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f NHRC takes cognisance of plight of 98 rescued bonded labourers

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G+ New Delhi, Jan 8 (PTI) The NHRC has taken cognisance of a complaint that 98 bonded labourers, rescued from two brick kiln sites in Jammu and Kashmir, have been neither given any immediate interim relief nor release certificates and left to fend for themselves.

✉ In a statement issued today, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) said that it has asked its Director General (Investigation) to "inquire into the matter and submit a report, within two weeks".

The NHRC has taken cognisance of a complaint that "98 bonded labourers, rescued from two brick kiln sites in Samba and Reasi districts of Jammu and Kashmir on December 28-29, have neither been given any immediate interim relief nor release certificates as per law and left to fend for themselves".

The labourers belong to Bilaspur, Janjgir, Champa, Jaijapur, Raigarh of Chhattisgarh and include 20 women and 41 children, the rights panel said.

"Allegedly, the victims were subjected to lathi-charge by the Delhi Police and some of the victims, including pregnant women have sustained injuries," it said.

The victims travelled from Jammu to Delhi in a "pitiable condition", without food and shelter, and approached the commission with the help of some social activists on January 4, the NHRC said.

The commission has also issued a notice to the district magistrates of Samba and Reasi calling upon them to submit the report in accordance with the provisions of the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976.

They have been also asked to submit the copies of the release certificates and explanations on the allegations made in the complaint within a "period of three days of the receipt of the notice".

The district magistrates of Bilaspur, Janjgir, Champa, Jaijapur, Raigarh, shall also coordinate with the district magistrates of Samba and Reasi, in order to ensure expeditious rehabilitation of the released bonded labourers, the NHRC said.

"They are expected to submit their report to the commission within four weeks," it added.

The Investigation Division (of the NHRC) shall also immediately contact the office of the chief secretary, Delhi government, resident commissioners of Chhattisgarh and Jammu and Kashmir in order to see the welfare and well-being of the victims till they reach their native places.

"A report be also obtained from Commissioner of Police, Delhi on use of force by police on the victims," it said. PTI KND ANB .

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