

9<sup>th</sup> December 2020

To,  
**ALL MEMBERS OF THE NHRC,**  
**The National Human Rights Commission**  
**Manav Adhikar Bhawan, C Block, GPO Complex**  
**INA, New Delhi-110023**

Respected Members of the NHRC,

We are writing with a sense of urgency to bring to your attention the horrendous, horrific and torturous human rights abuses inflicted by the Mumbai Police in the state of Maharashtra on Republic Media Network's Assistant Vice-president of Distribution Mr. Ghanshyam Singh during his days in custody after his baseless arrest, which he narrated upon his release.

Mr. Ghanshyam Singh was arbitrarily picked up on the morning of 10 November, 2020 from his home in relation to the FIR 143 of 2020 registered at the DCB, CID, Crime branch Mumbai ("TRP case"). The FIR in the TRP case neither named him, his affiliates nor his organisation, Republic Media Network, yet he languished in jail for 26 days. His arrest came despite the fact that he had fully cooperated in the probe and had appeared before the Mumbai police on 9 October 2020, 11 October 2020, 20 October 2020 and 21 October 2020 for the purpose of interrogation, which spanned long hours.

Shockingly, on the second day of his custody he was given open threats of physical harm if he did not self-incriminate and incriminate his organisation ARG Outlier Pvt Limited. In fact, the Police Officer handling the interrogation apart from assaulting Ghanshyam, did everything to try and intimidate him into implicating himself and his organisation without any valid basis. In the garb of an investigation, a cruel plot to physically and mentally torture a citizen of India played out within the walls of custody.

Horribly, Mr. Ghanshyam Singh was subject to extreme mental cruelty during his time in custody. When he refused to comply to the pre-medicated script of the law and order officers and maintained his true position that he give hard cash to any individuals that the police was making claims about, one police officer told him in custody - "humare pass doosrae raaste bhi hain... half hour later you will say... 10 days later you will". It is clear the Mumbai Police was trying to psychologically torture an innocent man.

Further, after maintaining his true statement that he didn't even know the individuals the Mumbai Police was insisting on linking him to, Mr. Ghanshyam Singh was taken into a room laden with a tool to torture and one inspector of the police force began saying "...inko maaro maro maro" following which, he was brutally and barbarically whipped with a chakki belt that was kept in the room. In what was a spine-chilling ordeal he was told "...haath aage karo", and was forced to extend his hand, which was then lashed by a thick injury-inflicting chakki belt multiple times on both the hands. He was put through systematic physical torture that is against all principles of human rights and a murderous blow to due process.



**REPUBLIC MEDIA NETWORK**

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Even as he cried and writhed in pain while the police officer was lashing him, they did not stop and kept the agony and assault going. All officers present were witness to his assault in custody and were partakers and bystanders to the crime, as directed to be committed by the senior police officer present. The Police Officer was saying "...Abhi bhi nahin bologe toh humare pass aur bhi raaste hain". This fully establishes the criminal and mala-fide intent of the crime branch and also establishes the tortuous, harsh, desperate and physically abusive methods the police exercised against him, right from the start of police custody. The very fact that the room of torture was prepared prior with the torture tool conclusively establishes the premeditated nature of the crime that was plotted by all the crime branch officers involved in the investigation. As importantly, the very fact that a senior police officer personally gave instructions for the physical torture establishes that the sanction for the human rights abuse was given by the senior officers of the crime branch.

There is not a shred of doubt that the Mumbai Police acted in an abusive, malafide and motivated manner during Mr. Ghanshyam's custody. Apart from the physical torture inflicted upon him, in a brazen violation of human rights and in an assault on the right to a fair trial, Mr. Ghanshyam Singh was constantly psychologically tormented to self-implicate and incriminate his organisation in a prejudged case despite being innocent. The police officers repeatedly tried to coerce him to make false statements by saying his organization would not be able to do anything for him, he was told "...tum toh phass gaya" and fed grave mistruths such as "...tumhara passport nahin milega". It is clear an innocent man who refused to lie had to face cruel mental games and a psychological attack by the Mumbai Police.

Despite narrating true facts repeatedly, the officers of the Crime Branch on multiple occasions didn't even allow Ghanshyam to read his own statements and made him forcefully sign them. This reveals a horrendous overreach by the Mumbai Police and a complete trampling of due process in custody. This was an utter abuse of power by the police officers, and patently unconstitutional.

Ghanshyam's personal dignity was shred to smithereens as he was paraded like a terrorist with his face covered in a black cloth as he was taken to court and it was justified to him saying that his identity should not be revealed to the media and that he had to cover his face for that purpose— this for a man whose name or whose organisation's name isn't even in an FIR. The Mumbai Police Crime Branch's campaign to rip Ghanshyam off basic human rights and human dignity is well established and serves as a terrifying example of the avatar a malicious state machinery can take against an innocent citizen.

There was a torturous attempt to intimidate Mr. Ghanshyam Singh with the threat of an excessive use of police force by the state government in Maharashtra on multiple occasions. He was beaten, he was tortured mentally and physically and the state machinery meant to protect him turned into his worst tormentor. Because he wouldn't lie and concoct facts, he was put through extreme physical and mental cruelty.

In the democratic Republic of India, every citizen has the right to life and personal liberty guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution of India. Republic Media Network strongly states that this excessive use of police force is against the very tenets of Indian democracy, and the prescribed duties of those in uniform. The barbaric nature of assault in custody and the savage intimidation tactics by the Mumbai Police establish the gory nature of state excess deployed against an innocent citizen. As part of a witch-hunt against Republic Media Network and in an attempt to fix investigations in a prejudged manner, now all semblance of due process has been shunned and devious means of torture are being resorted to.



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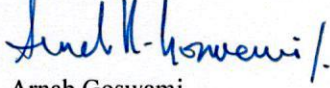
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We request your urgent intervention in this matter as the Protection of Human Rights Act 2019 mandates the NHRC to proactively inquire into violations of human rights; the violations of human rights by the Mumbai Police and its malafide action in the garb of an investigation cannot and must not go unchecked.

We turn to the NHRC to protect the human rights of Ghanshyam Singh who has been tortured, tormented and made to undergo gross mental and physical assault in the custody of the Mumbai Police. The NHRC should protect news agencies whose members have been physically tortured in custody.

Thanking You,



Arnab Goswami

Editor-in-chief and Managing Director



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