

Report of fact-finding inquiry into mob attack on Adivasis of Dumri (Gumla, Jharkhand)

(All relevant documents and photographs can be downloaded from this link - https://drive.google.com/open?id=1Tfzq9Xvbr_pJCSk6kjVrE0izavKjjIYW and *Testimony of victims, doctor and ox-owner can be seen at <https://youtu.be/yqJXrnYtCEs>*)

This report is based on an inquiry into the mob attack on four Adivasis (resulting in death of one of them) in Dumri block (Gumla, Jharkhand). This inquiry was conducted by the representatives of Jharkhand Janadhikar Mahasabha, a coalition of several progressive organisations. It is based on the following:

- Meeting of a team (Saroj Hembram, Sonal Tiwari and Siraj Dutta) with two of the victims – Janerius Minj and Peter Kerketta – and their relatives on 14 April 2019 in Debuka Nursing home, Ranchi.
- Visit of a team of activists and representatives of organisations associated with Mahasabha – Shadab Ansari (Advocate, HRLN), Sonal Tiwari (Advocate, HRLN), Afzal Anees (United Mili Forum), Bharat Bhushan Choudhary (Activist), Saroj Hembram (Jan Sangharsh Samiti), Siraj Dutta (Activist), Taramani Sahu (Activist) and Ziyaullah (APCR) – to Jurmu village, Jurmu Gram Panchayat, Dumri block, Gumla district on 15 April 2019. The team met the wife, daughter and son of the deceased Prakash Lakda, wife and son of victim Peter Kerketta and several residents of the village.
- Meeting of the above mentioned team with Dr Khalko, in-charge, Community Health Centre, Dumri on 15 April 2019.
- Meeting of the team with police officials of the local thana and the Investigating Officer R Kumar on 15 April 2019.

Summary of the finding

One Adivasi of Jurmu village of Dumri block (Gumla, Jharkhand) was lynched to death and three other Adivasis were seriously injured by the attack by a mob from the Sahu community (Hindu) of neighbouring Jairagi village on the night of 10-11 April 2019. The victims were part of a group that was carving out a dead ox after being told to do so by the owner of the ox (an Adivasi of their village). The mob chanted slogans of ‘Jai Shri Ram’, ‘Jai Hanuman’ and ‘Bajrang Bali ki Jai’ while beating the victims. The mob was led by Sanjay Sahu (a history chargesheetee) and his two sons, Sandeep Sahu, Shiva Sahu, Santosh Sahu and comprised several young men of Jairagi. It also forced the victims to chant the slogans and beat them more if they refused to chant or were not able to chant loudly.

The role of the local police of Dumri thana in the incident raises several questions. Sanjay Sahu and his associates dumped the four victims in front of the Dumri thana at around 12:00 am on 11 April. Instead of immediately rushing the victims to a hospital, the police made them wait outside in the cold for around four hours. By the time they were taken to the local health centre, Prakash had already succumbed to his injuries and was declared brought-dead by the doctor. While the victims kept saying that they were carving an ox that had died of old age, the police filed an FIR against them and 20-25 unnamed people of their village on charges of cow slaughter. The police has also registered an FIR

against seven perpetrators named by the victims, for the violence and death, but has arrested only two of the accused persons till now.

The police was unable to recall the sequence of events after the lynching. Also, there were discrepancies between its account and those given by the victims and the doctor at the health centre. This indicates that the police is trying to build a false case of cow slaughter against the Adivasis, cover up its negligence and protect the perpetrators. The statements of the officer in charge of the thana Amit Kumar (who was in charge on that day) given to the fact-finding team indicate that without paying attention to the facts of the case, he feels that sentiments of Hindus were hurt and the incident was a reaction to that.

Detailed report

Within a few minutes after the fact finding team reached Jurmu village on 15 April, a team of police / CRPF (in an unmarked car and several bikes), led by R Kumar, also reached the village. The Inspector of the Circle/Investigating officer of the case R. Kumar, questioned members of the team about the purpose of their visit and stayed in the village till the team left.

Incident (based on the statements of victims, relatives and other villagers)

An ox of Jurmu's Jakherius Kujur had not come back from grazing on 9 April (Tuesday). Jakherius and his family members searched for the ox on 9 April, but did not find it. They looked for it the next day as well and found that the ox was trapped in mud near the river, about a kilometre from the village. According to Jakherius's relative Birjina, the ox was old and had grown weak due to old age. The ox died at that spot. Jakherius, Birjina and other relatives came back to the village and informed others (at about 3-4 pm on 10 April) about the dead ox and asked them to carve it and use it, as required. According to one of the victims Janerius, Jakherius told the villagers, "Bail mar gaya hai. Makkhi hag-moot raha hai us par. Jao tum log kaat kar kha lo".

Around 25-30 people including Prakash Lakda, Peter Kerketta, Janerius Minj, Belesius Tirkey, few men of the village and several children, reached the site to carve the dead ox by 6:00 - 6:30 pm. They were skinning and carving the dead ox when an auto driver and some people (of Sahu community) of neighbouring Jairagi village spotted them on their way back from the local market in a neighbouring village Korundha of Chhattisgarh. At around 7:30-8:00 pm, a mob of around 35-40 people from Jairagi village attacked the villagers of Jurmu at the site. They had lathis, swords and sickles. Most of the people of Jurmu managed to flee. Four persons Prakash Lakda, Peter Kerketta, Janerius Minj and Belesius Tirkey were caught by the mob. The mob started beating them. According to Peter and Janerius, the mob was chanting naaras of 'Jai Shri Ram', 'Jai Hanuman' and 'Bajrang Bali ki Jai'. Prakash Lakda asked the mob why they were being beaten as the ox was already dead when they had come to carve it. He also told the mob that if they had any problem they should hand over the four persons to the thana. But the mob kept on beating them.

The mob made them walk to Jairagi chowk (more than 1 km away) and kept beating them till the chowk. The four victims were again asked to chant naaras of 'Jai Shri Ram', 'Jai Hanuman' and 'Bajrang Bali ki Jai'. They were beaten further when they were not able to chant loudly or refused to chant. More people of Jairagi village joined in beating the four persons at the chowk. At times, when the victims passed out, the mob made them stand up and beat them again. Both Janerius and Peter say that they passed out after some time. According to the victims, the mob was led by Sanjay Sahu and his two sons, Santosh Sahu, Sandeep Sahu and Shiva Sahu. The mob had several young Sahu men of

Jairagi village. The victims were beaten till 11:30 pm. Peter Kerketta was even made to sign on a blank paper by the perpetrators and give names of those who carved the dead ox with him.

During this period, Sanjay and another person went to the Dumri thana to inform the police of the incident. After they came back, the four victims were put on a Lakshmi Rath bus that was standing at Jairagi chowk (the bus makes trips between Ranchi and Dumri during the day). The driver was woken up. According to Janerius and Peter, Prakash was alive when they were put on the bus. Sanjay Sahu and others also got on the bus.

The victims were taken to Dumri bazar and brought down from the bus near the bazar sheds in front of the Dumri thana. Prakash was kept at a side and the other three were taken towards the thana gate. The three victims were crawling towards the thana. According to the victims, the thana officials were outside the thana and saw them being taken out. After getting out, Sanjay Sahu told his associates, “kisi ko to maarna hi hai” (we have to kill at least one person). When the victims asked for water, Sanjay and his associates asked them if they wanted to drink their urine. Sanjay and his associates went inside the thana, spent some time there and then left.

The police told the victims that they had some work and they would be taken to hospital after they returned. The police officials went somewhere in their vehicle. The victims managed to take shelter inside one of the bazaar sheds, right in front of the thana. Prakash was lying motionless where he was put by the perpetrators. As Belerius was beaten somewhat less than the others, he managed to collect some twigs and paper and lit a fire to keep them warm. The victims asked the thana chowkidar, an Adivasi, to help them, as he was also an Adivasi. The chowkidar got them a blanket. The police took them to the Dumri community health centre at around 4:00 am (“Jab murga bol raha tha”, according to the victims). Prakash and the other three victims were taken separately to the health centre. First the three victims who were alive were taken to the centre and then later, Prakash’s body was taken. According to Janerius, he realized that Prakash was dead when he touched the body lying next to him in the health centre.

They were at the health centre till 8:00-9:00 am and then taken to Gumla Sadar hospital. In the hospital, the police asked them for the names of people in the mob. The victims gave the names of Sanjay Sahu, his two sons, Santosh Sahu, Shiva Sahu, Sandeep Sahu and Jeevan.

The victims were then referred to RIMS, Ranchi. They were admitted there on the evening of 11 April and discharged in the morning of 14 April. The doctor who checked them before discharging them told them that they were fine, although they were still in pain. The police told them that they were free to go and no arrest-case had been filed against them. Peter and Janerius were admitted to a private nursing home in Ranchi by their relatives.

During the discussion with the fact-finding team, the victims, their family members and neighbours also categorically denied that the victims were beaten up during a fight amongst the villagers of Jurmu on division of meat of the dead ox (as reported in some local media reports). They also said that Sanjay Sahu, one of the perpetrators, has criminal antecedents and also has a history of violence against Adivasis.

Details of the village and the victims’ families

The village Jurmu has around 200-250 households - about 106 Christian Adivasi, 50-60 Chik Baraiks, 10-12 Rajputs, 10 Ghasis, 2 Lohras, 2 Muslims and 1 Sahu. The Adivasis, Ghasis and Lohras

traditionally eat beef, but only when the bovine dies. They use the skin of the ox for making their drums. The people said that they never had any issue amongst the different communities of their village regarding the consumption of beef.

The Sahu community primarily owns business and trades in Jairagi. Many Adivasis do manual labour in their shops / businesses during market days. The Adivasis and Ghasis are asked to take away dead bovine animals by all communities of these two villages, including the Sahus.

Prakash Lakda is survived by his wife Jermena Lakda, daughter Shubhra and son Kuldeep. The family owns around 1 acre of land of which 0.5 acre is cultivable. They primarily cultivate paddy. Prakash worked as a manual labourer in various shops on weekly market days and earned around Rs. 300-400 a day. Shubhra works in Delhi as domestic help and Kuldeep works as a manual worker in Manesar, Haryana. Shubhra used to send money to her parents when they needed it. The family had worked in NREGA a few years ago. They have a job card but have misplaced it. The family has an Antyodaya ration card. Both Shubhra and Kuldeep came home after receiving the news of their father's death.

Peter Kerkatta's wife stays in the village, while his two sons had gone to work in Chhattisgarh when the incident happened. Janerius's two brothers work in Rourkela and the third one works in Patna. None of them was in the village when the incident happened. Janerius's son studies in class 2 in Garhwa and his two daughters (studying in class 1 and 3) live in the village.

Observations and testimonies of family members and villagers

When the incident happened, the residents of Jurmu who fled the site of the initial beatings did not inform others in the village immediately, as they were scared and it was already dark. Someone told Prakash Lakda's wife that something had happened where the ox had died. She, along with a neighbour, started towards the river at around 9:00 pm to look for her husband. But she returned mid-way as it had become dark.

The police came to the village the next morning (11 April) at around 9:00 am and informed her that her husband was in the hospital and that they had come to take her. Several neighbours also said that they wanted to go to the hospital to know what had happened. But the police did not allow them to do so. It took Jermena to the Dumri health centre and then to Sadar hospital. She was made to sign on some papers, but does not know what was written on them. Prakash Lakda's body was handed over to the police in the evening. The police (along with Jermena) brought the body back to Dumri, but did not take it to the village that night. It instead took the body and Jermena to the village the next morning (12 April). It instructed people in the village to bury the body as soon as possible. Jermena and some neighbours shared with the fact-finding team that Prakash Lakda's penis was mutilated / injured. The villagers buried the body at around 9:00 am that morning.

The Block Development Officer and Circle Officer visited the village and gave Rs. 5000 to Prakash Lakda's wife. They promised a PM Awas Yojana for the family and widow pension for Jermena. They also promised that Kuldeep's son would be hired as a guard at the Panchayat Bhawan.

Whoever the fact-finding team spoke to, said that violence over the consumption of bovine meat had never happened amongst different communities in the past. Also, none of the victims or their family members was aware that an FIR was registered against them on charges of cow slaughter.

Statement of the community health centre doctor

The team met the ANM Dyuti Kumari and doctor-in-charge Dr. Rohan Khalkho at the Dumri health centre on 15 April. The doctor reached the hospital after he received a phone call by the home guard at around 4:00-4:15 am. According to the ANM, Prakash Lakda's body and the rest of the victims were brought to the centre at around 4:00 am. First the alive victims were brought to the centre (Janerius, Belerius and Peter) and then Prakash's Lakda's body. Both the doctor and the ANM confirmed that Prakash was brought dead. The same is entered in the health centre's register (Annex 1)

According to the doctor, the Chhota Babu of Dumri thana, Amit Kumar, tried to make him enter Prakash Lakda's name also in the centre's register, to show that he was alive when he reached the hospital. Amit Kumar told Dr. Khalkho, "Entry kijiye ki zinda hai. Nahi to kaise pata chalega ki hum laye the aspatal". The doctor refused but made an entry as "brought dead".

According to the doctor, there were several bruises and injury marks made by hard and blunt objects on Prakash's and other victims' bodies (Annex 2). There were also marks of penetrating wounds. Prakash's shirt and body were soiled. According to doctor's assessment, the death may have happened at least an hour ago as the body was cold when it was brought.

The other three victims received first aid and were sent to Sadar hospital, Gumla district at around 9:00 am.

Statement of the investigating officer

The fact-finding team met the investigating officer, R Kumar, in Jurmu itself. He said that an FIR was registered against the four Adivasis and 18 unnamed persons of Jurmu village on charges of cow slaughter. Another FIR was registered against 7 named and 30 unnamed persons of Jairagi village on charges of sections 147, 148, 149, 302, 307 etc of IPC. He said that they were yet to take a statement of the ox owner. He also said that a copy of the FIR was with the SP in Gumla, but refused to share any details.

Statement of the thana officer

The Bada Babu (Officer-in-charge) of the Dumri thana was on leave on 10-15 April and the Chhota Babu (Sub Inspector), Amit Kumar, was in charge. Amit Kumar started by saying that the incident happened at the Chhat ghat. The Shamshan ghat is also near the Chhat ghat. The Sahun had cleaned the Chhat ghat for Chhat festival (on 10 April). On the same day, some people from Jurmu cut the cow at the ghat. Amit Kumar also seemed to indicate that the Adivasis were at fault (as compared to the perpetrators of mob violence) as they had cut the animal. He said, "Hindu ke dimaag mein ye cheez aa gaya ki yehaan chhat ghaat hai. Agar chhat ghat mein ya shamshan mein agar koi gaaye kaatta hai, to koi Hindu kya sunega?"

Amit said that the police heard some noise at 2:30 am and saw some people leave the four victims in front of the thana and then leave. The police could not see the people who had brought the victims and left them there. The police also does not know how the victims were brought from Jairagi to Dumri.

According to Amit Kumar, one of the victims was much more injured than the rest three. He woke up his driver, got his car out and loaded all the four victims in his car and took them to the health centre at around 3:00 am. On being asked again if he took all four in the same car, he confirmed. According to Amit, Prakash was alive when he was loaded in the car but he was counting his last breath. By the

time he was admitted in the local health centre, he had died. The doctor checked and found him to be dead.

Following this, the police went to the spot where the incident happened, at around 4:00-4:30 am. The police had to ensure that the evidence of cow slaughter was not tampered with. During the whole discussion, Amit Kumar was unable to clearly recall the sequence (with time) of the events and the action taken by the police that night. He kept repeating that he would not be able to give the exact time of the events.

Based on the statement of the victims taken at the Sadar hospital, an FIR was lodged against 7 named and 30-35 unnamed person. They were charged with 147, 148, 302, 307, 504, 506 and some other sections of the IPC. Two of the named persons, Sanjay Sahu and Jeevan Prasad, were arrested and sent to Gumla jail. The police was still conducting raids to arrest the other five named in the FIR. When asked about Sanjay Sahu's criminal record, Amit Kumar said that some charges were levied on him in 2013 and that he went to jail as well.

The police initially agreed to share copies of the FIRs with the team. But then later said that the investigating officer had taken the file with him. When asked for the diary entries, Amit Kumar kept procrastinating and finally did not share them.

Amit Kumar said that had this been a case of mob lynching, a group of so many people (as being told by the victims) would have killed everyone. But only one person died and that too, a 50 years old. He did not look very seriously injured. There was a cut near his fingers and some faint injury marks on his legs – the type one would get on being dragged.

An FIR was registered by the police against the four Adivasis and 20-25 unnamed persons of Jurmu on charges of cow slaughter. It was done on the basis of the testimony of the thana chowkidar. When asked how the FIR was filed on the chowkidar's testimony, as he was not present during the incident, Amit Kumar said that the chowkidar went to the spot once the information of the incident came. He further added that another reason for filing the FIR on the chowkidar's testimony was that the people who beat the Adivasis will never file the FIR against them as it would incriminate them in the attack on the Adivasis. So those people did not come forward to file the FIR and the police had to file it on the chowkidar's testimony.

When Amit Kumar was asked how the police knew that the ox was slaughtered alive, he said that the block veterinary doctor and magistrate gave statements that the meat found on site was of bovine animal. When he was cross questioned that how did the police know that the animal was alive when it was killed, Amit Kumar said, “Ye hum kaise batayenge ki mara hua tha ki zinda tha. Ye koi bata nahi payega ki jaanwar mara hua tha ki zinda tha? Aap jo police se ye sawaal kar rahe hain ki zinda tha ki mara hua tha, aapko lagta hai ki police ke liye ye sabhav hai batana? Hai sambhav?” The case registered for cow slaughter is 9/19 and the case registered for attack on Adivasis and murder is 10/19.

At the end of the conversation, Amit Kumar, referring to the Adivasis, said to the fact-finding team, “Log ek doosre ke bhawna ko samajh nahi pa raha hai. Is tarah ka ghatna na ho. Aap log o samjhaiye. Thoda ismein bhi koshish kijiye. Ki awareness ho un logon mein.”

Contact numbers

R Kumar – Investigating Officer of the case - +917292829272

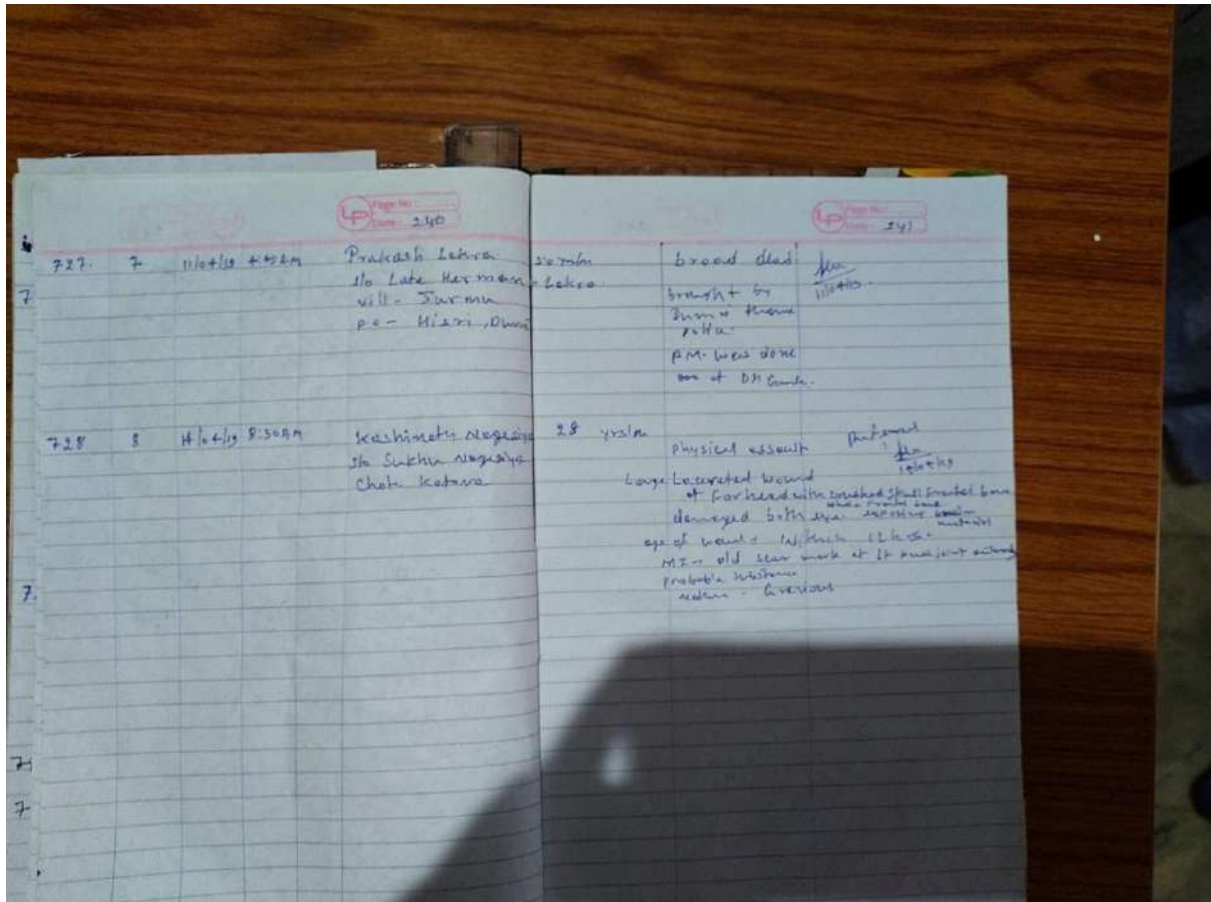
Dr. Khalko – Doctor in charge, Community Health Centre, Dumri – 9471507946

Dumri Thana Incharge - 9431706309

Amit Kumar, ASI who was in charge of Dumri thana during the incident-943155601

Fact-finding team - Afzal Anees (9234982712), Bharat Bhushan Choudhary (7838001177), Saroj Hembram (8987447623), Shadab Ansari (9835044441), Sonal Tiwari (9538161195), Siraj Dutta (9939819763), Taramani Sahu (9430742215) and Ziyauallah (7979852347)

Annex 1 – Entry of Prakash Lakda's case in Health Centre's register



Annex 2 – Details of Peter’s injuries in the health centre’s register

LP Page No. _____
Date: 23/6

Case No.	Age	Sex	Date	Time	Referral
719	722	2	3/4/19	4:30pm	Nizaj Binay S/O Ramesh Binay Vij. CRPF Dumm Age 28 (M)
723	3	3	09/09/19	1:30pm	Khudi Soli 70 x 10 Jla Jitla Soli Majhgan P.O. Majhgan.
727	724	+	11/09/19	4:30am	Petar Karkalla Sona S/O Fudjans Marakata J. Waman

*Drawn by
Dhanu Hame Puhak*

Joint

- ① Malunion
- ② Semi joint
- ③ In Situ
- ④ Skipped
- ⑤ Soft tissue
- ⑥ Joint space

Wound

- ① Wound located medial to
line of L4-L5
below knee joint
- ② 1 1/2" x 1 1/2" x 1/4"
- ③ 1 1/2" x 1 1/2" x 1/4"
- ④ 1 1/2" x 1 1/2" x 1/4"
- ⑤ X-ray Lt
- ⑥ X-ray Lt
- ⑦ X-ray Lt
- ⑧ X-ray Lt
- ⑨ X-ray Lt
- ⑩ X-ray Lt
- ⑪ X-ray Lt
- ⑫ X-ray Lt
- ⑬ X-ray Lt
- ⑭ X-ray Lt
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*Severe pain
Lt Shoulder
X-ray*

LP Page No. _____
Date: 23/7

Case No.	Age	Sex	Date	Time	Referral
719	722	2	3/4/19	4:30pm	Nizaj Binay S/O Ramesh Binay Vij. CRPF Dumm Age 28 (M)
723	3	3	09/09/19	1:30pm	Khudi Soli 70 x 10 Jla Jitla Soli Majhgan P.O. Majhgan.
727	724	+	11/09/19	4:30am	Petar Karkalla Sona S/O Fudjans Marakata J. Waman

*Generalised
distended
abdomen
tender
+
Vibretans
negative*

*Multiple
injury*

- ① Abrasion lateral aspect of Lt eye
1 1/2" x 1 1/2" x 1/4"
- ② Abrasion at pt below elbow
lateral aspect 1 1/2" x 1 1/2" x 1/4"
- ③ Swell of Rt knee lateral aspect
1 1/2" x 1 1/2" x 1/4"
- ④ Abrasion at back side of knee
4 1/2" x 1 1/2" x 1/4"
- ⑤ Severe pain of Lt knee
X-ray
- ⑥ Pathological wound of Lt lower leg
below knee joint at line of L4-L5
J. Waman Middle part 1 1/2" x 1 1/2" x 1/4"
- ⑦ X-ray Rt knee