

Christians Tormented With Music, Then Attacked

For months, a group of Hindu extremists in southern India had been blasting high-volume movie music at the **prayer** meetings of a local Christian ministry.

In early July, the harassment crossed the line to assault when the Hindus burst into the **prayer** meeting of End Time Ministries, knocked three **worshippers** unconscious and ripped the clothes off a widow, ministry officials say.

As a result, End Time Ministries has moved to a new location to achieve a measure of safety, its leaders say, and a magistrate has warned the ministry to stop holding its meetings in homes.

End Time Pastor Mounesh, who identifies himself by the single name, told Open Doors News that for three months, a man he identified as Kumar Nagappa had been disrupting the ministry's **prayer** meetings in the Romagonadanahalli, a tiny village in central Karnataka, a fast-growing, comparatively wealthy state in southwest India. Mounesh said Nagappa would point a loudspeaker at the meeting place and play Hindi movie music.

Mounesh complained to police in Basavapatna, more than 150 kilometers to the south. The police issued a warning to Nagappa, according to Moses Muragavel, a lawyer who takes up many **Christian persecution** cases in Karnataka.

"Nagappa has been disturbing the Christians' **prayer** meetings since three months back," Muragavel said. "The police reached a compromise between the two parties and warned Nagappa to stop disturbing the Christians." Another extremist, identified by Muragavel by the name Hanumanthappa, was taken into

custody, he said.

Tensions quickly escalated from there.

“Instigated by the extremists, the whole villagers thereafter turned against pastor Mounesh and filed a counter police complaint against him,” Muragavel said.

He said Basavapatna Police Sub Inspector Shankariahvadi then instructed Mounesh to sign a statement that he would stop the **prayer** meetings, warning that dire consequences would follow if he did not. Mounesh signed.

Nonetheless, End Time Ministries held a **prayer** meeting the next day, July 6, led by Mounesh and two guest pastors.

That’s when about 100 Hindu villagers burst into the house church and beat up the three pastors, as well as church members.

“Two Christian men, Hosuramma and Gurumoorthy, were mercilessly beat up, repeatedly punched slapped and kicked on their chests,” Muragavel said, identifying the men by single names. They also set upon a widow, whom Muragavel identified by the single name Bhagyamma.

“The extremists chased her around and tore up her clothes,” he said.

The three Christians lost consciousness and were taken to the hospital in Davangere, a city about 50 kilometers to the north. They were discharged after three days. Even so, Muragavel said, “the police refused to register a separate case on the incident.” According to the medical report, there were no serious injuries, a finding disputed by the Christian leaders.

Area Christians appealed to H.T. Sangliana, vice chairman of the National Minority Commission of India, who began a series of phone calls to police officials, who ultimately prevailed upon the police sub inspector of Basavapatna to file a First Information Report.

The Christians lodged a police complaint against the Hindu extremists, who filed a counter-complaint against Pastor Mounesh. The police registered both the complaints.

Davangere Superintendent of Police (Rural) Kavalappa told Open doors News that an investigation is ongoing. Both sides appeared in court July 27, where the magistrate told Pastor Mounesh he should not conduct worship services in homes. End Time Ministries has no building of its own; meetings and worship services typically are held in the pastor's house.

In the meantime, Pastor Paul Praveen, area deputy superintendent of End Time Ministries, told Open Doors News that Mounesh has stopped all Christian activities in the area.

"He has relocated to another area for safety measure." Praveen said.

With 49 cases of violence and hostility against Christians in 2011, Karnataka is the state with the highest incidence of persecution, according to the Evangelical Fellowship of India.