

Anti-Conversion Law Implemented in Gujarat State - VOM Sources

On April 1, an anti-conversion law passed in 2003, in Gujarat State, India, came into effect, increasing Christians' concerns that it will encourage false accusations by Hindu extremists. According to Voice of the Martyrs sources, "The law is supposed to curb religious conversions made by 'force,' 'fraud' or 'allurement.' However, Christians and human rights groups believe that the law actually obstructs all conversions, as Hindu extremists invoke it to harass Christian workers with arrests and imprisonments, which are often accompanied with violence against the accused."

The law dictates that any person who intends to convert must notify the government or they will be declared an offender and prosecuted under criminal laws. It also stipulates that those convicted of "forcible conversion" could be jailed for up to three years. Anti-conversion laws are now enforced in five Indian states-Gujarat, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Himachal Pradesh-and have been passed, but are yet to be implemented in Arunachal Pradesh and Rajasthan.

Ask God to strengthen Christian workers in Gujarat as they face more opposition in serving the Lord. Pray for the faithfulness of Indian Christians, that they will be a light that draws many to the love of Christ (Matthew 5:14-16).