**13 May 2019**

**From The European Association of Jehovah’s Witnesses**

**Submission to the UN Human Rights Committee prior to the adoption of the List of issues** (***126th Session—1–26 July 2019*)**

**4th Report on**

**INDIA**

*(126th Session of the Human Rights Committee, 1-26 July 2019)*

Contact address in Belgium: Rue d’Argile 60, 1950 Kraainem,

Tel.: ++ 32-2-782 00 15 - Fax: ++ 32-2-782 08 11 - E-mail: jwitnesses.be@jw.org

Table of Contents

[**SUMMARY OF THE SUBMISSION 2**](#_Toc8228549)

[**I. INTRODUCTION 3**](#_Toc8228550)

[**II. HIGHLIGHTS 4**](#_Toc8228551)

[**III. ISSUES: 4**](#_Toc8228552)

[**III.A. ABUSES OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM (VIOLATIONS OF ARTICLES 18, 19 AND 26 OF THE “ICCPR”) 4**](#_Toc8228553)

[**III.B. INTERFERENCE WITH FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY—RELIGIOUS MEETING DISRUPTION 12**](#_Toc8228554)

[**IV CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 12**](#_Toc8228555)

|  |
| --- |
| SUMMARY OF THE SUBMISSION This submission to the Human Rights Committee highlights violations of the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) prior to the adoptionof the *List of issues*.  Jehovah’s Witnesses in India and as a worldwide organisation respectfully request the government of India to:   1. Protect the fundamental human rights of Jehovah’s Witnesses by providing protection against violence and preserving the freedom to share one’s faith publicly as guaranteed by the Constitution of India and to practise, profess and propagate their religion in a peaceful manner. 2. Ensure that the police do not file false and fabricated charges under Section 295A of the Indian Penal Code and Sections 3 and 4 of the Madhya Pradesh Freedom of Religion Act, and recognise that publicly sharing one’s faith is protected under Article 19 of the ICCPR. 3. Ensure that police do not prevent Jehovah’s Witnesses from practising their religion and recognise their fundamental rights such as freedom of speech and expression under Article 19 and the freedom to practise, profess and propagate religion in a peaceful manner under Article 25 of the Constitution of India. |

# I. INTRODUCTION

* 1. The European Association of Jehovah’s Witnesses is a charity registered in the United Kingdom. It is assisting the adherents to the faith of Jehovah’s Witnesses in various areas of the world.
  2. Jehovah’s Witnesses have been in India for more than 113 years. They were legally registered on March 7, 1978 as a charitable trust under the name The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of India.
  3. This submission provides information prior to the adoption of the *List of Issues* in connection with India. It predominantly focuses on the rights protected under Articles 18, 19 and 26 of the ICCPR.

# II. HIGHLIGHTS

Jehovah’s Witnesses generally enjoy freedom of worship in India. However, they continue to face disturbing incidents of religious intolerance as targets of religiously motivated attacks and harassment. Over the past 15 years (2002–2018) Jehovah’s Witnesses have suffered nearly 300 mob attacks, 50 attacks in the last year alone, some of which have been vicious. Generally, when the Witnesses request the assistance of the local police, they receive little or no relief. Instead of upholding the fundamental rights of the Witnesses, the police are influenced by the mob to arrest the Witnesses on fabricated charges of forced conversion, blasphemy and disturbing the peace. The attackers are allowed to file a First Information Report (FIR), whereas Jehovah’s Witnesses are generally denied the right to file a counter/cross FIR.

# III. ISSUES:

## III.A. ABUSES OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM (VIOLATIONS OF ARTICLES 18, 19 AND 26 OF THE “ICCPR”)

1. **20 January 2018, Paramakudi, Tamil Nadu:** Two Witnesses, Mr. Micheal and Mr. Arockiasamy were surrounded by a mob of more than 50 members of Bajrang Dal, a Hindu group, who accused them of ‘conversion’. They took Mr. Arockiasamy to the local police station. He was released in the evening after an attorney spoke to the police sub-inspector.
2. **21 January 2018, Kangeyam, Tamil Nadu:** A man accused two Witnesses, Mr. Prabakaran and Mr. Johnson, of ‘converting’ people. He took a tract folder and a mobile phone from Mr. Prabakaran. The Witnesses informed the police and filed a complaint. The attackers were called in and asked to hand over the mobile phone. They threatened to lodge a counter complaint against the Witnesses under Section 295A (deliberate and malicious acts, intended to outrage religious feelings or any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs). They also threatened to hold a strike against Jehovah’s Witnesses and their alleged ‘conversion’ work. The incident was later handled by a higher police official, who assisted the Witnesses.
3. **21 January 2018, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu:**Mr. Stanley and Mr. Jayaraj were talking to a woman about the Bible. She informed her husband (a well-known Hindu leader in that area) who came with a mob of around 30 people. The mob abused the Witnesses verbally and threatened to burn their vehicle. The police came and took the Witnesses to the police station. There, the Hindu leader submitted a written complaint and the Witnesses were forced to write a letter saying that they would not visit that area (Atlanta Nagar and nearby areas) again. The mob was sent away by the police and the Witnesses were later allowed to go home.
4. **31 January 2018, Sullia, Karnataka**: A small group of young men stopped Mr. Pradeep and Mr. Biju Philip, and accused them of ‘conversion’. They were taken to the police station where the police sub-inspector interrogated them and threatened both to file an FIR and to register a case against them. The Witnesses were detained from 2 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. and were allowed to go home only after they gave an undertaking that they will not visit people who are not interested.
5. **14 February 2018, Secunderabad, Telangana:** A Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS: Hindu nationalist organisation) leader accused Mr. Shailendra Emmanuel and Mr. Wilfred Selvakumar of ‘conversion’. Soon a mob gathered and accused them of giving money to people to convert them. They were taken to the police station. A complaint was made against them and an FIR was filed. The next day the sub-inspector refused to accept and acknowledge a complaint by Mr. Emmanuel, who then sent a request to the commissioner of police to register his complaint. No action was taken and he filed a Private Complaint Registered (PCR) in the Judicial Magistrates’ Court, which was rejected. An appeal has been made in the Sessions Court to accept the PCR and to file a complaint against the RSS leader.
6. **27 February 2018, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu:** Mr. Anbu and Mr. Shivakumar were surrounded by a mob of some 50 people and were accused of ‘conversion’. The sub-inspector of the nearby police station arrived and took them to the police station for an enquiry. In the meantime, two more Jehovah’s Witnesses, Mr. Chelladurai and Mr. Mariappan, who were in the same area, were attacked by a mob and severely beaten. The police rescued them and brought them to the police station. They were subsequently taken to a government hospital. The police did not accept the Witnesses’ complaint, hence it was sent by registered post to the higher authorities. Since no action was taken by the police, a PCR was filed, and it has been admitted in the court.
7. **2 March 2018, Pudupatti, Tamil Nadu:** Mr. Arokiaraj, Mrs. Arokiaraj, Ms. Shantalata and Ms. Peula Antony were stopped by two men. The women were forced to apply Kumkuma (a red coloured powder used for Hindu religious markings) but they refused. All the Witnesses were taken to the police station. They were asked to sign a document saying that they will not come to that area again for preaching, and were allowed to go.
8. **10 March 2018, Madurai, Tamil Nadu:** Two elderly Witnesses, Mr. D. Rajasekar and his wife Vellaiyammal, were sharing their beliefs using a portable literature cart. A group of about 12 people arrived, abused them verbally, threatened to beat them and then burnt the literature.
9. **12 March 2018, Settikudi, Tamil Nadu:** Mr. Edward Raja was stopped by a man belonging to a Hindu group (Hindu Munnani). Mr. Raja was accused of ‘conversion’ and was taken to the police station. An FIR was filed against him and he was released. Mr. Raja filed a complaint against the man who accused him, but the police did not take any action. A PCR has been filed in the court.
10. **14 April 2018, Bengaluru, Karnataka:** A policeman shouted at Ms. Jacintha and Ms. Annapurna and accused them of ‘conversion’. He arrested them and took them to the police station. They were allowed to go after giving an undertaking that they will not visit the houses of those who are not interested.
11. **15 June 2018, Jammu, Jammu & Kashmir:** Suneha, Kavita, Mikkel and Rahul were stopped by a man who gathered a mob of some 20 people. The mob verbally abused them and forced them to go to the police station. They were allowed to go after giving an undertaking that they will not visit anyone in that area who is not interested.
12. **25 June 2018, Pollachi, Tamil Nadu:** Mr. Deepak and Mrs. Parimala, a 60-year-old woman, shared their beliefs with a woman who then informed her husband, the secretary of Hindu Munnani. He came with other members of his group and severely beat Mr. Deepak. The police were contacted and in their presence, the mob continued to beat him. Both Mr. Deepak and Mrs. Parimala were taken to the police station. A Witness named George was also severely beaten by the crowd outside the police station. The Witnesses were verbally abused by the police and were allowed to go after giving a statement that they had been brought to the police station for an enquiry.
13. **1 July 2018, Chennai, Tamil Nadu:** Three Witnesses, Mr. Augustine, Mr. Marko and Mr. Harihar Subramaniyan spoke to a man who said that he was not interested. As they were leaving, a mob gathered, took their mobile telephones and vehicle licenses and called the police, who took them to the police station. The Witnesses were allowed to go after they gave an undertaking that they will not go to the houses of those who are not interested.
14. **12 July 2018, Dindigul, Tamil Nadu:** When Mr. Benjamin and Mr. Pavulraj were engaged in speaking about their beliefs, a woman approached them, scolded them, and accused them of ‘conversion’. The Witnesses started to leave, but about four or five men arrived, stopped them, and accused them of ‘conversion’. The men called the police, who took the Witnesses to the police station, where the opposers submitted a written complaint. The Witnesses were allowed to go after they gave an undertaking to the police that they will not distribute literature to those who are not interested.
15. **15 July 2018, Bengaluru, Karnataka:** A woman gathered a mob and accused two Witnesses, Mr. Madhukar and Mr. Kiran, of ‘conversion’. Sensing trouble, the Witnesses called the police. The woman made a false complaint and the police registered an FIR against the Witnesses. They were detained for more than 24 hours in the police station and then remanded to judicial custody for another day. The Witnesses were released on bail the following day. They have sent several complaint letters to the police and higher authorities, seeking to file an FIR against the woman who made the false complaint, but without result to date.
16. **18 July 2018, Secunderabad, Telangana:** Mr. Shivakumar and Ms. Sherlin spoke to a young man who said that he was not interested. As they were leaving, the father of the young man arrived and started questioning the Witnesses. He took them to a nearby police station and made a written complaint. The policemen interrogated the Witnesses and accused them of ‘conversion’. They were allowed to go after giving an undertaking that they will not visit people who are not interested.
17. **18 July 2018, Hubli, Karnataka:** A small group of young men followed Mr. Vinod Kumar, verbally abused him and accused him of ‘conversion’. Approximately nine people gathered and questioned him about his work and place of residence. While he was replying, they hit him in the face and kicked him. He was allowed to escape when a leader of the village intervened.
18. **22 July 2018, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh:** While engaged in speaking about their beliefs, Mr. Haribabu (53 years old) and Abishai (13 years old) were restrained by a group of men. The men abused them verbally, and slapped and beat Mr. Haribabu. They were allowed to go after Mr. Haribabu told them that he will not come to that place again.
19. **29 July 2018, Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra:** Mr. Richard Lobo and Ms. Priscilla spoke to a woman at her door. As they were leaving, a man came out of the house and starting asserting that they were ‘converting’ people. Another man joined in and the two men called the police, who took the Witnesses to the police station. Two policemen were hostile but a third one, who arrived later, allowed the Witnesses to go home on the condition that they will not file a counter-complaint against the man who accused them.
20. **1 August 2018, Dharmasthala, Karnataka:** Ms. Philomena and Ms. Mini went to visit a relative. When they were in the relative’s house the police arrived and took them to the police station because of complaints received from some men belonging to the Bajrang Dal group. The Witnesses were detained in the police station until the evening, and then allowed to go. They were asked to return to the police station the following day and give a statement that they will not visit the houses they had visited the previous day.
21. **18 August 2018, Kolkata, West Bengal:** Jadhav, a deaf Witness, saw a group of six deaf men. When they realised that Jadhav was one of Jehovah’s Witnesses, they beat him with a rod because he would not support a protest.
22. **21 August 2018, Virudhunagar, Tamil Nadu:** Ms. Pandiammal, Ms. Maariammal and Ms. Raakammal went to a home Bible study that had been conducted for some six weeks. A Hindu group leader came to the house and accused the Witnesses of ‘conversion’. Though the householder supported the Witnesses, the Hindu leader called the nearest police station. The police inspector arrived and asked the Witnesses to come to the police station. The Witnesses signed an undertaking and were allowed to go.
23. **5 September 2018, Tenkasi, Tamil Nadu:** A young man accused Mr. John Britto Amaladoss and Mr. Ruban Sylvester of ‘conversion’ and made telephone calls to gather supporters. The Witnesses left the place immediately, leaving behind their car. When they returned later to collect the car, they found that it had been taken to the police station. The police informed them that they should come the following day. The following day, they were informed that an FIR had been filed against them and against additional Witnesses, Mr. Ravikumar, Mrs. Renuka and Ms. Shanti. Though the Witnesses have asked to register an FIR against the men who accused them of ‘conversion’, no FIR is registered to date.
24. **12 September 2018, Karur, Tamil Nadu:** Mrs. S.V. Kalaimagal, 62 years old, and Mrs. Rajeswari Jayapal, 55 years old, were surrounded by seven men belonging to the Hindu Munnani group and accused of ‘conversion’. The men called the police, but the police did not respond. The men broke their portable literature cart, threw the literature on the road and left.
25. **18 September 2018, Kangeyam, Tamil Nadu:** While engaged in speaking about their beliefs, Mr. Vivek and Mr. Johnson sensed trouble from a man they had met, and were trying to leave the area. A mob of about 20 people surrounded them and did not let them leave. The mob beat, kicked and threatened the Witnesses. They also snatched their bags, bike key and helmets. The police arrived but the mob continued mistreating the Witnesses. They were then taken to the police station, and were allowed to go after they gave an undertaking that they will not talk to the people who were part of the mob. Despite requesting to register an FIR against the mob, and sending several reminders to the police, the higher authorities have not taken any action.
26. **21 October 2018, Delhi, Northern India**: Mr. and Mrs. Rajkumar and Mrs. Vaishali were visiting an acquaintance who was interested in listening to the Bible’s message. A man barged in, saw what was going on, left, and returned with 10–12 men. This mob pulled Mr. Rajkumar out of the house, beat him, and verbally abused Mrs. Rajkumar and Mrs. Vaishali. Medical treatment was given to Mr. Rajkumar and a medico-legal case was filed. Since no further action was taken by the police, Mr. Rajkumar submitted a separate complaint on which a Non-cognizable Offence Report was registered by the police against the perpetrators.
27. **27 October 2018, Kangeyam, Tamil Nadu**: While Mr. and Mrs. Samuel were engaged in speaking about their beliefs, Mrs. Samuel noticed a group of Hindu activists following them. Sensing trouble, she asked her husband to leave the area. The group formed a mob, which prevented Mrs. Samuel from leaving. The police were informed and Mrs. Samuel was taken to the police station. With the intervention of an advocate, she was allowed to go after a few hours.
28. **28 October 2018, Harihar, Karnataka**: While engaged in speaking about their beliefs, Mr. Mahesh and Mr. Shanmugam were stopped by a man who questioned them about their work and accused them of ‘conversion’. The Witnesses attempted to walk away but the man followed them on his bicycle, stopped them and gathered a mob. This mob attacked the Witnesses, verbally abused them, tore their shirts, forced them to go to the police station and made a complaint accusing them of ‘conversion’. With the intervention of an advocate, both of them were allowed to go after giving an undertaking.
29. **17 November 2018, Ambala, Haryana**: While two Witnesses, Mr. Ankit and Mr. Vinay, were talking to an elderly man, three young men approached and began questioning them. A mob of about 50 people gathered, beat the Witnesses and forcibly took them to their leader's office, where they were questioned and beaten again. Later the mob forced them to go to the police station. With the intervention of an advocate, both of them were allowed to go home after some hours.
30. **27 November 2018, Katpadi, Tamil Nadu**: Three Witnesses, Mr. Arockiadass, Mr. Justin Raj and Mr. Rajaram, were engaged in speaking about their beliefs. A mob physically assaulted and verbally abused them. One person from the mob called the police, who came and took them to the police station. After giving a warning, the police allowed the Witnesses to go.
31. **27 November 2018, Theni, Tamil Nadu**: Mr. and Mrs. Ranjit Lal and Mr. and Mrs. Ramar were on their way home after speaking about their beliefs. They were stopped by a group of men who questioned them about their activity. The Witnesses tried to explain, but the men shouted at them and forcibly took the four Witnesses to the police station. With the intervention of an advocate the issue was settled without filing a complaint or FIR.
32. **4 December 2018, Kovilpatti, Tamil Nadu**: While Mr. and Mrs. Pancharatnam were engaged in speaking about their beliefs, they noticed a man who on two previous occasions had threatened Mrs. Pancharatnam. As they were leaving the area, the man stopped them, forcibly took the couple to the police station and made a complaint falsely accusing them of insulting the Hindu religion. With the intervention of an advocate, they were allowed to go after giving an undertaking.
33. **4 December 2018, Madurai, Tamil Nadu**: Two Witnesses, Ms. Mary and Ms. Panchavarnam, spoke to a small group of women. A young man standing nearby took the tract and shouted at the Witnesses. A group of men joined, verbally abused the Witnesses, and forcibly took them to the police station. A police officer refused to take a complaint, spoke in favour of the Witnesses and allowed them to go.
34. **6 December 2018, Bengaluru, Karnataka**: Mr. Nagaraj Shetty spoke about his beliefs to an elderly woman, who was interested. The woman’s son arrived and started shouting at him, accusing him of ‘conversion’. Mr. Shetty immediately left the area. However the man followed him, and gathered people who forcibly took him to the police station. With the intervention of an advocate, Mr. Shetty was allowed to go late that night after giving an undertaking.
35. **11 January 2019, Mangalore, Karnataka**: While engaging in speaking about his beliefs, Mr. Pandu Gowda spoke to a middle-aged woman. Her husband called a group of friends, who came, interrogated Mr. Gowda about his activity and left. The husband then called another group of friends who also came and questioned Mr. Gowda. Then the husband called the police. A police patrol arrived, seized Mr. Gowda’s religious literature, took his photograph, warned him not to go to Hindu homes and let him go.
36. **30 January 2019, Mumbai, Maharashtra**: Four Witnesses, Mr. Yogesh, Mr. Moses, Mr. Kiran and Mr. Ashok, were engaged in speaking about their beliefs. Messrs. Yogesh and Moses met a man who saw the word “Bible” on the jw.org website and accused them of ‘conversion’. The man took both of them to the police station, and the other two Witnesses were called to the police station. With the intervention of an advocate, all four were released after giving an undertaking.
37. **6 February 2019, Pollachi, Tamil Nadu**: Two Witnesses, Mrs. Parimala and Mrs. Vinitha, met a man who told them that their sharing their believes is not right and to go away. As they were leaving, a small group of men arrived and forcibly took them to the police station. The Witnesses were compelled to sign an undertaking stating that they will not engage in preaching activity. With the intervention of an advocate, they were allowed to go.
38. **8 February 2019, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu**: Mrs. Divya Jayprakash was sharing her beliefs with a young woman at her house. A woman who lives nearby gathered a mob of about 60 people belonging to a Hindu group. The mob called Mrs. Jayprakash out, forcibly took her to a nearby temple and asked her to worship there, which she refused to do. She was verbally abused and then taken to the police station. With the intervention of an advocate, and after giving an undertaking, she was allowed to leave at around 10:00 p.m.
39. **10 February 2019, Hyderabad, Telangana**: While engaged in speaking about his beliefs, Mr. Suryaprakash spoke to a man who began shouting at him. As he was leaving, the man followed him, restrained him and gathered a group of friends. They verbally abused Mr. Suryaprakash, accused him of ‘conversion’ and called the police, who took him to the police station. He contacted a police official, whom he knew, who in turn spoke to the station officer. With the intervention of an advocate, and after giving an undertaking, he was allowed to go.
40. **13 February 2019, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu:** Two Witnesses, Ms. Angel and Ms. Sheela, spoke to a Christian lady, who was interested. Some neighbours noticed and gathered a mob. The mob questioned the Witnesses and accused them of ‘conversion’ and robbery. They shouted at the Witnesses and forcibly tried to apply Kumkuma on their forehead. The police arrived, questioned the Witnesses, checked their identity and allowed them to go.
41. **15 February 2019, Udupi, Karnataka**: Four Witnesses, Mrs. Purina, Mrs. Martha, Mrs. Salomi and Mrs. Dona, were engaged in speaking about their beliefs. Two of them met an elderly man who objected to their activity. The Witnesses immediately left the area, but the man called a group of friends who waylaid the Witnesses and started questioning them. Then the other two Witnesses, who were in the next street, were also waylaid. The police were called and all four were taken to the police station. The man followed them and lodged a complaint. A case was filed against the Witnesses.
42. **22 February 2019, Madhapur, Telangana:** Three Witnesses, Mr. Jordan, Mrs. Azia, and Mr. Thomas George, were speaking about their beliefs on the street. A woman approached them and accused them of ‘conversion’ and religious propaganda. She took a video of them on her mobile telephone and left. After an hour, she returned with a man and a police official, who took the three Witnesses to the police station. They were allowed to go after a petty case was filed and a fine was imposed. The woman uploaded the video on social media as she was unhappy with the way the police had resolved the matter.
43. **6 March 2019, Dindigul, Tamil Nadu:** Mr. Thangam gave a jw.org website card to two young men. The young men scanned the QR code on the card and noticing the word “Bible”, they accused him of ‘conversion’. One of the young men called the police, who took the Witness to the police station. The police told Mr. Thangam to write down what he had been saying. They then took his signature on blank paper and let him go.
44. **15 March 2019, Chikmagalur, Karnataka**: Four Witnesses, Mr. and Mrs. Balachander, Mr. Nathan and Mrs. Susheela, were engaged in speaking about their beliefs. As Mr. Balachander and Mr. Nathan were leaving the area, a man waylaid them and accused them of doing an illegal work. A mob gathered and stopped Mrs. Balachander and Mrs. Susheela and verbally abused them. The Witnesses called the police and informed them of the situation. The police came and took the Witnesses to the police station. With the intervention of an advocate, and after giving a statement, the Witnesses were allowed to go.
45. **20 March 2019, Brahmavar, Karnataka:** Nine Witnesses, John, Adel, Solomon, Alwyn Celine, Leena, Melissa, Sharlet and Nathal, were engaged in speaking about their beliefs. Two of them met a member of the local village council, who declined to listen. Later this man stopped two other Witnesses, who were walking towards a house, and questioned them about their activity. He then went in search of other Witnesses, and returned with a group of 20 people. The other Witnesses arrived in a vehicle and they were all restrained. The man called the police, who took the Witnesses to the police station. With the intervention of an advocate, and after giving a statement, all of them were allowed to go.
46. **23 March 2019, Tindivanam, Tamil Nadu:** Two Witnesses, Mrs. Senthamil Selvi and Ms. Anitha, were inviting people for the annual commemoration of Jesus’ death. Two men arrived, shouted at the Witnesses, grabbed their bags and took these to the police station. The Witnesses went to the police station and explained their activity to a police officer. They were then taken to the superintendent of police. The men accused the Witnesses of ‘conversion’. The superintendent asked the Witnesses to give a written statement that they will not share their beliefs in public places but they refused to do so. The police took the addresses of the Witnesses and let them go.
47. **24 March 2019, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu:** Four Witnesses, Nehemiah, Latha, Kalaivani and Kamala, were engaged in speaking about their beliefs. A man stopped them on a public road and asked them about the purpose of their visit. Another man joined him and they accused the Witnesses of ‘conversion’. One of the men forcibly put a chain of beads used by Hindus on Latha. Upon being informed about the situation, another Witness, Mr. Stephen, went to assist. The men called the police. Meanwhile the four Witnesses left the area. The police arrived and took Mr. Stephen to the police station. Another Witness, Mr. Wesley Lawrence, went to the Police Station to assist. After several hours of discussion, and with the intervention of an advocate, the police asked Mr. Stephen and Mr. Lawrence to return the following day. The following day the Witnesses agreed to give an undertaking.
48. **29 March 2019, Chengalpattu, Tamil Nadu:** Two Witnesses, Mr. Wilson and Mr. Sudeep, gave a man an invitation to the annual commemoration of Jesus’ death. Realizing it was a Christian programme, he angrily tore up the invitation and accused the Witnesses of ‘conversion’. He then called the police, who came and took the Witnesses to the police station. With the intervention of an advocate, and after giving an undertaking, they were allowed to go.

## III.B. INTERFERENCE WITH FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY—RELIGIOUS MEETING DISRUPTION

1. **25 March 2018, Jamshedpur, Jharkhand:** A mob of 30–40 men entered the Kingdom Hall while a religious meeting was in progress. They shouted religious slogans, and took away the mobile telephones and tablets of those assembled there. They invaded the stage, threatened to beat all in attendance and even to kill those gathered there next time. They also took a carton of literature and burned it in the compound. The Witnesses filed a complaint at the local police station and an FIR was registered against the perpetrators.

## IV Conclusions and Recommendations

1. Jehovah’s Witnesses in India, and as a worldwide organisation, are concerned about the serious human rights violations that have been committed with impunity. They respectfully request the government of India to:
2. Protect the fundamental human rights of Jehovah’s Witnesses by providing protection against violence and preserving the freedom to share one’s faith publicly as guaranteed by the Constitution of India and to practise, profess and propagate their religion in a peaceful manner.
3. Ensure that the police do not file false and fabricated charges under Section 295A of the Indian Penal Code and Sections 3 and 4 of the Madhya Pradesh Freedom of Religion Act, and recognise that publicly sharing one’s faith is protected under Article 19 of the ICCPR.
4. Ensure that police do not prevent Jehovah’s Witnesses from practising their religion and recognise their fundamental rights such as freedom of speech and expression under Article 19 (1) (a) and the freedom to practise, profess and propagate religion in a peaceful manner under Article 25 of the Constitution of India.