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January 3, 2013

**Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders,**  
**Ms. Margaret Sekaggya**

c/o Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights - Palais Wilson

United Nations Office at Geneva

CH 1211 Geneva 10

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Dear Ma'am,

*Sub: HRD Alert - India - Urgent Appeal for Action - Andrapradesh /  
Markapuram Town/Pakasam district: RTI activist who took on cops injected  
with poison, condition critical-Reg*

Greetings from Human Rights Defenders Alert - India!

HRD Alert - India is a Forum of Human Rights Defenders for Human Rights Defenders. It endeavours to initiate actions on behalf of Human Rights Defenders under threat or with security concerns. We are now writing to express our grave concern regarding the critical situation of Mr. Srinivasa Rao an RTI activist after being given a poison shot by unknown assailants.

**Name of the perpetrators:** 3 unknown persons.

**Date and time of incident:** December 30, 2012, 2012 at 4pm

**Place of incident:** Markapuram Town of Pakasam District, Andhra Pradesh  
India

**About the activist:**

Srinivasa Rao has been invoking the provisions of the Right to Information Act against local revenue and police officials in Markapur. He is into pawn broking in the town and gives loans taking insurance policies and bonds as security. Mr. Rao has been at loggerheads with police since he began seeking information from police stations under the RTI Act. He also contributes to RTI related programmes in a vernacular TV channel and was also the district convener for RTI Activists Association in the district.

**Incident:**

On 30.12.2012 Mr. Srinivasa Rao was found lying unconscious near his office at the Court Centre in the town. It was alleged in his complaint that on 30.12.2012, three men walked into his office on the pretext of discussing a case. Two of them held him back while the third injected poison in the abdomen of Rao and fled. Immediately Rao was rushed by locals to the government hospital which referred him to the district headquarters hospital in Ongole. When his condition deteriorated, Rao was shifted to [Rajiv Gandhi](#) Institute of Medical Sciences. Doctors are yet to figure out the nature of the poison.

**Background Information:**

Rao had highlighted many irregularities in the use of government funds and earned the wrath of local officials and contractors in the district. Last week, he had complained to the district administration about a threat to his life from a local official whose corruption he was trying to expose. He had also claimed that despite his complaint, no action was taken against the official. The incident was said to have taken place before resumption of hearing in a case in the Markapur court on Monday against him filed under the Scheduled Castes and Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act.

**Appeal:**

We therefore urge you to immediately take necessary steps:

1. To locate the perpetrators and prosecute them for their actions immediately.
2. To take all necessary steps to guarantee the professional and personal freedom of Right to Information Activist Mr. Srinivasa Rao.
3. To provide medical assistance at the cost of the State for Mr. Rao.
4. To ensure in all circumstances respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with international human rights standards and international instruments ratified by India.
5. To guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in India are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions, including judicial harassment.

Looking forward to your immediate action in this regard,

Yours sincerely,

*Henri Tiphagne*

Honorary National Working Secretary

Human Rights Defenders Alert - India