

Questions of the Members Voordewind (ChristianUnion), Van der Staay (SGP) and Haverkamp (CDA) to the Minister of Foreign Affairs about the EU delegation investigating the situation of victims of hindu-extremist violence in Kandhamal, Orissa (submitted 8 February 2010)

1. Are you aware of reports that the EU delegation who was supposed to investigate the situation of victims of Hindu-extremist violence in Kandhamal, Orissa¹, after first having been refused to visit the Kandhamal district and being refused again end of January to visit that district, will now visit Kandhamal in Orissa between the 2nd and 5th of February?
2. What is your assessment about this course of affairs and more specifically the fact that this EU delegation has a very limited mandate and is not allowed to do any fact-finding regarding the situation of Christian refugees in the state of Orissa² after the violence against them resulting in dozens of lives lost?
3. Are you familiar with the report³ that on the eve of the visit of the EU-delegation, Christian refugees have been ousted from their shelter camps? If this is true, which steps have been taken towards the Indian government to make sure that these refugees will still be adequately taken care of?
4. What is your assessment of the announced measures to restore justice via the “fast track courts” which were specifically established to try in court the perpetrators of the violence against Christians, also taking into consideration the letter of the ‘Association of Victims of Kandhamal Communal Violence’ to the Chief Justice of the Orissa High Court, which states that victims are being threatened, that there are shoddy police investigations and, more generally, that there is ‘gross miscarriage of justice’ in the fast-track courts?
5. What is your assessment about the rehabilitation of the victims of the violence, including the “40.000 Christians” that, according to your answers on November 18th, “have been on the run for religious violence”, also taking into account the contention by the above-mentioned AVKV that the rehabilitation and compensation of the victims is either not sufficient or has not reached them at all?
6. What has been the nature of the Dutch support so far and what has been achieved with the Dutch input for the victims of the violence, for the possible returning home of the displaced victims and for the normalisation of the relations?
7. What is your assessment of the claims of, among others, the AVKV, that not only Hindu-extremists but also government officials tend to blame the violence on conflicts between Scheduled Castes (‘Dalits’) and Scheduled Tribes (‘Adivasi’) in order to distract the attention from the activities of these same Hindu-extremists?
8. Can you inform the Parliament after the visit of the EU delegation about their findings and the way The Netherlands will be involved in their follow-up?

¹ Proceedings of Parliament, Year 2009-2010, nr. 189

² See Press Trust of India: http://www.ptinews.com/news/489996_Orissa-allows-Eu-delegation-to-visit-Kandhamal

³ See e.g. Nederlands Dagblad (Dutch Daily Newspaper), 21st of January 2010