



JÉSUITES  
du Canada

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of Canada

**April 26, 2023**

**The Honourable Mélanie Joly**  
**Minister of Foreign Affairs**  
**House of Commons**  
**Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6**  
[melanie.joly@parl.gc.ca](mailto:melanie.joly@parl.gc.ca)

Dear Minister Joly,

Today, April 26, 2023, is Fr Stan Swamy's birthday.

Fr Stan, who would have turned 86 today, was an Indian Jesuit priest and renowned social justice advocate who spent 50 years fighting for indigenous rights in the state of Jharkhand. After spending seven months in an Indian prison, he died of complications from Covid-19 in July 2021.

Fr. Stan and 15 other human rights activists were jailed in October 2020 on fabricated terrorism charges. To date he is the oldest person to be charged under India's harsh Unlawful Activities Prevention Act.

While in prison, Fr Stan, who was suffering from Parkinson's disease, was denied bail despite his condition and hence stripped of the most basic of human rights.

I am writing to let you know that the Jesuits of Canada, along with many concerned Canadians, are asking the Government of India to clear the name of Fr Stan, based on new evidence that a hacker infiltrated his computer and planted evidence against him and his co-accused.

Massachusetts-based digital Arsenal Consulting, an internationally renowned digital forensic firm, examined Fr Stan's computer and found that the digital evidence used to arrest Fr Stan was planted on his computer's hard drive. Fr Stan was systematically targeted in an extensive malware campaign over a six-year period, according to the [Arsenal report](#) released in December 2022. Fr Stan had been falsely accused of being part of an alleged conspiracy by outlawed Maoist rebels to instigate mob violence at Bhima-Koregaon, Maharashtra, in 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 delivers over the course of years, is truly unprecedented," said Arsenal Consulting President Mark Spencer.

When Fr Stan and his co-accused were arrested, I wrote a letter to your predecessor, the Honourable François-Philippe Champagne, asking the Government of Canada to condemn Fr

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Stan's incarceration and to demand his immediate release. Two months later, in December 2020, I sent a follow-up letter, noting that Fr Stan's health had rapidly deteriorated, and reiterating our plea for the Government of Canada to call for his release. Seven months later, Fr Stan died without achieving justice.

His arrest and death in custody were reportedly widely by the international media and roundly condemned around the world, including by the United Nations and the US State Department. Fr Stan's death while in custody "will forever remain a stain on the human rights record of India," said the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention.

In your Human Rights Day statement in 2022, you said that "Canada firmly believes that respect for democracy and its inherent values —the rule of law, the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and equality—are shared by millions at home and abroad."

Today, I am asking the Government of Canada to stand by these values by urging the Indian government to clear Fr Stan of the false and unjust charges against him.

Yours sincerely,



**Fr Erik Oland SJ**  
**Provincial Superior/ Supérieur Provincial**  
**Jesuits of Canada/ Jésuites du Canada**

Cc:

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau. Prime Minister of Canada

[justin.trudeau@parl.gc.ca](mailto:justin.trudeau@parl.gc.ca)

The Honourable Pierre Poilievre, Leader of the Conservative Party of Canada, Leader of the Opposition

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The Honourable Michael D. Chong, Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs