

**TESTIMONY OF**

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**U.S. COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM**

**BEFORE THE**

**TOM LANTOS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

**ON**

**THE PLIGHT OF RELIGIOUS MINORITIES IN INDIA**

**APRIL 4, 2014**

I want to thank the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission for holding this hearing today and inviting me to testify on behalf of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF).

I commend the Lantos Commission for providing this opportunity to focus on the plight of religious minorities in India. This is an especially important period of time for India. The Indian people shortly will start to go to the polls to elect their parliamentary representatives to the Lok Sabha – the lower house of parliament – and the Rajya Sabha – the upper house, for the next five and six years respectively. The newly elected parliament then will elect the next Prime Minister and President.

The Indian election is a remarkable undertaking. The world's largest demonstration of democracy will bring nearly 800 million people to the polls, about three times the total population of the United States. India is a deeply religious and pluralistic society. A country with a Hindu majority, India is estimated to have the third largest Muslim population in the world and a Christian population of over 25 million. The country is also home to numerous Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Zoroastrians, Jews, and Baha'is. The current two-term Prime Minister is Sikh, the past President is Muslim, and the head of the national governing alliance is Catholic. India also has an independent judiciary, independent media, and a dynamic civil society. Furthermore, India has created several governmental bodies that monitor human rights violations and fund minority welfare programs.

India and the United States have a long and proud partnership. We share uncommon commonalities given our robust commitment to democracy and multiethnic, multi-religious societies. India also is an important ally that holds key strategic economic, political and regional value to the United States, since it is the second most populous country in the world, situated between the Middle East and the Asia-Pacific region, and a neighbor to a troubled Pakistan.

Yet, USCIRF is concerned by the religious freedom violations, including religiously-motivated violence and the harassment of members of minority communities during electioneering, that have taken place in the lead-up to the elections, which may tarnish this massive undertaking. These actions are deeply troubling and add to other longstanding concerns, such as the implementation of anti-conversion laws in some Indian states (which together constitute roughly 1/3 of India's total population) and a climate of impunity in which minority community members have been violently attacked and many have not received justice for past large-scale communal violence, including in Gujarat (2002) and Odisha (2007-2008).

It is important to note that India has taken some steps to address justice for past communal violence and other religious freedom violations, including establishing Fast-Track Courts, Special Investigative Teams, and independent commissions. Unfortunately, the effectiveness of these initiatives has been limited due to religious bias and corruption. Yet India has demonstrated the capacity to act effectively, including anticipating and responding to outbreaks of communal violence. For example, in advance of the decision in the September 2010 case of the Ayodhya mosque (which both Hindus and Muslims claimed), federal authorities took proactive steps to lessen the potential for violence, including issuing public appeals, placing advertisements in newspapers urging respect for the rule of law, and mobilizing tens of thousands of security forces

to prevent sectarian violence. Because of these actions, the verdict in the case was not followed by significant violence.

## **Overview**

India is a constitutional democracy. Article 25 of the constitution guarantees that every person in India shall have the freedom of conscience and the right to profess, practice and propagate religion. However, despite the religious freedom language in the Indian constitution, the constitution also subjects these guarantees to restrictions that the state may impose on the following grounds: “(1) public order, morality and health; (2) other provisions of the Constitution; (3) regulation of non-religious activity associated with religious practice; (4) social welfare and reform; and (5) throwing open of Hindu religious institutions of a public character to all classes of Hindus.” Government officials, police officers and judges reportedly have abused these restrictions which the constitution leaves undefined.

The Indian government, at the national and some state government levels, has adopted laws that limit the full expression of religious freedom, including the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA), the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA), and the previously mentioned anti-conversion laws, officially referred to as Freedom of Religion Acts. Moreover, individuals or communities often claim public order disturbances or falsely accuse religious minority communities of denigrating Hinduism to stop religious adherents from public worship or practices, such as proselytizing.

Serious periodic outbreaks of large-scale communal violence against religious minorities have taken place in India. Christian communities report harassment and violent attacks in the states that have adopted anti-conversion laws. To address the aftermath of the Gujarat violence of 2002 and the Odisha violence of 2007-2008, India established Fast-Track Courts, Special Investigative Teams, and independent commissions, as noted earlier. However, they have been inconsistently used and their impact limited by insufficient capacity to investigate and prosecute cases, an antiquated judiciary, political corruption, and religious bias, particularly at the state and local levels. As a result, a climate of impunity continues to exist in some Indian states, exacerbating the social and religious tensions among communities.

The State Department’s 2013 Human Rights Report noted significant human rights problems with police and security force abuse, torture, and rape; widespread corruption at all levels of government that has led to denial of justice; and separatist, insurgent, and societal violence. The report also noted that the judiciary remained overburdened, and court backlogs led to lengthy delays or the denial of justice. The report also noted that widespread impunity at all levels of government remained a serious problem, and that investigations into individual cases and legal punishment for perpetrators occurred, but in many cases a lack of accountability due to weak law enforcement, a lack of trained police, and the overburdened and under-resourced court system contributed to this atmosphere of impunity. These problems provide the context for the religious freedom violations that take place in India. The State Department’s 2013 report on religious freedom violations is expected to be issued shortly.

In summary, despite positive attributes as a democracy with a deeply diverse religious demographic and a robust civil society, India has serious religious freedom issues. The Pew Research Center's Religious Restrictions report has found that India scores in the "High" category on government restrictions and "Very High" on social hostilities, the highest category a country can be placed on the Pew scale.

### **USCIRF's Work**

USCIRF has reported on India for some years. To analyze religious freedom conditions in India, USCIRF engages with U.S. government and foreign government officials, NGOs, human rights advocates, religious leaders, and laity. USCIRF has never been provided the requisite visas to allow for a visit to India.

From 2002 to 2004, USCIRF recommended that India be named a "Country of Particular Concern" (CPC) for its "systematic, ongoing and egregious violations of religious freedom," the standard in the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA); from 2005 to 2008, while included in USCIRF's Annual Report, it was neither a CPC nor Tier 2 country, and from 2009 to the present India has been on USCIRF's Tier 2. (Tier 2 is a category USCIRF created that includes countries in which the violations the government engages in or tolerates are serious and characterized by at least one of the elements of the "systematic, ongoing, and egregious" standard, but do not fully meet the CPC standard.) USCIRF will release its 2014 Annual Report by May 1, and India's listing will be announced at that time.

USCIRF would welcome a more fulsome engagement with the Indian government, including the Indian embassy here in Washington, D.C. And the fact that USCIRF Commissioners have never travelled to India is not because of any lack of desire on our part or attempts to do so. In fact, USCIRF in 2009 delayed its Annual Report chapter on India given the Commission's strong belief at that time that India would accept a delegation, after which we could update our report based on the findings of the visit. However, USCIRF was denied visas in June of that year. Since then, USCIRF has made inquiries about traveling to India, but to no avail. In contrast, USCIRF delegations have been permitted to visit many countries over the years, including Saudi Arabia, Uzbekistan, and Sudan. A visit to India would allow the Commission to better understand the complexities, nuances, and challenges facing both federal and state governments, hearing directly from Indian officials and religious groups.

Additionally, each year USCIRF, as part of our Annual Report process, invites relevant embassies to submit information for the Commission's consideration and to further inform us on religious freedom conditions in their countries. India has never responded to this request.

Meanwhile, USCIRF has been hearing more frequently from NGOs and religious communities that religiously-motivated violence and harassment is increasing in India, and that some politicians are using religiously divisive language to gain favor with constituencies in the lead-up to the general election. These NGOs and religious communities also have told USCIRF that religious bias and corruption, especially in some states, hinder the protection of and justice for religious minority communities that are victims of religiously-motivated violence and harassment.

## **Religious Freedom Conditions 2013-2014**

USCIRF concerns are not based on our own research alone. In 2013, the Indian Ministry of Home Affairs reported a 30 percent increase in the number of communal violence incidents from 2012. In February of this year, the Ministry reported that in 2013 there were 823 incidents, up from 668 incidents in 2012. Additionally, the Ministry reported that 133 people died and 2,269 were injured in communal violence in 2013 versus 94 and 2,117 respectively in 2012. These incidents included 479 acts of Hindu-Muslim violence in which 107 people were killed and 1,700 injured.

Uttar Pradesh, the state with the largest population in the country and fifth in geographic size, had the highest number of recorded incidents: 247 in 2013 as compared to 118 in 2012. Other states also reported an increased number of incidents from the prior year. The state of Bihar reported 63 cases in 2013 versus 21 in 2012; Gujarat reported 68 incidents in 2013 versus 57 in 2012; Tamil Nadu reported 36 incidents in 2013 as compared to 14 in 2012; and in Rajasthan, 52 incidents were reported in 2013 versus 37 in 2012. The states of Karnataka, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh also reported increases in 2013 over 2012.

***Hindu-Muslim Violence in Uttar Pradesh:*** In late August 2013, communal violence erupted in the Muzaffarnagar district of Uttar Pradesh (UP). While the federal and state governments deployed army troops, provincial military personnel, and federal Rapid Action Force officers to the areas, between 40 and 60 people were killed; at least a dozen women and girls were raped, often by gangs; nearly 100 people were injured; and about 50,000 were displaced to “relief camps.” As of early 2014, several thousand people, mostly Muslims, remained displaced in deplorable conditions and fear returning to their homes. Sixteen local governmental officials from several different political parties were arrested in September 2013 and charged with inciting communal violence, as were several local parliamentarians and community leaders. Their cases remain pending. In addition, 570 cases related to this incident, implicating over 6,000 people (including local governmental leaders and police) have been filed.

***Christian and Muslim Dalit Rally:*** In mid-December 2013, the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of India, the National Council of Dalit Christians, the National Council of Churches in India, and the Church of North India organized a rally in New Delhi to protest the treatment of Christian and Muslim Dalits, as compared to Hindu Dalits. When some protestors crossed police lines, the police responded with water cannons and attacked protestors with canes and batons, injuring scores of people. Police also arrested dozens of protestors including the General Secretary for the Church of North India, Alwan Masih; the Roman Catholic Archbishop of New Delhi, Anil Couto; and dozens of nuns, monks, and others of both the Christian and Muslim faiths. The following day Prime Minister Manmohan Singh promised a full investigation, but to date the outcome is unknown.

Indian church leaders, as recently as March 2014, have expressed alarm over the dramatic increase in the state of Andhra Pradesh (India’s fifth most populous state) of attacks against Christians. Recently, one pastor was murdered, others beaten, and churches demolished. This recent violence highlights a deeply concerning trend: the increase from 39 large-scale incidents in 2012 to 72 large-scale incidents in 2013 of anti-Christian violence and hostility.

***Attack on Buddhist Religious Complex:*** On July 7, 2013, nine explosives were detonated in the Bodhi Gaya Buddhist religious complex located in the Indian state of Bihar. A temple and sacred tree sustained minor damage and two monks were injured in the attack. On August 14, the Indian National Investigation Agency (NIA) arrested Arup Brahmachari, a Hindu priest. Protests ensued and the NIA released Brahmachari, saying they made an error. The NIA has not made any other arrests.

***Anti-Conversion Laws:*** State-level anti-conversion laws, officially known as “Freedom of Religion Act(s),” are deeply problematic, as they violate international standards and place the government in the inappropriate position of determining the validity of individual decisions regarding religious faith. They are one-sided and discriminatory, placing hurdles and penalties for converting out of Hinduism, but not towards it. In addition, these laws have led to higher incidents of intimidation, harassment and violence against religious minority communities, particularly Christians and Muslims, with few arrests and no convictions. Yet these accusations are rarely true, which the incredibly low conviction rates under these laws prove. However, while not leading to large-scale arrests, these laws have fostered a climate of societal impunity against minorities and have led to police harassment. Accusations of forced conversion often are used against religious minority communities, particularly Christian adherents and their religious leaders, when there are disputed issues unrelated to religion including, for example, if a religious leader or adherent speaks out against a particular political issue or local politician or if there is a land dispute.

Seven Indian states – Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Rajasthan and Odisha – have anti-conversion laws that each is implementing differently. These laws generally require government officials to assess the legality of conversions and provide for fines and imprisonment for those who use force, fraud, or “inducement” to convert another.

The UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, Heiner Bielefeldt, has been especially critical of Gujarat’s anti-conversion law, noting as recently as March 2014 that Gujarat’s law “carries a high penalty of three years’ imprisonment based on such loosely defined terms. This doesn’t do justice even to the rule of law, in which laws need to be clear, especially in criminal law.” He continued, noting that “India’s laws restricting religious conversions – intended to protect people from being forced to change their beliefs – are an obstacle to religious freedom.” The Madhya Pradesh Legislative Assembly in August 2013 approved an amendment to the state’s 1968 anti-conversion law that would make the law more stringent. Under the amendment, both the converter and would-be convert must obtain state permission at least 30 days prior to a conversion ceremony, or face one year in prison and a 1,000-rupee fine. That state’s governor has yet to sign this measure into law. However, in a positive development in September, Himachal Pradesh’s High Court found that that state’s anti-conversion law – requiring people to notify the authorities within 30 days of the intention to convert to a religion other than Hinduism and requiring the state to investigate conversions – was unconstitutional.

***Redress for Past Large-Scale Violence:*** Justice for past incidents of sectarian violence targeting Muslims, Christians, and Sikhs has not been achieved fully. Indian courts still are adjudicating cases stemming from large-scale Hindu-Christian communal violence in Odisha in 2007-2008 and large-scale Hindu-Muslim communal violence in Gujarat in 2002. NGOs, religious leaders, and human rights activists allege religious bias and corruption in the investigations and adjudications

related to Gujarat and Odisha. There have been few developments relating to prosecuting perpetrators of the anti-Sikh riots. The passage of time should not diminish the urgency of seeking justice for the victims of this violence.

- Gujarat: Communal violence broke out in Gujarat in February 2002. Hindu mobs killed between 1,200 and 2,500 Muslims, forced 100,000 people to flee, and destroyed homes. Christians also were killed and injured and churches destroyed. India's National Human Rights Commission found evidence of premeditated killing by members of Hindu nationalist groups, complicity by state government officials, and police inaction. Many allege that violence was possible because of the complicity of the state police and Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi. Notably, in early February 2012, the Gujarat High Court strongly chastised the Gujarat government and Chief Minister Modi for "inaction and negligence" during the violence. The court also has ordered the government to pay compensation for the over 500 houses and businesses that were destroyed during the violence. The state has begun to pay compensation to next of kin who had a family member killed, and rebuild houses and businesses, although funds reportedly are insufficient to do so.

In 2005, the U.S. State Department agreed with USCIRF's recommendation and that of others to revoke a tourist visa for Minister Modi, thereby preventing him from entering the United States. The State Department utilized the provision in IRFA that makes a foreign government official who is responsible for particularly severe violations of religious freedom ineligible for an American visa for a private trip.

In 2013, a lower court in Gujarat found Gujarat Chief Minister Modi not responsible for the death of a prominent Muslim Congress Party leader who was burned alive in 2002. The case was brought by the leader's widow, and she reportedly has appealed. Several other cases in which Minister Modi has been implicated for involvement or complicity in the 2002 violence continue.

- Odisha: In December 2007, in Kandhamal, Odisha, violence between Christians and Hindus resulted in several deaths, dozens of injuries, churches and homes destroyed, and thousands displaced. The State Department reported 40 deaths, 134 injuries, and over 10,000 fleeing the state. There was no immediate police or state government reaction, and religious leaders and aid agencies were denied access. An August 2008 murder of a Hindu political leader sparked a violent campaign against Christians, although Maoist extremists claimed responsibility.

In October 2013, a lower court acquitted 54 individuals of crimes relating to the Odisha violence (including burning down a Baptist church and dozens of homes and businesses) due to lack of evidence and witnesses. Also in October, the court convicted seven Christians for murdering Hindu leader Laxamananda Saraswati, whose death triggered the violence, despite the fact that Maoist rebels twice have claimed responsibility for the murder.

- 1984 Anti-Sikh Riots: In November 1984, anti-Sikh riots erupted following Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's assassination. Nearly 3,000 Sikhs were killed, allegedly with the support of Congress Party officials. There have been few developments relating to the prosecution of the perpetrators of these Sikh riots. The Sikh community continues to urge the United Nations

Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in Geneva to open an investigation into these riots, including alleged mass graves found in Hond Chillar in Rewari district Haryana in 2011 and in Gudha and Kanina Mandi Khas villages in the Mahendergarh district in 2012.

Two Congress Party leaders, Sajjan Kumar and Jagdish Tytler, have been implicated in cases stemming from the 1984 riots. The Karkardooma district court in Delhi in April 2013 acquitted Kumar, while convicting five others, leading to protests of inciting violence. In August 2013, the Delhi High Court accepted an appeal the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) filed against Kumar's April acquittal, stating that the trial court "erred in acquitting Sajjan Kumar as it was he who had instigated the mob during the riots." Several cases in which Kumar has been charged with various crimes, including one in which he has been charged with murder, are ongoing.

In another case currently pending, Resham Singh, a Sikh who was a taxi driver in 1984, alleges that he witnessed Congress Party leader Jagdish Tytler, and current parliamentary candidate for the Lok Sabha, leading a mob of rioters. However, as of March 2014, the CBI reportedly is attempting to locate three witness, at least one of whom is believed to be living in the United States, to corroborate Singh's allegation to allow the case against Tytler to proceed. Tytler has been implicated in other cases.

***Hindu Refugees:*** Pakistani Hindus have been fleeing Pakistan at an increasing rate, as the conditions for religious freedom and human rights continue to deteriorate. The Human Rights Commission Pakistan (HRCP), an independent body campaigning for human rights, reported that between 600 and 1,000 Pakistani Hindus fled Pakistan between 2012 and 2013. Unfortunately, after arriving in India, these Pakistani Hindus face official discrimination by the Indian government. India does not recognize Pakistani Hindus as "refugees" as defined by the UN 1951 Refugee Convention. While India is not a signatory to the convention, it does offer assistance to asylum seekers from other countries including Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Burma, and Sudan, but does not extend assistance to Pakistani Hindus. Hindus fleeing Bangladesh also face the same official discrimination by the Indian government.

### **The Upcoming Election in India**

Many across the world will be monitoring India's general election that will take place from April 7 through May 12. During this election, the Indian people will select their national parliament, which will then elect the country's next Prime Minister and President.

USCIRF also will be closely monitoring the situation. Many religious minority communities have reported to USCIRF that they fear that a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) win, and the election of Narendra Modi as the country's Prime Minister, will be detrimental to them and religious freedom. The BJP last led the national government between 1998 and 2004. Between 2002 and 2004 USCIRF had recommended that the State Department designate India a "Country of Particular Concern" (CPC) for the government's systematic, ongoing and egregious violations of religious freedom.

USCIRF long has been concerned about the BJP's and Narendra Modi's close association with Hindu nationalist organizations. The activities of these groups, especially those with an extremist agenda or history of using violence against minorities, often negatively impact the status of religious freedom in the country. Many of these organizations exist under the banner of the Sangh Parivar, some 30 organizations including the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), Bajrang Dal, and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). Sangh Parivar entities aggressively press for governmental policies that would promote a Hindu nationalist agenda, and adhere in varying degrees to an ideology of Hindutva, which holds non-Hindus as foreign to India.

### **Recommendations**

Since 2004, the United States and India have pursued a strategic relationship based on shared concerns about energy, security, and the growing threat of terrorism, as well as shared values of democracy and the rule of law. As part of this important relationship, the U.S. government should:

- Integrate concern for religious freedom into bilateral contacts with India, at both the federal and provincial level, and urge the strengthening of the ability of state and central police to implement effective measures to prohibit and punish cases of religious violence and protect victims and witnesses;
- Encourage the U.S. Ambassador, as well as U.S. government officials travelling to India, to visit areas where communal violence has occurred or is likely to occur, and meet with leaders of religious communities and local governments, and police to discuss international religious freedom standards;
- Urge India to increase training on human rights and religious freedom standards and practices for the police and judiciary, particularly in states and areas with a history or likelihood of communal violence;
- Urge the central Indian government to press states that have adopted anti-conversion laws to repeal or amend them to conform with international standards; and
- Encourage the establishment of an impartial body of interfaith religious leaders, human rights advocates, legal experts, and government officials to discuss and recommend actions to promote religious tolerance and understanding.

The U.S. Congress should:

- Encourage the State Department to make religious freedom concerns a larger part of the bilateral relationship;
- During delegation visits abroad, examine conditions of religious freedom for all faiths/beliefs and meet with individuals and organizations that promote religious freedom and related human rights as well as targeted religious communities;

- Hold hearings in support of religious freedom in India that underscore the many dimensions of the issue; and
- Support legislation that promotes freedom of religion or belief. H. Res. 417 praises India's rich religious diversity and commitment to tolerance and equality, and reaffirms the need to protect the rights and freedoms of religious minorities.

## **APPENDIX: Facially Neutral Laws that Have Been Used to Discriminate against Religious Minorities**

- 1. Foreign Contribution Regulation Act:** *The Bill was introduced in the Rajya Sabha 12/18/2006, which referred it to the Standing Committee on Home Affairs. The committee submitted its report on the Bill on 10/21/2008. The Bill was subsequently passed by the Lok Sabha on 08/27/2010 and the Rajya Sabha on 10/19/2010, and was enacted in May 2011.*

The Act regulates the acceptance and use of all foreign funds that come into India through donations, gifts, or grants. The Act requires all persons with a cultural, economic, educational, religious, or social program to register with the central government if they want to receive foreign contributions. It grants the government the right to deny or cancel certification upon certain conditions; for example, (1) if the registrant has engaged in activities aimed at directly or indirectly inducing conversion from one religion to another, (2) if the registrant has created communal tension, (3) if allowing the registrant to receive the funds would likely have a negative effect on harmony between religious groups, or (4) if allowing the registrant to receive the funds would likely prejudice “public interests.”

See: <http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-new-foreign-contribution-regulation-act-comes-into-force-1538714>

- 2. Andhra Pradesh Propagation of Other Religion in the Places of Worship or Prayer (Prohibition) Ordinance (2007)**

The Ordinance establishes that no person may propagate any religion in a place of worship or prayer other than the religion traditionally practiced at such a place. Propagation is defined to include the use of speech, the written word, and symbols. The Ordinance states that it is founded on a concern to maintain public order. It also makes some reference to the right to be free from coercion, although it does not explain the way in which the Ordinance prevents coercion. Violation of the Ordinance is punishable by up to three years in prison and 5,000 rupees.

- 3. Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (1967)**

The Act grants the central government the power to declare any association unlawful if the association encourages or aids unlawful activity, or has as its objective the questioning or disrupting of the sovereign and territorial integrity of India. Once an association is declared unlawful, a tribunal assesses the matter. The government may freeze the funds of any association declared unlawful and may quarantine the unlawful association’s premises. Members of associations deemed unlawful are liable to punishment not to exceed two years in prison and a fine. Questioning or disrupting the sovereign and territorial integrity of India, or intending to do so, or supporting those who do so, is punishable by up to seven years in prison and a fine.

- 4. Religious Institutions (Prevention of Misuse) Act (1988)**

The Act generally prevents religious institutions and their managers from fostering, encouraging, or participating in political or martial activity that might threaten the

government's control. The Act has a few overly broad provisions (as is common in Indian law) that could be used for religiously discriminatory purposes. Section 3(g), for instance, prohibits religious institutions and their managers from undertaking "any activity which promotes or attempts to promote disharmony or feelings of enmity, hatred, or ill-will between different religions... or communities." Every party connected to a violation of the Act is subject to punishment of up to five years in prison and a fine of 10,000 rupees. In addition, section 8(1)-(2) allows courts to discharge any manager or employee of a religious institution against whom such charges have been filed if a prima facie case exists. If a manager is convicted, that manager not only is discharged, but barred from any appointment at a religious institution for six years.

#### **5. Foreigners Act (1946, amended in 2004)**

The Act grants the central government the power to exercise complete control over who comes into the country, what they can bring in with them, how long they can stay there, where they go while in the country, with whom they can interact, and what they do while in the country. The Act also allows the central government to mandate that foreign groups, including NGOs and religious groups, register with the government, and that foreigners carry proof of identification while in the country.