

INDIA: Chhattisgarh, Hindu radicals attack a Pentecostal church

The incident occurred during the prayer service. The attackers beat the faithful gathered to hear the Sunday sermon. Some musical instruments destroyed; three copies of the Bible ripped.

By Nirmala Carvalho

AsiaNews (28.01.2019) – <https://bit.ly/2G7suVc> – A group of radical Hindus attacked a Pentecostal church in Chhattisgarh. The incident occurred yesterday during Sunday prayers, according to Sajan K George, president of the Global Council of Indian Christian (GCIC), who “strongly condemns the attack on the Pentecostal church”.

The Christian leader reports: “Yesterday around 9.30 am, the Rev. Ajay Ravi was preaching at a meeting of about 25 people. Suddenly, without any provocation, 15 people stormed the church, while others waited outside. The attackers were shouting that the people gathered in prayer were insulting the gods and goddesses [Hindu] “.

Later the interruption of the prayer service degenerated into real violence. The radicals, continues Sajan K George, “beat up the faithful, insulted the women. Then they ripped three copies of the Bible, broke some musical instruments and

destroyed a motorcycle. ”

The attack took place the day following the 70th anniversary of the Republic. According to the president of the GCIC, “it is a shame. Religious freedom is guaranteed by the Constitution. This attack intimidates the vulnerable Christian community, [and spreads] fear and insecurity, above all because of the anti-conversion law in force in the State “.

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INDIA: Christians in shock after pastor shot dead in

'safe' Punjab

World Watch Monitor (17.07.2017) – <http://bit.ly/2vvig8D> – The Christian community in Ludhiana, the largest city in India's north-western state of Punjab, is in shock after a pastor was shot dead outside his Pentecostal church on Saturday evening (15 July).

Sultan Masih, 47, who also ran a school for the poor, was gunned down by two people on a motorbike, who shot him at close range outside the Temple of God Church, where he was senior pastor. He suffered multiple wounds to his body and head.

Hundreds of Christians took to the streets on Sunday (16 July), blocking off a major national highway (the road to Jalandhar) for three hours, and only ceasing once they had received assurances from the police that the perpetrators would be brought to justice.

"Pastor Sultan Masih was my neighbour and my friend," fellow pastor Paul Tamizharasan told World Watch Monitor following the funeral today (17 July).

"Family members are grieving and we hope the government will catch the accused. We demand answers and have gone to the Punjab government, but they couldn't find who did this.

"The state of Punjab is very safe in India for Christians. There are Sikhs living here – they are also a religious minority in India. We are also a minority, but never before have we had any threats. But unfortunately this has happened and we are all shocked about how this is possible. Nobody knows how this can happen.

"Two people came by bike. Every Saturday, the pastor, after finishing his Sunday-service preparations, at 8.30pm he will come out. As usual, he had been talking with people outside,

very casually. Then at 8.45, two people came very near, about 2-3 feet, and they shot his leg, and his face and his chest.”

CCTV cameras recorded footage of the attack, but a police spokesman said it was too dark to make out the attackers’ faces.

Masih had been pastor of the church for 20 years and also ran a school for the poor from inside the church. He is survived by his wife, Sarabjit, and sons, Elisha, 26, and Hanok, 18.

According to The Tribune, the Punjab Chief Minister, Amarinder Singh, has promised 500,000 rupees (around \$8,000) for Masih’s widow and a guaranteed job with the police for one of Masih’s sons. He also promised that the killers would be brought to justice.

Some reports say that Masih had received threats before his death. The police denied this but refused to rule out “terror” as a possible motive. Meanwhile the Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee said the attackers were trying to “disturb the peace” and called on the Christian community to “maintain the peace”.

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RUSSIA: Police harass Pentecostal youth event

Invictory.com (19.09.2016) – <http://bit.ly/2cY17v9> – On Saturday, 17 September, in Samara (Russia), police arrested participants in a youth conference “YuS Volga,” which was held in the “Word of Life” church from 16 to 18 September, the Christian megaportal Invictory.com reports.

As Invictory reported, the situation with the arrests has been resolved. All detainees were released in the night of Saturday/Sunday.

The arrest of the conference participants was earlier reported by a lawyer of the Slavic Legal Center, Konstantin Andreev.

“Yesterday disturbing news arrived from Samara: a protestant youth conference was held in the city. During the conference, police burst in and began to ‘interrogate,’” the attorney wrote on his Facebook page. “Ministers were arrested and taken to the police department, including a young pastor from a fraternal church in Israel. Minors were stuffed into the whole vehicle and also taken away. Those who accompanied them were told that they will ‘surrender the children’ only to their parents.”

The attorney said that the chaperones possessed permission for the children’s attendance at the event in simple written form, without notarization. Law enforcement personnel refused to release the children without provision of information about birth and notarized permission by the parents for the chaperones.

“It should be noted that ‘power of attorney,’ on the basis of

which parents permit someone to accompany a child on a trip is a document without entirely clear legal status. Formally such a document is required only in one case—if a child is crossing the boundaries of the country. Within Russia, such a document is not required,” Andreev emphasized.

In his turn, the attorney advised parents to avoid unpleasantness with law enforcement agencies by composing the power of attorney in accordance with all rules, and he described what kind of information should be indicated in the document.