

## On abuse, India 'mimics' China, says Human Rights Watch report

<https://www.telegraphindia.com/india/on-abuse-india-mimics-china-says-human-rights-watch-report/cid/1909587>

The US-based NGO Human Rights Watch has equated India with China in their suppression of dissent and free expression and “systematic discrimination against religious minorities”.

The report came on a day families of jailed Indian dissenters said the spirit of the accused remained unbroken despite the crackdown they faced for opposing government policies.

In the preface, titled “A new model for global leadership on human rights”, to the NGO’s World Report 2023, its acting executive director Tirana Hassan wrote: “...And the Biden administration, despite its rhetoric about prioritising democracy and human rights in Asia, has tempered criticism of abuses and increasing authoritarianism in India, Thailand, the Philippines, and elsewhere in the region for security and economic reasons, instead of recognising that all are linked.”

She added: “Meanwhile, as discomfort around the Chinese government’s repressive ambitions has grown, governments, including those of Australia, Japan, Canada, the UK, EU, and US have looked to cultivate trade and security alliances with India, taking cover behind its brand as the ‘world’s largest democracy’.

“But Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party has mimicked many of the same abuses that have enabled Chinese state repression — systematic discrimination against religious minorities, stifling of peaceful dissent, and use of technology to suppress free expression — to tighten its grip on power.”

The report reiterates the adverse view Human Rights Watch holds of the human rights violations by security forces, and the crackdown on journalists, in Jammu and Kashmir.

The chapter on India also says: “The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led government continued its systematic discrimination and stigmatisation of religious and other minorities, particularly Muslims. BJP supporters increasingly committed violent attacks against targeted groups. The government’s Hindu majoritarian ideology was reflected in bias in institutions, including the justice system and constitutional authorities like the National Human Rights Commission.

“Authorities intensified efforts to silence civil society activists and independent journalists by using politically motivated criminal charges, including terrorism, to jail those exposing or criticising government abuses. The government used foreign funding regulations and allegations of financial irregularities to harass rights groups, political opponents, and others.”

The activists' collective, Campaign Against State Repression, held a meeting titled "Conspiracy of conspiracy cases" at the CPM party school building here on Thursday. There, relatives of those jailed in a 2013 Maoist links case, the 2018 Elgaar Parishad-Maoist conspiracy case and the 2020 Delhi riots conspiracy case reaffirmed the resolve of the accused to keep up their dissent against what they see as unjust acts by governments.

Miranda House assistant professor Jenny Rowena P. said: "It has been very tough but they have continued reading, writing and thinking. We are not defeated, We should not fear, and must keep fighting for justice and make them get the message that we are not afraid."

Rowena is married to Delhi University associate professor Hany Babu M.T. who is in a Navi Mumbai jail, awaiting trial in the Elgaar Parishad case.

Among the speakers were A.S. Vasantha Kumari, wife of academic G.N. Saibaba, and Nargis Saifi, wife of Khalid Saifi who is in prison in a 2020 case that links the protests against the new citizenship matrix to an alleged conspiracy behind the 2022 Delhi riots.

Saibaba, a former professor at Delhi's Ram Lal Anand College who is paraplegic, is serving a life sentence in Nagpur for his association with banned Maoists in a 2013 case. He was first arrested in 2014.

Nargis said: "We have always celebrated Independence Day like Id. Why do we have to constantly prove that we are patriots?"

Joseph Xavier, Bangalore-based convener of the Fr Stan Swamy Legacy Committee of the Jesuits, cited how Boston-based firm Arsenal Consulting had found fabricated evidence planted on the computer of Ranchi priest Stan Swamy. Arrested in the Elgaar Parishad case, Swamy died of post-Covid complications while in judicial custody.

In a message read out at the gathering, Xavier said: "What shocked me from the Arsenal report was that Stan was under surveillance since 2014. What changed in this country in 2014? Who masterminded targeting Fr Stan? Was it Pune police or the NIA or someone who controlled all these agencies? Why was Stan targeted? While I may not know the answers to all the questions, I know why Stan was targeted and killed."

He added: "Stan was considered by the State a thorn in the flesh. The crony capitalists and the junta of the State considered an 82-yearold Jesuit priest, suffering from Parkinson's disease, an enemy of the state. Why? He joined hands with the Adivasis and challenged the ruthless rape of nature by the corporate (world) in connivance with the State.... The State must ask itself whether it was following constitutional provisions or behaving as an institution above the Constitution."

{ **NHRC 2-DAY CAMP** } AROUND 200 CASES HEARD

# Pay ₹32.5 lakh relief to seven victims: Rights panel to state

**Vinay Dalvi**

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**MUMBAI:** In a special sitting, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) heard around 200 cases in two days and recommended the state government to pay a compensation of ₹32.5 lakh as relief to seven victims of human rights violations.

"We had the two-day camp sitting on Wednesday and Thursday. This was done to expedite the pending cases of human rights violations in Maharashtra. The state authorities and the complainants concerned were asked to remain present at the hearing to facilitate on-the-spot deliberations," said Dr D M Mulay, Member, NHRC.

"Besides the hearing of the cases, the camp aimed to sensitise the state government officials about human rights and

also interact with the representatives of the NGOs and Human Rights Defenders," he added.

The sitting was a unique concept which was aimed at bringing the NHRC to the doorsteps of the victims of various human rights violations, said Mulay.

"Over 300 cases of human rights violations received from Maharashtra were listed for hearing in the two-day camp. We could hear around 200 of the cases," he added. "The cases were related to serious violations like death due to negligence of the electricity department, denial of retiral benefits, alleged negligence in protecting the fundamental human rights of people belonging to Koli community, cine workers, death of people in a building collapse cases, incidents of bonded labourers, child labourers and deaths in judicial/police custody."

In seven cases, the commission recommended a compensation of ₹32.5 lakh – to be paid by the state, said Rajiv Jain, another member of NHRC.

"We had meetings with several senior bureaucrats from the state, wherein it was suggested for speedy disposal of cases, timely reports should be submitted. We also recommended a uniform policy for payment of compensation to next of the kin in electrocution death cases. It has recommended that the distribution companies should create more awareness to avoid electrocution cases," said Mulay.

The commission also stressed that Prison Reforms, shelter home upgradation, the release of interim compensation to the released bonded labourers and other provisions for the rehabilitation and final compensation must be followed.

## **Indian government continued systemic discrimination against minorities in 2022: Human Rights Watch**

<https://scroll.in/latest/1041748/indian-government-continued-systemic-discrimination-against-minorities-in-2022-human-rights-watch>

The Bharatiya Janata Party-led Union government continued systematic discrimination and stigmatisation of religious and other minorities in India, particularly Muslims, the rights group Human Rights Watch said in its “World Report 2022” on Thursday.

“BJP supporters increasingly committed violent attacks against targeted groups,” the group said in its annual report. “The government’s Hindu majoritarian ideology was reflected in bias in institutions, including the justice system and constitutional authorities like the National Human Rights Commission.”

To substantiate its findings, the report cited the Gujarat government’s decision to grant early release to 11 life-term convicts in the Bilkis Bano case, the “online auction” of over 100 Muslim women on an online platform and the demolition of properties mostly owned by Muslims.

The report also made mentions about arrests of fact-checking website Alt News co-founder Mohammed Zubair and journalist Siddiqui Kappan, the targeted killings in Jammu and Kashmir, and the raids by tax officials on non-governmental organisations.

Tirana Hassan, the acting executive director of Human Rights Watch, said that the Narendra Modi-led BJP government “mimicked many of the same abuses that have enabled Chinese state repression – systematic discrimination against religious minorities, stifling of peaceful dissent, and use of technology to suppress free expression – to tighten its grip on power”.

The body’s South Asia Director Meenakshi Ganguly said that BJP’s promotion of Hindu majoritarian ideology provoked authorities and its supporters to engage in “discriminatory and at times violent actions against religious minorities”.

“The authorities should be reining in party members and supporters responsible for abuses instead of jailing critics and shutting down rights groups,” Ganguly added.

On Jammu and Kashmir

In its report, Human Rights Watch noted that violence continued in the Valley three years after the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution, stripping Jammu and Kashmir of its special status.

“Violence continued with 229 reported deaths as of October, including 28 civilians, 29 security force personnel, and 172 suspected militants,” the report said. “Minority Hindus [Kashmiri Pandits] and Sikh communities in the Muslim-majority Kashmir Valley came under attack.”

The report added that Kashmiris complained that some of the suspected militants killed in gunfights were civilians, but no independent investigation was carried.

On Dalits and Muslims

The Human Rights Watch also criticised the demolition of properties, mostly owned by Muslims, in response to communal clashes.

“Although they [authorities] tried to justify the demolitions by claiming the structures were illegal, the destruction appeared intended to be collective punishment for Muslims,” the report observed.

A municipal demolition drive in Jahangirpuri in New Delhi. | AFP

In recent months, authorities have on several occasions resorted to using bulldozers to demolish the houses of persons accused of crimes. However, there are no legal provisions that allow for the demolition of a house as a punitive measure.

Most instances of such demolitions have taken place in states ruled by the BJP.

On the Gujarat government’s decision to grant remission of sentence to 11 convicts in the Bilkis Bano case, the Human Rights Watch noted that BJP affiliates “celebrated publicly”.

“The action highlighted the government’s discriminatory stance toward minority communities even in cases of violence against women,” it said.

It added: “Indian authorities misused laws forbidding forced religious conversion to target Christians, especially from Dalit and Adivasi communities.”

On journalists and civil society members

The Human Rights Watch said that law enforcement agencies arrested journalists critical of the government on politically motivated charges. It took note of the arrests of journalists Rupesh Kumar Singh in Jharkhand and Siddique Kappan in Uttar Pradesh.

The report also added that the arrest of Zubair in June “appeared to be a reprisal for exposing a television news network that aired controversial remarks of a BJP politician [Nupur Sharma] about Prophet Mohammed, leading to criticism by several Muslim governments”.

Alt News co-founder Mohammad Zubair leaves from Tihar Jail after being granted interim bail by the Supreme Court on July 20. | PTI Photo

On the arrest of activist Teesta Setalvad and police officers RB Sreekumar and Sanjeev Bhatt, the rights body said that police action was in “apparent reprisal for pursuing accountability for the 2002 mob violence targeting Muslims in Gujarat”.

The tax raids on the offices of Oxfam India, Delhi-based think tank Centre for Policy Research, and Bengaluru-based Independent and Public Spirited Media Foundation were politically motivated, the Human Rights Watch said.



## **NHRC orders to compensate ₹32.5 lakh to 7 victims**

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/mumbai-news/nhrc-orders-to-compensate-32-5-lakh-to-7-victims-101673551349668.html>

In a special sitting, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) heard around 200 cases in two days and recommended the state government to pay a compensation of ₹32.5 lakh as relief to seven victims of human rights violations.

“We concluded the two-day camp sitting on Wednesday and Thursday. This was done to expedite the pending cases of human rights violations in Maharashtra. The state authorities and the complainants concerned were asked to remain present at the hearing to facilitate on-the-spot deliberations,” said Dr D M Mulay, Member, NHRC.

“Besides the hearing of the cases, the camp aimed to sensitise the state government officials about human rights and also interact with the representatives of the NGOs and Human Rights Defenders,” he added.

The sitting was a unique concept which was aimed at bringing the NHRC to the doorsteps of the victims of various human rights violations, said Mulay.

“Over 300 cases of human rights violations received from Maharashtra were listed for hearing in the two-day camp. We could hear around 200 of the cases,” he added. “The cases were related to serious violations like death due to negligence of the electricity department, denial of retiral benefits, alleged negligence in protecting the fundamental human rights of people belonging to Koli community, cine workers, death of people in a building collapse cases, incidents of bonded labourers, child labourers and deaths in judicial/police custody.”

In seven cases, the commission recommended a compensation of ₹32.5 lakh – to be paid by the state, said Rajiv Jain, another member of NHRC. The commission has assured compliance with orders in one more case.

“We had meetings with several senior bureaucrats from the state, wherein it was suggested for speedy disposal of cases, timely reports should be submitted. We also recommended a uniform policy for payment of compensation to next of the kin in electrocution death cases. The commission has also recommended the distribution companies should create more awareness among people to avoid electrocution cases,” said Mulay.

The commission also stressed that Prison Reforms, shelter home upgradation, the release of interim compensation to the released bonded labourers and other provisions for the rehabilitation and final compensation must be followed.

It was said the state government was informed that it was proactively involved in the promotion and protection of human rights in the state and had recently set up a

separate department for persons with disabilities. The Maharashtra State Human Rights Commission was formed and came into existence in March 2001.



ANI News/ ThePrint/ Latestly/ WebIndia

## **NHRC hears over 200 cases of human rights violation in Maharashtra**

<https://www.aninews.in/news/national/general-news/nhrc-hears-over-200-cases-of-human-rights-violation-in-maharashtra20230112202648/>

<https://theprint.in/india/nhrc-hears-over-200-cases-of-human-rights-violation-in-maharashtra/1311575/>

<https://www.latestly.com/agency-news/india-news-nhrc-hears-over-200-cases-of-human-rights-violation-in-maharashtra-4705250.html>

<https://news.webindia123.com/news/Articles/India/20230112/4026066.html>

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on Thursday concluded its two-day camp sitting at Mumbai, organized to hear the pending cases of human rights violations in the State of Maharashtra.

The Camp Sitting was presided over by the NHRC Members, Dr D.M. Mulay and Rajiv Jain.

According to an official statement, the Commission heard more than 200 cases in the presence of concerned State government officers and the complainants. These included, among others, the cases of deaths due to negligence of the Electricity Department, denial of retirement benefits, negligence in protecting the fundamental human rights of people belonging to 'Koli' community and cine workers, death of eleven people in a building collapse, incidents of bonded labour involving child labour, and deaths in judicial/police custody.

"On the recommendations of the Commission, the Government of Maharashtra paid Rs.32.5 lakh in six out of the seven cases. The state government has assured compliance with the recommendations of the Commission in the remaining one," read an official release.

The Commission asked the Government of Maharashtra to submit reports for the speedy disposal of cases.

It has recommended that the State government formulate a uniform policy for the payment of compensation to the Next of Kin in electrocution death cases.

The Commission emphasized that human rights issues not only pertained to police/prison administration but also to civil authorities. The Commission also stressed upon Prison reforms, shelter home upgradation, the release of interim compensation to the rescued bonded labourers and other provisions for their rehabilitation and final compensation must be followed.

The members also advised that the Chief Electrical Inspector's office carry out a public awareness campaign regarding safety measures for electrocution cases. The Commission had also taken up three matters pertaining to the Director General of Shipping and the Shipping Corporation of India.

Earlier, inaugurating the camp sitting on January 11, 2023, the NHRC Member, Dr D.M. Mulay said that the Commission has a wide-ranging mandate for the promotion and protection of human rights in diverse areas.

"The NHRC camp sitting is a unique concept aimed at reaching out to the doorsteps of the victims of human rights violations," he said.

He also emphasized that the State government should make payments of compensation on time to them.

Addressing the gathering, NHRC Member, Rajiv Jain said, "There are various areas where the State Government officials needed to pay more attention. These included the functioning of Mental Health institutions in Maharashtra with a view to ensuring implementation of provisions of the Mental Health Act, 2017, standardization of compensation to those who died in judicial custody e.g. (Haryana State circular), repeal of legal provision discriminating Hansen's disease (Leprosy)."

He said that State Human Rights Cell Nodal Officer should ensure quick up-gradation of responses/reports through the HRC Net Portal of the NHRC. He also said that the NHRC's Advisory dated September 24, 2021, on hazardous cleaning must be strictly followed.

Additional Chief Secretary (Home), Government of Maharashtra, Anand M. Limaye said that the State government is proactively involved in the promotion and protection of human rights. It has recently set up a separate Department for persons with disabilities. The Maharashtra State Human Rights Commission has been functioning since March 6, 2001.

Manu Kumar Srivastav, Chief Secretary, Maharashtra, Justice K.K. Tated, Chairman of Maharashtra State Human Rights Commission, Manoj Yadava, DG(I), Surajit Dey, Registrar (Law), Anita Sinha, Joint Secretary, NHRC and other senior officers of the Commission and the State Government were present.

After hearing the cases, the Commission interacted with the NGOs/HRDs. They raised a gamut of issues of human rights violations. These included patient charter to be followed by the hospital, bonded labour issues in the construction sector, sugarcane, migrant labour, deaths due to unfair labour practices, domestic workers, lack of social security, etc, as per an official release.

The Commission appreciated the work being done by the NGOs and Human Rights Defenders in the State of Maharashtra and encouraged them to continue to do so without fear or favour. (ANI)

## एनएचआरसी महाराष्ट्र में मानवाधिकारों के उल्लंघन के 200 से अधिक मामलों की करता है सुनवाई

<https://jantaserishta.com/local/maharashtra/nhrc-hears-over-200-cases-of-human-rights-violation-in-maharashtra-1923971>

राष्ट्रीय मानवाधिकार आयोग (एनएचआरसी) ने गुरुवार को महाराष्ट्र राज्य में मानवाधिकारों के उल्लंघन के लंबित मामलों की सुनवाई के लिए मुंबई में आयोजित अपने दो दिवसीय शिविर का समापन किया।

शिविर बैठक की अध्यक्षता एनएचआरसी के सदस्य डॉ. डी.एम. मुले और राजीव जैन। एक आधिकारिक बयान के अनुसार, आयोग ने संबंधित राज्य सरकार के अधिकारियों और शिकायतकर्ताओं की उपस्थिति में 200 से अधिक मामलों की सुनवाई की। इनमें अन्य के अलावा बिजली विभाग की लापरवाही से हुई मौतों के मामले, सेवानिवृत्ति लाभ से वंचित करना, 'कोली' समुदाय के लोगों और सिने कर्मियों के मौलिक मानवाधिकारों की रक्षा में लापरवाही, एक इमारत के ढहने से ग्यारह लोगों की मौत के मामले शामिल हैं. , बाल श्रम से जुड़ी बंधुआ मजदूरी की घटनाएं, और न्यायिक/पुलिस हिरासत में मौत।

"आयोग की सिफारिशों पर, महाराष्ट्र सरकार ने सात में से छह मामलों में 32.5 लाख रुपये का भुगतान किया। राज्य सरकार ने शेष एक में आयोग की सिफारिशों के अनुपालन का आश्वासन दिया है," एक आधिकारिक विज्ञप्ति पढ़ें।

आयोग ने महाराष्ट्र सरकार से मामलों के त्वरित निस्तारण के लिए रिपोर्ट प्रस्तुत करने को कहा।

इसने सिफारिश की है कि राज्य सरकार बिजली के झटके से मौत के मामलों में परिजनों को मुआवजे के भुगतान के लिए एक समान नीति तैयार करे।

आयोग ने इस बात पर जोर दिया कि मानवाधिकार के मुद्दे न केवल पुलिस/जेल प्रशासन से संबंधित हैं बल्कि नागरिक अधिकारियों से भी संबंधित हैं। आयोग ने जेल सुधारों, आश्रय गृह उन्नयन, बचाए गए बंधुआ मजदूरों को अंतरिम मुआवजे की रिहाई और उनके पुनर्वास के लिए अन्य प्रावधानों और अंतिम मुआवजे का पालन करने पर भी जोर दिया।

सदस्यों ने यह भी सलाह दी कि मुख्य विद्युत निरीक्षक कार्यालय बिजली के झटके के मामलों के लिए सुरक्षा उपायों के संबंध में एक जन जागरूकता अभियान चलाए। आयोग ने नौवहन महानिदेशक और भारतीय नौवहन निगम से संबंधित तीन मामले भी उठाए थे।

इससे पहले, 11 जनवरी, 2023 को बैठे शिविर का उद्घाटन करते हुए एनएचआरसी के सदस्य डॉ. डी.एम. मुले ने कहा कि विभिन्न क्षेत्रों में मानवाधिकारों के प्रचार और संरक्षण के लिए आयोग के पास व्यापक जनादेश है।

उन्होंने कहा, "एनएचआरसी शिविर की बैठक मानवाधिकारों के उल्लंघन के पीड़ितों के दरवाजे तक पहुंचने के उद्देश्य से एक अनूठी अवधारणा है।"

उन्होंने इस बात पर भी जोर दिया कि राज्य सरकार को उन्हें समय पर मुआवजे का भुगतान करना चाहिए।

सभा को संबोधित करते हुए, NHRC के सदस्य, राजीव जैन ने कहा, "ऐसे कई क्षेत्र हैं जहाँ राज्य सरकार के अधिकारियों को अधिक ध्यान देने की आवश्यकता है। इनमें मानसिक स्वास्थ्य अधिनियम के प्रावधानों के कार्यान्वयन को सुनिश्चित करने की दृष्टि से महाराष्ट्र में मानसिक स्वास्थ्य संस्थानों का कामकाज शामिल है। , 2017, न्यायिक हिरासत में मरने वालों के लिए मुआवजे का मानकीकरण जैसे (हरियाणा राज्य परिपत्र), हैनसेन रोग (कुष्ठ रोग) में भेदभाव करने वाले कानूनी प्रावधान को निरस्त करना।

उन्होंने कहा कि राज्य मानवाधिकार प्रकोष्ठ के नोडल अधिकारी को एनएचआरसी के एचआरसी नेट पोर्टल के माध्यम से प्रतिक्रियाओं/रिपोर्टों का त्वरित उन्नयन सुनिश्चित करना चाहिए।

उन्होंने यह भी कहा कि खतरनाक सफाई पर एनएचआरसी की 24 सितंबर, 2021 की एडवाइजरी का सख्ती से पालन किया जाना चाहिए।

अतिरिक्त मुख्य सचिव (गृह), महाराष्ट्र सरकार, आनंद एम. लिमये ने कहा कि राज्य सरकार मानवाधिकारों के प्रचार और संरक्षण में सक्रिय रूप से शामिल है। इसने हाल ही में विकलांग व्यक्तियों के लिए एक अलग विभाग की स्थापना की है। महाराष्ट्र राज्य मानवाधिकार आयोग 6 मार्च, 2001 से कार्य कर रहा है।

मनु कुमार श्रीवास्तव, मुख्य सचिव, महाराष्ट्र, न्यायमूर्ति के.के. तातेड, महाराष्ट्र राज्य मानवाधिकार आयोग के अध्यक्ष, मनोज यादव, डीजी (आई), सुरजीत डे, रजिस्ट्रार (कानून), अनीता सिन्हा, संयुक्त सचिव, एनएचआरसी और आयोग और राज्य सरकार के अन्य वरिष्ठ अधिकारी उपस्थित थे।

मामलों की सुनवाई के बाद, आयोग ने एनजीओ/एचआरडी के साथ बातचीत की। उन्होंने मानवाधिकारों के उल्लंघन के मुद्दों की एक सरगम उठाई। एक आधिकारिक विज्ञप्ति के अनुसार इनमें अस्पताल द्वारा अपनाए जाने वाले पेशेंट चार्टर, निर्माण क्षेत्र में बंधुआ मजदूरी के मुद्दे, गन्ना, प्रवासी श्रमिक, अनुचित श्रम प्रथाओं के कारण होने वाली मौतें, घरेलू कामगार, सामाजिक सुरक्षा की कमी आदि शामिल हैं।

आयोग ने महाराष्ट्र राज्य में गैर सरकारी संगठनों और मानवाधिकार रक्षकों द्वारा किए जा रहे कार्यों की सराहना की और उन्हें बिना किसी भय या पक्षपात के ऐसा करने के लिए प्रोत्साहित किया।