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**Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance, follow-up to and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action**

### **Written statement\* submitted by European Centre for Law and Justice, The / Centre Européen pour le droit, les Justice et les droits de l'homme, 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.

[04 August 2025]

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\* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.

## **Requesting That India Guarantee The Right To Religious Freedom For Christians And Repeal All Anti-Conversion Laws**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

In 2025, India was ranked as the 11th worst country for Christians.(1) In India, Christians are persecuted by Hindu extremists who seek to rid the country of Christianity.(2) These extremists are emboldened by a belief that India should be for Hindus only.(3) Hindu extremists use this belief to justify carrying out attacks against Christians all across the country, often with impunity. In many cases, authorities are unwilling to step in to protect Christians or take action against the perpetrators.(4) Additionally, twelve states in India have passed anti-conversion laws, which have been weaponized against Christians.(5)

### **2. BACKGROUND**

Christians comprise approximately 5.1% of the population in India.(6) Yet, violence against Christians has been increasing over the past decade.(7) In 2014, there were 127 reported incidents of violence carried out against Christians.(8) In 2024, the number of reported incidents was 834.(9) So far, between January and June of this year, there have already been 378 incidents of violence being carried out against Christians.(10) This means that on average there are two incidents of violence being carried out against Christians every day this year.(11)

Additionally, Hindu extremists have been emboldened through anti-conversion laws that have been passed in twelve states throughout India. Hindu extremists regularly attack Christians who are gathered to worship in homes and churches and accuse the Christians of carrying out conversion activities. One church official said that “[e]ven a simple gathering of our people in their homes for prayer has been portrayed as a violation of the anti-conversion law” and that “our people are dragged into police stations and false cases are registered against them.”(12)

### **3. VIOLATIONS**

Below, we have highlighted just a fraction of the cases of Christians being attacked and arrested because of their faith.

In a public speech given in July 2025, BJP Member of the Legislative Assembly Gopichand Padalkhar, put out a bounty for attacking and killing Christians.(13) In his speech he promised \$3,500 to anyone who assaults a priest, \$5,800 for breaking a priest’s bones, and \$13,000 for killing a priest.(14)

In July 2025, two Christians were arrested after they were accused of trying to carry out a forced conversion on July 27, 2025.(15) They were arrested after a man named Sunny Bansilal Danani filed a complaint.(16) According to a police officer, “[t]hey claimed that converting to Christianity would bring Danani peace, prosperity, and mental well-being. They allegedly told the complainant that Jesus Christ is the only God and that other deities and religions are fictitious.”(17)

On July 25, two Catholic nuns were arrested and charged with human trafficking and forced conversions.(18) The two nuns were accompanying three Christian girls and were traveling to northern Uttar Pradesh to work at a hospital. All three girls had written permission from their parents to go.(19) When members of a local Hindu extremist group learned that they would be traveling through the train station, they gathered there and verbally abused them and urged police to arrest them.(20) K.C. Venugopal, a member of the Lower House of the Indian Parliament, wrote a letter to Indian Home Minister Amit Shah expressing his concern over the arrest.(21) In the letter, he stated that the arrests constituted “a blatant

miscarriage of justice and a direct attack on the rights and dignity of citizens belonging to minority communities.”(22)

On July 13, 2025, Hindu extremists broke into a Christian’s home during a prayer service.(23) The extremists verbally attacked the women attending the prayer service and took the women to the police station.(24) Police later issued a notice to the owners of the house questioning the legality of them holding religious gatherings.(25)

On June 22, 2025, 150 Hindu extremists broke into the house of a Christian pastor in Burhanpur district and assaulted him and three other Christians.(26) According to another local Christian pastor, the extremists “undressed them, attacked them, and used foul language to abuse them before parading them naked in their underwear along a public road.”(27) The extremists attacked the Christians because they believed they were involved in carrying out conversions.(28)

On June 21, 2025, hundreds of Hindu nationalists attacked a group of twenty Christian families who were gathering to have lunch in the Malkangiri district in southern Odisha.(29) Eight Christians were injured as the mob attacked them with sticks and sharp objects.(30) Even though a complaint was filed with the police, authorities have yet to take action against the mob.(31)

On June 16, 2025, a group of Hindus stormed the house of a Christian family in Chhattisgarh and kicked them out of the village because they refused to convert to Hinduism.(32)

On June 11, 2025, Hindu nationalists attacked a Christian wedding party in Chhattisgarh.(33) Several people were injured in the attack and the bride and groom had to lock themselves inside a house to get away from the angry mob.(34) When some of the Christians went to the police to ask for help, the police said they lacked the manpower to provide protection.(35) Thankfully, no one was killed in the attack, but several Christians were injured and taken to the hospital.(36)

On June 9, 2025, the government of Maharashtra in India announced plans to investigate and demolish hundreds of churches deemed to be unauthorized structures.(37) This announcement was made in response to concerns by members of the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly about forced conversions being carried out in the state.(38) In addition to destroying these churches, it was also announced that the government would be drafting an anti-conversion law.(39) If this law were to be passed, Maharashtra would become the thirteenth state in India to pass an anti-conversion law.(40)

#### 4. REQUEST

The reports highlighted above are just a small fraction of the violent attacks and arrests under anti-conversion laws. Not only is the government failing to protect the rights of Christians to gather, but it has also actively created legislation that infringes on the rights of Christians to gather and practice their faith. As demonstrated above, simply gathering with other Christians to pray and worship is enough to incite an angry mob to attack the Christians and pressure authorities to arrest them. Now, it has even gotten so bad that nuns who were simply traveling with other Christians to work at a hospital are being arrested for human trafficking. The ridiculous attacks on the freedom of religion must end. India must take a stand against the Hindutva bullies who are wreaking havoc not only with impunity but with assistance from Indian officials. India must also take action to prevent the daily violent attacks being perpetrated against Christians. Additionally, all anti-conversion laws must be repealed, and action must be taken to ensure that Christians are able to enjoy the fundamental right to religious freedom.

- (1) India, OPEN DOORS.
- (2) Id.
- (3) Id.
- (4) Id.
- (5) Angana Chakrabarti, Identity Crisis: A Law Banning Conversion Sparks Fears of Religious Divide, GLOBAL PRESS JOURNAL (June 4, 2025).
- (6) OPEN DOORS, INDIA PERSECUTION DYNAMICS 5 (2024).
- (7) Nirmala Carvalho, American Arrested for “Forced conversion” in India, CRUX (July 29, 2025).
- (8) Id.
- (9) Id.
- (10) Id.
- (11) Anugrah Kumar, At Least 2 Attacks on Christians are Logged Each Day in India: Watchdog, THE CHRISTIAN POST (June 23, 2025).
- (12) Four Indian Christians Arrested for Alleged Conversion, UCA NEWS (May 16, 2025).
- (13) Legislator Puts Bounty on Evangelists in India, INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN CONCERN (July 7, 2025).
- (14) Id.
- (15) Carvalho, supra note 7.
- (16) Id.
- (17) Id.
- (18) Catholic Nuns Arrested at Train Station in Chhattisgarh, INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN CONCERN (July 29, 2025).
- (19) Id.
- (20) Id.
- (21) Id.
- (22) Id.
- (23) Nirmala Carvalho, Rising Series of Attacks on Christians Occurs in Central India, CRUX (July 16, 2025).
- (24) Id.
- (25) Id.
- (26) Christians Stripped and Paraded Naked, Accused of Conversion in India, UCA NEWS (June 25, 2025).
- (27) Id.
- (28) Id.
- (29) Hindu Nationalist Mob Attacks 20 Christian Families in Odisha, INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN CONCERN (June 30, 2025).
- (30) Id.
- (31) Id.
- (32) Jodan King, Christian Family Kicked out of Their Home for Refusing to Convert, NEWSWEEK (July 24, 2025).
- (33) Hindu Extremists Attack Christian Wedding, INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN CONCERN (June 16, 2025).
- (34) Id.
- (35) Id.
- (36) Id.
- (37) Indian State Plans to Demolish Hundreds of “Unauthorized Church Structures”, INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN CONCERN (July 14, 2025).
- (38) Id.
- (39) Id.
- (40) Id.