

Sec Blinken and Sec Austin Should not Allow Their Indian Counterparts at the 2+2 Meeting Today Blackmail Them : FIACONA

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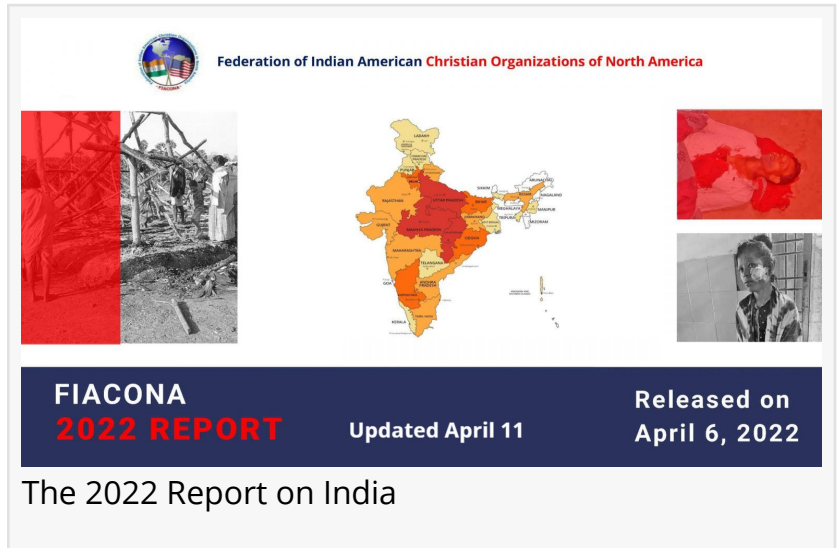
FIACONA Asks Sec Blinken and Sec Austin not to Allow themselves to be Blackmailed by their Indian Counterparts Today at 2+2 Meeting.

The Federation of Indian American Christians (FIACONA) Releases 2022 Report on India Documenting 761 cases of Violent Attacks.

Washington, D.C. FIACONA representing a million Indian American Christians in the U.S., released its 2022 Report documenting 761 attacks against Christians in India. This report was released ahead of the soon-to-be-released report from the United States Commission on Religious Freedom (USCIRF).

India is becoming more and more involved in America's global engagement. Sensing the weakness among the US Policymakers who are ready to compromise its principles to achieve short-term goals, the Indian side would demand that the US ignore India's domestic policies and internal developments in return for cooperation on issues like Ukraine. FIACONA asks that America stay firm and resist compromising on its principles and not allow it to be blackmailed by Indian officials meeting with Mr. Blinken and Mr. Austin today.

FIACONA's Report on India shows that the attacks on Christians were carried out by the radical Hindu extremists affiliated with the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party government headed by Prime Minister Modi. The party's objectives include turning India into a Hindu religious nationalist state similar to a Buddhist Myanmar and an Islamic Pakistan in the region.



This political ambition of Hindu nationalism has begun marginalizing over 100 million people following the Christian faith in the Union of India along with other non-Hindu religious populations. This will impact America's interests in the region like it has in the region after similar nationalist policies were adopted by other countries.

Although India is considered to be a democratic nation, in effect, The Report finds that it does not act like one. India is acting more and more like Pakistan and Srilanka. The Report documents the state's complicity in harassment of Christian worshippers, destruction of Christian worship places, and physical assault on Pastors and other Christian leaders, resulting in murder and mutilations.

The Report makes clear that the Christian communities are facing severe challenges through various Government mandates that range from restrictions on what children can be taught in Christian schools, to making it impossible for Christian charities to accept gifts from their overseas donors.

A press conference was held to mark the release of the Report where several prominent Americans who have suffered deportation or jail time only because of their Christian faith also spoke. (Video of the event at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v3bp5rNzEPk&t=2746s>)

A copy of the full report could be downloaded from www.fiacona.org

Rev. Peter Cook, the Executive Director of the New York State Council of Churches, a victim of deportation from India himself, told his experience. "Nine of us were refused entry after being heavily interrogated on our Christian faith. It was a profoundly upsetting experience for me and others who have to come to India and be shabbily treated like this and sent home..... this current government systematically seeking to undo the Indian constitution to become a totalitarian and Hindu nationalist state. This vision runs so contrary to India's historical respect for religious pluralism". He said, "We have a duty to speak up. Allowing this government to continue on this anti-democratic path is facilitated with heavy doses of physical and policy violence poses a great threat to the stability in the region and make India an unreliable partner with the United States".

Rev. Bryan Nerren, of the International House of Prayer based in Shelbyville Tennessee, spoke about how he was interrogated and arrested in India during his last visit. He was told over and over by authorities that they have been ordered from Delhi to arrest him and make an example of him so that other Christians from the US don't come to India to help the poor. Rev. Narren said "While in house arrest, a BJP leader told me if it was up to him, he would send me to prison for life. we don't want you, westerners, here and we don't care for the poor people, and we don't care for the poor children and that is their problem. We are going to be a Hindu-only nation, everyone is going to be a Hindu and the rest will be eliminated. Most of our government in the United States is either unaware or unwilling to face the truth because of financial and political maneuvering."

Ms. Ria Chakrabarty of Hindus for Human rights said that it is our duty to push back against BJP, RSS, and Hindu Nationalism. Our interpretation of Hinduism celebrates the diversity of people all across South Asia. It is increasingly evident that Christians and Muslims are targeted by mob violence in their places of worship. She has called on the United States to refocus more on the role of human rights in this relationship and to know that Prime Minister Modi and his allies are subverting democracy in order to create an electoral autocracy contrary to the stated shared values of both nations.

The video of the event with comments from all speakers and the pdf copy of the 2022 Report could be found on our website, www.fiacona.org

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