



PRESS RELEASE

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Through an interactive street performance on 10 December, International Human Rights Day, at Rathaus Neukölln in Berlin, the India Justice Project called for solidarity with imprisoned human rights defenders in India. By reconstructing a prison visitor's room, passbyers were able to sit down with "prisoners" and query them about the injustice of their incarceration. This enabled a dialogue about repressive laws in India, such as the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), which are being routinely used to arrest anyone demanding their rights or dissenting against unlawful actions of the state.

During the event known Indian activists and lawyers spoke on the state of democracy and shrinking civic spaces in India. A case of particular interest was that of the "Bhima Koregaon 16" (BK16), one of the most blatant examples of the repression of civil society in India. The 16 imprisoned activists, advocates, authors and cultural artists have arbitrarily been accused of terrorism under UAPA since 2018, because they spoke, acted, and organized in support of the rights of Dalits, Adivasis (indigenous people), and workers. One of the most prominent figures of the BK16 was the Jesuite priest Stan Swamy, who died in prison in July 2021 due to medical negligence. The tragedy of his death was addressed during the event through a minute of silence.

The protest action was part of a larger campaign - "Speaking up is not Anti-National, Silencing people is!" organized by individuals and 30+ organizations across 15 countries. The India Justice Project wants to raise awareness in Germany regarding the situation of political prisoners such as the Bhima Koregaon 16 in India. Such cases are emblematic for the injustices perpetrated by the Indian government with absolute impunity. Other manifestations of the politics of hate by the Indian government are discriminatory laws such as the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) and the anti-conversion law, as well as the revocation of the autonomy of Jammu and Kashmir.

We at the India Justice Protect, demand:

The Indian government to-

1. Guarantee basic human rights as per international conventions and the Indian Constitution
2. Free all political prisoners and compensate them for mental and physical pain endured
3. Repeal anti-democratic laws such as the UAPA, anti-conversion laws, and the CAA

India Justice Project

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