



Kerala Catholic Bishops' Council's **COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL HARMONY & VIGILANCE**

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All Kerala Press Release
Ref: KCBCSHVC/ 06/ 25

30/ 04/ 2025

Increasing wildlife attacks and the "forest raj": The government needs to take decisive action. KCBC Commission for Social Harmony and Vigilance

According to the startling conclusions of the report prepared by the Kerala High Court-appointed amicus curiae, 2630 wildlife attacks occurred in Kerala between 2023 and 2024. In five years, 103 people were killed by wild elephants and 341 by other wild animals. The damage that wildlife causes to property and agriculture is incalculable. Since attacks by wild animals are becoming more frequent, the government, public officials, and the media are not even giving these tragedies the attention they deserve. The following recommendations are made once more in this regard.

1. The people of Kerala want the central and state governments to take notice, take action to curb the growing number of wildlife attacks and the factors that contribute to them, and comprehend and address the people's predicament. All leaders in the media, politics, and organisations should come forward and give these issues the attention they deserve, and the government should plan to make constructive interventions and find and implement effective solutions.

2. The amicus curiae's recommendation that compensation for fatalities resulting from wildlife attacks should be at least Rs. 24 lakh is commendable. But the government systems need to wake up and take action to improve the current situation, where victims are not even given the minimum amount of compensation in a timely manner. They should also make sure that those who have lost their property, the injured, and the relatives of the deceased all receive the compensation they are entitled to.

3. The Forest Department is continuously taking anti-people positions without supporting the people, even though tens of thousands of families in Kerala live in constant fear of wildlife attacks. The Chief Minister should step in directly to control the department's actions. Control must be exercised over the Forest Department's actions, which include interfering with the rights of the people and encroaching on residential and agricultural land that has been lawfully occupied by the people for decades in districts like Idukki and Wayanad and other hilly forest areas. The government should take decisive action to stop certain officials from abusing their position of authority and disregarding the Constitution's fundamental rights.

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