

Anti-Christian violence a result of Hindu anger: Rajnath Singh

While distancing the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) from the Bajrang Dal, party president Rajnath Singh has stopped short of blaming the rightwing outfit for continuing anti-Christian violence and attributed it to 'Hindu anger' against forcible conversions instead.

'The Bajrang Dal is not part of the BJP,' Singh told IANS in an interview here at a time when there is speculation that the government may ban the outfit which is said to be behind the attacks on Christians.

Singh said he had directed the BJP-ruled states, namely, Orissa and Karnataka, to investigate these incidents and take 'appropriate action'.

Incidents of Christians being killed, priests being attacked, a nun being raped, and churches and homes being burnt down have been reported almost every day after the Aug 23 murder of a religious Hindu leader. At least 35 people have died in the violence in Orissa since then.

Even the BJP's prime ministerial candidate L.K. Advani has condemned the attacks - mostly attributed to the Bajrang Dal that is an offshoot of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad - but Singh chose to lay the blame on 'forcible conversions' by Christian missionaries.

'Hindu anger and resentment against large-scale forcible conversions is the root cause of anti-Christian riots in both the states,' he said. He was convinced it could end only if strong measures were put in place to 'stop forcible, or by allurements, conversions of Hindus by Christian missionaries'.

He said every conversion should be verified to ensure that missionaries have not forced a person or offered any sort of allurements to convert a Hindu to Christianity.

'The government should look into finding a way to verify this. Whenever a Hindu converts to Christianity, there should be verification by district authorities to the state that the conversion is not by force or after extension of any allurements such as promise of money or food.

'There should be a verification document with the person who has been converted. If such a system is put in place, there will be no opportunity for this sort of violence.'

'There is a need to go into the root cause. We very strongly feel that Christian missionaries should not be allowed to give allurements to Hindus or for that matter anyone to convert them,' Singh said.

'Missionaries have been allowed into the country to serve the people and not convert them.' He alleged that 'the poor are allured by the missionaries to convert. Why is it that we never hear of the rich and well-to-do Hindus converting to Christianity?'

Singh denied that his party was playing the communal card with an eye on the coming assembly polls in some states and the general elections.

'Someone should answer why communal riots take place only when there is Congress rule? This is because the Congress has adopted the policy of appeasement since partition,' Singh said even

though it was the BJP that was in power at the centre and the state when the worst communal clashes in India's recent history took place in Gujarat in 2002.

Insisted Singh: 'The minorities under the Congress rule feel they can get away with anything and so they try to take advantage. The Congress has since the beginning thought on Hindu-Muslim lines or on religious lines. They have granted reservation on religious lines too. It is all about vote bank politics'.

He said the BJP is profiled as communal because 'we are not afraid to take tough action (against Muslim extremists) unlike the Congress which has played a cruel joke on the country by ending Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA). It is on this plank that we will return to power as we did in Gujarat. We will recapture Delhi.'

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