

To Mr. Narendra Modi,
Prime Minister of the Republic of India

For information
Mr. Santosh Jha,
Ambassador of the Republic of India to the EU



Subject:
Liberation of Fr. Stan Swamy SJ on humanitarian grounds

Brussels, 18th December 2020

Dear Prime Minister,

The undersigned, Members of the European Parliament (MEP), would like to express our deep concern about the detention and imprisonment of 16 human rights defenders in connection with the Bhima Koregaon case under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) in relation to the incident that took place in India in December 2017.

We would like to draw particular notice to the Jesuit priest Fr. Stan Swamy, arrested on October 8, 2020 in Ranchi (Jamshedpur) and transferred to Taloja Prison, Mumbai, on October 10, 2020. Stan Swamy SJ has been accused of having links with Maoists, and of having participated in the Bhima Koregaon incident, where he denies having been. He strongly denies these accusations.

Fr. Stan Swamy has worked for four decades for the rights of indigenous peoples (Adivasis) in the states of Jharkhand, Chattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh in India. He was Director of the Indian Social Institute Bengaluru, from 1974 to 1991. From 1991 to 2000, he served as Director of the Jharkhandi Organization for Human Rights, a Jesuit Social Centre in Chaibasa, - which works among the 'Ho' tribes.

In 2000, he moved to Ranchi and in 2006, he founded a new social Centre, known as Bagaicha, which continues to work for the rights of Adivasi people in central India. The work he has been engaged in, has always been within the framework of the Indian Constitution and of democratic processes

Fr. Stan Swamy is 83 years old and a sufferer of Parkinson's Disease. He is also hard of hearing and uses aids in both ears. Last year, he underwent surgery for appendicitis in Bengaluru and in January 2020 and fractured his hand. He is thus in a vulnerable physical state and especially because of his advanced age has been under medical observation and special diet.

His captivity has in no doubt impaired his health for the last month and a half. He is reliant on a straw and sipper-tumbler to be able to take in fluids independently. We are deeply concerned about his health and well-being in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, and we urge you to release him immediately on humanitarian grounds.

Most respectfully,

MEP François ALFONSI, France
MEP Marc ANGEL, Luxembourg
MEP Marie ARENA, Belgium
MEP Konstantinos ARVANITIS, Greece
MEP Izaskun BILBAO BARANDICA, Spain
MEP Milan BRGLEZ, Slovenia
MEP Saskia BRICMONT, Belgium
MEP Olivier CHASTEL, Belgium
MEP Özlem DEMIREL, Germany
MEP Laurence FARRENG, France
MEP Cindy FRANSSSEN, Belgium
MEP Bernard GUETTA, France
MEP Eva KAILI, Greece
MEP Pierre LARROUTUROU, France
MEP Nathalie LOISEAU, France
MEP Juan Fernando LOPEZ AGUILAR, Spain
MEP Emmanuel MAUREL, France
MEP Karen MELCHIOR, Denmark
MEP Peter POLLAK, Slovakia
MEP Inmaculada RODRIGUEZ PINERO, Spain
MEP Irène TOLLERET, France