

INDIA: Indian Christians beaten 'with rods and sticks'

World Watch Monitor (17.10.2017) – <http://bit.ly/2yxVgul> – A Christian man involved in church work across ten villages in the southern Indian state of Telangana was severely beaten earlier this month, a source told World Watch Monitor.

The victim, known as Pastor Seviya, “was attacked by five Hindu extremists with rods and thick sticks ... until he became unconscious”, the source said. The pastor was “in a critical stage for many days” in hospital because of head injuries sustained during the attack on 5 October. He had blood clots on the brain and bleeding from his ears, added the source.

A similar incident on 13 October left another church leader “bleeding profusely” and later hospitalised and needing 12 stitches to his head.

Pastor Khel Prasad Kurre was attacked by Hindu extremists in Chhattisgarh state on his way home after visiting a member of his church, a source told World Watch Monitor.

Kurre said three or four men called out to him while he was riding his motorcycle. When he stopped, the men rushed towards him and started beating him with sticks. Kurre shouted for help, and when people from the village arrived, his attackers fled, also stealing his phone.

When Kurre later reported the incident to the police, he was informed that his attackers had earlier visited the station to report that he was converting people to Christianity. Kurre said police officers threatened to arrest him on charges of luring people into Christianity and that this put him off filing an official complaint against his attackers.

Chhattisgarh is one of eight Indian states to have passed so-

called 'anti-conversion laws', which ostensibly seek to eliminate forced conversions from one set of beliefs to another, but in reality dissuade all conversions.

Five of these states are led by the BJP – the Hindu nationalist party led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. In Jharkhand, the most recent state to pass the law, senior church leaders recently called on the prime minister to help control the [“ideological hatred” of the state’s BJP chief minister](#), who, a day before the bill was passed, published advertisements in daily newspapers using pictures of Mahatma Gandhi and a quote ridiculing missionaries carrying out “fraudulent conversions”.

In two states 'anti conversion' laws are not active, while in a third, Himachal Pradesh, parts of the law were repealed after a court challenge was brought by the Evangelical Fellowship of India.

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