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व्यक्षानिय स्थितिस्य द्वार

Ref. No.....

Date. 17/12/2021

To

The Chairman, National Human Rights Commission, New Delhi Camp- Guwahati

Sir.

The Assam Jatiya Parishad would like to draw the kind attention of the Honourable National Human Rights Commission that there has been a rise in the number of extra judicial killings in Assam ever since the Government with Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarmah has taken the oath of office.

According to reports a list prepared by Assam Police shows 28 people were killed from May till the end of November in police firing. Two more people died in custody in early December. A third person died in a police shootout a few days later. All deaths have been confirmed by the police.

A closer look at the list of those killed throws up certain patterns – most belonged to ethnic or religious minorities in Assam. Of the 30 people killed and identified so far, 14 belonged to a religious minority and 10 were Bodo, Dimasa or Kuki – tribal communities that have seen armed movements for self-determination. They were reportedly facing police action for being alleged extremists.

According to Assam Police at least 55 people were also injured in police shootings between May 10 and December 10. Of these, at least 30 are from a particular minority community.

Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarmah, the chief minister, who also holds the home portfolio, has repeatedly defended the state police about these custodial deaths and shootouts. Shooting at criminals "should be the pattern" if they tried to escape, said the chief minister. The chief minister even claimed that the law permitted it and such measures would be used until crime was wiped out from Assam.

The number of custodial deaths, shootouts and injuries rose as the new government publicised its crackdown on drug trafficking, cattle smuggling and other forms of organised crime as well as militancy. According to Press reports Union Home Minister Amit Shah told the Assam chief minister to work on three areas — rising drug abuse, cow smuggling and human trafficking.

This is reportedly said by the chief minister at a press conference in July where he defended police shootings once again. The trend of "extra judicial





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killings" which seemed to deliver "instant justice", has set a dangerous precedent where police norms and guidelines could be flouted as a matter of course.

Assam Jatiya Parishad is of the firm view that the anti-social elements indulging in unlawful activities like drug trafficking and cow smuggling should be dealt with vigorously. However once an alleged culprit is apprehended he must be given the chance to be tried judicially. Even the worst offender should face justice through due process of law. However unfortunately the principle of natural justice has been repeatedly violated by the law enforcing agencies, and more unfortunately this has been endorsed by the top functionary of the state. The chief minister is on record saying that criminals can be shot in the legs if they try to escape. Laws say the police can only use minimum force and it doesn't mean police can fire on a fleeing person.

The Assam Jatiya Parishad apprehends that an alleged criminal is deliberately allowed to escape so that police can indulge in unlawful shooting. Only such an apprehension explains the pattern seen in the police action in different cases. As a political party it is not acceptable to us to allow enforcing agencies to act without any sanction of law. The police force of any state must function within the limits set by the principle of justice even to criminals.

The Assam Jatiya Parishad is deeply worried and concerned over the unique pattern of such extra judicial killings and, therefore, prays the Honourable National Human Right Commission to be kind enough to take note of the same and take appropriate action. The police may be very conveniently used by the party in power to suppress the legitimate rights of the people if the police actions are not constantly scrutinised by the public conscience.

The party has sought certain information from the state government regarding the matter and wish to submit a detail memorandum to the Honourable Commission as soon as the same are received.

Yours faithfully,

(Lurinjyoti Gogoi) President **Assam Jatiya Parishad**

(Jagadish Bhuyan) **General Secretary Assam Jatiya Parishad**