



Kerala nun rape case Bishop Acquitted

- By Ankit Agrawal

Bishop Franco Mulakkal, Accused Of Nun's Rape In Kerala, Acquitted

After a trial of more than 100 days, the additional sessions court pronounced a single line verdict saying it had found him not guilty of the charges.

All India | Reported by [Sneha Mary Koshy](#) | Updated: January 14, 2022 1:24 pm IST



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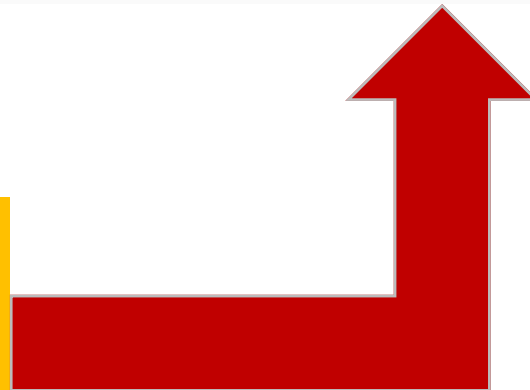
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WHAT HAS HAPPENED?

Former bishop of the Jalandhar diocese of the Catholic Church **Franco Mulakkal** was **acquitted in the Kerala nun rape case on Friday** by a trial court.

Kottayam Additional District Court judge **G Gopakumar** announced the verdict.

ABOUT THE NUN RAPE CASE

In an **FIR filed at the Kuravilangad** police station in **June, 2018**, a **senior nun**, belonging to the order of the Missionaries of Jesus of the Catholic Church,

Accused Franco Mulakkal, the then bishop of the Jalandhar diocese of the Church, of **raping her** and subjecting her to **unnatural sex 13 times** between **2014 and 2016** at the Mission convent in **Kuravilangad**.

Kochi



Kochi

Vembanad
Lake

○ Kottayam

Alappuzha

Kumarakom

○ Changanassery

KERALA

Thotapally



The **Bishop** alleged the charges against him were 'fabricated' and in **retaliation for taking action against her** with regard to a complaint raised by a woman.

Shortly after the **FIR** was registered, in September 2018, a **group of nuns** close to the victim **launched a hunger-strike** in front of the **Kerala High Court premises** in Kochi demanding the **arrest of Mulakkal**.

The protest saw **success as Mulakkal was brought to Kochi from Jalandhar, questioned for three days** by the police and **eventually arrested**.

He was released on bail **nearly a month later.**

The trial began in September 2020 and even though Mulakkal approached the High Court and the Supreme Court with a plea to quash the charges against him, the courts refused to entertain the plea.

CHARGES AGAINST MULAKKAL

Mulakkal faced a slew of charges including **illegal confinement, sexual harassment through abuse of power, unnatural sex, rape and outraging the modesty of a woman.**

Vaikkom DySP K Subhash was the **investigating officer.**

The **verdict came at the end of the 105-day-long trial** in closed court.

There were **83 witnesses** on the list **out of which 39** are said to have **given testimonies in favour of the prosecution.**

The defence paraded **nine witnesses**.

The witnesses include **4 bishops** including Major Archbishop George Alencherry of the Syro-Malabar Church, **11 priests, 25 nuns, seven magistrates** who gave secret testimonies and the doctor who conducted the medical test.

WHY IS THIS CASE SIGNIFICANT?

This is the **first time a Catholic Bishop** was **arrested and booked** on **charges of rape and** sexual harassment **in India**.

Mulakkal was **relieved from official duties at the Jalandhar diocese** **after he was charged by the police** in the rape case.

The **case also shone a bright spotlight on the horrors that nuns face** **within the Church** with **hardly any mechanisms in** **place for grievance redressal**.

Oftentimes, complaints of harassment against senior clergy go unnoticed and **deliberately buried by those in the higher management.**

The verdict in the case will spur more discussions on the lopsided power **structure within the Church** and hopefully compel amends.



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—Peter Travers, *Rolling Stone*

Q. Which among the following statement is correct regarding the POCSO Act?

1. Every crime against children must be reported as per POCSO Act
2. Those who do not report sexual offences against children may be punished as per the Act

- A) 1 only
- B) 2 only
- C) Both 1 & 2
- D) None of the above



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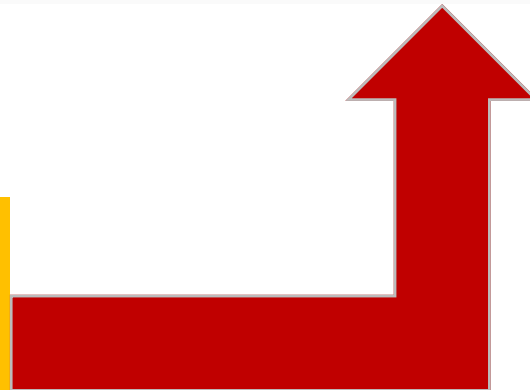
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