



UNITED CHRISTIAN FORUM

UCF toll-free helpline number: 1-800-208-4545 was launched on 19th January 2015 with the aim of upholding fundamental freedom and promotion of values of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity of India. The helpline helps people in distress, especially those who are not aware of the law of the land and the system by guiding them how to reach out to the public authorities and by providing the way to legal remedies.

Sharp Increase in Violence Against Christians in 2024 Dignity of Burial Rights Denied to Families Rise in False Cases Sees Over 100 Indian Followers of Christ Arrested

New Delhi – 21 March 2024

With barely a few weeks for National elections, the first 75 days of 2024 has seen a large-scale erosion of basic fundamental rights and protection of Indian Christians. The period of 1st January to 15th March, one hundred and sixty one (161) incidents of violence against Christians were reported on the UCF toll-free helpline number 1-800-2028-4545.

January witnessed 70 incidents of violence against Christians followed by 62 incidents in 29 days of February and 29 incidents in 15 days of March, 2024.

Chhattisgarh, a state notoriously known for social ostracization of Christians, is the number one leading state in assaults against Christians with 47 incidents of reported violence. Christians are being denied access to water from the community-bore-well of the village. In this state, sadly, even dead Christians are not spared as many were denied burial as per Christian rituals. Local villagers have been threatening to cremate the bodies as a final act of *Gharwapasi*. As in the Christmas period of 2022, Christians are again being chased out of their own homes. Locals are physically assaulting, threatening their lives and vandalizing their homes.

Uttar Pradesh, home to 80 Lok Sabha seats, with 36 incidents, ranks in the second position of states where Indian citizens are being persecuted for practicing Christianity. There is clear evidence of state-sponsored harassment of Christians in this state as the police files false allegations of conversion against the pastors even for praying in birthday parties and other social gatherings. UCF helpline has recorded over 30 incidents of arrests and detentions of pastors under UP Freedom of Religion Act (UP FORA).

Other states that are witnessing incidents of violence against Christians so far this year are: Madhya Pradesh with 14, Haryana with 10, Rajasthan with 9, then Jharkhand and Karnataka with 8 each, Punjab and Andhra Pradesh with 6 each, Gujarat and Bihar with 3 each, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Odisha with 2 each, Delhi, Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra and West Bengal with one (1) each incidents.

In all, there are 19 states in India wherein Christians are facing threat to their lives for practicing their faith. There are 122 Christians who have either been detained or arrested on the false allegation of conversions in just 75 days of 2024. As UCF, we request our leadership to put an end to this violence by taking strict action against perpetrators of all such crimes, and we hope and pray for a peaceful and fair election.

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