

Uttar Pradesh Attacks on Christian Minorities on the Rise

We are publishing here excerpts from a report by the Religious Liberty Commission of Evangelical Fellowship of India (EFIRLC) about attacks on Christian minority in UP. –

Editor

According to the documentation compiled and available with the RLC, there has been a sharp rise in incidence of violence and targeted hate against the Christian minority in the state this year. The months of September and October 2018 have been particularly troublesome and have witnessed maximum number of incidents in the state, September saw 28 incidents while 16 incidents were recorded in October.

Last ELC documented 50 incidents of targeted hate and violence against Christians in UP which was in itself a highest figure in comparison with the past years. However, this year till October alone the number of incidents recorded is 64 and counting.

The origin and epicenter of this systematic campaign was the district of Jaunpur located in the Eastern part of UP. Jaunpur is about 50 KM from Varanasi, the parliamentary constituency of Mr. Narendra Modi. Starting from Jaunpur, the incidents have also spread across other districts including: Azamgarh, Pratapgarh, Siddharth Nagar, Barabanki, Ghazipur, Gorakhpur, Agra, Kanpur and Varanasi.

Churches have been targeted by right-wing groups and the police alike using the convenient allegation of “conversions through force or fraud”. The media has seemingly become a willing partner with political elements who are leading the assault from the front.

Both the police and right-wing mobs have been disrupting worship services and harassing the worshippers. Videos have surfaced on social media, in which the police are seen blocking roads and discouraging people from attending worship services and asking them to go away. Right-wing mobs have beaten up pastors and misbehaved with people who come to church meetings and have indulged in vandalism. A large disinformation campaign is accompanying the targeting of the churches and the primary vehicles of it are the vernacular press, the electronic media as well as the social media.

Many pastors and Christians have also been arrested or detained on the pretext of investigation. Many of the arrests have been in the late evening or even after midnight and have been a source of harassment.

The documentation for the months of September and October 2018 also includes incidents of violence and targeted hate against Christians that have taken place in other states of India. The total number of incidents recorded for these two months stands at 71, with 44 incidents recorded from UP, 5 from Jharkhand, 4 from TN, 3 each from Bihar and Telangana, 2 each from Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh and West Bengal and one incident from Jammu and Kashmir, Assam and MP. A total of 195 incidents have been documented from January to October 2018.
