

Press release on the arrest of Fr Stan Swamy

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI) expresses its deep sorrow and anguish on the arrest of Fr Stan Swamy from his residence by the National Investigation Agency (NIA), accusing him of being related to the Bhima –Koregaon incident.

Fr Stan Swamy, 83 years old, a Jesuit has spent a major portion of his life giving yeoman service to the tribals and the downtrodden in the state of Jharkhand. According to our reports Fr. Stan has for decades been working to protect the rights of the Adivasis, especially their land rights. This could have worked against the interests of certain people. When questioned during the months of July- August 2020 by authorities, Fr Stan Swamy has fully cooperated with Investigating Agencies and has provided detailed statements, claiming to be innocent in the case.

It is difficult to comprehend the plight of an octogenarian with several morbidities, like Fr Stan Swamy to have to undergo such difficulties during this pandemic in which even a normal healthy person would hesitate to travel or would never travel risking one's life.

The CBCI makes a strong appeal to the concerned authorities to immediately release Fr Stan Swamy and to permit him to go to his residence. The Catholic Community has always been lauded by all as body of loyal, law abiding and service minded citizens of Mother India. The community has always been contributing to nation building and continues to collaborate with the government in working for the common good of all Indians and the progress of our nation. We earnestly urge that the rights, duties and privileges of all citizens are duly safeguarded, and peace and harmony prevail among all.

The Catholic Church is very grateful to all people of goodwill, people from all walks of life, belonging to all religions, and all institutions that have come out in an overwhelming support for Fr Stan Swamy's immediate release and safe return to his residence.

Archbishop Felix Machado
Secretary General
Catholic Bishops' Conference of India, (CBCI)
9th October 2020