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PUBLIC STATEMENT

LATEST DEVELOPMENT
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India must protect witnesses and bring the Gauri Lankesh trial to a fair conclusion

The family of Kannada journalist Gauri Lankesh has waited years for the trial over her killing. Witnesses should be able to testify safely and defendants are entitled to a fair hearing.

What we know

Gauri Lankesh was shot outside her Bengaluru home in September 2017. The proceedings have moved slowly. On May 28, 2025, a witness told the court he had received a threatening phone call the day before, as he was traveling to testify, and the court recorded his complaint. Later reporting documented further turnover among the judges handling the case. The reported threat deserves its own investigation. [1–5]

Our position

A family that has waited years for a trial deserves a process that is fair and free of delay. Witnesses must be able to testify without fear, and defendants are entitled to the presumption of innocence. India is a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. [6–7]

Our calls

Amnesty Freedom calls on the authorities to:

1. Assess witnesses' protection needs confidentially and investigate threats.
2. Give the court the resources to hear the case without avoidable delay.
3. Keep progress reports from exposing witnesses or compromising the presumption of innocence.

Supporting information

1. Gauri Lankesh - Committee to Protect Journalists
2. Witness in murder of journalist Gauri Lankesh complains of receiving threat call ahead of court appearance | India News - The Indian Express
3. Key witness in Gauri Lankesh murder trial threatened
4. 9 years, 8 judges: Long wait for justice in Gauri Lankesh murder case | Bangalore News - The Indian Express
5. Six years on, slow progress in Gauri Lankesh murder trial
6. UNESCO, UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity
7. United Nations, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

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Note to editors: *This statement is based on the public sources listed above. The date shown is that of the most recent development recorded in those sources; later developments may not be reflected.*

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