

## *Human Rights Defenders Alert - India*

National Coordination Office

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March 6, 2012

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  
CH 1211 Geneva 10  
Switzerland  
Email: urgent-action@ohchr.org

Dear Sir/Ma'am,

Sub: *HRD Alert - India - Urgent Appeal for Action - Madhya Pradesh/  
Bhopal/Rewa District - Threats and brutal killing of a journalist Mr. Rajesh  
Mishra - 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 brutal killing of Mr. Rajesh Mishra, a journalist killed within a space of two weeks in Madhya Pradesh.

### **Incident**

**Name of the Perpetrators: Two unidentified persons**

**Place of incident: Rewa, Bhopal District, Madhya Pradesh**

**Date of incident: March 1, 2012**

### **About the activist:**

Mr. Rajesh Mishra, a journalist working for *Media Raj*, a weekly based in Rewa, which is 550 km northeast of the state capital, Bhopal. He used to receive anonymous phone threats after writing reports about the alleged mismanagement of a number of regional schools owned by Rajneesh Banerjee, the publisher of another Rewa-based newspaper, *Vindhya Bharat*.

According to the received information, Mr. Rajesh Mishra was attacked and beaten over his head on 1 March 2012 in Rewa, in the central state of Madhya Pradesh, and died of his injuries the next day. His murder came less than two weeks after another journalist was clubbed to death with his wife and children in the Madhya Pradesh town of Umaria.

Mishra had gone to a tea stand with *Vindhya Bharat* editor Anil Tripathi, at Tripathi's invitation and while there he was beaten over the head by two unidentified persons who quickly ran off. He was immediately hospitalized and was then transferred to a hospital in Jabalpur, where he died the next day (March 2, 2012).

#### **History of events:**

Fellow journalist **Chandrika Rai**, a reporter for the dailies *Navbharat* and *The Hitavada*, his wife and two children were beaten to death in their home in the coal-mining town of Umaria on 18 February 2012. Rai's family said they thought their deaths were linked to his investigative coverage of illegal mining in the nearby Shalabh Bhadoria area. The police have so far made six arrests in their investigation, which is continuing.

In the past 15 months, there have been a disturbing number of murders of journalists in which the motive was clearly or probably linked to their work. **Jyotirmoy Dey**, 56, an investigative journalist with the newspaper *Mid-Day*, was shot dead in Mumbai on 11 June 2011. **Umesh Rajput**, 32, a reporter with the daily *Nai Duniya*, was gunned down in the east-central state of Chhattisgarh on 23 January 2011. **Sushil Pathak**, a reporter for the daily *Dainik Bhaskar*, was shot dead in Chhattisgarh on 20 December 2010.

This new outbreak of violence, which highlights the dangers of investigative journalism in India and the Indian authorities should immediately undertake to guarantee the safety of media workers and to assign the necessary human and material resources to ensure that the investigations into these murders are effective. Human Rights Defenders Alert India had already issued an urgent appeal regarding the brutal murder of Mr. Chandrika Rai, journalist in Umaria District, Madhya Pradesh on March 1, 2012.

## **Appeal**

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

1. Guarantee physical and psychological integrity to the deceased family members of the Journalist Mr. Rajesh Mishra.
2. Immediate investigate all the authorities in Madhya Pradesh and the perpetrators of this shocking crime are brought to justice;
3. Investigate the nexus between Rajneesh Banerjee and Anil Tripathi who are suspected back drop persons of this brutal act;
4. Guarantee in all circumstances that all journalists in India are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment

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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