

Human Rights Defenders Alert - India

National Coordination Office

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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 - Urgent Appeal for Action – West Bengal: BSF personnel threaten people for displaying posters on human rights - 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 following information that BSF personnel threatened 3 persons from Char Rajanagar and Char Rajapur in West Bengal for displaying posters on human rights and forcibly removed posters from their houses where they were displayed.

Incident

HRDA has received information from MASUM (Banglar Manabadhikar Suraksha Mancha), a human rights organization based in Hooghly, West Bengal, that some armed BSF (Border Security Force) personnel led by Mr. Abhijit Singh, a Company Commander of 91 Battalion, in a shocking turn of affairs, went Char Rajanagar village in the Char Rajapur Post Office limits and Raninagar Police Station limits, on the 13th of July 2011 in two vehicles, threatened Mr. Kanai Mondal, son of Late Lakhindar Mondal for displaying posters (flex) at the fencing of his house. The said armed forces personnel threatened Mr. Kanai Mondal with dire consequences, pointing a

gun to his head. Before they left, they said that they would return that night to teach him lesson.

Then those two vehicles with armed personnel went to the house of Mr. Rai Charan Mondal son of Late Kedar Mondal at the crossing of Char Rajapur. There too two posters were displayed. Without talking with anyone those BSF armed personnel cut off the ropes tied with the posters and took away two posters.

On way back, those officers went to the house of Mr. Santosh Mondal son of Late Upendra Nath Mondal of Char Rajapur, where one poster was displayed. Those BSF personnel forcibly snatched away that poster from that house.

All the posters (flex) were published by MASUM, and bore the logos of MASUM and UNVFVT (United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture). The posters were on human rights awareness, against torture and for medical, psychological, legal help to the torture survivors with MASUM's address printed on them. The posters were promptly removed by the armed forces and taken away to Rajanagar camp by the BSF.

All the three houses where the BSF personnel went and threatened and removed posters were houses of persons belonging to a Scheduled Caste (Dalit) community.

We strongly condemn this outrageous act of the BSF and their open challenging of constitutional rights.

Appeal

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

- ✦ Carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the threats issued against Kanai Mondal, Raicharan Mondal and Kani Mondal and the forcible removal of the posters on human rights with a view to bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with national and international standards;
- ✦ Guarantee, in all circumstances, the physical and psychological integrity of Kanai Mondal, Raicharan Mondal and Kani Mondal

- ▲ Guarantee in all circumstances that human rights defenders are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals, and free of all restrictions.
- ▲ Ensure that everyone in the police, armed forces and judiciary is aware of the UN Declaration on the Rights and Responsibilities of Human Rights Defenders

Looking forward to your immediate action in this regard,

Yours sincerely,

Henri Tiphagne

Honorary Working Secretary

Human Rights Defenders Alert - India