August 3, 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 – Karnataka/ Mangalore/
Padil: Journalist faces false charges and threats for telecasting a mass attack
- 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 series of threats faced Mr. Naveen Soorinje, a journalist working for Kasturi News Channel in Mangalore, Karnataka.

**Date and time of incident:** July 28, 2012 at 6:45 pm

**Place of incident:** Morning Mist Homestay, Padil, Mangalore

**Incident:**

Naveen Soorinje is a journalist working for a Kannada satellite channel Kasturi News 24 x 7 in Mangalore, Karnataka. On July 28th 2012 at 6:45 pm, a resident of Padil, whom Naveen had known for years, called him over phone and informed him about an attack that was planned by a group of 30 assailants near the Morning Mist homestay at Padil on the outskirts of Mangalore.
As soon as Naveen heard the news of the attack, he called the Mangalore Rural Circle Inspector Raveesh Naik (Mob: 9480805330), but he did not respond to his call. So, he requested Mr. Rajesh Rao, TV9 cameraman, to call the police and inform him about aforesaid attack but the Police Inspector did not respond to his call too.

Owing to the same, Naveen Soorinje along with his cameraman rushed to the Morning Mist Homestay, Padil, where he witnessed certain group of men attacking boys and girls who were present at the spot. When Naveen enquired the attackers the reason for which they were attacking them, one among them replied that the Muslim boys had brought along Hindu girls.

At this juncture, the attackers saw the Hindu girls and they started chasing them. The girls sensed danger and started running. One of the girls who jumped from the first floor was chased by 20 assailants and they stripped her naked.

Later on, after 20 minutes, the Police Inspector Ravish Nayak and Police SI Munikanta Neelaswamy reached the spot and were having a friendly conversation with the attackers instead of taking any action against them.

From the next day of the attack, Naveen Soorinje has been receiving series of threatening calls from unknown persons asking for his residential address and the address of his cameraman. The frequency of the calls increased from Monday afternoon (July 30, 2012) when his views on the incident were published in a local daily and on various websites.

Moreover, the police have booked false charges against Naveen in connection with the attack instead of booking cases against the attackers.

**Appeal:**

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

1. To guarantee the professional and personal freedom and personal safety of Naveen Soorinje and to his cameraman;

2. To immediately withdraw all false charges that have been booked against the Journalist Naveen Soorinje;
3. To initiate departmental action against the police perpetrators (Mangalore Rural Circle Police) under the appropriate provisions of law for registering false charges against the Journalist and for not taking legal action against the attackers;

4. To ensure in all circumstances, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with international human rights standards and international 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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