

Human Rights Defenders Alert - India

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February 27, 2012

Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders,
Mrs. Margaret Sekaggya
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United Nations Office at Geneva
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Switzerland
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Dear Sir/Ma'am,

Sub: *HRD Alert - India - Urgent Appeal for Action -Jharkhand/Jamshedpur-
False and fabricated charges imposed on trade union activists for raising
their voices for a social cause - 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 and fabricated charges imposed on the Jharkhand Krantikari Mazdoor Union activists who were raising their voices for the villagers who have been displaced by the Uranium Corporation of India Limited management.

Incident

Name of the perpetrators: Management of Uranium Corporation of India Limited (UCIL)

Place of incident: Jamshedpur, Jharkhand

Date and time of incident: February 20, 2012

Abbreviations:

1. Jharkhand Krantikari Mazdoor Union (JKMU)
2. Uranium Corporation of India Limited (UCIL)

3. New Trade Union Initiative (NTUI)

According to the information received the management of Uranium Corporation of India Limited (UCIL) gave a termination notice to Sagar Besra, President, Jharkhand Krantikari Mazdoor Union - Turamdih unit for raising voice and serving for the displaced person from Dohdanga village in order to stop unsafe mining in the Banduhurang mines which are located just 150 meters from the village.

On 20 February 2012, NTUI delegation of Ashim Roy (General Secretary), Rakhi Sehgal (Hero Honda Thekha Mazdoor Union), Phudan Murmu (President, JKMU), Arjun Samad (Jt General Secretary, JKMU) visited Dhodanga village of displaced persons and observed first hand that the Jharkhand Krantikari Mazdoor Union leaders like Sagar Besra are being victimized for raising their voices asking for safe mining norms to be followed, in order to protect both the employees of Uranium Corporation of India Limited as well as displaced and mine affected villagers in the vicinity of Uranium Corporation of India Limited mines from radiation and injury from unsafe blasting. They were also demanding a uniform rehabilitation policy for all displaced villagers and has filed RTIs asking in public interest for greater transparency from Uranium Corporation of India Limited on these issues; These people were acting as whistleblowers and ensuring that the union brings these issues to the attention of Uranium Corporation of India Limited Management, Prime Minister Office, Jharkhand administration, SC/ST Commission and to the State Commission for Women.

History of Events:-

As per the received information, this incident is the latest in a series of victimization that the management of Uranium Corporation of India Limited has unleashed on the activists and union leaders of the Jharkhand Krantikari Mazdoor Union. On 10 March 2011 the Sunder nagar Police Station lodged FIRs on false charges on 37 office bearers and executive committee members of JKMU on the behest of Uranium Corporation of India Limited management and on 20 April 2011 forced the arrest of 3 union leaders - Srijan Tudu,

Subodh Patro and Kalicharan Karmakar. Uranium Corporation of India Limited management has charge sheeted Jharkhand Krantikari Mazdoor Union leaders on a regular basis, 15 charge sheets thus far.

Present Scenario:-

The Jharkhand Krantikari Mazdoor Union activists demand the Uranium Corporation of India Limited Management to withdraw all false charges against the union leaders of JKMU. In the event of unjust, unlawful and unfair termination of Sagar Besra the NTUI will launch a nationwide campaign in support of the union and mobilize villagers who have been displaced by the Uranium Corporation of India Limited management.

Finally the New Trade Union Initiative and Jharkhand Krantikari Mazdoor Union is organising All India Strike on 28 February 2012 demanding that the Government to ensure permanent nature of work by employing regular workers and all workers are paid equal wages for equal work.

Appeal:-

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

1. Ensure physical, psychological safety and integrity to the union activists and to the displaced people of Dhodanga village;
2. Immediately set a team to monitor the intensity of radiation due to mining of uranium;
3. Provide reparation and full medical check-ups for all workers and affected villagers;
4. Withdraw all false and fabricated charges against the union activists who are fighting for a social cause and render justice to the victims.

Looking forward to your immediate action in this regard,

Yours sincerely,

Henri Tiphagne

Hon'ble National Working Secretary
Human Rights Defenders Alert - India

Copy to:

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