West Bengal Christians hurt by mob violence narrate their ordeals before people's tribunal

Christian women say mobs vandalised prayers meetings in their homes and physically assaulted them, accusing them of religious conversion; most perpetrators not arrested, police attitude has changed under BJP rule, survivors say

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Jury members of People's Tribunal on Christian Persecution in West Bengal held in Kolkata on November 2, 2026 | Photo Credit: Special Arrangement

A number of Christian gatherings and prayer meetings have faced brutal attacks by mobs in West Bengal over the last few months, according to more than a dozen survivors of violence who narrated their experiences before a People's Tribunal on Christian Persecution in West Bengal here on Monday (November 2, 2026).

Women shared accounts of being beaten and even stripped, attacks on family members and vandalism, by mobs accusing them of engaging in religious conversion. Most of those who spoke, including some Christian priests, said that the perpetrators of the violence had not been arrested. A number of them claimed that the police attitude to such violence had changed after the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) came to power in the State this summer.

The survivors largely hailed from different districts of south Bengal. The tribunal, held at Kolkata's Muslim Institute, was organised by the Karwan-e-Mohabbat, Sabar Institute, and Aamra Ek Sachetan Prayas.

Brutal assaults

A woman from Keshpur in Paschim Medinipur district said that her house was attacked by a mob of 80 to 100 people while a prayer meeting was being held on October 2. The woman said that she had been disrobed and beaten up by a few people from the mob, which also included a few women. "While they were leaving after the assault, they raised slogans and said that the place had become free of Christians," said the woman, who did not wish to be named.

Sampa Karmakar from Haripal in Hooghly district said that a mob had not only attacked a prayer gathering next to her residence on September 13, but had also assaulted members of her family and vandalised household appliances.

Mamata Joshua, from Asansol in Paschim Bardhaman district, said that a prayer meeting next to her residence was attacked on May 31, and despite an assurance from a local BJP MLA, she has been receiving threats and holding prayer meetings in fear since then.

Priest arrested

In all the cases, the mob had accused their targets of engaging in religious conversion and threatened them with more violence if they held Christian prayers.

Anup Kumar Ghosh, a priest at a church in Midnapore town, was arrested by the police after a mob attacked his church on July 3, when he was holding a feast after a marriage ceremony. "I was booked under several sections, including charges of attempted murder. Though I am out on bail after spending 41 days behind bars, I

have to present myself to the police station every week," the priest said.

There were accounts of violence from Purba Medinipur, Paschim Medinipur, North 24 Parganas, South 24 Parganas, Howrah, and Hooghly districts. A number of survivors said there was a change in the attitude of the police after May 4, when the BJP came to power, though some also recalled that they had been targeted for their faith earlier as well, particularly between 2023 and 2025.

Home fellowships at risk

Reverend Arpan Rana, the State general secretary of the National Christian Council said that the majority of targets over the past few months have been home fellowships or prayer meetings held at home. Under The West Bengal Religious Buildings And Places Act, 1985, there are restrictions and conditions on holding religious prayers in public and private buildings not designated as religious places, he said.

Herod Mullick, founder of the Bangiya Christiya Pariseba (BCP), an interfaith forum representing Christians in the State, said that there have been cases when churches have also been attacked and cited the example of a mob attack at a church in the Basanti police station area in South 24 Parganas on October 31.

Mr. Mullick added that the U.S.-based research project, India Hate Lab, has documented at least 60 incidents of hate crimes and targeted attacks against Christians in West Bengal across 13 districts between May 13 and September 20 this year.

Claims of increased violence under BJP rule

The jury at the people's tribunal comprised former Chief Information Commissioner of India Wajahat Habibullah, former bureaucrat and Rajya Sabha MP Jawhar Sircar, journalist John Dayal, and activists Aakar Patel, Vidya Dinkar, and Harsh Mander, among others.

While Mr. Habibullah said that the attacks caused a great deal of harm to Bengal's spiritual tradition, Mr. Mander asked how it took just four months after the BJP came to power to brutalise society in the State and instill fear among a section of people. Mr. Patel also highlighted the timing of these events and said that Bengalis

should not think that they are less vulnerable than other parts of the country.

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