



Uttar Pradesh Sees First Arrest Under New Anti-Religious Conversion Legislation

The eighth Indian state to ratify and implement an anti-religious conversion law, Uttar Pradesh, on January 4th **saw the first arrest of a Christian under the new legislation**. In addition to Uttar Pradesh, other states such as Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Guharat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Uttarakhand have all implemented similar laws which the governments claim are imperative to combat “Love Jihad” (also commonly referred to as “Romeo Jihad”), an unproven conspiracy theory that Indian Muslim men are seeking marriage with Hindu women in order to convert their wives to Islam and have Muslim children.

The new legislation, under which an individual can be charged of “facilitating fraudulent [religious] conversion” with little to no evidence or warrant, posits a penalization of 10 years of imprisonment to individuals convicted of waging ‘Love Jihad.’ Additionally, the law stipulates that any individual who wishes to convert religions must confer first with the district magistrate and submit a “declaration” of conversion 60 days prior to the religious conversion ceremony. Those that do not follow these stringent regulations can be detained in prison for a term of no less than six months and up to five years.

Quick Facts About Uttar Pradesh's Prohibition of Unlawful Religious Conversion Ordinance

- Passed by Uttar Pradesh state cabinet on 24 November 2020
- Religious conversion is a non-bailable crime with punishment of up to 10 years prison time
- The first charge under this legislation was filed just hours after it came into effect
- "One month of 'love jihad' law in UP : 51 arrests made, 14 cases lodged, only 2 complaints from victims" - Only 2 out of the 14 cases were filed by the alleged victims themselves; the majority were filed by family members
- In December, one pregnant Hindu woman, 22-year-old Muskan Jahan, was arrested under the new legislation for allegedly 'unlawfully converting religions' to marry her Muslim husband. She later suffered a miscarriage
- Former Law Commission of India Chief Justice A. P. Shah and former Supreme Court of India judge Madan Lokur have condemned the persecutory application of the new ordinance



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Now, on 4 January 2021, Morning Star News announced that three Indian civilians and one Korean Christian woman were arrested in Uttar Pradesh on December 19th, having been accused of violating the new legislation and engaging in fraudulent evangelism. Two individuals by the name of Sharma and Gupta claimed that three Indian civilians visited their homes not only to deliver COVID-19 aid, but also in attempts to convert them to Christianity by offering them some stimulus money. More specifically, they claim that the aid workers told them that if they visited church with them or converted to Christianity, they would receive extra rations and 1 million rupees (\approx USD \$13,673).

Raj Kumar Masih, the leader of the aid organization that the three arrested individuals worked for, has asserted that Sharma and Gupta's claims of attempted incitement to fraudulent conversion to Christianity are absurd, as not all of those arrested are even Christian themselves. Moreover, Masih has steadfastly denied that the aid organization has offered recipients any money as an incentive to convert to Christianity; he has offered to provide documentation of the organization's beneficiaries who will testify that they were made no such propositions.

Jubilee Campaign condemns the persecutory and discriminatory application of Uttar Pradesh's Prohibition of Unlawful Religious Conversion Ordinance, which has been used to imprison religious minorities and revoke women's freedom to convert religions and marry. We are similarly disheartened to see 'love jihad' legislations being passed in multiple other Indian states such as Madhya Pradesh. Jubilee Campaign continues to tirelessly advocate against abductions and forced conversions of girls, and believes that the "love jihad" legislations is not a proper counter to abductions and forced conversions.

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