

ONE SUNDAY IN INDIA

The ongoing persecution of Christians in India continues to be documented by Church in Chains partner Persecution Relief, which reports several persecution incidents each week. The widespread nature of persecution was vividly illustrated by three incidents in three different states on **Sunday 3 February**.

Fifteen church members were brutally beaten up at a Sunday morning worship service in the remote village of **Chote Markeli, Chhattisgarh state**, in central India. Hindu militants and local villagers gathered outside the church building and shouted: "Deny Jesus or die!" When the Christians refused to recant their faith, they were brutally and indiscriminately



Sister Bundi in hospital

attacked. One elderly woman known as Sister Bundi (pictured) had to have surgery for a broken hand, while several people sustained serious head wounds.

CHURCH BUILDINGS BADLY BURNT

Several hours earlier on the same day an **Assemblies of God church in Musiri Taluk, in the southern state of Tamil Nadu** was burnt badly. Pastor Edwin Joseph and his wife arrived at the church for a 5am prayer meeting to find the building covered in smoke and on fire.

Church members and neighbours managed to put out the fire before it destroyed the whole building. Pastor Edwin believes this to be an arson attack as there was no other explanation for the fire.

CHURCH CLOSED DOWN

On the same Sunday, **Fellowship Baptist Church in Kuchaikote, Bihar state**, in eastern India was effectively shut down. A week earlier, church members had attended a meeting in a nearby village. Photographs from this meeting were shared on social media, with claims that "conversion activities" had taken place.

The church pastor, Jacob Mani, received a message warning him the Sunday morning service of his church would be attacked. The next day the landlord of the rented premises where the church was meeting was pressurised by militants not to allow the Sunday service to go ahead.

In 2018, Persecution Relief recorded 477 incidents of violence against Christians across India. In the month of January 2019 alone, 45 incidents of persecution were recorded.

(Persecution Relief)