**A Resolution of Witness in response to Christian Persecution in India**

This resolution calls upon the New York Conference, United Church of Christ to condemn the violence against religious minorities in India, which include Christian organizations and individuals.

WHEREAS Since May 2023, due to violence against Christians in the North East State of Manipur, India, 120 people have been killed, more than 250 churches and 1,700 houses have been destroyed, and 40,000 people have fled to neighboring states, some to Myanmar, the neighboring country. Manipur's state government is led by India's Hindu Nationalist ruling Bharatiya Janatha Party (BJP);

WHEREAS Religious minorities such as Christians and Muslims live under constant fear and threat in India, the largest democracy in the world. Supported by the National and State governments, the Hindu Nationalist movement commits egregious religious rights violations in India. The UCCNY does not conflate mainstream Hinduism with Hindutva. The latter stands for Hindu Nationalism and is the situation which we address in this witness;

WHEREAS the Apostle Paul’s 1st letter to the Corinthians, chapter 12 states clearly that there are many in the body of Christ but all are equal and equally important. In verses 14-15 he states; “the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot would say, ‘Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,’ that would not make it any less a part of the body.”  In verses 25b-26 we are called to “have the same care for one another, and if one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it;”

WHEREAS if part of the body of Christ is suffering extreme hardship and persecution, we are compelled to stand with them and call for justice;

BE IT RESOLVED that we, The New York Conference of the United Church of Christ (UCCNY) at our Annual Meeting 2024, condemn the violations against religious minorities in India, especially the demolition and burning of churches and schools in the North Eastern state of Manipur.

BE IT RESOLVED that the UCCNY stands in solidarity with the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA (NCC), Federation of Indian Christian Organizations (FIACONA) based in the US, Religions for Peace USA, the Ecumenical Partners in Outreach, and The United Methodist General Conference who passed a similar resolution in April of 2024 in condemning violence against religious minorities in India.

BE IT RESOLVED that along with the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), the UCCNY urges the US Government to:

1. "Designate India as a 'country of particular concern,' or CPC, for engaging in systematic, ongoing, and egregious violations of religious freedom, as defined by the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA).
2. Advance human rights for all religious communities in India and promote religious freedom, dignity, and interfaith dialogue through bilateral engagement and in multilateral forums.
3. Condemn ongoing religious freedom violations and support religious organizations and human rights groups targeted for their advocacy of religious freedom.
4. Impose targeted sanctions on Indian government agencies and officials responsible for severe violations of religious freedom by freezing those individuals' assets and/ or barring their entry into the United States under human rights related financial and visa authorities, citing specific religious freedom violations.

5. Condemn ongoing religious freedom violations and support religious organizations and human rights groups targeted for their advocacy of religious freedom.

We also urge the members of UCCNY to:

1. Contact their respective US Congressional representatives to bring this violation of religious minorities to the attention of the House Foreign Affairs Committee (HFAC) and the Church and Society.
2. Contact the State Department regarding the human-rights violations committed against religious minorities, especially the Christians, and thoroughly investigate issues of tax-payers' funds in the US being sent to Hindutva groups that are engaged in acts of violence against religious minorities in India.

Respectfully,

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