PERSECUTION RELIEF INTOLERANCE MONITOR – APRIL 2019

Persecution Relief presents the monthly Intolerance Monitor, to report hate crimes against Christians. Through this endeavor we try to bring you the unprecedented, unabated hostility and discrimination, Christians are facing in India.

While the Indian Constitution guarantees freedom of religion and belief, the reality on the ground is often-untold. We wish to bring to the attention of the State and the Central Governments of India, to take strong and effective measures, to respond to this alarming crisis.

Church, let us be united in Prayer and as a member of Body of Christ make every effort to stand with the Persecuted and don’t respond with hatred or bitterness, but forgive and pray for the Persecutors, just as Jesus Christ has commanded.

Count of hate crimes recorded in April 2019 – 27
We provided Consistent and fervent Prayer support to all 27 cases through our Prayer Partners globally. We also provided Financial, Political & Judicial support in 10 cases.
Summary:

- In April 2019, we recorded 27 incidents of hate crimes against Christians.
- Both Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu continued to be most hostile against Christians.
- The Election Season which commenced this month, saw that in spite of the “Code of Conduct”, several instances of “highly provocative hate speeches with tone and tenor” and propensity to polarize different religious communities were made.
- In spite of National and International Observers, and police observers monitoring the constituencies, Christian minorities were still attacked.
- The month of April, saw a record of 5 Church buildings that were burnt in arson attacks.

MAHARASHTRA - STATE IN FOCUS

- Maharashtra is a state spanning west-central India, is best known for its fast-paced capital, Mumbai (formerly Bombay).
- Good Friday is a very sacred Christian holiday, which the Government of India had gazetted it as a National Holiday since the last 72 years.
Therefore, the decision by the Administration of the 2 Union Territories - Daman and Diu and Dadra and Nagar Haveli, to scrap the “Good Friday” holiday was totally unacceptable and unjustifiable. The Christian community vehemently condemned the move as a direct attack on the rights of the Christian minorities.

Having appealed to the Government authorities against this injustice who turned a deaf ear, the Christian community were compelled to seek redressal from the High Court to undo this injustice.

The Hon. Chief Justice ruled that a holiday of a religious minority community, cannot be arbitrarily cancelled, which goes against the basic tenets of secularism.

We are grateful to Senior Counsel Haresh Jagtiani, ADF, Bro. Gul Kripalani, Dr. Abraham Mathai, for their collective efforts for this very important cause.

Comparison of hate crimes recorded in Maharashtra from 2016 – 2019 (YTD April)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2016</th>
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<tr>
<td>Data</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>25</td>
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Minority related cases reported in the Media, April ‘19 – 17

Categorization of Media Stories related to Christians April ‘19 - 54

- Exposing hypocrisy & double standards: 5
- Discrimination against minorities: 4
- Public condemnation by Government: 3
- Public condemnation by civil society: 3
- False Allegations with evil intent to incite hatred: 2

- Anti-Christian propaganda
- Fundamentalist strategies, Promoting Ideology
- Pro-Secularism & Freedom of religion
- Public condemnation by Government
- Discrimination against minorities
- Exposing hypocrisy & double standards
- False Allegations with evil intent to incite hatred
- International press highlighting growing intolerance

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**Key Media Stories:**

“If BJP comes to power again, we will change constitution”: Pankaja Munde - Jharkhand Government seeks to ban tribal people who have converted to Christianity and Islam from contesting tribal seats.

The new government should imbibe the culture of charity and respect the Constitution and the "golden rule of secularism", a Catholic bishops' body said Saturday after holding discussions among the faithful across the country.

In a controversial statement, KS Eshwarappa said “Lok Sabha tickets cannot be distributed to Muslims and Christians under quota. Tickets should be given to those who are loyal to the country.” Karnataka BJP leader and former Deputy Chief Minister K S Eshwarappa, justified denying tickets to Christians, saying that Muslims and Christians had not been given party tickets since they were not loyal to the country, undermining the party’s ‘Sabka Saath Sabka Vikaas’ slogan’.

Mob of Hindu Radicals Strip, Beat Nuns, Destroy Catholic School in Tamil Nadu - Christian leaders and activists in India are pinning hopes on the Supreme Court to set aside guidelines made by a state court on individuals changing religion. The Supreme Court on Monday sought to know why the government in a secular state should be involved in running and managing religious places, after noting that pilgrims going to Puri’s Jagannath temple complained they were harassed.

According to a fact-finding team of Jharkhand Janadhikar Mahasabha, local police may have been complicit in the lynching of Prakash Lakda, a 50-year-old Adivasi of Jurmu village in Gumla’s Dumri block, on April 10, 2019, when he and three others were beaten up by a right-wing mob. He was killed by a mob of men from the Sahu community of the neighbouring Jairagi village. Three other victims from Jurmu – Peter Kerketta, Belarius Minj and Janerius Minj – sustained severe injuries.

The Election Commission on Sunday removed a Tamil Nadu cadre IAS officer, C Umashankar, as poll observer in Sidhi district of Madhya Pradesh after his “faith-healing” activities. EC officials had to take action on Umashankar, a 1990-batch officer, because he persisted with his faith healing despite being warned against it.

Msgr. Theodore Mascarenhas, auxiliary bishop of Ranchi and general secretary of the Indian Bishops' Conference (CBCI), denounces to AsiaNews: "It is a tragedy for humanity, not only for Christians. The fact that such things happen in this century, in this "new India", is a shame ".

The BJP says Father Conceicao D'Silva accused it of harassing minorities and Msgr. Theodore Mascarenhas, auxiliary bishop of Ranchi and general secretary of the Indian Bishops' Conference (CBCI), denounces to AsiaNews: "It is a tragedy for humanity, not only for Christians. The fact that such things happen in this century, in this "new India", is a shame ".

Commissioner of Police Sanjay Barve meets Cardinal Gracias and other Christian leaders today
urged his parishioners to vote against the party.

Security has been beefed up at churches in Indian capital New Delhi after a series of suicide bombings killed more than 300 people in Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday.

The government-run National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has dropped a full chapter – ‘Democracy in the Contemporary World’ – from the political science textbook for class IX.

Persecution Relief

is an inter-denominational initiative, providing Comprehensive support

(Prayerfully, Financially, Politically, Judicially)

to the Persecuted Church in India.

We have recorded and handled around 1300 verified incidents of Christian Persecution over the past 3 years

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