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National Human Rights Commission

Minutes of the Meeting of Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors





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The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India organised a meeting of its Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors on 22 January, 2026 at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi. The meeting was chaired by Hon'ble Chairperson, NHRC Justice Shri V. Ramasubramanian. Hon'ble Member, Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani, Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal, Director General (Inv.), Smt Anupama Nilekar Chandra, Registrar (Law), Shri Joginder Singh, Joint Secretaries Shri Samir Kumar and Smt Saisingpuii Chhakchhuak and other senior officers were present in the meeting. 27 Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors participated in the meeting, which included eminent persons from diverse areas of expertise, including former civil servants, former law enforcement officers, representatives of civil society, academia, diverse gender identities and the differently-abled community, among others.



Session - I (Introductory Session): Concept of Special Monitors and Special Rapporteurs

2. **Shri Bharat Lal, Secretary General, NHRC**, in his opening remarks, spoke about the concept of Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors and their role in protection and promotion of human rights especially most vulnerable people. Outlining the role of Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors as 'eyes and ears' of the Commission, he stressed the role of NHRC as well as theirs is that of 'conscience

keepers' by identifying wrongdoing or inaction, and nudging authorities to take remedial action as well as preventing recurrence of such incidences. He emphasized that cases of human rights violations occur often, and Special Rapporteurs will work extensively in their allotted states/ UTs to monitor and initiate necessary action to address such issues. Special Monitors to work on their allotted subjects and prepare reports/ action plan by identifying gaps in policy, programmes, implementation and suggest remedial institutional action. He requested the newly appointed Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors to plan collaborative work for the next six months, focusing on key human rights issues and field visits. He said that their visit inputs will help the NHRC issue advisories and make policy recommendations to the government. He also highlighted the importance of advisories, suo motu cognizance and data-driven interventions, including the NHRC advisory on beggary and reviews of the Transgender Act and Mental Health Act, in driving policy reform and public awareness.



- Shri Samir Kumar, Joint Secretary, NHRC** gave a detailed presentation on the Commission's human rights framework, organisational structure, and functioning, complaint management system, advisories, core groups, guidelines and functioning of the Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors, among others. He highlighted NHRC's coordination with State Human Rights Commissions under the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993. The presentation underscored NHRC's full compliance with the Paris Principles and engagement with national, regional and UN mechanisms. It highlighted NHRC's robust



interventions on key human rights issues, issuance of binding advisories, and ongoing monitoring, outreach, research, and capacity-building efforts aimed at strengthening human rights protection and addressing emerging challenges. The presentation provided detailed guidelines relating to tour programmes of the Special Monitors and Special Rapporteurs, information about logistics for their visits, honorarium and the sample format for the visit reports.

Session - II: Finalisation of the Work Plan

4. The second session of the meeting was on the topic “Finalisation of the Work Plan”. The session commenced with the opening remarks of the Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal, who emphasised that State institutions are also mandated to protect and promote human rights. He noted that the effective realisation of human rights requires constructive engagement and cooperation with government institutions, rather than adversarial approaches. He accordingly urged all stakeholders to work collaboratively and requested the Special Monitors and Special Rapporteurs to submit their proposed plans of action for the next two quarters.



5. **Hon'ble Chairperson, NHRC, Justice Shri V. Ramasubramanian**, thereafter addressed the gathering and conveyed his appreciation and congratulations to the Special Monitors and Special Rapporteurs. He commended them for placing societal interest above personal interest, observing that such commitment is rare.

He further noted that their selection had been carried out through a transparent process, wherein both their areas of interest and professional expertise were duly taken into consideration. He reaffirmed the Commission's commitment to integrity, transparency and public service in its institutional processes. The Chairperson urged Special Monitors and Special Rapporteurs to work as the Commission's foot soldiers and focus on small incremental improvements, noting that even aiding a single household fulfill the purpose of their engagements.



- Smt Vijaya Bharathi Sayani, Hon'ble Member, NHRC**, welcomed all participants to the NHRC family and congratulated them on their appointment, emphasising that human rights are lived realities and not merely legal provisions in statutes or reports. She highlighted that custodial and institutional settings such as prisons, juvenile homes and shelter homes require special attention due to higher risks of rights violations. She underlined the ethical responsibility of Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors as the eyes and ears of the Commission at the grassroots, tasked with giving voice to the unheard and building safety and trust. Referring to field-level observations, she noted persistent concerns including overcrowding, medical negligence, lack of gender and child sensitivity, delays in grievance redressal and weak follow-up mechanisms. She stressed that monitoring reports must lead to accountability, corrective action and institutional reform, with effective safeguards against retaliation and timely escalation of cases. Concluding, she reiterated that human rights protection must move from files to lives, translating the NHRC's mandate into real relief, dignity and meaningful change on the ground.



7. **Shri Akhil Kumar Shukla, Special Rapporteur (Zone I)**, introduced himself and outlined his proposed areas of focus. He highlighted the need to examine healthcare institutions, particularly mental health facilities, with a view to assessing



their accessibility to the general public. He also emphasised the importance of reviewing the implementation of de-addiction programmes and expressed his intention to engage with issues related to education.

8. **Shri Ashit Mohan Prasad, Special Rapporteur (Zone XIII)**, shared his experience and highlighted key human rights concerns in Karnataka, noting that the State has often been at the forefront of addressing such issues. He referred to the incident of a matrimonial dispute and the problem of safe drinking water contamination. He also emphasised the importance of regular visits to custodial and institutional settings, especially mental health institutions, to bring persistent issues to light.

9. **Shri Devendra Kumar Nim, Special Rapporteur (Zone XII)**, stated that he intends to focus on all relevant human rights issues within his assigned zone and ensure that complaints relating to human rights violations are effectively identified, reported, and addressed.

10. Shri K. Padma Kumar, Special Rapporteur (Zone XI),

introduced himself and mentioned that he has been assigned Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and Lakshadweep. He stated that during his visits, his focus would be on broad human rights indicators and sought general guidance on the approach and expectations for his role.



11. Shri Mohammad Jamshed, Special Rapporteur (Zone IV), shared his experience in the policy sector and expressed his willingness to work closely with the Commission on a range of issues. He conveyed his appreciation for the opportunity to contribute to the work of the NHRC.

12. Shri Nityanand Srivastava, Special Rapporteur (Zone V), shared his experience of working on social justice-related schemes concerning women and children, ensuring effective implementation and real impact. He noted that Rajasthan faces challenges similar to those in Gujarat and expressed his keenness to use this opportunity to work in the field, understand issues firsthand, and contribute meaningfully so that his experience of service is put to constructive use.



13. Shri Praveen Sinha, Special Rapporteur (Zone IX), thanked the NHRC for convening the meeting and emphasised the need to bring a human touch to institutions such as shelter homes. He observed that although several welfare schemes exist for the benefit of the common citizen, many intended beneficiaries are unable to access their rightful entitlements. In this regard, he suggested that the NHRC could serve as an effective bridge between the State and the people. He also stressed the importance of strengthening and expanding the network of human rights defenders.

14. **Smt Sadhana Rout, Special Rapporteur (Zone VI)**, shared her extensive experience and stated that she would begin by closely engaging with the NHRC to identify priority areas for focused intervention, with particular interest in tribal rights in Gujarat, including implementation of the Forest Rights Act, SC/ST, livelihood issues and public service delivery. She also highlighted her continued work on gender-based violence, health and education, while seeking guidance on examining emerging human rights challenges such as the impact of artificial intelligence, as well as the rights and dignity of gig and platform workers. She further supported advance planning and coordination of tours and emphasised collaborative work with the other special rapporteurs and monitors.



15. **Shri Sayeed Ahmed Baba, Special Rapporteur (Zone XV)**, drew attention to the persistent challenges related to connectivity in the North-Eastern region of the country. He stated that his work would focus on the mainstreaming of the North-East, alongside efforts to improve health infrastructure in the region.

16. **Shri Subhash Chandra, Special Rapporteur (Zone VII)**, expressed his keen interest in working in tribal, mining-affected and forest-dependent areas where environmental degradation has a direct bearing on human rights and the dignity of affected communities. He emphasised the need to sensitise local authorities and institutions



on human rights concerns in such regions. He further stated that he would endeavour to work in close coordination with State authorities while carrying forward the guidance of the NHRC to strengthen the implementation of human rights at the grassroots level.

17. **Shri Upendra Baghel, Special Rapporteur (Zone III)**, stated that his primary focus areas would include prisons and other places of detention, including observation homes and mental health institutions. He further emphasized the need to promote dignity in policing practices.
18. **Dr Vijay Kumar, Special Monitor (Livelihood, Skilling and Employment)**, stated that his focus would be on assessing the effectiveness of livelihood, skilling and employment schemes at the ground level, including equity in beneficiary selection, outcomes of skill training, placement effectiveness, and timely payments. He expressed his commitment to undertaking this work in a sincere and humanitarian manner and thanked the Commission for the opportunity to contribute to human rights protection.
19. **Shri Dhananjay Tingal, Special Monitor (Bonded Labour and Child Labour)** highlighted that the lack of proper, timely, and comprehensive rescue and rehabilitation of bonded labourers, leading to significant gaps between official targets and actual results. He pointed out that in many states, rehabilitation practices are either inadequate or entirely absent which increases the likelihood of individuals falling back into the system.



20. **Dr. Purva Mittal, Special Monitor, Women and Disability (Subject covered - Sexual Violence & Rape, Domestic Violence and Sexual Harassment at workplace)**, shared her experiences and contributions in the field of human rights. She highlighted her significant efforts in making essential drugs more affordable and addressing incidents of sexual assault occurring in villages. Dr. Mittal emphasized that closer coordination and collaborative functioning between Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors would enhance the effectiveness of human rights protection and monitoring efforts.



21. **Dr. Poonam Malakondaiah, Special Monitor (Elementary Education and Literacy)**, highlighted her extensive work in promoting women's literacy and in designing and implementing farmer field schools. She observed that while significant progress has been made, certain initiatives remain unfinished, which she intends to carry forward with the guidance and support of the NHRC. Dr. Malakondaiah underscored the pressing challenges in ensuring access to quality education and strengthening healthcare services. She noted that Anganwadi Centres present considerable potential for meaningful intervention and emphasized the need to foster stronger linkages between primary and secondary schools. She further shared her experience in undertaking capacity-building programmes for teachers and stressed the importance of sustaining and strengthening such initiatives.
22. **Shri V. B. Kumar, Special Monitor (Environment, Climate Change and Human Rights)**, outlined four priority areas for his engagement, namely pollution, including river, air, and soil pollution; land degradation and desertification; the

human rights implications of extreme climatic events such as droughts and floods; and the protection, monitoring, and sustainable utilisation of natural capital.

23. **Shri R. K. Srinivasan, Special Monitor (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene)**, indicated that collaboration with Bureau of Indian Standards could contribute to strengthening standards, safety and implementation frameworks in the concerned areas.
24. **Shri R Hemanth Kumar, Special Monitor, Tribal Welfare (Subject covered - All matters relating to welfare of Tribal and Forest dwellers)**, highlighted that his work focuses on the challenges faced by forest-dwelling communities, noting that these communities were denied basic facilities, including voting rights and essential public services such as schools and hospitals. He stressed the urgent need to bridge the gap between progressive legislation and its implementation on the ground, with priority given to effective management of community forest reserves and the equitable distribution of resources among forest-dwelling populations.



25. **Prof. Kanhaiya Tripathi, Special Monitor, Human Rights Advocacy(HR Education and Gender Equality)**, emphasised the importance of integrating human rights values more effectively within educational institutions and curricula. He underlined the need to advance gender equality, noting that educational spaces play a crucial role in shaping attitudes, awareness, and inclusive practices.

26. **Dr. Pradeepta Kumar Nayak, Special Monitor (Public Health, Healthcare and Hospital-- Mental Health, HIV/ AIDs, Spurious drugs, Diagnostics and Labs)** outlined that his areas of focus would be on the intersection of leprosy and mental health, highlighting the psychological and social dimensions associated with the condition.

27. **Dr. Muktesh Chander, Special Monitor (Cybercrime and Artificial Intelligence)** underscored the extensive and serious effects of cybercrime, including its links to human trafficking and the circulation of child sexual content. He identified the lack of information sharing between states as a major concern and emphasized the need for stronger authority and intervention by the commission to promote proper reporting and ensure accountability.



28. **Shri Hari Nath Mishra, Special Monitor (Terrorism, counterinsurgency, LWE, communal riots)** stated that radicalization has emerged as a major concern and needs to be effectively addressed within this subject. He emphasized that the spread of extremist ideologies, particularly through online platforms, plays a significant role in fuelling terrorism and must be closely monitored. He highlighted the importance of coordinated efforts among agencies to prevent terrorism through early intervention, information sharing, and community-based counter-radicalization measures.

29. **Gopi Shankar Madurai, Special Monitor (Transgender, LGBT Rights)**, highlighted his extensive experience of working with United Nations bodies and international organizations on diverse human rights issues. He drew attention to the continued invisibility of intersex persons, noting that nearly 20 million individuals remain unrepresented in census data, with significant implications for policy and governance. He emphasized the need to promote public understanding of the distinction between sex and gender and expressed his commitment to advancing this work. He also underscored the importance of strengthening focus on the rights of persons with disabilities through inclusive, culturally grounded approaches, and called for enhanced coordination between Special Rapporteurs and Special Monitors to ensure more effective and collaborative human rights interventions.

30. Shri D. S. Dhapola, Special Monitor (Matters relating to the implementation of Advisory in relation to the mechanisation of sewer and septic tanks, cleaning, matter relating to beggars, matter relating to silicosis and other matters as assigned specifically, time to time), highlighted issues related to sewer cleaning, septic tanks, and begging, noting that current implementation efforts are often inadequate. He stressed the importance of preventive management and design-based solutions. Referring to vacuum systems used in aircraft toilets, he suggested similar technology could be adapted for safer and more efficient sewer management.



31. Shri Ajay Bhatnagar, Special Monitor (Criminal Justice System and Police and Police Reforms), drew on his extensive experience in policing at UN Headquarters, field operations, and state-level police reforms to highlight key challenges within the criminal justice system. He emphasized the need to address deficits in professionalism



through attitudinal and behavioural change and underscored the importance of proper case registration in rural areas, prompt police response, and equal treatment of both the powerless and the powerful. He also stressed the value of coordination and collaboration between Special Monitors and Rapporteurs, offering his expertise to support intersectional related work, particularly in contexts such as prison visits by Special Rapporteurs. His intervention reflected a strong commitment to professionalizing policing, strengthening accountability, and ensuring justice for marginalized communities.

32. Shri Balkrishan Goel, Special Monitor (Child Rights and Elderly Citizens) stated that his primary focus would be on sensitizing the elderly about the citizen helpline number, observing that many states still do not have such helplines in place. He observed that several senior citizen tribunals are functioning without members and that old age homes are in a poor condition. He further remarked that observation homes are increasingly becoming breeding grounds for criminal activity. He also emphasized the importance of counseling for Children in Conflict with Law (CICL), noting that despite significant government investment and national initiatives outcomes remain uneven. He also highlighted the persistently high malnutrition levels in several states, particularly in central and eastern India.

33. Shri Uma Kant, Special Monitor (Panchayati Raj and Local Self Government), shared his administrative and forestry experience across several States and his experience in watershed management. He highlighted that with the majority of the population residing in rural areas, there remains substantial scope for rights-based engagement with local communities. He also drew attention to increasing rural-to-urban migration driven by limited livelihood opportunities in villages, which requires attention. He also emphasised building upon the Commission's earlier work in Panchayati Raj Institutions and local self-governance while identifying new areas for future action.

34. In his closing remarks, the Hon'ble Chairperson, NHRC, Shri Justice V. Ramasubramanian, observed that while Special Monitors and Special Rapporteurs serve as the eyes and ears of the Commission, they should also strive to become its heart and soul by remaining deeply



responsive to the concerns of the common citizen. He reflected on the narrative of India's economic growth and urged consideration of whether such growth has been equitably distributed across all sections of society. He noted that despite the existence of over 1,60,000 welfare schemes in the country, awareness and effective outreach remain limited.

35. He reiterated the Commission's intention to make meaningful use of the collective wisdom and experience of the Special Monitors and Special Rapporteurs. Quoting the adage, 'The hands that serve are holier than the lips that pray,' he emphasized the service-oriented ethos of the Commission. He clarified that the NHRC does not



seek to challenge the government or existing systems but aims to facilitate incremental improvements through constructive engagement with government institutions. He informed the participants that their suggestions had been duly noted and that the Commission would evolve a structured policy framework to enable Special Monitors and Special Rapporteurs to work in coordination with one another. He further announced that similar interaction meetings would be held every three months to encourage dialogue, shared learning, and mutual exchange of experiences. The session concluded with his call to action to light lamps in as many homes as possible.

- 36. Smt. Saidingpuii Chhakchuak, Joint Secretary, NHRC,** presented the Vote of Thanks and expressed her gratitude to the Hon'ble Chairperson, Members, Director General, Registrar, Joint Secretary and other officials of the NHRC present in the meeting. She further thanked the Special Monitors and Special Rapporteurs for their active participation, acknowledging the presence of such eminent people with diverse areas of expertise.



List of participants

National Human Rights Commission

1. Justice Shri V Ramasubramanian, Hon'ble Chairperson
2. Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani, Hon'ble Member
3. Shri Bharat Lal, Secretary General
4. Smt Anupama Nilekar Chandra, Director General (Investigation)
5. Shri Joginder Singh, Registrar (Law)
6. Shri Samir Kumar, Joint Secretary
7. Smt Sainingpuii Chhakchhuak, Joint Secretary
8. Shri Bipin Bihari Gautam, Presenting Officer
9. Shri Vinod Kumar Tiwari, Presenting Officer
10. Smt. Neeru Kamboj, Presenting Officer
11. Shri Anjane Anuj, Presenting Officer
12. Shri Gaurav Garg, DIG
13. Shri Virender Singh, Director
14. Shri Vikram Harimohan Meena, SSP
15. Shri Yuvraj, SSP
16. Shri Hari Lal Chouhan, SSP
17. Shri Mukesh, Deputy Registrar
18. Shri Indrajeet Kumar, Deputy Registrar
19. Shri Sparsh Agarwal, Deputy Registrar
20. Shri Sanjay Kumar, Deputy Secretary

The list of newly appointed Special Rapporteurs who attended the meeting

1. Shri Akhil Kumar Shukla
2. Shri Upendra Baghel
3. Shri Mohammad Jamshed
4. Shri Nityanand Srivastava
5. Ms. Sadhna Rout
6. Shri Subhash Chandra
7. Shri Praveen Sinha
8. Shri K. Padma Kumar
9. Shri Devendra Kumar Nim
10. Shri Ashit Mohan Prasad
11. Shri Sayeed Ahmed Baba

The list of newly appointed Special Monitors who attended the meeting:

1. Prof. Kanhaiya Tripathi
2. Shri Ajay Bhatnagar
3. Shri Dhananjay Tingal
4. Shri R. Hemanth Kumar
5. Shri D. S. Dhapola
6. Dr. Purva Mittal
7. Shri Balkrishan Goel
8. Gopi Shankar Madurai
9. Shri Uma Kant
10. Shri V. B. Kumar
11. Dr. Poonam Malakondaiah
12. Shri Hari Nath Mishra
13. Dr. Pradeepta Kumar Nayak
14. Dr. Muktesh Chander
15. Dr. Vijay Kumar
16. Shri R. K. Srinivasan

समानी प्रपा सह वोननभागः।
समाने योक्ते सह वो युनज्मि।
अराः नाभिमिवाभितः॥

- अथर्ववेद-संज्ञान सूक्तम्

“All human beings are born free, their dignity and rights are equal, they have been given intelligence and conscience by God and they should behave with each other in a brotherly manner. Just as the strings of the wheels of a chariot connect the wheel to the axle, in the same way all should help each other harmoniously.”



National Human Rights Commission

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