



वकालत मञ्च-नेपाल
ADVOCACY FORUM- NEPAL
Lawyers forum for human rights and rule of law

Press Statement

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Impunity on Nirmala Panta Case: State Fails to Deliver Justice to the Victim

Five years have passed without any resolution to the brutal rape and murder case of teenager Nirmala Panta. She went missing around 2 pm on 26 July 2018 from the house of her friend Roshani Bam where she had gone to do school homework. The following morning her dead body was found in a sugarcane field not far from her home.

Investigation into the case was botched from the very beginning as local people and activists alleged that the police had tampered with evidence to falsely accuse a mentally disabled person Dilip Singh Bista in order to cover for the real perpetrator. The mishandling of the investigation, exemplified by Constable Chandani Saud washing Panta's trousers in the crime scene and the police allegedly torturing Bista and other suspects in custody to extract confessions, provoked the victim's family members and the local people to agitate against the police. The police used excessive use of force against the agitators, causing the death of a person and injury to several people.

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) conducted an investigation into the case and in January 2019 submitted a report to the government with four point recommendations and 24-point directives to the government, all of which remain to be implemented. Successive governments have failed to fulfil the public's demands for fair investigation and prosecution of the accused. Kanchanpur District Court acquitted all defendants in the case filed by Panta's mother Durga Devi Panta regarding evidence tampering and Dilip's brother Khadak Singh Bista's case against police officers involved in the torture of his brother. AF's report published in 2021 "[Unable or Unwilling? Nirmala Panta Investigation Exposes Systemic Police Failures](#)" has detailed the obstructions for victims to get justice.

AF demands an impartial, independent and immediate investigation into the case and punishment of the perpetrators as per the law and asserts that failing to investigate and prosecute the perpetrators will further entrench impunity in the country. AF stands together with family members, human rights defenders, and lawyers involved in the case who have been continuously demanding truth and justice in the case.

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