



JESUITS®

Jesuit Conference
The Society of Jesus
in Canada and the United States

1016 16th Street, NW #400
Washington, DC
20036

202.462.0400 v
202.328.9212 f
www.Jesuits.org

October 20, 2020

The Honorable Michael Pompeo
Secretary of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Re: Unjust detention in India of Fr. Stan Swamy, SJ

Dear Mr. Secretary,

On behalf of the Jesuits in the United States, and in solidarity with our Jesuit brothers in India, I write to express deep concern over the ongoing unjust detention of Fr. Stan Swamy, SJ. Fr Stan, an Indian Jesuit priest, is 83 years old and in poor health. For 50 years, he has worked tirelessly for poor and marginalized communities in India, especially its Indigenous people (Adivasis).

On October 8, 2020 Fr Stan was arrested and taken into custody by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) of India. His arrest is related to alleged Maoist links, in particular a 2017 anniversary event in Bhima Koregaon-Elgar Parishad in Pune that drew 35,000 people. Tragically, the event ended in violence with one person dead and several injured.

Fr. Stan has always denied being present in Bhima Koregaon and strongly rejects any suggestion that he is linked to Maoist groups. Despite these denials, Fr Stan is one of 16 people who been detained in connection with this incident. Others include well-known human rights lawyers Arun Ferreira and Sudha Bharadwaj, and writers Vernon Gonsalvez and Varavara Rao.

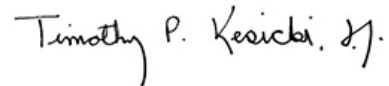
Fr Stan has been harassed because of his opposition to government policies that affect the rights of the Adivasis. His work has included documenting abuses of power against Indigenous youth and others falsely imprisoned for defending their rights.

Fr Stan's arrest has become international news and is being condemned globally. The United States plays an essential role as a leader in the promotion and advancement of human rights on the international stage. Our country stands for freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of religion, and against abuses of power, especially those that target people working to protect the rights of those who are marginalized. We cannot espouse these principles and values and stand by, doing nothing in this case.

We ask that the United States strongly condemn the incarceration of Fr Stan Swamy, ask the Indian Government to ensure his immediate release, and ask it to refrain from arbitrary arrests of innocent citizens.

We ask you to act as quickly as possible for the sake of Fr Stan, whose health and very life are at risk. Many incarcerated people have contracted the COVID-19 virus in prisons during the current pandemic, making this matter all the more urgent.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Timothy P. Kesicki, J. in cursive script.

Fr. Timothy P. Kesicki
President

Cc: David Hale, Under Secretary for Political Affairs
Dean Thompson, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary,
Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs
Nathan Sales, Acting Under Secretary,
Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights
Robert Destro, Assistant Secretary,
Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor