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To

Hon. Sushil Shinde,  
The Honourable Minister for Home Affairs,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi.

*Sub.: Request submitted, by the Catholic Diocese of Tuticorin, Tamil Nadu – to withdraw fully the order of prohibition to draw foreign funds by the said diocese. The first order No: II/21022/58 (480)/2011/FCRA-MU dated 09-02-2012 from MHA and the second order No: F.II/21022/58 (0480)/2011/FCRA-MU dated 25<sup>th</sup> September 2012 – reg.*

Respected Sir,

Greetings from the Catholic Diocese of Tuticorin, Tamil Nadu!  
The diocese of Tuticorin was established in the year 1923. The Catholic Diocese of Tuticorin is the second largest diocese in Tamilnadu, having a Catholic population of around 4.5 lakhs. The said Diocese is comprised of the district of Tuticorin and part of the district of Tirunelveli. The said diocese has established a time tested and traditional administrative machinery, to discharge its religious, charitable and social functions, especially for the welfare of the minority Catholic Community and the marginalized and the poor of the society at large, particularly the dalits in our area.

Even before the registration of the society, the diocese of Tuticorin, as a Religious Body of the Catholic Community existed and was involved in multifarious activities in the public interest. All these 90 years, it has enjoyed unblemished record, because of sound financial administration including its accountability in respect of foreign contributions. The Petitioner Society is involved in the development of the people, and the nation building, through its involvement in the field of *education, health, social development, relief and rehabilitation* during and after disasters, apart from its *pastoral and religious* activities.

In short the diocese runs the following institutions:

**I. Schools**

Government aided schools whose buildings and infrastructures are maintained by the diocese.

Educational helps 232 poor students amounting to Rs.5,93,080(2013-2014)

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II. Orphanages in Thoothukudi Diocese	Boys	Girls
1. Adaikalapuram, St. Joseph's Charity Institute	237	213
2. Manapad, St. James parish	65	85
3. Innaciarpuram, Thoothukudi	38	49
4. Somanathaperi, Kodankulam	23	22
5. Vembar - Holy Ghost	65	52
6. Kurumbur - Kachanavilai	13	188
7. Chettivilai	8	16
Total	449	625

III. Dispensaries in rural areas for the poor 18

IV. Priests

- Total number of Active priests : 219
  - Retired Priests who served the diocese for more than 50 years : 20
- Their medical expenses & maintenances

V. Destitute Homes - Adaikalapuram

Men	39
Women	124
Total	163

- Repair and maintenance of old and dilapidated buildings

VI St. Joseph's Charity Institute is run at Adaikalapuram with 1200 resident inmates: mentally retarded women, boys and girls, mostly orphans and semi-orphans, undergoing educational and employment formation, besides other Charitable and Socio Development activities for the poor and marginalized.

Because the activities of the Petitioner Society are well founded in the historical and traditional charitable services of the Catholic community, millions of people, especially the weaker sections, the children, the women, the old-aged, the disabled, the dalits, the victims of various diseases and disasters have greatly benefitted for nine decades. These current beneficiaries irrespective of caste and creed are thousands in numbers.

It will be pertinent to mention that the petitioner's involvement and integrity has never at any time intended to prejudice the sovereignty and security or the territorial integrity of India. On the other hand, the petitioner by its activities has contributed for the public interest, communal harmony and nation building. It can be verified from the past records of the Petitioner Society. It remains unblemished and clean in respect of transparency and accountability for around nine decades. The returns and the reports filed under the Income Tax Act, 1951 and Foreign Contribution (Regulations) Act, have been done on time and have been found to be in order. By no stretch of imagination, anyone can allege that the said Catholic Community of Tuticorin diocese is subverting public interest.

There seems to be some misinformation and consequently a certain misunderstanding that the actions of the diocese have been prejudicial to the public interest. Possibly there is a connection made between us and those who are making a protest against Koodangulam Nuclear Power Plant and thereby accuse the diocese of political involvement in the protest.

Hence they sent a questionnaire of 32 questions in Nov.2011 which we duly answered giving required data for past 6 years. From January 10 to 14, 2012 two officials from Ministry of Home Affairs came to check our accounts and all related documents on the spot. They did so and expressed satisfaction that no funds received from abroad was diverted outside the Society Projects aims and objectives. But on February 10<sup>th</sup> the Ministry of Home affairs sent an order cited above to freeze the operation of FCRA Account. In July 2012 once again the Ministry of Home Affairs sent 3 persons to do the ground-check on the same documents from July 2 to 6<sup>th</sup> 2012 and that was also executed. There is an interim stay granted by the Madurai Branch of Madras High Court to the freezing of FC Account from 5<sup>th</sup> July 2012 but the case is going on. We maintain that it is an unfounded allegation that the diocese is acting against the public interest of the nation. Hence we feel that the freezing of Bank account of FCRA is not in order.

Unless the Hon'ble Minister for Home Affairs intervenes in the above problem, advising the appropriate authorities not to unnecessarily harass the Christian community and to withdraw the negative injunctions issued in respect of the traditional and respectable Catholic diocese of Tuticorin, the Christian community will be greatly prejudiced.

Therefore we humbly request the intervention of the Hon'ble Minister for Home Affairs in the above referred injunctions against the Catholic Diocese of Tuticorin and grant appropriate relief to the Christian Community, affected by such actions of the executives for the past one year.

Yours faithfully,

(Most Rev. Dr. Yvon Ambroise  
Bishop of Tuticorin)