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'Right to life of 1.30 lakh violated in last decade'

GRIM NUMBERS

1,30,407
persons' right to life violated in 2004-14

1,086
persons' right to life violated every month on average

STATE OF THE RIGHT TO LIFE IN INDIA

(Source: ACHR Report)*

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NEW DELHI: Over 1.30 lakh persons were either killed by state agencies or their death was caused by failure of the state agencies to prevent human rights violations by non-state actors during 2004-14, a report released by Asian Centre of Human Rights (ACHR) has said.

In its report released on Tuesday — "The State of the Right to Life in India" — ACHR said majority of the victims were women (80,947), followed by victims of custodial deaths (16,465), encounter deaths (10,900), deaths in police firing (2,527), deaths of civilians in militancy/Maoist-related violence (10,219), deaths in caste related violence (8,138) and deaths in communal violence (1,211).

"The right to life guaranteed by the Constitution of India is perhaps the most violated right in the country," ACHR Director Suhas Chakma told HT, adding his was the first ever study on the subject and the report was based on official records.

"On an average, the right to life of 1,086 persons is violated in India every month," he said.

The report sought to highlight the state's failure to safeguard the right to life of citizens, particularly of those from vulnerable groups such as women (80,947), civilians in militancy/Naxal violence, and those who died in caste-related and communal violence (9,349).

While appreciating the Supreme Court for expanding the ambit of the right to life, ACHR criticised the court for what it termed "arbitrary imposition of death penalty".

The NGO also criticised the 2014 SC order laying down guidelines to deal with encounter killings, saying it limited the National Human Rights Commission's powers — both on reporting of encounter killings by the police and in awarding compensation to victims. The report demanded doing away with the requirement of prior permission under the Armed Forces Special Powers Act and the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) to prosecute police/army/para-military personnel accused of such crime.

Chakma added: "Unless impunity is addressed, the violations of the right to life cannot be effectively reduced."