**Hindu extremists held over deadly bombings**

• Blasts during Ramadan killed six Muslims   
• Police link three arrested to opposition youth wing

Three people said to be Hindu activists were arrested yesterday in connection with bombings that killed six Muslims during Ramadan last month in the west of the country.

Police in Maharashtra state investigating the two attacks on September 29 said the three were part of a group of extremist Hindus with links to the youth wing of the nationalist Bharatiya Janata party, India's main opposition party.

Five people died in one of the explosions, in a crowded market near a mosque in Malegaon, 175 miles north-east of Mumbai, while a teenager lost his life in Modasa, in neighbouring Gujarat, when a bomb exploded in a predominantly Muslim area.

Both came after a wave of deadly bombings apparently directed at middle-class Hindus in Indian cities and claimed by Islamists.

The government had considered banning some extremist Hindu groups for inciting violence but backed off after groups of men armed with guns took to the streets of big cities in protest.

"These blasts do not fit into the pattern of Muslim terror groups. And in most cases we have credible evidence to link it to Hindu groups. But the question is, how pro-actively are we willing to investigate?" one unnamed officer told local media.

The news comes after an upsurge in violence that has seen Hindu mobs rampage through Christian villages in the eastern Indian state of Orissa, leaving more than 40 people dead.

More than 20,000 Christians in the district of Kandhamal fled their homes for state-run camps.

Christians who have lost their homes have been told they can return only if they convert to [Hinduism](http://www.theguardian.com/world/hinduism).

At a press conference in the Indian capital yesterday a nun said she had been raped and paraded naked in Orissa by a rampaging mob of Hindus in August.

"The police failed to protect me. They were friendly with the attackers and tried to prevent me from filing [a charge]). They abandoned me," said the nun, who was swaddled in scarves to remain anonymous.

She called for the central government's investigating arm to launch an inquiry into the attacks, defying an order from the country's top judges to cooperate with local police.

"I have no faith in the [state] government or the police," she said.

The anti-Christian violence this summer spread across four states, including Karnataka, the capital of which is Bangalore, India's information technology capital.

This month Nicolas Sarkozy, the French president and current European Union president, said he had serious concerns over the "massacres of Christians".

Kancha Ilaiah, professor of political science at Hyderabad's Osmania University, said the violence was part of a disturbing trend.

"The Hindu fundamentalists have a long history of trying to play politics with religion in India," he said. "They claim Muslims are terrorists but the Hindu groups openly distribute weapons in [India](http://www.theguardian.com/world/india)."