

Some Updates on Fr. Stan Swamy, SJ

EXCERPTS from a letter written by Fr. Stan Swamy SJ, from the prison, with the help of another accused Mr. Arun Ferreira:

Dear friends:

Peace! Though I do not have many details, from what I have heard, I am grateful to all of you for expressing your solidarity support. I am in a cell approximately 13 feet x 8 feet, along with two more inmates. It has a small bathroom and a toilet with Indian commode. Fortunately, I am given a western commode chair. Varavara Rao, Vernon Gonsalves and Arun Ferreira are in another cell. During the day, when cells and barracks are opened, we meet with each other. From 5.30 pm to 06.00 am and 12 noon to 03.00 pm, I am locked up in my cell, with two inmates. Arun assists me to have my breakfast and lunch. Vernon helps me with bath. My two inmates help out during supper, in washing my clothes and give massage to my knee joints. They are from very poor families. Please remember my inmates and my colleagues in your prayers. Despite all odds, humanity is bubbling in Taloja prison.

Fr. Stan Swamy SJ

Some other updates:

- On 5 Nov in the evening Fr. Stan called one of the Jesuits. Spoke to him for 4 minutes, the allotted time for a prisoner to speak anyone of his choice once in 10 days.
- He received Rs. 4,000/- which was transferred to him on 24 Oct. This helps him to buy some food or anything else that is available in the prison canteen. He is allowed to receive Rs. 4,000/- a month.
- He wanted warm clothes and this was sent to him. Apparently, the jail authorities are not allowing any clothes to be sent inside for prisoners.
- On 7th November Fr. Stan appealed to the Special Court that he be allowed to use a straw and sipper in prison to drink water, as he cannot hold a glass because of Parkinson's disease. Sadly, the National Investigation Agency's lawyers sought 20 days time to file a reply. This has been widely condemned by a large number of people in the country, including some Members of Parliament and intellectuals and also internationally. Many public protests have been going all over the country.
- The courts in India are on holidays due to Diwali Festival. They will reopen on 23rd November.
- The lawyer Adv. Mihir Desai and his team are working on Stan's bail petition. Adv. Mihir has been in conversation with Stan.
- Stan is a strong person. He demands from or negotiates with prison authorities to get what he considers as his basic human right. But he is adjusting to the conditions there.
- On 12th November Fr. Stan called Adv. Mihir to inquire about bail application process. Mihir has told him that after Diwali bail applications will be filed.
- Stan also mentioned about the deteriorating health condition of Mr. Varavara Rao, another 80-year-old poet, writer, and another accused in the same Sedition case.

Xavier Jeyaraj SJ
17th November 2020