

India: 'Only Christians Celebrate...': Christmas In Assam Church Disrupted

26/12/2021 18:17 by admin

The attackers - who claimed to be from the Bajrang Dal - said they would not allow Hindus to celebrate Christmas because December 25 was also 'Tulsi Diwas'

In Assam last year, a Bajrang Dal leader said Hindus celebrating Christmas would be "beaten"

Guwahati: Christmas celebrations were disrupted in Assam's Silchar on Saturday after men claiming to be members of the Bajrang Dal - a right-wing group with close ties to the ruling BJP - forced their way into a church and demanded it be shut down because Hindus could not take part in the festivities.

The attackers claimed they had no issue with Christians celebrating Christmas but declared they would not allow Hindus to do so, because December 25 was also 'Tulsi Diwas'.

A senior Assam Police officer told NDTV no complaint had been filed so far and, therefore, no case had been registered. Police have labelled this a "small commotion" not needing a suo moto case.

"We are not against Christmas... let only Christian celebrate Christmas. We are against Hindu boys and girls participating in Christmas function. Today it was Tulsa Diwas of Hindus, but no one celebrated. It hurts our sentiments... everyone is saying Merry Christmas. How will our religion survive?" one of the attackers (who was wearing a saffron cap) said in a video circulated online.

Visuals of the incident showed hundreds of people milling about (some without face masks and with little sign of social distancing) a large Christmas tree with twinkling lights.

Visuals also showed a group of people - presumably those stopped from celebrating Christmas - standing outside the gates of the church with a handful of policemen standing about.

The attackers said only Christians could celebrate Christmas

This isn't the first time Christmas has been targeted in Silchar. Last year, a Bajrang Dal leader - to raucous cries of 'Jai Shri Ram' - said Hindus celebrating Christmas would be "beaten".

It also comes on the heels of an attack yesterday on Christians in Haryana's Gurgaon district.

There have also been several incidents of the burning of Christian religious books and churches in Karnataka, where the BJP government has pushed through a hugely controversial anti-conversion bill.

There have been nearly 40 such attacks in the southern state over the past 11 months.

On Thursday a 160-year-old church in Belgavi district was vandalised. Police have filed a FIR (first information report) but no action has been taken since.

Two weeks ago, in Kolar district, right-wing groups burned Christian religious books. No arrest has been made; in fact, police said Christians had been warned against distributing religious booklets.

The attacks on the Christian communities in Karnataka, and on Christmas celebrations in Haryana and Assam, come as Muslims in Haryana's Gurgaon face repeated disruptions over namaz.

Last week - at the city's Udyog Vihar neighbourhood - visuals emerged of an angry mob seemed to harass Muslims gathered to pray, demanding they chant 'Bharat mata ki jai'.

In the videos the Muslims gathered seem to ask: "We're trying to pray... why are you doing this?"

- NDTV