

# ORISSA BURNING

THE SINISTER ANTI-CHRISTIAN POGROM IN ORISSA. WHAT THE MAINSTREAM MEDIA ISN'T TELLING YOU ABOUT ONGOING TORTURE AND KILLING OF CHRISTIANS THERE.

**Monday, September 1, 2008**

**Fresh Violence: Atleast 4 More Churches Burnt**

**At Least Four More Churches Burnt as Violence Continues to Spread in Orissa**



Christians gather inside a shelter at Raikia village in Orissa August 31, 2008.

## **Situation Under Whose Control?**

Despite all "situation under control" assurances, violence continues to spread in Orissa. [Reuters](#) reports:

Hindu mobs have burnt at least four more churches in Orissa, officials said on Monday, as religious violence appeared to spread.

Thousands of people, mostly Christians, have taken shelter in makeshift camps, where Hindu mobs went on the rampage last week after a Hindu leader was killed.

Last week officials said the violence appeared to be abating after Hindu and

Christian leaders called for calm, but over the weekend it spread to new parts of the state.

Mobs set fire to four churches in the districts of Koraput and Rayagada, Orissa's Director General of Police, Gopal Chandra Nanda, told Reuters.

Two churches and several houses were also burnt in the Kandhamal district, the epicentre of the tension, despite a curfew imposed in most of its towns, one of the state's leading newspapers, The Samaja, reported on Monday.

POSTED BY ORISSA BURNING AT 3:07 PM 0 COMMENTS LINKS TO THIS POST  

LABELS: NEWS AND ANALYSIS, PICTURES

## FIACONA Protests at the UN HQ in New York

### FIACONA Stages Protest Outside United Nations Headquarters



Members of the Federation of Indian American Christian Organisations of North America stage a protest outside the United Nations headquarters.

Rediff.com reports:

The Federation of Indian American Christian Organisations of North America on Friday staged a protest outside the United Nations headquarters and urged Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to look into the 'naked violation' of human rights of Christians in Orissa.

### Christian schools shut to protest Orissa violence

Holding placards with slogans that read 'Ban VHP,' 'Stop Burning Christians alive in Orissa,' and 'Deploy Army to Orissa to Christians,' the FIACONA activists staged a three-hour protest outside the UN.

"By conducting a prayer vigil and writing to Ban, we seek to highlight the issue in the international arena. If India seeks to become a major player in the global arena, since it is a signatory to the human rights declaration, it should respect these sensibilities," Bernard Malik, chief of FIACONA, told rediff.com.

### **Orissa violence: Centre favours CBI probe**

"UN is not a foreign body and India is very much part of it. Whether Mr Ban reads the letter or makes a statement on it not, it is not going to resurrect the dead Christians. India needs to own up to its responsibility in protecting its own citizens," he said.

"By giving the memorandum to Mr Ban, we would like to call the attention of the world body to the plight of Christians in India. Because India is constitutionally a secular state, we would like to see all communities, irrespective of their religions, to live in peace and harmony. India should uphold its constitutions and so this memorandum," the Reverend Wilson, of Grace International Assembly, and also a coordinator for Indian American Christians, told rediff.com.

### **Rights groups urge US, EU to end Orissa violence**

"We are concerned about the atrocities committed on the minorities in our mother land. We condemn every murder, including that of Swami Saraswati, whose murder was perpetrated by Communist Maoists. The Vishwa Hindu Parishad blamed the Christians for the killing, using it as a ruse to attack and kill Christians, who also are peaceful citizens of India," the Reverend Wilson said.

In the memorandum to Ban, FIACONA urged him to look into the 'crumbling of the very basis of the civilised society and the absolute degradation of the morals and values of co-existence and cooperation. All the Christians in India and the world look up to you for your valuable support to end the macabre and horrendous carnage of the Christians in Orissa'.

### **Kandhamal returns to normalcy after week-long violence**

Abraham George, a senior UN Official and general secretary of the Indian National Overseas Congress, said that the latest news reports suggest that over 30 people have been killed, schools, orphanages and churches vandalised, nuns raped and a woman set ablaze.

"What we are witnessing here is a complete failure of the government machinery headed by the Biju Janata Dal-Bharatiya Janata Party combine, in protecting the

innocent citizens of the state, where extremists are wreaking havoc by killing people and challenging the pluralistic character of the nation," Abraham said.

### **Woman burnt, 12 churches razed during Orissa bandh**

The INOC has also released a statement condemning the killings.

Malik blamed the Orissa government for its inaction in protecting Swamiji even after he received death threats.

"Then, after the murder, the government should have been proactive in preventing riots and protecting Christians. The VHP is also to be blamed for the negative propaganda about the myth of conversion and Central government for its failure to intervene in a timely manner," he said.

### **Christian families still still hiding in the jungles, says CRPF**

Malik said there have been as many as 123 incidents in Orissa in the last two weeks and 143 incidents of violence against Christians in Karnataka.

"Being a forever peace-loving and religious tolerant community, Christians are remaining mute spectators to these intensely inhuman and barbaric acts," Malik said.

### **Orissa: VHP men damage churches, prayer hall**

In response to another question, Malik said that it is matter of changing the mindset of common masses that gets exploited by the ruling party.

"Indians till today are not driven by principles but by political affiliations. Therefore, the principle of plural India is not an objective principle that has been consistently supported. Indians have a short memory in learning lessons," he said.

POSTED BY ORISSA BURNING AT 2:01 PM 0 COMMENTS [LINKS TO THIS POST](#)  

LABELS: [NEWS AND ANALYSIS](#), [PICTURES](#)

## **Names of 26 People Killed in the Violence**

### **A Circulating List of the 26 People Killed in the Orissa Violence**

Church groups have been able to give the names of atleast 26 people who were killed in the week-long violence in Orissa, in which Hindu fanatics also burned down or destroyed some 4,000 Christian homes, several churches and convents

A [circulated](#) list gives the names of the 26 deceased as follows:

### **Names of the Deceased**

1. Dasarath Pradhan (Tiangia)
2. Kamolini Nayak (Mondakia)
3. Pastor Samuel Nayak (Bakingia)
4. Romesh Digal (Bakingia)
5. Jacob Digal (Petapanga)
6. Sureshon Nayak
7. Abhimonyu Nayak
8. Bikram Nayak (Tiangia)
9. Goyadhar Digal, Kasinipadar
10. Dibyasundar Digal
11. Parakhita Nayak(Tiangia)
12. Trinath Digal (Tiangia)
13. Joseph Digal
14. Gopan Nayak (Mondakia)
15. Khogeswar Pradhan
16. Ajuba Nayak, Barakhama
17. Rosananda Proadhan
18. Jaka Nayak Budamaha
19. Akhar Digal Totomaha
20. Sidheswar Digal, Sulisoru
21. Praful Nayak, Barakhama
22. Mary Digal, Barakhama
23. Daniel Mallick (Pastor) Bankingia
24. Michael Nayak, Bankingia
25. Gulu, Kanbagiri
26. Bidyadhara Digal, Kattargarh

### **Churches Attacked**

1. Petapanga Church
2. Catholic Church, Mondakia
3. Catholic Church, Ratingia
4. Believers church, Ratingia
5. Diocese Church, Ratingia
6. Believers Church, Gimangia
7. Diocese Church, Gimangia
8. Mdahukia Church
9. Catholic Church, Raikia
10. Catholic Church, Badimunda
11. Pentocastal Church, Badimunda
12. Catholic Church, Breka
13. Pentocastal Church, Breka

14. Catholic Church, Pobingia
15. Catholic Church, Srasanaanda
16. Catholic Church, Phulbani
17. Catholic Church, Phulbani
18. Catholic Church, Balliguda
19. Catholic Church, Sankrakhhol
20. R.C. Church, Kanjamedi
21. Diocese Church, Kanjamedi
22. Pentecostal Church, Kanjamedi
23. Pentecostal Church Jugapadar, Nuagam
24. Baptist Church, Tumudiband
25. Pentecostal Church, Tumudiband
26. Catholic Church, Padanpur
27. Church in Dhanpur
28. Catholic Church, Tiangia
29. Baptist Church, Tiangia
30. Catholic Church, Gabindapali
31. Catholic Church, Padua
32. Catholic Church, Duburi
33. Pentecostal Church, Tiangia
34. Seveth Advent Church Bakingia
35. Catholic Church Nilungia
36. Pentecostal Church Nilungia
37. Catholic Church Boipariguda
38. R.C. Bakingia
39. Penteconstal church, Bakingia
40. R.C. Kotimaha
41. Pentocostal church, Budamaha
42. Baptist Church, Sukananda
43. Pentaconstal church Adaskupa
44. R.C. Church, Adaskupa
45. Pentacostal Church, Rupagao
46. Sulesoru Church
47. Pengoberi village Church
48. Kambaguda, Church
49. Tengapadar village church
50. Prakash Prayer House, Raikia

### **3. Shops Destroyed in Raikia**

1. Biraj Nayak - Chicken Centre
2. Alok Nayak - Chicken Centre
3. Chiku Nayak
4. Rohit Nayak - Tea Stall
5. Simon Nayak - Computer
6. Kabula Nayak
7. Sudhir Nayak - Xerox
8. Junes Nayak - Computer

9. Jerbas Mondal - Grocery
10. Paburia shops

#### **4. Convents**

1. St. Joseph's Convent, Sankharkhole
2. St. Anne's Convent, Pobinga
3. Mt. Carmel Convent, Balliguda
4. St. Anne's Convent, Padangi

#### **5. Hostels**

1. Boy's Hostel, Padangi
2. Girl's Hostel, Padangi
3. Balliguda Convent
4. Boy's Hostel, Pobingia
5. Girl's Hostel, Pobingia

#### **6. Six Institutions Damaged**

1. Janvikas
2. Pastoral Center
3. Ajka, Raikia
4. Poly Shree, Paburia
5. Gramya Pragati, Balliguda
6. Karuna, Raikia

#### **7. Priests and Religious Attacked who are Seriously Injured**

1. Fr. Thomas Chellan
2. Fr. Bernard Digal
3. Fr. Edward, SVD
4. Fr. Simon Lakra, SVD
5. Sr. Meena HM
6. Fr. Xavier Tirkey

POSTED BY ORISSA BURNING AT 1:31 PM 0 COMMENTS [LINKS TO THIS POST](#)  

LABELS: [FIGURES AND STATISTICS](#), [NEWS AND ANALYSIS](#)

### **Maoists Warn of More Attacks; Christians Watchout!**

## **Maoists Warn Saffron Outfit of More Attacks**

### **Christians Watchout!**

**Claiming responsibility for the killing of VHP leader Swami Lakshmananda Saraswati in Orissa for which the Christian community in Orissa paid a heavy price, the Communist Party of India (Maoist) on Monday warned the saffron outfit of "more such punishments if it continued violence against religious minorities in the country".** PTI reports:

The CPI (Maoist) has decided to punish "anti-people, fanatical leaders like Saraswati" in the wake of "endless persecution" of religious minorities in the country, a party release said here.

The statement alleged that Saraswati was a "rabid anti-Christian ideologue and persecutor of innocent Christians and was responsible for the burning down of over 400 churches in Khandamal district alone".

It warned the saffron outfit of "more such punishments if it continued violence against religious minorities in the country".

"The Sangh Parivar leaders like Pravin Togadia have been trying to divert people's attention by uttering lies that it is not Maoists but Christian organisations that had carried out the attack on the VHP leader," the CPI (Maoist) said.

Appealing to secular and democratic forces to condemn the Sangh Parivar, it said "it is not SIMI that is to be outlawed but Hindu fanatical groups like VHP, Bajrang Dal, Shiv Sena, BJP, Hindu Munnani and so on."

Slamming the Congress leadership, the release said it was strange that it did not see any threat from "overtly communal, criminal acts of the VHP and the Sangh Parivar".

POSTED BY ORISSA BURNING AT 2:14 AM 0 COMMENTS [LINKS TO THIS POST](#)  

LABELS: [NEWS AND ANALYSIS](#)

**Sunday, August 31, 2008**

**First Things First: Let the Killings Stop**

**Christians Demand Immediate End to Violence**

**The Right to Life: First Among Human Rights**

Even as Orissa continues to burn and more and more innocent victims fall prey to acts of diabolic insanity, Indian officials and media seem more preoccupied with questions like '[Who Killed the Swami](#)', 'Is Conversions pitting Hindus Vs.



Christians', etc., rather than with bringing the ground situation under control.

This then was the primary and fundamental demand placed by the [Christian delegation which met Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh](#). The killings should stop with immediate effect.

Fr. Babu Joseph SVD, spokesman of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) on Reuters:

POSTED BY ORISSA BURNING AT 11:08 PM 0 COMMENTS LINKS TO THIS POST  

LABELS: [NEWS AND ANALYSIS](#), [VIDEO](#)

## Saved from the Fires: Fr. Edward Sequeira

### Fr. Edward Sequeira SVD Rescued from Burning Narrates the Trauma



Picture of Fr. Edward

Sequeira SVD

*Fr. Edward Sequeira SVD reached Hyderabad early on August 30th morning after an 8 hours gruelling journey by road from Sambalpur hospital where he was undergoing treatment after he was rescued from the burning inferno that took the life of 19 year Hindu girl Rajni Majhi. His lungs have been badly affected due to inhaling for more than two hours smoke polluted air. He has been taken to Mumbai where he will be close to his family and receive the urgent medical care he needs.*

*He [recounts](#) his traumatic story:*

"It all began around 13.00 hrs" he recalled. "I was having lunch at my single room presbytery that doubles as office, bedroom and store room. The doors were closed. I heard some one calling out, 'Father, Father.' Thinking that some one was there with some patients needing to be taken to hospital I opened the door and came out.

There was a crowd of about 20 people crowding before my room. They suddenly pulled out from behind their backs, iron rods, lathies, and wooden pieces. They started thrashing me. They wanted to me to shout '*Yesu Christu Murdabad*' (Death to Jesus Christ) '*Bajrang Bali Ki Jai*' (Long Live Bajrang Bali).

They continued thrashing me and then pushed me back into the room, poured diesel on the floor, some fell on by clothes and set the place on fire and bolted the room from outside.

I slipped on the diesel soaked floor, some how managed to reach the bath room where providentially there were two buckets of water - we do not have running water - and poured it all across the room. Without making much noise I bolted from inside all the doors and windows under cover of billowing smoke."



Dr. Sr. Marykutty of Handmaids of Mary who nursed him all through this stay at the hospital and then accompanied him filled in with the remaining details.

"The previous evening Fr. Edward was in a town around 300 kilometers away and when he heard of the killing of the Swamy he decided to rush back to the hostel as the kids were alone in the care of Rajani.

She had been given in adoption by her Hindu biological parents. As soon as the adopted parents got children of their own Rajani's life changed. Her natural parents refused to receive her back when the adopted parents started neglecting her and pulled her out of school for working in the house.

The sisters found her a place at father's hostel so that she could continue her studies. She had completed her plus two and had been sort of a boarding mistress to the children of leprosy patients for whom the hostel was being run.

People had advised Fr. Edward not to return to the hostel. But he knew his children needed him. And that is what he decided to do - to return to the hostel.

After locking up Fr Edward in his room the marauding crowd pushed out all the children from where they were hiding in a shed nearby. **When Rajini came out running, she was tied up and thrown back in the fire!**



20 Year Old Rajni Majhi

Burnt to Death by the Mob

[See Separate Story: [How 20 Year Old Rajni Was Burnt to Death](#)]

Fr. Edward told me that he sees the hand of God in all this. "He has plans for me, He kept me alive."

POSTED BY ORISSA BURNING AT 3:01 PM 0 COMMENTS [LINKS TO THIS POST](#)  

LABELS: [FIRST HAND STORIES](#), [NEWS AND ANALYSIS](#), [PICTURES](#)

## Pregnant Lady Cut to Pieces in Orissa

### 7 Month's Pregnant, Kamalini Naik Cut into Pieces for Her Faith

As narrated by an [independent writer](#):

Mrs. Kamalini Naik's husband was asked to become a Hindu for which the fanatics threatened to kill his mother. Seeing his mother under their grip Mr.

Naik denounced his faith.

**Then they called his wife Kamalini Naik who was 7 months pregnant. She strongly stood for her faith in Christ and immediately the fanatics cut her into pieces and her one and half year son in front of her husband and other Christians.**

POSTED BY ORISSA BURNING AT 2:46 PM 0 COMMENTS LINKS TO THIS POST  

LABELS: FIRST HAND STORIES, NEWS AND ANALYSIS

## Orissa Violence: Real Death Toll?

# Death Toll Much Higher Than Official Figure



7 days after the terrible violence in Orissa began, officials are presenting a death toll between 14 and 20.

Given the nature of the violence, and the scale of destruction, one suspects this figure to be far higher.

Basing himself on "reliable sources", a Christian activist now makes a shocking claim that there are "at least 100 dead".

[Asianews](#) reports:

Meanwhile, the number of victims of the violence continues to increase: "**We have received authentic information that the death toll is 100**", says Dr Sajan George, national president of the GCIC, "**and more butchered bodies and burnt corpses are being found**".

POSTED BY ORISSA BURNING AT 2:25 PM 0 COMMENTS LINKS TO THIS POST  

LABELS: FIGURES AND STATISTICS, NEWS AND ANALYSIS, PICTURES

## Cardinal Toppo on the Orissa Anti Christian Violence

## Cardinal Toppo Reacts to Anti Christian Violence in India

(29 Aug 08 - RV) [Thousands of Christian-run schools and colleges across India were closed](#) Friday to protest deadly Hindu mob attacks on churches and homes this week in the eastern part of the country. The Cardinal Archbishop of Ranchi, India, Telesphore Toppo spoke with us about the situation...

**Download and Listen:** [Christian Institutions Close for a Day in Protest](#)

POSTED BY ORISSA BURNING AT 2:03 PM 0 COMMENTS [LINKS TO THIS POST](#)  

LABELS: [AUDIO](#), [NEWS AND ANALYSIS](#)

### Agartala Christians Hold Protest Rally

## Christians in the North East Holy Rally to Protest Orissa Violence



Bishop Lumen and other Pastors of Denominations lead the rally

Guwahati, Aug. 30. Agartala, 29 Aug 2008: The Christian community of Agartala held a rally in the capital town to protest against the repeated attacks on Christians in the state of Orissa. The rally which started from RMS Choumunhi in the heart of the town and proceeded to the Gandhi statue near Raj Bhawan, was attended by a large group of Christians belonging to the various churches and denominations in the state.

The rally, organized by the United Christian Forum of Agartala, was held in a



peaceful manner, with the participants wearing black badges and walking in silence.

Those who spoke at the rally included Bishop Lumen Monteiro CSC, DD, Pastor Kamal Chakarbarti and Pastor Dakhina Reang. They reiterated that the intention behind the rally was to register protest against the ongoing violence against Christians in Orissa and also to show solidarity with the suffering brethren there. The Christian leaders also urged the government of Orissa to restore normalcy and peace among all sections of people in Orissa. A memorandum to this effect was also submitted to the Governor by the Christian leaders.

Many school students were also found participating in the rally as all the Christians schools in the state were closed as yet another mark of protest against the Orissa violence.

Joseph Pulinthanath sdb  
Spokesperson, Diocese of Agartala

Picture and Story Courtesy: [Bosco Information Service](#)

POSTED BY ORISSA BURNING AT 1:34 PM 0 COMMENTS [LINKS TO THIS POST](#)  

LABELS: [NEWS AND ANALYSIS](#), [PICTURES](#), [PRESS STATEMENTS](#)

**Saturday, August 30, 2008**

**"They Ordered Me to Have Sex with the Nun": Fr. Chellen**

## **Fr. Thomas Chellen Describes the Orissa Mob Ordeal**

Fr. Thomas Chellen, director of the [pastoral center that was destroyed with a bomb](#), had a narrow escape after a Hindu mob nearly set him on fire. Currently undergoing treatment at a Catholic hospital in Orissa's capital Bhubaneswar, Fr. Chellen had this horrifying experience to share with [Catholic News Service](#): "They had poured kerosene on my head, and one held a matchbox in his hands to light the fire. But thanks to divine providence, in the end, they did not do that. Otherwise, I would not have been there to tell this horror," the 55-year-old priest, director of the pastoral center at Konjamendi in the Indian state of Orissa, told Catholic News Service in a telephone interview from his hospital bed Aug. 28.

When a Hindu mob of 500 people broke into the pastoral center around noon Aug. 24, Father Chellen said he fled through the backyard with another priest and a nun.

"It was heartbreaking for us to watch from a distance the entire complex go up in smoke," said Father Chellen, who had supervised the construction of the center that opened in 2001 and could accommodate 200 people.

"They vandalized everything and set it on fire. It has been reduced to ashes," he added.

As the three watched from a distance, some other priests told them to flee.

"We fled to the jungles and came in the night to take shelter in the house of a Hindu friend and spent the night there," Father Chellen said, adding that the second priest left them to join other priests.

The following morning, he said, the Hindu family moved the priest and nun to an adjacent vacant house and locked it to give the impression that no one was inside.

However, the Hindu mobs overheard the priest speaking on his cell phone, broke into the room and dragged him and the nun outside.

**"They began our crucifixion parade," said Father Chellen. The gang of about 50 armed Hindus "beat us up and led us like culprits along the road" to the burned pastoral center.**

**"There they tore my shirt and started pulling off the clothes of the nun. When I protested, they beat me hard with iron rods. Later, they took the sister inside (and) raped her while they went on kicking and teasing me, forcing (me) to say vulgar words,"** said the priest who has cuts, bruises and swollen tissue all over his body and stitches on his face.

**"Later both of us, half-naked, were taken to the street, and they ordered me to have sex with the nun in public, saying nuns and priests do it. As I refused, they went on beating me and dragged us to the nearby government office. Sadly, a dozen policemen were watching all this,"** he said.

**Angry at his plea to the police for help, the mob beat the bleeding priest again.**

**Later, a government official and members of the mob took the priest and the nun to the police station, where Father Chellen said he was kicked in the face.**

"The four-hour ordeal ended when a senior police officer arrived in the evening," said Father Chellen.

The priest said one of the most hurtful things about the incident was that some

local Hindus whom he knew were watching the events and ignored his requests for help.

POSTED BY ORISSA BURNING AT 2:10 PM 4 COMMENTS LINKS TO THIS POST  

LABELS: [FIRST HAND STORIES](#), [NEWS AND ANALYSIS](#)

## Christian Groups Did Not Kill the Swami: Govt Sources

### "Christian Groups Did Not Kill VHP Leader Swami Lakshmanand Saraswati"

6 days after the Orissa carnage began, Govt sources tell [NDTV](#), **Christian groups not responsible:**

"Government sources tell NDTV that their assessment is that Christian groups did not kill VHP leader Swami Lakshmanand Saraswati.

In an Orissa daily, Maoist leader Azad has claimed responsibility for killing of the VHP leader."

[AICC laments:](#)

"The media largely ignored these facts while reporting the allegations of Sangh Parivar leaders for five days. And Orissa burned."

POSTED BY ORISSA BURNING AT 1:14 PM 0 COMMENTS LINKS TO THIS POST  

LABELS: [NEWS AND ANALYSIS](#)

**Friday, August 29, 2008**

## The Great "Conversions" Lie

### Just How Many 'Forced' Conversions Are Taking Place?

#### An AICC Leader Finds Out

"Forced conversion" remains the number one unproven allegation Hindu fundamentalists level against Christians in India. Using it as a Goebbelsian propaganda (repeat a lie loud enough and often enough, it will soon be believed as truth), anti-conversion laws have been enacted, under the guise of 'freedom of religion' acts (enforced in Orissa and some other States).

Interestingly, the "[Freedom of Religion Act](#)" passed in the state of [Himachal Pradesh](#) (and proposed in some other States too), without prescribing a time limit for the conduct of such an enquiry or defining its modalities, prescribes that a



person intending to convert from one religion to another must give a notice of at least thirty days to the District Magistrate who then "shall get the matter enquired into by such agency as he may deem fit". However no such notice is required of a person reverts back to his "original religion".

Thanks to the [Right to Information Act 2005](#), Samson Christian, a leader of the All India Christian Council (AICC), unearthed just how many "forced" conversions were taking place that called for such stringent anti-conversion laws. [Compass Direct News](#) has this story:

The Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party government in Gujarat state has disclosed that **there were only three complaints of alleged "forcible" conversions in the state in the last 10 years, and only two of those concerned Christian conversions.**

The state Home Department made the embarrassing disclosure after Samson Christian, a leader of the All India Christian Council, sought the information under the Right to Information Act of 2005. The Act makes it mandatory for government authorities to furnish information concerning public matters sought by any citizen.

"The Home Department said two of the three complaints were concerning Christian conversions," Christian told Compass. "**One was filed in 2007, and the other in 1997.**"

The BJP government's reluctant admission coincided with the notification of the rules under the Gujarat Freedom of Religion Act of 2003 on July 10. The rules were framed on April 1, and their notification was the last formality in the implementation of the law.

POSTED BY ORISSA BURNING AT 10:53 PM 0 COMMENTS [LINKS TO THIS POST](#)  

LABELS: [NEWS AND ANALYSIS](#)

## 60,000 Christians Take Refuge in Forests

# Orissa Violence Forces 60,000 Christians to Take Refuge in Forests

UCA News has [this story](#):

**The violence has forced some 60,000 Christians to take refuge in forests, it said. Despite government assurances of protection, it added, the fundamentalists move about with weapons threatening Christians.**

<...>

**Archbishop Raphael Cheenath of Cuttack-Bhubaneswar, another**

**delegation member, told UCA News on Aug. 28: "Christians hiding in the forest don't have anything to eat. Yesterday evening one priest called me and said they were hiding in the jungle for the past three days. The attackers are sparing no one."**

**The archbishop added: "This is a collapse of the total police force. Sometimes they (policemen) don't even have a lathi (baton) to defend themselves. The state administration is not doing anything to restore peace."**

POSTED BY ORISSA BURNING AT 8:01 PM 0 COMMENTS [LINKS TO THIS POST](#)  

LABELS: [FIGURES AND STATISTICS](#), [NEWS AND ANALYSIS](#)

## **Orissa Violence: 20,275 Institutions Close for a Day**

### **Catholic Schools Closed As Christians Nationwide Demand Peace In Orissa**

August 29, 2008

NEW DELHI (UCAN) -- Catholic schools across India remained closed on Aug. 29 as Religious, dioceses and other groups demanded and prayed for peace in Orissa state, where anti-Christian violence continues.

More than 700 Religious, clergy, lay Catholics and other Christians, and people of other religions have taken part so far in an Aug. 27-29 candlelight vigil at the Jesuits' St. Xavier's College in Kolkata, capital of West Bengal state, 1,460 kilometers southeast of New Delhi.

West Bengal is just north of Orissa, where anti-Christian violence started Aug. 25, following the deaths of Hindu leader Swami Laxmanananda Saraswati and five of his associates in Kandhamal district Aug. 23.

Maoists reportedly claimed responsibility for the killings, but some Hindu groups have alleged Christians masterminded the killing, a charge all Christian Churches and denominations have denied.

Father George Pattery, who heads the Jesuit's Calcutta province and serves as president of the West Bengal region of Catholic Religious of India, says he organized the vigil to "express their solidarity" with suffering Christians. The group wanted to make this a prayer of protest against violence and injustice, and for people who are being misled by others, he explained.

Armed mobs of radical Hindus have burned down at least 50 churches, hundreds of Christian homes and convents in the four days of violence, Church officials say in statements. They also say hundreds of Christians have fled their homes for

forest cover to save their life.

In Indore, Madhya Pradesh state, central India, about 2,000 people from different religions joined a peace march on Aug. 28. The silent rally started from the main city's square and proceeded to the city administration's head office. The leaders, including Hindus, submitted a memorandum to one of the city's top officials. The memorandum asked federal government leaders, to whom it was addressed, to ensure the safety of Christians in Orissa and the restoration of peace in the state.

During the rally, Bharat Chhapparwal, former vice chancellor of Indore University, told UCA News the "a brutal killing of innocent people is a barbaric act, and it is a matter of shame for all Indians." He asked the government to arrest the murderers immediately.

Indore diocese's spokesperson, Father Hans Puthiakulangara, said all Catholic educational institutions in the state would stay closed.

**The Indian Catholic Church's 160 Catholic dioceses and some 240 Religious congregations have closed their 20,275 educational institutions, which serve more than 10 million students, more than 80 percent of whom are not Christians.**

Sister M. Joseline, principal of St. Mary's School in eastern New Delhi, in a letter circulated to students' parents, said they are closing the school to make the public aware of the dangers of sectarian violence.

"What is at stake is not only the freedom of a minority community, but India's secular democracy and its commitment to human rights and constitutional guarantees" of religious freedom, she wrote. "The general public must wake up to the dangers of the threats that are manifested in the violence in Orissa."

Other Catholic schools reportedly circulated similar notes.

Christian groups in Mangalore, a coastal Catholic stronghold 2,290 kilometers southwest of New Delhi, jointly sent a memorandum to the Orissa government on Aug. 26 asking it to protect minority Christians.

The memorandum, which local Catholic Church leaders signed, demanded deployment of the army to bring normalcy in Orissa. The groups also asked for a high-level probe into the murder of the Hindu leader.

Source: [UCANews](#)

POSTED BY ORISSA BURNING AT 7:21 PM 0 COMMENTS [LINKS TO THIS POST](#)  

LABELS: [NEWS AND ANALYSIS](#)

## Bombs Used in Orissa Anti-Christian Violence

### Archdiocesan Pastoral Centre Destroyed with Bombs

Petrol and matchsticks were not the only weapons used in razing Christian churches and institutions. Obviously a huge building like the Archdiocesan Pastoral Centre which escaped destruction in last December's violence could not easily be brought down with fire. How then was it destroyed? Evidences from more than one source concur here. Bombs were used in the destruction activity.

#### Fr. Augustine Kanjamala writes:

"A meeting of Hindu leaders took place on the following day in Rourkela, also known as Steel City, where a decision for an immediate and violent retaliation was taken. The total success of the dawn to dusk strike in Orissa on 25 August is clear evidence of the shocking reaction. The simultaneous unleashing of violent attacks on 35 Christian centres in Orissa on the evening of 25 August further confirms that the plan was organized.

**All bomb attacks were directed at Christians and their institutions. The rampaging mob, seeking revenge for the Guru's murder, destroyed the pastoral centre of the archdiocese of Bhubaneswar with a bomb.** A priest and a nun working there were beaten up, stripped and paraded naked in order to humiliate them. Four other priests were severely beaten—one suffered severe burns and is now in critical conditions in Burla Medical College, in the district of Sambalpur"

#### Another SVD Priest reporting from Orissa writes:

The Pastoral Centre, at Konjamendi, a huge building of the Archdiocese of Bhubaneswar is **totally demolished by blasting it with bombs.**

Later Archbishop Raphael Cheenath [who learnt of the destruction from Fr. Thomas](#), the Pastoral Centre's director, said:

"Father Thomas, director of our pastoral centre, is hiding in the forest," the archbishop said. "From there, tears in his eyes and sorrow in his heart, he saw it go up in smoke. Just before the attack he phoned me and I told him: 'Pray and be vigilant.' But when he saw mobs of people coming towards the centre he had to flee for his life. The pastoral centre had cost more than 15 million rupees."

POSTED BY ORISSA BURNING AT 4:18 PM 0 COMMENTS [LINKS TO THIS POST](#)  

LABELS: [NEWS AND ANALYSIS](#)

## FIACONA Prayer Vigil at the United Nations on 29th August

**The Federation of Indian American Christian Organization of North America**

110 Maryland Ave, NE, Suite# 306, Washington, DC, 20002 USA  
 Phone: 202-547-6228 www.fiacona.org, Email: bernardmalik@hotmail.com

## Press Release

### Prayer Vigil in front of United Nations on 29th August 2008

(30 Martyred, 10000 fled to the jungles, 400 plus injured and 100's village churches razed down and burnt in last 72 hours)

In the wake of unabated violence against Christians in Orissa, FIACONA has called in solidarity with the suffering Christians a day of prayer on 29th August. The Catholic Church is closing all its institutions in India on 29th to protest the burning alive of Christians and destruction of Christian institutions. In expression of our solidarity and to support our grieving community in India, FIACONA will observe prayer vigil in front of the United Nations from 12pm to 3pm. At the end of vigil a memorandum will be handed over to the Secretary General of the United Nations. There are innumerable incidents where Christians are assaulted, humiliated, paraded half-naked, beaten up, their limbs mutilated, tortured, burnt alive, nuns gang raped and even murdered. There are about 123 incidents in Orissa in last 72 hours alone and 143 incidents of violence against peace-loving Christians in the state of Karnataka. All the Christians of India and the world are in extreme shock and profound grief, over these brutal and heartless events happening against Christians in Orissa. Being a forever peace-loving and religious tolerant community, Christians are remaining mute spectators to these intensely inhuman and barbaric acts. But the international community is taking note and thus a lot of negative publicity is also being generated.

Christians of India and all over the world have full faith in dynamic, charismatic, and justice driven leadership of Dr. Manmohan Singh. We are confident that as he has made India into one of the leading economies, he will also make it into one of the leading religious tolerant countries of the world. We look forward to him for guidance and leadership in this matter. As all these incidents happened, FIACONA is deeply concerned along with the entire Christian community of India. We request that necessary action may be immediately initiated to stop the inhuman atrocities being committed against Christians in Orissa and rest of the country.

For the favor of publication  
 Rev. Bernard Malik  
 302-354-5452

POSTED BY ORISSA BURNING AT 4:15 PM 0 COMMENTS [LINKS TO THIS POST](#) 

LABELS: [NEWS AND ANALYSIS](#), [PRESS STATEMENTS](#)

## **Vijayawada Christians Protest Orissa Violence, Submit Memorandum**

### **In Solidarity with the Orissa Christians...**

**Sr. Benigna Menezes, Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh, India**

Christians took to the streets in protest against the spiralling violence, demanding protection for Christians in Orissa after closing down all the Church run institutions in Vijayawada, Krishna District of Andhra Pradesh on Friday, August 29, 2008

Over 3000 people marched with banners in their hands, shouting slogans and demanding justice to the Christians in the country as they submitted a memorandum to the sub-collector of the Krishna District who resides in Vijayawada city in the wake of the Orissa violence.

"We condemn in unequivocal terms the incidents of burning people alive and vandalizing the property of Christian community in Orissa by Vishwa Hindu Parishad activists, and armed attacks on Churches in Orissa," Vicar General Monsignor Chinnappa said in his speech on the PWD grounds where the rally assembled after a two hour walk in the main streets of the city.

The priest also stated that these attacks are against the human rights and human freedom and compromises the climate of mutual understanding and peaceful co-existence of the citizens.

A delegation of Christian leaders lead by the local Bishop Prakash Mallavarapu had submitted a memorandum a few days ago to the collector demanding CBI inquiry into the killings of Christians.

The Bishop had also issued an appeal to all the Parishes and Catholic organisms to join the Friday rally in protest of the violence meted to the local Christian community in Orissa.

Fr. John, SJ director of the Kaladarshini unit of the Andhra Loyola College read out the memorandum which listed the atrocities in Orissa against Christians and demanded that immediate efforts be made to rehabilitate the victims of vandalism and that the families of the victims may be compensated adequately.

Sources from Kandhamal district said hundreds of Christians along with their families have fled to the nearby forests to save their lives in the rainy climate and are without shelter, food and clothing

The memorandum sought CBI inquiry in the entire incidents and punishments to the culprits who masterminded the mayhem and terrorized the tribals and poor

of the area.

The priest also sought immediate restoration of peace and harmony and law enforcement in the life of the districts.

Hundreds of nuns and priests, teachers and professionals along with the city youth from various colleges and institutions carrying slogans seeking justice, and religious freedom marched out from the two Cathedrals of the city of Vijayawada.

The Parishioners from the 12 city Parishes too joined the march quitting the jobs on this black Friday supporting the cause of the Church and demanding justice to the Christian minority.

"We should have more rallies like this so that we can make our presence felt in this city" said Mr. Prasad, a Catholic who works as a driver.

The peace loving and law abiding Christian citizens are not recognized in this country in–spite of their great contribution to health, education, and social service, lamented Sr. Rosy, MSI a city school counselor.

What crime have we committed to receive so much neglect and persecution? Why there is so much hatred?, asked another speaker of the rally.

CSI Bishop of the Protestant Church and other heads and members of the Christian denominations too closed their institutions and joined the rally and voiced their concerns on the stage.

Fr. Emmanuel, SSP, the President of the Conference of the Religious of the diocese who helped to organize the rally along with Ecclesiastical diocesan authorities said that he was impressed about the number who participated in the march.

"This is going to make an impression which will last for a long time in the memory of the city", he said.

"A collection would be made towards the victims of the Orissa violence soon after the rally and the money would be sent through the CRI to the affected", said Fr. Emmanuel to the Press persons.

He had called an emergency meeting of the heads of the Catholic institutions, CRI officials and other Church leaders to discuss the CBCI call of solidarity to the Christians in Orissa on August 28.

Sr. Theresa, FMM Principal of Maris Stella College was too willing to co-operate and show solidarity to the cause though it cost the institution heavy losses to close down the college for a day, she stated.



Fr. Emmanuel, SJ participated in the preliminary meeting called by the local CRI had readily agreed to the proposal to down the shutters on the college and offered all possible support and assistance in making the rally a success.

"There were many reports of Christians being pulled from their homes and killed or beaten, with many homes of Christians torched. It makes me feel very much worried", said a CSI Pastor who participated in the rally on Friday.

POSTED BY ORISSA BURNING AT 3:13 PM 0 COMMENTS [LINKS TO THIS POST](#)  

LABELS: [MEMORANDUMS](#), [NEWS AND ANALYSIS](#)

## CBCI Submits Memorandum to Prime Minister

### Memorandum Submitted To Hon'ble Prime Minister By The CBCI Delegation

NEW DELHI, AUG. 28, 2008, 18.00 Hrs: CBCI Delegation met Hon'ble Prime Minister Manmohan Singh today at 6.30 pm at New Delhi. The Delegation briefed him with the situation in Kandhamal district of Orissa and requested his for immediate intervention. Most Rev. Vincent Concessao, Archbishop of Delhi, Most Rev. Raphael Cheenath, Catholic Archdiocese Archbishop of Cuttack-Bhubaneswar, Rev. Thomas D'Aquino Sequeira, Dy. Secretary General, CBCI, Rev. Dr. Babu Joseph, SVD, Spokesperson, CBCI, Bishop Samson Dass, Bishop of Cuttack- CNI, Bishop Sunil Kumar Singh, Bishop of Church of North India, Ms. Sushma Ramaswami, Vice-President, NCCI Submitted the Memorandum to Hon'ble Pime Minister.

Following is the full text of the Memorandum submitted to Hon'ble Prime Minister by the CBCI Delegation :-

To,

Dr. Manmohan Singh  
Hon'ble Prime Minister of India  
7, Race Course Road  
New Delhi-110001 August 28, 2008

Subject: Earnest request for your immediate intervention in Kandhamal District of Orissa which is again witnessing violence against the Christian community.

Hon'ble Prime Minister Ji,

We are sad to note that Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) leader Lakshmanananda Saraswati and five others were murdered on Saturday, August 23, 2008 allegedly by a Maoist group in Kandhamal Dist of Orissa. The Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) and the Church leaders in Orissa and other parts of the country



have condemned the killing of Swami Lakshmananda Saraswati and his associates in the Ashram. We have also appealed for peace and harmony in the State.

However, we are extremely sorry to find that some organizations have pointed finger at the Christian community in Orissa for the alleged murder of the Swami and his associates. Consequently, there have been unprovoked attacks on Christians and their institutions in Kandhamal and surrounding areas.

We are pained and shocked at the merciless killings and unabated violence against the Christians all over the State of Orissa. While the Christian leaders have condemned the heinous crime perpetrated on Swami Laxmanananda Saraswati and his associates in the Ashram at Kandhamal District, Orissa, the killings of and atrocities against Christians are the evil designs of the fanatic fundamentalists. They are still continuing the violence and the State Government has failed to protect the Christians and other innocent people.

The Christians in the State are living in continual tension and great fear. The law and order machinery is not at their rescue and they are living in pathetic conditions for the last four days. The houses, churches and prayer halls have to be rebuilt and a sense of security has to be restored in the hearts of Christians and other affected people. This is the greatest disaster in the history of a Christian community in India and more so in Orissa.

### **OUR FEAR:**

Even though the Government has been assuring us all protection the fundamentalists are moving about with lethal weapons threatening the Christians.

The fundamentalists go on their destructive activities even in the presence of the police men. The police says that they are unable to face such unruly mob. The destruction goes on unabated.

The Christians who are already attacked and those who are in great panic of being attacked, feel with sufficient reason that they are left to the mercy of the fundamentalists.

We do not see anywhere sufficient number of policemen and the senior police officers for maintenance of law and order have expressed their inability to control the situation in absence of adequate force.

The fundamentalists are forcing the Christians to leave their homes and to take refuge in the forests and even to leave the State. As a consequence there are sixty thousand refugees in the State.

The aim of the fundamentalist groups is to drive the Christians away from the region as it is evident from the slogan they are shouting at Christians and the anti-inflammatory statements made by them.

Most of the priests, pastors and religious men and women in Kandhamal are hiding in the forest to save their lives. In fact, the fundamentalists are in search of their hide-outs.

We are in receipt of information from various Churches and institutions that the miscreants are still active and the destruction of property is still going on rampant and Christians are under fierce attack. On the other hand, the innocent Christians are frightened and Christian officials are victimized as an outcome of the constant attacks.

**In view of the facts stated above we demand the following:**

1. That a CBI enquiry be ordered for proper and impartial investigation for justice.
2. That Central Para-Military Forces/ Army be deployed in adequate strength at all the affected and sensitive places to prevent any further recurrences as the local police has not been able to control the situation.
3. That impartial and proper assessment of the property damage caused to various Churches, Christian institutions, individuals and other establishments be made and given adequate compensation as early as possible in view of proper rehabilitation.
4. That adequate compensation be given to the families of the deceased and injured persons.
5. That the culprits responsible for creating communal disharmony and damage caused to the people and properties should be severely dealt with and those Government officials found wanting or negligent in their duties be taken to task.
6. That a law be enacted after the manner of SC Atrocities (Prevention) Act, in order to restrain such heinous communal crimes which have become so common in India.

Thanking you,

Yours sincerely,

Sd/-  
Most Rev. Vincent Concessao  
Archbishop of Delhi

Sd/-  
Most Rev. Raphael Cheenath  
Catholic Archdiocese Archbishop of Cuttack-Bhubaneswar

Sd/-  
Rev. Thomas D'Aquino Sequeira  
Dy. Secretary General, CBCI

Sd/-  
Rev. Dr. Babu Joseph, SVD  
Spokesperson, CBCI

Sd/-  
Bishop Samson Dass  
Bishop of Cuttack- CNI

Sd/-  
Bishop Sunil Kumar Singh  
Bishop of Church of North India

Sd/-  
Ms. Sushma Ramaswami  
Vice-President, NCCI

POSTED BY ORISSA BURNING AT 3:11 PM 0 COMMENTS LINKS TO THIS POST  

LABELS: [MEMORANDUMS](#), [NEWS AND ANALYSIS](#)

## Orissa Violence: Mangalore Submits Memorandum

### Mangalore Church Submits Memorandum Against Orissa Violence

*A South Indian Diocese in the State of Karnataka has submitted a memorandum against the atrocities on Christians in Orissa. The Memorandum addressed to Sri Naveen Patnaik, the Chief Minister of Orissa and Sri Shivraj Patil, Home Minister of the Government of India through the Deputy Commissioner of the Dakshina Kannada district in Karnataka was submitted in the name of the Bishop of Mangalore, Most Rev. Aloysius Paul D'Souza by Rev. Fr. Henry Sequeira, Chancellor and Judicial Vicar of the Diocese as the Bishop is under medical treatment. The full text of the Memorandum follows:*



29 August 2008

**MEMORANDUM**

To:  
 Hon'ble Sri Naveen Patnaik  
 Chief Minister, Orissa  
 Bhubaneswar,  
 ORISSA

Hon'ble Sri Shivaraj Patil  
 Home Minister,  
 Government of India  
 NEW DELHI

Through:  
 The Deputy Commissioner, D.K.,  
 MANGALORE

Honorable Sir

In the wake of the recent violence unleashed in the Kandhamal District of Orissa and the killing of Swami Lakshmananda Saraswathi and his four associates in the Ashram, which the [Catholic Bishops' Conference of India \(CBCI\)](#) as well as the [Christian community of Orissa](#) and in other parts of the country strongly denounced and [condemned and appealed for maintaining communal harmony and peace](#), there have been [unwarranted attacks on Christians and their houses and institutions](#) in the same district and neighbouring areas.



Some organizations in Orissa pointed fingers at the Christian community and brutally murdered [Fr. Thomas Pandipally, a CMI priest](#). An orphanage managed by Christian missionaries was set ablaze. [A woman working for that orphanage and a paralytic man in his own house, were burned to death. Two priests and a few religious women were seriously injured and several Christian institutions destroyed.](#) Fearing for their life many Christians including women and children, religious men and women have taken shelter in the nearby forests!



We are deeply pained to see our brothers and sisters in Orissa being targeted for no fault of theirs; they are victims of [a calibrated malicious campaign by certain](#)

**unruly organizations** that take the law in their own hands. Besides, the calibrated malicious campaign has already spread or is spreading to the other States. In the light of this, we express our helplessness.



We Christians are a peace-loving and law abiding citizens of our great country, India. We are no less patriotic than others. We have manifested our patriotism in many ways in the past and history is clear evidence to this truth. When atrocities take place we are adequately protected and many times justice is denied to the victims.



We solicit your support in the matter mentioned above and from our part we promise that we remain loyal citizens of this great nation of great people. We want to reiterate that as we are loyal to our religion, we are second to none in our allegiance to our country. Therefore we request you to grant us adequate protection.



**Most Rev Dr Aloysius Paul D'Souza  
Mangalore**

POSTED BY ORISSA BURNING AT 3:02 PM 0 COMMENTS [LINKS TO THIS POST](#)  

LABELS: [MEMORANDUMS](#), [NEWS AND ANALYSIS](#), [PICTURES](#), [PRESS STATEMENTS](#)

## **Christians' Offense: Fighting Against Slavery**

### **In India, the Christians' Offense Is Fighting Against Slavery**

*The slavery is that of the caste system. Against this, the Christians both preach and practice equal dignity for all. Professor Parsi explains the reasons for the growing Hindu violence. And he warns about the international repercussions*

by Sandro Magister

ROMA, August 29, 2008 – This morning, the 15,000 Catholic schools in India closed their doors for the entire day. The Indian Catholic Church has called for a day of prayer and fasting for the first Sunday in September, with peaceful processions all over the country.

The reason is the new wave of violence that has struck the Christians in the state of Orissa. Every day, there is news of killing, wounding, rape, assaults against churches, convents, schools, orphanages, villages, carried out by Hindu fanatics. Hundreds of people have had to abandon their homes and flee to the forests.

The spark for the latest explosion of violence was struck with the killing, on August 23, of the Hindu religious leader Swami Laxmanananda Saraswati and five of his followers. The killing was carried out by armed Maoist groups, but the Hindus used it as a pretext for blaming the Christians and taking revenge on them.

The epicenter of the latest violence is the district of Kandhamal, in the state of Orissa. For several months, this has been the most bloodstained state in the country. There are few Catholics there, less than 1 percent. There are also few conversions, but these are taken as another pretext for retaliation. What is unleashing the violence – according to Raphael Cheenath, the archbishop of Chuttack-Bhubaneswar, whose territory includes the district of Kandhamal – is the work that Christians in Orissa are carrying out on behalf of the tribals and the Dalits, at the very bottom of the caste system:

"Before, they were like slaves. Now, some of them study in our schools, start businesses in the villages, demand their rights. And those who – even in the India of the economic boom – want to keep intact the old division into castes are afraid that they will gain too much power. Orissa today is a laboratory. What is at stake is the future of millions of Dalits and tribals living all over the country."

According to the latest census, conducted in 2001, 80.5 percent of India's inhabitants are Hindu, while 13.4 percent are Muslim. The Christians are 2.3 percent. And they are even less numerous in Orissa and in the other states in the central and northern part of the country, the most densely populated areas. The highest percentages of Christians are in the easternmost part of the country, reaching 90 percent in Nagaland and Mizoram, 70 percent in Meghalaya, and 34 percent in Manipur. But these areas are thinly populated and very backward economically. In absolute numbers, Christians are most heavily represented in the southern part of the country, in Goa, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala. In Kerala, Christians are 19 percent of the population, and most of them are Catholic. The state boasts the highest level of education, including female education, in all of India.

The events of recent days confirm that coexistence between Christians and

Hindus in India is no longer as peaceful and harmonious as the tradition – and myth – of this country would have one believe. Hindu intolerance and fanaticism are growing, and acts of violence against Christians are on the rise. To the silence and disinterest of the world.

The reasons for this development, and the dangers of ignoring it, are incisively analyzed by Vittorio E. Parsi, professor of international politics at the Catholic University of Milan, in this editorial published on August 27 in "Avvenire," the newspaper of the Italian bishops' conference:

## **Contradictions and fanaticism are undoing Gandhi's legacy**

by Vittorio E. Parsi

The largest democracy in the world. This is the definition that is usually associated with India. It would be ungenerous and mistaken to forget this now, or to question it at its core. But it does seem necessary to question the quality of this democracy, and the direction that it is taking.

The Indian Union has the separation of powers, an independent judiciary, a genuine multiparty system, and a free press. But at the same time, widespread corruption and the crony-client political system in the individual states, together with the substantial impunity granted to the violent actions of extremist groups, risk emptying of meaning the concrete significance of India's democracy.

The alarm is being raised in a particular way by the growth of sectarian violence, which is especially targeting the Christians – responsible for helping the Dalits, the outcastes, the slave foundation of the pyramidal system according to which Hindu society was traditionally organized – but also Muslims and Buddhists.

What is happening in India with worrying frequency and intensity shows the dark side of the independence achieved under the inspiration of Mahatma Gandhi's nonviolent action. The story of his life itself, with its tragic conclusion, contains in symbolic form all of the contradictions of this extraordinary country: from the rediscovery of traditional culture and the village economy, to the decision to live as the least of the least, to the attempt to preserve the unity and religious pluralism of the old British Raj, to his violent death at the hand of a Hindu extremist.

More than 60 years after the country's independence, it is precisely the position that India should be solely and exclusively Hindu that is continually making new proselytes. Movements like Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh are the expression of a Nazi-like culture, which preaches through violence the false idea that being Indian means being Hindu, in spite of the fact that there are more Muslims living in India than in many Muslim countries. Of course, there has always been

Hindu hegemony in the political system, but it was mitigated to a certain extent by the fact that the early leaders of the republic, from Nehru to Indira Gandhi, all members of the Congress Party, acted on the basis of an essentially secular view of politics, blocking the most devastating consequences of such a contradiction.

It is likely that the sneering modern "spirit of the times" in which fundamentalism and the political abuse of religion seem to be re-emerging, on top of the radical tendencies of neighboring Pakistan, have contributed to the success of movements like Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, and of the Bharatiya Janata party. But – as Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran has correctly observed – in Hinduism as well there is a growing push toward intolerance and fanaticism, which is all the more grave in that it is understood too little, and too often denied.

Beside the political contradiction is the economic contradiction. India is the "office" of the world, at least to the same extent that China is its "factory." It is a society that produces tens of thousands of English-speaking engineers each year, but still lives in the Gandhian myth of the village economy, that ossified structure which deprives the "least" of any hope, for this and any other life, and fosters the caste system with its aftermath of commonplace violence. It is the Christians who are held responsible for offering hope to the "least," for this and any other life. And they have accepted the burden of this responsibility, to the point of martyrdom, as has taken place in Orissa.

One last point of reflection. Brazil, Russia, India, and China are considered, together with South Africa, the leading countries that should balance the excessive power of the West and make the governing of the world more multilateral. One must begin to reflect on the fact that, with the exception of Brazil, none of these countries seems to have begun to reduce its heavy deficit of internal democracy, and on the consequences that this implies for international "governance."

Source: [Chiesa](#)

POSTED BY ORISSA BURNING AT 12:53 PM 0 COMMENTS [LINKS TO THIS POST](#)  

LABELS: [NEWS AND ANALYSIS](#)

## Memorandum to the Governor of Orissa

# Memorandum to the Governor of Orissa

At the culmination of the Protest and Prayer Rally of the Christians of Delhi and National Capital Region at Orissa Bhawan on 29th August 20008, and the closure of all Christian institutions in the country in solidarity with their brothers and sisters in the State

To



His Excellency Murlidhar Chandrakant Bhandare  
The Governor of Orissa  
Bhubaneswar

Sir,

In deep anguish and pain, We, the Christian Community of the Delhi and National Capital Region, submit this memorandum to you, and not to the Chief Minister of Orissa, because we believe that by not stopping the Ethnic Cleansing of Christians in Orissa in the last six days, he has abdicated his Constitutional duties to the Sangh Parivar and thereby has forfeited his right to be in Government.

We therefore approach you, as the Constitutional Head of the State of Orissa and protector of the rights of the State's citizens irrespective of their religion, caste or ethnic status, to restore sanity, peace, and the Rule of Law in the State, protect the life, liberty and property of the Christian community, specially in Kandhamal and other affected districts.

As you know, in the last six days in the second wave of mass violence since Christmas 2007, almost a score of Christian men and women have been brutally killed in acts reminiscent of the massacre of the Sikhs in Delhi and other places in 1984, and of the Muslims in 1993 in Mumbai and 2002 in Gujarat.

Nuns have been raped, pastors, Priests, religious workers injured in their hundreds. Over forty churches have been destroyed, many for the second time, apart from once again hundreds upon hundreds of houses burnt in towns, villages and forest settlements. Christians have been chased and hunted like animals. In case your intelligence apparatus has not briefed you properly, we attach herewith an incomplete list of the murder and mayhem in Orissa, as we gather data from the victims and the kin of the dead.

There is no element of doubt as to who is the perpetrator of the violence. It is the Sangh Parivar, and its component elements, the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, the Bajrang Dal and the Vanvasi Kalyan Sangh, and especially groups connected with the ashrams of the late VHP Vice president Lakshmanananda Saraswati. VHP leaders, including Mr. Praveen Togadia have openly called for ethnic cleansing, and others have vowed not to rest from their bloody labours till they have rid Orissa of Christians.

The police have looked on for six months. They have often abetted in the violence and never intervened to save the hapless Christians and their institutions. Instead, the official machinery and the top policemen and bureaucrats have parroted the lies of the Hindutva Sangh Parivar and its narrow definition of religious nationalism to pin the blame of the acrimony on the Christians.

If the Chief minister and his government have forfeited their right to govern, the

Chief Secretary, the Home Secretary and the Director General of Police have lost their right to be in active service. It is a shame they continue to be in office, and speaks volumes for the conspiracy between the Government, the coalition partner Bharatiya Janata party and the State official apparatus against the Christian community and the Christian Faith.

The state apparatus has failed thrice – to protect the Christians in December 2007, to protect the late VHP leader and unravel the mystery of his murder, and then to once again protect the Christians facing annihilation in August 2008.

We therefore call upon you as Governor to:

1. Write to the President of India to impose President's Rule in Orissa, and that you take over the reigns of Governance so that peace is restored in Kandhamal and other districts.
2. Immediately suspend not constables and junior officials, but the Chief Secretary, the Home Secretary and the Director General of Police for gross dereliction of duty, and for joining the conspiracy to wipe out Christians in Orissa.
3. Hand over the Kandhamal district in particular to the Indian Army, which alone can restore the confidence of the victims.
4. Trace the many people reported abducted, some feared dead or injured, in the last six days
5. Bring back the tens of thousands of Christians Tribals and Dalit villagers hiding for their lives in the forests, most of them without food and adequate drinking water
6. Hand over all investigations relating to the circumstances and course of violence to the Central Bureau of Investigations. The CBI should also investigate the murder of VHP leader Lakshmanananda Saraswati.
7. Expand the terms of reference of the sitting Judicial Commission headed by Mr. Justice Basudeo Panigrahi to fix responsibility and culpability on government servants of all ranks, as also on guilty politicians.
8. Grant exemplary compensation to the next of kin of the dead, and to the injured. Grant immediate relief and rehabilitation to the victims so that they can rebuild their homes, get back their jobs and resume normal human lives.
9. Compensate the Church to rebuild and restore its religious, educational, and humanitarian institutions.
10. Set up Fast Track criminal court to try those found guilty at all levels during

all phases of the violence.

This alone will prove to the world that India remains a secular country, which gives Constitutional guarantees of the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, the freedom of faith to its citizens, and for its children, the right to food, education and a childhood without the trauma of terror and the fear of death,

Thank you

God bless you, and God bless Orissa

In prayer

The Christian Community of Delhi and the National Capital Region  
Together with our brothers and sisters from other states.

POSTED BY ORISSA BURNING AT 7:59 AM 1 COMMENTS LINKS TO THIS POST  

LABELS: [NEWS AND ANALYSIS](#), [PETITIONS AND APPEALS](#)

## **[Petitions Against Attack on Christians in Orissa](#)**

### **Something Everybody Can Do**

**Sign these petitions. Show Solidarity**

#### **[1. Petition Against Attack on Christians in Orissa](#)**

#### **[2. Stop killing of Christians and destruction of Churches in Orissa, India](#)**

POSTED BY ORISSA BURNING AT 1:37 AM 0 COMMENTS LINKS TO THIS POST  

LABELS: [PETITIONS AND APPEALS](#)

**Thursday, August 28, 2008**

**["A Plan to Cleanse Orissa of its Christian Population"](#)**

**[The Motives Behind the Ongoing Violence](#)**

## To Stop Tribals and Dalits From Developing and Achieving Dignity



Verbite clergyman and expert sociologist, Fr. Augustine Kanjamala, talks about the motives behind the ongoing waves of violence against Christians — conversion to Christianity, education and emancipation allow Tribals and Dalits to escape slave-like conditions. Fr. Augustine, who teaches at the University of Mumbai, appeals to the Churches of the world to "express their protest to the government of India" which has remained "inactive" with regards to anti-Christian violence. He openly charges the Orissa state government for its increasingly explicit collusion with the pogrom currently underway against the community of faithful.

According to Father Kanjamala **a plan to cleanse Orissa of its Christian population has been in the making for years**, especially in the district of Kandhamal (where most of the atrocities have taken place) where Christians now constitute around 5 per cent of the population. Conversions by, development for and emancipation of Tribals and Dalits are confronted by Hindutva conservatism.

**This is a must read story.**

POSTED BY ORISSA BURNING AT 9:58 PM 0 COMMENTS LINKS TO THIS POST  

LABELS: NEWS AND ANALYSIS, PICTURES

### Ahmedabad Citizens Condemn Orissa Violence

## CONCERN ON VIOLENT ATTACKS

ON

# CHRISTIANS OF ORISSA

## PRESS RELEASE

Several Concerned Citizens and Human Rights organizations of Gujarat held a meeting in Ahmedabad today (27th August 2008) to condemn the violent attacks on the Christian community of Orissa, following the brutal killing of the VHP leader Swami Laxmananda Saraswati.

The meeting strongly condemned the continuous attacks on Christian organizations and institutions by the VHP, Bajrang Dal, etc. and was of the view that the Government of Orissa has totally failed in protecting the lives and properties of the Christian Community. Looking to the prevalent situation of Orissa, the Constitutional machinery has absolutely failed in maintaining law and order in the State.

In view of this, the meeting unanimously passed the following resolutions:

- 1.. That the State of Orissa be placed under the control of army and President's Rule be imposed immediately.
- 2.. That the citizens who have fled into the jungles out of fear, should be brought back to their homes safely and that complete security be ensured to them.
- 3.. That all organizations who had declared the Orissa Bandh, and who have been directly involved in the violent attacks on Christians, should be declared as "terrorist" organizations and should be put under the same category of other banned organizations in the country, with immediate effect.
- 4.. That all the individuals and groups involved in violent attacks on Christians should be arrested and strictly dealt with in accordance with the law.
- 5.. That the brutal killing of Swami Laxmananda and his associates should be thoroughly and impartially investigated, and that the killers be punished in accordance with the law.

- 1.. Adv. S. H. Iyer
- 2.. Rohit Patel
- 3.. Saroop Dhruv
- 4.. Gautam Thaker
- 5.. Hiren Gandhi
- 6.. Adv. Bhushan
- 7.. Dwarikanath Rath
- 8.. Shamshul Pathan
- 9.. Joseph Dominic

- 10.. Kiran Desai
- 11.. Kishore
- 12.. S. Pandey
- 13.. Deepika R.
- 14.. Simon F. Parmar
- 15.. Edwin Masihi
- 16.. Beena Macwan
- 17.. D. Ramakrishnan
- 18.. Fr. Varghese Paul sj
- 19.. Digant Oza
- 20.. Paul D'Souza sj
- 21.. Piyush
- 22.. Manjula Lavji
- 23.. John D'Souza
- 24.. Ashok Singh
- 25.. Iqbal Baig
- 26.. Prasad Chacko
- 27.. Waqar Qazi
- 28.. Mary Paul
- 29.. Bhavna Ramrakhiani
- 30.. Sheba George
- 31.. Fr. Francis Parmar sj
- 32.. Ashok Naik
- 33.. Fr. Vinayak Jadav sj
- 34.. Lona Pinto
- 35.. Fr. Ishanand sj
- 36.. E. Shailaja Pillai
- 37.. Sophia Khan
- 38.. Freeda Coelho
- 39.. Pravin Bhikadira
- 40.. Chetana Vyas
- 41.. Jigna Joshi
- 42.. Harsh Jadav
- 43.. Fr. Cedric Prakash sj
- 44.. Kaushik Raval
- 45.. Nafisa Barot
- 46.. Veronica D'Souza
- 47.. Hanif Lakdawala
- 48.. R. Vasantha

27th August 2008

POSTED BY ORISSA BURNING AT 8:08 PM 0 COMMENTS [LINKS TO THIS POST](#)  

LABELS: [NEWS AND ANALYSIS](#), [PETITIONS AND APPEALS](#), [PRESS STATEMENTS](#)

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## Must Read Stories

- "A Plan to Cleanse Orissa of its Christian Population"
- "They Don't Even Have a Stick to Protect Us"
- "They Ordered Me to Have Sex with the Nun": Fr. Chellen
- 60,000 Christians Take Refuge in Forests
- A Plan to Raze All Christian Places
- Christian Groups Did Not Kill the Swami: Govt Sources
- Christians' Offense: Fighting Against Slavery
- Fr. Pius Fernandes SJ Narrates the Whole Story
- How 20 Year Old Rajni Was Burnt to Death (With Pictures)
- List of Damaged Churches, Institutions
- Nun Gang Raped in Public
- ORISSA: Christians Beaten and Cut to Pieces
- Police Refuse Christians Protection
- Pregnant Lady Cut to Pieces in Orissa
- Saved from the Fires: Fr. Edward Sequeira
- The Great "Conversions" Lie



## Labels

- audio (5)
- figures and statistics (6)
- first hand stories (7)
- memorandums (3)
- news and analysis (49)
- petitions and appeals (12)
- pictures (17)
- press statements (14)
- video (2)



**Has the mainstream media reported accurately and without bias the facts concerning the anti-Christian violence in Orissa?**



## Blog Archive

- ▼ 2008 (52)
  - ▼ September (4)

- Fresh Violence: Atleast 4 More Churches Burnt
- FIACONA Protests at the UN HQ in New York
- Names of 26 People Killed in the Violence
- Maoists Warn of More Attacks; Christians Watchout!...
- ► August (48)
  - First Things First: Let the Killings Stop
  - Saved from the Fires: Fr. Edward Sequeira
  - Pregnant Lady Cut to Pieces in Orissa
  - Orissa Violence: Real Death Toll?
  - Cardinal Toppo on the Orissa Anti Christian Violen...
  - Agartala Christians Hold Protest Rally
  - "They Ordered Me to Have Sex with the Nun": Fr. Ch...
  - Christian Groups Did Not Kill the Swami: Govt Sour...
  - The Great "Conversions" Lie
  - 60,000 Christians Take Refuge in Forests
  - Orissa Violence: 20,275 Institutions Close for a D...
  - Bombs Used in Orissa Anti-Christian Violence
  - FIACONA Prayer Vigil at the United Nations on 29th...
  - Vijayawada Christians Protest Orissa Violence, Sub...
  - CBCI Submits Memorandum to Prime Minister
  - Orissa Violence: Mangalore Submits Memorandum
  - Christians' Offense: Fighting Against Slavery
  - Memorandum to the Governor of Orissa
  - Petitions Against Attack on Christians in Orissa
  - "A Plan to Cleanse Orissa of its Christian Populat...
  - Ahmedabad Citizens Condemn Orissa Violence
  - Some Pictures of the Orissa Violence
  - Christian Institutions to Remain Closed Aug 29, 20...
  - Orissa Violence: Govt. Like Mute Spectators
  - List of Damaged Churches, Institutions
  - Police Refuse Christians Protection
  - 20 Year Old Rajni Burnt to Death
  - Goa Archdiocese Expresses Solidarity with Orissa V...
  - VIDEO: Orissa Communal Violence
  - Pope Condemns Violence, Appeals for Peace
  - ORISSA: Christians Beaten and Cut to Pieces
  - ORISSA: Christians in Deep Trouble
  - Vatican Deplores Orissa Violence
  - A Plan to Raze All Christian Places
  - Catholics to Close Schools to Protest Orissa Viole...
  - How Could They Not Foresee This?
  - Orissa Church Condemns Swami's Murder
  - Kill Christians and Destroy their Institutions
  - Orissa Anti-Christian Violence August 2008
  - ORISSA: Kandhamal is Burning Again
  - Nun Brutally Gang Raped in Public
  - EFI Denounces Swami's Killing



- "They Don't Even Have a Stick to Protect Us"
- Mother Teresa Nuns Van Attacked
- Prashant Condemns Swami's Killing, Violence
- AICC Condemns Violence, Swami's Killing



## Orissa Time



## Send Us Your Information

"In the present day, however, individual and group effort within these countries is no longer enough. The world situation requires the concerted effort of everyone, a thorough examination of every facet of the problem—social, economic, cultural and spiritual." (Pope Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*, 26 March 1967. No.13)

**Orissa Burning** is committed to telling the world the untold story about the violence against innocent Christians in Orissa, India.

If you've got a story or a viewpoint to share, just drop it in the comments. If you've got pictures or videos, you could either upload it on a free hosting website (such as youtube.com) and send us the link or you could email the same to *orissaburning(at)gmail(dot)com*.

