

PRESS RELEASE

8.11.2020

It is an outrage that the local police at Model Town Police Station have to this date still not filed an FIR more than a month has passed after a young girl from the Nishad community was raped and murdered at the residence of her employer in Gurmandi, Delhi. While the family has been fighting for justice, the police has effectively been extending protection to the culprits by not filing an FIR; while paradoxically filing an FIR against those protesting for justice including family members, students and a journalist on the charges of criminal conspiracy and epidemic acts. The family of the victim along with supportive students and media persons have been continuously protesting against this denial of justice, and against the adamance of Delhi police and the criminal silence of the MLA of the area.

The complicity of the police and their criminal refusal to file an FIR, their suspicious four day delay in conducting even a postmortem, the way they conducted a rushed cremation that effectively destroyed evidence and restricted the family's access to their own child's body, and they way they brutalised the family and activists seeking justice, all forms part of a pattern that emerges from Hathras to Butana.

In Butana a dalit minor girl was gang raped by the 10-12 policemen themselves, and both she and her cousin were stripped, physically and sexually brutalized by objects as well as verbally abused with casteist and sexist slurs. While an FIR has been registered, the accused police have themselves engaged in sustained intimidation of the survivors. In fact the girls themselves are in jail since they were custodially raped in the context of investigation around another incident in which a person known to them stabbed the police who had harassed them all. Meanwhile the accused police are roaming around freely.

In Hathras, UP, it was only after a sustained agitation by the family and activists that the rape and murder of a 19-year-old Valmiki community girl by four Thakur men in the national capital that the police took action. However, since then the CBI has been going in the direction of framing this crime as an honour killing by members of the family rather than investigating the accused. Furthermore, the officials responsible for the hurried cremation such as Hathras District Magistrate Praveen Kumar Laxkar who also issued threats to the family, continue to function in office during the investigation into the case.

We demand that:

1. An FIR should be registered in the Gurmandi matter without further delay. There should be a fair, impartial probe. Dhrupadi Bansal, her daughter Renu and son Atul, along with driver Subhash should be questioned given past distress calls made by the girl.
2. An independent judicial inquiry should be held in the Butana matter. All those accused of sexual violence should be arrested immediately prosecuted under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code and the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989.
3. The Butana survivors should be given immediate medical treatment and ensured safety inside prison. The survivors' medical examination should be conducted at AIIMS Delhi or PGI Chandigarh at the earliest.

4. In the Hathras case, the accused should be investigated by a truly independent body, as well as the police and the authorities who enabled and covered up the crime, as per relevant sections of the IPC and the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989.
5. All these cases of sexual violence must move swiftly on a fast-track basis as per the PoA Act.
6. Model Town ACP Ajay Kumar, SHO and other officials should be charged with the assault of protestors, including members of the family of the victim and journalists.
7. The families of all these victims must be provided full security, and police measures of repression upon protesting families must be stopped. All the authority figures who colluded in covering up the crime must be suspended and arrested under relevant sections of IPC, POCSO and the PoA Act, while the investigation takes place.
8. Measures should be considered under law for proper protection from sexual harassment of women domestic workers, and the recommendations of the Justice J.S. Verma Committee must be implemented around custodial sexual violence.