25 June 2013

The Chairperson
National Human Rights Commission
Faridkot House, Copernicus Marg,
New Delhi, PIN 110001
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E-Mail: covdnhrccnic.in, ionhrcnic.in, jrlawnhrcchubnic.in

Dear Sir,

Sub: HRD Alert - India - Urgent Appeal for Action – Tamilnadu: 51 PDK activists arrested & assaulted by police - 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 arbitrary arrest of 51 activists of Periyar Dravida Kazhagam (PDK) by the police on Sunday, 23 June 2013.

About the Human Rights Defender under attack:

51 Periyar Dravida Kazhagam (PDK) activists, a Tamil nationalist outfit, from Pollachi and Coimbatore

Perpetrators: The Police

Date and Time of Incident: Sunday, 23 June 2013, at 9 am

Place of Incident: Gandhi statue in Pollachi and Lakshmi Mills Junction in Coimbatore.

Source of Information: The Times of India
**Incident:**

On Sunday, 23 June 2013, police arrested 51 Periyar Dravida Kazhagam (PDK) activists, a Tamil nationalist outfit, from Pollachi and Coimbatore for waving black flags at Union minister of commerce E M Sudarshan Nachiappan.

The activists were protesting against the training being provided to senior Sri Lankan military officers in the Defence Services Staff College (DSSC) in the Wellington cantonment area of the Nilgiris.

Around 9 am on Sunday Nachiappan, Union minister of commerce, was on his way to Coimbatore via Pollachi to attend a meeting when the PDK activists waylaid him. The PDK activists were hiding behind a Gandhi statue in Pollachi and suddenly jumped in front of the minister's car. They waved black flags and raised slogans against the Centre for its undue favours to the Rajapakse government, which allegedly killed thousands of ethnic Tamils.

With only a few on-duty policemen present at the spot, the protest continued for about half-an-hour. As the news of the protest spread, over 150 Congress activists rushed to the spot and raised slogans against the irate PDK activists.

Soon a police team reached the spot and tried to pacify the PDK activists and urged them to withdraw the protest. After the activists refused, police arrested them.

Another group of 36 PDK activists were arrested from Lakshmi Mills Junction in Coimbatore after they tried to hold a protest and wave black flags at the minister. The spot was cleared minutes before the minister's vehicle passed through the area.

**Appeal**

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

1. All PDK activists are released immediately and unconditionally since their detention is only arbitrary as it only aims at impeding their human rights activities.
2. All necessary measures are taken to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity and security of PDK activists.
3. The errant police are booked under relevant sections of the law and are prosecuted.
4. 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.

5. 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

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