



# کاروانِ محبت

## कारवान ए मोहब्बत

### KARWAN E MOHABBAT

#### Open letter to the Chief Secretary of Odisha Government

We are members of a people's tribunal that Karwan-e-Mohabbat and a collective of concerned citizens have constituted to investigate the growing incidents of anti-Christian discrimination and violence in many states of India.

Among the states that have caused special concern is Odisha with an unfortunate long history of violence targeting its Christian minorities especially amongst its adivasi and dalit communities.

We, members of this people's tribunal travelled in Odisha between 2nd to 5th May 2026. The places we visited were Nabarangpur, Jeypore, Balasore and Baripada. In these meetings we met with around 300 women and men from Nabarangpur, Koraput, Malkangiri, Mayurbhanj, Balasore, Keonjhar, Dhenkanal, Anugul, Sambalpur, Rayagada, Khorda and Jajpur.

The testimonies that we heard from all the people the tribunal met in the course of its travels in Odisha are extremely harrowing and worrying. From the accounts, it is beyond doubt that the Odisha state government is doing little to prevent the brazen and continuous violations of the fundamental rights of its Christian, mostly adivasi and dalit citizens. Firstly, under assault is their fundamental right of freedom of conscience and faith guaranteed under Art 25 of the Constitution. They have also been denied protection of their life, liberty and livelihoods, and their freedom to choose where they live and work.

However even more worrying than simply attacks by organized formations reportedly closely affiliated to the ruling BJP and its ideological mentor, the RSS, is repeated testimonies of the role of the police, the civil administration, elected representatives and even members of the state cabinet who encouraged and participated in the persecution of Christian minorities and the denial of their fundamental rights. It was particularly striking that one of the districts which has seen the worst anti-Christian violence includes the constituency represented by the Ministry of Minority Welfare.

The tribunal heard evidence of four principal times of violence targeting Christian minorities. The first of these were physical attacks on Christian places of worship including chapels and house churches and pastors and priests; forceful disruption and closure of prayer meetings and collective worship; and instituting false charges of unlawful religious conversion on the clergy and their confinement in police stations and jails.

A second worrying pattern that we heard about from almost all the districts was social and economic boycott of people of Christian belief and faith and on some occasions even their enforced expulsion from their village. We heard of fines being imposed on non-Christian residents who interacted in any way with the boycotted Christians, traded with them, employed them or gave them shelter.

A third development is gruesome stories of the forceful prevention of burial of Christians who died within the village burial ground or even the private lands owned by Christians. We hear of bodies rotting sometimes for days before the burial becomes possible and some burials are forced in forested lands outside the village boundaries. Funeral prayers are also forcefully prevented.

In some of the districts, the violence has crossed even these many red lines and taken the form of physical assaults on the bodies of people of Christian identity. Sometimes, this takes the form of tying them to a tree and beating them or putting them in sacks and physically assaulting them; and a few instances of sexual assault and violence and attempts to burn alive which were halted only at the last minute.

We reiterate our particular concern with many testimonies in which the people told us that the police joined Hindutva organizations to force them to sign "compromise" agreements in which they undertake to give up their faith and collective worship.

We are also concerned that in most cases of violence the police register grave criminal charges against those who are attacked, followed by their detention in police stations and jails. There also were instances where the police played a direct role in the intimidation and violence against the Christian minorities.

What is evident to us is a complete breakdown in the constitutional machinery of the state in relation to its Christian minorities. We call upon the state administration led by you to uphold and defend the constitutional rights including the religious rights of every citizen in the state without discrimination of religion, caste or creed.

Yours Sincerely,  
John Dayal,  
Aakar Patel,  
Vidya Dinker,  
Harsh Mander