

# Human Rights Defenders Alert - India

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04 Jun 2014

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&  
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Dear Respected Madam and Sir,

**Sub: HRD Alert - India - Urgent Appeal for Action – Human Rights Defender working with Jesuit Refugee Service abducted from Herat City, Afghanistan – 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 Indian Human Rights Defenders under threat or with security concerns.

We are now writing to express our grave concern over the abduction of the Country Director, Rev. Fr. Alexis Prem Kumar SJ, an HRD of Indian origin , by a group of unidentified men in Western Afghanistan.

## Source of Information on the Incident:

- Media Reports dated 04 May 2014
- Communications from the Jesuit Refugee Service.

## About the Human Rights Defender under attack:

Rev. Fr. Alexis Prem Kumar SJ is a 47 year old Indian National who is the Afghanistan Country Director for the Jesuit Refugee Service, an organization working for refugees worldwide and an education charity. Before going to Afghanistan, Fr. Prem Kumar was working in the JRS in India.

Before moving to Afghanistan four year ago, Fr. Prem Kumar had worked for the Jesuit Refugee Service, serving Sri Lankan refugees living in Kodaikanal of the Dindigul District of the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu. JRS has been working in Afghanistan since 2008 accompanying returnees home from exile in Iran and Pakistan and providing education and healthcare services in Bamiyan, Kabul and Herat. The Jesuit Refugee Service is an international Catholic organisation with a mission to accompany, serve and advocate on behalf of forcibly displaced persons. With its headquarters based in Rome and with teams working in more than 50 countries around the world, JRS provides education, health, social and other services to approximately 950,000 refugees and internally displaced persons, more than half of whom are women. JRS services are provided to refugees regardless of race, ethnic origin or religious beliefs.

**The Perpetrators:**

Unidentified persons

**Date of Incident:**

2<sup>nd</sup> of June 2014

**Place of Incident:**

Sohadat village, 25 km from the city of Herat

**Incident**

According to sources, Fr. Kumar had accompanied teachers on a visit to a JRS-supported school for the returnee refugees in Sohadat village, 25 km from the city of Herat. He was apparently kidnapped from the school as he was about to return to Herat. The abduction comes nearly 10 days after the attack on the Indian consulate in Herat by four heavily-armed gunmen carrying rocket-propelled grenades and machine guns. The attackers were subsequently killed by the security forces who repelled the attack on May 23, 2014. On May 29, 2014, the Indian mission in Herat

had issued an advisory asking its nationals to exercise extreme caution while venturing out.

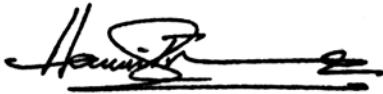
**Appeal:**

We, therefore urge you both, the NHRIs of Afghanistan and India to immediately take necessary steps to ensure that the concerned authorities from India and Afghanistan

1. Expedite investigations and ensure the safe return of Fr. Prem Kumar and bring all perpetrators to book
2. Ensure the physical and psychological safety and integrity of the concerned human rights defender
3. Safeguard him from any form of harassment as the Government of Afghanistan has the obligation to ensure a safe environment for the legitimate work of human rights defenders, and ensuring protection from any form of attack by both state and non-state actors.

Looking forward to your immediate action in this regard,

Yours sincerely,



**Henri Tiphagne**

Honorary Working Secretary

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