31/05/2020

Christian Families in India’s Chhattisgarh State brutally displaced



05/29/2020 Washington, D.C. (International Christian Concern) – On May 20, three Christian families in India’s Chhattisgarh state were brutally attacked and displaced by radical Hindu nationalists. The attack, which took place in the middle of the night, has left several Christians severely injured and all three families homeless.

According to Channaram Markam, a mob of around 30 radicals attacked three Christian homes in Devkhumpli village, located in the Sukma district of Chhattisgarh. The extremists accused the Christians of practicing a foreign faith and deserting the village gods and goddesses. As they beat the Christians with sticks and sharp stones, the radicals threatened that they would be killed if they refused to recant their Christian faith.

For those unable to escape the mob, they were tortured for more than an hour. As a result of the attack, five Christians are hospitalized, including Bhima Markam, who is fighting for his life in the hospital.

"*It happened around 11:00 in the night,*" Hadme Markam told International Christian Concern (ICC). "*I woke up from my sleep when I heard a big bang on my door. I was very scared because my husband was away for work that night.*"

"*Before I realized what was happening, a mob broke down the door, rushed into the house, and started to beat me,*" Hadme continued. "*All my fear was for my child. I held her close to my chest and pushed through the mob. I was able to flee because it was dark. However, they ransacked my house and destroyed all of my household things.*"

"*I fled for my life along with my four-year-old daughter,*" Hadme explained. "*I was soaked in blood, walking through the thick forest. I was carrying my four-year-old daughter and was hoping we would reach the next village. I did not know if I would make it to my husband.*"

Both Channaram and Hadme converted to Christianity a year ago after experiencing a miraculous healing in their family. Since then, the radicals have been harassing them.

"*In December, the Hindu radicals threatened to kill me if I didn't give up my new faith,*" Channaram told ICC. "*However, I told them boldly that I am not doing any harm to anybody or doing anything bad. I have received peace and joy in my heart, and I learn good things every week when I go to church. I am not going to deny Jesus, no matter what, even if it means death.*"

According to local reports, the Christian families of Devkhumpli village were told by radicals that they were forbidden from using the community well a week before the attack. Hindu radicals had a villager monitoring the well to report if any Christian visited or used it. To collect water, the Christian families had to travel to a neighboring village, approximately a mile away.

The day after the attack, May 21, a local pastor helped the Christians report the incident to police. Police registered First Information Report No. 46/2020 and charged the assailants under Sections 147, 452, 323, 427, and 506 of the IPC. According to local Christians, the Station House Officer promised to investigate, but only after the COVID-19 lockdown is lifted. The officer then advised the Christians to not return to the village as there could be further attacks.

All three Christian families remain displaced as a result of the attack. Most of them are staying at the hospital where their loved ones are being treated for the injuries they received in the May 20 attack.

Source