

# Christian Nuns Arrested Over Conversion Charges

Protests across India intensified after two Catholic nuns and a third Christian woman were arrested in Chhattisgarh on charges of “conversion” and “human trafficking”—allegedly for escorting a legally adult young woman to a job opportunity. Sister Preeti Mary, Sister Vandana Francis, and Sukaman Mandavi were released on bail after 10 days, but the charges remain active.

On July 25, the trio accompanied local tribal women to Durg Railway Station, as one young woman—aged between 19 and 22—was traveling to Agra for work as a cook. She denied any recent conversion, stating she had embraced Christianity years earlier. A mob linked to the radical Hindu nationalist group Bajrang Dal reportedly assaulted the women, pressuring them to claim they had been converted and trafficked against their will. Threats included violence toward the young woman’s family.

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Bajrang Dal affiliates allegedly coerced the women into false testimony. One woman identified Jyoti Sharma, connected to the Hindutva movement, who allegedly coerced her, warning, “You must say you were taken against your will or your brother will be beaten.” The local BJP has remained mostly silent on the case, even as national backlash escalates.

In response, Christians in Goa and around India organized silent marches demanding justice. Father Bolmax Pereira, who helped lead a march in Chicalim, stated, “We may be silent, but our God fights for us.” The political opposition Congress Party publicly aligned with Christian protesters against the

persecution.



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The Catholic Bishops' Conference of India issued a statement acknowledging the government's role in securing bail, while urging the BJP to take stronger action to uphold minority rights. CBCI president Archbishop Andrews Thazhath emphasized the need to protect all religious minorities in India's secular democracy and to immediately drop charges against the women, who are legally adults and true believers.

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Independent data collected by the Evangelical Fellowship's religious liberty commission found Chhattisgarh to be the second most dangerous state for Christians in India, noting dozens of incidents of false arrests, threats, physical violence, and worship disruptions. Authorities often delay justice or downgrade criminal charges, leaving Christian minorities vulnerable despite constitutional protections.

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Christian persecutory conditions in India are exacerbated by discriminatory social and legal systems, particularly targeting former Hindus and rural Christian communities. As violence increases, the chasm between India's secular promises and on-the-ground reality deepens.

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