

12<sup>th</sup> June, 2019**PUCL STATEMENT:**

PUCL strongly condemns the early morning raid today (12<sup>th</sup> June) by Maharashtra – Pune police in the residence of 83 year old Father Stan Swamy at Bagaicha Campus in Namkum, Ranchi, Jharkhand. The Maharashtra police allegedly conducted the raid and search without obtaining judicial search warrant and seized his computer's hard disk, internet modem and other storage devices and forced him to give his gmail and Facebook passwords. It needs to be pointed out that the Maharashtra police had already conducted a raid on his residence several times last year.

The stated objective of the Maharashtra police of seizing and collecting evidence against Stan Swamy does not bear scrutiny as the same police force had already collected all available electronic and other evidence during their search last year. The objective is thus very clearly to intimidate, scare and frighten all others – rights activists, democratically minded groups and concerned citizens – from extending any type of support to Stan Swamy and others. These activists have for some years now been opposing state terrorism let loose in Jharkhand by a corrupt mafia of corrupt police and government officials, greedy politicians and vested Corporate interests who have been attempting to grab valuable forest lands belonging to the Adivasis so as to plunder and appropriate very valuable forest and common resources such as minerals, forest wealth, land, water and other common resources.

Fr. Stan Swamy has been diligently documenting the illegal actions of the state police and security forces brazenly violating all laws, arresting and imprisoning hundreds of local adivasis, extensive use of torture and numerous other rights violations.

The continued harassment, intimidation and terrorization of Father Stan Swamy is part of the same tactics used by the Maharashtra - Pune police, with the support of the Central government, to illegally arrest other rights activists like Sudha Bharadwaj, Vernon Gonsalves, Arun Ferreira, Varavara Rao and detain Gautam Navalakha and Anand Teltumbde in the infamous Bhima Koregaon case. The aim is clearly to strike terror in the hearts of any citizen from criticizing the anti-people, undemocratic, brazenly illegal actions of the BJP led government in Maharashtra and the Centre and in Jharkhand too by dubbing such activists as "urban naxals" thereby creating fear in the minds of ordinary people from raising their voices against open, brazen and defiant abuse of law by the police.

PUCL demands an immediate end to the abuse of law by the Maharashtra police which is launching a witch hunt to ensnare and entrap many more activists in criminal prosecutions. PUCL also demands an immediate release of all the 9 activists arrested so far in the Bhima Koregaon case and dropping of plans to arrest some others.



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