

**Refugee Review Tribunal
AUSTRALIA**

RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE

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Questions

- 1. Please provide advice on any attacks on SNDP members since 2003 in Kerala.**
- 2. Please advise of any attacks of the RSS on the Hindu population in Kerala.**
- 3. Please advise if there is any information on a bomb attack in Mala or Male in 2007 conducted by a Hindu fanatic?**
- 4. Please advise of the level of police protection in Kerala against attacks by RSS and SIMI and whether they are supporters of religious fanatics.**
- 5. Please advise whether the judiciary is effective in Kerala against such attacks by organisations such as SIMI and the RSS.**
- 6. Please provide details about SIMI and their aims and whether they are in operation in Kerala.**

RESPONSE

- 1. Please provide advice on any attacks on SNDP members since 2003 in Kerala.**

No information could be located on a movement with the exact title of “Sree Narayana Paripalana Sabha”. Extensive information is available on the Kerala SNDP movement known as the Sri Narayana Dharma Paripalana (SNDP; Society for the Preservation of Sree Narayana Guru’s Moral Path; also: Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana). Extensive background is available on the manner in which the SNDP has sought to mobilize Kerala’s Izhava caste community (also known by the titles Ezhava, Thiyya or Thiya) through the teachings of Sree Narayana Guru, who advocated against the caste hierarchy. An overview, sourced from an SNDP website, provides background on the manner in which the SNDP seeks to provide spiritual, cultural, educational and other services to the “Ezhava and Thiyaas of Kerala”. The webpage details three organizational SNDP levels: “Yogam (Top Level Body)”; “Union (Middle Level)”; and “Sakhas (Lower level)” (for the SNDP overview, see:

‘Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam’ (undated), Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam, Delhi Union website <http://www.sndpuniondelhi.org/> – Accessed 20 October 2008 – Attachment 12; for background on the SNDP as a vehicle for the Ezhava community, see pages 573-574 of Osella, C. & Osella F. 2006, ‘Once upon a time in the West? Stories of migration and modernity from Kerala, *South India*’, *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, vol.12, pp.596-588 – Attachment 11; and: RRT Research & Information 2007, *Research Response IND32058*, 18 July – Attachment 1; for background on the Ezhava community itself, see the entry: ‘Izhattu Pillaimar’ pp. 1318-1322 in: Singh, K.S. 1998, *India’s Communities H-M*, People of India, National Series Vol.V, Anthropological Survey of India & Oxford University Press, Delhi – Attachment 2).

The SNDP would appear to have been involved in regular episodes of violence over the years. In 2008 SNDP supporters were dispersed by police after an SNDP mob attacked a Christian place of worship. 2008, 2007 and 2005 have seen reports of attacks on Sri Narayana place of worship and/or figures. 2008 also saw an SNDP office attacked by persons unknown. In 2002 and 2003 the youth and student wings of the SNDP and the Communist Party of India–Marxist (CPI-M) clashed in street violence. And 2005 saw numerous incident of violence between competing SNDP factions (for the police response to an SNDP attack on Christians, see: ‘SNDP Yogam Activists Attacks Christian Worship Centre’ 2008, *United News of India*, 6 July – Attachment 24; ‘SNDP convention turns violent’ 2008, *The Hindu*, 7 July <http://www.hindu.com/2008/07/07/stories/2008070753850400.htm> – Accessed 21 October 2008 – Attachment 32; for attacks on Sri Narayana place of worship and/or figures, see: ‘BJP alleges police-CPI(M) nexus’ 2008, *The Hindu*, 7 July – Attachment 23; and: Life stands still in Kodungallur’ 2008, *New Indian Express*, 4 July – Attachment 39; ‘Violence in Kodungalloor’ 2008, *The Hindu*, 4 July <http://www.hindu.com/2008/07/04/stories/2008070454670300.htm> – Accessed 21 October 2008 – Attachment 41; ‘One arrested’ 2007, *The Hindu*, 20 February <http://www.hindu.com/2007/02/20/stories/2007022009430300.htm> – Accessed 21 October 2008 – Attachment 43; ‘Guru Mandiram attacked’ 2006, *The Hindu*, 21 July <http://www.hindu.com/2006/07/21/stories/2006072110090300.htm> – Accessed 21 October 2008 – Attachment 45; ‘Attack on guru mandiram: BJP observes hartal in Nedumangad’ 2006, *The Hindu*, 7 April <http://www.hindu.com/2006/04/07/stories/2006040722720300.htm> – Accessed 21 October 2008 – Attachment 46; ‘Hindu Vedi sees plot behind temple attacks’ 2005, *The Hindu*, 16 November <http://www.hindu.com/2005/11/16/stories/2005111606540500.htm> – Accessed 21 October 2008 – Attachment 48; and 2008 attacks on SNDP offices: (‘Past Harthals’ (undated), harthal.com website <http://www.harthal.com/php/showNews.php?linkid=3&newsid=204> – Accessed 21 October 2008 – Attachment 42; for reports of SNDP clashes with CPI-M activists at the youth/student level, see: ‘Kumarakom tense after clash’ 2003, *The Hindu*, 26 October <http://www.hinduonnet.com/thehindu/thscrip/print.pl?file=2003102704730400.htm&date=2003/10/27/&pr=th&> – Accessed 15 October 2008 – Attachment 49; Controversy over article on Osama’ 2002, *The Hindu*, 10 July <http://www.hinduonnet.com/2002/07/10/stories/2002071003661200.htm> – Accessed 15 October 2008 – Attachment 51; for inter-factional SNDP violence, see: ‘SNDP office vandalised’ 2005, *The Hindu*, 9 November <http://www.hinduonnet.com/thehindu/thscrip/print.pl?file=2005110908400500.htm&date=2005/11/09/&pr=th&> – Accessed 16 July 2007 – Attachment 3; ‘Clash at SNDP Yogam Director Board meeting’ 2005, *the Hindu*, 6 November <http://www.hinduonnet.com/2004/11/07/stories/2004110706490500.htm> – Accessed 14

October 2008 – Attachment 4; ‘Vellappally re-elected SNDP Yogam chief’ 2005, *The Hindu*, 22 December <http://www.hindu.com/2005/12/22/stories/2005122215060100.htm> – Accessed 14 October 2008 – Attachment 5).

Information on security for the SNDP in Kerala, and on the context of the current political conjuncture in Kerala state, follows below under the following subtitles: [*Politics and government in present day Kerala*](#); [*The SNDP and politics in Kerala*](#); [*Post 2003 violence, threats and arrests involving the SNDP*](#); [*Pre 2003 violence not noted in Research Response IND32058 of July 2007*](#); [*Internal factional violence within the SNDP*](#).

Politics and government in present day Kerala

Kerala’s most recent state government elections took place in May 2006 and ended as a victory for the Left Democratic Front (LDF) coalition. Led by the Communist Party of India–Marxist (CPI-M) the 2006 LDF coalition also consisted of: “Communist Party of India, Janata Dal-Secular, Kerala Congress-J, Revolutionary Socialist Party, Nationalist Congress Party, Indian National League, Kerala Congress-S and Congress-S”. The victory of the LDF in May 2006 saw the United Democratic Front (UDF) governing coalition removed from office. Led by the Indian National Congress (INC, or Congress) the 2006 UDF coalition also consisted of: “Kerala Congress (Mani), Janathipathya Samrakshana Samiti, Kerala Congress (B), Communist Marxist Party, Revolutionary Socialist Party (Shibu faction) and Revolutionary Socialist Party (Babu Divakaran faction)”. News reports have noted that the May 2006 state election result continued a trend wherein the Kerala electorate has swung back-and-forth between the LDF and the UDF at successive elections. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) attempted to position itself as a third force in the May 2006 election but failed to win any seats. A *Rediff.com* report of May 2006 report noted that: “The BJP-led National Democratic Alliance fielded candidates in all the constituencies; but they failed to make a mark”. It is also worth noting that the INC and the CPI-M, though opponents in Kerala state politics, have until recently been partners at the national level in the INC led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) coalition. This partnership ended in June 2008 when the CPI-M, along with four other left wing parties, withdrew its support from the INC led UPA over the terms of a nuclear energy deal being negotiated with the United States (for an overview of the May 2006 state election results in Kerala, see: Muraleedharan, N. 2006, ‘2006: Political conflicts in Kerala’, *Rediff.com*, 20 December <http://in.rediff.com/news/2006/dec/20year.htm> – Accessed 6 July 2007 – Attachment 6; Lype, George 2006, ‘Kerala: Where change is static’, *Rediff.com*, 11 May <http://in.rediff.com/election/2006/may/11gi.htm> – Accessed 6 July 2007 – Attachment 7; Election Commission of India 2006, *Statistical Report on General Election, 2006 to the Legislative Assembly of Kerala*, Election Commission of India website http://www.eci.gov.in/StatisticalReports/SE_2006/StatReport_KL_2006.pdf – Accessed 20 October 2008 – Attachment 8; for an overview of Kerala’s LDF and UDF coalitions and their various relationships with national political coalitions, see: Iype, G. 2006, ‘Kerala’s political jigsaw, unravelled’, *Rediff.com*, 10 April <http://www.rediff.com/election/2006/apr/10pkerala.htm> – Accessed 20 October 2008 – Attachment 9; for the recent withdrawal of the CPI-M from the UPA over the nuclear deal, see: ‘Left pulls out, will meet President Patil on Wednesday’ 2008, *Express India*, 8 July <http://www.expressindia.com/latest-news/Left-pulls-out-will-meet-President-Patil-on-Wednesday/332876/> – Accessed 20 October 2008 – Attachment 10).

The SNDP and politics in Kerala

In the lead up to the May 2006 Kerala state elections it was reported, on 26 April 2006 in *The Hindustan Times*, that the SNDP would be “backing the LDF in all the 140 assembly constituencies”. The report follows in detail:

An organisation representing the Hindu Ezhava community says it is being forced to support the Left Democratic Front (LDF) in the current elections as it had been “deeply humiliated” by the United Democratic Front (UDF).

Vellappally Natesan, general secretary of the Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana (SNDP) Yogam, said the group was backing the LDF in all the 140 assembly constituencies.

Hindu Ezhavas constitute half the Hindu population, which comprise 54 percent of Kerala’s electorate.

“We have every reason to feel deeply humiliated because the UDF completely ditched us after getting our support in the last assembly poll,” said Natesan.

SNDP Yogam is the only major social organisation in the state that has openly decided to support the LDF.

“We have had interactions with several Left leaders and we feel that they are fully aware of our needs as well as our shortcomings,” said Natesan.

“Even though some members have different political affiliations, the policy of the Yogam is to work for the defeat of all the UDF candidates. If we get evidence that any of our office bearers worked against our policy decision, they would be thrown out of their posts,” he threatened (‘Hindu Ezhava organisation to work for defeat of UDF’ 2006, *Hindustan Times*, 26 April – Attachment 13).

It would appear that the SNDP has continued to side with the LDF, on certain issues at least, and in spite of some disappointment with the LDF government following the May 2006 election (see: Radhakrishnan, M.G. 2007, ‘Ire of the minorities’, *India Today*, 27 December http://indiatoday.digitaltoday.in/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2881&issueid=34 – Accessed 20 October 2008 – Attachment 18; ‘Congress sabotaged unity efforts: Natesan’ 2006, *The Hindu*, 22 November <http://www.hindu.com/2006/11/22/stories/2006112211420400.htm> – Accessed 21 October 2008 – Attachment 34).

The SNDP has, in the past, claimed that it has no intrinsic loyalty to any one party; electing to support one party or another on a case-by-case basis and assuming a united front in this regard with the Nair Service Society (NSS), an allied social movement which advocates for the rights of the Nair caste community in Kerala. The SNDP and NSS relationship has not been as close in recent years. In January 2007 it was reported that the SNDP and NSS partnership had hit “rockbottom”. Recently, in October 2008, it was reported that the “SNDP Yogam general secretary Vellappilly Natesan...was ready for talks with the Nair Service Society to continue the efforts for Hindu unity”. The SNDP general secretary made the statement in the context of expressing concern for what he alleged was the widespread “forced conversion” of Hindus (see, for example: ‘SNDP bears no loyalty to any party’ 2005, *The Hindu*, 30 April <http://www.hinduonnet.com/2005/04/30/stories/2005043011020300.htm> – Accessed 20 October 2008 – Attachment 17; for more recent NSS and SNDP relations, see: Mathew, A. 2007, ‘Ties between caste outfits deteriorate’, *Gulf News*, 3 January

<http://archive.gulfnews.com/articles/07/01/03/10093947.html> – Accessed 21 October 2008 – Attachment 27; for the October 2008 report, see: ‘Large-scale conversion alleged’ 2008, *The Hindu*, 2 October <http://www.hindu.com/2008/10/02/stories/2008100252740300.htm> – Accessed 21 October 2008 – Attachment 28).

Although the CPI-M has enjoyed the support of the SNDP in recent times the relationship between the two groups has not always been so amicable. The youth and student wings of the SNDP and the CPI-M clashed in both 2002 and 2003. And in January 2005 the CPI-M criticized the cooperation of the SNDP and the NSS as concerning; viewing it as an exercise in Hindu communalism “following the agenda of the RSS”. The attempts of the BJP to bring the SNDP into the Hindutva fold were well reported during these years and, in April 2005, the Kerala “BJP State president...claimed that the NSS and SNDP Yogam were closer to his party than ever”. Nonetheless, in May 2005 the SNDP Yogam general secretary, Vellappally Natesan, reportedly declared that the “SNDP, NSS unity is not part of any Hindutva agenda” (for the CPI-M allegations, see: ‘Natesan following RSS agenda: Pinaray’ 2005, *The Hindu*, 15 January <http://www.hindu.com/2005/01/16/stories/2005011614910300.htm> – Accessed 21 October 2008 – Attachment 26; ‘SNDP-NSS unity will not create communal tension’ 2005, *The Hindu*, 18 January <http://www.hindu.com/2005/01/18/stories/2005011809470300.htm> – Accessed 20 October 2008 – Attachment 19; and: ‘CPI(M) objection to NSS-SNDP unity flayed’ 2005, *The Hindu*, 6 January <http://www.hinduonnet.com/2005/01/06/stories/2005010607460400.htm> – Accessed 20 October 2008 – Attachment 20; for the April 2005 BJP statement, see: ‘NSS, SNDP moving closer to BJP’ 2005, *The Hindu*, 29 April <http://www.hindu.com/2005/04/29/stories/2005042912200400.htm> – Accessed 21 October 2008 – Attachment 29; for the SNDP denial of a Hindutva agenda. See: ‘Unity not part of Hindutva agenda’ 2005, *The Hindu*, 7 May <http://www.hindu.com/2005/05/07/stories/2005050717990300.htm> – Accessed 21 October 2008 – Attachment 36.

In August 2004 the *Hindustan Times* provided the following overview of the political situation on the SNDP in relation to communal politics and the BJP which was then the leader of the governing coalition at the national level and which had been attempting “to bring the SNDP into its fold”. The reported presence of “Congress president Sonia Gandhi” at SNDP events would appear to indicate that the INC also had friendly relations with the SNDP at this time.

The newfound camaraderie between two major Hindu social outfits in Kerala – the Nair Service Society (NSS) and the Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana (SNDP) Yogam – could become a strong political force if it jells into a permanent arrangement, analysts say. NSS represents the Nairs and the SNDP the Ezhavas, who, between them, represent almost 80 percent of Kerala’s Hindu population. The Hindus account for 50 percent of the state’s population. The first major event for which the two organisations will share the stage is the “Guruvarsham” or the 150th birth centenary of social reformer and Ezhava leader Sree Narayana Guru that will be inaugurated by Congress president Sonia Gandhi Aug 29. The celebrations will be conducted at Varkala, 40 km from here, considered the holy city of the Ezhavas. Significantly, NSS general secretary P.K. Narayana Panicker will deliver the keynote address at the event.

The coming together of the two organisations has raised hopes that the Hindu Mandalam or umbrella organisation of Hindus created in the 1950s by Mannath Padmanabhan of the NSS and R. Sankar of the SNDP will be revived. There are reports that informal talks have begun for possible unity between the two. One reason cited for their coming together is that none of

them have a political party of their own. This is thanks to veteran Congress leader K. Karunakaran, who in his prime in the 1980s, finished off the political arms of the two groups. Today, the only time the Nairs and the Ezhavas are sought after is during the election, when politicians from all parties make a beeline for them. The Kerala unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) tried hard to bring the SNDP into its fold. When the BJP-led government was in power at the centre, its leaders were always available for SNDP's functions but even this failed to produce results. "Hindu unity would be a good thing, but for the two to come together there are more hurdles to be overcome. A trial is worth it and we are all looking forward to it," said a Nair leader ('Kerala Hindu outfits could become potent political force' 2004, *Hindustan Times*, 10 August – Attachment 30).

Relations between the SNDP and the BJP were also noted in a *Frontline* report of 2004 (also cited in the previous *Research Response IND32058* of 18 July 2007) in which the differing political postures of Kerala's northern Ezhava (largely supportive of the CPI-M) and southern Ezhava (largely supportive of the SNDP) were also noted. The report appeared in the context of an attack, in Kerala, on a Christian Missionary, Joseph Cooper, from the United States, and concerns that Hindu nationalist movement might be attempting to expand its influence in Kerala via a campaign of communal violence.

Cooper was the unsuspecting victim of an unprecedented attack on a foreign missionary in Kerala, well known for its atmosphere of religious amity and, as yet, for not providing a foothold to Hindutva forces. But the Hindutva combine is hell-bent on changing the situation through a multi-pronged offensive on the social, religious, cultural and political fronts as recent events demonstrated – such as the vilification campaign against secular writers and intellectuals ("A saffron offensive", *Frontline*, December 6, 2002), the burning down of a Pentecostal church at Sultan Battery in Wayanad district and the attack against a local preacher at Payippad in Alappuzha district.

On January 16, by around 9.30 p.m., a mob wielding clubs and machetes attacked Cooper, Benson Sam, a local pastor, his wife and children and two gospel singers, while they were walking along a paddy field embankment after a service at the Friends Bible Church at Puliyan near Kilimanoor in Thiruvananthapuram district. Cooper was seriously injured. Police arrested 10 persons, whom they described variously as "RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh) sympathisers" and "regulars at RSS shakhas". Chief Minister A.K. Antony refused to name them as "RSS cadres".

...striking in the context of the attack on Cooper were some coincidental events that took place in its wake. For one, the attack occurred a day before the RSS launched an ambitious 'All-Kerala Vanavasi Sangamom', a conference of tribal people in the State, at Mananthavaadi in Wayanad district. The theme of the conference was the "need to oppose Christian missionary activity and religious conversions", especially among the tribal people and other backward communities in the State.

...The second "coincidence" was that the attack on Cooper occurred but two days before the arrival of Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee in Kochi to inaugurate the Antony government's flagship event, the Global Investor Meet, organised to attract much-needed financial investment in productive ventures in the State, which is facing a serious financial and investment crisis (*Frontline*, February 14). The stakes were, therefore, high for the Congress(I)-led UDF government, which was then indeed seeking the pleasure of Vajpayee's government and his party for more Central investment in the State telling investors from India and abroad that Kerala was indeed a safe destination for them and that the atmosphere in the State had at last turned peaceful and conducive for private investments. Given the circumstances, the Cooper incident was but something to be pushed under the carpet as

quickly as possible. The Antony government promptly chose to ask Cooper to leave the country and delay the arrest of those involved in the crime.

...THE third “coincidence” was that the attack on Cooper occurred barely a fortnight before the Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana (SNDP) Yogam – the social (and increasingly political) organisation of the Ezhavas, one of the largest Hindu communities in the State – organised a ‘Malabar Sangamom’ at Kannur, to announce formally its foray into north Kerala.

For historical reasons linked to the growth of the Communist Party of India(Marxist) (CPI(M)) in Kerala, a majority of the Ezhava community members of north Kerala (known as Thiyyas) were traditionally CPI(M) supporters and the SNDP Yogam has a strong presence only in south Kerala. Following its alienation from the Left Democratic Front during the previous government’s rule, the SNDP leadership had formed a symbiotic, yet-to-be formalised alliance with the BJP and tried to wean away Ezhavas among the CPI(M) cadres into their common communal fold. Through such a strategy, the SNDP Yogam perhaps expected to find new members to boost its fortunes in north Kerala, which in the BJP’s reckoning would weaken the party’s most powerful enemy in the State, the CPI(M), in its northern stronghold. For the BJP, which finds the communal divisions within the Hindu vote bank in Kerala the major factor for its failure to win even a single Assembly seat, it also meant one more step forward in its goal of uniting Hindus under the saffron umbrella. The highlight of the Malabar Sangamom, despite the debatable response it evoked, was the presence of some of the State leaders of the BJP and the call given by the conference for “Hindu unity” and “a ban on religious conversions” (Krishnakumar, R. 2003, ‘An emerging threat’, *Frontline*, Vol. 20, Iss. 4, 15-28 February <http://www.hinduonnet.com/thehindu/thscrip/print.pl?file=20030228003704000.htm&date=fl2004/&prd=fline&> – Accessed 16 July 2007 – Attachment 38).

Reports of BJP efforts to win the support of the SNDP have continued to appear over the years and, in January 2008, it was reported that: “the BJP is trying to get closer to the SNDP and the NSS to form an alternative political front in the state” (‘BJP trying to come closer to SNDP, NSS’ 2008, *New Indian Express*, 14 January – Attachment 35).

As is noted in the extract above the SNDP has, in the past, contested elections though a political wing. Known as the Socialist Republican Party (SRP), the SNDP’s former electoral vehicle would now appear to be a defunct or dormant institution and no SRP candidates are listed as contesting any seats in Kerala state’s most recent state assembly elections. As is noted above, and in another *Hindustan Times* report also, the SRP were “eliminated...from the political canvas of the state in the mid-1980s”. It was recently reported, on 25 July 2008, that the SNDP Yogam secretary, Vellappally Natesan, had “ruled out any plan to launch an Ezhava political party”. However, in August 2008 it was subsequently reported that the “SNDP director board” had “authorised SNDP Yogam general secretary Vellappalli Natesan to take a decision to float the political party at an appropriate time” (see: ‘Hindu community seeks unity in Kerala’ 2004, *Hindustan Times*, 16 December – Attachment 14; for further background on the SRP, see: Simha, V. 1999, ‘Strange deals in Kerala – BJP, Cong smile’, *Indian Express*, 18 August <http://www.expressindia.com/ie/daily/19990818/ipo18056.html> – Accessed 13 July 2007 – Attachment 15; ‘Chandy will be the last Congress Chief Minister in State: Kodayeri’ 2004, *The Hindu*, 12 September <http://www.hinduonnet.com/thehindu/thscrip/print.pl?file=2004091203670300.htm&date=2004/09/12/&prd=th&> – Accessed 13 July 2007 – Attachment 16; for the absence of the SRP in the most recent state election, see: Election Commission of India 2006, *Statistical Report on General Election, 2006 to the Legislative Assembly of Kerala*, Election Commission of India website http://www.eci.gov.in/StatisticalReports/SE_2006/StatReport_KL_2006.pdf – Accessed 20 October 2008 – Attachment 8; for recent developments on the possibility of a

new SNDP political wing, see: Basheer, K.P.M. 2008, 'SNDP plans survey of Ezhava community', *The Hindu*, 25 July <http://www.hinduonnet.com/2008/07/25/stories/2008072551270600.htm> – Accessed 20 October 2008 – Attachment 21; and: 'SNDP to float political forum' 2008, *New Indian Express*, 9 August – Attachment 31).

Articles have also appeared during 2008 in which it has been reported that the SNDP is exploring the possibility of joining with the People's Democratic Party (PDP) as a possible third force which could support either the UDF or LDF ('SNDP may forge alliance with PDP' 2008, *The Hindu*, 24 February <http://www.hindu.com/2008/02/24/stories/2008022453650400.htm> – Accessed 21 October 2008 – Attachment 33; 'PDP to explore third front option in Kerala' 2008, *newKerala.com*, 22 August <http://www.newkerala.com/topstory-fullnews-14219.html> – Accessed 21 October 2008 – Attachment 37).

Post 2003 violence, threats and arrests involving the SNDP

Incidents of note are addressed below in reverse chronological order.

SNDP leader arrested (September 2008)

On 26 September 2008 it was reported that an SNDP leader had been arrested by police and charged with "violating the Arms Act" after allegedly attempting to board a flight "with .22 bullets in his suitcase" (see: 'Violation of Arms Act: SNDP leader held' 2008, *The Hindu*, 26 September – Attachment 22).

SNDP attack on Christians; police disperse SNDP mob (July 2008)

On 6 July 2008 it was reported from Kottayam, in Kerala state, that "Police burst tear-gas shells to disperse a violent mob of SNDP Yogam activists today when they allegedly attacked and pelted stones at the Heavenly Feast worship centre (a Christian Worship Centre)". The report follows:

Kottayam, Jul 6 (UNI) Police burst tear-gas shells to disperse a violent mob of SNDP Yogam activists today when they allegedly attacked and pelted stones at the Heavenly Feast worship centre (a Christian Worship Centre) here. Police said few persons sustained injuries in stone pelting. SNDP Yogam activists staged a protest meeting before the town's branch of the Yogam against the alleged conversion at the Heavenly Feast, which is near the SNDP Yogam branch office. Few SNDP Yogam activists entered the Heavenly Feast worship centre and destroyed furniture in the morning. Police removed them. Later the SNDP Yogam activists pelted stones at the worship centre. They also threatened the believers who came for worship at the Heavenly Feast. Police had to burst tear gas shells to disperse the violent mob. Meanwhile, the heavenly feast authorities had cancelled today's worship at the centre to avoid untoward incidents because of the protest ('SNDP Yogam Activists Attacks Christian Worship Centre' 2008, *United News of India*, 6 July – Attachment 24).

On the following day *The Hindu* reported that: "Four cases were filed against the protesters led by SNDP Union president K.K. Babu and secretary A.G. Thankappan". According to this report the arrests following the dispersal of the attackers by the police, "The agitators who tried to regroup were rounded up by the police and taken to the Kottayam (West) Police Station. They were allowed to go on bail, later" ('SNDP convention turns violent' 2008, *The*

Hindu, 7 July <http://www.hindu.com/2008/07/07/stories/2008070753850400.htm> – Accessed 21 October 2008 – Attachment 32).

On 9 July 2008 *The Hindu* reported that the “agitations by the Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana (SNDP) Yogam” against “the faith-healing Heavenly Feast Ministries” took place “with the support of Hindutva organisations against the Kottayam Municipal authorities” (‘A new turn to property row’ 2008, *The Hindu*, 9 July <http://www.hindu.com/2008/07/09/stories/2008070951950300.htm> – Accessed 21 October 2008 – Attachment 25).

Violence in Kodungalloor; statue of Sri Narayana Guru vandalized (July 2008)

In July 2008 violent confrontations broke out in the Kerala city of Kodungalloor between activists aligned with the Hindu nationalist movement and activists supporting the CPI-M’s LDF government. Both sides reportedly staged hartals (strikes) as did the SNDP following the vandalism of a statue of Sri Narayana Guru. A *Hindu* report noted the vandalism of the statue but did not detail the suspected political allegiance of the vandals. Alternatively, a *New Indian Express Group* report appears to attribute the vandalism to supporters of the CPI-M hartal. Extracts follow below from *The Hindu* and *New Indian Express Group* reports:

***The Hindu* (4 July 2008):**

Kodungalloor: Hartal called separately by the Left Democratic Front (LDF) and the Viswa Hindu Parishad (VHP) on Thursday turned violent in Kodungalloor. Many incidents of violence were reported from various parts.

Protesters damaged a statue of Sri Narayana Guru on the Sri Kumara Samajam campus at East Nada. Some media offices were also attacked.

The SNDP has called for hartal in Kodungalloor on Friday.

While the VHP’s hartal was part of the Bharat bandh, the LDF observed the hartal to mourn the death of DYFI Kodungalloor block committee vice-president and Municipal committee secretary K.U. Biju (28).

Suspected BJP activists had assaulted Biju, an employee of the Kodungalloor Vividodhesa Cooperative Society, on Monday (‘Violence in Kodungalloor’ 2008, *The Hindu*, 4 July <http://www.hindu.com/2008/07/04/stories/2008070454670300.htm> – Accessed 21 October 2008 – Attachment 41).

***New Indian Express Group* (4 July 2008):**

LIFE in Kodungalloor came to a standstill during the last three days with hartals, violence and attacks on shops, vehicles, residential houses, media persons and pedestrians. The violence and stone throwing at shops and vehicles forced shops, markets and other establishments in the town to down their shutters and private buses and autorickshaws to discontinue their services abruptly. A dawn-to-dusk hartal was called on Thursday by the LDF to mourn the death of the DYFI activist. The hartal supporters attacked parked vehicles and closed shops, threw stones at pedestrians and smashed cameras and threatened media persons. The hartal supporters smashed the statue of Sree Narayana Guru in the Sreekumara Samajam at the West Nada. Since Wednesday afternoon, over 40 houses were attacked, and more than a dozen shops and vehicles had been damaged. Top police officers and over 500 police personnel are camping in the area. Though the police have registered 40 cases, no one was arrested so far. A hartal was called on Thursday by the SNDP Yogam and the Vyapari Vyavasayi Ekopana Samithi to protest against the smashing of the statue of Sree Narayana Guru and the attacks on shops. The private bus operators struck work in Kodungalloor-Thrissur, Ernakulam-Kodunallur-Guruvayur routes on Thursday to protest against attacks on vehicles. The town

also witnessed protest demonstrations one after another organised by the SNDP Union, Merchants' Association and the Press Club ('Life stands still in Kodungalloor' 2008, New Indian Express, 4 July – Attachment 39).

Following the violence in Kodungalloor the "BJP State president" reportedly alleged that a nexus existed between the police and the CPI-M that allowed "certain outlawed organisations" to promote violence in the area of Kodungalloor. The SNDP leader Vellappilly Natesan also made issued a statement on the violence at Kodungalloor, expressing the view that "Fundamentalists have a role in incidents at Kodungalloor"; and that: "The police had remained passive during the outbreak of violence". Unlike the BJP state president, however, the SNDP leader appeared to side with the CPI-M; using the occasion to show support for "the kin of slain Democratic Youth Federation of India leader K.U. Biju Pertinent" (the Democratic Youth Federation of India (or DYFI) is a youth wing of the CPI-M). The report follows:

BJP State president P.K. Krishnadas on Sunday alleged that the police had colluded with the CPI(M) in unleashing violence at Kodungalloor. He was addressing a press conference after visiting houses of BJP workers that were damaged in recent clashes and taking a look at a statue of Sree Narayana Guru that was vandalised.

He said the Inspector General of Police, Superintendent of Police and the Deputy Superintendent of Police stood mute witnesses to the violence. "It indicates that the violence was planned. Top police officials should be named among the accused. Home Minister should take responsibility for the outbreak of violence. The Chief Minister's remarks in favour of the police are a whitewash. The statement by the CPI(M) that certain outlawed organisations were behind the violence should be taken seriously. In this context, the CPI(M) should reveal its links with extremist organisations, if any. That the CPI(M) paid scant respect to the all-party peace meet was evident in Saturday's attack on a BJP worker," he said.

SNDP leader Vellappilly Natesan on Sunday called on the kin of slain Democratic Youth Federation of India leader K.U. Biju. He handed over Rs.1 lakh as relief to Biju's father. He examined the statue of Sree Narayana Guru that was vandalised.

"Fundamentalists have a role in incidents at Kodungalloor. The police had remained passive during the outbreak of violence," he alleged. CPI leader K.E. Ismail too called on Biju's relatives ('BJP alleges police-CPI(M) nexus' 2008, *The Hindu*, 7 July – Attachment 23; for a report which notes that the DYFI is a youth wing of the CPI-M in the context or reporting an August 2008 DYFI attack on a Kerala police station, see: 'CPI-M youth wing men attack police station in Kerala, free activist' 2008, *Samachar.in*, 30 August

http://www.samachar.in/Kerala/CPI-M_youth_wing_men_attack_police_station_in_Kerala_free_activist_55069/print.asp – Accessed 21 October 2008 – Attachment 40)

Harthal.com – an advocacy site which seeks to monitor and raise support for diminishing the excessive use of harthals, bandhs, strikes, etc – provides an overview of the various harthals which have been stage in Kerala in 2008. The SNDP are reported to have organised two harthals thus far this year (2008). Both of the SNDP's harthals are listed as relating to the July 2008 events in Kodungalloor with the SNDP calling for a harthal on 4 July 2008 and again on 5 July 2008. Both days concerned the vandalism of "the statue of Sree Narayana Guru in front of the Sreekumara Samajam office at the west Nada and the attack against the SNDP Union office". On 6 July 2008 the prevalence of harthals in Kerala was noted in an article published in the *Deccan Herald* which claimed that Kerala has seen "over a 100 hartals annually in recent times". According to the report: "That the BJP, a less-dominant

political force in the state, has called the most number of hartals in recent past – 31 of a total 57 this year alone – gives a clear indication of the fact that the protests in this parts do not necessarily require mass support” (‘Past Harthals’ (undated), harthal.com website <http://www.harthal.com/php/showNews.php?linkid=3&newsid=204> – Accessed 21 October 2008 – Attachment 42; ‘Kerala, a hunting ground for hartal seekers’ 2008, *Deccan Herald*, 6 July <http://www.deccanherald.com/Content/Jul62008/national2008070677281.asp?section=scrollingnews> – Accessed 21 October 2008 – Attachment 44).

Statue of Sri Narayana Guru vandalized (February 2007)

20 February 2007 *The Hindu* reported: “A police team lead by Rishikesan Nair, sub-inspector of police, Kayamkulam, arrested on Monday a person on charges of destructing a Sree Narayana Guru Mandiram, Kappil East, Kayamkulam” (‘One arrested’ 2007, *The Hindu*, 20 February <http://www.hindu.com/2007/02/20/stories/2007022009430300.htm> – Accessed 21 October 2008 – Attachment 43).

Sri Narayana Guru Mandiram vandalized (July 2006)

21 July 2006 *The Hindu* reported: “A Sree Narayana Guru Mandiram at Tharayil Junction in Karunagapally town was attacked by unidentified persons late on Wednesday night. The mandiram is managed by the SNDP branch number 3624” (‘Guru Mandiram attacked’ 2006, *The Hindu*, 21 July <http://www.hindu.com/2006/07/21/stories/2006072110090300.htm> – Accessed 21 October 2008 – Attachment 45).

Sri Narayana Guru Mandiram vandalized (April 2006)

7 April 2006 *The Hindu* reported: “The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Thursday observed a hartal at Nettah in Nedumangad police station limits in protest against the armed attack on Sree Narayana Guru mandiram in the area on Tuesday night. The glasspanes of the guru mandiram were damaged in the attack. Three residents were also injured in the attack” (‘Attack on guru mandiram: BJP observes hartal in Nedumangad’ 2006, *The Hindu*, 7 April <http://www.hindu.com/2006/04/07/stories/2006040722720300.htm> – Accessed 21 October 2008 – Attachment 46).

Former SNDP political opponent killed (January 2006)

21 January 2006 *The Hindu* reported: “The rise of Tillery Shaji (27), who was killed in an encounter with the police at Mangalore on Thursday, as a notorious freelance muscleman of Kollam city eight years ago owes much to the campus politics at the local S.N. College. Though not a student there, he was, in fact, instrumental in triggering the Students Federation of India-led strike at the college in the year 2000 which turned into a major political issue between the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and the Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana (SNDP) Yogam” (‘Criminal killed in police encounter’ 2006, *The Hindu*, 21 January <http://www.hindu.com/2006/01/21/stories/2006012104020500.htm> – Accessed 21 October 2008 – Attachment 47).

Numerous Sri Narayana Guru Temple and Mandirams vandalized (November 2005)

On 16 November 2005 alleged that “Hindu Aikya Vedi general secretary Kummanam Rajasekharan” alleged that a “recent attack on a Sree Narayana Guru Mandiram at Aravukad” was part of a larger campaign of communal violence:

At a press conference here on Tuesday, Mr. Rajasekharan said there were enough reasons to suspect a conspiracy behind the attack and only a top official could ensure a free and fair investigation. The attack on the Guru Mandiram was not an isolated incident but was the

latest in a series of attacks on Hindu temples and Guru Mandirams being carried out with a view to destroying the morale of Hindus.

He alleged that 80 temples and 11 Guru Mandirams had been attacked across the State this year, but the police had failed to bring to book the culprits or prevent the recurring attacks. Regarding the cases registered in connection with the attacks on Guru Mandirams, the accused in only a single case had been arrested. The Government had a responsibility to make public the details of the investigations. The Government should make clear who has been entrusted with the investigations into the attacks on Hindu places of worship and what is the state of the investigations, he said ('Hindu Vedi sees plot behind temple attacks' 2005, *The Hindu*, 16 November <http://www.hindu.com/2005/11/16/stories/2005111606540500.htm> – Accessed 21 October 2008 – Attachment 48).

SNDP clash with CPI-M's DYFI (October 2003)

On 26 October 2003 *The Hindu* reported that a clash had occurred "between activists" of the SNDP's S.N. Youth Movement and the Democratic Youth Federation of India (or DYFI; the youth wing of the Communist Party of India–Marxist (CPI-M)). The circumstances of the clash are detailed below:

An atmosphere of tension prevails in Kumarakom following a clash between activists of the S.N. Youth Movement and the DYFI over the Vembanad lake encroachment issue today.

Five persons have been admitted to hospitals with injuries.

The CPI(M) has called for a hartal in the Kumarakom panchayat area from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. while the SNDP has called for a hartal from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. in the Kottayam taluk area tomorrow.

...The clash followed an attempt by the S.N. Youth Movement activists to put back the fence at the boundary of the 'kayal' area, which was allegedly destroyed by the DYFI activists a few weeks back during their agitation against the Vembanad lake encroachment by resort owners and other private parties.

The SNDP Union had always maintained that the lake area under its custody was part of the 25 acre-plot it had purchased for a college which is under construction and for which they had title deed. The SNDP Yogam had taken the action by the DYFI activists seriously and had alleged political motives behind the act. At least on two earlier occasions, the conflict between the two sides had reached flashpoint.

This morning, a contingent of nearly 25 persons owing allegiance to the S.N. Youth Movement arrived at the spot where the DYFI activists had removed the fence. The number of activists swelled by the time the work was over and as announced earlier, they marched to the Kumarakom Market junction from their plot.

There was argument over the shouting of slogans in front of the CPI(M) party office and the two parties started hurling stones at each other. The activists rushed into the office and a clash followed.

When they were driven out of the party office, they sat in dharna laying siege to the office. An additional contingent of police, which arrived later, held talks with both the parties and the S.N. Youth Movement activists agreed to disperse, turning the siege into a protest rally ('Kumarakom tense after clash' 2003, *The Hindu*, 26 October <http://www.hinduonnet.com/thehindu/thscrip/print.pl?file=2003102704730400.htm&date=2003/10/27/&prd=th&> – Accessed 15 October 2008 – Attachment 49; for a report noting the DYFI's affiliation with the CPI-M see: 'CPI-M youth wing men attack police station in

Kerala, free activist' 2008, *Thaindian News*, 30 August
http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/uncategorized/cpi-m-youth-wing-men-attack-police-station-in-kerala-free-activist_10090569.html – Accessed 21 October 2008 – Attachment 50).

Pre 2003 violence not noted in *Research Response IND32058* of July 2007

On 9 July 2002 *The Hindu* reported that clashes had taken place, at the SAS SNDP Yogam College at Konni in Pathanamthitta district of Kerala, with supporters of the SNDP Youth movement pitted against supporters of the Students Federation of India (or SFI; the student wing of the Communist Party of India–Marxist (CPI-M)). The article reports that the clash at the college occurred after the publication of an article defending Osama Bin Laden in the college magazine. “SNDP Yogam Devaswom secretary, M. B. Sreekumar, who manages the college, [reportedly] alleged that the student editor of the magazine, Mathew Abraham Mathew, a worker of the Students Federation of India, and some local SFI leaders, were behind the article.” The Hindutva website Hindu Vivek Kendra published an article supporting the stance taken by the SNDP against what it saw as a “a CPM and SFI conspiracy to tarnish” the SNDP (see: ‘Controversy over article on Osama’ 2002, *The Hindu*, 10 July <http://www.hinduonnet.com/2002/07/10/stories/2002071003661200.htm> – Accessed 15 October 2008 – Attachment 51; for a report noting the SFI’s affiliation with the CPI-M see: ‘SFI initiates discussion’ 2008, *The Hindu*, 23 June <http://www.hindu.com/2008/06/23/stories/2008062353200400.htm> – Accessed 15 October 2008 – Attachment 52; Chandrasekha, A.S. 2002, ‘CPM-SFI conspiracy to tarnish SNDP’, Hindu Vivek Kendra website, 28 July <http://www.hvk.org/articles/0902/86.html> – Accessed 22 October 2008 – Attachment 89).

Internal factional violence within the SNDP

Research was most recently completed on the issue of security for SNDP members in July 2007 as part of *Research Response IND32058*. At this time only one report could be located which detailed hostile actions against the SNDP, a November 2005 article in *The Hindu* which related that “The administrative committee office of the SNDP [Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana] Mavelikara union” was attacked and “vandalized” in what appears to have been an inter-factional dispute amongst SNDP members. The attack was reportedly staged by supporters of two SNDP figures S. Sujatan and C.K. Vidyasagar who had been ousted from their respective offices by an SNDP faction headed by Vellappally Natesan (for further background on the dispute and subsequent factional maneuverings see *The Hindu* reports of December 2005 which are supplied as Attachment 4 and 5 and which are addressed below). *The Hindu* report on the November 2005 incident provides some details of the manner in which the office and its staff were attacked and files and money were stolen. According to the report: “Mavelikara police said a group of people, identified as supporters of Mr. Vidyasagar, were behind the attack and 12 of them had been arrested”.

The administrative committee office of the SNDP [Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana] Mavelikara union was vandalised by a group of people, allegedly supporters of ‘ousted’ taluk union president S. Sujatan, on Tuesday morning. Documents kept at the office were partly destroyed in the attack.

The SNDP Yogam leader and Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) member M.B. Sreekumar is functioning as the administrator of the union there.

Mr. Sujatan and other office-bearers of the union had been removed from the post by the SNDP Yogam leadership with the support of general secretary Vellappally Natesan and the union brought under administrator rule. Both the factions have been fighting legal battles over the issue. C.K. Vidyasagar who had been dethroned from the post of SNDP Yogam president by Mr. Natesan has been supporting Mr. Sujatan.

The Mavelikara police said a group of people, identified as supporters of Mr. Vidyasagar, were behind the attack and 12 of them had been arrested. The police said cases had been registered against the arrested.

The SNDP Yogam director board member from Mavelikara A.V. Anandarajan, who owes allegiance to Mr. Natesan, said around 60 supporters of Mr. Sujatan destroyed the office completely and attacked the staff there. He said they destroyed the furniture and took away many records related to a micro-finance project of the SNDP Yogam and Rs.50,000 in cash ('SNDP office vandalised' 2005, *The Hindu*, 9 November <http://www.hinduonnet.com/thehindu/thscrip/print.pl?file=2005110908400500.htm&date=2005/11/09/&pr=th&> – Accessed 16 July 2007 – Attachment 3; RRT Research & Information 2007, *Research Response IND32058*, 18 July – Attachment 1).

No information could be located on whether those arrested in relation to the November 2005 affair were subsequently tried in court, although reports were located on court rulings on the legitimacy of the SNDP's internal disputes. On 6 November 2008 *The Hindu* reported on further violence between opposing SNDP faction members in the wake of the latter court rulings. Pertinent extracts follow:

The Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana (SNDP) Yogam Director Board meeting held here today ended in a clash between the supporters of the Yogam president, C.K. Vidyasagar, and the general secretary, Vellappally Natesan. Two board members were injured in the fisticuff.

K.S. Raveendran, 54, a supporter of Mr. Natesan and board member from Karunagapally, was admitted to a private hospital at Karuvelipady. V.K. Chittaranjan from Kothamangalam, who supported Mr. Vidyasagar, was also injured.

The meeting adopted a resolution demanding the resignation of Mr. Vidyasagar claiming that he had lost the moral right to continue as president in the wake of a recent verdict by the Kerala High Court, which rejected Mr. Vidyasagar's plea against the Yogam and its general secretary.

Mr. Vidyasagar said that he would move the High Court against the act of Mr. Natesan and his supporters.

Ninety-three Yogam members, including Mr. Vidyasagar and Mr. Natesan, took part in the meeting.

Mr. Vidyasagar got only five votes against 88 when he demanded a voice vote to decide who should preside over the meeting. As suggested by Mr. Natesan, M.B. Sreekumar, Devaswom secretary, presided over the meeting.

When the meeting started, Mr. Vidyasagar and his supporters left their chairs, and soon the supporters of both the leaders came to blows.

...Speaking at a press conference later, Mr. Vidyasagar said that the supporters of Mr. Natesan had beaten up the Yogam members who demanded that the president of the meeting be elected through the ballot. He said two of his supporters, V.K. Chittaranjan and V. Narayanan, had been assaulted by the men of Mr. Natesan. He said that the president of the meeting should be decided through the ballot and not through a voice vote.

“Majority of the Yogam board members are either neutral or with me; they are being intimidated by Mr. Natesan. If there is a ballot, they will vote for me,” said Mr. Vidyasagar (‘Clash at SNDP Yogam Director Board meeting’ 2005, *the Hindu*, 6 November <http://www.hinduonnet.com/2004/11/07/stories/2004110706490500.htm> – Accessed 14 October 2008 – Attachment 4).

On 22 November 2005 *The Hindu* reported on the participation of S. Sujatan and C.K. Vidyasagar in the SNDP’s internal elections, which would seem to indicate that both figures remained at liberty. According to *The Hindu*: “The election was generally peaceful barring minor scuffles between supporters of the official panel led by Mr. Natesan and supporters of the panel of Mr. Vidyasagar. A large posse of police was present”. Pertinent extracts follow:

Vellappally Natesan has been re-elected Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana (SNDP) Yogam general secretary for the third time. Mr. Natesan defeated his once-confidante-turned-rival C.K. Vidyasagar by a huge margin.

In the elections held at Cherthala on Wednesday, the panel led by Mr. Natesan defeated the panel led by the present president (Mr. Vidyasagar) hands down. Mr. Vidyasagar failed to put up even a good fight.

The other newly elected office-bearers of the Yogam are as follows:

G. Kamalasanan is the new president. He defeated the rival panel candidate S. Sujatan. The Travancore Devaswom Board member M.B. Sreekumar is the new vice-president. He defeated D. Prabha. The new Devaswom secretary is M.N. Soman. He defeated M.S. Prasanna.

All of the candidates in the panel led by Mr. Natesan won more than 90 per cent of the valid votes. Of the total of 8,517 voters 8,003 cast their votes.

The election was held at S.N. College amid tight security in the presence of O. Ramachandran Nambiar, the single-man commission directed by the High Court to oversee the election.

The election was generally peaceful barring minor scuffles between supporters of the official panel led by Mr. Natesan and supporters of the panel of Mr. Vidyasagar. A large posse of police was present.

...Mr. Vidyasagar said the supporters of Mr. Natesan manhandled him and vice-president candidate on his panel D. Prabha. Many people without identity cards cast their votes, he added.

Mr. Natesan said the election was held under the watchful eyes of the commission directed by the court and nobody could subvert the process. The complaint of attack raised by Mr. Vidyasagar was false.

Ramachandran Nambiar told *The Hindu* that he did not receive any formal complaint of rigging of the election (‘Vellappally re-elected SNDP Yogam chief’ 2005, *The Hindu*, 22 December <http://www.hindu.com/2005/12/22/stories/2005122215060100.htm> – Accessed 14 October 2008 – Attachment 5).

2. Please advise of any attacks of the RSS on the Hindu population in Kerala.

No reports could be located which referred to attacks being staged in Kerala by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) against Hindu Kerala communities on the basis of the attacked community's Hindu identity. The RSS has traditionally presented itself as the champion of Hindu communal interests in India and attacks perpetrated by the RSS are typically represented in resulting reportage as being perpetrated in the name of the Hindu identity and Hindu interests rather than in opposition to Hinduism. It may be the case that RSS activists have clashed in Kerala with Hindus who are members of competing secular organisations (such as the INC or the CPI-M), or even with fellow Hindus who are members of nominally allied Hindu nationalist organisations (there have been reports of disagreements between the BJP and the RSS in Kerala), but reportage of such events tend not to make note of the communal identities of those involved except insofar as "other political parties and the current secular order [may be presented by an aggrieved Hindutva movement] as 'traitors' to the Hindus" (Ekert 2008, p.9). Where reports do note the communal identities of communities subject to RSS attack it tends to be the case that the communities being attacked are Muslim, Christian, or lower caste Hindus who have converted to, or associated themselves with, the Muslim or Christian faiths (for an overview of the Hindutva Hindu nationalist ideology of the RSS and communal violence, see: Ekert, J. 2008, 'Creating Hindusthan: Religion and Violence in Hindu-nationalist Mobilisation', European University Institute website, RSCAS Working Paper 2008/15, pp.1-16

http://cadmus.eui.eu/dspace/bitstream/1814/8810/1/RSCAS_2008_15.pdf – Accessed 21 October 2008 – Attachment 56; and: Anand, D. 2005, 'The Violence of Security: Hindu Nationalism and the Politics of Representing "the Muslim" as a Danger' 2005, Bath University website, *Round Table*, Vol. 94, No. 379, April, pp.203–215

<http://staff.bath.ac.uk/ecsda/DAnandRTArticle.pdf> – Accessed 21 October 2008 – Attachment 55; with particular reference to the conversion issue, see pages 44-46 and 55 of: Narula, S. 2008, 'Overlooked Danger: The Security and Rights Implications of Hindu Nationalism in India', Harvard Law School website, *Harvard Human Rights Journal*, vol 16, pp.41-68 <http://www.law.harvard.edu/students/orgs/hrj/iss16/narula.pdf> – Accessed 24

October 2008 – Attachment 90; for examples of reportage of RSS attacks on secular groups in Kerala, see: Radhakrishnan, M.G. 2008, 'Old battle new ground', *India Today*, 13 March http://indiatoday.digitaltoday.in/index.php?issueid=&id=5770&option=com_content&task=view§ionid=21 – Accessed 21 October 2008 – Attachment 59; for RSS disagreements with the BJP in Kerala, see: 'Rupture of dialogue cause for RSS-BJP rift: Govindacharya' 2005, *The Hindu* website, 25 October

<http://www.hindu.com/2005/10/25/stories/2005102501580700.htm> – Accessed 19 January 2007 – Attachment 63; for examples of reportage of attacks on Muslim and Christian communities in Kerala, see: 'Suspect Extremists Behind Stanley's Murder in Kerala' 2007, *SVM News*, Salem Voice Ministries website, 15 February <http://salemvoice.org/news142.html> – Accessed 16 March 2007 – Attachment 61; 'Gospel Center vandalized in Kerala in India' 2007, *SVM News*, Salem Voice Ministries website, 11 March

<http://salemvoice.org/news146.html> – Accessed 16 March 2007 – Attachment 62; Engineer, A.A. 2004, 'No decline in communal violence in India', *Dawn*, 17 January <http://www.hvk.org/articles/0104/112.html> – Accessed 7 November 2006 – Attachment 93;

and generally: Rajeshwari, B. 2004, 'Communal Riots in India: A Chronology (1947-2003)', *Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies*, March, p. 13 <http://www.ipcs.org/IRP03.pdf> – Accessed 12 March 2008 – Attachment 94; and for RSS antipathy to the conversion of lower caste Hindus, see: Taneja, N. 'Gujarat 2006: Life For Christians, Tribals And Dalits', *People's Democracy* website, vol.30, no.52, 24 December http://pd.cpim.org/2006/1224/12242006_nalini.htm – Accessed 12 October 2007 – Attachment 91; Suresh, V. & Gopalakrishnan, S. 2007, 'Convert, and be damned!', *India Together*, 28 May <http://www.indiatogether.org/combatlaw/issue7/damned.htm> – Accessed 28 May 2007 – Attachment 92; and for the continuity of SNDP politics with Hindu nationalist anti-conversion campaigns in Kerala in previous years, see: Krishnakumar, R. 2003, 'An emerging threat', *Frontline*, Vol. 20, Iss. 4, 15-28 February <http://www.hinduonnet.com/thehindu/thscrip/print.pl?file=20030228003704000.htm&date=fl2004/&prd=fline&> – Accessed 16 July 2007 – Attachment 38).

Should it be of interest, examples follow of the kind of recent reporting available on episodes of violence involving RSS activists in Kerala. These have typically involved violence between activists of the RSS and activists of the ruling CPI-M. Related reports of Kerala police arrests and surveillance of RSS camps are also included in the survey.

- On 11 October 2008 the *Indo-Asian News Service* reported the death of an RSS activist and the injury of another after a bomb exploded "in a town in Kerala's northern Kannur district". "The RSS has alleged that Anoop was killed in a bomb attack carried out by workers of the Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M). The CPI-M...refuted the charge saying that the RSS activist was killed while handling a country-made bomb himself" ('RSS activist killed, shutdown in Kerala town' 2008, *Hindustan Times*, source: *Indo-Asian News Service*, 11 October <http://www.hindustantimes.com/StoryPage/StoryPage.aspx?sectionName=&id=6e7f09b9-fbf5-4132-8a5b-a0d13f7d61c3&&Headline=RSS+activist+killed%2c+shutdown+in+Kerala+town> – Accessed 21 October 2008 – Attachment 54).
- On 26 September 2008 it was reported that a CPI-M activist had "suffered stab injuries on his left hand in an alleged attack by RSS activists at Cheruparambil, near Panoor"; and that: "A case has been registered against eight persons" ('CPM activist stabbed by RSS men' 2008, *oneindia*, 26 September <http://news.oneindia.in/2008/09/25/cpm-activist-stabbed-by-rss-men-1222413156.html> – Accessed 21 October 2008 – Attachment 53).
- On 27 August 2008 it was reported that Kerala police had announced "that physical training and arms training of all organisations, including National Development Front (NDF) and RSS, would be put under strict police surveillance. No organisation would be allowed to take up such training sessions and camps, without permission from the police" ('Kerala to set up cell to monitor extremism' 2008, *India Express*, 28 August <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/kerala-to-set-up-cell-to-monitor-extremism/354202/> – Accessed 21 October 2008 – Attachment 57).
- On 4 August 2008 it was reported that "Two Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) workers were injured when unknown assailants attacked them near a village in Kerala. The RSS was quick to blame the Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) for the violence against its men". The attack occurred in "Panur is near Thalassery, a

hotbed of political violence between the CPI-M and the RSS” (“Two RSS workers attacked, injured in Kerala” 2008, *South Asia News*, 4 August <http://www.southasianews.com/279421/Two-RSS-workers-attacked-injured-in-Kerala-.htm> – Accessed 21 October 2008 – Attachment 58).

In March 2008 *India Today* reported at length on the ongoing trend of tit-for-tat violence in Kerala between the CPI-M and Hindu Nationalist groups such as the RSS and BJP:

...Over the last few years, Thalasserry, in Kannur district, has been sporadically grabbing the headlines for its crass political violence. At least 200 persons have been killed and thousands maimed over the last 30 years in tit-for-tat violence between BJP-RSS and CPI(M), both of which have deep roots in these areas.

While the casualties may seem small, they are rather steep for a state not known for the blood and gore variety of politics. The latest round of violence in the first week of March claimed seven lives in three days. Five of the victims belonged to BJP-RSS while two were CPI(M) workers.

The killings were belated retaliation for the murder of four CPI(M) workers in Thalasserry and two in Palakkad district between November and January.

Until now, this mutual annihilation between the two long-standing adversaries had seldom crossed the boundaries of Thalasserry, at worst reaching the borders of Kannur district. However, this time the repercussions were felt across the country.

As their colleagues fell victims to communists’ wrath in Kerala, BJP-RSS activists stormed the CPI(M)’s national headquarters in AKG Bhavan in Delhi and destroyed furniture and parts of the library. Six senior party members, who came to attend the party’s Central Committee meeting were injured and several cars parked outside, including that of Politburo member Sitaram Yechury were damaged. Police had to resort to tear gas shelling to disperse the mob.

Subsequently there were attacks at the Bangalore house of V.J.K. Nair, CPI(M) state secretary of Karnataka, at Sundarayya Vignana Kendram, the CPI(M)’s research institute in Andhra Pradesh and also the party’s district committee office in Nagercoil, Tamil Nadu.

...Though Thalasserry has been notorious for political murders since 1970s, there is a surge whenever CPI(M) comes to power. “The police become completely partisan and let the cadres run riot. It is state-sponsored terrorism,” says BJP leader P.S. Sreedharan Pillai. However, CPI(M) counters this allegation and puts the blame squarely on BJP.

“The BJP and RSS always strike whenever we are in power because they know we will be defensive. We won’t put our own government in difficulty,” says C. Rajeevan, a local leader of CPI(M). The recent killings have forced Chief Minister V.S. Achuthanandan to make an appeal to all, cutting across party lines: “Let us not take life in the name of politics. My appeal is to my party workers too.”

Following the recent spurt in violence, more than 1,000 police personnel have been deployed in the district and 198 CPI(M) and 139 BJP-RSS workers arrested in connection with the murders. “What happened in Thalasserry was purely political murders and, therefore, the parties have to put a halt to them. Now things are under control,” says Raman Srivastava, director-general of police.

Though Congress and CPI(M) have remained the main political adversaries in the state for decades now, RSS embroiled in the tussle after the 1970s when it began making inroads into

what were traditional Left bastions. The growing tendency among the young generation of many traditional communist families of embracing RSS or BJP was blasphemy, as far as the CPI(M) was concerned.

For instance, former BJP state president C.K. Padmanabhan had come from a communist family of Kannur. For both CPI(M) and BJP bouts of violence have become necessary to keep the ranks in the fold.

Not surprisingly, the offices and of both parties and even those of Congress are always ready for battle with stockpiles of country bombs, guns, swords and other ammunition. In fact, on three occasions district Police Superintendent K. Sreejith had to brave flying country bombs as the rival party workers fought against each other.

An increasing internal strife in BJP leading to a split and a major drop in the number of RSS shakhas have been cited as a cause for the sudden rise in their “actions”. As per a report presented in the state RSS meet in Thrissur last June, the number of shakhas in Kerala (one of the highest in the country once) has dropped from 4,500 to 3,700. The organisation was alarmed by the non-remission of the annual Vijayadashami contribution by more than 60,000 members in 2007.

Though most victims from both the political camps in Kannur are low level workers who come from poor families, several top leaders from the district too have been involved in violence. Among those killed in the past include Jayakrishnan and Panniannur Chandran who were state level BJP leaders while CPI(M) state committee members like E.P. Jayarajan and P. Jayarajan were grievously injured.

“In Kannur it is the tail which wags the dog,” says P.K. Gangadharan Nair, a prominent physician and social analyst from Kannur. “Leaders of both parties are under heavy pressure from lower ranks to give green signal for acts of revenge and bloodshed. There are occasions when ranks, disillusioned with leadership which block acts of revenge, leave the party.”

Though the recent violence in Thalasserry was fuelled by the urge for revenge, many attribute it to the social culture of the region.

“This place comes within the Kadathanadu region which is home for Kalaripayatt, the traditional Kerala martial arts. The famed folk songs of the region called Vadakkan Patt (northern ballads) are paeans to legendary warlords and celebrate physical violence,” says Nair.

It’s not merely a coincidence that a small Siva temple in Ponnyam—a CPI(M) party village—is named Vairi Ghataka (executioner of the enemy) and the nearby Subramonya shrine is called Porkkalam (battlefield). The numerous memorials in Kannur built for all those killed in political violence are just a grim reminder of the many bloody battles fought on this land (Radhakrishnan, M.G. 2008, ‘Old battle new ground’, *India Today*, 13 March http://indiatoday.digitaltoday.in/index.php?issueid=&id=5770&option=com_content&task=view§ionid=21 – Accessed 21 October 2008 – Attachment 59).

A report published on 30 March 2008 by the *Indo-Asian News Service* provides an alternative perspective on the violence:

...No one seems to want the wave of brutal violence that has enveloped Kannur district, specifically the Thalasserry area, a known bastion of the ruling Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M).

Ever since the first victim fell dead in 1968, there has been no end to the brutal turf war raging between CPI-M supporters and those of the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS), the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP).

This month, the shadow of Kannur travelled to distant New Delhi when CPI-M activists and RSS sympathisers clashed outside the Marxist headquarters, raising temperatures in parliament.

A truce of sorts has now been called in Kannur. But no one knows how long this will last.

“See the profile of those killed. Ninety percent had only school education and more than 80 percent belonged to backward classes,” said T. Sasidharan, a Kannur S.N. College professor with a doctorate on the Kannur violence.

According to Sasidharan, the official toll in the murder saga stands at 174. No one has any count of the numbers badly injured or maimed for life. There have been convictions, but these have not stopped the violence.

The brutality is what stands out in Kannur, a district of 2.25 million people with a sizeable Muslim population.

Victims are killed with swords, small axes and locally made bombs. They are murdered in planned and targeted strikes. Some are attacked in their homes; some have been killed while travelling.

There is one silver lining: women are never targeted.

...The last big outbreak of violence was early this month when three days of mayhem claimed seven lives. Calm was brokered at an all-party meeting March 15.

Some blame unemployment and social backwardness for the violence.

...”The RSS wanted to make Thalassery its headquarters in Kerala and it found the CPI-M an obstruction. That is why they are targeting the party,” said P. Jayarajan, a CPI-M leader and legislator.

Some say the violence is due to the region’s political culture. The ancient tribal warrior culture, represented by the martial art Kalarippayattu and the ritual art of Theyyam, must have influenced the violent ways of Kannur.

The CPI-M refutes this.

“Ninety percent of violence in Kannur is taking place in Thalassery. How come that tribal culture common to the region gets confined to a certain area?” asked Jayarajan, partially crippled after an attempt on his life in 1999.

...In Kannur district, many villages are known as “party villages” in media parlance. Nothing stirs in these villages without the knowledge of the party concerned. Most such villages are controlled by the CPI-M.

One man from Mangattidam village, about 20 km from Thalassery town, told IANS on the condition of anonymity: “Mostly, quarrels over personal issues turn into political clashes. A majority of those getting killed are not active party workers. They may only be party sympathisers. The workers are difficult to be targeted. They are alert and seldom sleep in their own homes.”

Once someone gets killed, the Marxists and the RSS and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) tend to look after the families of the victims – a sort of pension for life (‘Where Reds and Saffron keep fighting – and killing’ 2008, *Indo-Asian News Service*, 30 March – Attachment 60).

For previous research on the influence of the RSS in Kerala, see the information supplied under Question 7 of *Research Response IND33237* of 6 May 2008 (RRT Research & Information 2008, *Research Response IND33237*, 6 May – Attachment 64).

3. Please advise if there is any information on a bomb attack in Mala or Male in 2007 conducted by a Hindu fanatic?

Mala

The Welcome to Kerala website lists Mala as a constituency of the Thrissur (Trichur / Trissur) “district situated in the central part of Kerala state” (‘Thrissur district’ (undated), Welcome to Kerala website <http://kerala.ebharat.in/thrissur-district> – Accessed 22 October 2008 – Attachment 71).

Bomb scares have been reported in Thrissur district in 2008 and 2006:

- 31 July 2008: “Thrissur: The police and the bomb disposal squad on Wednesday searched the Thiruvananthapuram-Gorakhpur Raptisagar Express (2512) at the Irinjalakuda and Thrissur railway stations following a bomb scare” (‘Bomb scare delays trains’ 2008, *The Hindu*, 31 July <http://www.hindu.com/2008/07/31/stories/2008073154430400.htm> – Accessed 22 October 2008 – Attachment 72).
- 5 March 2006: “A bomb hoax created panic when the first show was going on at the ‘Kairali’ cinema theatre in the city on Saturday” (‘Bomb hoax creates panic at cinema’ 2006, *The Hindu*, 5 March <http://www.hindu.com/2006/03/05/stories/2006030512080300.htm> – Accessed 22 October 2008 – Attachment 73).

Other incidents of political violence reported to have occurred in the area may be of interest:

- On 21 August 2008: “A man was killed and three others were injured as activists of two rival outfits clashed in Thrissur district of Kerala Thursday, the police said. ...The district collector clamped prohibitory order in the area after the clashes between activists of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh - and the National Democratic Front -, a Muslim organisation” (‘One killed in political clashes in Kerala’ 2008, *Nerve*, 21 August <http://www.nerve.in/news:253500158934> – Accessed 22 October 2008 – Attachment 74).
- On 20 February 2006: “a walkout in the Kerala Assembly today protesting against the government’s refusal to discuss what it alleged as the RSS attack on CPI(M) cadres in Thrissur district” (‘Opposition stages walkout on “RSS attack” on CPI(M) cadres’ 2006, Grass Roots News website, source: *WebIndia123.com*, 20 February <http://grass-roots.in/cache/index.php/5085> – Accessed 22 October 2008 – Attachment 75).

- 26 September 2000: “Minor skirmishes were reported from Karimannur (Idukki district), Cherkala, Uduma and Bandaduka (Kasaragod district), Kodakara and Kodungallur (Thrissur district) and Sasthamkotta (Kollam district). At Mathilakam in Thrissur district, a 65-year-old man who developed heart attack while witnessing an angry dispute between the workers of rival parties, died before he could be taken to hospital” (‘Heavy turnout in first phase’ 2000, *The Hindu*, 26 September <http://www.hinduonnet.com/2000/09/26/stories/0426211t.htm> – Accessed 22 October 2008 – Attachment 76).

Male

Reports were located of a bomb attack which occurred in the Maldives capital of Malé in September 2007. Available reports, however, relate that the attack was attributed to a group of Muslim men with some speculation within the media of links between the group and militant groups such as Lashkar-e-Taiba and/or Al Qaeda. The bombing occurred at Malé’s Sultan Park and it reportedly injured a number of tourists. No mention is made in the available reports of a bomb attack on a speaker. Reports generally framed the event as an attack on Malé’s tourist industry. No other reports of bomb attacks occurring in Malé could be located for 2007 (for details of the attack see: ‘Bomb blast wounds 12 tourists in Maldives capital’ 2007, *Reuters*, 29 September <http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/L29323425.htm> – Accessed 22 October 2008 – Attachment 65; for subsequent arrests, trials and claims of links to Lashkar-e-Taiba and/or Al Qaeda, see: ‘Maldives bomb plotters jailed for 15 years’ 2007, *Reuters*, 14 December – Attachment 66; for further charges, see: ‘Two acquitted of “aiding terrorism” over Maldives blast’ 2008, BBC Monitoring Newsfile, source: *Minivan News* website (14 January 2008), 15 January – Attachment 67; ‘Maldives immigration officer jailed over bomb “masterminds” flight’ 2008, *BBC Monitoring South Asia*, Source: *Haveeru Daily* website (23 February 2008), 24 February – Attachment 68; for reports which present the bombing as an attack on Malé’s tourist industry, see: ‘12 wounded in bomb blast in Maldives capital’ 2007, *China Daily*, 30 September http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2007-09/30/content_6147432.htm – Accessed 22 October 2008 – Attachment 69; ‘Two British tourists injured in bomb attack on Maldives’ 2007, *The Independent*, 30 September <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/two-british-tourists-injured-in-bomb-attack-on-maldives-404007.html> – Accessed 22 October 2008 – Attachment 70).

4. Please advise of the level of police protection in Kerala against attacks by RSS and SIMI and whether they are supporters of religious fanatics.

5. Please advise whether the judiciary is effective in Kerala against such attacks by organisations such as SIMI and the RSS.

For information on the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) in Kerala, see Question 1 and 2 above. For information on Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI), see Question 7 below.

7. Please provide details about SIMI and their aims and whether they are in operation in Kerala.

Information on the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) and Kerala follows below. There are reports that SIMI has recruited from amongst the Muslim population of Kerala and there have also been reports of SIMI being active in Kerala state. Kerala police have been actively pursuing SIMI activists in recent years and reports indicate that this pursuit has become all the more intense following the spate of bombings which have occurred throughout India in 2008 and which have been attributed to a group titled Indian Mujahideen. According to an August 2008 report produced for the Jamestown Foundation's *Terrorism Focus*: "It is now believed that IM could be a front used by former SIMI activists working in tandem with terrorist groups like Lashkar-e-Tayyeba (LeT) and HuJI"; and: "Known sympathizers and friends of former SIMI leaders and workers have been rounded up for questioning" (for the recent spate of attacks and SIMI's links to the Indian Mujahideen, see: John, W. 2008, 'India's Security Agencies Struggle with Probe into Serial Bombings in Gujarat and Karnataka', *Terrorism Focus*, 5 August, vol.5: no.29 <http://www.jamestown.org/terrorism/news/article.php?articleid=2374356> – Accessed 22 October 2008 – Attachment 78; for background on SIMI, see: Roul, A. 2006, 'Students Islamic Movement of India: A Profile', *Terrorism Monitor*, 6 April, vol.4: no7. <http://www.jamestown.org/terrorism/news/article.php?articleid=2369953> – Accessed 22 October 2008 – Attachment 77; for SIMI's reported activities in Kerala and the response of the Kerala police, see: Unnithan, S. 2008, 'Homemade and deadly', *India Today*, 2 October http://indiatoday.digitaltoday.in/index.php?option=com_content&issueid=73&task=view&id=16681&acc=high – Accessed 22 October 2008 – Attachment 79; Srinagar, S.K. 2008, 'Two more Keralites hired by Lashker killed in Kashmir', *Outlook India*, 12 October http://www.outlookindia.com/pti_news.asp?id=619081 – Accessed 22 October 2008 – Attachment 80; 'Cops find Kerala connection in terror attacks' 2008, *Times of India*, 10 October http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Cities/Mumbai/Cops_find_Kerala_connection_in_terror_attacks/rssarticleshow/3577891.cms – Accessed 22 October 2008 – Attachment 81; 'Kerala police arrest 2 for "SIMI links"' 2008, *The Hindu*, 8 October <http://www.hindu.com/2008/10/08/stories/2008100860401300.htm> – Accessed 22 October 2008 – Attachment 82; 'SIMI meeting: suspect arrested' 2008, *The Hindu*, 15 October <http://www.hindu.com/2008/10/15/stories/2008101559410400.htm> – Accessed 22 October 2008 – Attachment 83; 'Ban on physical training camps' 2008, *The Hindu*, 28 August <http://www.hindu.com/2008/08/28/stories/2008082855440700.htm> – Accessed 22 October 2008 – Attachment 85).

Background

The *Jamestown Terrorism Monitor* provides the following background on the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) in an April 2006 profile:

Following the October 2005 deadly bombings in New Delhi, the Union Home Department claimed that Islami Inquilabi Mahaz, or the Islamic Revolutionary Front (a hitherto unknown outfit), which accepted responsibility for the Delhi blasts, is associated with the outlawed Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI), a radical Islamist organization. Intelligence sources revealed that the masterminds behind the October blasts had several meetings with SIMI cadres in the southern cities of Gulbarga and Hubli. SIMI is also suspected of involvement in the blast at Ahmedabad railway station in Gujarat on February 19 and the twin

blasts in Varanasi on March 7 that killed 18 people and injured over a hundred others (Daily News and Analysis, February 22; Hindustan Times, March 30).

Although SIMI was outlawed immediately after 9/11, the Indian government claims its subversive activities have continued relentlessly. In 2005, SIMI allegedly struck twice in a single month; for instance, on July 5, suspected SIMI operatives staged an attack on the disputed temple complex in Ayodhya, and, on July 28, SIMI operatives allegedly played a role in the bombing on board the Shramjeevi train that killed 12 passengers and injured at least 52 others (The Hindu, August 1, 2005).

Background

SIMI was founded on April 25, 1977 at the Aligarh Muslim University, Uttar Pradesh, as a radical student outfit with a mission to revive Islam in India and transform the entire country into an Islamic state. SIMI's founding president was Mohammad Ahmadullah Siddiqi, currently a professor of journalism and public relations at the University of Western Illinois. The group's three core ideological concepts were: Ummah, Caliphate and Jihad. SIMI's ideological inspirations were Muslim thinkers who had launched major Islamic movements in the subcontinent, in particular Shah Waliullah, Sayyid Ahmad, Haji Shariat Allah and the legendary Maulana Maududi, the founder of Jamaat-e-Islami (JI).

Specifically, SIMI was deeply inspired by Maududi's goal to make Islam the supreme organizing principle for the social and political life of the Muslim community. In its annual report, SIMI reiterated these tenets, urging Muslim youths to struggle for the revival of Islam in the light of the Quran and Sunnah (South Asia Analysis Group, October 30, 2003). In fact, the Maududi influence was so deep-rooted that in the early years of SIMI's existence the organization was dominated by the Indian wing of JI, called Jamaat-e-Islami Hind (JIH). In due course, SIMI emerged as a coalition of student and youth Islamic bodies, namely the Muslim Students Association, Students Islamic Union, Students Islamic Organization and Muslim Youth Association.

SIMI's pro-Taliban stance in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, anti-U.S. demonstrations in the Indian states of Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Rajasthan and the glorification of Osama bin Laden as the "ultimate jihadi" prompted the Indian government to impose a ban. Since the ban, some reports suggest that SIMI has been operating under the banner of Tahreek Ihya-e-Ummat or Movement for the Revival of the Ummah (The Milli Gazette, January 2002).

SIMI is believed to have 400 full time cadres called "Ansars" and some 20,000 ordinary members known as "Ikhwan." The leadership is in complete disarray following the ban in September 2001. The last known leaders of the outfit were Shahid Badar Falah and Safdar Nagori as the national president and secretary-general, respectively. While Falah was arrested and charged with sedition and communal tension in north India in September 2001, Nagori has so far evaded arrest. It has been reported that Nagori is trying to revive SIMI and has established links with Pakistani intelligence operatives, the Palestinian group Hamas and other like-minded organizations beyond India's borders (The Pioneer, July 21, 2003).

The ideological affinity with Hamas was revealed by SIMI's financial secretary Salim Sajid following his arrest in June 2002. According to Sajid, Hamas' former spiritual leader Sheikh Ahmad Yasin had endorsed the "freedom struggle" in India's Jammu and Kashmir state and the reconstruction of the demolished Babri Masjid in Uttar Pradesh (Times of India, June 29, 2002). Sajid's interrogation also exposed SIMI's covert connections with Saudi Arabia's Jamayyatul Ansar (JA) and Bangladesh's Islamic Chhatra Shibir, the student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh (Times of India, June 29, 2002). JA is primarily comprised of expatriate Indian Muslims working in Saudi Arabia and is suspected of channeling funds to SIMI. Other

sources of funding have included the World Assembly of Muslim Youth in Riyadh, the International Islamic Federation of Students Organizations based in Kuwait and the U.S.-based Consultative Committee of Indian Muslims (The Hindu, September 28, 2001).

While SIMI's strong ties with Jamaat-e-Islami units in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal are well documented, not much is known about its ties with Pakistan's notorious Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI). According to some reports, SIMI cadres were being trained by the ISI to launch terrorist attacks in India (rediff.com, April 27, 2004). One arrested Sikh militant revealed in 1993 that SIMI cadres, along with Kashmiri and Sikh militants, had been brought together by the ISI through the Jamaat-e-Islami in Pakistan to carry out training and subversive activities in India (The Hindu, September 28, 2001). Moreover, it has been reported that the ISI has maintained contact with key SIMI operatives during their trips to Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern countries, either for Haj or fund-raising activities (Daily Excelsior, October 9, 2001). In early 2003, a senior police official in Lucknow (tasked with investigating SIMI in Uttar Pradesh state), warned that the group was trying to re-organize with the help of the ISI. His claim was based on the confessions of two detained SIMI operatives, Obaid Ullah and Mohammed Arif (Press Trust of India, January 27, 2003).

Intelligence sources have stated that after proscription, large numbers of SIMI cadres fled to the northeastern parts of India and neighboring Bangladesh for sanctuary, training and bonding with other Islamic groups. In previous years, SIMI had formed local branches in West Bengal, especially in the border districts of Malda, Murshidabad, North and South Dinajpur and even Kolkata. They organized regional meetings in West Bengal and in Chittagong (Bangladesh) under a different banner in 2003 where they were reportedly planning to infiltrate Islamic education centers, libraries, and other cultural bodies (Daily Excelsior, December 12, 2003). SIMI is also believed to be active outside the Indian subcontinent, mainly in Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf states. In 2003, as many as 350 Indian Muslims working in Jordan, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and other Middle-Eastern states were allegedly recruited by SIMI to fight U.S. forces in Iraq at the behest of the International Islamic Front (Intelligence Online, August 28, 2003).

Additionally, Pakistani terrorist outfits like Hizbul Mujahideen (HM), Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM) have had strong logistical and operational ties to SIMI. In late 2002, Maharashtra police seized as many as 30 compact discs containing speeches of Maulana Masood Azhar, chief of Jaish-e-Muhammad, along with clippings of communal riots in Gujarat from SIMI offices in Aurangabad. Furthermore, there is clear evidence of operational ties between HM militants and SIMI. The arrest of Sayeed Shah Hasseb Raza and Amil Pervez with explosives in the Kolkata railway station in 2002 substantiated earlier claims of terror ties. Both Raza and Pervez were senior members of SIMI and earlier worked for HM. Investigation officers believed that the duo were in Kolkata to carry out subversive activities and recruit youth for jihadi activities (Times of India, March 2, 2002) (Roul, A. 2006, 'Students Islamic Movement of India: A Profile', *Terrorism Monitor*, 6 April, vol.4: no7. <http://www.jamestown.org/terrorism/news/article.php?articleid=2369953> – Accessed 22 October 2008 – Attachment 77).

The SIMI network has been linked to a spate of recent bomb attacks across India and India's various security apparatus are currently reported to very much concerned with the task of pursuing the networks responsible for these attacks. Of particular interest is the "Indian Mujahideen", thought to be a SIMI related group. A *Jamestown Terrorism Focus* report of August 2008 provides an overview of the situation:

Intelligence and crime investigation units from eight Indian states as well as three federal agencies – the Intelligence Bureau (IB), Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) and National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO) – are busy sifting through evidence for clues to the

group or groups involved in the terror attacks in Ahmedabad (the capital of Gujarat state) and Bengaluru (or Bangalore, the capital city of Karnataka state) in the last week of July.

The half dozen low-intensity blasts in Bengaluru on July 25, followed the next day by 16 blasts in Ahmedabad and the discovery of 22 live bombs with integrated circuits from the “Diamond City” of Surat, clearly show the involvement of a large network of local people (possibly including women and children) aiding the coalition of terror networks that has carried out attacks in different places in India over the past three years (Times of India, August 2). Indian intelligence officials have described for the author the existence of a wide network of supporters, including women, who are assisting the terror groups – one such group even maintains a women’s wing called Shaheen Force (Rediff.com, April 24).

What has surprised the intelligence and police agencies is the audacity of the group in launching serial blasts in high-profile areas like Ahmedabad and Bengaluru, which have been under police watch for quite sometime. The bombings were a challenge to security agencies that already had information as early as last March about the possibility of former Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) activists carrying out serial bombings (Times of India, March 19).

Two other elements of the attacks which have forced the investigating agencies to rework their strategy are the 14-page “Indian Mujahideen (IM)” manifesto, which was emailed to newspapers and television channels minutes before the Ahmedabad blasts, and the possible signature of the Indonesian al-Qaeda ally Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) in the manufacture of the Surat bombs (The Hindu, July 27; The Times of India, July 31).

...The multi-agency probe is focusing on sifting through a massive collection of interrogation reports and intelligence inputs on former SIMI workers and leaders. Some teams are already revisiting SIMI leaders and their associates lodged in various jails. Known sympathizers and friends of former SIMI leaders and workers have been rounded up for questioning – over 280 in Surat in the first five days after the discovery of the bombs (The Hindu, July 31). A record of stolen vehicles in Gujarat and Maharashtra was hastily collated as four cars used in the bombings —two in Ahmedabad and two in Surat – were among the 11 stolen recently from Navi Mumbai, a suburb of Mumbai in Maharashtra state (Daily News and Analysis, August 4).

...Unraveling the identity of the group or group members of the recent wave of terror attacks has left investigators equally stymied. Although the “Indian Mujahideen” has surfaced twice before the Ahmedabad serial blasts, the security agencies have no clue about its leadership or command structure. IM previously claimed responsibility for the 2007 Uttar Pradesh serial bombings and the May 2008 blasts in Jaipur. Before the latest bombings, the group was dismissed as a prank. The 14-page manifesto (written in English), the photograph of one of the motorcycles used in the Jaipur bombing pasted on the manifesto cover and the specific nature of the threats within have forced the agencies to review their assessment. **It is now believed that IM could be a front used by former SIMI activists working in tandem with terrorist groups like Lashkar-e-Tayyeba (LeT) and HuJI** (John, W. 2008, ‘India’s Security Agencies Struggle with Probe into Serial Bombings in Gujarat and Karnataka’, *Terrorism Focus*, 5 August, vol.5: no.29 <http://www.jamestown.org/terrorism/news/article.php?articleid=2374356> – Accessed 22 October 2008 – Attachment 78).

SIMI and Kerala

An *India Today* article of 2 October 2008 reports that Kerala is one of several Indian states which have been host to SIMI training camps: “For more than a year, members of the radical SIMI group were trained in batches of 12 in six camps that were held across Kerala,

Karnataka and Gujarat. The recruits came from across the country-there were web designers from Kerala and doctors and engineers from Mangalore”. The information was sourced from an intelligence review released by the New York police (Unnithan, S. 2008, ‘Homemade and deadly’, *India Today*, 2 October

http://indiatoday.digitaltoday.in/index.php?option=com_content&issueid=73&task=view&id=16681&acc=high – Accessed 22 October 2008 – Attachment 79).

On 12 October 2008 *Outlook India* also noted the claims of the New York police intelligence assessment with regard to Kerala in the context of reporting on claims from the Indian armed forces that Muslims from Kerala were being captured and killed in Kashmir after being recruited to fight in the restive region by militant Islamist groups like Lashker-e-Taiba. The report notes ongoing investigations and arrests being pursued by Indian security forces in Kerala in response to both the SIMI and Lashker-e-Taiba networks. Extracts follow:

Jammu and Kashmir Police and Central security agencies have launched a probe to unravel the designs of Pakistan-based Lashker-e-Taiba of recruiting people from various parts of the country especially Kerala as police and army shot dead another two militants hailing from Kerala in Lolab valley of North Kashmir.

Sources in the state Home Department said that three more militants including two hailing from Malappuram district in Northern Kerala, where the Calicut airport is located, were killed.

Now both the state police and their counterparts in Kerala were working to ascertain their actual identity as the documents recovered from them about their identity could be misleading.

...According to the sources, there was an intelligence report to suggest that Lashker commander Abdullah had been on a recruitment spree under instructions from Pakistan’s ISI and Kerala’s Malappuram district was chosen as one of the targets in South India.

...The sources said the group was still scattered over the area and a hunt was on to nab others with maximum efforts to nab them alive to ascertain the exact ramifications of Lashker’s network in Kerala.

...The encounter comes close on the heels of intelligence reports suggesting that the banned **SIMI had begun preparing itself for “participation” in the Indian Mujahideen offensive in December 2007 when nearly 40 of its members participated in a militant training camp held near Aluva, Kerala.**

Earlier in February this year, Mohammed Yahya Kammukutty, 31, hailing from Mukkom in Kozhikode district of Kerala, was arrested as part of a continuing probe into a SIMI network in Karnataka that has already lead to the arrest of six youths from northern Karnataka, including four medical students (Srinagar, S.K. 2008, ‘Two more Keralites hired by Lashker killed in Kashmir’, *Outlook India*, 12 October

http://www.outlookindia.com/pti_news.asp?id=619081 – Accessed 22 October 2008 – Attachment 80).

On 10 October 2008 *The Times of India* reported on links between recent bomb attacks, SIMI, Indian Mujahideen and Kerala as follows:

MUMBAI: Investigations into the Indian Mujahideen (IM) terror module recently busted by the Mumbai police have revealed a Kerala connection. The police are now gathering details about the operatives being active in two districts of northern Kerala.

Sources said one of the districts is next to Mangalore, while the second, though has a significant Muslim population, was never on the terror map. The IM module has been active in Mangalore and the recent arrest of four members from the coastal belt adds credence to it. Two of the key persons in the IM module--Riyaz Bhatkal and his civil engineer brother Iqbal--belong to Mangalore, though they managed to escape the police dragnet.

Joint commissioner of police (crime) Rakesh Maria was tightlipped when asked about the Kerala connection. Maria, at a press conference on Monday, had said that explosives for the recent bomb blasts across the country came from Mangalore and another place in South India. "Investigations are on but we cannot disclose more details at this stage," he said.

Some of the districts in Kerala were known to be hotbeds of the banned Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI). Senior SIMI leaders arrested in Indore by the Madhya Pradesh police last March were reported to have experimented with peroxide-based liquid explosives during a training camp in Kerala last year. This explosive is mainly used by pro Al-Qaeda jihadi organisations abroad. One of the arrested, Shibly Abdul Padikkal belonged to Kerala.

The role of Kerala-born C A M Basheer, president of SIMI in the 1980s had cropped up in the Mumbai police investigations into the August 2003 twin blasts. An aeronautical engineer, Basheer is believed to be holed up in Dubai.

Two senior police officers from Kerala told TOI that SIMI is active in several northern districts. "We are aware of their activities, but they get support from some political parties," one of the officials said ('Cops find Kerala connection in terror attacks' 2008, *Times of India*, 10 October

http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/Cities/Mumbai/Cops_find_Kerala_connection_in_terror_attacks/rssarticleshow/3577891.cms – Accessed 22 October 2008 – Attachment 81).

On 8 October 2008 *The Hindu* reported on the arrest of two suspected SIMI activists by Kerala police. Another suspect was reportedly arrested on 15 October 2008 ('Kerala police arrest 2 for "SIMI links"' 2008, *The Hindu*, 8 October

<http://www.hindu.com/2008/10/08/stories/2008100860401300.htm> – Accessed 22 October

2008 – Attachment 82; 'SIMI meeting: suspect arrested' 2008, *The Hindu*, 15 October

<http://www.hindu.com/2008/10/15/stories/2008101559410400.htm> – Accessed 22 October 2008 – Attachment 83).

Several reports of this kind have appeared in recent times, with claims of a suspected SIMI presence in Kerala and reports of police campaigns intended to stamp out the presence of any SIMI activities in Kerala state:

- 28 August 2008: "Kerala Home Minister Kodayeri Balakrishnan has said that the police will not allow any organisation or group to hold martial combat or physical training camps"; and: "The government was identifying organisations having links with the banned Students Islamic Movement of India in Kerala" ('Ban on physical training camps' 2008, *The Hindu*, 28 August
<http://www.hindu.com/2008/08/28/stories/2008082855440700.htm> – Accessed 22 October 2008 – Attachment 85).
- 28 August 2008: "remark by Gujarat DGP that SIMI activists had found a safe haven in the jungles of Kerala to carry out their training"; "The police intelligence wing is now probing the links of SIMI in the state as well the activities of Left extremist organisations" ('Kodayeri finds political angle in Gujarat DGP's remarks' 2008, *Express Buzz*, 28 August

<http://expressbuzz.com/edition/story.aspx?artid=E4Lfwr0AE1I=&Title=Kodiyeri+fin ds+political+angle+in+Gujarat+DGP%E2%80%99s+remarks&SectionID=1Mx/b5mt1 kU=&MainSectionID=wIcBMLGbUJI=&SectionName=tm2kh5uDhixGIQvAG42A/ 07OVZOOEmts&SEO=> – Accessed 22 October 2008 – Attachment 84).

- 15 August 2006 it was reported from Kerala that “In a major crackdown, Kerala Police today arrested 18 suspected activists of the banned Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) in Binamipuram in this district” (‘18 suspected SIMI activists arrested in Kochi’ 2006, *oneindia.com*, 15 August <http://news.oneindia.in/2006/08/15/18-suspected-simi-activists-arrested-in-kochi-1155657799.html> – Accessed 22 October 2008 – Attachment 86).

The following may also be of interest:

- An article in *Jane’s Islamic Affairs Analyst* from December 2007 claims there has been a “visible Islamisation of social life” in Kerala which has “brought often fierce reactions from non-Muslim members of local societies”. These have in turn “elicited more radical responses from Muslim groups themselves”, including increasing support for Islamic militant organisations such as the National Development Front (NDF) and the banned Students’ Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) (‘India’s evolving Muslim community’ 2007, *Jane’s Islamic Affairs Analyst*, 1 December – Attachment 87).
- A 22 August 2006 report from the Institute of Defence Studies & Analyses titled ‘Is Kerala Emerging as India’s New Terror Hub?’ mentions the National Development Fund (NDF), a Muslim organisation, as a source of potential communal violence, claiming that they “have allegedly masterminded communal violence in recent years” and that “the Kerala Police believes that this outfit, which masquerades as a human rights movement, is another re-incarnation of the ISS” (Kumar, A. 2006, ‘Is Kerala Emerging as India’s New Terror Hub?’, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses website, 22 August <http://www.idsa.in/publications/stratcomments/VinodKumar220806.htm> – Accessed 24 April 2008 – Attachment 88).

For previous research on the influence of Muslim groups in Kerala, see the information supplied in *Research Response IND33237* of 6 May 2008 (RRT Research & Information 2008, *Research Response IND33237*, 6 May – Attachment 64).

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