



To,

dt. 24-07-2025

The Director-General & Inspector General of Police  
Karnataka State Police Headquarters  
No. 2, Nrupathunga Road  
Bangalore – 560001, Karnataka

**Subject: Request for Immediate Reforms to Prevent Deaths in Police Custody:  
Facts, Analysis, Recommended Procedures, and the Essential Role of CCTV  
Surveillance**

Respected Sir,

We write to you in the wake of Police custodial deaths that persist as a serious human rights issue in India, highlighted by recurring fatalities, low conviction rates for responsible officers, and systemic obstacles to transparency and accountability. This representation calls on the Government to recognize the scope of custodial deaths, implement robust reforms, and prioritize specific procedures to prevent further loss of life. Mandatory CCTV surveillance in all places of custody emerges as a cornerstone measure for monitoring, deterrence, and justice.

**Facts and Figures: Police Custodial Deaths**

**National Overview (India)**

- 2021–22: 155 deaths in police custody across India.
- 2019: 125 deaths recorded.
- April 2020 – March 2022: 278 police custodial deaths reported.
- Conviction Rate (2001–2021): 26 police personnel convicted out of 1,888 reported deaths (<1.4%).





<u>Year / Period</u>	<u>Police Custody Deaths (India)</u>
2019	125
2021–22	155
Apr 2020 – Mar 2022	278

## State Overview (Karnataka)

- **2020–21:** 8 deaths in police custody.
- **2021–22:** 10 deaths reported.
- Recent incidents, such as the death reported in May 2024, highlight the ongoing nature of the problem.

## Key Issues

- **High Incidence, Low Accountability:** Despite significant numbers of custodial deaths, convictions of responsible officers are exceedingly rare.
- **Gaps in Transparency:** Actual figures may be higher due to underreporting and classification shortcomings.
- **Systemic Barriers:** Investigations often lack independence, and implicated officers are infrequently suspended or prosecuted.

## Critical Role of CCTV Surveillance in Police Custody Areas

### Why CCTV Matters

- **Transparency and Accountability**
  - Continuous recording acts as an impartial witness to all interactions and detentions.
  - Provides crucial evidence in cases of alleged misconduct, protecting detainees and police personnel alike.
- **Deterrence Against Abuse**
  - The presence of visible cameras discourages excessive force and unauthorized activity, reducing custodial violence.
- **Aid in Investigations**





- CCTV footage supplies objective evidence for inquiries into death or mistreatment, advancing fair judicial outcomes.
- **Legal Mandates**
  - The Supreme Court of India mandates CCTV installation in all police stations and custody areas.
  - National Human Rights Commission recommends comprehensive CCTV coverage and secure retention of footage.

## Recommendations for Effective Implementation

Action	Impact
Install CCTV in all custody areas	Enhanced monitoring and evidence collection
Maintain 24x7 recording and secure storage	Prevents tampering and evidence loss
Independent audits of CCTV systems	Ensures functional operation and reliability
Judicial and public access where needed	Promotes trust and enables thorough review
Minimum 18-month footage retention	Ensures availability for long investigations
Disciplinary action for non-compliance	Reinforces system integrity

## Challenges:

Non-functional cameras, selective placement, or tampering with footage undermine effectiveness.

## Solutions:

Mandatory maintenance, independent audits, tamper-proof storage, and consequences for interference.



## Recommended Procedures to Prevent Custodial Deaths

### **1. Legal and Systemic Reform**

- Full compliance with Supreme Court guidelines during arrest, detention, and interrogation.
- Mandatory electronic recording (audio and video) of all custodial interrogations and holding areas.

### **2. Independent Investigation Mechanism**

- Immediate reporting of all custodial deaths to judicial or human rights bodies.
- Investigations to be led by independent agencies, not the implicated police force.

### **3. Accountability and Fast-Track Justice**

- Establish dedicated fast-track courts for custodial violence cases.
- Automatic suspension of officers implicated in custodial deaths.
- Criminalize custodial torture through robust legislation in line with the UN Convention Against Torture.

### **4. External Oversight and Transparency**

- Unannounced, regular inspection visits by judicial magistrates and human rights commissions.
- Annual publication of custodial death statistics and investigation outcomes.

### **5. Police Training and Protocols**

- Ongoing human rights and non-coercive interrogation training for all police staff.
- Compulsory, independent medical checks for detainees before, during, and after custody.





The persistent rate of custodial deaths and the overwhelming lack of accountability demand prompt and decisive action. Institutionalizing comprehensive CCTV coverage stands out as both a deterrent and an evidentiary safeguard, forming a critical component alongside broader legal, procedural, and oversight reforms. Implementation of these recommendations will reinforce the rule of law, protect fundamental rights, and demonstrate India's commitment to upholding the dignity of every person in state custody.

As an organisation committed to the protection and promotion of human rights, we emphasize that police stations as custodians of law must uphold the highest standards of accountability and conduct.

We hope that your office will treat this issue with the urgency it demands and take prompt steps to rectify the current situation.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely,

Legal Department

Copy to,

1. The Office of the Chief Minister, Government of Karnataka, Bangalore-01
2. The Office of the Home Minister, Department of Home affairs, Government of Karnataka, Bangalore-01