

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

23rd October 2014

Shri A. K. Parashar
Focal Point - Human Rights Defenders & Joint Registrar,
National Human Rights Commission,
Manav Adhikar Bhawan,
Block-C, GPO Complex, INA,
New Delhi – 110 023
Email: hrd-nhrc@nic.in

Dear Sir,

***Sub: HRD Alert - India - Urgent Appeal for Action – Arunachal Pradesh:
Harassment and slapping of false case on anti-dam activists – 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 over the harassment meted out to Mr. Ojing Tasing of Siang People's Forum and the slapping of false charges against him for protesting the construction of the Lower Siang Hydroelectric Project.

Source of Information on the Incident:

- A communication from Human Rights Alert and the Coordinator of HRDA for the east of India

About the Human Rights Defenders under attack:

Mr. Ojing Tasing, (aged about 34 years), S/o. Tasong Tasing residing at Gandhi Village, in Boleng Police limits, East Siang District, Arunachal Pradesh.

He is the President of Siang People's Forum of the Siang Basin in the North Eastern State of Arunachal Pradesh which has been fighting against the government's plan to construct the Lower Siang Hydro Electric Project. His colleagues, namely Mr. Sokun Siboh, Mr. Obuk Gao, Mr. Mak Yirang and Mr. Magyar Lego are other defenders who have met with the same fate.

The Perpetrators:

- The local administration

Date and time of Incident:

Since May 2012

Place of Incident:

Siang District, Arunachal Pradesh.

Incident

According to sources, the Siang People's Forum of the Siang Basin in the North Eastern State of Arunachal Pradesh has been fighting against the government's plan to construct the Lower Siang Hydro Electric Project. They were opposed to the construction of a dam for the project saying it would affect 6,708 households with a population of 34,911. The entire Rs 13,000 crore Lower Siang Hydro Electric Project is likely to affect more than 50 villages in Upper, East and West Siang districts being inhabited by the Adi community people since time immemorial.

The organisation was also apprehensive that 15,000 odd migrant labourers to be engaged by the company would jeopardise the existence of the tribal population in these districts with only 54 per cent indigenous population.

As a result of their effective advocacy of the negative consequences of this dam on the indigenous people of the basin, the proposed 2700 Mega Watt has been halted. However, this successful struggle of indigenous people came with a heavy price for the leaders of the movement, who selflessly fought for the rights of their fellow beings.

The local administration has clamped the President of Siang People's Forum, Mr. Ojing Tasing, with charges in the Yingkiang Police Station case no. 7/12, under sections 427/147/148/149/506/341/109/34 of the Indian Penal Code. His colleagues,

namely Mr. Sokun Siboh, Mr. Obuk Gao, Mr. Mak Yirang and Mr. Magyar Lego have also been clamped with the similar charges since May 2012.

Mr. Tasing and his colleagues have to regularly appear every month before the Judicial Magistrate First Class Yingkiong Court, which is 73 kilometres away from their houses and have to take the dilapidated hill road which is impossible to travel during rainy seasons. The long drawn legal battle has caused much physical and financial hardship to the human rights defenders.

Appeal:

We, therefore urge you to immediately take necessary steps to ensure that the concerned officials

- Order an immediate, thorough, transparent, effective and impartial investigation into the above-mentioned events and ensure the immediate withdrawal of the false charges against Mr. Tasing and the other human rights defenders
- Along with local district officials guarantees in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of Tasing and his family members as they continue to be harassed and compensate them adequately for the undue harassment they have faced
- Along with local district officials puts an end to all acts of harassment against all human rights defenders in general to ensure that in all circumstances they carry out their activities without any hindrances;
- Conform with the provisions of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 9, 1998, especially:
 - Article 1, which states that “everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to promote and to strive for the protection and realisation of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels”
 - Article 12.2, which provides that “the State shall take all necessary measures to ensure the protection by the competent authorities of everyone, individually and in association with others, against any violence, threats, retaliation, de facto or de jure adverse discrimination, pressure or any other arbitrary action as

a consequence of his or her legitimate exercise of the rights referred to in the present Declaration”;

- More generally, 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 human rights instruments ratified by India is strictly adhered to in Arunachal Pradesh.

Looking forward to your immediate action in this regard,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Henri Tiphagne', with a horizontal line underneath it.

Henri Tiphagne

Honorary National Working Secretary