



INTRODUCTION

The European Centre for Law and Justice (ECLJ) is an international, non-governmental organization dedicated to promoting and protecting human rights around the world. The ECLJ also holds Special Consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. The ECLJ submits this report in response to Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief Ahmed Shaheed’s call for input for his report on “Indigenous Peoples and the right to freedom of religion or belief.” This report provides information pertaining to question number four:

Are there laws, policies and practices that discriminate against indigenous peoples in enjoying their spiritual and religious traditions . . . ? They may include but are not limited to undue restrictions on the above; forced assimilation, forced conversion and . . . restrictions on the freedoms of association Are there reports of impunity for these practices?

BACKGROUND

In the Republic of India (India), indigenous peoples, which include Adivasis (or tribals), Dalits, and Christians, frequently face persecution and discrimination, often with impunity. Adivasis, Dalits, and majority of Indian Christians share a common Dravidian origin¹ and are indigenous to the land.² They were subjugated by the Aryans who arrived in the Indian subcontinent around 1400-1000 B.C.³

¹ See Luisa Steur, *Traveling Models of Indigenism and Kerala’s Emergent ‘Adivasi’ Politics*, 17 ANTHROPOLOGICAL NOTEBOOKS 91, 102 (2011), http://www.drustvo-antropologov.si/AN/PDF/2011_2/Anthropological_Notebooks_XVII_2_Steur.pdf (noting the theory that “dalits and adivasis belong to the same Dravidian culture or (dark) race” that the Aryan Brahmins subjugated); *India’s Caste System Under Attack: The Dalit Movement*, ENCYCLOPEDIA.COM, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/energy-government-and-defense-magazines/indias-caste-system-under-attack-dalit-movement> (last visited July 8, 2022) (noting that the Dalits descended from the Dravidians).

² *Adivasi*, BRITANNICA, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Adivasi> (last visited June 17, 2022) (noting that Adivasis were the original inhabitants of India); ENCYCLOPEDIA.COM, *supra* note 1 (last visited July 8, 2022) (noting that Dalits descended from the “indigenous Dravidians”).

³ See ENCYCLOPEDIA.COM, *supra* note 1 (noting that the Indo-Aryans “enslaved the indigenous Dravidians”); ASIF AQEEL & MARY GILL, SHAME & STIGMA IN SANITATION 26 (2021) (noting how the Aryans “describe[d] the locals as *dasa* (slave/servant)”).

The Aryan society was already divided into a caste based system of priests, warriors, and commoners.⁴ When they came to the Indian subcontinent, they gave birth to Hinduism, retaining their original three castes of Brahmins (priests), Kshatriyas (warriors), and Vaishyas (farmers and merchants), but incorporated some local dark skinned people as servants as the fourth caste called Shudras (laborers).⁵ However, other locals were kept outside the caste system as untouchables and outcastes (called Dalits today)⁶ who were forced to perform the most menial and humiliating jobs.⁷ Some locals (Adivasis) were pushed into forests and dwell there to this day.⁸ Majority of Christians in the Indian subcontinent are converts from the lower caste Shudra and the untouchable “caste.”⁹

Much of the modern-day persecution of these indigenous groups considered “unclean” and “low-born” occurs through the misuse of anti-conversion laws and at the hands of the Hindu majority. Christians (including new converts from Dalit and Adivasi communities) are a particular target of the fundamentalist Hindus¹⁰ because Christianity undermines India’s millennia old caste system. Those belonging to the upper castes fear that becoming Christian will free lower castes from their social and political low status.¹¹

“According to the official Census held in 2011, Adivasis constitute 8.6 per cent of the nation’s total population, some 104.3 million people. Unofficial figures vary significantly but represent a much higher proportion of India’s population.”¹² Dalits represent about 201.4 million, or about 16.6 percent of the population.¹³ However, this number only includes Hindu, Sikh, and Buddhist Dalits and excludes Christian and Muslim Dalits.¹⁴ According to one estimate, there are

⁴ AQEEL & GILL, *supra* note 3, at 26.

⁵ *Id.*; Albee Ning, *The Caste System in India*, ASIA HIGHLIGHTS (Aug. 23, 2021), <https://www.asiahighlights.com/india/caste-system>.

⁶ *Untouchable*, BRITANNICA, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/untouchable> (last visited June 22, 2022). HUM. RTS. WATCH, 13 CASTE DISCRIMINATION: A GLOBAL CONCERN 5–6 (2001), <https://www.hrw.org/reports/2001/globalcaste/caste0801.pdf>.

⁷ *See, e.g.*, AQEEL & GILL, *supra* note 3, at 29 fig.2.

⁸ *Adivasis*, MINORITY RTS. GRP. INT’L, <https://minorityrights.org/minorities/adivasis-2/> (last visited July 8, 2022); *Adivasi*, *supra* note 2 (last visited July 8, 2022).

⁹ *See* AQEEL & GILL, *supra* note 3, at 25.

¹⁰ OPEN DOORS, DESTRUCTIVE LIES: DISINFORMATION, SPEECH THAT INCITES VIOLENCE AND DISCRIMINATION AGAINST RELIGIOUS MINORITIES IN INDIA 6–7 (2021), <https://media.opendoorsuk.org/document/pdf/Destructive%20Lies-Full%20version-DIGITAL-ODUK-2021.pdf>.

¹¹ Blessy Mathew Prasad, *Dalit Christians – Why Do They Remain at the End of the Stick 75 Years After Independence?*, CITIZEN (May 3, 2022, 7:29 AM), <https://www.thecitizen.in/index.php/en/NewsDetail/index/13/21812/Dalit-Christians---Why-Do-They-Remain-At-the-End-of-the-Stick-75-Years-After-Independence?infiniteScroll=1>.

¹² MINORITY RTS. GRP. INT’L, *supra* note 8 (last visited June 17, 2022).

¹³ *Official Dalit Population Exceeds 200 Million*, INT’L DALIT SOLIDARITY NETWORK (May 29, 2013), <https://idsn.org/india-official-dalit-population-exceeds-200-million/>.

¹⁴ Shreehari Paliath, *How Unreliable Data on Dalit Christians & Muslims Expose Them to Discrimination*, INDIASPEND (Mar. 14, 2021), <https://www.indiaspend.com/data-gaps/how-unreliable-data-on-dalit-christians-muslims-expose-them-to-discrimination-734972>.

about 3.2 million Christian and Muslim Dalits living in the country.¹⁵ Other estimates regard 3.2 million as a severe underestimation.¹⁶

Christians make up about 2.4 percent of India's population.¹⁷ About 33 percent of India's Christians are from the lower castes (primarily Dalits) and about 24 percent are from the Adivasi community.¹⁸ Likewise, a vast majority of modern-day converts to Christianity belong to both of these groups.¹⁹

The discrimination and persecution happens in the form of "pressure to convert to Hinduism, . . . bullying, harassment, violence and perversion of justice."²⁰ Violence against these groups is primarily perpetrated by members of the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) paramilitary wing called Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), who adhere to the Hindu nationalist ideology.²¹ Law enforcement officials and right-wing Hindu politicians are usually complicit in such actions²² and persecution is particularly egregious in rural areas.²³

PERSECUTION UNDER ANTI-CONVERSION LAWS

A number of Indian states have enacted anti-conversion laws (ironically called Freedom of Religion Acts) to stop Hindus, Dalits, and Adivasis from converting to other religions. Hindu nationalists often use these laws to perpetrate violence against Christians, Dalits, and Adivasis, and severely hinder their freedom to practice their beliefs or convert to a religion of their choice.

Currently, the states of Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand, Karnataka, and Haryana²⁴ have

¹⁵ *Id.*

¹⁶ *Official Dalit Population Exceeds 200 Million*, *supra* note 13. "According to some estimates, there are 15-20 million Christian Dalits in India, while the number of Muslim Dalits may be as high as 100 million or more." *Id.* Note that this estimate conflicts with the 2008 report, which reports that, compared to Muslims, Christians seem to constitute "a much larger proportion of Dalits." SATISH DESHPANDE & GEETIKA BAPNA, NAT'L COMM'N FOR MINORITIES, *DALITS IN THE MUSLIM AND CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES* 23 (2008), http://kscminorities.org/pdf/Status%20Report%20on%20Dalits_in_Christian_and_Muslim_Communities.pdf.

¹⁷ Ariana Monique Salazar, *8 Key Findings About Christians in India*, PEW RSCH. CTR. (July 12, 2021), <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/07/12/8-key-findings-about-christians-in-india/>.

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ NEHA SAHGAL ET AL., PEW RSCH. CTR., *RELIGION IN INDIA: TOLERANCE AND SEGREGATION* 32 (2021), <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2021/06/29/religion-in-india-tolerance-and-segregation/>. "The number of tribals who adhere to the Christian faith has grown by 63 per cent from 63.90 lakh in 2001 to 1.03 crore in 2011." Zeeshan Shaikh, *Christian, Muslim Tribals Fastest Growing Demographic Groups: Census Dept*, INDIAN EXPRESS (Apr. 15, 2016, 4:44 PM), <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/christian-muslim-tribals-fastest-growing-demographic-groups-census-dept-2754838/>.

²⁰ OPEN DOORS, *DESTRUCTIVE LIES: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY* 7–8 (2021), <https://media.opendoorsuk.org/document/pdf/Destructive%20Lies-Executive-Summary.pdf>.

²¹ *See, e.g.*, Neel Madhav & Alishan Jafri, *Why India Is Witnessing Spike in Attacks on Christians, Churches*, AL JAZEERA (Dec. 2, 2021), <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/12/2/india-christians-church-hindu-groups-bjp-conversion>.

²² *Id.*

²³ *DESTRUCTIVE LIES: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY*, *supra* note 20, at 8.

²⁴ Shaheryar Gill, *ACLJ Delivers Critical Report to U.N. Human Rights Council over Violent Persecution and Human Rights Violations Against Christians*, ACLJ (June 22, 2022), <https://aclj.org/persecuted-church/aclj-delivers-critical-report-to-un-human-rights-council-over-violent-persecution-and-human-rights-violations-against-christians>.

laws that, on their face, prohibit “forced” religious conversions. In reality, however, these laws are intended to stop the indigenous low caste peoples from adopting or practicing a religion of their choice.

For example, the law in Chhattisgarh—which is similar to other states’ laws—provides that “[n]o person shall convert or attempt to convert, either directly or otherwise, any person from one religious faith to another by the *use of force* or by *allurement* or by any *fraudulent means* nor shall any person abet any such conversion.”²⁵

The definitions of “allurement” and “force” grant authorities vast discretion in prosecution. Under the law, “‘allurement’ means [an] offer of any temptation in [the] form of . . . any gift or gratification . . . [or] grant of any material benefit,”²⁶ and “force” means “threat of divine displeasure or social ex-communication.”²⁷ These broad definitions outlaw many legitimate forms of proselytizing—such as offering salvation or preaching repentance.

Further, “conversion” does not include returning to an “ancestor’s original religion or [the individual’s] own original religion.”²⁸ Because of this provision, converting to Hinduism is effectively exempt from the law since Hindus consider it the only “original religion” in India.

Anti-conversion laws are in conflict with Article 25 of India’s Constitution, which protects citizens’ rights to “freely profess, practise, and propagate religion.”²⁹ Despite this, in 1977, the Supreme Court of India affirmed the constitutionality of the anti-conversion laws, holding that “there is no fundamental right to convert another person to one’s own religion.”³⁰ The court’s wrongful affirmation ensured the laws’ continued existence and endorsed their continued use.

INSTANCES OF PERSECUTION

In 2021, at least 761 instances of violence against Christians (including converts from Dalit and Adivasi communities) were recorded.³¹ In the first five months of 2022 alone, there were 207 reported instances of violence against Christians in several states in India.³²

Below are just some examples from the last two years of violence against Indian Christians who belong to indigenous backgrounds:

²⁵ Chhattisgarh Dharma Swantantraya Adhiniyam [Freedom of Religion] Act, 1968, § 3 (Oct. 19, 1968) (emphasis added).

²⁶ *Id.* § 2(a).

²⁷ *Id.* § 2(c).

²⁸ Chhattisgarh Dharma Swantantraya Adhiniyam [Freedom of Religion] (Amendment) Act, Bill No. 18 of 2006, § 2 (2006).

²⁹ India Const. art. 25, § 1.

³⁰ *Rev. Stainislaus v. State of Madhya Pradesh & Ors*, 1977 SCR (2) 611 (India).

³¹ FED’N OF INDIAN AM. CHRISTIAN ORGS. OF N. AM., FIACONA ANNUAL REPORT 2022 (2022).

³² *Violence Against Churches and Christians Increase: United Christian Forum Appeals to Authorities*, AGENZIA FIDES (June 13, 2022),

<http://www.fides.org/en/news/72348->

[ASIA_INDIA_Violence_against_churches_and_Christians_increase_United_Christian_Forum_appeals_to_authorities](http://www.fides.org/en/news/72348-ASIA_INDIA_Violence_against_churches_and_Christians_increase_United_Christian_Forum_appeals_to_authorities).

1. In March 2022, six masked men attacked a pastor in a tribal area in Chhattisgarh and murdered him in front of his family.³³ The men tied his hands at the back, hit his face, and forced him to kneel.³⁴ They then slit the back of his neck with a knife, shot two bullets into his chest, and stabbed him.³⁵ This pastor was among 21 other pastors from the area who were threatened to “return” to Hinduism.³⁶
2. In February 2022, a police officer barged into a church in Chhattisgarh during a service and threatened that if prayer and worship were not stopped he would charge the attendees with being communist “Naxalite” or Maoist rebels.³⁷ A day later, the officer ordered two church members to burn down their church. When they refused, he threatened to kill them.³⁸ A few days later, the officer burned down the church.³⁹
3. In January 2022, in Uttar Pradesh, a mob brutally assaulted and severely injured Pastor Rakesh Babu and his wife.⁴⁰ Days before the attack, the police sub-inspector of the locality called the pastor and told him not to encourage other villagers, most of whom were Dalits, to join him in prayer.⁴¹ The officer threatened that if he did not listen, there would be dire consequences.⁴² Speaking regarding such incidents, Dr. John Prasad, an anthropologist who has conducted extensive research on Dalits, stated that Dalit Christians are economically doing better than Dalit Hindus and Dalit Buddhists.⁴³ Upper castes want Dalits to remain oppressed. They don’t want Dalits to be empowered and rise up to a higher status in society, which is why they try to stop Dalits from converting.⁴⁴
4. In December 2021, a priest and three pastors in Chhattisgarh were arrested when a tribal committee complained and accused them of trying to convert tribals.⁴⁵ All four were arrested by the police under the state’s anti-conversion law and the Indian Penal Code’s section 295-A, which punishes outraging religious feelings of any class by insulting their religion.⁴⁶

³³ *Christian Pastor Slashed, Shot to Death in Central India*, MORNING STAR NEWS (Mar. 29, 2022), <https://morningstarnews.org/2022/03/christian-pastor-slashed-shot-to-death-in-central-india/>.

³⁴ *Id.*

³⁵ *Id.*

³⁶ *Id.*

³⁷ Anugrah Kumar, *Christians in India Say Police Officer Who Burned Down Their Church Is Threatening to Kill Them*, CHRISTIAN POST (May 21, 2022), <https://www.christianpost.com/news/india-christians-say-police-officer-burned-down-church-threatened-murder.html>.

³⁸ *Id.*

³⁹ *Id.*

⁴⁰ Prasad, *supra* note 11.

⁴¹ *Id.*

⁴² *Id.*

⁴³ *Id.*

⁴⁴ *Id.*

⁴⁵ Ritesh Mishra, *4 Held in Chhattisgarh for Allegedly Trying to Convert Tribals to Christianity*, HINDUSTAN TIMES (Dec. 22, 2021), <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/4-held-in-chhattisgarh-for-allegedly-trying-to-convert-tribals-to-christianity-101640145402555.html/>.

⁴⁶ *Id.*

5. On December 29, 2021, a Hindu mob barged into the home of a Dalit Christian pastor in Karnataka while he was praying with his family.⁴⁷ The mob accused them of converting their neighbors to Christianity and ordered them to stop the prayers.⁴⁸ The mob assaulted the family, burning one woman, attacking another woman, and snatching jewelry from another family member.⁴⁹ That same day, a video emerged on social media showing a group of Dalit women fending off Hindu supremacists who barged into their home inquiring about conversions and to stop their Christmas celebrations.⁵⁰
6. On November 7, 2021, a mob of about 25 Hindus barged into a prayer gathering in Karnataka, accusing the pastor of converting local Hindus.⁵¹ Many of the Christians in Karnataka who have been attacked are “first-generation preachers who hail from historically marginalised groups, including Dalits and Adivasis. Moreover, such attacks affect communities which have over the years resorted to religious conversion as a way of emancipation from the caste system.”⁵²
7. In August 2021, a Hindu mob vandalized and demolished a church that belonged to the Adivasi community in a village in Chhattisgarh.⁵³ Families from the area had come together to build the place of worship in February of that year.⁵⁴ The mob accused the Adivasi Christians of forced conversions and building the church on public land.⁵⁵
8. On August 11, 2021, Nitish Kumar, a 14-year-old Dalit Christian boy, was attacked and drenched with acid on a street in Bihar.⁵⁶ Nitish’s family converted to Christianity five years before the attack.⁵⁷ Family members said they were threatened and warned against attending church.⁵⁸ The police refused to register a case before or after the acid attack on Nitish.⁵⁹ He died the following month.⁶⁰

⁴⁷ *Karnataka: Hindutva Supremacists Attack Dalit Family on Charges of Religious Conversion*, SCROLL.IN (Jan. 3, 2022, 10:19 AM), <https://scroll.in/latest/1014164/karnataka-hindutva-supremacists-attack-dalit-family-on-charges-of-religious-conversion>.

⁴⁸ *Id.*

⁴⁹ *Id.*

⁵⁰ *Id.*; *Video: Women Fend off Hindutva Supremacists Who Tried to Disrupt Christmas Celebrations in Karnataka*, SCROLL.IN (Dec. 31, 2021, 5:21 PM), <https://scroll.in/latest/1014064/video-women-fend-off-hindutva-supremacists-who-tried-to-disrupt-christmas-celebrations-in-karnataka>.

⁵¹ Nikhila Henry, ‘*Anti-Conversion*’ *Bill: Dalit, Adivasi Christians the Most Attacked in Karnataka*, QUINT (Dec. 15, 2021, 10:30 AM), <https://www.thequint.com/news/india/karnataka-anti-conversion-dalit-christians-tribal-christians-attacks-on-churches#read-more>.

⁵² *Id.*

⁵³ Nirmala Carvalho, *Tribal Christian Church Demolished in Chhattisgarh (VIDEO)*, ASIANEWS (Aug. 3, 2021, 12:46 PM), [http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Tribal-Christian-church-demolished-in-Chhattisgarh-\(VIDEO\)-53784.html](http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Tribal-Christian-church-demolished-in-Chhattisgarh-(VIDEO)-53784.html).

⁵⁴ *Id.*

⁵⁵ *Id.*

⁵⁶ Dev Raj, *Dalit Christian Boy Who Faced Acid Attack Dies in Gaya*, TEL. INDIA (Sept. 28, 2021, 2:19 AM), <https://www.telegraphindia.com/india/dalit-christian-boy-who-had-faced-an-acid-attack-in-gaya-died/cid/1832504>.

⁵⁷ *Id.*

⁵⁸ *Id.*

⁵⁹ *Id.*

⁶⁰ *Id.*

9. In May 2021, ten Dalit Christian families in Odisha were attacked and forcibly displaced because of their faith.⁶¹ Tensions in the village rose after two Christian Dalit women fetched water from a public well.⁶² Nearby villagers attacked the women, tore their clothes, touched them inappropriately, and told them that Christians were not allowed to use the public well.⁶³ After the women reported the incident, the perpetrators set the families' houses on fire and chased them from the village.⁶⁴
10. In March 2021, a mob threatened to beat to death ten Christian families in Chhattisgarh if they did not reconvert to their ancestral religion.⁶⁵ These families were prevented from accessing water, obtaining government rations, and working in their own fields.⁶⁶ All but ten Christians fled the village.⁶⁷ Those that remained were beaten on two occasions.⁶⁸ During a reconversion ceremony, the mob forced the remaining Christians to recant and worship tribal deities instead.⁶⁹ When the police received a complaint on the matter, they did not file charges.⁷⁰ Instead, the officer in charge said that he asked the villagers to "sort it out among themselves."⁷¹
11. On January 31, 2021, Pastor Vipin, a Dalit convert to Christianity, organized a Sunday service at his home in Karnataka.⁷² Around 30 believers from the Dalit community had gathered there.⁷³ A Hindu mob of 25-30 barged in and attacked.⁷⁴ Members of the mob "locked the door, with the pastor, his wife and three children inside. . . . They held the Pastor by both his arms, twisted them and beat him mercilessly. They broke the tambourine used for hymns by smashing it against his wrists. When his 13-year-old daughter tried to come to her father's defense, they kicked her in the stomach."⁷⁵ Later on, at the police station, the family was met with accusations of converting people.⁷⁶ When Pastor Vipin tried to file a complaint, the sub-inspector was initially unwilling and threatened him, even though representatives from radical groups admitted that "it was boys from their party who had carried out the attack."⁷⁷ Pastor Vipin said these attacks are meant to destroy anti-caste thinking and to establish a system where "Brahmins rule unopposed."⁷⁸

⁶¹ Prasad, *supra* note 11.

⁶² *Id.*

⁶³ *Id.*

⁶⁴ *Id.*

⁶⁵ *Christians Forced to 'Re-Convert' to Tribal Religion in Central India*, ETERNITY NEWS (Apr. 6, 2021, 11:30 AM), <https://www.ernitynews.com.au/world/christians-forced-to-re-convert-to-tribal-religion-in-central-india/>.

⁶⁶ *Id.*

⁶⁷ *Id.*

⁶⁸ *Id.*

⁶⁹ *Id.*

⁷⁰ *Id.*

⁷¹ *Id.*

⁷² DESTRUCTIVE LIES: DISINFORMATION, SPEECH, *supra* note 10, at 16.

⁷³ *Id.* at 17.

⁷⁴ *Id.*

⁷⁵ *Id.*

⁷⁶ *Id.*

⁷⁷ *Id.*

⁷⁸ *Id.* at 19.

12. On January 22, 2021, three tribal families in Jharkhand suffered severe consequences for converting to Christianity. The village court caned, fined, and excommunicated them from the community.⁷⁹ Villagers reported that, throughout the previous year, around two dozen Dalit and Adivasi families had converted to Christianity in the area.⁸⁰
13. Gagan is an Adivasi who converted to Christianity.⁸¹ He hosted prayer meetings and Sunday services at his home in a tribal district in Odisha.⁸² In January 2021, a mob of around “200-250 people across three different villages came to his house and attacked him and his family while they were at prayer. His mother and 10-year-old sister were brutally beaten.”⁸³ Since the attack, the mob has further intimidated Gagan and his family, pressuring them to flee the village. Gagan recounted the mob’s threats: “we will cut you into pieces and throw you into the river.”⁸⁴ They also cut off the family’s “access to the ration shop and to water.”⁸⁵
14. On January 10, 2021, “[a] mob of 30 people confronted a Christian congregation [in Alirajpur, a predominantly tribal district in Madhya Pradesh] alleging the forced conversion of tribal people. The mob threatened to beat and imprison the church pastor and his congregation if they continued to preach Jesus in nearby villages.”⁸⁶ Two days later, in the same village, a mob of 30 people interrupted baptism ceremonies, threatening to report allegations of forced conversions. Soon after that, the church was forced to close.⁸⁷
15. On December 31, 2020, in Madhya Pradesh, a mob of 25-30 Hindu extremists burst into a home of Adivasi Christians who were organizing a New Year’s party.⁸⁸ The mob “harassed and abused the seven-to-eight women inside, and kicked Sunita, who was eight months pregnant at the time, in the stomach.”⁸⁹ After being rushed to the hospital, Sunita gave birth to a still-born baby.⁹⁰ The government and the media were silent.⁹¹ Instead, the police started investigating the claims that the mob made against the Adivasi

⁷⁹ TNN, *Jharkhand Tribal Families Caned, Fined in Conversion Backlash*, TIMES OF INDIA (Feb. 2, 2021, 4:28 PM), [https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/jharkhand-tribal-families-caned-fined-in-conversion-backlash/articleshow/80640941.cms#:~:text=GARHWA%3A%20Three%20Korwa%20tribal%20families,on%20January%202022%2C%20sources%20said;BijayKumarMinj,IndianTribalFamiliesCanedforEmbracingChristianity,UCANEWS\(Feb.3,2021,9:56AM\),https://www.ucanews.com/news/indian-tribal-families-caned-for-embracing-christianity/91272](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/jharkhand-tribal-families-caned-fined-in-conversion-backlash/articleshow/80640941.cms#:~:text=GARHWA%3A%20Three%20Korwa%20tribal%20families,on%20January%202022%2C%20sources%20said;BijayKumarMinj,IndianTribalFamiliesCanedforEmbracingChristianity,UCANEWS(Feb.3,2021,9:56AM),https://www.ucanews.com/news/indian-tribal-families-caned-for-embracing-christianity/91272).

⁸⁰ TNN, *supra* note 79.

⁸¹ Anton Nieboer & Sebastian Milbank, *Adivasi Christians – a Forgotten Minority*, TABLET (July 1, 2021), <https://www.thetablet.co.uk/news/14282/adivasi-christians-a-forgotten-minority>.

⁸² *Id.*

⁸³ *Id.*

⁸⁴ *Id.*

⁸⁵ *Id.*

⁸⁶ WILLIAM STARK & MATIAS PERTTULA, *INDIA’S ANTI-CONVERSION LAWS AND THEIR EFFECTS ON THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY* (2021), <https://www.persecution.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/2021-07-12-India-Report.pdf>.

⁸⁷ *Id.* at 11.

⁸⁸ Nieboer & Milbank, *supra* note 81.

⁸⁹ *Id.*; DESTRUCTIVE LIES: DISINFORMATION, SPEECH, *supra* note 10, at 21 (describing the attacks as based on “trumped-up accusation of ‘conversions’”).

⁹⁰ Nieboer & Milbank, *supra* note 81.

⁹¹ *Id.*

Christians that they had been funded by foreign sources to convert.⁹² Sunita's uncle said that "[i]f Adivasis fight with Hindus or with RSS people even to defend themselves, the police immediately file [charges] against the Adivasis."⁹³

CONCLUSION

Above are just a few examples of the long list of incidents of violence against the indigenous Christian, Dalit, and Adivasi communities. Even though caste-based discrimination is outlawed in India, it is very much prevalent. These outcaste communities, who were segregated and served the higher caste Hindus for millennia, continue to be violently persecuted today for either practicing or converting to a religion of their choice. The ECLJ hopes that this input will be helpful for the Special Rapporteur in preparing his report on the freedom of religion and belief of indigenous peoples.

Respectfully submitted,

Grégor Puppinck
Director General



⁹² *Id.*

⁹³ DESTRUCTIVE LIES: DISINFORMATION, SPEECH, *supra* note 10, at 21.