

India in shock over 86-year-old grandmother's rape

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Tens of thousands of rapes are reported in India every year, but some stand out for being deeply disturbing.

The 86-year-old grandmother was raped in Delhi

New Delhi: In one particularly shocking case, police in the capital, Delhi, have arrested a man in his 30s for the rape and assault of an 86-year-old grandmother.

"The woman was waiting outside her home on Monday evening for the milkman when she was approached by her attacker," Swati Maliwal, head of the Delhi Commission for Women, told the BBC.

"He told her that her regular milk delivery man wasn't coming and offered to take her to the place where she could get milk."

The octogenarian trustingly accompanied him, said Ms Maliwal, adding that he took her to a nearby farm where he raped her.

"She kept crying and begging him to leave her. She told him that she was like his grandmother. But he ignored her pleas and assaulted her mercilessly when she tried to resist and protect herself," Ms Maliwal said.

Local villagers who were passing by heard her cries and rescued her. They handed over the attacker to the police.

Ms Maliwal, who visited the survivor at her home on Tuesday, described her meeting as "heart-breaking".

"Her hands are totally wrinkled. You get a shock when you hear what she went through. There are bruises on her face and all over her body and she told me that she had vaginal bleeding. She is suffering from extreme trauma."

Ms Maliwal has demanded the death penalty for the attacker, whom she described as "not human".

"I'm writing to the chief justice of Delhi High Court and the lieutenant-governor of the city to fast-track the case and hang him in six months," she said.

Rapes and sexual violence have been in the spotlight in India since December 2012 when a 23-year-old physiotherapy student was gang-raped on a moving bus in Delhi.

She died a few days later from injuries sustained during the assault. Four of the accused were hanged in March.

But despite the increased scrutiny of sexual crimes, their numbers continue to rise.

According to the National Crime Records Bureau, police recorded 33,977 cases of rape in India in 2018 - that works out to a rape every 15 minutes. But campaigners say the actual numbers are much higher as many cases are not even reported.

And not all make news - only the most brutal or shocking get reported in the press.

- BBC