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title: Issue regarding the abduction of a Catholic priest from Kerala-Father Tom Uzhunnalil by ISIS in Yemen.

SHRI K.C. VENUGOPAL (ALAPPUZHA): I would like to invite the kind attention of the Government to an issue of serious concern regarding the abduction of a Catholic priest from Kerala- Father Tom Uzhunnalil by ISIS in Yemen.

Father Tom was kidnapped during a terror raid on a Missionaries of Charity-run old age home in Aden in Yemen on March 4. At least 16 people including four nuns were killed in the attack. The Father was working with the Missionaries of Charity for last two years.

He has been abducted almost a year ago and till now his whereabouts are not clear. Four months after his abduction by Islamic State militants in Yemen, video clippings of Father Tom Uzhunnalil -- surfaced on the Facebook page of the priest. **In** the clippings, the blind-folded priest was seen getting thrashed by unidentified men in a secret location. It was clear from the visual that he has been brutally thrashed and tortured. There were reports that the priest was crucified by his abductors. Later news surfaced that he was alive in militants' custody. Even Pope Francis also made a fervent plea to abductors to release the priest.

Two months back External Affairs Minister Shrimati Sushma Swaraj also said the priest was safe. However till now there is no official clarification on the exact details of his whereabouts and safety.

This is a serious matter which needs urgent intervention from the Government. I am sorry the Home Minister of India has told the media that he was not aware of the fact. That was sad. I would request the Government to use all possible diplomatic and other amenities in the Middle East to rescue Fr. Tom. I would also demand the Government to appoint a Cabinet Minister to coordinate the rescue mission of Fr. Tom. Thank you.

SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH (MAVELIKKARA): Madam Speaker, the hon. Prime Minister is here. We want a reply from the Government on this matter.

HON. SPEAKER: No. No reply is needed.

SHRI KODIKUNNIL SURESH: Madam, I would like to associate.

HON. SPEAKER: You can send slips to the Table.

S/Shri P.K. Biju,

Jose K. Mani,

Mullapally Ramachandran,

Anto Antony,

M.K. Raghavan,

M.I. Shanavas,

Kodikunnil Suresh,

Prof. K.V. Thomas and

Adv. Joice George are permitted to associate with the issue raised by Shri K.C. Venugopal.