

# GUJARAT ANTI-TERROR BILL GETS PRESIDENT'S NOD

Relevant for: Indian Polity | Topic: Issues and Challenges Pertaining to the Federal Structure, Dispute Redressal Mechanisms, and the Centre-State Relations

President Ram Nath Kovind has given his assent to the 'Gujarat Control of Terrorism and Organised Crime (GCTOC) Bill', controversial anti-terror legislation passed by the BJP-ruled State in March 2015.

One of the key features of the new Act is intercepted telephonic conversations would now be considered as legitimate evidence. The announcement of the presidential assent was made by Gujarat Minister of State for Home Pradeepsinh Jadeja in Gandhinagar on Tuesday.

The Bill, earlier named as the Gujarat Control of Organised Crime (GUJCOC) Bill, failed to get the presidential nod thrice since 2004 when Narendra Modi was the Chief Minister of the State.

In 2015, the Gujarat government re-introduced the Bill by renaming it the GCTOC, but retained controversial provisions such as empowering the police to tap telephonic conversations and submit them in court as evidence.

Mr. Jadeja said the provisions of the Bill would prove crucial in dealing with terrorism and organised crimes such as contract killing, ponzi schemes, narcotics trade and extortion rackets.

"One of the key features of this Bill is that the intercepted telephonic conversations would now be considered legitimate evidence. This Bill also provides for the creation of a special court as well as the appointment of special public prosecutors. We can now attach properties acquired through organised crimes. We can also cancel transfer of properties," he said.

Other provisions of the Act is the admissibility of confession made before a police officer as evidence.

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