



General Assembly

Distr.: General
2 September 2019

English only

Human Rights Council

Forty-second session

9–27 September 2019

Agenda item 4

Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Written statement* submitted by Society for Threatened Peoples, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[21 August 2019]

* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.



Persecution of minorities in India

Society for Threatened Peoples is deeply concerned about the rise of intolerance and religious related violence against minorities in India. Hate crimes and religiously motivated crimes against Christians and Muslims in India's most popular province of Uttar Pradesh almost tripled in the year 2018 in comparison to previous years. Christian organizations have registered 132 incidents of persecution in this province in the year 2018, compared to 50 in the year 2017. Most of the intimidations, harassments and acts of violence were committed in the last four months of the year 2018. In India as a whole some 325 incidents against Christians were documented in the year 2018. Targeted violence and hate crimes directed against Muslims even are more important but more difficult to document due to a lack of organizational structures enhancing the right to religious freedom.

Despite claims by the Indian Federal Government threats by nationalist Hindus are familiar to Muslims and Christians in many regions of the country. Our human rights organization has been observing a steady decline in conditions for religious minorities in recent years, especially since the election in the year 2014 which increased the influence of the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

Even during the electoral campaign in the year 2019 the violence further increased. In April 2019 there were 35 attacks Christians registered in India. It signifies a dramatic increase in violence. In the year 2018 some 20 cases of violence against Christians were committed, in the first four months of the year 2019 the average was around 30 cases, this means an incredible increase by 50 percent. In most cases Hindu nationalists of the RSS and VHP movements were accused as perpetrators of the criminal acts. But there is no credible perspective for holding them responsible for their crimes due to the impunity which prevails.

Since BJP took power under Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the year 2014 and his reelection in May 2019 Hindu nationalists feel free to intimidate and threaten religious minorities and to commit crimes against them. The BJP Government has encouraged a climate of intolerance and hatred against Christians and Muslims, tolerating and inciting the persecution of religious minorities by providing impunity for the perpetrators of this violence. Modi's first term of Prime Minister has deepened communal violence especially in minority areas. The systematic violation of the right to religious freedom is a deliberate denial of basic human rights guaranteed in the Indian Constitution and Indian laws and a violation of the concept of secularism enshrined in the Constitution of the country.

Mainly Muslims and Dalits have been suffering from mob lynchings which resulted in the loss of 60 lives and the injury of 102 people in the year 2018. Several Muslims were lynched on false allegations of eating beef or even just transporting cattle for slaughter. The consumption of beef in India has been a divisive issue for years because many Hindus are honoring cows as sacred animals. Cow slaughter and consumption of beef have been banned in 24 of 29 states across the country. On the other hand, India is one of the biggest cattle exporters of the world and earns millions of US-Dollars by selling beef on the global market.

Christians very often are falsely accused and criminalized for forced conversions of Hindus which are forbidden in many states. It's an effective approach to intimidate religious minorities and to incite prejudices, hatred and violence against minority people. Even social medias and messaging platforms have been used by radical Hindus to start disinformation campaigns against Christians and their worship services by alleging conversions of entire Hindu villages. More than 40 incidents have been reported from the Jaunpur district in the state of Uttar Pradesh where in September 2018 several churches have been raided by Hindu extremists who have started a defamation campaign against religious minorities. Regularly church worship services or prayer meetings were disrupted or stopped by radical Hindus. Even physical violence has been used in more than 70 cases to prevent Christians to exercise their right to religious freedom. Christians were beaten than a group of Hindu nationalists disrupted a prayer meeting in Kanjappalli (State of Tamil Nadu) on May 3, 2019 and threatened to kill the Christians if they would continue praying.

Especially in rural areas forced conversions of Christians are widespread. Intimidation, harassment and physical threats commonly are committed against minority people to force them to abandon their faith. To incite pressure excommunication and alienation of traditional rights to pastures, water and markets often is being used by Hindu activists.

STP calls on the UN Human Rights Council to urge the Government of India to respect the religious freedom of religious minorities, to ensure their protection and to guarantee an end to impunity for intimidation, harassment and hate crimes against religious minority people.
