

April 26, 2023

His Excellency Sanjay Kumar Verma
High Commissioner of India to Canada
High Commission of Canada
10 Springfield Road, Ottawa, ON K1M 1C9
hc.ottawa@mea.gov.in

Dear High Commissioner,

Greetings from Canadian Jesuits International (CJI), the international solidarity agency of the Jesuits of Canada.

I am writing to let you know that CJI has joined a global campaign asking the Government of India to clear the name of Fr Stan Swamy SJ, based on new evidence. Fr Stan Swamy was an 84-year-old Indian Jesuit priest and renowned social justice advocate who spent 50 years fighting for Indigenous rights in the state of Jharkhand. He died of complications from Covid-19 in July 2021 after spending seven months in an Indian prison.

Fr Stan and 15 other human rights activists were jailed last October 2020 on fabricated terrorism charges. While in prison, Fr Stan, who was suffering from Parkinson's disease, was denied bail despite his condition, and stripped of his human rights.

In December 2022, Massachusetts-based digital Arsenal Consulting, an internationally renowned digital forensic firm, [reported](#) that digital evidence used to arrest Fr Stan was planted on his computer's hard drive. The firm's investigation showed that Fr Stan was systematically targeted in a cyber campaign over a six-year period and fabricated evidence was planted on his computer to attack him and his co-defendants. Fr Stan was falsely accused of being part of an alleged conspiracy by outlawed Maoist rebels to stir mob violence at Bhima-Koregaon, Maharashtra, in January 2018.

"The scale of what happened to Fr. Swamy and some of his co-defendants, in terms of the aggressive surveillance of their electronic devices which culminated in incriminating document deliveries over the course of years, is truly unprecedented," noted Mark Spencer, president of Arsenal Consulting.

As part of the campaign, we have been asking Canadians across the country to sign an online petition asking the Indian government to clear Fr Stan's name. We do so as stand

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against injustice, and as an act of solidarity with Fr Stan and activists in Jharkland, where the petition has already received over 10,000 signatures.

In 2021, upon receiving news of Fr Stan's death in July 2021, Mary Lawlor, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders said, "There is no excuse, ever, for a human rights defender to be smeared as a terrorist, and no reason they should ever die the way Father Swamy died, accused and detained, and denied his rights." To this, I humbly add, there is no excuse, ever, for Fr Stan to be denied justice and to continue to be smeared as a terrorist even in death.

Fr Stan, who would have turned 86 on this day, worked tirelessly for the poor and marginalized communities of India. His life – and his death -- has inspired many, not just in India, but around the world, including in Canada.

May I request you to inform the Government of India about our efforts to secure justice for Fr Stan? Fr Stan was innocent. The Indian government must clear Fr Stan of the false and unjust charges against him. It is the just and right thing to do.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jenny Cafiso". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jenny Cafiso
Executive Director
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