

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL INDIA

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India's next Prime Minister must show evidence of commitment to human rights

Amnesty International India is asking the declared and probable Prime Ministerial candidates of various political parties to clarify their positions on key human rights issues ahead of parliamentary elections in April and May.

"Political parties have sworn to uphold constitutional values of justice, liberty, equality and dignity," said Shashikumar Velath, Programmes Director at Amnesty International India. "But their leaders' actions must reflect this pledge. It is essential for everyone to know where Prime Ministerial candidates stand on important human rights questions."

Amnesty International India's "14 for 2014" campaign asks candidates to state their positions on issues including police reforms, marital rape, undertrial detention, impunity for armed forces, land acquisition, decriminalization of homosexuality, and freedom of expression.

The candidates approached include Rahul Gandhi, Narendra Modi, Jayalalitha, Mayawati, Mamata Banerjee, Mulayam Singh Yadav, Naveen Patnaik, Nitish Kumar and Arvind Kejriwal.

"Human rights are unfortunately often seen as fringe issues during elections. But these crucial issues should be at the centre of debates and decisions around the elections," said Shashikumar Velath. "The next five years will show whether India is willing to be seen as a true global power by upholding human rights at home and abroad, or whether it will continue to be driven by politics and narrow conceptions of national interest."

Amnesty International India's "14 for 2014" human rights charter calls on political parties to incorporate 14 key human rights issues in their election manifestos.

The charter includes issues of business and human rights, reforms to the criminal justice system, violence against women, the death penalty, migrant workers' rights, human rights through education, and a principled approach to human rights abuses abroad.

Amnesty International India has submitted the Charter to various political parties, both national and regional. The organization has also launched a website, www.14for2014.com, and a missed call number - 09223322777 – for people to support the campaign by pledging to vote for candidates who commit to upholding human rights.

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Regards

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