

## *Human Rights Defenders Alert - India*

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Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders,

Mrs. Margaret Sekaggya

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

United Nations Office at Geneva

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Dear Ma'am,

**Sub: *HRD Alert - India - Urgent Appeal for Action - India/Karnataka-Kodagu - Alleged attack by the mob on journalist K.K.Shahina - 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 alleged charges of criminal intimidation, attack of the mob against Ms. K.K. Shahina, journalist from Kerala.

### **Incident**

**Name of the perpetrators:** "Right Wing Organisation", people from the Hindu Jagarana Vedike.

**Place of incident:** Somwarpet, Kodagu District, Bangalore

**Date of incident:** December 9, 2011

### **About the activist:**

Ms. K. K. Shahina (37) a journalist from Kerala, who had to visit the Somwarpet Tahsildar's office to fulfil a legal procedure, was allegedly attacked by a 'right wing' organization, even as she was inside a police van escorting her to 'safety', on December 9, 2011(Friday).

**Case Narrative:**

As per the information received Ms. K.K. Shahina is facing the charges of criminal intimidation after she had interviewed K. K. Yogananda, one of the eye-witnesses in the Madani case, and reported that the witness had actually not seen Madani, had to appear at the Tahsildar's office for the identification parade.

Shahina, was there as part of fulfilling a legal procedure and the police is stated to have behaved rudely with her as alleged by Shahina. She was welcomed by a large group of people, including Yogananda, with black flags, but she had not expected that they could cause problem to her. However, after the Inspector's warning, she had sought security, but in vain. In spite of this the police officer quoted and stated her that, "Your security is not my responsibility,"

Ms Shahina's lawyer, Venkatesh's colleague was present on the spot and has claimed that as the van neared the exit, people from the Hindu Jagarana Vedike attacked the van and pelted stones at the van and tried stopping it. They also pushed her around before she got into the police van and that the van barely escaped from the barrage.

This incident of an attack on a journalist is to be viewed very seriously on the transparency and accountability of the actions of the police as well as organizations that are mentioned. It was the duty of the police to provide her full security and assure her of protection since she was called in by the police to fulfill investigation procedures.

A section of the media had reported about the same in Kerala and also in Bangalore. The South India Cell for Human Rights Education and Monitoring (Sichrem), on December 14, 2011 (Tuesday) has lodged a complaint before the Karnataka State Human Rights Commission regarding the attack on Shahina in Somwarpet on December 9, 2011. It has requested to take action against the authorities involved in this attack.

All the organisations who are working for the rights of the people have condemned the attack on Shahina and has appealed to trade unions, democratic organisations, media organisations and secular people to take note of these growing attacks on the freedom of the press.

## **Appeal**

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

1. Ensure physical, psychological safety and security to Ms. K.K. Shahina as well as to her family members;
2. Internally investigate the police personnel and other authorities who were involved in the attack of Ms. K.K. Shahina and the perpetrators are brought before justice.
3. Ensure that all the state governments and the central government must take actions to stop these kinds of growing attacks which inturn stops the freedom of press and media.
4. Guarantee in all circumstances that all the journalists in India are able to carry out their legitimate human rights work.

Looking forward to your immediate action in this regard,

Yours sincerely,

*Henri Tiphagne*

Hon'ble National Working Secretary

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