

12 June 2019

Jharkhand Janadhikar Mahasabha condemns repeated raids on Stan Swamy and arrests of other human rights activists

Today, at around 7:15 am, an eight-member team of the Maharashtra police once again raided the Bagaicha campus in Namkum near Ranchi, the residence of 83-year old Stan Swamy, a well-known activist of Jharkhand. The police searched Stan Swamy's belongings for about 3.5 hours. It took Stan Swamy's hard disk and internet modem and forced him to give his email and Facebook passwords. Thereafter, they changed the passwords and seized these accounts. The Maharashtra police had [raided](#) Stan Swamy's residence last year as well on 28 August 2018 as well.

Stan works for the rights of Adivasis and other underprivileged groups in the state. Among other issues, he works on displacement, corporate loot of resources, the condition of undertrials and PESA. Stan has been a vocal critic of the government's attempts to amend land laws and the land acquisition act in Jharkhand, and a strong advocate of the Forest Rights Act, PESA and related laws. He is an exceptionally gentle, honest and public-spirited person. Jharkhand Janadhikar Mahasabha has the highest regard for him and his work

The Mahasabha is shocked by the intimidation and arrests of activists and public intellectuals who are critical of the government and the ruling party at the Centre. Last year, Surendra Gadling, Sudhir Dhawale, Mahesh Raut, Shoma Sen, and Rona Wilson were arrested on 6 June 2018, and they continue to be held imprisoned in the Yerwada Central Jail. On 28 August 2018, the police arrested five more activists - Sudha Bharadwaj, Arun Ferreira, Vernon Gonsalves, Varavara Rao and Gautam Navlakha. They too are yet to be released. These imprisonments are nothing but an attempt by the government to strike terror among those who are fighting for the rights of the marginalised.

The central government and media houses close to the BJP claim that the human rights activists were part of a Maoist conspiracy related to the Bhima-Koregaon incident. This concocted story seems to be part of a larger propaganda, based on terms like "urban naxals", aimed at stifling any criticism of the government. The raids and arrests are part of the government's growing attempts to stifle dissent and intimidate those who are fighting for justice.

Jharkhand Janadhikar Mahasabha demands an immediate end to the raids, dropping of all false charges against human rights activists across the country and release of those who are arrested. These harassments are politically motivated and wholly unjustified.

For further information, please write at jharkhand.janadhikar.mahasabha@gmail.com or contact Soloman (8757690775), Aloka Kujur (8986683426), B B Choudhary (7838001177) or Siraj Dutta (9939819763).