

Enact anti-torture laws immediately, says forum

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Members of JAACT (Joint Action Against Custodial Torture) staged a protest near the Collectorate here on Wednesday demanding the Union government to enact anti-torture laws immediately to prevent repeated offences of suspects and accused being tortured in prisons and police stations.

Observing the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, Human Rights Activist Henri Tiphagne said they urged the Union government to ratify the UN Convention against torture which was signed in 1997. “Ratification is crucial, especially if we aim to actively participate in the UN Security Council,” he added.

JAACT, highlighting the absence of anti-torture laws in India, advocated enactment of Human Rights Defenders Protection Act and pressed for the need to withdraw the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act.

Acknowledging the recent positive steps in protection of public against police violence, he said, the Supreme Court’s directive for CCTV installation in police stations should be implemented in all police stations in the country. “It is essential especially in critical investigation zones to prevent instances like custodial torture and custodial deaths,” he added.

The protesters condemned the denial of permission by police in districts like Theni to observe an international Day endorsed by the UN. They urged the police authorities to ensure that lawful protests are given permission.

The three laws which come into force from July 1 would pose a serious problem to the legal procedures as the cases filed before July 1 would continue with the old laws and the cases filed after that would have new laws. Dealing with two different laws parallelly would cause chaos in the legal proceedings throughout the country, they added.

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