

INCIDENT REPORTS

Compiled by

**NATIONAL CHRISTIAN
EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE
OF
SRI LANKA**

2009

Reported anti-Christian attacks and Incidents

January – December 2009

NOTE:

- All incidents contained in this report are based on information received by NCEASL from member Churches and affiliates.

- All information has been verified through interviews with victims, Church leaders, eye witnesses and Police and through site visits by NCEASL staff.

- NCEASL has monitored and documented incidents since 1987.

- It is generally accepted that approximately 40% of incidents are never reported.

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Incident Reports – 2009

Compiled by the National Christian Evangelical Alliance of Sri Lanka (NCEASL)

Anti-Conversion Laws

January and February

There were no significant incidents of violence. The proposed anti-conversion bill was resurrected by the JHU with the report of the Standing Committee presented to Parliament. The bill was tipped to be taken up for the 3rd and final Reading and vote in February.

Release of report on conversion of Buddhists

A Report by a commission appointed by the All Ceylon Buddhist Congress (ACBC) on conversion of Buddhists to other religions was launched on the **6th January 2009**, at a public meeting to be held at Ananda College in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

The ACBC appointed the commission in 2006 to investigate what it termed unethical conversions; including activities of NGOs and other charitable organizations. The proceedings of the commission were highlighted in several vernacular newspapers during 2006. Allegations levelled against Christian churches and organizations during these proceedings ranged from alleged unethical conversion through material inducement to allegations of supporting terrorism.

The launch of this report with much publicity in the local media coincides with renewed efforts to implement the proposed anti-conversion bill.

False complaints and Unlawful confiscation of sound equipment

**Calvary Pamula Namaskara Sabawa
Liyanage Mulla, Medland Uyana, Seeduwa
Negombo District**

20th February 2009

Police confiscated the sound equipment belonging to the church, without warning.

On the 18th of February, the pastor was asked to come to the Police station and informed him that there are two complaints made against him for noise pollution. The pastor explained that he keeps the sound level at a minimum during worship services so as not to disturb the neighbourhood to the extent that those sitting at the back of the church cannot hear him preach.

He further explained that whenever there is a special meeting that goes on until night he has always obtained permission from the Police to use amplification equipment according to the law,

but did not seek permission for his regular worship services since these were conducted during the day - On Sunday at 8am, Wednesday at 5pm and Friday at 9am. The Police took down his statement but did not ask him to stop using the amplification system.

A Case was filed for the 27th of February in the Negambo Magistrates Court, charging the pastor with use of sound amplification without a permit.

27th February 2009 Case Hearing

The Magistrate ordered the Police to return the sound equipment, dismissing the charge on the reason that such equipment was not used during the prohibited times (10pm and 6am) and hence the respondent did not need a permit.

Christians forced to stop worship and prayer meetings

Pibideeme saha Aswenna Neleeme Sabhawa (an independent local prayer centre)
Werahara, Piliyandala.

8th March 2009

A petition against the prayer ministry signed by about 100 persons and 2 Buddhist monks claiming to be the 'civil defense committee' was sent to the local Police. The petitioners demanded that the Christians stop meeting for worship claiming it is causing unrest in the village. The house owner (where the prayer meetings were held) was summoned to the Police station and asked to stop the meetings, in the presence of 2 Buddhist monks.

Pastor threatened

Lanka Deva Sabhawa
Hungama, Galle District

9th March 2009

A group of about 10 Buddhist monks and several young men entered the premises and threatened the pastor. He was issued an ultimatum to leave before 9 a.m. the following day, on the basis that there was no room for Christians to be in that area. One monk attempted to beat the pastor. They threatened to demolish the building if he failed to leave the next day.

Pastor and worker attacked with machete

Vineyard Community Church
Pannala (Kurunegala District)

25th March 2009

At approximately 7.00p.m. last night, the assistant pastor and a worker were attacked by a man wielding a machetes. He is identified as Mahinda Dharmasiri Muthuarachchi who was at one time an excise officer. The attacker entered the church building through the back door which was not locked, taking the two pastoral workers Dihsan Alexander and Nandana Pradeep by surprise. During the brutal attack which had lasted about 10 minutes, they sustained cut wounds to the head, lips, hands and arms. There was no one else around to help them. After the attacker left, the two wounded and bleeding men set off on foot seeking medical help at the closest hospital in Makandura. They were transferred to the Government Hospital in Colombo for further treatment.

A complaint has been made to the Pannala Police CIB 100/509. According to the senior pastor, they have visited the scene of the crime. Mahinda was arrested and charges filed against him. He was later enlarged on bail. First hearing was on the 28th of May 2009. It was postponed to 28th September 2009, since the Police failed to produce the medical records of the victims. The church suspects this same attacker was behind previous incidents where the electricity meter of the church was burned and the care taker of the church was attacked.

Threats and posters against Church

Calvary Prayer Centre Udugampola (Gampaha District)

21st - 22nd March 2009

The Church had received information that a protest rally is being organized against the church on Sunday the 22nd March 2009. Hand written posters carrying statements inciting the masses against the Christians were put up in and around the Udugampola town and close to the Church. The posters carried utterly false allegations that the Church was engaged in kidnapping youth.

A Police entry was made by the Pastor, seeking protection. On Sunday 22nd March 2009 the Church was able to conduct the worship service without any disturbance and the Police had sent a mobile patrol to deter any possible attack.

Congregation threatened and prevented from attending Church

Assembly of God Bulathkohupitiya (Kegalle District)

January - March 2009

During the past 3 months, this Church which has a congregation of about 80 people has come under intense pressure and threat. Members of the congregation are threatened and verbally abused by mobs and prevented from attending the Sunday worship service. As a result of these threats, it has become near impossible for the Church to meet for worship. Only 8 members were able to attend the last service. The instigators of these threats and Buddhist monks from the area have sent a petition to the Ministry of Religious Affairs against the Church's existence. They have also held meetings in the village to discuss closing down the Church.

The pastor and workers say they are being watched and monitored by people appointed by this same group. A tense situation prevails and the Christian community are unable to engage in worship.

Gang breaks in to Church and steals documents

Methodist Church Pepiliyana, Dehiwela (Colombo District)

5th April 2009

An unidentified gang broke in through the back door and windows of this 150 year old church during the night. The intruders looted valuable musical instruments, Bibles, Hymn Books and

other documents including Baptism and marriage records. The attackers took away all church documents and records from the church office. They were seen leaving the scene during the early hours of the morning in a white coloured van.

Although items of value were also taken, church sources say the deliberate removal of church records and documents which are of no monetary value indicate the motive was not robbery. The incident occurred the same night after the church celebrated Palm Sunday with a traditional procession. The Boralasgamuwa Police are investigating.

Pastor threatened with death
Jeevanaloka Sabhawa
Weeraketiya (Hambanthota District)

8th - 13th April 2009

8th April

Four men stood outside the house of the pastor shouting “Christian come out” while the pastor's wife and two children were alone at home. They were frightened by the shouts of the men who were threatening to kill the pastor. Receiving a phone call from his terrified wife, The pastor immediately returned home fearing for the safety of his family. A short while later he received a telephone call from the man who led the gang, threatening him with death unless he left the village by morning. He continued to harass the family with several threatening calls during the next few hours.

Later that same night the same man pounded on their front door shouting abuse and threats demanding the pastor to come outside. Going by the common knowledge in the village that this man possessed weapons and his own boasts that he is not afraid to use them, the pastor attempted to reason with him and persuade him to leave and not terrify his children. However the intruder continued his verbal abuse until the police who were called in arrived and placed him under arrest.

9th April

After his release from police custody, the intruder of the previous night initiated a petition against the church with the assistance of other villagers and several Buddhist temples around the area. The house owner of the pastor was threatened to evict the family or face serious damage to his house. The pastor's frightened children are temporarily relocated for safety.

10th & 12th April

The church cancelled Good Friday and Easter Sunday worship services, as a precautionary measure.

13th April

News reaches the pastor of a plot to attack him while on his way to pick up his children and the pastor cancels his journey.

Christians threatened

Several church congregations in Kommatalamadu and Amanthanaveli, Vakari (Batticaloa District)

April 2009

Christians from have been experiencing difficulty to meet together for worship due to threats. Early this week, a pastoral worker visiting Christian families was threatened and chased away by the majority Hindu villagers.

Mob breaks in to Church premises; puts up notice banning worship

Assemblies of God Dickwella, Matara District

23rd May 2009

While the pastor was engaging in prayer and worship with a few members, a prominent businessman from the area and a few other men arrived at the premises and threatened them to stop.

Church Dedication Service disrupted by mob

Apostolic Church, Thalvapadu, Mannar District

7th June 2009

The Apostolic church in Mannar was celebrating the dedication of their newly constructed church building with a service of dedication. While the service was in progress, a mob of about 300 persons arrived. They entered the premises, threatened the pastors and congregation and ordering they stop the service. Within about 15 minutes, the attackers destroyed the structure and threw the bricks and roofing sheets on to an adjacent land. .

7 attackers were arrested and action has been filed in the local Magistrates Court.

Pastor waylaid and attacked by knife wielding gang

Foursquare Gospel Church, Polonnaruwa District

23rd June 2009

The pastor of the church was driving home at approximately 10.30 pm after attending a prayer meeting when he was stopped by a group of men riding motorcycles near the *Parakrama samudra* bund. The men called out to him “pastor, pastor”. Thinking they were known to him, the pastor stopped his car. As soon as he rolled down the window, 3 assailants began to attack him with knives. They told the pastor, “this is your last day, if we let you live, you will convert the whole town”. He succeeded in avoiding their attempts to slash his neck by putting up his arms but sustained cuts on his arms. The assailants also caused damage to the windscreen and body of the car. Bleeding and injured, the pastor escaped by driving way and seeking help. An entry was made in the Polonnaruwa police and the Police are conducting inquiries. The Pastor was treated for cuts and was provided police protection. The men had their faces covered. The pastor could not make a positive identification at the Police identification parade.

(On the 22nd of May, the pastor's car was knocked by a lorry. The present incident has raised a question whether that was also a deliberate attempt to cause an accident and possibly death).

Statue damaged

**Roman Catholic Church
Minneriya, Polonnaruwa District
(mid June) 2009**

A Catholic statue placed at the Ayurveda junction was smashed. Another smaller statue was removed from the same location and later found broken near the *Parakrama Samudra* tank.

Pastor's house attacked by mob

**Foursquare Gospel Church,
Radawana, Gampaha District**

28th June 2009

A mob of over 100 persons with some Buddhist monks surrounded the house of a lady pastor from the Church of the Foursquare Gospel at about 10.30 a.m. on Sunday 28th June. The lady pastor and her husband were away and only their 13 year old daughter was home. The mob broke in, shouted insults and destroyed chairs and other furniture as the helpless girl watched in fear. Hearing that her home was under attack with her child inside, the parents rushed to the police and attempted to make a complaint but they were asked to wait awhile. Anxious not to waste time, the pastor called the emergency police hotline. The mob had dispersed by the time the police arrived on the scene. The pastor was asked to be present at an inquiry at the Gampaha Police station on the 9th July and again on the 11th July.

Church desecrated with faeces, robbery of property

**Vineyard Community Church
Makandura (Kurunegala District)**

29th June 2009

This church where two pastoral workers were subjected to a brutal machete attack on the 25th of March 2009 continues to face attacks. The church premises were desecrated with human faeces. The water pump belonging to the church was stolen. Police complaint GCIB 223/217, Pannala Police station.

Mob breaks in to Church premises; puts up notice banning worship

**Assemblies of God
Dickwella, Matara District**

5th July 2009

A mob of about 100 persons and about 50 Buddhists monks forcibly entered the premises, breaking the gate and part of the fence. The pastor was away during this time. The mob had attempted to open the door and enter inside but the lock had jammed. They protested against the church shouting threats and pasted threatening notices on the walls of the building, stating that any form of Christian worship in this place is completely prohibited. It went on to say "if you destroy this notice, you will be destroyed". Another poster stated "if you rebuild the

church, we will destroy it". Yet another threat written on the wall stated that praying is banned and Christianity is prohibited.

A complaint was lodged with the Dickwella Police. Entry number CIB 1/252/84.

**Church property damaged.
Vineyard Community Church
Makandura (Kurunegala District)**

Around 6th July 2009

The well and the toilet of the premises were found deliberately damaged. The assailant in the machete attack who is out on bail, is suspected of causing the damage around Monday the 6th of July 2009, which was a Poya holiday. Since the church premises is not occupied by a caretaker since the machete attack, the damage was discovered on the 12th July, when the senior pastor and congregation gathered for Sunday worship. Police complaint number GCIB 352/94.

**Mob disrupts Christian man's house blessing, graffiti scrawled on wall
Obawatte, Kirindiwela, (Gampaha District)**

6th July 2009

A young Christian man Sanjana Kumara invited his pastor and some friends to pray and bless the second phase of construction of his home. While they were praying, about group of about 30 unruly persons entered the premises by force and demanded they stop worshipping. "There is no place for a church here" they shouted. The crowd became unruly, threatening S. Kumara, "if you come back we will kill you". The prayer meeting to bless the house was abandoned amidst the treats. Attempts to make an entry with the Police seeking protection failed, as the Police were reluctant to take down their complaint.

8th July 2009

A shed used for storing building material and tools where the house was being constructed was broken in to and tools stolen. A message was written on the wall of the shed and the wall of the half built house, using black tar, proclaiming a Buddhist blessing 'Budhu Saranai'.

**Pastor forced to sign document promising not to hold prayer meetings
Foursquare Gospel Church,
Radawana, Gampaha District**

11th July 2009

(ref. incident of 28th June 2009, above) When the pastor was going for the Police inquiry as requested by the Police, nearing the Police station on the 11th together with two other pastors, a large and unruly procession of protestors led by Buddhist monks make their way to the Police station. The protestors surrounded the two accompanying pastors, assaulted them and spat on them. The complainant pastor was prevented from entering the Police station. The mob spoke against Christian worship in the area, questioning the right of Christian churches to function. Later at the police inquiry, where the Buddhist monks and other protesters were present, the pastor was compelled, under pressure, to sign a document promising that only her family will engage in worship and she will not entertain any other visitors for religious activity.

Church care takers assaulted, furniture damaged

**Vineyard Community Church
Makandura (Kurunegala District)**

12th July 2009

After the previous attacks, concerned that more damage will be done to the premises, 4 persons from the congregation remained in the church, including caretaker Akila Nishantha Dias. At approximately 6 pm, Mahinda D. Muthuarachchi who is the accused in the machete attack (now out on bail) arrived with about 6 others, armed with swords. They shouted at the 4 men inside the church, damaged chairs and other furniture, slashed the tyres of a motorcycle and assaulted Akila and another congregant. Akila sustained injuries to his arm and was taken to the Makandura hospital for emergency treatment and later to the Negombo hospital. Police complaint was lodged with the Pannala police.

After the attack, the assailant Mahinda had complained to the Police that Akila and the senior pastor Vidharshana Samadhi (who was not even present in the area) threatened him with a gun and sword and tried to attack his house.

Church roof destroyed

**Vineyard Community Church
Makandura (Kurunegala District)**

12th July 2009

During the night, the roof of the unguarded church was completely destroyed. The roof tiles were removed, thrown down and smashed, leaving the building exposed to the elements. A complaint was made to the Pannala Police.

Christian man's home demolished

Obawatte, Kirindiwela, (Gampaha District)

14th July 2009

The partially built house was destroyed by a mob. Sanjana Kumara received a telephone call from a friend that his house which was under construction has been demolished. On rushing to the scene, he found the concrete pillars pulled down, damaging walls and the concrete slab beyond repair. This was the culmination of a campaign against his Christian faith which began a week earlier.

All attempts by the victim house owner to report the incident formally to the Police proved futile as they did not record his complaint. After several attempts to file a complaint failed, he finally succeeded through the intervention of a lawyer, to file a complaint 2 weeks later.

Eight suspects were produced in court on the 28th of July and enlarged on bail. Next hearing scheduled for 25th August 2009.

A false rumour that the building under construction is a church was spread in the area. The victim encountered an absolute lack of cooperation when seeking justice, with even lawyers from the locality refusing to provide legal services.

Anti-Christian flyers distributed
Vineyard Community Church
Makandura (Kurunegala District)

18th July 2009

Flyers calling people to 'unite and save our motherland from fundamentalists' were distributed in the area. The document contained wild allegations against the church as a centre of hatred, dividing the community and destroying peace. It called people to gather at the Sacred Bo Tree, at the Makandura junction on the 19th of July 2009 at 8.30 am.

Pastor visiting church member's home mobbed and ducked with cow dung
Church of the Foursquare Gospel
Radawana (Gampaha District)

3rd week of July 2009

A pastor and wife visiting the house of a Christian family were verbally abused and threatened by a mob of about 50 persons who gathered at the entrance to the house. "We will not tolerate any Christian activity to continue in this village" they shouted, blocking the way and preventing the pastoral couple from leaving. The pastor was struck with a rod and drenched in a bucket of cow dung. The police arrived after about two hours after they called for assistance. Three persons were arrested and later reported released.

Church burned down for the second time
Assemblies of God
Pannaladi, Norachcholia, (Puttlam District)

28th July 2009

The temporary hall in which the church was meeting was set on fire and completely destroyed. At approximately 8.45 pm, neighbours alerted the Pastor that the church had been set on fire by unidentified persons. The entire structure was destroyed by the flames. Several coconut trees in the vicinity were also caught in the flames.

This church was destroyed once before by an act of arson almost 1 year ago, on 17th August 2008. The structure which was destroyed this week was re-built after that incident.

A complaint was made to the Police.

Pastor threatened
Assemblies of God
Ranna, (Galle District)

20th August 2009

The pastor was taken from his home by 3 armed Police officers to the Police station. A large crowd gathered to watch him being led through the town. At the Police station, he was questioned about his Christian ministry. Once he established that he was an accredited clergyman in charge of the Assemblies of God (which is a Christian denomination incorporated under Act of Parliament) branch in Ranna, he was allowed to leave.

Worship service disrupted by Mob, pastor assaulted
Living Voice of Life - Apostolic Church
Elpitiya, Kurundugaha Hethekma town, (Galle District)

23rd August 2009

A mob of about 50 persons and 3 Buddhist monks disrupted the Sunday worship. The pastor invited the monks to come in and discuss any issues with him in a peaceful manner. However, they began verbally abusing the pastor and the congregation in derogatory language. The mob became unruly and threatened the congregation members. The Pastor was viciously hit on the head by one person in the mob and they attempted to drag him out of the premises. 2 out of the 3 monks were reported to be from the *Saranankara Viharaya* Buddhist temple which is situated between the Kurundugaha Hethekma town & Elpitiya town. Some of the congregation members attempted to call the Police on their mobile phones, but the calls were not answered. The mob surrounded the 20 – 30 congregation members and intimidated them, taking their pictures via phone cameras.

The injured pastor was later admitted to the Elpitiya hospital for treatment. The incident was later reported to the Police.

Church vandalized and desecrated
Church of Jesus the Saviour
Mannar District

30th August 2009

The church was broken in to by an unidentified group who broke the windows, doors, tables and the pulpit. The electrical supply to the church was disconnected and wires and switchboxes destroyed. Burnt oil was poured inside the church desecrating the premises. Further, damage was caused to the roof by breaking Asbestos sheets. The roof had been damaged and the Asbestos sheets had been destroyed. A complaint was made to the Mannar Police.

Christians threatened
Church of the Foursquare Gospel
Bulathkohupitiya, (Kegalle District)

During the month of September

Christians in the area faced threats and intimidation, preventing them from gathering together for worship.

Community Centre put up by Church attacked and damaged
Calvary Loving Church
Attampitiya, Bandarawela (Badulla District)

5th October 2009

On the morning of the 5th, the pastor of the congregation received a message that the small hall used for prayer and worship has been demolished during the night. A complaint was made to the Police. Neighbours had confirmed to the pastor that the structure was still standing at 9

p.m. the previous night, when they retired for the night. The Police are conducting investigations into the matter but no arrests have been made.

Prayer Centre set on fire

**Prayer Centre of the Heavenly Vision Fellowship
Katupitiyawatte, (Kurunegala District)**

10th October 2009

At approximately mid night, two tyres had been attached to the main entrance of the Prayer Centre and set on fire by unidentified persons. The ensuing fire destroyed door, door frame and ceiling and caused some damage to the walls. The fire was put out and the Police called called in that same night. A complaint was lodged with the Pothuhera Police on 11th October. There were no witnesses to the incident.

Mob threatens congregation

**Methodist Church
Mawathawewa, Eppawela (Anuradhapura District)**

29th October 2009

The church members were accosted and threatened with death by mobs. Some of the families abandoned their homes and spent the night in the jungle in fear of the mob.

Pastor threatened

**Assemblies of God
Ranna, (Galle District)**

During the month of October

Members of the church were threatened not to attend worship services. The pastor and his wife were accosted by a mob of men while returning home after visiting a congregation member and threatened. They were scolded in abusive language and harassed. They threatened to throw human excrement on the pastor if he continued Christian worship services.

Previously, in 2007, a monk from a local Buddhist temple visited church members in their homes and threatened them not to engage in Christian worship activities.

Pastors' meeting disrupted

**Assemblies of God
Dickwella, Matara District**

5th November 2009

Several Christian clergymen from the Southern Province gathered at the pastor's premises for a meeting. A few hours after they began their meeting, at approximately 1.30 p.m. the meeting was disrupted by 3 Buddhist monks, some local government officials and a group of about 25

men. They verbally abused the pastors and issued verbal threats. The group of men became unruly and shouted in derogatory language.

Prayer Centre attacked by mob
Jesus Never Fails - Prayer Centre
Koswatte (Colombo District)

5th November 2009

A mob of about 200 persons surrounded the prayer centre at approximately 12.45 in the afternoon and hurled stones at the building, damaging the building exterior, windows and air conditioning units and the gate. They shouted threats to kill the pastor, accusing him of unethical conversions and demanding he stops conducting healing services. A large protest march led by members of the Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU) including some of their party M.P. monks preceded the violent attack.

The protest and the attack were a reaction to the death of two women who were brought to an open air healing service conducted by the pastor of the church on the 31st of October 2009, at the Vihara Mahadevi Park in Colombo. A spokesman for the church said the women came of their own free will, seeking divine healing and they died on admission to hospital and not at the healing service.

Police were called in to stop the attack but were unable to prevent damage to the building. No arrests have been made so far. The prayer centre suspended services & meetings due to fear of further attacks and threats issued to members of the church. Video footage of the attack on the church were televised by several local TV stations.

Pastor Joseph is a respected member of the community and the prayer centre has been there for a considerable period of time, coexisting harmoniously with the local Buddhist temple. According to members of the church, the local Temple had no part in the attack.

Ven. Athureliye Rathana Thero M.P. and leader of the JHU Parliamentary group on the 6th speaking in Parliament denied the JHU's involvement in the attack, but called for the arrest of the pastor and urged the Anti-Conversion Bill to be made law.

Video of the attack can be found on the web:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PykosGP3VuU&videos=kejYYh9Wsx8>

and http://www.dailymirror.lk/DM_BLOG/Sections/frmNewsDetailView.aspx?ARTID=66946

Prayer Centre attacked by mob
Prayer Centre Sri Lanka
Jayanthipura Track 14 (Polonnaruwa District)

6th November 2009

While the pastor was at a prayer meeting held in the home of a Christian, two groups of unidentified men arrived on motor bikes along with the Buddhist Monk of the village. They forced themselves in to the house and dragged the pastor out, threatened him to leave the premises and stop conducting prayer meetings in the village. The Buddhist monk threatened the

house owners to vacate their home immediately. The pastor and the others present remained silent until the mob left and informed the police, but did not make a formal complaint as they did not want to aggravate the situation. The prayer meeting has been held in this household on a regular basis with about 15 Christians attending.

Pastor's house stoned during the night

Assemblies of God

Dickwella, Matara District

7th November 2009

At approximately mid night, the pastor's house came under attack with stones thrown on the roof and at windows causing damage to these and the gutters. Thankfully, the pastor, his wife and child were unharmed.

Pastor waylaid and attacked, threatened to stop ministry

Colombo Gospel Tabernacle

Moratuwa, (Colombo District)

8th November 2009

The pastor received an anonymous threatening phone call. The caller demanded that he stops preaching and prayer meetings or face death. He was advised that his movements and times of services are noted. The church has been in existence in Moratuwa for over 2 years, and has a congregation of about 50 members.

11th November 2009

At approximately 11 pm, while the pastor was returning home after the regular Wednesday meeting of the church's men's fellowship, his way was barred by six or seven unidentified men who were in 3 three wheelers and two motor bikes. The pastor was compelled to stop his own motor bike. One of the men kicked the pastor in the chest and demanded to know the name of his church. They set upon him, beating him with an iron rod on his back. A blow aimed at his chest missed him and landed on the petrol tank of the bike, causing a dent. The attackers' intention seemed more to injure and frighten the pastor rather than kill him, as they could have easily dealt him a death blow. The pastor was also slapped in the face and accused of killing people (*a reference to the incident at the prayer rally of Ps. Joseph on 31st October 2009*). The pastor attempted to reason with the attackers that he was not engaged in any illegal or unethical activity. He was threatened to stop his church or be killed. The pastor sustained bruises and minor injuries.

17th November 2009

The pastor received another threatening call, to stop his ministry and leave or be killed.

Church attacked by mob

AOG

Dickwella, (Galle District)

8th November 2009

The church came under attack by a mob hurling stones at the pastor's house and shouting threats.

Banning prayer meetings?

13th November 2009

A report by Sri Lanka Watch - a web based news service (12th November 2009) and some local TV stations report that the Inspector General of the Sri Lanka Police, at a meeting with the National *Sangha* Council (National Council of Buddhist clergy) revealed a decision to ban prayer meetings for faith healing within the Colombo city limits with immediate effect.

Mobs threaten and prevent Christians from attending worship services

Jeevena Diya Church

Godallahena (Kurunegala District)

Second week of November onwards

The pastor received several threatening letters warning him to stop the services. On several occasions the church was stoned during worship services.

Since the second week of November 2009 mobs began to block the road way, preventing the worshippers from attending the Sunday service from 9.00 a.m.-12.00 noon. They were threatened with violence if they attempted to go for the service. Due to these threats, they were unable to have worship service even on Christmas day - 25th of December.

Building damaged and vandalized by mob

Methodist Church

Mawathawewa, Anuradhapura District

25th November 2009

A Community Centre for the use of the people of Mawathawewa was under construction by the Methodist church, with the permission of the relevant Divisional Secretary (Eppawela) and the fullest cooperation of the villagers of Mawathawewa. The building was to house a day care centre and a medical centre. On the night of 25th November, a large mob of over 100 persons from another village (Nallamudawa) was led by a Buddhist monk (reportedly connected to the JHU) arrived at the premises armed with iron rods, rocks and clubs. They proceeded to damage the building. The roof, all the doors and windows were completely damaged. Their intention was to demolish the whole building.

The Mawathawewa villagers were appalled by this act of violence but they were threatened not to intervene. The Buddhist monk threatened the Mawathawewa villagers that if they alerted the Police, they will be killed. However, one villager succeeded in evading the mob and make his way to the Police through a back road. The Police arrived promptly, dispersed the mob and prevented further damage. Acting on the complaint made to the Police, they visited the temple in Nallamudawa and found the mob responsible for the attack at the temple premises.

The police later informed the church that they are unable to take strict action with regard to the attack since there were political forces at play. At the time of the attack, 90% of the building construction was completed and it was due to be declared open at the end of November.

Church vandalized and pastor threatened by politicians & thugs

**Church of the Foursquare Gospel
Waragod, Kelaniya, Gampaha District**

28th November 2009

At approximately 6.15 pm, a large mob consisting of about 200 persons, including the Minister of Labour and UPFA organizer for Kelaniya, a Member of Parliament and a Provincial Councilor and several Police officers entered the church premises. They threatened the pastor who was present at the premises with his wife, children and mother in law to stop construction of the church building. The mob became unruly and broke chairs and other furniture, tore down banners with Scripture verses and toppled newly put up concrete pillars. The pastor was warned to stop holding worship services immediately. He was further warned that if he did not stop construction of the church, they would bring a bulldozer and demolish the entire church. These acts were committed in the presence of several police officers.

The church was granted leave to proceed with the construction by the Appeal Court of Sri Lanka on the 3rd November 2009, where the church sought relief from the Court to quash an illegal order by the Kelaniya Urban Council, which withdrew approval for the construction of the church building, without a legitimate reason. The pastor resumed construction of the stalled building on the 23rd of November 2009, 5 days before the above incident, where a Minister of the government and other elected officials accompanied by Police and villagers forcibly entered the premises and made criminal threats, in total violation of an order issued by Sri Lanka's second highest Court.

A complaint was made to the Kelaniya Police. No action was taken against any of those involved.

Prayer Centre attacked and set on fire

**(Independent Catholic Prayer Centre)
Croosewatte, Ja Ela, Gampaha District**

6th December 2009

A mob of unidentified persons attacked the prayer centre, setting fire to the building as well as two vehicles. Police, army and the Special Task Force were deployed to maintain law and order in the area and to arrest the suspects who were believed to be from that locality. The incident was reported in the press: Daily Mirror of 7th December 2009.

Pastor threatened to stop worship services

**Jeevena Diya Church
Godallahena (Kurunegala District)**

12th December 2009

The pastor and a few members of the congregation were taken by two Buddhist monks and villagers to the police for questioning. The church was ordered by the police to stop worship services on the basis that the church was not registered with the government.

The church was initially established in 1982 in Kudalgamuwa and moved to the present location in May 2005.

Church destroyed
Calvary Worship Centre
Thimilaithivu, (Batticaloa District)

15th December 2009

The temporary shelter in which the church is housed was attacked at mid night by unidentified persons and destroyed. Complaint was made to the Vavunatheevu Police: CIB 1/338/50. This church has faced 4 attacks in the past.

Pastor and congregation threatened
Assemblies of God
Galewela, (Matale District)

Third week of December 2009

The worship service was disrupted with threats and stones thrown at the premises causing damage to the building. Further mobs accosted church members on the road and prevented them from attending worship services. The attackers made a complaint to the police against the pastor. The pastor was called to the Police station and was ordered to stop holding worship services in order to prevent a breach of peace. A large crowd supporting the complaint was gathered at the Police station. The pastor who was there alone reported feeling utterly intimidated. On the advice of his lawyers and his senior pastor in Colombo, he agreed that the matter be referred to the courts, rather than agree to an arbitrary order by the police. However, the matter of closure was settled by his lawyer at a meeting with the Police and the Police agreed to allow him to continue services. The matter of damage caused to the building was referred to the courts by the police.