



ASIA/INDIA - Christians beaten and boycotted in Orissa on charges of "forced conversions"

Bhubaneswar (Agenzia Fides) - Hindu extremists have launched a series of attacks and boycotts against Christians in Orissa (eastern India). As reported to Fides by local sources, on 24 June a large group of Hindu extremists raided a meeting of the "independent Pentecostal Church", in the village of Canalpada, in the district of Duagarh. The militants accused those present to make "forced conversions" and forced them to end the meeting. The seven Christian leaders present, in order to avoid conflicts, took a car to go back home, but the militants on motorcycles blocked the car, provoking an accident. The passengers, including, Pastor Sura Mahat Samal, suffered minor injuries and were taken to hospital.

According to Fides sources, the Hindu extremist group "Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh" (RSS, "Corps volunteers Hindu") organized a series of attacks against Christians in Orissa. Christians are "unwanted and thrown out." In another episode reported to Fides, in Malkangiri district, on June 10 last year, about 70 Hindu villagers attacked Christians with swords and sticks, seriously injuring some of the faithful and damaging two houses. Since April Christian villagers are not allowed to draw water from the public well. Christian families have started to draw water from the nearby river, but due to heavy rains, the river has become muddy. On 8 May, a Christian woman, Mongli Madhi, went to fetch water from the public well. Three Hindu extremists stopped and beat her severely. The next day, the three extremists went to the woman's house and, in the absence of her husband, they beat her again, seriously wounding her. Given the threats and discrimination suffered, Christians have been forced to move to another area. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 27/06/2013)