Dr. Randhir Kumar, Ph.D.
National President

National Human Rights and Crime Control Bureau
(Govt. Regd. 483/2017, Incorporated Under the Legislation of Govt. of India, I.T.A. – 1882)
Regd. Niti Aayog (Govt. Of India), United Nations (UNDESA)
Regd. 12A & 80G Under Income Tax Department (Ministry of Finance, Govt. of India)
Regd. CSR | Under Ministry of Corporate Affairs (Govt. of India) & M.S.M.E. (Govt. of India)
An ISO 9001:2015 Certified Non- Government Organization

(BY - EMAIL)

Ref. No: NHRCCB/0113/2026
Date: 28th November , 2026

To,
The Hon'ble Chairperson,
Press Council of India (PCI),
Soochna Bhawan, 8-CGO Complex,
Lodhi Road, New Delhi – 110003
chairmanbpp-pci@nic.in

Subject: Memorandum Seeking Suo Motu Cognisance and High-Level Fact-Finding Inquiry into the Unwarranted Police Raid on The Bharat Mitra News Office, Arrest, and Alleged Custodial Torture of Journalist Shri Abhishek Bharti in Jharkhand.

Respected Sir,

On behalf of the National Human Rights and Crime Control Bureau (NHRCCB)—a premier national non-governmental organization working tirelessly since 2017 (registered under the Indian Trusts Act, and enlisted with NITI Aayog, Government of India, and UNDESA) toward the protection of fundamental human rights, crime prevention, and constitutional justice across India—I am writing to draw your urgent attention to a grave assault on press freedom and the alleged custodial harassment of a working journalist in the state of Jharkhand.

As brought to light through credible news reports, constitutional protections guaranteed to the fourth estate have been severely violated in Jharkhand, as detailed below:

1. Coercive Police Action at The Bharat Mitra News Office:
Following the reporting of a sensitive public-interest matter, state police conducted an unwarranted raid and search operation at the news office of the digital media outlet The Bharat Mitra. Such intrusive police action inside a media newsroom not only obstructs independent journalism but also directly violates the confidentiality of journalistic sources and undermines the dignity of the fourth estate.

2. Arrest and Alleged Custodial Torture of Journalist Shri Abhishek Bharti:
On November 25, 2026, journalist Shri Abhishek Bharti (associated with The Bharat Mitra) was arrested by Simdega Police in Bistupur, Jamshedpur, in connection with a counter-FIR (Pakartand Police Station Case No. 25/26). Credible news reports and family statements indicate that Shri Bharti was subjected to inhuman physical torture in police custody to extract a coerced statement, resulting in him collapsing during his production before the court.

3. Attempt to Suppress Public-Interest Journalism:
The background of this episode traces back to mid-November 2026, when a 14-year-old minor girl from Simdega leveled serious allegations of sexual assault against a sitting Member of the Legislative Assembly, and Shri Bharti aired the minor's initial statement on his digital platform. Following the subsequent alteration of the victim's statement before a magistrate and the registration of a counter-FIR, the targeted police action against the journalist and his media house represents a textbook example of creating a "chilling effect" on free and fearless journalism.
The primary mandate of the Press Council of India is to preserve the freedom of the press and ensure that journalists can discharge their professional duties without fear, intimidation, or state coercion. If media offices exposing sensitive matters are subjected to police raids and journalists face custodial violence, the very foundation of democratic accountability is endangered.

On behalf of NHRCCB, I therefore earnestly urge the Press Council of India to:
• Take immediate suo motu cognisance of this entire incident and dispatch a high-level Fact-Finding Committee to Jharkhand to investigate the police raid on The Bharat Mitra office as well as the arrest and alleged custodial torture of Shri Abhishek Bharti.
• Seek a comprehensive factual report from the Government of Jharkhand and the state police administration, specifically demanding the legal basis for raiding a media office and complete medical records detailing Shri Bharti's physical condition post-arrest.

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• Recommend strict disciplinary and legal action against the erring police officials responsible for custodial violence and high-handedness, while ensuring immediate security for Shri Abhishek Bharti and the editorial team of The Bharat Mitra.

I trust that the Hon'ble Press Council of India will intervene decisively and expeditiously to uphold press freedom and safeguard the human rights of journalists.

With Regards

Yours faithfully,

(Dr. Randhir Kumar)

Copy to (for information and immediate necessary action please):

1. The Chief Secretary, Government of Jharkhand, Project Building, Dhurwa, Ranchi – 834004
2. The Director General of Police (DGP), Jharkhand Police Headquarters, Dhurwa, Ranchi – 834004
3. The Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi – 110001

(Dr. Randhir Kumar)