

H.E Ms Gaitri Issar Kumar
High Commissioner
Indian High Commission
London
WC2B 4NA

10th December 2020

Your Excellency,

We are writing to you to raise our concern about Fr Stan Swamy SJ, an Indian citizen and Jesuit priest. Fr Stan is 83 years old, a sufferer of Parkinson's disease and in poor health. We have been alarmed to hear of his imprisonment by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) for Maoist links on 8 October. Prior to this, he was the subject of relentless harassment between July and August and was interrogated multiple times for over 15 hours by the NIA.

Fr Stan has worked for over three decades, committedly and relentlessly for the Adivasis in India. The work he has been engaged in, has always been within the framework of the Indian Constitution and he strongly opposes false allegations relating him to Maoist groups.

We write to you on World Human Rights Day 2020 because we understand Fr Stan's imprisonment to be a violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Michelle Bachelet condemned and recognised Fr Stan's arrest on 20th October 2020, stating, "Most recently, the 83-year-old Catholic priest Stan Swamy, a long-standing activist engaged in defending the rights of marginalised groups, was charged and reportedly remains in detention, despite his poor health."

Just two days before his arrest Fr Stan said:

"What is happening to me is not unique. Many activists, lawyers, writers, journalists, student leaders, poets, intellectuals, and others who stand for the rights of Adivasis, Dalits, and the marginalised and express their dissent to the ruling powers of the country are being targeted and put into jail."

As respecters of human rights and proud members of the Jesuit family we wish to register with our strongest concern about Fr Stan's treatment. It is a matter of regret that so great a civilisation as India – with its proud secular tradition - should treat him so shamefully.

I would ask you to do what you can to safeguard Fr Swamy's well-being and to obtain his release from imprisonment immediately.

With regards,

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