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December 10, 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](mailto:urgent-action@ohchr.org)

Dear Ma'am,

**Sub: HRD Alert - India - Urgent Appeal for Action - Uttar Pradesh: Human Rights Defender Receives Death Threats in Lucknow, India-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 situation of Urvashi Sharma, a Human Rights Activist in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh that received a death threat because of the RTI Petitions she made to expose corruption of the State.

**Name of the perpetrator(s):** Unknown caller

**Date and time of incident:** December 4, 2012 at 11.00 a.m.

**Place of incident:** Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India

**About the activists:**

Urvashi Sharma is an RTI (Right to Information Act) activist in Lucknow. She made RTI petitions regarding governmental corruption, especially in the social welfare and women welfare departments.

**Incident:**

According to the information received, Urvashi Sharma received a death threat from an anonymous caller who claimed to belong to the Samajwadi political party. The caller asked her to stop submitting RTI requests about the working of the Akhilesh Yadav Government and stated that, if she does not stop, she will pay with her life. Ms. Sharma also stated that the caller claims to be Haribhai Yadav, an office bearer of the Samajwadi Party. However, it does not appear that such a person exists.

Ms. Sharma lodged a complaint with the Talkatora police, which registered a case against an unnamed person under section 507 of the Indian Penal Code.

A reporter called the phone of the perpetrator back. The person answering said initially that the call to Ms. Sharma was "made by mistake" and then sought the matter be dropped. The person then identified himself as an SP leader and said that there was no point taking the matter further and that he would talk to the Lucknow DIG to "settle the matter."

Meanwhile, Ms. Sharma said that she believes the phone call was made on behalf of a senior Indian Administrative Service (IAS) official, against whom she has recently sought a probe.

**Appeal:**

We therefore urge you to immediately take necessary steps:

1. To locate the perpetrator and prosecute him for his actions immediately.
2. To take all necessary steps to guarantee the professional and personal freedom of social activist Ms. Sharma.
3. 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.
4. To guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders 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*

Honorary National Working Secretary

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