

Human Rights Defenders Alert - India

National Coordination Office

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May 17, 2012

Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders,
Ms. 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 Ma'am,

Sub: HRD Alert - India - Urgent Appeal for Action -Bihar/ Muzaffarpur

District: RTI Activist Mr. Razi Hasan shot and battling for life - 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 RTI activist Mr Razi Hasan who was shot by unknown assailants near Muzaffarpur district, Bihar and was grievously hurt.

Incident

Name of the perpetrators: Unidentified persons

Place of incident: Muzaffarpur District, Bihar

Date & Time of incident: May 10, 2012 at 10.00 pm

About the activist:

Mr. Razi Hasan from Bihar is a RTI activist who has filed over 250 RTI applications in the last one and a half years seeking information on several welfare schemes, such as the Indira Awas Yojana and the MNREGA scheme. He was employed in Iran until a few years ago. When he returned to his

hometown at Muzaffarpur, he was saddened by the plight of the people and dropped the idea of going back to Iran and started doing social service, especially as an RTI activist. His applications exposed many influential persons and officials in the district. Hasan had recently procured RTI information on a bank's scheme in which the bank had been delaying payment to policy holders despite maturity.

Case Narrative:

On 10th May 2012 at around 10.00 p.m. when Razi Hasan was returning to his home in Chandwara locality, two persons who were riding a motorcycle shot at Hasan, grievously injuring him. Hasan was admitted to Sardar hospital in Muzaffarpur in a serious condition and is battling for his life. Two suspects named Mohammad Razique and Aftab Alam have been arrested by the police in this regard.

It was reported that Hasan had been threatened repeatedly by some people on whom he had filed complaints with the local police on three occasions based on the RTI responses he has obtained. The investigation is in progress.

Appeal

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

1. Guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of Mr. Razi Hasan as well as other RTI activists in Bihar;
2. Conduct a prompt and thorough investigation into the brutal attack on Mr. Hasan, the result of which must be made public, with a view to identify and bring those responsible to justice in accordance with national and international standards;
3. Conform to the provisions of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 9, 1998, especially:
 - its Article 1, which states that "everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to promote and to strive for the protection and

realisation of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels”;

- its Article 6(a), which provides that “everyone has the right, individually and in associations with others, to know, seek, obtain, receive and hold information about all human rights and fundamental freedoms”;

- and its Article 12.2, which states that “the State shall take all necessary measures to ensure the protection by the competent authorities of everyone, individually and in association with others, against any violence, threats, retaliation, de facto or de jure adverse discrimination, pressure or any other arbitrary action as a consequence of his or her legitimate exercise of the rights referred to in the present Declaration”;

4. Create an enabling environment and guarantee in all circumstances that RTI activists in India are able to carry out their legitimate 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

Honorary National Working Secretary

Human Rights Defenders Alert - India

Addresses:

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