

Human Rights Defenders Alert - India

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Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development

Baan Vichien, Apartment 3B,
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Bangkok, 10110, Thailand
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Dear Ma'am,

Sub: HRD Alert - India - Urgent Appeal for Action – West Bengal: Illegal Detention and Torture of HRDs associated with MASUM - 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 false implication, illegal detention and physical torture committed upon human rights defenders Mr. Mahiruddin Seikh and Mr. Safikul Islam by the police personnel of Raninagar police station, Murshidabad. We have been informed of this incident by Banglar Manabadhikar Suraksha Mancha (MASUM), a non-governmental human rights organization headquartered in Kolkata, West Bengal and working against extrajudicial killings, custodial death, rape, mysterious disappearances, and police torture.

The HRDs:

Mr. Mahiruddin Seikh and Mr. Safikul Islam are Human Rights Defenders working for the human rights organization Banglar Manabadhikar Suraksha Mancha (MASUM) in Murshidabad district, West Bengal.

The perpetrators:- 1) Mr. Swarup Biswas (Sub-Inspector of Raninagar Police Station), 2) Mr. Ajay Paul (Sub-Inspector of Raninagar Police Station), 3) Mr. Anil Biswas (Sub-Inspector of Raninagar Police Station) 4) Mr. Abdul Kalam (Home Guard of Raninagar Police Station) of Raninagar Police Station, Murshidabad, West Bengal.

Date and time of incident: - On 28.03.2013 at about 6.00 p.m.

Place of occurrence: - Inside Raninagar Police Station under Domkal Sub-Division, District- Murshidabad, West Bengal.

The Incident

On the date of the incident the above mentioned human rights defenders went to Raninagar police station along with one Ms. Kanchan Bibi, a victim of physical torture at her in-laws house and they wanted to lodge a complaint in this regard. But the police personnel refused to register the complaint. The victims were brutally assaulted by the police personnel of Raninagar Police Station when they requested them to register the complaint. After that the victim Mr. Safikul Islam was falsely implicated, illegally detained and brutally tortured at the police station by the police personnel when they came to know that the victim is a Human Rights Defender attached with MASUM.

Mr. Mahiruddin Seikh lodged a written complaint before the District Magistrate, Murshidabad and the Superintendent of Police, Murshidabad informing them of the whole incident of brutal torture and humiliation he suffered at the hands of the perpetrator police personnel of Raninagar Police Station; he also stated on that application regarding the matter of illegal detention, false implication and brutal torture committed upon Mr. Safikul Islam by the police personnel of Raninagar Police Station. But till date no action has been taken by the higher authorities.

Background:

It is important here to mention that this is not a one off incident where human rights defenders attached with MASUM have been implicated in a false and concocted criminal case by the police in the district. Recently Mr. Gopen Chandra Sharma who is a noted human right activist attached with MASUM was also implicated in false criminal cases foisted by police. It is noteworthy that MASUM has brought numerous incidents of human rights violations cases in the district-Murshidabad to the notice of the Human Rights Commission and the Commission has intervened into those cases. It is therefore clear that the human rights activists attached with MASUM are under attack as the police and the administration want to throttle the voice of human rights activists.

Appeal

We, therefore, urge you to immediately take necessary steps to ensure that:

- Mr. Safikul Islam is released from all false charges immediately and the perpetrator police personnel of Raninagar police station are booked under the law immediately for their unlawful acts and are prosecuted under the criminal law.
- The victims are given adequate compensation and protection, so that they do not come under threat or harassment.
- The concerned authorities in the district-Murshidabad are directed to immediately stop harassment and attack upon the human rights activists working in the district and give them proper protection.
- 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 in all circumstances.
- Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with international human rights standards and international instruments ratified by India is guaranteed

Looking forward to your immediate action in this regard,

Yours sincerely,



Henri Tiphagne

Honorary Working Secretary
Human Rights Defenders Alert - India