

## ACCESS DENIED

# Use of Aadhaar data for criminal probe not allowed by law: UIDAI

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A DAY after the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) made a case for limited Aadhaar data access for the police to crack crimes, UIDAI today asserted that use of Aadhaar biometric data for criminal investigation is not allowed under the Aadhaar Act. It also informed that Aadhaar data has never been shared with any crime investigating agency.

The statement from Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) came after NCRB Director Ish Kumar on Thursday made a strong pitch for the police to be provided with limited access to Aadhaar data, to aide them in catching first-time offenders and for identification of unidentified bodies.

"...the use of or access to Aadhaar biometric data for criminal investigation is not permissible under Section 29 of the Aadhaar Act, 2016," UIDAI said in a statement.

The "very limited" exception to this, said UIDAI, is allowed under Section 33 of the Aadhaar Act, which permits use of or access to Aadhaar biometric data in cases involving national security only after pre-authorization by an oversight committee headed by the Cabinet Secretary. "This is also the consistent stand taken by Union of India in the ongoing Aadhaar case in the Supreme Court," UIDAI said.

It further argued that under Aadhaar Act, the biometrics data collected by UIDAI "can be used only for the purpose of generating Aadhaar and for authentication of identity of the Aadhaar holders and cannot be

used for any other purpose".

Based on this legal stance, UIDAI said, it has never shared any biometric data with any crime investigating agency. "It may be underlined here that when Mumbai High Court gave orders to share biometric data with an investigating agency in a particular case, the matter was taken up to the Supreme Court which stayed that order,"



## BODY FINDER

NCRB's Ish Kumar pointed out that more than 40,000 unidentified bodies were recovered every year. With limited access to Aadhaar, these could be identified and handed over to their relatives.

the Aadhaar-issuing body said.

The NCRB Director had yesterday stated that around 50 lakh cases were registered every year in the country and most of them committed by first-time offenders, who leave their fingerprints, which would not be available in police records.

"Limited access to Aadhaar data is crucial, as 80-85% of criminals every year are first time offenders, but they leave their fingerprints while committing a crime. Aadhaar will help us catch them," he said.