

Human Rights Defenders Alert - India

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Shri A. K. Parashar

Focal Point - Human Rights Defenders
National Human Rights Commission
Faridkot House
Copernicus Marg
New Delhi-110001
Email: hrd-nhrc@nic.in

Dear Sir,

Sub: HRD Alert - India / Jharkhand - Urgent Appeal for Action - Activist sentenced to death - 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 sentencing of activist Jeetan Marandi to death by the Giridih additional District Sessions Court Judge Indradeo Mishra.

Incident

We have been informed by Stan Swamy, Member of Jharkhand Bachao Andolan and People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) - Ranchi Unit that Jeetan Marandi a human rights activist has been sentenced to death.

Jeetan Marandi along with three other Maoists was sentenced to death in Chilkari massacre. The massacre happened on 26 October 2007 when there was a firing incident allegedly by Maoists in Chilkari village, Giridih district, Jharkhand. 19 persons were killed including a son of a former chief minister.

Among the suspected killers there was one Jeetan Marandi, a Maoist Commander who gave a slip to the police and disappeared and has not been traced since. The human rights activist Jeetan Marandi was not even in that village at the time. Instead of tracing the killer-suspect, the police implicated the human rights activist Jeetan

Marandi, arrested him, charge sheeted him under various clauses of the penal code and produced doctored witnesses and finally succeeded in having him sentenced to death.

According to the information received, Jeetan is a talented artist, adept in composing music, songs, enacting street plays. He has been using his artistic skills to entertain and awaken people about their problems in different villages of Giridih district. Because of this the local administration and police felt he was becoming a thorn in their flesh and were looking for an opportune occasion to remove this thorn.

The suspected killer in the above mentioned massacre, who also went by the name Jeetan Marandi and had slipped away from the spot, has not been traced since.

The inside story is a political plot by the powerful political party of the former chief minister to keep the masses in silent servitude in connivance with the district police. Capital punishment by the state in itself is a barbaric act, which has been ended in more than 130 countries already but not in the “world’s largest democracy”. It is summarily used against people who challenge the policies of the state and fight for a better society. *We strongly condemn this and demand the withdrawal of the death sentence against the activists and their immediate release.*

Appeal

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

- Ensure that a thorough re-investigation is done into the massacre and the actual perpetrators are apprehended and Jeetan Marandi is released without charges
- Ensure that all such human rights defenders can freely conduct legitimate activities promoting and protecting human rights without fear of reprisals, in accordance with the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.
- Work towards the introduction a moratorium on executions, with a view to complete abolition of death penalty in the country

Looking forward to your immediate action in this regard,

Yours sincerely,

Henri Tiphagne

National Coordinator
Human Rights Defenders Alert - India