

Human Rights Defenders Alert – India

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July 10, 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

Email: urgent-action@ohchr.org

Dear Ma'am,

Sub: HRD Alert - India - Urgent Appeal for Action – India/Assam: RTI activist Akhil Gogoi attacked - 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 brutal attack on the RTI activist Mr. Akhil Gogoi while he was taking stock of the flood situation in Punni village, Nalbari District, Assam.

Name of the perpetrators: Five Congress workers including Ratul Ali, Khalilur Rahman, Bhuban Deka and Raju Barman. Assam Agriculture and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Nilamani Sen Deka

Date of incident: July 6, 2012

Place of incident: Punni village, Dharmapur area, Nalbari District, Assam

Incident

According to the information received the RTI activist and 'Team Anna' member Akhil Gogoi has been attacked and critically injured by suspected youth Congress activists in Nalbari District, Assam on July 6, 2012.

Gogoi, also the General Secretary of Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti (KMSS), had gone to Punni village in Dharmapur area of the district to take stock of the flood situation under Dharmapur Assembly constituency, represented by Assam Agriculture Minister Nilamani Sen Deka, when he was allegedly attacked with bamboos and other sharp weapons.

He alleged that five Congress workers including Ratul Ali, Khalilur Rahman, Bhuban Deka and Raju Barman were responsible for the attack at the behest of Assam Agriculture and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Nilamani Sen Deka who represents Dharmapur assembly constituency. He filed an FIR at the Nalbari Sadar police station. The motive against this attack clearly seems to be the silencing of his voice, as he has constantly been using the RTI to improve the democratic functioning of institutions.

A profusely bleeding Gogoi was admitted to the Nalbari Civil Hospital in a critical condition. He was then referred to the Guwahati Medical College Hospital, Assam.

Congress councillor Tapan Barman was arrested on last July 6, 2012, while search was on for five others allegedly involved in the attack on Gogoi when he was surveying flood damage in Purni village. Gogoi had refused to leave Nalbari until the five other accused were brought to book.

Meanwhile, it has been brought to our notice that Gogoi, who has been undergoing treatment in the Shaheed Mukunda Kakati Civil Hospital at Nalbari, was discharged on Monday, the 9th of July, 2012. However, KMSS alleged that Akhil was discharged forcibly. Official sources said the leader is being taken to Guwahati under tight security and that a police contingent is accompanying the RTI activist.

Appeal

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

- Guarantee, in all circumstances, the physical and psychological integrity of Mr. Akhil Gogoi;
- Conduct an impartial, thorough, transparent investigation into the said matter and book the perpetrators under the appropriate provisions of law;
- 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 in all circumstances the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and with international and regional human rights instruments ratified by India.

Looking forward to your immediate action in this regard,

Yours sincerely,

Henri Tiphagne

Honorary National Working Secretary
Human Rights Defenders Alert - India

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