

## **Nuns Harassed In India On Suspicion Of Conversion, Forced Off Train**

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The incident, which took place on Friday, has generated outrage, with Kerala State Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan writing to Home Minister Amit Shah asking for strict action.

*Nuns Accused Of Conversion, Forced Off Train*

**Uttar Pradesh (INDIA):** Two nuns and their two novices were heckled and forced to get off a train in Uttar Pradesh's Jhansi by members of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad, who suspected them of conducting religious conversion. **They were allowed to proceed only after an inquiry at the railway station established there was no conversion involved.** The ABVP is the student's wing of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, the ideological mentor of the BJP.Â Union minister Amit Shah has promised action in the matter.

"Those involved in the Jhansi nuns' harassment incident will be brought before the law," Mr Shah said today.

The incident, which took place on Friday, has generated outrage, and Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan wrote to Mr Shah earlier, asking for strict action.

"Such incidents tarnish the image of the nation, and its ancient tradition of religious tolerance. Such incidents require utmost condemnation by the Union government. I would request your kind intervention to instruct authorities to take strict action on all groups, individuals who disrupt, impair the freedom of individual rights guaranteed by the constitution," the Chief Minister wrote.

"The constitution gives us the freedom to move anywhere,Â wear anything. What has happened has pained the Christian community a lot. It is a violation of fundamental rights. They were forced to change their dress. This is not acceptable. The Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh wears a religious dress and has freedom to roam around everywhere. So do we," Father Jacob, the spokesperson of the Kerala Catholic Bishops' Council, told NDTV.

*A screengrab of the four nuns being interrogated by Bajrang Dal members on a train in Uttar Pradesh on March 19.*

*Two nuns and two postulants of the Sacred Hearts Congregation of Delhi Province were forced to get off a train by the Railway police.*

*The nuns were travelling on the Haridwar-Puri Utkal Express on March 19.*

The nuns were travelling on the Haridwar-Puri Utkal Express on March 19. A 25-second video from the train compartment shows the women surrounded by some men, some of whom appear to be policemen.

"Go get your luggage. You will be sent home if what you are saying is correct," a man is heard saying.

"Why are you indulging in netagiri," another said.

"Arre what netagiri. Chaliye madam. Jaldi uthao samaan," a third said.

Other videos and photographs from the Jhansi railway station showed the women on the railway platform and then, inside what appeared to be a Jhansi Railway Police station.

"There were some members of the ABVP who were returning from a training camp in Rishikesh on board the Utkal express to Jhansi. Four Christian ladies were travelling on the same train from Hazrat Nizamuddin in Delhi to Rourkela in Odisha. Two of them were nuns and two were under training. These members of the ABVP suspected that these two nuns were taking the other two women for conversion because the nuns were speaking to the other ladies. On this suspicion, they informed the Railway Protection Force who in turn informed the railway police. These ABVP members also gave a written complaint about conversion. I reached the spot and made inquiries. **These inquiries revealed that the two other women were from Odisha's Rourkela and were under training. We checked their certificates and both had 2003 baptism certificates and this proved both women by birth were Christian and that no conversion was involved.** After this we sent all four women onwards to their destination in Odisha," Naeem Khan Mansuri, the Superintendent of Railway Police in Jhansi said in a detailed statement.

It is not clear what action has been taken against the ABVP members who were involved.

- NDTV, ATS, Scroll, India Today