

URGENT ACTION

FOUR MEN AT IMMINENT RISK OF EXECUTION

Mukesh Singh, Pawan Gupta, Vinay Kumar Sharma and Akshay Thakur are at the immediate risk of being hanged after they were convicted for the rape and murder of a 23-year-old woman in Delhi in 2012. The President of India has rejected the mercy petition of Mukesh and Vinay.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

President of India, Ram Nath Kovind
Rashtrapati Bhavan,
New Delhi, 110004
Email: us.petitions@rb.nic.in

Dear President of India,

I ask for your urgent intervention to halt the executions and commute the death sentences of **Mukesh Singh, Pawan Gupta, Vinay Kumar Sharma and Akshay Thakur**.

The four men are at immediate risk of being hanged after being convicted for the gangrape and murder of the 23-year-old woman in New Delhi in 2012. The crime of which they are convicted was extremely violent and shocked people all around the world. While I feel the utmost sympathy for the family of victim and in no way wish to further their suffering, I appeal to you to halt the cycle of violence and stop the executions. I oppose the death penalty in all cases, as the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment.

Executions do not eradicate violence against women. There is no evidence to show that the death penalty acts as a unique deterrent. Instead, we call on you to put pressure on the Government of India to allocate adequate resources for the effective implementation of laws, improve conviction rates and ensure certainty of justice in all cases, through fair proceedings and without resort to the death penalty.

Even the Justice Verma Committee, whose recommendations were relied upon to reform laws on sexual assault and rape in the aftermath of the Nirbhaya case, had opposed imposing the death penalty in cases of rape. India has not hanged anyone since 2015, we implore you to ensure that this hiatus in executions continues by commuting the death sentences imposed on the four men.

Therefore, I ask you Mr. President to:

- **Accept the mercy petitions lodged by Pawan Gupta, and Akshay Thakur,**
- **Reconsider the rejection of Mukesh Singh and Vinay Kumar Sharma's mercy plea and**
- **Establish an official moratorium on all executions as a first step towards abolition of the death penalty**

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The 2012 Delhi gang rape case involved a rape and fatal assault that occurred on 16 December 2012 in New Delhi. The murder victim was a 23-year-old woman who was beaten, gang raped and tortured in a private bus in which she was travelling with her friend.

The incident generated widespread national and international coverage. Since Indian law does not allow the press to publish a rape victim's name, the victim was widely known as Nirbhaya.

As a result of widespread public calls for improved security for women, in December 2012, a judicial committee was set up to study and take public suggestions for the best ways to amend laws to provide quicker investigation and prosecution of people suspected of sex offences. After considering about 80,000 suggestions, the committee submitted a report which indicated that failures on the part of the government and police were the root cause behind crimes against women and contained recommendations on a wide range of issues that impact the safety of women and gender discrimination, ranging from laws on violence against women, child sexual abuse and honour killings; to principles of sentencing, the creation of adequate safety measures for women, police reforms, and electoral reform. The report opposed punishing rape with the death penalty.

Six men were arrested and charged in relation to this crime, but one died in prison and another, who was below 18 years of age at the time of the incident, was tried and convicted by a juvenile court. On 13 March 2014, the Delhi High Court found each of the defendants guilty of rape, murder, unnatural offences and destruction of evidence and confirmed death sentence for all four. The court noted that the crime fell into the "rarest of rare" judicial category set under Indian law to restrict the use of the death penalty.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases and under any circumstances. The President of India has the power to grant pardon to a person awarded the death sentence. As of 3 February 2020,, the President of India has rejected the plea of two of the prisoners, Mukesh Singh and Vinay Kumar Sharma. The other two convicts are at various stages of exhausting other legal remedies.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 17 March 2020

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Mukesh Singh (He/His), Pawan Gupta (He/His), Vinay Kumar Sharma (He/His), Akshay Thakur (He/His)