

# *Human Rights Without Frontiers Int'l*

Avenue d'Auderghem 61/16, 1040 Brussels  
Phone/Fax: 32 2 3456145

Email: [international.secretariat.brussels@hrwf.net](mailto:international.secretariat.brussels@hrwf.net) – Website:  
<http://www.hrwf.net>



## **Hindu Extremist Movements and their Impact on Religious Minorities**

**HUMAN RIGHTS WITHOUT FRONTIERS INTERNATIONAL**

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**By Willy Fautre, Alfiaz Vaiya and Serena Romeo**

## **Hindu Movements, BJP and Modi**

In the last months and years, acts of intolerance and violence perpetrated by Hindu organizations, groups and individuals have occurred against religious minorities.

### ***Hindutva ideology***

"Hinduness", a word coined by Vinayak Damodar Savarkar in his 1923 pamphlet entitled *Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?* is used to describe movements advocating political Hindu nationalism.

In a judgment, the Indian Supreme Court ruled that "no precise meaning can be ascribed to the terms "Hindu", "Hindutva" and "Hinduism"; and no meaning in the abstract can confine it to the narrow limits of religion alone, excluding the content of Indian culture and heritage.

In popular usage Hindutva has come to be identified with the guiding ideology of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a Hindu nationalist organization. The etymology of the word is peculiar, "Hindu-" coming from a Persian root while "-tva" is a Sanskrit suffix. "Hindutva" is thus usually translated as "Hinduness", describing a nationalist identity based around the Hindu religion. It is in many respects a syncretic ideology; though it draws heavily from Hindu philosophy rhetorically and holds Hindu historical and religious figures up as inspirational examples, it is also influenced by Western traditions that have no historical origins in Hinduism.

### ***Political embodiment of the Hindutva ideology***

This right-wing ideology has existed since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, but did not play a dominant role in Indian politics until the late 1980s. It then attracted many Hindus following two events. The first event was the use of a large Parliamentary Majority by the Rajiv Gandhi government to overturn a Supreme Court verdict that had angered conservative Muslims (see the Shah Bano case). The second was a dispute over a 16th century Mughal Babri Mosque in Ayodhya that some Hindus claimed to be the birthplace and site of the original temple of Lord Rama. Hindu nationalists destroyed the mosque and then set about to kill and injure Muslims protesting against the destruction of the mosque. The BJP in elections in 1991 and 1996 saw an increase in their seats in the Indian Parliament with many observers putting the surge in votes due to the latter event.

### ***Indian elections and the possibility of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) forming the next government***

The Indian election is taking place in the world's second more populous nation and biggest democracy. Amid the fanfare of this election, exit polls predict that Narendra Modi and the BJP will form the next government. The BJP has often been accused of participation in religious violence and using religiously sensitive issues for political advantage. The BJP's xenophobic and intolerant ideology has contributed to fomenting communal tension. Although the party itself does not openly advocate violence or actions against religious minorities, members of the BJP have been linked to such violence. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and paramilitary organisations like

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Bajrang Dal continue to seek support by evoking fears and resentment toward religious minority groups. The results have often been explosive. Social hostility and violence directed against Christians were especially alarming in 2013. Christians in particular are targeted for intimidation and violence. Moreover, vague and ambiguous laws have been used as cover to justify this violence. For instance, the Freedom of Religion Acts, originally intended to prevent forced or manipulative conversion, have been exploited by Hindu nationalist groups to restrict Christians' right to propagate their beliefs. The result has been a distressing climate of harassment, vigilantism and widespread impunity for religiously-motivated hate crimes.

### ***Modi background***

Narendra Modi is a Hindu nationalist who was a member of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a far-right organization based on European fascist ideologies. The RSS still operates as a nationalist organization with the BJP being its political wing.

Modi has overseen a transformation of Gujrat due to economic growth levels under his tenure as the Chief Minister of Gujrat. Modi has a reputation for removing corruption and promoting economic policies that remove red tape and create an enabling environment for growth. This is an even stronger pull factor given the last ten years of a Congress led government which has been mired in corruption scandals and slow economic growth. However he has a troublesome reputation and track record regarding religious minorities in India. Whilst he was Chief Minister of Gujarat, nearly 200 Muslims were killed with others being raped, severely beaten and displaced. It is alleged that he was complicit in these attacks against Muslims as his administration failed to act to prevent Hindu nationalists from attacking Muslims. This resulted in a travel ban being placed on Modi which prevented him from entering the United States and European Union on grounds that Modi violated religious freedom. However in 2012 many countries in the European Union overturned the ban.<sup>1</sup> Although several investigations have taken place, Modi has never been charged with an offence. However he has never apologized for his administration's failure to prevent the attack. Furthermore BJP activists have been behind several attacks on Christians in India and false accusations against Christians Pastors for forced conversions. More worryingly in the election campaign, a senior party member Amit Shah, General Secretary of the BJP, was banned from campaigning in Uttar Pradesh after he incited hatred against religious minorities. Worryingly, Amit Shah is likely to become the next Home Minister of India after the election.

***Human Rights Without Frontiers*** has carried out a preliminary enquiry about the Hindu groups that are behind numerous hate-motivated incidents and crimes targeting members of religious minorities.

***Human Rights Without Frontiers*** urges the European Union to follow events in India especially with the possibility of a new government in India led by Modi and the BJP

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.internationalpolicydigest.org/2014/02/25/time-end-narendra-modis-travel-ban-united-states/>

This all the more vital given our research and the track record of Modi, the BJP and comments made by BJP officials in the election campaign.

**Human Rights Without Frontiers** urges the EU to raise the issue with India in bilateral talks and in Human Rights Dialogues.

*Human Rights Without Frontiers* calls upon the Indian authorities to prosecute and condemn the authors of such incidents, and to develop a culture of tolerance among their population.

## **Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)**

The first Hindu nationalist organisation formed was the [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh](#) (RSS), founded in 1925.

The **Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh** (RSS) was formed in 1925 by **Dr. Keshav Baliram Hedgewar**, a Nagpur doctor. He formed the group with the proclaimed aim of protecting Hindu culture and the diversity of Indian civilization from the effects of western Imperialism and Islamic ideology through greater organization and cooperation of Hindu society. The current president of the RSS is **Mohan Bhagwat**. The organization has an estimated 4.5 million members.

RSS's ideology is one of Hindu nationalism (*Hindutva*). A former chief of the RSS and one of its main ideologues wrote:

“The non-Hindu peoples in Hindusthan must either adopt the Hindu culture and language, must learn to respect and hold in reverence Hindu religion, must entertain no idea but that of the glorification of the Hindu race and culture: i.e., they must not only give up their attitude of intolerance and ungratefulness towards this land and its age-old traditions, but also cultivate a positive attitude of love and devotion instead, . . . in a word, they must cease to be foreigners, or must stay in this country wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation, claiming nothing, deserving no privileges, far less any preferential treatment-not even citizens rights.”

Since its origins, the RSS has participated actively in the political process through the Bharatiya Janata Party. They are very well organized and have a hierarchical structure, with the Sarsanghchhalak serving as the family head. The group has been lead by four Sarsanghchhalak since its founder, Dr. Keshav Baliram Hedgewar, passed away in 1940.

The RSS was banned in India three different times during periods where the government considered them a threat to the state. These time periods included 1948 after Mahatma Gandhi's assassination, during the 1975 emergency in India, and after the 1992 Babri Masjid demolition. Each time, the bans were eventually lifted after the Supreme Court of India declined to uphold them due to lack of evidence of their involvement in alleged illegal activities.

The RSS continues to be viewed as controversial because of its, at times violent, efforts to stop conversions of Hindus and to “organize” Hindu society. According to Paul R. Brass, Professor Emeritus of Political Science and South Asian Studies at the University of Washington, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh is the core of a family of militant Hindu nationalist organizations.

### **Acts of violence in 2013**

**16 February:** Pastor Isaac Rajamani of Friends Missionary Prayer Band, along with another evangelist called Raju, were attacked by Bajrang Dal while conducting a prayer meeting. Bajrang Dal assaulted the two individuals and held them in Khalwa where they were further beaten by members of the Hindu nationalist organization

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. Following this, they were taken to a Police station at Khalwa, where they were charged under section 295A and held in Harsud Jail.

**18 February:** Four Christians - Pastor Iliyas Buck, 42; HiraLal, 32; VishramKorku, 22; and SundarRachiya, 18 - gathered for a prayer meeting when 70 members of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh disrupted the meeting and started to punch and kick the worshipers. The four were then dragged to the local police station for questioning. The police released them at 21:00 without charging them.

### **Acts of Violence in 2012**

**23 January:** Kanara, Karnataka - RSS members disrupted a prayer meeting led by Pastor Chandrakanth Chavan of New Life Fellowship. He was beaten, stripped naked and paraded through the village.

**31 January:** Korba, Chhattisharh - RSS members surrounded Nirmala Convent School and tried to force those present to make a ritual offering to a Hindu goddess. Although the principal, a Christian religious sister, refused to conduct the ritual, a teacher was later forced to do it.

**15 February:** Pandhi village, Chhattisharh - RSS members interrupted a prayer service and tried to force the Pastors, Daulat Ram and Sunam Kumar Besra, to halt the meeting. The attackers tore down the tent that was being used and attacked the Christians who had come to pray. Some of the worshippers suffered severe injuries.

**25 March:** Dhanegaon, Chhinwara, Madhya Pradesh - RSS members disrupted a Christian service and started beating several church members, including Pastors Harichand Varti, Santaram Parteti and Mayram Padame. The three pastors were dragged to the police station, where they were charged with "promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion and deliberate and malicious acts, intended to outrage religious feelings or any class by insulting its religion or religious belief."

**28 March:** Gadag, Karnataka - While distributing religious literature, church members were beaten by RSS members. The Christians were arrested for forcible conversion and released later.

**7 April:** Maharajganj, Uttar Pradesh - RSS members entered a "Festival of Deliverance" meeting, organised by the Maharajganj Baptist Church in Uttar Pradesh. Several Christians were beaten, including Pastor Ram Chander, Vish Prasad and his wife, Ambika Prasad, a convert from Hinduism. A few attackers were arrested but released the same day without charges.

**12 April:** Kakinda, East Godavari, Andhra Pradesh - Hindu extremists from the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) tied and stabbed a pastor identified only as Ratnababu, his wife and his son. The RSS members arrived to the pastor's house and asked for him. When his son, Madhu, opened the door, the attackers pounced on him, stuffed his mouth with cloth and tied both his hands and legs. They later attacked the pastor and his wife. Although Madhu and others identified the assailants, police filed a case against "unknown persons".

**7 September:** Birmawal villages, Madhya Pradesh - While distributing Christian pamphlets, Pastor John Pargy of the India Gospel Church was stopped by Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Bajrang Dal members. He was dragged into the police station, where the attackers told the police the pastor publicly criticised Hinduism and forced them to drink cow's blood. He was detained for three days.

### **Acts of Violence in 2009**

**22 January:** Hindu extremists from the *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* assaulted pastor T.T. Abraham of the Brethren Assembly Church and beat him till he fell unconscious in Vaithiry.

**26 January:** Hindu extremists from the Hindu extremist *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* on Jan. 26 vandalized and attacked the nuns at St. Mary School in Kadiri. A mob of about 12 extremists led by Vishnuvardhan Reddy barged into the school premises accusing authorities of not hoisting the flag on India's Republic day. The extremists destroyed furniture, window panes and attacked the sisters. A deputy superintendent of police identified only as Sainad said that school officials and the attackers reached a compromise.

**15 March:** Hindu extremists from the *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* accused pastor Tiwari of trying to convert people to Christianity by offering them money and seriously injured another Christian in Ludhiana.

**06 April:** In Dharmapuri village, Karimnagar district about 40 Hindu extremists of the *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* broke into the house of 67-year-old Pastor Prabhu Dass, and charged him with attempting forcible conversion, then dragged him and three other women to the police station, where they were held for 3 days.

**08 May:** Members of the Hindu extremist *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* interrupted a Good Shepherd Community Church screening of the "Jesus Film" and accused pastor Kandha Swamy of forceful conversion in Erode district. The extremists barged into the house of the pastor, verbally abused him and warned him to vacate his house. Police arrived during the middle of the film and took all equipment, including a ministry team vehicle, to the police station.

**24 May:** About 10 Hindu extremists from the Hindu extremist *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* attacked pastor Ramesh Mandevay, leaving him unconscious in Dewas. The Hindu hardliners stopped the pastor as he was on his way back from visiting a Christian's home and assaulted him. Sustaining internal injuries, the pastor was hospitalized.

**14 June:** About 50 Hindu extremists from the *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* and *Bajrang Dal* ( Youth Wing of the World Hindu Council) chanting, " Jai Shri Ram [Praise lord Ram]" barged into Beersheba Church and attacked pastor Kuldeep Daniel, his family and church in Ratlam. The extremists beat, punched and kicked the pastor, his wife, two children and brother and also verbally abused them. They also destroyed church musical instruments and took the pastor's books and his brother cell phone. The couple suffered minor injuries.

**19 July:** Police arrested Pastor Devadass of Manna Church after 10 Hindu extremists from the *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* beat him on his way from a Sunday worship meeting. They accused him of distributing gospel tracts on Hindu temple premises in Vemulawada and Rajarajeshwar and dragged him to a police station. Officers detained him for a couple of hours, releasing him on the condition that he return to the station the next day.

**20 August:** Hindu extremists from the *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* attacked two Christians in Amtala, Kolkatta. Eight extremists accused two unidentified Christians of forceful conversion and filed a police complaint against them after forcing villagers to sign a letter of complaint.

### **Acts of violence in 2008**

**3 February:** Bangalore, Karnataka - About 20 Hindutva extremists attacked the pastor and believers of an independent church. The extremists are believed to be from the *Vishwa Hindu Parishad* and the *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh*.

**9 March:** Davangare, Karnataka - Hindu extremists belonging to the *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* disrupted Christian worship in a rented home, severely beating members of a Brethren Assembly, with one believer requiring hospitalization for internal injuries.

**11 March:** Shajapur, Maksi district, Madhya Pradesh - Hindu extremists belonging to the *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* beat pastor Tulsi Ram and had him arrested on false charges of forced conversion

**23 March:** Bherugarh village, Jhabua district, Madhya Pradesh - Seven people associated with the Hindu extremist *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* attacked the evening service of a house church with stones and sticks. They beat the owner of the house, and his wife. They then looted the house and destroyed its roof.

**14 April:** Nalgonda district, Andhra Pradesh - A mob of 50 people led by three activists belonging *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* arrived and attacked a pastor and evangelist who were distributing Christian literature to children. The mob left them badly injured.

**26 March:** Gundikoppa village, Shimoga district, Karnataka - Hindu radicals led by the local extremist *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* leader forced their way into a house and assaulted three Christians.

**6 April:** Mulugu village, Medak district, Andhra Pradesh - Hindu extremists from the *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* attacked 30 Christians at Sunday worship, accusing an independent pastor of forcible conversion, demanding that his house church cease meeting and ordering him to leave Mulugu village.

**8 April:** Shimoga district, Karnataka - Hindu extremists from the *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* stormed into a Bible study in a house and accused a church pastor and the homeowner of forcible conversion.



**15 April:** Nalgonda district, Devarakonda village, Andhra Pradesh - About 50 Hindutva extremists from the *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* beat two pastors.

**25 April:** JP Nagar District, Karnataka - Hindutva extremists belonging to the *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* and *Bajrang Dal* stormed a rented house church in the Raggiguda slum, beat a pastor and three evangelists and threatened children.

**22 June:** Rangadam Palli, Medak district, Andhra Pradesh - Hindu extremists from the *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* attacked a pastor, his wife and another Christian woman and poured alcohol on them.

**22 June:** Rangadampally center, three kilometers from Siddipet, Andhra Pradesh – Hindutva extremists belonging to the *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* attacked a prayer meeting.

**26 July:** Heggere, Hubli, Dharwad district Karnataka – Police arrested a pastor after Hindu extremists from the *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* and *Bajrang Dal* attacked him at a prayer meeting and falsely accused him of forcible conversion and kidnapping.

**5 July:** Baswapur village, Bhiknoor Mandal, Nizambad district, Andhra Pradesh – Hindu extremists belonging to the *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* beat up an evangelist alleging forced conversion.

**13 July:** Harapanahalli Taluk, Davangere district, Karnataka – Nearly 20 Hindutva extremists led by *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* leaders identified only as Somu and Ravi stormed the Full Gospel Assembly Church, walked up to the dais, and slapped pastor Prakash Nayak. Grabbing a Bible from his hand, they repeatedly struck him on the head.

**17 August:** Uppal hills, Hyderabad - Extremists belonging to the *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* demolished a half-built Jesus Prayer House Church building.

**August 24:** Bangalore - About 30 Hindu extremists belonging to the *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* and *Vishwa Hindu Parishad* handed over a pastor and 10 others to the Frazer town police station for preaching the gospel and pressured police to file a case against them in Bangalore.

**August 24:** A mob led by two members of *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* disrupted a prayer service, beat the pastor, and dragged him to the police station where they gave false accused the pastor of bribing people to come to his meetings.

**05 January 2009:** Police arrested Christians in Kushalpura village, near Rajgarh in Dhar district after Hindu extremists attacked them. 10 members of the Hindu extremist *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* and *Vishwa Hindu Parishad* stormed into the house, assaulted the Christians and falsely accused the pastor of forcible conversion. Officers jailed the victims of the Hindu extremist aggression. Pastor Bhuria and Baria were taken to the Sardarpur police station. Investigating officer Upendra Khare informed the Christian Legal Association that the Christians were arrested for injuring or defiling a place of worship with intent to insult religion.

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## **Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)**

The **Bharatiya Janata Party** is a right wing political party that was founded in 1980 under the leadership of **Atal Bihari Vajpayee** and **Lal Krishna Advani** and is the predecessor of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS, *Indian People's Union*). The BJS was founded in 1951 as the political wing of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) by Syama Prasad Mookerjee, a nationalist leader, former Union Minister, and freedom-fighter. The BJP's foundation lies in socio-religious cultural values of the country's Hindu majority, conservative social policies, and strong national defense. It is associated with a broad umbrella of Hindu nationalist organizations under the Sangh Parivar.

The BJP led the government in India between 1998 and 2004, under Prime Minister Atal Bihari Bajpayee and Deputy Prime Minister Lal Krishna Advani.

In the current national Indian legislature the BJP holds 138 out of 552 seats in the Lok Sabha and 48 out of 250 seats in the Rajya Sabha.

The BJP's professed goals are:

1. **The Repeal of Article 370 of the Constitution**, which prevents non-Kashmiris, including Hindus who have fled the area due to increasing terrorism, from owning property in the state of [Jammu and Kashmir](#).
2. **The Promulgation of a [Uniform Common Civil Code](#)**, which create only one personal and civil law code for Hindus, Muslims and Christians, who enjoy the privilege of having law codes tailored to their religious culture over personal and family matters. In the minds of BJP supporters, this system creates a sense of division in the country between religious communities.
3. **A Ban on Cow Slaughter**, to honor the Hindu tradition of deeming [cows and most cattle as sacred](#), and prohibiting the consumption of beef and pork.
4. **The Ban on Forcible Religious Conversions**
5. **The Construction of the [Ram Janmabhoomi](#) temple in [Ayodhya](#).**
6. **To achieve the full territorial and political integration of [Jammu and Kashmir](#) with India.** Presently over 40% of the territory is under the control of [Pakistan](#) and [China](#).

From its beginnings, the BJP has been opposed to the Indian National Congress and allied with regional parties to roll back the leftist tendencies that dominated Indian politics for four decades.

The main tenant of BJP ideology is Hindutva, or cultural Hindu nationalism. They profess that Indian culture and civilization are essentially Hindu, thereby omitting the diverse character of Indian culture and the significant contributions made by minorities.

The BJP is anti-secular and argues that secularism is partisan and only favours the Muslim minority in India. They believe that the Indian National Congress uses secularism as an excuse to pander to the interests of minorities. Some often-cited examples of the supposed inequality according to Rao Bradinth in his article "*The*

*Variant Meanings of Secularism in India: Notes Towards Conceptual Clarifications*” in the *Journal of Church and State* vol. 48 – 1 winter 2008, includes:

- Allowing Muslims and other minorities to retain and follow their canonical, personal laws while denying the privilege to Hindus
- Providing special legal provisions like Article 30 and Article 370 which confer a special status on Muslim dominated Kashmir under which, among other things, non-Kashmiris cannot buy property without the permission of the provincial government
- The setting up of a Minorities Commission to safeguard their interests and look into the grievances of minorities such as abuse of human rights

The BJP claims that such indulgences have fostered a separatist identity amongst religious minorities and has prevented their full assimilation into Hindu culture. The BJP would prefer that India embrace the idea of Hindu exclusivism which reaffirms the supremacy of Hinduism and would require all minorities to submit their identity to the supremacy of the Hindu mainstream.

The current President of the BJP is **Shri Rajnath Singh**.

### **Acts of Violence in 2013**

**18 January:** Saranggarh, Raigarh district - Pastors Rajesh Yadav and Raju Dewangan were attending a prayer meeting when members of the Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party accused those present of forceful conversion and then physically assaulted the two pastors. Police arrested Saranggarh and Raigarh, who were released on bail after two days.

**3 May:** Chhattisgarh - Police arrested four pastors in Bhelwa Baddhara after they were accused of forceful conversion. The Evangelical Fellowship of India reported that Pastors Mani Munda, Vishnu Kerketta, Ashok Idaigo, and Rajgopal Munda, from the Power of Saviour Ministry in Sundargarh, Odisha, were visiting the house of a believer when police arrived and took them to the station to interrogate them. Although ten local Christians told the police they became believers out of their own free will, the pastors were charged with continuing an assembly that had been ordered to disperse, and they were released on bail.

**5 May:** Pimpri village, Maharashtra - A mob of about 20 Hindu extremists entered Maranatha Worship Centre during services in Pimpri village. They threatened the 50 assembled parishioners, and ordered the priest to leave town and close the church. The priest, Fr. Wilson Patole, suffered a swollen eye and other bruises.

**14 May:** Gujarat - Rajubhai R. Bhuriya and his family, assembled in their Bilwani village home for evening family devotion, were assaulted by a group of about 20 drunken villagers who accused the family of forceful conversion. Five members of the family were admitted in Dahod Government Hospital.

**15 May:** Pakshirajapura, Karnataka - Pastor Steven Suresh was accused by Hindu nationalists of forcefully converting members of the nomadic Hikki Pikki Adivasi tribe to Christianity and insulting Hindu gods. Police arrested Pastor Suresh and 11

other Christians. According to Pastor Shiibu of Indian Evangelical Church the new converts were forbidden to draw water from the town well, and denied government-subsidized staples such as rice and sugar.

**21 May:** Bhalukasai village, Odisha - Kati Singh was assaulted by Hindutva extremists after he refused to contribute to Hindu festivals. Singh was injured and admitted to Nilgiri Government Hospital.

**23 May:** Sarfabad, Maharashtra - Intruders barged into the house of Gyaneshwar Kurwade while the family had gathered for evening prayer. They assaulted Kurwade and his son, Shrikrishana, stating they did not want Christian activity in the area. The victims reported the assault to police, but no action was taken.

**23 May:** Tripura - Tapas Bin, of age 35, was murdered in Twirisa village. After Bin had married a local woman, he was pressured by his father-in-law to leave Christianity. When, two days later, the beheaded body of Tapas Bin was found, police claimed that he was killed by his father-in-law and a tribal sorcerer for refusing to abandon his Christian faith. However, police later backed off from the statements that faith was a factor in the murder.

**5 June:** Kerala - While returning home from a visit to a believer who had fallen sick, the Pastor of the Church of God Full Gospel India Vijayan M. and his wife were attacked by eight Hindutva extremists in Edathar. The couple was knocked off their scooter, and they both suffered injuries that required care at Palakkad District Hospital. Local Christian leaders filed a police complaint.

**6 June:** Pandherwani, Maharashtra - State police filed a First Information Report against local Christians after Hindus accused them of forceful conversion. Some local Hindus assaulted Christians, destroyed a house, seized farmland and ordered them to leave the village.

**09 June:** Tamil Nadu - Pastor Ram Chandra was assaulted by Hindus after he prayed for a sick man. Chandra was praying with the man's wife and children when protesters gathered at the family's home. The protestor's assaulted the Pastor as soon as he left the house.

**10 June:** Kongpal, Manipur - Some residents attacked Pastor A. Shyam and damaged the newly-built Victory Church of India. Residents claimed that the church is an insult, because it is built close to an historic site.

**10 June:** Andra Pradesh - A Hindu mob, assisted by a local government official Dhanjiy Reddy, demolished the Christ Church in Gutta Begumpet. Local Hindus insisted that Pastor Paul Viswas stop church services in the area.

**10 June:** Dangarguda village, Odisha - A group shouting anti-Christian slogans attacked Christians with swords, axes, chains and other weapons. The victims were beaten nearly unconscious, and the attackers poured water on them to revive them when they were about to pass out. One victim, Mudha Madhi, was unconscious for about three hours. Four Christians - Irma Madhi, Mangli Madhi, Mudha Madhi and Samburu Khurami - suffered cuts and bruises and were bleeding profusely when they were rushed to the hospital.

**12 June:** Canalpada, Odisha - A three-day meeting of Independent Pentecostal Church pastors and church leaders was interrupted by a crowd accusing the organisers of forced conversion. Some of the intruders on motorcycles chased several meeting participants that were leaving the session in an auto-rickshaw. The rickshaw overturned, injuring eight people.

**26 June:** Narasipura, Karnataka state - In Narasipura, after repeated calls to stop holding worship services, a crowd set the Zion Church on fire, beat the pastor and five church members. Three days later, the temporary shed built to replace the church was also burned. Police told Hindus to stop disturbing the church, and also told Christians to stop holding meetings and to pray at home.

**3 August:** Bijapur District - 50 Hindu extremists violently attacked Somashekarwas, an Evangelical Christian. They pulled his hair, ripped his clothes and ordered him to renounce Christianity and reconvert to Hinduism. Somashekarwas and his wife Kusumabhai were ordered to leave the village if they were not willing to renounce their faith. As they refused, the attackers reported them to the police in Nedugundhi, accusing them of practicing forced conversions.

**11 August:** Chitadurga District -. Rev. Paramajyothi, pastor of an independent Pentecostal Church, was attacked by Hindu ultra-nationalists. The attackers dragged the man out of the church, beat him in front of his congregation and family and ordered him to leave the village. After being released from the hospital, Paramajyothi asked protection from the police in Bejikere. Police instead filed a complaint against the attackers, as well as the clergyman.

**22 August:** Jagalur tilak, Davengere - Pastor Kotresh was beaten up at a house prayer meeting by around 40 Hindu extremists. They stormed the property, beat the pastor and accused him of forceful conversion.<sup>2</sup>

**24 August:** Ilkal, Bangalkote - Pastor Samson of Jehovah Shalom Prayer House was hospitalised for a week with bleeding nose and ears after Hindu extremists attacked him.<sup>3</sup>

**31 August:** Thimidoli, Belgaum - Hindu extremists burst into the house of two Christian families identified as Suresh and Gangadhar. The extremists beat the families and took them to the Hindu temple, where the Christians were forced to worship idols.<sup>4</sup>

**8 September:** Yelahanka New Town, Bangalore - The worship meeting of The Living Hope Church was interrupted by Hindu extremists shouting "No prayer, no church". Extremists accused Pastor William John of forceful conversion and told him to stop holding worship services. For the following two Sundays, Pastor John was able to lead worship serviced under police protection.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Morning Star News - Persecution of Christians Rockets in Karnataka, India - See more at: <http://www.faithtalk1500.com/11699730/#sthash.uX1KGBHD.dpuf>

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*

## Acts of Violence in 2012

**12 February:** Sutari Gudem village, Andhra Pradesh - During a worship service, BJP members threatened a local church. Pastor Timothy Paul had received a warning six months before from BJP members to stop leading services in his home, so another Christian provided a place for believers to meet. It was there that the attack occurred. The pastor and BJP members had an animated argument which almost led to a physical attack.

**21 April:** Panageri, Shivagangai - About a hundred BJP members beat fifteen Christians for preaching about Christ. The attackers also burnt Bibles and seized a vehicle.

**5 September:** Sagar village, Karnataka - Rev. Damodara was attacked during a prayer service by 15 activists of radical groups supported by BJP led by someone only identified as Omkara. Some of the worshippers were beaten by the Police and accused of forcible conversion.

## Acts of Violence in 2009

**02 February:** A group of young Hindu radicals from the *Bharatiya Janata Party* attacked a Catholic school in Bhopal, capital of Madhya Pradesh, destroying classrooms and equipment. The school principal, a Catholic priest, was arrested for insulting India's national anthem.

**17 February:** Police arrested 11 pastors from the Believers Church in Sarguja under Chhattisgarh's anti-conversion law after Hindu extremists stormed into their revival meeting and beat them. Hindu extremists of the *Bharatiya Janata Party* attacked the pastors, tore Bibles and banners and damaged the sound system. The Christians were conducting the meeting with prior permission of the police and the civil administration.

**15 March:** About 10 Hindu hardliners from the *Bharatiya Janata Party* (BJP) attacked an evangelist O.J. Andrews in Malapuram.

**07 April:** Police arrested Christian social workers in Chhattisgarh on charges of forceful conversion brought by the Hindu extremist *Bharatiya Janata Party* (BJP) in Pratap Chowk. Police detained the Christians for about eight hours.

**22 June:** Nine witnesses from the village of Raikia (Kandhamal District) received death threats. They were going to testify against Manoj Pradhan, a member of the *Bharatiya Janata Party* (BJP) who was recently elected to the Orissa State Assembly. He is charged on 14 counts of violence, including seven murders, against Christians.

**19 July:** Hindu extremists from the *Bharatiya Janata Party* (BJP) attacked a children's educational center in Ambala, beating Christian staff members and ordering everyone to vacate the premises. BJP Hindu extremists attacked Pastor Daniel Kamaraj and his staff, who are running the free educational program under Children Compassion Ministry. The five Christian staff members sustained minor injuries. The Hindus accused Pastor Kamaraj of forceful conversion and forced him to

leave. The pastor went to the police station the next day, where officers told him to vacate the building as soon as possible.

**19 July:** Police arrested a Christian woman identified only as Hemavathy on charges of “proselytization” in Tirupati. The arrests were made on the basis of a complaint filed by a medical officer from Shri Venkateswara Ayurvedic College-Hospital, who accused her of distributing religious pamphlets on hospital premises. Area leaders from the Hindu extremist *Bharatiya Janata Party* staged a protest in front of the police station demanding action be taken against Hemavathy. The Hindu reported that Circle Inspector V. Subhanna said action would be taken in accordance with Government Order No.747, which prohibits “proselytism in and around Hindu temples and institutions.”

### **Acts of Violence in 2008**

**28 February:** New Delhi – A crowd led by a female councilor from the *Bharatiya Janata Party* overpowered policemen, entered the police station and beat the state coordinator of the Gospel Mission to India who was inside.

**3 May:** Dehradun, Uttarakhand – A *Bharatiya Janata Party* member of the Legislative Assembly, Ganesh Joshi, and other BJP activists ransacked Grace Academy School and manhandled the principal.

**28 June:** Madya Pradesh- Police accompanied by *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* and *Bharatiya Janata Party* workers disrupted a worship service, manhandling and arresting pastor Hatey Singh Rawat. He was charged with hurting religious sentiments of Hindus. Police used sticks to beat members of the congregation who tried to protest the arrest of the pastor.

**15 September:** Figures in the central government accuse the pro-Hindu *Bharatiya Janata Party*, a partner in Orissa's ruling coalition, of ignoring the violence against Christians in the Orissa region. Christians' homes have been burned and destroyed and they are threatened with death or forced expulsion from their villages if they do not convert.

### **Links**

- [Official site of Bharatiya Janata Party.](http://www.bjp.org/) <http://www.bjp.org/>
- [Official site of Bharatiya Janata Party, Karnataka Unit.](http://bjpkarnataka.org/) <http://bjpkarnataka.org/>
- [Official site of Bharatiya Janata Party, Tamil Nadu Unit.](http://www.bjptn.org/) <http://www.bjptn.org/>
- [Official site of Bharatiya Janata Party, Gujarat Unit.](http://www.bjpguj.org/) <http://www.bjpguj.org/>
- [BJP friends.](http://www.bjpfriends.org/bjp-html/) <http://www.bjpfriends.org/bjp-html/>
- [BJP Overseas friends.](http://www.ofbjp.org/) <http://www.ofbjp.org/>
- [Overseas friends of BJP - USA.](http://www.ofbjp-usa.org/html/index.php) <http://www.ofbjp-usa.org/html/index.php>
- [Hindu Vivek Kendra.](http://www.hvk.org/) <http://www.hvk.org/>
- [The Hindu: Statistical Analysis of 2004 Elections.](http://www.hinduonnet.com/elections2004/verdict2004/02hdline.htm) <http://www.hinduonnet.com/elections2004/verdict2004/02hdline.htm>



- [Stars give polls a shine.](http://www.hinduonnet.com/thehindu/fr/2004/03/12/stories/2004031202250300.htm)  
<http://www.hinduonnet.com/thehindu/fr/2004/03/12/stories/2004031202250300.htm>
- [The BJP and the AIADMK have similar ideals , L. Ganesan, BJP Tamil Nadu State president.](http://www.hinduonnet.com/2008/02/23/stories/2008022358370300.htm)  
<http://www.hinduonnet.com/2008/02/23/stories/2008022358370300.htm>  
[<http://www.hindu.com/thehindu/holnus/002200801141967.htm> Not ruling out an alliance with AIAD

## Sangh Parivar (SP)

The **Sangh Parivar** refers to a family of Hindu organizations all built around the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). The RSS acts as the central controller of the SP and its trained volunteers, swayamsevaks, set up and manage different organizations within it in order to pursue the RSS's goals. These organizations tend to promote Indian nationalism and Hindu culture and are involved in many social services in rural India. The proclaimed goal of the group is to “activate the Hindu society, to make it come out of its self-oblivion and realize its past mistakes, to instill in it a firm determination to set them right, and finally to make it bestir itself to reassert its honor and self-respect so that no power on earth dares challenge it in the days to come.”

Some groups of the Hindutva-oriented Sangh Parivar have pushed their nationalistic goals through extreme and, at times, violent means.

The group includes the following organizations with their memberships:

- [Bharatiya Janata Party](#) (BJP), *Indian People's Party* (17m)
- [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh](#) (RSS), *National Volunteer Association* (2.5m)
- [Vishwa Hindu Parishad](#), *World Hindu Council* (2.8m)
- Durga Vahini,
- [Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad](#), *All India Students' Forum* (1.8m)
- [Janata Yuva Morcha](#) (1.8m)
- [Bajrang Dal](#), *Army of Hanuman*
- Dharma Sena,
- [Bharatiya Kisan Sangh](#), *Indian Farmers' Association* (8m)
- [Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh](#), *Indian Labour Association* (4.5m)
- [Adivasi Kalyan Kendra](#) (2.3m)
- Fishermen's Co-op Societies (2.2m)
- [Vivekananda Medical Mission](#) (1.7m)
- [Adhyapak Parishad](#) (1.8m)
- [Vivekananda Kendra](#) (1.8m)
- [Bharatiya Vikas Parishad](#) (1.8m)
- [Deen Dayal Shodh Sansthan](#) (1.7m)
- [Rashtriya Sevika Samiti](#), *National Volunteer Association for Women* (1.8m)
- [Shikha Bharati](#) (2.1m)
- [Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh](#), *Hindu Volunteer Association – overseas wing*
- [Swadeshi Jagaran Manch](#), *Nativist Awakening Front*
- [Saraswati Shishu Mandir](#), *Nursery*
- [Vidya Bharati](#), *Educational Institutes*
- [Vanavasi Kalyan Ashram](#), *Organisation for the improvement of tribals*
- [Vijnana Bharati](#), *Indian Science Movement*
- [Samkalp](#),
- [Sanskar Bharati](#), *Organisation of artists*
- [Sahkar Bharati](#), *Organisation of co-operatives*
- [Adhivakta Parishad](#), *Lawyers' association*
- [Vit Salahkar Parishad](#), *Financial consultants' association*
- [Seva Bharati](#), *Organisation for service of the needy*, founded in 1984.
- [Bharatiya Vichara Kendra](#)

Other organizations not affiliated with Sangh Parivar

- Shri Ram Sena, *Army of Ram*
- Abhinav Bharat,
- Karnataka Rakshana Vedike,

### **Acts of Violence in 2013**

The GCIC recorded four incidents between January and June, while 27 acts of violence against Christians were recorded over the next four months.

**6 October:** In Hubli, Rev. Anil Kumar was accused of conducting forced conversions and beaten under the eyes of Siddapura police agents. The day before, he held a prayer vigil for a Christian man who died few years before. Instead of stopping the violence, police officers took Rev. Kumar to the police station and charged him with violating Section 109 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (concerning "suspected persons"). He was later released on bail.

### **Acts of Violence by Sangh Parivar and *Hindutva* nationalists in 2009**

**11 January:** *Hindutva* (*Hindu nationalists*) forcibly entered the home of Christian converts in Amrthmahal Kavalu hamlet, near Tiptur town in Tumkur district. They verbally abused the four Christians there, burned their Bibles and forced them to the Honnavalli police station, according to the Global Council of Indian Christians. Identified only as Shankarappa and his wife Leelamama, and Shivappa and his wife Manjamma, the two brothers and their wives are the only Christians resident in the village. They worship at Calvary Gospel Centre in Tiptur town.

**18 January:** Police went to the house of pastor Paulose Venkatarao of an area Pentecostal church around midnight on a complaint filed by *Hindutva* extremists accusing the pastor of selling a book, "Dharam Nirpeksh Evam Hindutva," which they said harmed the sentiments of the Hindus. He went to the police station, where officers reprimanded the pastor. He gave a statement saying he had no idea who was selling books at the convention.

**12 April:** 20 *Hindutva* extremists in Karnataka beat pastor Rajesh Kurdekar and falsely accused him of forceful conversion after disrupting worship in Analekoppa, Sagar Taluk, Shimoga district. Police at the Sagar City police station refused to accept a complaint filed by Pastor Kurdekar.

**28 May:** Police detained Christians after *Hindutva* extremists falsely accused them of forcible conversion in Shad Nagar, Mahaboob Nagar district, Two Christians identified only Narasimhalu and Ramesh were conducting religious classes when the local extremists of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and Vishwa Hindu Parishad arrived. The extremists filed a complaint at Shad Nagar police station against Pastor David, Narasimhalu and Ramesh.

**06 June:** A leader from the Sangh Parivar was arrested for the murder of tribal Christians and officers from the Central Reserve Police Force (Crpf). The widow of a tribal Christian killed in October by Hindu extremists recognised her husband's

assassin while she was at the market. Kalia Pradhan, the murderer, had been in hiding for over 9 months but had recently been seen in public places in the village.

Supporters of the Sangh Parivar immediately began protesting outside the Raikia police station demanding the assassin's release. Officers dispersed the crowd of protesters and immediately alerted priests and Christians in the area.

### **Links**

1. [Toe swadeshi line or lose support, RSS warns BJP](http://www.indianexpress.com/res/web/pIe/ie/daily/19981215/34950194.html) Indian Express - December 15, 1998.
2. [VHP mail: BJP is like 'secular' Cong](http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/761560.cms) Times of India - July 1, 2004.
3. [Probe Sangh Parivar role in terror activities: CPM to Govt](http://www.expressindia.com/latest-news/Probe-Sangh-parivar-for-terror--CPM-tells-govt/372816/) Express India – October 13, 2008.
4. [Christians: The Sangh Parivar's new target](http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/PoliticsNation/Christians_Sangh_Parivars_new_target/articleshow/3505720.cms) The Economic Times - September 20, 2008.
5. [Firm action needed against Sangh Parivar outfits](http://www.kashmirwatch.com/showarticles.php?subaction=showfull&id=1223972194&archive=&start_from=&ucat=3&var0news=value0news) Kashmirwatch.com - October 14, 2008.
6. <http://www.hinduonnet.com/2008/10/07/stories/2008100759610400.htm>
7. <http://www.hindu.com/2007/10/07/stories/2007100760141000.htm>
8. <http://www.Sevabharathi.Org>
9. <http://www.RSS.org>
10. <http://www.VHP.org>
11. Ram, Puniyani. Anatomy of Sangh Parivar. *Countercurrents.org*  
<http://www.countercurrents.org/puniyani051108.htm>

## **Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP)**

The VHP is an offshoot of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and was founded in 1964 by **Swami Chinmayanada**, a former Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) member, and co-founded by **Master Tara Singh**. Its slogan is “Dharma protects those who protect Dharma”. The VHP is active throughout all of India and has several international branches. In the last decade, their work has been most noticeable in the Indian states of Orissa and Gujarat.

The group is a non-political organisation and no office bearer of any political party can simultaneously be an office bearer in the Parishad. The following aims and objectives were set before the Parishad:

1. To consolidate and strengthen the Hindu Society.
2. To protect, promote and propagate Hindu values of life, the ethical and the spiritual in the context of modern times.
3. To keep in touch with all the Hindus living abroad, and to organise and help them in all possible ways in protecting their Hindu identity also popularly known as [Hindutva](#).

VHP general demands are as follows:

- Creation of Ram temple at [Ram Janmabhoomi](#).
- End of alleged forcible conversions by Christian missionaries and Islamic institutions.
- Ban on cow slaughter.
- Declaration of India as a [Hindu Rashtra](#), literally Hindu Nation (note that this term includes all those who can trace their religious beliefs back to India, including [Sikhs](#), [Buddhists](#) and [Jains](#)).
- Tougher anti-terror laws and tougher penalties for terrorists.
- Implementation of a [Uniform Civil Code](#).
- Revocation of [Article 370](#) of the Indian Constitution.
- Erasure of Casteism from Hindu society.

The VHP believes the Republic of India to have historically been a Hindu nation, in culture, heritage and history. They maintain that Islam was brought by foreign invaders who imposed and coerced it upon millions of Hindus and that Christian missionaries brought in Christianity when the Portuguese, French and the British colonized the land. The VHP has spoken out against [Islamic Fundamentalism](#) and the rise of [Islamist](#) terrorism and works to counter and undo the conversion efforts of Christian religions.

The Bajrang Dal and Durga Vahini are auxiliaries of the VHP.

### **Acts of Violence in 2013**

**12 March:** Chhattisgarh - In Guriya village, the local newspaper published allegations that Divya Jyoti Church had been built on government land. The next day, a crowd equipped with a backhoe and led by Kailash Rathi and Yogendra Kaushik, officers of the local Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), demolished the church. No

resistance was made from police officers and the leader of the village, and those who protested were assaulted by members of the crowd.

### **Acts of Violence in 2012**

**24 March:** Chadidiha, Uttar Pradesh - Rampur police and Vishwa Hindu Parishad disrupted the Yeshu Mahatsava Convention (Celebration of Jesus Christ) after the VHP had filed a complaint against the organisers for forced conversions.

### **Acts of Violence in 2009**

**21 March:** Hindu extremists from the *Vishwa Hindu Parishad* (VHP or World Hindu Council) attacked Bible students and staff members of the Believers Church and demanded 10,000 rupees (US\$193) from them in Udaipur.

**19 April:** Nearly 25 Hindu extremists in Maharashtra vandalized a 100-year-old church in Saoner, about 40 kilometers (25 miles) from Nagpur. During Sunday Mass the extremists stormed the Douglas Memorial Church chanting “Jai Shree Ram, Jai Bajrang [Hail Lord Ram, Hail Lord Bajrang],” tore up several books including the sanctuary Bible and ransacked the building, damaging furniture, musical instruments and the altar. The extremists hurled a sharp trident-like weapon at the Rev. Mark Madhukar Sakharpekar, who had just begun his sermon, but he escaped unhurt. Two women, Aruna Telkhande and Preeti Dongre, received minor injuries. Nagpur district police arrested seven persons for the attack, including two who belonged to the Hindu extremist *Vishwa Hindu Parishad* and *Bajrang Dal*.

**31 May:** Hindu extremists from the *Vishwas Hindu Parishad* (World Hindu Council) vandalized a Baptist church in Jorhat and threatened two Christian girls, 16-year-old Moromi Gogoi and Monica Gogoi, 18. The Hindu hardliners also demanded 5,000 rupees (US\$100) from the girls. About 10 Hindus entered the church premises and broke the church’s fence, walls, windows and doors, and they had threatened the two girls several times via mobile phone to stop their ministry or face dire consequences.

**Beginning of July:** Hindu extremists from the *Vishwa Hindu Parishad* (VHP or World Hindu Council) and *Bajrang Dal* (Youth Wing of the VHP) put up three signboards in Bastar sternly warning Christians not to preach in the area. Most of the churches in Bastar, which borders the troubled district of Kandhamal, Orissa state, were closed down as the Hindu extremists continually threatened tribal Christians there.

**23 July:** Hindu medical students at Gandhi Medical College under the influence of Hindu extremists from the *Vishwa Hindu Parishad* (VHP or World Hindu council) beat a professor and filed a complaint with the college principal accusing three faculty members of forceful conversion in Musheerabad. One of the professors was beaten and sustained minor injuries.

**26 July:** Nearly 50 *Vishwa Hindu Parishad* (VHP or World Hindu Council) and *Bajrang Dal* activists stormed the compound of the Assembly of God Bethel Church in Habibganj, Bhopal, accusing Christians of converting people. Superintendent of Police R.S. Mishra stated that Hindu extremists Devendra Rawat, Kamlesh Thakur

and others charged that conversions were taking place; church secretary Abraham George filed a counter-complaint that the VHP and Bajrang Dal disrupted the Sunday service.

**01 August:** Hindu extremists from the *Vishwa Hindu Parishad* (World Hindu Council or VHP) attacked Christians charging large-scale, forceful conversion. They forced the Christians to wear tilak, a Hindu symbol on the forehead, and threatened to kill them if they went ahead with church construction in Mahabubnagar. Pastor B.Y. Dass of the Smarna Prayer Home Church had obtained land to build a church with permission from the village head. Upon hearing of the Christians' plan to build a church building, the VHP came to the site with threats and accusations.

**16 August:** A church leader of New Life Fellowship identified only as Pastor Quadros was conducting a prayer meeting in a church member's house in Karwar when Members of the Hindu extremist *Vishwa Hindu Parishad* (VHP or World Hindu Council) barged in. The Hindus accused the pastor of forceful conversion, searched the house and took Christian literature, and threatened him with violence if he continued Christian activities.

### **Acts of Violence in 2008**

**5 April:** Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh - Hindu extremists from the *Vishwa Hindu Parishad* desecrated a Catholic church and ransacked a convent school in Harsodan village.

**24 May:** Sathanarayapettai area of Bellary, Karnataka -About 20 Hindus allegedly from the extremist *Vishwa Hindu Parishad* broke the windowpanes and furniture of the Timothy Theological School attacked teachers and students and accused the institute of indulging in forced conversions.

**22 June:** Krishnagar, Dehra Dun city, West Bengal – A group organized by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Bajrang Dal and Bharatiya Janata Party attacked a Christian prayer meeting, beating participants and the pastor.

**10 July:** Andhra Pradesh – Hindutva extremists belonging to the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) in Dandu Mylavaram, Rangareddy on July 10 assaulted a pastor, accused him of “forced” conversion and threatened to bury him on land he recently obtained.

**20 July:** Vinayakanagara, Davangere district, Karnataka – Nearly 40 Hindutva (Hindu nationalist) extremists from the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and Ram Sena (Army of Ram) stormed a Gypsy Prayer Hall and dragged pastor Lakshman Naik outside, repeatedly kicking and punching him.

**22 August:** Dasamantapur, Koraput district, Orissa - Hindu extremists belonging to the *Vishwa Hindu Parishad* dragged a pastor to the police station and filed false complaints of “forcible” conversion and destruction of idols after beating him for an hour.

**23 August:** Around 70 families in four villages – Bogapada, Boriguda, Kuttiguda and Danniguda – in Kandhamal were forcibly ‘reconverted’ to Hinduism by *Vishwa Hindu Parishad* extremists.

**23 August:** *Vishwa Hindu Parishad* extremists in Nuagon, Kandhamal district burned alive a man suffering from paralysis, whose identity and religious affiliation were still unknown at press time, and assaulted pastors.

**23 August:** *Vishwa Hindu Parishad* extremists burned a small thatched prayer house in Tentulijhari area in Sundargarh district.

**25 August:** The *Vishwa Hindu Parishad* and other radical Sangh Parivar groups decided to go on a dawn-to-dusk strike, bringing thousands of people together. The gatherings turned violent and resulted in many attacks against Christians.

**27 August:** Hindu extremists from the *Vishwa Hindu Parishad* disrupted the two day-prayer meeting held with prior police permission, brutally beat a pastor identified only as Santosh and dragged him to the police station. The extremists forced the pastor to give a written statement saying he would not conduct future prayer meetings or share the gospel with anyone.

**7 September:** *Vishwa Hindu Parishad* state leader, B.R. Narendra led a group of 20 men in storming a prayer meeting in Ayodhya Nagar, near Madanapally in Chittoor district. They beat and chased away participants.

## Links

1. [A lethal cocktail of religion & politics](http://www.hindustantimes.com/StoryPage/StoryPage.aspx?id=c9058d8c-f3e6-4b55-9e0a-836fd43534fa&ParentID=173c4c85-f6ce-49cc-92cc-33afa7bc2283&&Headline=A+lethal+cocktail+of+religion+and+politics) Hindustan Times - July 27, 2007.  
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2. [Proof of temple found at Ayodhya: ASI report](http://www.rediff.com/news/2003/aug/25ayo1.htm) Rediff - August 25, 2003.  
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## **Bajrang Dal (BD)**

On 1<sup>st</sup> October 1984 in Uttar Pradesh, India, the VHP founded the [Bajrang Dal](#) as its youth wing. The Dal has since spread throughout all of India, runs 2,500 akhadas, traditional place for [wrestlers](#) of [India](#) to practice or to have duels with other wrestlers, and claims to have 1,300,000 members. It has organized in many states major training camps called *shakhas*, where thousands of young men simultaneously train in group activities, receive religious and cultural education and in many cases, self-defensive arms training.

The BD carries the slogan “service, safety, and culture”. It has several main agenda items, which include preventing the slaughter of cows, and the liberation the Ramjanmabhoomi temple in Ayodhya, the Krishnajanmabhoomi temple in Mathura and the Kashi Vishwanath temple in Kasi, which are currently disputed places of worship. Another main goal of the BD is to protect India’s Hindu identity, from the perceived dangers of Muslim population growth, Christian conversions, and anti-national Hindus.

Although the BD claims to have no association with violent acts against Christians, BD members have repeatedly been linked to crimes against Christians, anti-Muslim protests, and other acts of violence throughout India.

### **Acts of Violence in 2013**

**8 February:** Rajnandgaon, Chhattisgarh - The second day of a three day revival by the India Christian Assembly of God Church in the city of Rajnandgaon was disturbed by more than thirty Hindus armed with sticks and iron rods. They interrogated Pastor Thomas Abraham and other church leaders, who protested the interruption. Men, women and children were beaten, and Church properties were damaged. Police were summoned, but they did not intervene. The witness said the intruders were from several Hindu nationalist groups, including Bajrang Dal, Shiv Sena, and Dharma Sena.

**16 February:** Gulai village, Khandwa district, Madhya Pradesh - Pastor Isaac Rajamani of Friends Missionary Prayer Band, along with an evangelist identified as Raju, were attacked by Bajrang Dal members while conducting a prayer meeting. They assaulted the two and held them in Khalwa where they were further beaten by members of the Hindu nationalist organization Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. Following this they were handed over to the Police station at Khalwa, where they were charged under section 295A and held in Harsud Jail.

**April:** Chhattisgarh - Elements of Bajrang Dal demolished a church in Taragaon. After their church was destroyed, the Christians of Taragaon had to move their worship meetings into the homes of believers.

**22 September:** Chhattisgarh - Mitko Kashyap was beaten by her nephew after refusing to denounce her Christian faith. The man struck the woman on the head with a rock, causing injuries that required hospitalisation. Initially, police refused to register the complaint against the attacker, because the case was considered a family

matter. However, the police came to examine the woman after the hospital registered the incident. No arrests were made.

**Early October:** Chhattisgarh - Members of Bajrang Dal paraded Hindu idols by the houses of Christian believers and forced them to venerate the idols. They threatened believers to beat and kill them if they did not come out of their homes themselves.

### **Acts of Violence in 2012**

**1 January:** Humnoor, Bagalkot, Karnataka - Barjang Dal members attacked a New Year's prayer meeting. Attackers beat Pastor Siddu Seemanth Gunike and other Christians, accusing them of forced conversion.

**17 January:** Yadagirgutta, Andhra Pradesh - Pastor Kiran and another church member were beaten by Barjang Dal members after they have been accused of forced conversions. The victims were arrested but later released.

**31 January:** Indira Nagar, Dongargarh, Chhattisgarh - Bajrang Dal members disrupted the screening of a Christian film, destroyed equipment and beat Pastor Rajendra Masih.

**11 March:** Bajrang Dal members disrupted a house church and accused Pastor Motilal Gujare of forcible conversion. Police arrested Pastor Gujare along with a church member, Prakash Masih. Both were released on bail on 15<sup>th</sup> March.

**12 March:** Kalkaji, New Delhi - Bajrang Dal members attacked a prayer meeting led by members of the Apostolic Faith Church. According to the assailants, the Christians had been desecrating idols and insulting Hindu gods.

### **Acts of Violence in 2009**

**02 February:** A group of Hindu extremists from the *Bajrang Dal* attacked a Christian truck driver in the Deralakatte area on the outskirts of the Mangalore. The extremists beat Albert D'Souza, 48, with iron rods after he found them breaking the windshield of his Jeep and marring the Christian stickers on it.

**24 March:** Hindu extremists in Chitoor burned a church building, resulting in damages totaling 30,000 rupees (US\$600). The Hindu hardliners set ablaze the Jesus Prayer House Church, damaging Bibles, hymnals and furniture and destroying the thatched structure. The pastor had received several threats from the Hindu extremist *Bajrang Dal*, youth wing of the World Hindu Council, warning him not to lead worship meetings in the area.

**28 March:** A member of the Hindu extremist *Bajrang Dal*, youth wing of the World Hindu Council, threatened to kill pastor G. Timothy of the Brethren Fellowship if he did not leave his village in Warrangal within 48 hours. A Bajrang Dal worker told Timothy to come outside with him, then Timothy was insulted and threatened with murder.

**19 April:** Nearly 25 Hindu extremists in Maharashtra vandalized a 100-year-old church in Saoner, about 40 kilometers (25 miles) from Nagpur. During Sunday Mass the extremists stormed the Douglas Memorial Church chanting “Jai Shree Ram, Jai Bajrang [Hail Lord Ram, Hail Lord Bajrang],” tore up several books including the sanctuary Bible and ransacked the building, damaging furniture, musical instruments and the altar. The extremists hurled a sharp trident-like weapon at the Rev. Mark Madhukar Sakharpekar, who had just begun his sermon, but he escaped unhurt. Two women, Aruna Telkhande and Preeti Dongre, received minor injuries. Nagpur district police arrested seven persons for the attack, including two who belonged to the Hindu extremist *Vishwa Hindu Parishad* and *Bajrang Dal*.

**03 May:** Members of the Hindu extremist *Bajrang Dal*, youth wing of the World Hindu Council, attacked a youth prayer meeting led by a Christian woman, Neeshi Nath, in Bilaspur. The extremists burned Bibles and gospel tracts, broke household goods and threatened further harm if those present continued Christian activities.

**14 June:** About 50 Hindu extremists from the *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* and *Bajrang Dal* ( Youth Wing of the World Hindu Council) chanting, “ Jai Shri Ram [Praise lord Ram]” barged into Beersheba Church and attacked pastor Kuldeep Daniel, his family and church in Ratlam. The extremists beat, punched and kicked the pastor, his wife, two children and brother and also verbally abused them. They also destroyed church musical instruments and took the pastor’s books and his brother’s cell phone. The couple suffered minor injuries.

**Beginning of July:** Hindu extremists from the *Vishwa Hindu Parishad* (VHP or World Hindu Council) and *Bajrang Dal* (Youth Wing of the VHP) put up three signboards in Bastar sternly warning Christians not to preach in the area. Most of the churches in Bastar, which borders the troubled district of Kandhamal, were closed down as the Hindu extremists continually threatened tribal Christians there.

**07 August:** In Haveri, a group of about 25 Hindu extremists from the *Bajrang Dal* accused a pastor from Every Home Crusade church of forceful conversion and threatened to beat him if he continued his ministry in the area. The extremists went to Pastor Ajit Kumar’s house, spoke derogatorily about his faith, and warned him not to conduct a worship meeting otherwise he would face serious consequences. The pastor registered a case against the extremists.

### **Acts of Violence in 2008**

**17 January:** Pathigaon village, Rewa district, Madhya Pradesh - Six Hindu nationalist extremists, allegedly of the *Bajrang Dal*, stormed a house church, abducted two Christians and severely beat.

**28 January:** Arugere village, Belgaum district, Karnataka - 15 to 20 Hindu extremists belonging to the *Bajrang Dal* beat an independent pastor, cursed at his wife and later filed a false police complaint against them.

**3 February:** Kumbara Halli village, Karnataka - Three Christians of Shalom Full Gospel Church were hospitalized after a mob of 25 to 30 Hindu extremists belonging to the *Bajrang Dal* attacked them during Sunday worship.

**14 February:** Narsinghpur district, Madhya Pradesh – 60 Hindu extremists belonging to the *Bajrang Dal* and other right-wing groups forcibly entered *Sachidanand Ashram*, a Catholic center promoting inter-religious dialogue, attacked a Catholic priest and staff members, and vandalized and desecrated the church.

**24 February:** New Delhi - A group of around 30 Hindu extremists suspected to be from the *Bajrang Dal* pelted a Catholic church with stones and vandalized vehicles of church members.

**27 February:** Balaghat, Madhya Pradesh - Newly elected president of the Balaghat Christian Association was beaten by members of the *Bajrang Dal* for providing legal help to the previous victims.

**22 March:** Bahera village, Rewa district, Madhya Pradesh - Nine members of the Hindu extremist *Bajrang Dal* beat the grandparents and aunt of a 15-year-old girl last weekend when the Christian family refused to allow the group to rape her.

**5 April:** Indore, Madhya Pradesh - Hindu extremists from the *Bajrang Dal* surrounded harassed and verbally abused two nuns in Rajwada, a crowded market area.

**7 April:** Raigad, Maharashtra - Hindutva extremists belonging to the *Bajrang Dal* stormed St. Joseph's Convent School demanding that photographs of Hindu deities be put up inside the school.

**4 May:** Manjunatha Nagara, Hubli district, Karnataka- About 15 extremists from the *Bajrang Dal* stormed the Sharon Assembly of God Church, cursed at the believers, ripped up their hymn books and Bibles and dragged Pastor Peniel Thankappan Johnson to the local police station, hitting him along the way.

**15 June:** Chungi Naka, Gurh Tehsil, Rewa district, Madhya Pradesh - Hindutva extremists belonging to the *Bajrang Dal* beat and filed a false complaint of forcible conversion against a pastor.

**16 June:** Rewadahi village, Rajnandgaon district, Chhattisgarh - Hindutva extremists belonging to the *Bajrang Dal* attacked a group of Christians.

**17 June:** Varna Village, Mysore district, Karnataka - About 100 Hindu extremists belonging to the *Bajrang Dal* accompanied by police disrupted a seminar for pastors and seized their property.

**2 July:** Rental Colony area of Bhubaneswar, Orissa – Youths belonging to the *Bajrang Dal* attacked 7 pastors and tore up missionary tracts they were distributing.

**23 July:** Kantalapa Village, Jaipur, Rajasthan - Hindu extremists belonging to the *Bajrang Dal* and *Vishwa Hindu Parishad* tortured and forcibly “reconverted” Christians to Hinduism.

**27 August:** Nearly 100 extremists belonging to the *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* and *Bajrang Dal* came to the Full Gospel Assembly Church, took four Christians to the Yellamma Temple, smeared them with vermilion, forced them to bow to Hindu idols and dragged the pastor and his family to the police station where the filed false charges against them.

**17 September:** Karnataka- The *Bajrang Dal* claimed responsibility for several attacks against Christian Churches around the state.

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19. [Muslim cleric demands ban on Bajrang Dal.](http://www.expressindia.com/latest-news/Muslim-cleric-demands-ban-on-Bajrang-Dal/353369/)  
<http://www.expressindia.com/latest-news/Muslim-cleric-demands-ban-on-Bajrang-Dal/353369/>

## **Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP)**

The **Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad** (All-India Students' Council'), is a youth political group drawing its inspiration from the RSS and serves as its youth wing. The ABVP was founded in 1948 and formally registered on July 9<sup>th</sup>, 1949. It has over 3,000 branches spread all over India and a membership of nearly a million college students. Its objective is to channel students' energy into the task of national reconstruction and is guided by a group of students and teachers. Its growth process was slow and sporadic in the first few years but it picked up after Prof. Yeshwantrao Kelkar, a lecturer in Bombay, became its main organiser in 1958. He was its real architect and builder.

On occasion, members of the group have taken their nationalistic ideals to extremes and have been linked to violent acts against Christians and other Religious minorities.

### **Acts of Violence in 2009**

**02 February:** A group of young Hindu radicals of the ABVP attacked a Catholic school in Bhopal, capital of Madhya Pradesh, destroying classrooms and equipment.

**23 February:** Hindu extremists of *Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad* (student wing of the Bharatiya Janata Party), *Dharma Sena* (Religious Army) and *Dharm Jagran Manch* (Religious Awakening Forum), disrupted a prayer service in Ambikapur, and accused the pastors of forceful conversion, beat them and damaged motorcycles. The extremists belonged to the all affiliated with the Hindu extremist Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. Police arrived, took about 30 Christians to the police station.

**01 July:** Hindu extremists from the *Akhil Bhartiya Vidyarthi Parishad* (All India Student's Council), formed under the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, attacked St. Agnes School in Mahaboobnagar. They destroyed furniture and other fixtures and threatened to harm school authorities. Both parties filed a police complaint.

### **Acts of Violence in 2008**

**16 January:** A mob of around 500 people led by ABVP workers engaged in vandalism and prevented the Hyderabad archbishop from blessing the new building of an HIV/AIDS care center in Lingampet.

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## **Bharatiya Janata Yuva morcha (*Indian Popular Youth Front*)**

### **Acts of Violence in 2008**

**12 June:** L.B. Nagar, Hyderabad - Hindu extremists belonging to the *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh*, the *Bharatiya Janata Party*, the *Bharatiya Yuva Jana Morcha* (Indian People's Youth Front) along with members of an auto union attacked a pastor and a non-Christian brake inspector, falsely accusing them of forcible conversions.

**27 July:** Andhra Pradesh – Hindu extremists belonging to the youth wing of the *Bharatiya Janata Party* attacked a pastor and a Christian media team for showing a film about Jesus Christ, tore the screen and burned it along with Bibles in Janagam.

## **Dharma Sena**

The Dharma Sena is a VHP-backed outfit that is also supposedly supported by the BJP which has been accused of repressing police action against them. The group was relatively unknown until nearly three years ago, emerging suddenly in the central Indian states of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. It is widely believed that the Dharma Sena is nothing more than the Hindu extremist youth group, *Bajrang Dal*, in another form.

The group's leader is **Yogesh Agrawal**. It has been involved in numerous attacks against Christians and has spearheaded an anti-conversion campaign in Jabalpur.

### **Acts of Violence in 2013**

**8 February:** Rajnandgaon, Chhattisgarh - The second day of a three day revival by the India Christian Assembly of God Church in the city of Rajnandgaon was disturbed by more than thirty Hindus armed with sticks and iron rods. They interrogated Pastor Thomas Abraham and other church leaders, who protested the interruption. Men, women and children were beaten, and Church property was damaged. Police were summoned, but they did not intervene. The witness said the intruders were from several Hindu nationalist groups, including Bajrang Dal, Shiv Sena, and Dharma Sena.

### **Acts of Violence in 2009**

**23 February:** Hindu extremists of *Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarhi Parishad* (student wing of the Bharatiya Janata Party), *Dharma Sena* (Religious Army) and *Dharm Jagran Manch* (Religious Awakening Forum), disrupted a prayer service in Ambikapur, and accused the pastors of forceful conversion, beat them and damaged motorcycles. The extremists belonged to the all affiliated with the Hindu extremist Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. Police arrived, took about 30 Christians to the police station.

**26 July 2009:** About 40 Hindu extremists from the *Dharma Sena* (Hindu Religious Army) attacked the Sneh Sadan (Home of Love) Institute run by Christians in Jabalpur. The Hindu extremists tried to enter the institute for the handicapped run by the Methodist Church, but the police reached the premises before the extremists did major harm.

### **Acts of Violence in 2008**

**18 April:** Madhya Pradesh - Hindu extremist group *Dharma Sena* threatened to set a Christian woman's house on fire in Jabalpur and burn the body of her deceased husband.

**18 September:** Three suspected members of the *Darma Sena* vandalized and set fire to St. Peter and Paul Cathedral at Pentinaka, Sadar, Jabalpur. 10 days prior the Darma Sena had threatened to, "turn the face of the church within a week's time, as done in Orissa."

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4. "Madhya Pradesh : 7 Christians injured in Dharma Sena attack"  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SOCM-FORUM/message/10013>

## **Hindu Jagaran Samukhya**

A Hindu nationalist extremist outfit under the aegis of the Sangh Parivar.

### **Acts of Violence in 2008**

**7 September:** A mob of about 300 people attacked and torched a Christian prayer hall on in Bada village, Davangere district. The Hindu nationalist group *Hindu Jagarana Vedike* had threatened to forcibly close down three prayer halls in Davangere town district if the administration did not do so by 6 September.

### **Links**

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## **Shri Ram Sena (Army of Ram)**

Hindu extremist organization which has opened camps where they train “Anti Terror Squads”. They reportedly have 700 boys training as of November 2008. Shri Rama Sena chief and founder **Pramod Muthalik**, was a former leader of the Bajrang Dal.

### **Acts of Violence in 2008**

**31 July:** Karnataka- Extremists belonging to the *Ram Sena* attacked a prayer meeting and beat Christians that were present.

### **Links**

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## **Abhinav Bharat**

The present day organization was most likely modelled after Vinayak Damodar Savarkar's revolutionary outfit, Abhinav Bharat, which was formed in 1905 to fight against the British. Savarkar disbanded the group in 1952 saying there was no need for the group in independent India. He encouraged members to join the Indian Army. The group was reorganized in 2001.

Investigations have revealed that serving and retired army officers associated with *Abhinav Bharat* "hijacked" the organisation that was initially started by a prominent Pune historian for inculcating patriotism in the youth. The army personnel motivated the youth to take up an "armed" struggle against Islamic terrorism of which the Malegaon blast in September of 2006 was the result. The blast killed 37 and injured 125 people; mostly Muslim pilgrims.

### **Acts of Violence in 2008**

**3 August:** Madhya Pradesh – Members of Hindu fundamentalist *Abhinav Bharat* attacked a pastor and his family at Jayprakash Nagar, Adhartal, Jabalpur district.

### **Links**

1. Haygunde, Chadan. Abhinav Bharat's site shut. *Express India*. Oct 28, 2008 <http://www.expressindia.com/latest-news/abhinav-bharat-was-hijacked-by-hardliners-probe/380249/>
2. Haygunde, Chandan. Abhinav Bharat was 'hijacked' by hardliners: probe. *Express India*. Nov 02, 2008 <http://www.expressindia.com/latest-news/Abhinav-Bharats-site-shut/378725/>
3. Abhinav Bharat website: [http://www.abhinavbharat.org/press\\_release\\_2008.html](http://www.abhinavbharat.org/press_release_2008.html)

## **Karnataka Rakshana Vedike**

Karnataka Rakshana Vedike was founded by [T. A. Narayana Gowda](#) together with **Janagere Venkataramaiah**, in the Kannada Chaluvalli vacuum that existed after the death of [A N Krishna Rao](#). Gowda is the current President of the Karnataka Rakshana Vedike. The organization states that it has 6900 branches, and is active in all the 29 districts of Karnataka. It also claims to have an estimated 1,600,000 volunteers.

### **Acts of Violence in 2008**

**14 March:** Bangalore, Karnataka - Hindu nationalists of the extremist *Karnataka Rakshana Vedike* disrupted a Christian program entitled “Miracle” in playground in Koramangala and attacked participants.

### **Links**

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<http://www.internationalreporter.com/News-2242/Great-rush-for-Rajnikant%E2%80%99s-Sivaji-in-Karnataka-tickets-being-sold-at-3000.html>
3. [The Hindu: Ten Vedike Members Surrender.](http://www.hindu.com/2005/11/13/stories/2005111316210300.htm)  
<http://www.hindu.com/2005/11/13/stories/2005111316210300.htm>
4. [We are not against Marathis, says rakshana vedike.](http://www.hinduonnet.com/2006/07/29/stories/2006072903850300.htm)  
<http://www.hinduonnet.com/2006/07/29/stories/2006072903850300.htm>
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10. [Kannada outfits go on a rampage against TN - Sify.caom.](http://sify.com/news/fullstory.php?id=14635947&page=1)  
<http://sify.com/news/fullstory.php?id=14635947&page=1>
11. [The Hindu: `Rasta roko' hits vehicle movement.](http://www.hindu.com/2007/04/17/stories/2007041708450500.htm)  
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12. [Oneindia.in: AIR station attacked by Kannada activists.](http://news.oneindia.in/2006/09/14/air-station-attacked-by-kannada-activists-1158258907.html)  
<http://news.oneindia.in/2006/09/14/air-station-attacked-by-kannada-activists-1158258907.html>

## Durga Vahini (DV)

The [Durga Vahini](#) was founded in 1991 under the tutelage of **Sadhvi Rithambara** as its founding chairperson and with the support of the VHP. It is described as the "female arm of the [*Bajrang*] Dal". Members of the Vahini contend that the portrayal of their group as a branch of the Bajrang Dal is an oversimplification, and that their goals are to "dedicate ourselves to physical, mental and knowledge development". Once members reach the age of 30 they are inducted into the VHP. Kaplana Vyash, a senior leader in the DV claimed that they have at least 8,000 members in Gujarat alone.

The DV aggressively recruits young women from low-income earning and lower caste families. Members receive ideological education and are trained in karate, air-gun shooting, the use of lathi, yoga, and dhyana during summer training classes. The organization especially recruits young girls for carrying risky tasks of militant activism in which much physical strength is required, such as confronting [Muslim](#) people who they view as enemy and to fight on the front lines in places like [Ayodhya](#).

The DV share Ideological values with the VHP and BD. A VHP official states that the DV's aim is to "insulate young girls from cultural pollution and teach them various ancient Indian traditions" and that "The Vahini's members discuss ways to protect Indian culture from the Western Onslaught."

The Durga Vahini's headquarters is located in New Delhi. The DV now has branches all over India with exception to Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

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