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SUPREME COURT CASES

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(Record of Proceedings)

(BEFORE ALTAMAS KABIR, C.J. AND JASTI CHELAMESWAR
AND VIKRAMAJIT SEN, JJ.)

BACHPAN BACHAO ANDOLAN .. Petitioner;

Versus

UNION OF INDIA AND OTHERS .. Respondents.

Writ Petition (C) No. 75 of 2012, decided on January 17, 2013

Crimes Against Woman and Children — Trafficking — Search of missing girls — On prayer of NHRC two interim directions given for mandatory recording of FIR regarding missing children in police stations and, formation of Special Juvenile Police Units in different States, in accordance with S. 63 of Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000 (as amended in 2006) — Complaint with regard to missing children should be reduced into a FIR and follow-up investigation taken up immediately thereafter — States to ensure that one officer of Special Juvenile Police Unit is stationed at every police station, in accordance with Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Rules, 2007 — Copies of present order be made available by Registry to Advocates-on-Record for petitioner, Union of India, as also National Human Rights Commission, for necessary follow-up action — Chief Secretaries of different States to cause these directions to be circulated to all police stations — Ministry of Women and Child Welfare, as also Ministry of Social Welfare, are added as parties and copies of present order be served on them also — Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000, S. 63 (as amended in 2006)

SB-M/52184/SR

ORDER

1. This matter has been listed today for a follow-up of the directions given earlier regarding the filing of status reports by the different States and Union Territories. Despite such directions, till today only the States of Punjab, Chhattisgarh and U.P., have filed their status reports.

2. From the appearances given today, it appears that out of the various States and Union Territories, five are yet to file any kind of appearance whatsoever. Neither has any vakalatnama been filed nor has anybody appeared on their behalf, nor has any status report been filed. Although, the writ petition involves a matter of some concern regarding missing children, different States have failed to treat the matter with the seriousness it deserves. Let the matter be listed once again after two weeks (5-2-2013).

3. Time to file status reports by the States, who are yet to file their reports or yet to appear, is extended till the next date (5-2-2013).

a **4.** Ms Anitha Shenoy, learned advocate, appears and submits that she has already filed vakalatnama on behalf of the National Legal Services Authority and that the said Authority will be submitting its comprehensive response to the writ petition within the aforesaid period. She also submits that she will ensure that the State of Karnataka is duly represented and files its status report within the next date.

b **5.** On the next date, the Chief Secretaries of the State of Arunachal Pradesh, State of Goa, State of Gujarat, State of Orissa and State of Tamil Nadu, are directed to be present in the Court at 10.30 a.m., to explain as to why the matter has not been treated with the seriousness it deserves.

c **6.** Apart from the above, it has been submitted by Ms Shobha, learned advocate, appearing for the National Human Rights Commission, that two interim directions may be given with regard to these matters, namely, (1) mandatory recording of first information report with regard to missing children and, (2) formation of Special Juvenile Police Units in the different States, in accordance with the provisions of Section 63 of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000, as amended in 2006 (hereinafter referred to as the "Juvenile Justice Act").

d **7.** As far as the first submission is concerned, it appears to be fully justified, since filing of a first information report would activate the police authorities in taking active steps to try and trace the missing child. Accordingly, we direct that in case a complaint with regard to any missing children is made in a police station, the same should be reduced into a first information report and appropriate steps should be taken to see that follow-up investigation is taken up immediately thereafter.

e **8.** We also agree with Ms Shobha's second submission and are of the view that the States should put the same in place in the event this menace of missing children or trafficking of children is to be reduced. Accordingly, having regard to the fact that the Juvenile Justice Act was enacted in 2000, we direct each State to set up a Special Juvenile Police Unit within two months from date, if not set up already. For a start, the State should ensure that there is one officer of the said Special Juvenile Police Unit stationed at every police station, in accordance with the provisions of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Rules, 2007.

f **9.** Let copies of this order be made available by the Registry to the learned Advocates-on-Record for the petitioner, the Union of India, as also the National Human Rights Commission, for necessary follow-up action.

g **10.** The Chief Secretaries of the different States shall cause these directions to be circulated to all the police stations within their jurisdiction.

h **11.** Since the Ministry of Women and Child Welfare, as also the Ministry of Social Welfare, will have a part to play in giving effect to these directions, on the oral prayer made on behalf of the petitioner, the said two Ministries are added as parties through their respective Secretaries.

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12. Let copies of the Rule issued on the writ petition, be also served on the added respondents, through Mr D.S. Mahra, learned Advocate-on-Record for the Union of India.

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Court Masters

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