

Govt. of India
National Commission for Minorities
Lok Nayak Bhawan, Khan Market, New Delhi-3

Respondent: Govt. of Jharkhand

File No. FTS/3977/2011-NCM

The Bench of the NCM meeting on 22.11.2011 consisted of:

- i. Shri Wajahat Habibullah, Chairman
- ii. Dr. H.T. Sangliana, Vice Chairman
- iii. Ms. Syeda Imam, Member
- iv. Shri Keki N. Daruwalla, Member

Joint Secretary Ms. Esther Kar and Legal officer Meraj Khan assisted the Bench.

2. The Commission took cognizance of the report in Hindustan Times, Delhi edition dated 17.11.2011 with regard to the murder of tribal rights activist Sister Valsa John. The Vice Chairman, NCM desired to have a hearing with the Chief Secretary, Jharkhand to brief the Commission about the investigation into the murder of Christian Nun Valsa John. The Chief Secretary vide fax message dated 18.11.2011 informed the Commission that in view of his pre-occupation in the High Court of Jharkhand, he could not appear before the Commission and sought exemption from personal appearance, which was acceded.

Brief record of hearing held in the Conference Room of the National Commission for Minorities at 12.00 Noon on 22.11.2011.

Present (on video-conference from the Secretariat, Ranchi) :

- (i) Shri J.B. Tubid, Principal Secretary (Home), Jharkhand;
- (ii) DGP, Jharkhand Shri G.S. Rath

3. Shri J.B. Tubid informed the Commission that the murder of Sister Valsa John is not a communal incident but a law and order problem. The DGP, Jharkhand Shri G.S. Rath further submitted that nine people had been arrested so far and a special team has been created under an officer of the rank of Superintendent of Police to investigate the matter. It has been established that no firearms had been used by the miscreants. He also informed the Commission that Sister Valsa John came from Ernakulum, Kerala in 1998. She was involved in the anti-displacement campaign in the Panem Coal Mines Area and had a very good reputation in the area. She was also involved in the distribution of welfare of Panem projects to different agencies. She supported the local tribals and successfully managed to keep Coal Miners away till tribal demands were

accepted. He further submitted that the immediate cause of murder of Sister Valsa John seems to have been because she had insisted that a FIR should be filed based on the complaint of an alleged rape victim. He also submitted that the rape victim and the rapist had relations in the past, which was disapproved by the families. DGP also informed the Commission of the possibility that the Coal Mafia may also have been involved in the murder along with the supporters of the rape accused who did not want Sister Valsa John to get an FIR registered against them. Sister Valsa John had been visiting her home in Ernakulum, and returned on 7th October 2011. He further informed that over the past few years there had been a marked improvement in the lives of the people engaged with the Panem Coal Company but on the other hand those who worked with Sister Valsa and got their share of development work allotted by the company of displaced person were not able to much money and some of them saw Sister Valsa as a hindrance. There was a possibility that they might have connived with the Maoists in her murder.

Decision notice:

11 The Commission recommends as follows:

1. DGP, Jharkhand Shri G.S. Rath will, within ten days of date of receipt of this decision notice, inform the Commission of the current status of the case.
2. Chief Secretary Shri SK Chaudhury will intimate to the Commission by January 15, 2012 the progress of proceedings of the Investigating Officer, with specific reference to whether the actual accused have been identified/apprehended.

Sd/

Wajahat Habibullah
Chairperson

Sd/

Dr. HT Sangliana
Vice Chairman

Sd/

Syeda Imam
Member

Sd/

Keki N Daruwalla
Member

Authenticated true copy. Additional copies of order shall be supplied on application.

(Esther Kar)
Joint Secretary
22.11.2011