

Need a national law to protect human rights of refugees and asylum-seekers: NHRC

<https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/need-national-law-protect-human-rights-refugees-asylum-seekers-nhrc-1902553-2022-01-21>

On Thursday, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) called for a national law to end adhoc-ism and ambiguity in dealing with refugees and asylum seekers in India.

During an online open discussion, it was unanimously decided that a national law that includes all the best practices implemented so far is needed to ensure uniformity and legal sanctity in protection of human rights of refugees and asylum seekers across the country.

The panel agreed that although India has a good track record in dealing with international refugees and asylum-seekers, the nation must help them seek benefits of welfare measures put in place by the government even as it takes care of national security.

Addressing the open forum, NHRC chairperson Justice Arun Kumar said, "Article 14, 20 and 21 of the Constitution extend rights to all persons, including refugees and asylum-seekers. But their permit to stay in the country cannot be extended forever without them acquiring citizenship, as also observed by the Supreme Court."

Justice Kumar said that the legislature needs to be impressed upon and told to enact a national law for refugees and asylum-seekers so that adhoc-ism, confusion and unnecessary litigation can be avoided.

Kavita Belani, Deputy Chief Mission at UNHCR, said that refugees by definition are victims of human rights violations. She lauded India's support for refugees and displaced people with its home-grown solutions in line with global commitments. She described these as very inclusive and forward-looking.

However, she said that these needed to be formalised in a structured policy to form a national response. This will make it easy for all refugees and asylum-seekers to get access to their rights, she added.

Concluding the discussion, Justice Kumar said that all the suggestions would be further deliberated by the commission and then sent to the government as recommendations for implementation.

India Should Stop Using Abusive Foreign Funding Law: Human Rights Watch

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2022/jan/20/india-should-stop-using-abusive-foreign-funding-law-human-rights-watch-2409180.html>

As many as ten human rights groups have asked the Centre to stop using the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) and other abusive laws to silence civil society in India. The rights groups also urged the BJP government to immediately stop harassing the Centre for Promotion of Social Concerns (CPSC) and its program unit People's Watch.

The rights groups include Amnesty International, International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), Front Line Defenders and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) in the framework of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders.

A statement issued by Human Rights Watch (HRW) in this regard noted the raid conducted by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) at the office of CPSC in Madurai on January 8, 2022. The CBI officers informed the CPSC that they were investigating allegations of fraud and financial irregularities under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA), a law that regulates foreign funding for Indian nongovernmental organizations.

The rights groups recalled that in 2016, the Ministry of Home Affairs rejected CPSC's application for renewal under the FCRA. When the organisation challenged the government's decision in the Delhi High Court, the Home Affairs Ministry told the court that the group used foreign funding to share information with United Nations special rapporteurs and foreign embassies, "portraying India's human rights record in negative light...to the detriment of India's image." The government characterized this as "undesirable activities detrimental to national interest."

The government's response in court is evidence that it is violating India's international obligations by targeting a group for promoting respect for international human rights instruments and cooperating with UN human rights mechanisms. The government also alleged financial irregularities even though the Delhi High Court had previously cleared the group of those charges in 2014 after the organization challenged similar suspensions in 2012 and 2013. The case is still pending, the statement noted.

"The government appears to have routinely disregarded court rulings in favor of civil society organizations and their constitutional rights to freedom of expression and association. The courts have repeatedly reminded the government that in a democracy, peaceful dissent is protected and may not be muzzled," the statement said.

"This crackdown is part of the wider repression of civil society in India, including through the use of draconian laws such as sedition and terrorism. Over the years, a number of

United Nations bodies have expressed concerns over the use of the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act to silence dissenting voices," the organisations held.

Yet, in 2020, the Indian parliament passed amendments to the law, adding intrusive governmental oversight, additional regulations and certification processes, and operational requirements, which have further adversely affected civil society groups' access to foreign funding and their ability to carry out human rights work.

The rights organisations demanded India's National Human Rights Commission to promptly investigate the government's refusal to renew the registration of the CPSC under the law and take all appropriate and necessary actions to protect human rights defenders and organizations, including their right to freedom of association and access to funding.

"The government should also amend the FCRA to bring it in line with international law and human rights standards and stop using it to target defenders and others exercising their basic human rights. It should further ensure that all human rights defenders and organizations are able to carry out their activities without any hindrance or fear of reprisals," it said.

अराजक तत्वों के खिलाफ हो सख्त कार्रवाई

<https://www.amarujala.com/jammu/demand-jammu-city-news-jmu2522627113>

जेके ज्वाइंट चर्च फेलोशिप ने समुदाय के धार्मिक स्थलों और लोगों पर हमले करने के मामलों की निंदा की। वीरवार को पीआर शौकत पीटर सहित फेलोशिप के सदस्यों ने प्रेसवार्ता कर सरकार से अराजक तत्वों के खिलाफ उचित कार्रवाई करने की अपील की है।

उन्होंने कहा कि मसीही समुदाय हमेशा शांति प्रिय रहा है। दुर्भाग्य है कि कुछ समय से कुछ संगठन चर्च के सेवकों और संस्थानों पर लगातार हमला कर माहौल को बिगाड़ रहे हैं। लोगों की प्रार्थना में खलल डाली जा रही है, जो कि गलत है। संविधान किसी भी व्यक्ति को धार्मिक प्रार्थना में खलल डालने की इजाजत नहीं देता है। कुछ संगठन अशांति फैलाने में लगे हैं। कुछ माह से रामनगर, बसोहली, नगरी और कठुआ आदि क्षेत्रों में ऐसे घटनाएं हुई हैं। केंद्र और प्रदेश सरकार से मामले में हस्तक्षेप की अपील करते हैं। मसीही समाज असुरक्षित महसूस कर रहा है। अगर इन घटनाओं को नहीं रोका गया तो राष्ट्रीय मानवाधिकार आयोग और राष्ट्रीय अल्पसंख्यक आयोग के पास जाने के लिए मजबूर होंगे।

NHRC forum pitches for law to end ambiguity in dealing with refugees, asylum-seekers

<https://theprint.in/india/nhrc-forum-pitches-for-law-to-end-ambiguity-in-dealing-with-refugees-asylum-seekers/808901/>

A forum hosted by the NHRC Thursday unanimously pitched for enacting a national law to end “adhocism and ambiguity” in dealing with refugees and asylum-seekers in the country, officials said.

The National Human Rights Commission organised an online open discussion on the protection of the basic human rights of refugees and asylum-seekers in India on Thursday.

NHRC member justice M M Kumar chaired the event which was attended by NHRC chairperson justice (retd) Arun Kumar Mishra, other senior official of NHRC, and representatives of ministries of law, external affairs and home affairs, UN Human Rights Council, domain experts, among others.

“It was unanimously felt that though India had a very good track record and tradition of dealing with and handling the international refugees and asylum seekers since time immemorial, it is time a national law is enacted to include all the best practices and policies so far to have in place a uniformity and legal sanctity to ensure protection and realisation of human rights of refugees and asylum seekers across the country,” the NHRC said in a statement.

This was also to help them seek the benefits of other welfare measures by the government even while taking care of the national security, it added.

Earlier, inaugurating the open forum, justice Kumar said that by the virtue of the Constitution of India, every citizen is entitled to basic human rights.

India is a signatory to various international conventions and treaties related to refugees and asylum seekers largely within the framework of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) but not on the basis of Citizenship Act, 1955, which he said, can be regulated to protect their rights, according to the statement.

Because protecting their rights merely on the basis of certain documents, depending on case to case basis, may lead to ambiguities in the uniform interpretation thereof compounding their problems in getting even basic necessities in different parts of the country in the absence of a national law, the statement said.

Justice Kumar said that “legislature needs to be impressed upon for enacting a national law on refugees and asylum seekers to overcome adhocism and confusion as these may lead to subjectivity and unnecessary litigation”.

Triggering the discussion, NHRC Secretary General Bimbadhar Pradhan said that while there are various internationally acclaimed measures India has been using to deal with the refugees and asylum seekers, “these are largely with the intent that normalcy can be restored only by sending them back to their respective countries on voluntary repatriation”.

Kavita Belani, Deputy Chief Mission, UNHCR said “refugees by definition are victims of human rights violations”.

She lauded India’s support to refugees and displaced people with its home grown solutions in line with the global commitments, and described these as very inclusive and forward looking. However, she said these needed to be put in a structured policy on predictable lines for a national response to make it easy for all the refugees and asylum seekers get access to their rights. Besides the inaugural session, the open forum was divided into two thematic sessions focusing on policy framework and legal safeguards for refugees and asylum seekers; and issues and challenges in protection of right to life and dignity; and access to other socio- economic, educational and cultural rights, officials said.

Concluding the discussion, Justice Kumar said that all the suggestions will be further deliberated in the Commission before sending to the government as recommendations for implementation. PTI KND TIR TIR

India News | NHRC Forum Pitches for Law to End Ambiguity in Dealing with Refugees, Asylum-seekers

<https://www.latestly.com/agency-news/india-news-nhrc-forum-pitches-for-law-to-end-ambiguity-in-dealing-with-refugees-asylum-seekers-3275853.html>

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Bid to tarnish India's image: PM

Says system being created wherein there's no place for discrimination

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

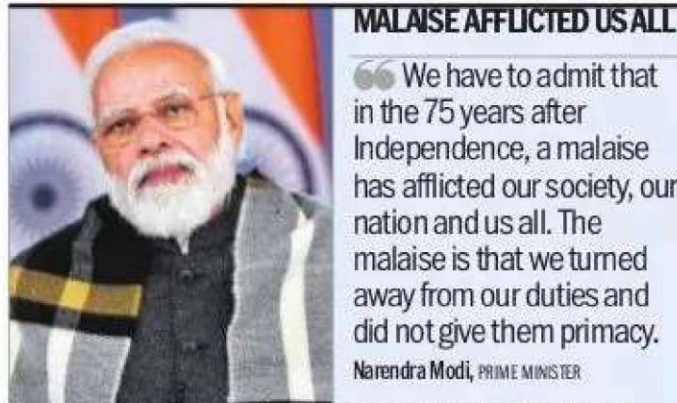
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 20

Noting that attempts are being made to tarnish India's global image, Prime Minister Narendra Modi today said this could not be brushed under the carpet by saying this was just politics, as it was a question of the country's reputation.

Delivering the keynote address through video-conferencing at a function organised by Brahma Kumaris to launch "Azadi ke Amrit Mahotsav se Swarnim Bharat ke ore", Modi noted that one's progress was aligned with the nation's progress and stressed the need to give importance to one's duties for the country's rise.

The PM also made a detailed account on the role Brahma Kumaris and other international bodies can play in countering anti-India propaganda. "You should ensure that correct information is being conveyed to people in different countries. Fighting rumours, which are being spread against India, is a responsibility that lies with all of us," he said.

Though he did not specify or allude to any particular incident, PM Modi had sent a sim-



PM TO UNVEIL STATUE OF EQUALITY ON FEB 5

Hyderabad: PM Narendra Modi will dedicate a 216-ft tall statue of Vaishnavaite Saint Bhagavad Ramanujacharya to the nation on February 5. The 11th-century saint is well respected in this part of the country and the event will mark the celebrations of his 1000th birth anniversary. TNS

ilar message on October 12 last year while addressing the 28th foundation day ceremony of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). He had urged people "not to be selective while raising issues pertaining to human rights".

Asserting that an India was emerging whose thinking and approach were new and decisions progressive, PM Modi said a system was being created in which there was no place for any discrimination.

"We also have to admit that in the 75 years after Indepen-

dence, a malaise has afflicted our society, our nation and us all. The malaise is that we turned away from our duties and did not give them primacy," he said while launching year-long initiatives by the Brahma Kumaris, which include more than 30 campaigns and over 15,000 programmes and events.

"The coming 25 years are of hard work, sacrifice, austerity and penance," he said, adding that, "This period is one to get back what our society has lost in hundreds of years of slavery."

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Modi inaugurates social housing unit project in Mauritius

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 20

Prime Minister Narendra Modi along with his Mauritius counterpart Pravind Kumar Jugnauth on Thursday virtually jointly inaugurated India-assisted social housing unit project in Mauritius as well as launched the setting up of Civil Service College and 8 MW solar PV farm projects in Mauritius.

PM Modi said India would bankroll several other projects in Mauritius such as a regional transplant unit, a forensics centre and a police academy. Jugnauth said it was a testimony to the vibrancy of the Indo-Mauritius relations that this is the third virtual inauguration. He added that one of the metro stations would be named after Mahatma Gandhi.

"Mauritius is a prime example of India's approach to developmental partnership which is based on need and priorities of partners and respect for their sovereignty. India and Mauritius are united by history, ancestry and the shared waters of the Indian Ocean," said PM Modi. — TNS

Medical negligence: Couple gets ₹2 lakh following NHRC order

BHUBANESWAR: A couple who had lost their newborn two hours after her birth at Gurudijhatia of Cuttack in 2019 has received ₹2 lakh compensation following the intervention of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). Earlier, the NHRC had directed the state Chief Secretary to pay the compensation after the Special Secretary for state Medical, Health & Family Welfare Department had agreed in its report that the baby died as the staff at Gurudijhatia Primary Health Centre (PHC) failed to attend to the pregnant mother, Kuni Maharana, 27, in time. The Special Secretary also accepted that the staff did not turn up on the date despite duty roster which resulted in the victim delivering her child in the auto-rickshaw, leading to the death of the child without getting any medical help. Following the NHRC directions, the Chief District Medical and Public Health Officer of Cuttack paid ₹2 lakh to Maharana and her husband.

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मानवाधिकार आयोग पहुंचा केस में देरी का मामला

आगरा। एटा के जैथरा में नाबालिग से जबरन शादी और सामूहिक दुष्कर्म का मुकदमा लिखने में देरी का मामला राष्ट्रीय मानवाधिकार आयोग पहुंचा है। मामले में सीबीसीआईडी आगरा को जांच के आदेश किए गए हैं। एटा के व्यापारी का परिवार दिल्ली में रहता है। उनकी कार कासगंज स्थित पटियाली का एक युवक चलाता था। जून, 2019 में व्यापारी गांव आए थे। तभी चालक ने अपने पिता से मिलने उन्हें बुलाया। इस दौरान चालक और उसका पिता बेटे को साथ ले गए। उसका अपहरण कर लिया। फिरौती के रूप में नाबालिग बेटी से शादी कराने की शर्त रखी। इनकार पर हत्या की धमकी दी। आरोप है कि व्यापारी बेटी को शादी के लिए लेकर गए। बाद में आरोपी चालक ने रिश्तेदार के साथ बेटी से दुष्कर्म किया। पुलिस ने चार आरोपियों को जेल भेजा। पीड़ित ने राष्ट्रीय मानवाधिकार आयोग में शिकायत की। देरी से केस दर्ज करने का आरोप लगाया। ब्यूरो