

PIL pushes for filling up of 40% police vacancies in Gujarat

Ahmedabad: Gujarat high court has sought a reply from the state government on a PIL seeking police reforms, filling up over 42,000 sanctioned vacant posts in state police department, abolition of fixed-pay structure and outsourcing various tasks to NGOs.

HC has asked the government pleader to find out what the state government has to say about this PIL.

The petition has been filed by NGO, Swaraj Abhiyan, through its district convener who is an advocate, K R Koshti. The petitioner has requested the HC to direct the state police to fill nearly 40% of vacant posts and regular payment in the civil and armed police forces. There are only 54,955 police personnel against sanctioned strength of 95,979 and 15,011 armed policemen against the sanctioned 20,912. The PIL cites Gujarat's long coast, safety of fishermen and that the state shares borders with Pakistan to insist for maintaining sanctioned strength of police force.

The PIL demands abolition of fixed pay structure because the state government pays a meagre amount, even less than minimum wages, to new recruits - Lok Rakshak jawans - who are inducted under this system. It has also urged to the state government to stop outsourcing services of police department to private agencies.

Advocate Koshti stated that the police strength in India is only 1.28, including civil and paramilitary forces, per 1000 citizens as against 3.44 in Malaysia, 2.1 in Brazil, 2.85 in the USA and 2.3 in the UK. According to Interpol's norms the police-citizen ratio should be 4:1000. The lawyer told the court that the poor strength in police department heightened stress level.

The PIL has also quoted examples of police officials committing suicide. The petitioner has claimed that junior-level officials are not even provided official vehicles for patrolling and they have to use their personal vehicles for this.