

Human Rights Defenders Alert - India

National Coordination Office

6, Vallabai Road, Chokkikulam, Madurai 625 002.

Tamil Nadu, INDIA

Tel: +91-9994368540 Email: hrda.india@gmail.com

04 Jun 2014

Dr. K.G.Balakrishnan,
Hon'ble Chairperson
&
Shri A. K. Parashar
Focal Point - Human Rights Defenders
National Human Rights Commission,
Manav Adhikar Bhawan,
Block-C, GPO Complex, INA,
New Delhi – 110 023
Email: hrd-nhrc@nic.in, covdnhrc@nic.in

Dr. Sima Samar
Hon'ble Chairperson,
Afghanistan Independent
Human Rights Commission,
پل سرخ کارته سه سرک چمچه مست
285 خانه نمبر Phone: (+93) 020
2500676 - 020 2500197
E-mail: aihrc@aihrc.org.af

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:

2nd 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 National Working Secretary

Copy to:

1. **Shri Narendra Modi,**
Hon'ble Prime Minister of India,
The Office of the PM of India,
South Block, Raisina Hill,
New Delhi-110011
Ph: +91-11-23012312
Fax: +91-11-23019545,23016857
2. **Mr. Rahimi.**
Special Secretary to the President,
The Office of the Afghanistan President,
Kabul,
Afghanistan,
Cell: (0093) (0) 799 322 777,
E-mail: surosh.r@gmail.com,
president@arg.gov.af

3. **H.E. Zarar Ahmad Osmani**
Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan
Malek Asghar St. Kabul, Afghanistan
Ph: 0093 (0) 20 2100372, 0093 (0) 70 0104173
Fax: 0093 (0) 20 2100 360, 0093 (0) 20 2100 361
E.mail: contact@mfa.gov.af mfawebsite@gmail.com
4. **Smt. Sushma Swaraj**
Hon'ble Minister for External Affairs,
Ministry of External Affairs,
South Block, New Delhi, 110011
Ph: +91 11 23011127, 23011165
Fax: 91 11 23013254
E.mail: sushmaswaraj@hotmail.com
5. **Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)**,
Palais Wilson,
52 rue des Pâquis ,
CH-1201 Geneva, Switzerland.
6. **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees**,
Case Postale 2500,
CH-1211 Genève 2 Dépôt,
Suisse.
Ph: +41 22 739 8111
Fax: +41 22 739 7377
7. **The UNHCR Representative in Afghanistan**,
P.O.Box 3232
Kabul, Afghanistan
Ph: +41 22 739 7500
Fax: +41 22 739 7501
E.mail: afgka@unhcr.org
8. **The UNHCR Representative in India**
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR),
B-2/16, Vasant Vihar, New Delhi – 110057
PH: +91-11-43530444,
FAX: +91-11-43530460
Email: indne@unhcr.org
9. **The UNHCR Head of Field Office in Chennai**,
No.11, 17th Cross Street,
Besant Nagar, Chennai 600 090
Ph: +91 44 2446 1734
Fax: +91 44 2446 1733
E.mail: indch@unhcr.org

10. **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
Switzerland
Email: urgent-action@ohchr.org
11. **Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR),**
Palais des Nations
CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland
Ph: +41 22 917 9220
E.mail: InfoDesk@ohchr.org
12. **Delegation of the European Union to India**
65, Golf Links, New Delhi - 110003
Phone: +91-11-4949 6565
Fax : +91-11-4949 6555
delegation-india@eeas.europa.eu
DELEGATION-INDIA-HRD-FOCAL-POINT@eeas.europa.eu
13. **European Union Delegation to Afghanistan and Office of the EU Special Representative in Afghanistan**
Ministry of Interior Road, Charahi Sedarat, Shahr-e-Naw (Opposite Ministry of Interior), Kabul, Afghanistan
Office GSM: **+93 (0) 202 200443/51/53/57/58/59/61/62, +93 (0)799 09 50 04/5/6/07**
International Direct: **+32-2-473 00 45**
Office fax: **+32 (2) 473 00 46**
Email: delegation-afghanistan@eeas.europa.eu
14. Mr. Kiren Fitzpatrick,
Executive Director ,
Asia Pacific Forum of NHRIs,
Sydney, Australia
Ph: +61 2 9284 9845
Fax: +61 2 9284 9825
E.mail: kierenfitzpatrick@asiapacificforum.net
15. **Jesuit Refugee Service/USA**
1016 16th St NW Ste 500
Washington,
D.C. 20036

16. Dr. Prakash Louis,
South Asia Regional Director,
Jesuit Refugee Service India
C/O. Indian Social Institute,
10, Institutional Area,
Lodi Road,
New Delhi 110003, India.
Tel: +91 11 24 64 20 72 or 49 53 41 06
Fax: +91 11 24 69 06 60 or 49 53 41 01
Mobile: +91 98 68 24 04 50
Email: jrssarodelhi2011@gmail.com prakashlouis2010@gmail.com
17. JRS Tamil Nadu,
Jesuit Provincial Madurai Province at Dindigul
Beschi Illam, P.B. 90, Karur Road,
Dindigul 624001, Tamil Nadu, India
Tel: +91 45 12 44 00 14 or 24 31 649
Fax: +91 45 12 43 38 48
Mob: +91 94 43 33 40 01
Email: indiajrs@gmail.com