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Follow-up and implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action

Written statement* submitted by Prahar, a non- governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[7 February 2022]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only. The views expressed in the present document do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations or its officials.



Minorities in India do not have religious freedom and they are facing many difficulties

On 14 January 2022 in Chandauli, Uttar Pradesh, India, Pastor Rakesh Babu age 51 years, his wife, brother and son were attacked at approximately 10.15 pm by a group of eight people, just after they had gathered to pray in their parsonage, a tiny room attached to the church where Pastor Babu has served for the last 15 years. The family fled through a neighbouring swampy field. The pastor's clothes were torn and his back, head and knees were bruised badly, as his young son reportedly pleaded with the mob to let his father go. The pastor was able to escape to a friend's house, who later took him to the Jalilpur police station and asked the police to file a complaint.

At the station, Pastor Babu met with Sub Inspector (SI) Krishnakumar Gupta, who is said to have completely ignored his pleas for police protection. The police told him to go to the hospital and refused to file a complaint, and he had a similar experience at a second police station in Mughalsarai. The fact is that on 8 January 2022, just a week before the night of the attack, a few villagers who claimed to be members of the Hindu nationalist group Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), had filed a police complaint against Pastor Babu to SI Gupta at the Jalilpur police station claiming that he was a Christian missionary who was converting Hindus to Christian through the church. The SI had called Pastor Babu and threatened that if he continued to encourage others to join him in prayer, he would be jailed.

On 12 January 2022, the same members of the RSS who had threatened Pastor Babu went around the village forcing people to sign a document that called for the destruction of the church building. When some of the villagers refused to sign it, they were threatened. After the attack on 14 January, the police took Pastor Babu, his wife and brother from Mughalsarai station to the nearby hospital. They were admitted for five days but did not receive adequate treatment, including food, clean water and warm water to bathe in. Police were arrested on the night of the attack but were released in the early hours of the following morning. The attackers, some of whom are known to me, roam freely now.

My organisation is deeply concerned for the safety of Pastor Babu and his family following this shocking attack, which was clearly pre-meditated and followed at least a week of intense harassment. The lack of concern from the police is deplorable, and the lack of arrests and prosecutions, even when the identities of the people harassing the pastor and his family are known, is inexcusable.

We request this council to ask the Indian government to ensure that Pastor Babu
