



All India Christian Council

To Protect and Serve

List of Attacks on Churches in Karnataka August-October 2008

The All India Christian Council confirmed details for **48 incidents of violence or discrimination** of varying intensity against Christians across **fourteen districts** in Karnataka between August and October 2008. Incidents range from throwing stones at Christian homes to vandalism of 39 churches to physical attacks on clergy. The frequency of the attacks peaked on September 14th with 12 attacks near Mangalore and another 6 attacks elsewhere within a few hours. Seventeen were in Dakshina Kannada District (formerly known as South Canara), eight were in Davanagere District, five in Udapi District, and others were scattered across the state including five in Bangalore city area.

It is notable that at least **16 of 39 attacks on Christian places of worship occurred after September 14** in spite of appeals to state and central authorities. Also, only two churches of the New Life Fellowship Trust were attacked. New Life was publicly blamed for sparking the violence by allegedly publishing a pamphlet derogatory to Hindu gods, a charge later proven to be false. The **Roman Catholic denomination bore the brunt of attacks** (11) along with the Believers Church (5). Nineteen targeted structures, the clear majority, were independent churches or prayer halls. Incidents of police brutality and disproportionate response to Christian protestors are not included here and are thoroughly documented by other groups.

Number of districts affected: 14 (of 29)

Number of churches and prayer halls damaged: 39

Christian educational institutions attacked: 2

Other incidents of discrimination (houses attacked, false arrests, etc.): 7

Number of people injured: more than 53 (not including those injured in police brutality)

Chronological List of Attacks

August 1st -- Three pastors of Believers Church were arrested in Tavarkere area in Tumkur District for 'forcible conversion' and 'attempt to murder' charges. After three days, they were released on bail. The case is continuing.

August 1st -- Eight Christian workers were arrested in Frazer Town area, Bangalore District for allegedly performing forcible conversions and defaming Hindu deities. They were later released on bail.

August 10th -- At Davanagere, Davanagere District, the House of Prayer church was attacked by around 200 Bajrang Dal activists. Fifteen church members received minor injuries. About 80 members normally attend the church. Six persons were arrested.

August 10th -- Two pastors from Jesus Prayer House Church in Yemana Bethur, Harapanahalli village, Davanagere District, were reportedly stripped and tied to a car for

evangelizing in the area. Hindu radicals are believed to be behind the attack. No FIR was filed.

August 12th -- A mob of about 200 people, including activists of the Hindu Jagarana Vedike and Shiv Sena youth association surrounded the house of Pastor Premkumar in Davangere Town, Davanagere District. They repeatedly pelted the house with stones between 10:30 am and 7 pm. Eleven people including four women were brought out of the house by force. The police were compelled to take the Christians into detention to protect them. The attackers demanded that Pastor Premkumar, Pastor Rajashekar and Pastor Karunakar of Divine Healing Ministries and Hosanna Ministries Eternal Life Church should be exiled from the district. An FIR was filed.

August 17th -- The Divine Healing Ministry church in Davangere city, Davanagere District, was attacked by around 50 Bajrang Dal workers during the church service. Bibles and hymn books were burnt. A few church members were beaten and harassed. No arrests were made.

August 24th -- Nitya Jeeva Devalaya, an independent church in Davangere city, Davanagere District, was attacked during the Sunday worship service. Around 60 Bajrang Dal workers barged in and disrupted the service and beat a few believers. They also broke furniture. And they burnt Bibles and song books. No complaint was registered.

August 27th -- A Christian prayer hall named Yesu Prathanalaya at Uchangidurga in Harpanahalli taluk, Davanagere District, was attacked by about 30 Ram Sena workers. Pastor Raju Gowda was roughed up. Three of the church members were hurt and treated for minor injuries in the hospital. Eight persons were arrested. Case was registered under IPC Section 295 and 298.

September 4th -- Three churches – Divine Healing Ministries, Jesus Prayer House, and Eternal Life Church – in Davanagere District were locked and sealed by the Davanagere Municipal Authorities citing the reason that the churches had no license and authorization to conduct worship.

September 7th -- Around 9 a.m. at Bada village, Davanagere District, an independent church planted by Mission Action Fellowship called Yesu Kripalaya was attacked by a 300-strong mob that broke the asbestos (corrugated material) ceiling, furniture, windows, and set fire to a Bible and other literature. They also broke the cross and the pulpit. Hindu Jagarana Vedike claimed responsibility for the attack and said it was because villagers were forced to convert. The pastor, Lukas, vacated the village and has not returned. Ten arrests were made. Case registered under IPC Sections 295 and 298.

NOTE: Mr. Mahendra Kumar, Bajrang Dal State Convener, claimed responsibility for 12 attacks near Mangalore on Sunday, Sept. 14, 2008.

September 14th

Between 9 a.m. and 11.15 a.m., the following churches and prayer halls were attacked:

1. In Bannur village, Udupi District, a group 25 to 30 attackers entered and vandalised Believers Church. They burned Bibles and damaged the furniture. Two church members were beaten. Four persons were arrested. Case was booked under IPC Sections 143, 147, 148, 427 and 149.

2. In Udupi city, Udupi District, the New Life Fellowship Hall was attacked by 40 to 50 slogan-shouting Bajrang Dal workers. They injured five adults and a child. Windows were smashed and furniture damaged. The pastor's name is Pastor Gopi and FIR was registered.
3. In Shiroor village, Udupi District, a gang of 25 with sickles and sticks attacked the Life and Light Ministries prayer hall. The pastor was assaulted, a car torched, windows broken, and furniture damaged. Five arrests were made. Case registered under IPC Sections 143, 147, 295, 448, 324, 506, 427 and 149.
4. In Koteswar village, Udupi District, the Carmel Ashram (Roman Catholic) was attacked. Icons/statues of Mother Mary and Infant Jesus were damaged by around 25 people. A few church members were physically harassed. A couple of them were slapped or hit. Two persons were arrested.
5. In Mudur village, Udupi District, a group attacked Mission One Million Life Centre and physically harassed one person and damaged furniture, a television set, and the telephone. Five arrests were made.
6. At Kodical, Mangalore city, Dakshina Kannada District, a Tamil-language Protestant church which is part of the Church of South India denomination was attacked by 15 persons during a prayer service. Several church members were assaulted. Furniture was destroyed. Four persons were arrested.
7. At the Roman Catholic Adoration Monastery on Falnir Road, Mangalore city, Dakshina Kannada District, about 15 people vandalised the building and sacraments, and attacked nuns who were in prayer. Several of the nuns were severely injured and treated in the hospital. Seven arrests were made.
8. At Kavoor, Mangalore city, Dakshina Kannada District, around 20 persons vandalised and desecrated the Assembly of Prayer Fellowship. Policemen stationed there were attacked. Bibles and Christian literature were burnt. Seven Christians received injuries. Four arrests were made.
9. At Shakti Nagar in Mangalore Rural taluk, Dakshina Kannada District, around 60 persons vandalised and desecrated the Jesus Christ Church. Windows were broken and furniture damaged. No arrests were made. Case registered under IPC Sections 143, 147, 148, 447, 427, and 149.
10. At Bilinele village, Dakshina Kannada District, at the Assembly of God Church, around 20 persons vandalised the facility. Bibles were burnt. A few Christians were assaulted. Nine persons were arrested.
11. At Kalanja village, Dakshina Kannada District, about 15 persons attacked believers with sickles and desecrated the Indian Pentecostal Prayer Hall. Four people received injuries and were treated in the hospital. Nine arrests were made.
12. At Madanthyar village, Dakshina Kannada District, a gang of 30 people assaulted the pastor of the Mahima Prayer Hall with iron rods and desecrated the church. Three people,

including the pastor, were injured. Six arrests were made. Case registered under IPC Sections 143, 147, 148, 427, 324 and 34.

13. A group of alleged Bajrang Dal members attacked the New Life Fellowship at Madanthyar, Dakshina Kannada District. The property was damaged and an FIR filed.

14. The End Time Full Gospel Church in Jayapura, Chikmagalore District, was attacked during the Sunday service by 15 people who claimed to be Bajrang Dal activists. They had sticks and sickles and injured nine Christians. No arrests were made.

15. Kingdom Hall church in Chikmagalore District was attacked by 20 Bajrang Dal workers who threw chilli powder in the eyes of the Christians. A pregnant woman was attacked and kicked. She later received treatment for her injuries in the hospital. No arrests were made.

16. New Apostolic Church was attacked in Singatagere village, Chikmagalore District by twelve people. They damaged the church, burnt a Bible, and one Christian, Kallesh, was stripped naked. An FIR was filed.

17. Ebenezer Prayer Hall in Chikmagalore town, Chikmagalore District, was vandalized by around 25 VHP workers who damaged the church furniture. An FIR was filed.

18. An attack took place on the St. Thomas Church, (Church of South India) in Chikballapur, Chikballapur District. Miscreants came in the night and vandalized the church.

September 15th

The following places were attacked between 1.30 a.m. and 3.30 p.m.

1. At Ganjimath village, Mangalore Rural taluk, Dakshina Kannada District, window panes of the Believers Church were broken by motorcycle-borne vandals. No arrests.

2. In Bantwal taluk, Dakshina Kannada District, vandals tried to set the door of the Believers Church on fire even though a police team was guarding the church. No arrests were made.

3. On Jail Road, Mangalore city, Dakshina Kannada District, motorcycle-borne vandals pelted stones at the Capuchin Church (Roman Catholic) and damaged sacred icons and statues. No arrests. Case registered under IPC sections 427 and 153a.

September 16th

1. In Kolar town, Kolar District, vandals damaged a century-old statue of the Mother Mary at the St. Mary's church (Roman Catholic). No arrests were made.

2. At Adyar, Mangalore Rural taluk, Dakshina Kannada District, over 20 vandals desecrated the Rima Worship Centre and destroyed property. No arrests were made.

3. At Ernody village, Dakshina Kannada District, vandals broke into the St. George Church (Roman Catholic) desecrated the place, and attempted to set it on fire. Two arrests were made. Case registered under IPC sections 457, 295, and 448.

September 18th

1. On B.C. Road in Bantwal taluk, Dakshina Kannada District, vandals pelted stones at the Believers Church. Windows were broken. No arrests.

2. In Dharwad city, Dharwad District, attackers broke the glass encasing of the Mother Mary statue of the Presentation Girls School. No arrests. Case was registered under IPC Section 295.

September 19th

1. In Sagar town, Shimoga District, a group hung a garland of chappals (flip flop sandals) on the Jesus statue at St. Mary's Church (Roman Catholic) This is a serious insult in the culture. Three arrests were made. Case registered under IPC section 153 and 153(a).

2. At Padu Kody village, Dakshina Kannada District, motorcycle-borne vandals pelted stones at the St. Xavier's (Roman Catholic) church and damaged icons. Cases registered under IPC sections 143, 144, 295, 427 and 149.

September 21st

1. A group of unknown assailants broke windows of a prayer hall called "Brethren Christa Aaradhanalaya" near Nellihudikeri town, Kodagu District. No arrests made.

2. At Yedapadavu village of Mangalore Rural taluk, Dakshina Kannada District, a seminary belonging to the Believers Church was attacked. Vandals threw stones and damaged the roof of the institution. No arrests were made.

3. In Bangalore District, at the St. James Church (Roman Catholic) in Mariyannapalya, two gold plated crowns and cash from the offering box were stolen, and the sacred sacrament damaged. Seven persons were arrested. A case was registered under IPC sections 144, 149, 333 and 448

4. At the Holy Name of Jesus Church (Roman Catholic) at Rajarajeshwarinagar in Bangalore District, the glass casing around the statue of the Infant Jesus was stoned and the statue damaged. No arrests have been made. A case was registered under IPC sections 144, 149, 333 and 448.

September 26th

1. Peace Prayer Hall in Yelahanka, Bangalore District, was vandalized. Pastor Gideon said about 20 members of the Bajrang Dal came as the prayer meeting was in progress and broke the musical instruments and burnt the Bible. An FIR was lodged.

2. At Shamboor village in Bantwal taluk, Dakshina Kannada District, attackers vandalized Sacred Heart Church. They burnt the Bible and two song books. They also damaged the pulpit, a lamp, a clock and two tube lights. An FIR was filed.

September 29th -- Money (Rs. 10,000) and electronic items were stolen from St. Anthony's church (Roman Catholic) Church in Anagalpura, Bangalore District. Unknown criminals ransacked the store room & stole musical instruments, microphones, and a loudspeaker.

October 5th -- Immanuel Prayer Hall in Chamraj Nagar near Mysore, Mysore District, was burnt down. According to Pastor Patrick, Bajrang Dal workers came and threatened him

couple of weeks ago and he believes they were involved in arson. Police declared that it was just an accident. An FIR was filed.

October 13th -- Some miscreants set fire to St. Anthony's church (Roman Catholic) at Yadavanahalli, Bangalore Urban District. The church suffered extensive damage and the loss is estimated around Rs. 1 million (10 lakh). Police said the fire was due to an electrical short circuit. Two experts' teams, comprising electrical engineers and technicians, said there was no trace of any electrical short circuit. A case has been lodged in Attibele Police station and no arrests were made.

October 25th -- Six Christians were arrested in Bellary city, Bellary District, and then released. A Christian man, Dr. Suresh, and his team from different independent churches were involved in children's ministry and accused of forcible conversions. Members of an extremist group brought the media to the church and wanted to turn their allegations into big news. However, a pastor, Mr. Ratna Kumar, stopped the attack with the support of a few local Dalit leaders. No case was registered. Since those who were taken into custody were released, the matter was closed.

NOTE: There are likely several more incidents not reported as we do not have the full information and/or some local pastors are unwilling to file a report and risk publicity.