

LETTER

DEATH IN MIDNAPORE JAIL

Masum being a crusader for human rights strongly condemns the incidence of custodial death and torture that took place inside the Midnapore Central jail on 21st March 2011. Violating the Jail Code and Supreme Court guidelines that the Undertrial Prisoners and Convicted Prisoners are to be kept in separate cells, the authority of the Midnapore Central Jail sent the convicted prisoners to 'teach' the UTPs a lesson. In fact the Jail Super, Jailor and other jail authority members conspired against the Undertrial Prisoners and masterminded an attack by using the convicted prisoners to hunt down the unarmed undertrial prisoners (UTPs). Several were injured and one prisoner was killed in the incident. The incident was an aftermath of "bribe collection" through the convicted prisoners as the hoodlums of the jail authorities. It's a common practice maintained throughout the state of West Bengal, where the state government changed the name "jail" to "Reformatory Centre".

Kailash Das was severely injured due to the beatings yet was not taken for treatment, which resulted into his death. Other prisoners who came to his aid were also mercilessly beaten. To hush up the incidence of custodial violence on March 21, 2011 the jail authority continued brutality on a specific ward where the Undertrial Prisoners of PCAPA supporters were kept. The prisoners are still under threat. Several prisoners are injured yet no one has come forward to report on it.

Kailash Das was arrested as he was traveling without ticket, he was fined Rs 400 which he was unable to pay, thus he was imprisoned for three days and was to be released on March 21, 2011.

Masum demands:

- Immediate suspension from service of the Jail Superintendent and the Jailor until the completion of investigation.
- Section 176(1)A of Criminal Procedure Code to be followed.
- The injured persons be treated separately and freely without any interference of the jail authorities in presence of their family members.
- Judicial Magistrate has to be appointed to inquire the custodial death.
- The victim UTPs be given safe custody in different nearby prisons.
- Family members of Kailash Das be given Rs 10,00,000 immediately as compensation and that money should be recovered from the guilty jail authorities.

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