



**Australian Government**  
**Refugee Review Tribunal**

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# Country Advice

## India

India – IND39421 – Christians – Karnataka  
– Bangalore – Sangh Parivar

4 November 2011

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- 1. Please provide an update on the situation for Christians in the state of Karnataka since response number IND34452 dated 27 February 2009? Please include information about the situation in Bangalore in particular.**

Karnataka was the state in India with the highest number of attacks on Christians during 2009 and 2010,<sup>1</sup> and has continued to be a high volume of attacks against Christians during 2011.<sup>2</sup>

The situation of Christians in Karnataka has reportedly deteriorated since the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won government in that state in 2008, with a subsequent rise in violence by Hindu nationalists against Christians.<sup>3</sup> The BJP is the political wing of the Sangh Parivar, a collective of Hindu nationalist groups in India (information on the Sangh Parivar can be found in the response to Question 2). There is also information available indicating that the government does not acknowledge the level of violence against Christians,<sup>4</sup> and that the security forces and lower judicial system are involved in this mistreatment.<sup>5</sup> Reports were located referring to mistreatment of Christians in Karnataka during 2011 by Hindus and members of the security forces.<sup>6</sup> Reports were also located which refer to mistreatment of Christians in Bangalore, the capital of Karnataka, during 2010 and 2011 by Hindus, Muslims and members of the security forces.<sup>7</sup>

### Treatment of Christians in Karnataka

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<sup>1</sup> Howell, R. 2010, 'Religion, Politics and Violence: A Report of the Hostility and Intimidation faced by Christians in India in 2010', International Institute for Religious Freedom website, source: Evangelical Fellowship of India, 22 December, pp. 1-6; Arora, V. 2009, 'Christians in India faced three attacks per week in 2009', *Compass Direct*, 31 December; All India Christian Council 2011, *2010 Annual Report: A report on activities and accomplishments of the All India Christian Council in 2010*, March 15, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Carvalho, N. 2011, 'Karnataka, police force closure of two Pentecostal churches', *AsiaNews.it*, 3 October; Carvalho, N. 2011, 'Karnataka boys beaten and arrested for having converted to Christianity', *AsiaNews.it*, 9 September.

<sup>3</sup> Carvalho, N. 2011, 'Karnataka boys beaten and arrested for having converted to Christianity', *AsiaNews.it*, 9 September; Arora, V. 2009, 'Christians in India faced three attacks per week in 2009', *Compass Direct*, 31 December.

<sup>4</sup> Arora, V. 2010, 'Christian in India Suffers Miscarriage in Hindu Extremist Attack', *Compass Direct*, 13 October; 'Christians Face 1,000 Attacks in 500 Days in Karnataka, India' 2010, *Compass Direct*, 22 March.

<sup>5</sup> 'Christians Face 1,000 Attacks in 500 Days in Karnataka, India' 2010, *Compass Direct*, 22 March.

<sup>6</sup> Carvalho, N. 2011, 'Karnataka, police force closure of two Pentecostal churches', *AsiaNews.it*, 3 October; Sailo, M. 2011, 'Recent incidents of persecution', *Compass Direct*, 4 October; 'Police interfere in activities of Protestant churches' 2011, *Deccan Herald*, 28 August.

<sup>7</sup> Carvalho, N. 2011, 'Karnataka, police force closure of two Pentecostal churches', *AsiaNews.it*, 3 October; 'Christian, visiting lepers beaten, jailed in India' 2011, *Compass Direct*, 20 June; 'Christians Attacked in India's Karnataka State' 2010, *BosNewsLife*, 20 December <http://www.bosnewslife.com/14774-christians-attacked-in-indias-karnataka-state> – Accessed 28 October 2011; Sailo, M. & Wadia, B. 2010, 'India briefs: Recent incidents of persecution', *Compass Direct*, 29 October.

A number of sources have been located which indicate that the number of incidents against Christians in Karnataka has been on the rise since the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) took government in that state in 2008.<sup>8</sup> Prior to their electoral victory that year, the BJP had ruled for 20 months in coalition with a local party, the Janata Dal-Secular.<sup>9</sup> An October 2011 report from the Catholic website *AsiaNews.it* refers to the BJP as an “ultra-nationalist party that supports groups and movements of Hindu extremists belonging to the Sangh Parivar”.<sup>10</sup> Two 2010 reports from *Compass Direct*<sup>11</sup> refer to the BJP’s 2008 electoral victory in Karnataka having “emboldened” Hindu extremists in that state,<sup>12</sup> while a *Hindustan Times* report from July 2009 indicated that “religious groups loosely affiliated to the Sangh Parivar” had committed “sporadic violence” following the BJP victory.<sup>13</sup> According to an article from *AsiaNews.it*, published on 9 September 2011, Sajan K. George, president of the Global Council of Christians (GCIC), alleged that since the BJP had come to power in Karnataka “freedom of worship for the Christian community is under threat, even in private homes”, and referred to the actions of “fundamentalist forces, who systematically stop prayer services and beat pastors and faithful.” George also accused the police of being “increasingly available and hasty in arresting and imprisoning Christians”.<sup>14</sup>

Christians in Karnataka have continued to be subject to a high volume of attacks during 2011. In an article published on 3 October 2011, *AsiaNews.it* reported on the closure of two Pentecostal churches in Hassan district and Bangalore and stated that “[w]ith these latest episodes, the number of anti-Christian attacks in Karnataka in 2011 alone now stand at 36.”<sup>15</sup> Another report from *AsiaNews.it*, published on 9 September 2011, refers to comments from Sajan K. George where he claimed that “Christians are “regularly” attacked in Karnataka by Hindu nationalists, while the authorities “turn a blind eye, because their political survival depends on these forces””.<sup>16</sup> A report from *Compass Direct*, published on 8 February 2011, also states that “Karnataka, which recorded the highest number of anti-Christian attacks among all Indian states in 2009 and 2010, is now seen as the hotbed of Christian persecution in the country.”<sup>17</sup>

An annual report published in December 2010 by the Evangelical Fellowship of India (EFI) lists 150 attacks on the Christian community in India during that year, spread across 18 states within that country.<sup>18</sup> There were 56 incidents listed for Karnataka, which was the state with

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<sup>8</sup> Carvalho, N. 2011, ‘Karnataka boys beaten and arrested for having converted to Christianity’, *AsiaNews.it*, 9 September; Arora, V. 2010, ‘Christian in India Suffers Miscarriage in Hindu Extremist Attack’, *Compass Direct*, 13 October; Arora, V. 2009, ‘Christians in India faced three attacks per week in 2009’, *Compass Direct*, 31 December.

<sup>9</sup> Arora, V. 2010, ‘Christian in India Suffers Miscarriage in Hindu Extremist Attack’, *Compass Direct*, 13 October.

<sup>10</sup> Carvalho, N. 2011, ‘Karnataka, police force closure of two Pentecostal churches’, *AsiaNews.it*, 3 October.

<sup>11</sup> *Compass Direct* describes itself on its website as “a news service dedicated to providing exclusive news, penetrating reports, moving interviews and insightful analyses of situations and events facing Christians persecuted for their faith”: ‘About Us’ (undated), *Compass Direct* <http://www.compassdirect.org/about/> – Accessed 6 July 2011.

<sup>12</sup> Arora, V. 2010, ‘Christian in India Suffers Miscarriage in Hindu Extremist Attack’, *Compass Direct*, 13 October; Arora, V. 2009, ‘Christians in India faced three attacks per week in 2009’, *Compass Direct*, 31 December.

<sup>13</sup> ‘Communal clash claims 3 lives in Mysore’ 2009, *Hindustan Times*, 2 July.

<sup>14</sup> Carvalho, N. 2011, ‘Karnataka boys beaten and arrested for having converted to Christianity’, *AsiaNews.it*, 9 September.

<sup>15</sup> Carvalho, N. 2011, ‘Karnataka, police force closure of two Pentecostal churches’, *AsiaNews.it*, 3 October.

<sup>16</sup> Carvalho, N. 2011, ‘Karnataka boys beaten and arrested for having converted to Christianity’, *AsiaNews.it*, 9 September.

<sup>17</sup> Arora, V. 2011, ‘Report in India Blames Attacks on Conversions to Christianity’, *Compass Direct*, 8 February.

<sup>18</sup> Howell, R. 2010, ‘Religion, Politics and Violence: A Report of the Hostility and Intimidation faced by Christians in India in 2010’, International Institute for Religious Freedom website, source: Evangelical Fellowship of India, 22 December.

the highest number of attacks on its Christian community that year.<sup>19</sup> This report also indicates that Karnataka also had more attacks on Christians than any other state during 2009.<sup>20</sup> According to a report from *Compass Direct*, published on 31 December 2009, the EFI had also published a report at the end of 2009 listing incidents against Christians in India during that year. This EFI report referred to 152 incidents taking place across India; of these, 48 took place in Karnataka.<sup>21</sup>

In its Annual Report for 2010, the All India Christian Council (AICC) stated that it had documented 71 attacks on Christians across 13 states that year.<sup>22</sup> The reason for the difference in numbers with the EFI report may possibly be found in the AICC's statement that they only included "independently verified attacks or those reported by a reliable source (e.g. an aicc [*sic*] leader or a mainstream newspaper)".<sup>23</sup> The report also states that "the highest number of incidents occurred in Karnataka". An accompanying bar graph indicates that there were 25 incidents in Karnataka.<sup>24</sup>

A number of reports from 2011 have been located which refer to Christians in Karnataka experiencing mistreatment from Hindus and security forces. The relevant information from a selection of these reports is provided below:

- An October 2011 report from *AsiaNews.it* states that on 25 September 2011 "Hindu extremists" had stormed into the Pentecostal Church End Times Full Harvest Church in Bagesafleshpur, Hassan district. The Hindus beat the church's pastor "and some ladies who tried to intervene, ripping Bibles from the hands of those present and throwing them on the ground." The Hindu attackers then called the police, who on arrival reportedly ordered the pastor to stop the prayer service and close the church. The police claimed that the church had "a lack of regular religious practice permits" and was also responsible for "forced conversions".<sup>25</sup>
- A report from *Compass Direct*, published on 4 October 2011, "suspected Hindu extremists" had "set fire to a pastor's motorbike and broke the windows and doors of his church building" in Mallikoppa, Chickmagalur on 18 September 2011. Villagers reported the incident to police, and it was reported that "an investigation was continuing at press time."<sup>26</sup>
- The same report also states that on 16 September 2011 "Hindu extremists" interrupted a baptism service being held at a canal in Athani, Belgaum, manhandled and abused the pastor and "accused him of forceful conversion". According to GCIC, the Hindus

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<sup>19</sup> Howell, R. 2010, 'Religion, Politics and Violence: A Report of the Hostility and Intimidation faced by Christians in India in 2010', International Institute for Religious Freedom website, source: Evangelical Fellowship of India, 22 December, pp. 1-6.

<sup>20</sup> Howell, R. 2010, 'Religion, Politics and Violence: A Report of the Hostility and Intimidation faced by Christians in India in 2010', International Institute for Religious Freedom website, source: Evangelical Fellowship of India, 22 December, p. 1.

<sup>21</sup> Arora, V. 2009, 'Christians in India faced three attacks per week in 2009', *Compass Direct*, 31 December.

<sup>22</sup> All India Christian Council 2011, *2010 Annual Report: A report on activities and accomplishments of the All India Christian Council in 2010*, March 15, p. 2.

<sup>23</sup> All India Christian Council 2011, *2010 Annual Report: A report on activities and accomplishments of the All India Christian Council in 2010*, March 15, p. 3.

<sup>24</sup> All India Christian Council 2011, *2010 Annual Report: A report on activities and accomplishments of the All India Christian Council in 2010*, March 15, p. 2.

<sup>25</sup> Carvalho, N. 2011, 'Karnataka, police force closure of two Pentecostal churches', *AsiaNews.it*, 3 October.

<sup>26</sup> Sailo, M. 2011, 'Recent incidents of persecution', *Compass Direct*, 4 October.

then called police, who took the pastor and seven others to the police station. They were later released without charge after the intervention of local Christian leaders.<sup>27</sup>

- *Compass Direct* also reported that police had arrested a pastor in Arakalgud, Hassan district, on 16 September 2011 “after Hindu extremists accused him of forceful conversion”. The GCIC reported that the pastor had been “conducting a prayer meeting in a Christian home” when the Hindus “surrounded the house shouting anti-Christian slogans.” The police then arrived and subsequently charged the pastor “with promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion”. He was later released on bail after the intervention of local Christian leaders.<sup>28</sup>
- According to a report from *AsiaNews.it*, published on 9 September 2011, two men from the village of Mank, in north Kanara district, had converted to Christianity while they were away working for a private company in Udupi. Following their return to Mank on 7 September 2011, activists from the “ultra-nationalist Hindu youth wing” Bajrang Dal became aware of their conversion and “started beating them and insulting them, telling them to return to Hinduism.” When the Christians refused, the activists “reported them to Honnavar police for forced conversions”, and they were subsequently arrested.<sup>29</sup>
- An October 2011 report from *Compass Direct* states that on 30 August 2011 Karnataka police arrested four Pentecostal Christians in Puttur, Dakshina Kannada district, “accusing them of trying to forcibly convert people from a Dalit colony in Nidle Boodujalu.” The GCIC reported that the Christians were beaten prior to their arrest. It was also stated that “Hindu extremist Praveen Boodujalu accused the Christians of door-to-door evangelizing, although such activity is legal in India.”<sup>30</sup>
- A report from the *Deccan Herald*, published on 28 August 2011, made reference to an allegation from the Protestant Missions Network that five Protestant pastors had been summoned to police stations during August 2011. It was claimed that the pastors “were told to obtain permission from the Deputy Commissioner to continue holding regular church gatherings or prayer meetings in churches or other places.” The report also stated that police had denied permission for a planned gathering on 21 August 2011 to be held at a hotel by a church in Surathkal.<sup>31</sup>
- A July 2011 report from the Christian news agency *BosNewsLife* refers to police detaining two Christians on 28 June 2011 in Heggere village, Hubli city, after they had been attacked by “Hindu extremists allegedly from the Bajrang Dal group” while returning home from a prayer meeting. The Hindus had accused the Christians of “forceful conversion”, and after they were detained the police charged them with “hurting religious sentiments, violation of private property and unlawful coercion.”<sup>32</sup>
- The same *BosNewsLife* report makes reference to an incident on 21 June 2011 where police had detained four Christians in the Bagragola area of Virajpet town “after

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<sup>27</sup> Sailo, M. 2011, ‘Recent incidents of persecution’, *Compass Direct*, 4 October.

<sup>28</sup> Sailo, M. 2011, ‘Recent incidents of persecution’, *Compass Direct*, 4 October.

<sup>29</sup> Carvalho, N. 2011, ‘Karnataka boys beaten and arrested for having converted to Christianity’, *AsiaNews.it*, 9 September.

<sup>30</sup> Sailo, M. 2011, ‘Recent incidents of persecution’, *Compass Direct*, 4 October.

<sup>31</sup> ‘Police interfere in activities of Protestant churches’ 2011, *Deccan Herald*, 28 August.

<sup>32</sup> Digal, S. 2011, ‘Pastors Detained, Attacks In Southern India’, *BosNewsLife*, 25 July

<http://www.bosnewslife.com/17731-pastors-detained-attacks-in-southern-india> – Accessed 28 October 2011.

Hindu extremists accused them of forceful conversion.” They were then “allegedly held at the police station for about five hours without food and water”, and were later released on bail after the intervention of local Christian leaders.<sup>33</sup>

- According to a report from *Compass Direct*, published on 25 April 2011, on 22 April 2011 “Hindu extremists” disrupted a Good Friday service in Nandi Taverre village, Davengere district, and “falsely accused” the pastor of “forcible conversion”. The GCIC reported that the Hindus had “chased away most of the congregation except for the pastor and six other church members, who remained locked inside the building.” GCIC officials informed police of the attack, and officers were sent to release the Christians and take bring them to the station for questioning. The pastor was subsequently freed “after he signed a statement to refrain from leading worship services in the village.”<sup>34</sup>
- The same report states that on 11 April 2011 Karnataka State police had detained and fined a pastor in Ombathuguligrama, Kolar district, “after Hindu nationalists belonging to the Bajrang Dal made false complaints about forcible conversion activities at a three-day prayer service.” Following the completion of the first day of this service, “officials from the Bangarapete police station” had detained the pastor and two guest speakers for three hours of interrogation after Hindus had “falsely complained of forcible conversion”. The three Christians were released “after police forced them to state in writing that they would conduct no further prayer meetings and imposed a fine of 4,000 rupees (US\$88) on them.”<sup>35</sup>
- *Compass Direct* also reported that on 6 April 2011 “Hindu extremists” had burned a coconut grove, fruit orchards and a field belonging to a pastor in Uttara Kannada. The pastor had previously been threatened with harm “if he continued to conduct worship meetings in his home.” The GCIC reported that police had “advised the pastor not to file a complaint or risk greater retaliation by the extremists”.<sup>36</sup>

### Quality of state protection in Karnataka

There is information available which indicates that the BJP government in Karnataka does not acknowledge that there is a high level of mistreatment of Christians in that state, and that the security forces and lower judicial system are also complicit in this mistreatment. A report from *Christian Today India*, published on 14 October 2011, makes reference to a meeting between the Governor of Karnataka and a Christian delegation mainly comprising “members of the Bharath Christian Okkutta (Indian Christian Association)”. It was reported that the delegation had complained of police in that state collaborating with Hindu nationalist organisations to mistreat Christians:

They pointed to the growing attacks on house churches and said often police worked hand in glove with the Sangh Parivar outfits. “Sometimes the police themselves without any rhyme or reason would suddenly scoop down upon them and disturb the entire worship, physically assaulting the participants, arresting the pastors, detaining

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<sup>33</sup> Digal, S. 2011, ‘Pastors Detained, Attacks In Southern India’, *BosNewsLife*, 25 July

<http://www.bosnewslife.com/17731-pastors-detained-attacks-in-southern-india> – Accessed 28 October 2011.

<sup>34</sup> ‘India Briefs: Recent Incidents of Persecution’ 2011, *Compass Direct*, 25 April.

<sup>35</sup> ‘India Briefs: Recent Incidents of Persecution’ 2011, *Compass Direct*, 25 April.

<sup>36</sup> ‘India Briefs: Recent Incidents of Persecution’ 2011, *Compass Direct*, 25 April.

them in the police stations for long hours and charge-sheeting them under various section. [sic]<sup>37</sup>

The report also indicated that the delegation sought the Governor's intervention "to check the nexus between the politicians, police and government officials in harassing innocent pastors and believers in that state."<sup>38</sup>

In a report from December 2010, *Compass Direct* stated that BJP leaders "deny" that persecution of minorities is a problem in Karnataka, and that they allege that complaints to this effect "are the result of a political conspiracy of opposition parties."<sup>39</sup> A *Compass Direct* report from March 2010 refers to an independent investigation into attacks on Christians in Karnataka that had been conducted by Justice Michael Saldanha, former judge of the Karnataka High Court, "on behalf of the People's Union for Civil Liberties' Dakshina Kannada district chapter, the Catholic Association of South Kanara (another name for Dakshina Kannada) and the Karnataka Chapter of Transparency International." This report indicated that Christians in that state had suffered "more than 1,000 attacks in 500 days." This statistic was denounced as "absolutely false" by the Karnataka Home Minister, V.S. Acharya, who countered with the claim that "Karnataka is the most peaceful state in India, and the people are law-abiding." He also expressed the view that claims of frequent violence against Christians in the state were "politically motivated".<sup>40</sup>

According to the same March 2010 *Compass Direct* article, Saldanha also reported that, in addition to these attacks, "numerous Christians also have faced false charges of fraudulent or forced conversions throughout Karnataka." Saldanha reported that he had visited "many police stations" where complaints of forced conversions had been lodged against Christians, and enquired of the police why they acted on "frivolous complaints". He claimed that "most of them told me that they had orders from above". This *Compass Direct* report also provides information in relation to the treatment in detention of Christians accused in this manner:

In his [Saldanha's] report, he notes that Christians "are dragged to the police station under false allegations, immediately locked up, beaten up and denied bail by the lower judiciary, which functions as the loyal partner of the police department and refuses bail on the grounds that 'the police have objected.'"

The report says 468 Christian workers in rural areas had been targeted with such actions since September 2008.

"Numerous others have been threatened and beaten up," the report states. "The police are totally out of control, with the lower judiciary having abdicated its constitutional obligation of safeguarding the citizens' rights particularly from a tyrannical state machinery, while the state government proclaims that everything is peaceful."<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Malhotra, J. 2011, 'Karnataka: Concern raised over religious profiling, police-Sangh nexus', *Christian Today India*, 14 October <http://in.christiantoday.com/articles/karnataka-concern-raised-over-religious-profiling-police-sangh-nexus/6738.htm> – Accessed 2 November 2011.

<sup>38</sup> Malhotra, J. 2011, 'Karnataka: Concern raised over religious profiling, police-Sangh nexus', *Christian Today India*, 14 October <http://in.christiantoday.com/articles/karnataka-concern-raised-over-religious-profiling-police-sangh-nexus/6738.htm> – Accessed 2 November 2011.

<sup>39</sup> Arora, V. 2010, 'Christian in India Suffers Miscarriage in Hindu Extremist Attack', *Compass Direct*, 13 October.

<sup>40</sup> 'Christians Face 1,000 Attacks in 500 Days in Karnataka, India' 2010, *Compass Direct*, 22 March.

<sup>41</sup> 'Christians Face 1,000 Attacks in 500 Days in Karnataka, India' 2010, *Compass Direct*, 22 March.

It should also be noted that a report from *Compass Direct*, published on 31 August 2010, makes reference to an incident on 13 August 2010, in which police accompanied BJP members to a church in Birur, Chikmagalur district. The police reportedly did not intervene as the BJP members disrupted the service. The Global Council of Indian Christians (GCIC) reported that the church's pastor, along with ten other Christians, were taken to the police station and interrogated "for over four hours." It was also reported that, during the interrogation, "BJP extremists surrounded them and shouted false accusations of forcible conversion and other abusive statements at the terrified Christians." The Christians were later released after "GCIC intervention", with a warning "to refrain from conversion activities in the area."<sup>42</sup>

### Treatment of Christians in Bangalore

A number of reports from 2010 and 2011 have been located which refer to Christians in or near Bangalore, the capital of Karnataka, experiencing mistreatment primarily from Hindus, but also from Muslims and members of the security forces. The relevant information from a selection of these reports is listed below:

#### **2011**

- According to a report from *AsiaNews.it*, published on 3 October 2011, a pastor of a church was taken into custody on 25 September 2011 in the district of Bangalore because of "numerous complaints that accuse him of not having permission to carry out regular worship and of practicing forced conversions." It was alleged that during the pastor's interrogation by police he was threatened and "ordered to close the church or he would be arrested."<sup>43</sup>
- A report from *Compass Direct*, published on 20 June 2011, refers to a Catholic, "retired Indian Army Cpl. Henry Baptist Robey" and two Hindu lepers from Tamil Nadu state being "beaten by suspected Hindu extremists and arrested on charges of forcible conversion" on 12 June 2011. They and other leprosy patients had been celebrating Pentecost at Robey's house when a crowd gathered outside, accusing Robey of having brought the lepers there for conversion. Despite Robey's protestations to the contrary, police arrived and subsequently put Robey and the two aforementioned lepers under official arrest. They were released on bail two days later. It was alleged that the crowd that had gathered outside Robey's house consisted of men from "the Hindu extremist Jai Karnataka group, said to have close ties with the ruling Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)."<sup>44</sup>
- A report from *Compass Direct*, published on 7 June 2011, refers to the arrest of Christians on 5 June 2011 by Karnataka police "based on a false complaint by Hindu nationalists of forcible conversion in Doddamma Layout, Hulimavu village, Bangalore." Police had reportedly interrupted "the worship of an Indian Pentecostal Church home fellowship" and arrested the pastor, before later returning to arrest his wife, children and six other Christians. All were released the same day without charge.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> 'Recent incidents of persecution' 2010, *Compass Direct*, 31 August.

<sup>43</sup> Carvalho, N. 2011, 'Karnataka, police force closure of two Pentecostal churches', *AsiaNews.it*, 3 October.

<sup>44</sup> 'Christian, visiting lepers beaten, jailed in India' 2011, *Compass Direct*, 20 June.

<sup>45</sup> 'Recent incidents of persecution' 2011, *Compass Direct*, 7 June.

## 2010

- A report from *BosNewsLife*, published 20 December 2010, made reference to “a group of 40 Hindu militants” surrounding a church in Bangalore and “throwing stones and shouting anti-Christian slogans.”<sup>46</sup>
- According to a report from *Compass Direct*, published on 31 December 2010, “Hindu extremists” filed a complaint with “the Slum Board administrative committee in Kengeri, Bangalore” on 5 December 2010 and persuaded them to demolish “the Gypsy Prayer Church building”. The Global Council of Indian Christians reported that prior to this, “the extremists barged into the prayer hall and disrupted a service led by a pastor identified only as Rajesh.”<sup>47</sup>
- The same report refers to the arrest of a pastor on 2 December 2010 “after Hindu extremists beat him and accused him of forceful conversion in Udayanagar, near Bangalore.” The Global Council of Indian Christians reported that these “extremists” had accosted the pastor as he returned home from a prayer meeting, “accused him of forcefully converting Hindus to Christianity, beat him and dragged him to Mahadevapura police”, where they continued to beat him. The pastor was later “arrested under Section 295 of the Indian Penal Code for damaging a place of worship with intent to insult the religion of any class”. The judge was later released on bail.<sup>48</sup>
- The aforementioned EFI annual report for 2010 makes reference to an incident on 2 December 2010 that took place at “Hova Maru, near Bangalore”. It was reported that a group of “about 20 alleged Hindu extremists” had “threatened to rape a Christian convert woman” if she did not return to Hinduism.<sup>49</sup>
- According to a report from *Compass Direct*, published on 29 October 2010, a pastor was arrested by police on 26 October 2010 in Nelamangala, Bangalore “after Muslim radicals barged into a prayer meeting, accused him of forceful conversion, tore Bibles and damaged household items.” After being alerted by the Muslims, police charged the pastor with “deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage the religious feelings of others.” The pastor was later released on bail after the intervention of Christian leaders.<sup>50</sup>
- In an April 2010 report from *Compass Direct*, it was reported that on 12 April 2010 “Hindu extremists” had “stopped a prayer meeting and accused Christians of forceful conversion in Chandapur, near Bangalore.” Reference was made to an All India Christian Council report that the Hindus had beaten the Christians, “who sustained minor injuries.” It was also stated that “[p]olice refused to file a complaint by the Christians.”<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> ‘Christians Attacked in India’s Karnataka State’ 2010, *BosNewsLife*, 20 December

<http://www.bosnewslife.com/14774-christians-attacked-in-indias-karnataka-state> – Accessed 28 October 2011.

<sup>47</sup> Sailo, M. & Wadia, B. 2010, ‘Recent incidents of persecution’, *Compass Direct*, 31 December.

<sup>48</sup> Sailo, M. & Wadia, B. 2010, ‘Recent incidents of persecution’, *Compass Direct*, 31 December.

<sup>49</sup> Howell, R. 2010, ‘Religion, Politics and Violence: A Report of the Hostility and Intimidation faced by Christians in India in 2010’, International Institute for Religious Freedom website, source: Evangelical Fellowship of India, 22 December, p. 6.

<sup>50</sup> Sailo, M. & Wadia, B. 2010, ‘India briefs: Recent incidents of persecution’, *Compass Direct*, 29 October.

<sup>51</sup> ‘Recent incidents of persecution’ 2010, *Compass Direct*, 30 April.



- The same report also refers to “[a]bout 50 Hindu nationalists from the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh” attacking an Indian Pentecostal Church house meeting on 11 April 2010 “in Horalhalli, Kanakapur, on the outskirts of Bangalore.” Reference was made to an All India Christian Council report had interrupted a worship service being held by the church, “accused Pastor K. Subhash of forceful conversion, threatened to beat him and warned him against leading any future house meeting services.” The pastor was arrested by police and was subsequently released “after the station police inspector warned him not to conduct any future house church meetings while telling the extremists not to disturb the Christians.”<sup>52</sup>
- An article from *Compass Direct*, published on 1 March 2010, stated that on 8 February 2010 “Hindu extremists from the Rakshana Vedike, affiliated with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh” attacked a pastor and two Bible students in Bangalore. The Evangelical Fellowship of India reported that the three Christians were attacked while returning home “after visiting a sick Christian in the area”. The Hindus had “verbally insulted them and manhandled them, shoving them and threatening to do more harm if they continued Christian activity in the area.” The matter was reported to the police and the Christians “continued to conduct worship meetings in the area.”<sup>53</sup>

**2. Could you please give me information about the Hindu Sangh Parivar group: (a) who are they; (b) who do they target; (c) do they have the ability to trace people who relocate to another part of India to get away from them?**

The Sangh Parivar is the name for a collective of more than 30 groups that belong to the Hindu nationalist movement in India.<sup>54</sup> The most prominent group within this collective is the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS),<sup>55</sup> which has a significant presence across India.<sup>56</sup> The BJP, which is the main opposition party in India,<sup>57</sup> acts as the political wing of this collective.<sup>58</sup> The BJP also currently holds government in five Indian states.<sup>59</sup> The Sangh

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<sup>52</sup> ‘Recent incidents of persecution’ 2010, *Compass Direct*, 30 April.

<sup>53</sup> Sailo, M., Bhatia, S. & Wadia, B. 2010, ‘India Briefs: Recent Incidents of Persecution’, *Compass Direct*, 1 March.

<sup>54</sup> Christian Solidarity Worldwide 2011, *India: Communalism, anti-conversion and religious freedom*, June, pp. 8-9 – <http://docs-eu.livesiteadmin.com/46f162cb-fcac-4198-bfa3-9b94cfaa8668/csw-briefing-india-june-2011.pdf> – Accessed 1 November 2011; United States Commission on International Religious Freedom 2011, *United States Commission on International Religious Freedom Annual Report 2011*, May, p. 245; UK Home Office 2010, *Country of Origin Information Report: India*, 24 September, p. 168, Annex D.

<sup>55</sup> Ramachandran, S. 2011, ‘India’s forgotten fast’, *Asia Times*, 8 September; Christian Solidarity Worldwide 2011, *India: Communalism, anti-conversion and religious freedom*, June, pp. 8-9 – <http://docs-eu.livesiteadmin.com/46f162cb-fcac-4198-bfa3-9b94cfaa8668/csw-briefing-india-june-2011.pdf> – Accessed 1 November 2011; Arora, V. 2010, ‘Attacks in Punjab, India similar to Orissa mayhem, report says’, *Compass Direct*, 3 March.

<sup>56</sup> Christian Solidarity Worldwide 2011, *India: Communalism, anti-conversion and religious freedom*, June, p. 9 – <http://docs-eu.livesiteadmin.com/46f162cb-fcac-4198-bfa3-9b94cfaa8668/csw-briefing-india-june-2011.pdf> – Accessed 1 November 2011; ‘Basic FAQ on RSS’ 2008, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh website, 25 October [http://rssonnet.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=10&Itemid=27](http://rssonnet.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=10&Itemid=27) – Accessed 2 November 2011.

<sup>57</sup> ‘India: BJP ex-minister arrested over kickbacks’ 2011, *BBC News*, 15 October <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-15322445> – Accessed 2 November 2011; ‘Slow movers’ 2011, *The Economist*, 10 September <http://www.economist.com/node/21528662> – Accessed 2 November 2011.

<sup>58</sup> Christian Solidarity Worldwide 2011, *India: Communalism, anti-conversion and religious freedom*, June, p. 9 – <http://docs-eu.livesiteadmin.com/46f162cb-fcac-4198-bfa3-9b94cfaa8668/csw-briefing-india-june-2011.pdf> – Accessed 1 November 2011; Center for Human Rights and Global Justice/Human Rights Watch 2007, *Caste Discrimination Against Dalits or So-Called Untouchables in India*, February, p. 9.

<sup>59</sup> Kesari, V. 2011, ‘Congress gathers graft case info in BJP states’, *Asian Age*, 5 June <http://www.asianage.com/india/congress-gathers-graft-case-info-bjp-states-748> – Accessed 2 November 2011.

Parivar targets religious minorities in India.<sup>60</sup> Reports specifically refer to mistreatment of Christians by Sangh Parivar members.<sup>61</sup> No reports were located which specifically refer to the Sangh Parivar's ability to trace persons who relocate to another part of India.

### The Sangh Parivar

The UK Home Office, in its September 2010 *Country of Origin Information Report* for India, provides the following description of the Sangh Parivar which indicates that this is the collective name for a group of Hindu nationalist organisations:

#### **Sangh Parivar (Family of Associations)**

The Sangh Parivar is the collective name for the various loosely associated Hindu nationalist organisations. All embraced the concept of Hindutva ("Hindu-ness"), Hindu nationalism, and an ideal of Hindu supremacy in India, often called "saffron power". The Hindutva project was intended to redress supposed grievances deriving from the contamination of Hindu India by Islam and Christianity, two religions that refused to incorporate the Hindu caste structure.<sup>62</sup>

A June 2011 report from Christian Solidarity Worldwide provides the following information on the Sangh Parivar which indicates that the Sangh Parivar is a Hindu nationalist collective involved in violence targeting religious minorities:

...[The] Hindu nationalist movement...constitutes the largest threat to pluralism in India today. Violence and discrimination against religious minorities are most commonly fostered by affiliates of the extremist Hindu nationalist movement, espoused by groups known collectively as the Sangh Parivar. Its chief organ is the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), founded in 1925, which has a number of subsidiary and associated organisations. The Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) is the religious and cultural wing of the Sangh Parivar; it effectively operates as an agency for grassroots mobilisation and was heavily implicated in the 2008 anti-Christian violence in Orissa. The Bajrang Dal, the youth wing of the VHP, is often involved in violence against religious minorities. Other branches of the Sangh Parivar include the Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram (VKA), established in 1952 to counter Christian missionary influence among *adivasis*, and the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), which operates among students.<sup>63</sup>

The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), in its 2011 Annual Report, provides the following information in relation to the Sangh Parivar. This information indicates that organisations under the Sangh Parivar umbrella target non-Hindu religious minorities and aggressively promote a Hindu nationalist agenda:

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<sup>60</sup> Christian Solidarity Worldwide 2011, *India: Communalism, anti-conversion and religious freedom*, June, pp. 8-9 – <http://docs-eu.livesiteadmin.com/46f162cb-fcac-4198-bfa3-9b94cfaa8668/csw-briefing-india-june-2011.pdf> – Accessed 1 November 2011; Freedom House 2010, *Freedom in the World – India (2010)*, June; Center for Human Rights and Global Justice/Human Rights Watch 2007, *Caste Discrimination Against Dalits or So-Called Untouchables in India*, February, p. 9.

<sup>61</sup> Malhotra, J. 2011, 'Karnataka: Concern raised over religious profiling, police-Sangh nexus', *Christian Today India*, 14 October <http://in.christiantoday.com/articles/karnataka-concern-raised-over-religious-profiling-police-sangh-nexus/6738.htm> – Accessed 2 November 2011; Sailo, M. & Wadia, B. 2010, 'Recent incidents of persecution', *Compass Direct*, 31 December; Christian Solidarity Worldwide 2011, *India: Communalism, anti-conversion and religious freedom*, June, p. 32 – <http://docs-eu.livesiteadmin.com/46f162cb-fcac-4198-bfa3-9b94cfaa8668/csw-briefing-india-june-2011.pdf> – Accessed 1 November 2011.

<sup>62</sup> UK Home Office 2010, *Country of Origin Information Report: India*, 24 September, p. 168, Annex D.

<sup>63</sup> Christian Solidarity Worldwide 2011, *India: Communalism, anti-conversion and religious freedom*, June, pp. 8-9 – <http://docs-eu.livesiteadmin.com/46f162cb-fcac-4198-bfa3-9b94cfaa8668/csw-briefing-india-june-2011.pdf> – Accessed 1 November 2011.

Hindu nationalist organizations retain broad popular support in many communities in India. The activities of these groups, especially those with an extremist agenda or history of using violence against minorities, often negatively impact the status of religious freedom in the country. Many of these organizations exist under the banner of the Sangh Parivar, a family of over 30 organizations that includes the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), Bajrang Dal, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), and the BJP. Sangh Parivar entities aggressively press for governmental policies to promote a Hindu nationalist agenda, and adhere in varying degrees to an ideology of *Hindutva*, which holds non-Hindus as foreign to India. It appears that Indian states that have or are contemplating Freedom of Religion Acts and that are governed by Hindu nationalist political parties have higher incidents of violence and harassment against religious minorities.<sup>64</sup>

The BJP, the ruling party in Karnataka, is one of the organisations affiliated to the Sangh Parivar.<sup>65</sup> In its aforementioned June 2011 report, Christian Solidarity Worldwide provides the following information indicating that the BJP is the political wing of the Sangh Parivar:

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is the principal political wing of the Sangh Parivar. It performed poorly in the general election of May 2009, but continues to hold power singly in Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, and Madhya Pradesh, and to form part of coalition governments in Bihar, Jharkhand, Nagaland, Punjab and Uttarakhand.<sup>66</sup>

One of the organisations within the Sangh Parivar, the “militant”<sup>67</sup> Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), is reported to be the most significant of the Hindu nationalist organisations within this collective. A report from the *Asia Times*, published on 8 September 2011, refers to the RSS as “the ideological fount of the Hindu right-wing Sangh Parivar”.<sup>68</sup> A *Compass Direct* article from March 2010 refers to the Sangh Parivar as “the family of outfits under the umbrella of India’s chief Hindu nationalist organization, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)”.<sup>69</sup> The US Department of State, in its *International Religious Freedom Report* for the period July to December 2010, stated that the Sangh Parivar “publicly claimed to respect and tolerate other religious groups”. However, particular reference is made to the opposition of the RSS to “coerced conversions from Hinduism”. It was also reported that the RSS had expressed the view “that all citizens, regardless of their religious affiliation, should adhere to Hindu cultural values, which they claimed were the country’s values.”<sup>70</sup>

The RSS is reported to be the parent body of the BJP. The *Political Handbook of the World* also refers to the RSS as “a secretive paramilitary Hindu communal group that is generally regarded as the BJP’s parent organization.”<sup>71</sup> A December 2010 *Compass Direct* report also

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<sup>64</sup> United States Commission on International Religious Freedom 2011, *United States Commission on International Religious Freedom Annual Report 2011*, May, p. 245.

<sup>65</sup> Freedom House 2010, *Freedom in the World – India (2010)*, June; Center for Human Rights and Global Justice/Human Rights Watch 2007, *Caste Discrimination Against Dalits or So-Called Untouchables in India*, February, p. 9.

<sup>66</sup> Christian Solidarity Worldwide 2011, *India: Communalism, anti-conversion and religious freedom*, June, p. 9 – <http://docs-eu.livesiteadmin.com/46f162cb-fcac-4198-bfa3-9b94cfaa8668/csw-briefing-india-june-2011.pdf> – Accessed 1 November 2011.

<sup>67</sup> Devraj, R. 2009, ‘Hindu fundamentalism in retreat’, *Inter Press Service*, 18 June.

<sup>68</sup> Ramachandran, S. 2011, ‘India’s forgotten fast’, *Asia Times*, 8 September.

<sup>69</sup> Arora, V. 2010, ‘Attacks in Punjab, India similar to Orissa mayhem, report says’, *Compass Direct*, 3 March.

<sup>70</sup> US Department of State 2011, *International Religious Freedom Report for 2010 (July-December)*, 13 September, Section 2.

<sup>71</sup> Banks, A.S., Muller, T.C., Overstreet, W.R. & Isacoff, J.F. (eds) 2010, *Political Handbook of the World Online Edition: India*, CQ Press, Washington, p. 645.

states that the RSS is “the BJP’s ideological mentor”.<sup>72</sup> It is also worth noting that a report from *Compass Direct*, published on 4 February 2010, makes reference to Justice Michael Saldanha, a former judge of the Karnataka High Court, stating that “Karnataka has had a dominant presence of the Hindu extremist Sangh Parivar since 1950”, although he also stated that Sangh Parivar’s cadres “obtained free rein only after the BJP’s electoral victory”. Saldanha was also quoted as stating that “[t]he real headquarters of the Sangh Parivar is not in Maharashtra (official headquarters of the Hindu extremist Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, or RSS, in Nagpur), it’s in Karnataka”.<sup>73</sup>

A January 2009 report from *Human Rights Without Frontiers International* provides the following list of organisations that come under the umbrella of the Sangh Parivar, with indications of membership numbers for some of these organisations:

The group includes the following organizations with their memberships:

- Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), *Indian People's Party* (17[million])
- Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), *National Volunteer Association* (2.5m)
- Vishwa Hindu Parishad, *World Hindu Council* (2.8m)
- Durga Vahini,
- Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad, *All India Students' Forum* (1.8m)
- Janata Yuva Morcha (1.8m)
- Bajrang Dal, *Army of Hanuman*
- Dharma Sena,
- Bharatiya Kisan Sangh, *Indian Farmers' Association* (8m)
- Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh, *Indian Labour Association* (4.5m)
- Adivasi Kalyan Kendra (2.3m)
- Fishermen's Co-op Societies (2.2m)
- Vivekananda Medical Mission (1.7m)
- Adhyapak Parishad (1.8m)
- Vivekananda Kendra (1.8m)
- Bharatiya Vikas Parishad (1.8m)
- Deen Dayal Shodh Sansthan (1.7m)
- Rashtriya Sevika Samiti, *National Volunteer Association for Women* (1.8m)
- Shikha Bharati (2.1m)
- Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh, *Hindu Volunteer Association – overseas wing*
- Swadeshi Jagaran Manch, *Nativist Awakening Front*
- Saraswati Shishu Mandir, *Nursery*
- Vidya Bharati, *Educational Institutes*
- Vanavasi Kalyan Ashram, *Organisation for the improvement of tribals*
- Vijnana Bharati, *Indian Science Movement*
- Samkalp,
- Sanskar Bharati, *Organisation of artists*
- Sahkar Bharati, *Organisation of co-operatives*
- Adhivakta Parishad, *Lawyers' association*
- Vit Salahkar Parishad, *Financial consultants' association*
- Seva Bharati, *Organisation for service of the needy*, founded in 1984.
- Bharatiya Vichara Kendra<sup>74</sup>

### Groups targeted by the Sangh Parivar

<sup>72</sup> ‘India’s Christians suffer spike in assaults in past decade’ 2010, *Compass Direct*, 30 December.

<sup>73</sup> ‘Attacks on Christians in Karnataka Frequent, Furious’ 2010, *Compass Direct*, 4 February.

<sup>74</sup> ‘India – Hindu Extremist Movements’ 2009, Human Rights Without Frontiers International website.

Members of religious minorities in India suffer mistreatment from members of the Sangh Parivar. Christian Solidarity Worldwide, in its June 2011 report, states that “violence and discrimination against religious minorities are most commonly fostered” by groups under the Sangh Parivar umbrella.<sup>75</sup> In its 2010 *Freedom in the World* annual report for India, published in June 2010, Freedom House stated that members of the Sangh Parivar “promote antiminority views”.<sup>76</sup> In a report from the Center for Human Rights and Global Justice and Human Rights Watch, published in February 2007, the Sangh Parivar is described as being responsible for “anti-Christian” and “anti-Muslim” propaganda. It is also stated that the organisations under its banner, particularly the RSS, Vishwa Hindu Parishad (World Hindu Council, VHP) and the VHP’s “militant youth wing”, the Bajrang Dal, “bear collective responsibility for widespread violence against Muslims and Christians in India”. They are also reported to have “disseminated propaganda targeting both Dalits and religious minorities.”<sup>77</sup>

Recent reports have been located which refer to Sangh Parivar members mistreating Christians. The relevant information from these reports is provided in the list below:

- A report from *Christian Today India*, published on 14 October 2011, makes reference to an attack that month in Coorg, Karnataka state, on “a group of six Christians who were praying at a believer’s house”.<sup>78</sup>
- A report from *Compass Direct*, published on 31 December 2010, refers to a funeral for a deceased Christian held in Madhya Pradesh in early September 2010. It was reported that “Hindu extremists from the Sangh Parivar forced local newspapers to publish biased reports about the funeral”. It was also stated that the Sangh Parivar members had “complained to the inspector general of police that the pastor had forcibly converted the parents of the deceased”. In addition, the pastor was reportedly threatened.<sup>79</sup>
- In its June 2011 report, Christian Solidarity Worldwide makes reference to an incident on 1 May 2010 in Mysore district, Karnataka state, where “around 30 Hindu extremists from Sangh Parivar physically assaulted a Christian youth group.” The Hindus then forced the Christians to go to a police station, where a case was filed against them and four were imprisoned. They were released on bail two days later following the intervention of local Christian leaders.<sup>80</sup>
- A *Compass Direct* report, published in March 2010, refers to information gathered by the AICC in relation to attacks against Christians in the town of Batala in Gurdaspur district, Punjab state in February 2010. It was stated that “supporters of the Hindu extremist Sangh Parivar” had burned a church belonging to the Church of North India

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<sup>75</sup> Christian Solidarity Worldwide 2011, *India: Communalism, anti-conversion and religious freedom*, June, pp. 8-9 – <http://docs-eu.livesiteadmin.com/46f162cb-fcac-4198-bfa3-9b94cfaa8668/csw-briefing-india-june-2011.pdf> – Accessed 1 November 2011.

<sup>76</sup> Freedom House 2010, *Freedom in the World – India (2010)*, June.

<sup>77</sup> Center for Human Rights and Global Justice/Human Rights Watch 2007, *Caste Discrimination Against Dalits or So-Called Untouchables in India*, February, p. 9.

<sup>78</sup> Malhotra, J. 2011, ‘Karnataka: Concern raised over religious profiling, police-Sangh nexus’, *Christian Today India*, 14 October <http://in.christiantoday.com/articles/karnataka-concern-raised-over-religious-profiling-police-sangh-nexus/6738.htm> – Accessed 2 November 2011.

<sup>79</sup> Sailo, M. & Wadia, B. 2010, ‘Recent incidents of persecution’, *Compass Direct*, 31 December.

<sup>80</sup> Christian Solidarity Worldwide 2011, *India: Communalism, anti-conversion and religious freedom*, June, p. 32 – <http://docs-eu.livesiteadmin.com/46f162cb-fcac-4198-bfa3-9b94cfaa8668/csw-briefing-india-june-2011.pdf> – Accessed 1 November 2011.

(CNI) denomination. The Sangh Parivar supporters also reportedly tried to destroy “a nearby Salvation Army church” and attacked its pastor, “leaving him seriously injured.”<sup>81</sup>

- A February 2011 article from the *Deccan Herald* makes reference to the case of a pastor who claimed that, in February 2010, “a few men from the Sangh Parivar stopped him from praying and beat him up.”<sup>82</sup>
- A report from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), published on 2 September 2010, provides the following information which indicates that the Sangh Parivar played a significant role in orchestrating anti-Christian communal violence in Orissa state in 2007 and 2008:

Anti-Christian communal violence in Kandhamal district of Orissa state in 2007 and 2008, rather than being spontaneous, was reportedly orchestrated by Hindu extremist groups under the banner of the Sangh Parivar, including the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), and with the support of the Kui Samaj, a Kandha (or Kondh) Adivasi tribal group. Hindu nationalism was the main motivation between the violence, but disagreement between (Hindu) Kandha Adivasis and (Christian) Pana Dalits over access to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe status was instrumentalised by Hindu extremists to justify it (Tehelka, 19 January 2008; CSW, May 2010, p.8).<sup>83</sup>

Reports were also located which refer to members of individual groups within the Sangh Parivar engaging in mistreatment of Christians. These reports refer to mistreatment of this nature being committed by members of affiliated groups such as the RSS,<sup>84</sup> the VHP,<sup>85</sup> the Bajrang Dal,<sup>86</sup> and the BJP.<sup>87</sup>

#### Ability of the Sangh Parivar to trace relocated persons

No reports were located which make specific reference to the Sangh Parivar’s ability to trace persons who might relocate to another part of India. However, in its June 2011 report, Christian Solidarity Worldwide does provide the following information in relation to the “reach of the Hindu nationalist movement”:

The reach of the Hindu nationalist movement is considerable: in 2010, the RSS claimed to have held 39,823 daily meetings in over 27,000 locations during the

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<sup>81</sup> Arora, V. 2010, ‘Attacks in Punjab, India similar to Orissa mayhem, report says’, *Compass Direct*, 3 March.

<sup>82</sup> ‘Victims recall horrors of attack’ 2011, *Deccan Herald*, 21 February  
<http://www.deccanherald.com/content/139871/victims-recall-horrors-attack.html> – Accessed 1 November 2011.

<sup>83</sup> Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre 2010, *India: National and state authorities failing to protect IDPs*, 2 September, p. 35.

<sup>84</sup> Carvalho, N. 2011, ‘Andhra Pradesh, eight Pentecostal Christians arrested for praying in the street’, *AsiaNews.it*, 29 September; Carvalho, N. 2011, ‘Andhra Pradesh: five Christians arrested on false charges, their attackers go free’, *AsiaNews.it*, 8 August; ‘India Briefs: Recent Incidents of Persecution’ 2011, *Compass Direct*, 25 April.

<sup>85</sup> Sailo, M. & Wadia, B. 2010, ‘India briefs: Recent incidents of persecution’, *Compass Direct*, 1 December; Sailo, M. & Bhatia, S. 2009, ‘India briefs: Recent incidents of persecution’, *Compass Direct*, 29 September.

Sailo, M. 2009, ‘India Briefs: Recent Incidents of Persecution’, *Compass Direct*, 31 March.

<sup>86</sup> Sailo, M. 2011, ‘India briefs: Recent incidents of persecution’, *Compass Direct*, 20 September; Carvalho, N. 2011, ‘Karnataka boys beaten and arrested for having converted to Christianity’, *AsiaNews.it*, 9 September; Carvalho, N. 2011, ‘Hindu radicals ransack churches, beat up clergymen in Karnataka’, *AsiaNews.it*, 22 August.

<sup>87</sup> Carvalho, N. 2011, ‘Tamil Nadu theft, destruction, beatings and arrests of Protestant Christians’, *AsiaNews.it*, 31 August; ‘Uttar Pradesh: 5 Pentecostal pastors and faithful arrested on false charges’ 2011, *AsiaNews.it*, 16 July; ‘Recent incidents of persecution’ 2010, *Compass Direct*, 31 August.

previous year. It operates through a large network of *pracharaks*, unmarried males who promote the Hindu nationalist agenda at a local level.<sup>88</sup>

The RSS currently provides the following information on its website with regard to its membership across India, although it is indicated that this information was last updated on 25 October 2008. It should be noted that ‘Bharat’ is an alternative name for India.<sup>89</sup>

**How many members and how many RSS shakhas are there in Bharat?**

There are Shakhas in approximately 50,000 villages and towns of Bharat. As RSS does not keep a formal membership or register of Swayamsevaks, the exact number of Swayamsevaks is difficult to count.<sup>90</sup>

The RSS website defines a ‘Shakha’ as “[a] daily gathering of all Swayamsevaks in a predefined area at a common meeting place for one hour”.<sup>91</sup> A May 2007 research paper by the International Affairs and Defence Section of the UK Parliament House of Commons Library refers to the RSS having “over 4.5 million members”.<sup>92</sup> It was reported by *The Economist* in 2005 that the RSS had seven to eight million activists, of which four million attended the daily Shakhas. The RSS also reportedly ran “22,000 schools, has 45,000 units working in slums and is active in 11,000 of the villages where India's tribal minorities live.”<sup>93</sup>

It should be noted that the BJP is the main opposition party in India.<sup>94</sup> There are also BJP governments in the states of Gujarat, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh.<sup>95</sup>

### 3. Deleted.

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<sup>88</sup> Christian Solidarity Worldwide 2011, *India: Communalism, anti-conversion and religious freedom*, June, p. 9 – <http://docs-eu.livesiteadmin.com/46f162cb-fcac-4198-bfa3-9b94cfaa8668/csw-briefing-india-june-2011.pdf> – Accessed 1 November 2011.

<sup>89</sup> Rahman, T. 2006, ‘Urdu as an Islamic language’, *Annual of Urdu Studies*, vol. 21, p. 111.

<sup>90</sup> ‘Basic FAQ on RSS’ 2008, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh website, 25 October [http://rssonnet.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=10&Itemid=27](http://rssonnet.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=10&Itemid=27) – Accessed 2 November 2011.

<sup>91</sup> ‘Basic FAQ on RSS’ 2008, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh website, 25 October [http://rssonnet.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=10&Itemid=27](http://rssonnet.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=10&Itemid=27) – Accessed 2 November 2011.

<sup>92</sup> Harrison, T., Jones, S., Lunn, J., Smith, B., Taylor, C., & Youngs, T. 2007, ‘A political introduction to India’, UK Parliament website, International Affairs and Defence Section – House of Commons Library, 2 May, p. 49.

<sup>93</sup> ‘The struggle for the Hindu soul’ 2005, *The Economist*, 4 August <http://www.economist.com/node/4254416> – Accessed 27 June 2011.

<sup>94</sup> ‘India: BJP ex-minister arrested over kickbacks’ 2011, *BBC News*, 15 October <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-15322445> – Accessed 2 November 2011; ‘Slow movers’ 2011, *The Economist*, 10 September <http://www.economist.com/node/21528662> – Accessed 2 November 2011.

<sup>95</sup> Kesari, V. 2011, ‘Congress gathers graft case info in BJP states’, *Asian Age*, 5 June <http://www.asianage.com/india/congress-gathers-graft-case-info-bjp-states-748> – Accessed 2 November 2011.

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