Persecutors of Christians brought to justice
Police make numerous arrests, Christians returned to their homes, following ADF intervention
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JHARKHAND, India — The Alliance Defense Fund, on hearing of numerous attacks against Christians in the Indian state of Jharkhand, were able to bring to justice several Hindu extremists who had attacked Christians and forced them from their villages.

“People should not be targeted for violence and inhumane treatment simply because of their Christian faith,” said ADF Legal Counsel Tehmina Arora. “Although we are glad that the intervention of ADF led to justice being done on this occasion, the initial apathy of the police forces towards the violent extremism committed against the minority Christian community is endemic of a nationwide problem.”

The attacks against Christians, in the Chaibasa district of the eastern state of Jharkhand, began in October 2011. Christians were prevented from using clean drinking water from the local well and forced to use a nearby stream, which was deliberately dirtied with animal waste to make it impossible to drink. Resources of the local forest were also cut off, and the trees adjoining Christian properties cut down. The attacks soon turned to violence, with Christians being physically beaten with iron rods and other weapons, as well as having their homes broken into and possessions destroyed. At one point all of the roads leading out of the village were sealed off to prevent the Christians from fleeing.

On 29 January 2012, a reconciliation meeting was called by the head of the village; however, rather than bringing reconciliation, the Hindu extremists boycotted the meeting and escalated the attacks against the Christian villagers. Mob violence led to the destruction of Christian homes, livestock, and harvest, as well as the beatings off many Christians who tried to escape. Although the Christian families eventually were able to seek refuge in the church of a neighboring village, away from their homes and fields they were without adequate food and clothing.

On hearing of the mob violence and discovering that the local administration had failed to take any action against the attackers, ADF immediately spoke to the local police station and the National Commission for Minorities. ADF-allied attorney Prakash Puthserry traveled to the district on 20 February 2012 and led a small delegation to meet with the district collector and the superintendent of police, who promised to take action.

The Commission for Minorities also responded to the issues raised by ADF and contacted the director general of police to ensure the safety of the Christians and that appropriate action be taken against the perpetrators of the attacks.

As a result of the ADF intervention, many of the accused were arrested. On 21 February 2012, the Christians were safely escorted back to their homes by the combined police force of three different stations. Later that same day, in a meeting called by the police administration, all the villagers were made to sign a bond of peace, and the local administration promised to provide compensation for all the damage done. The villagers also agreed to take a collection to compensate for the damage they caused to the Christian community.

ADF is a legal alliance of Christian attorneys and like-minded organizations defending the right of people to freely live out their faith. Launched in 1994, ADF employs a unique combination of strategy, training, funding, and litigation to protect and preserve religious liberty, the sanctity of life, marriage, and the family.