



## Human Rights Defenders Alert - India

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**February 14<sup>th</sup> 2015**

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  
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Dear Sir,

***Sub: HRD Alert - India - Urgent Appeal for Action – Telengana: Activist's car vandalized after her "Shame the Rapists" campaign - 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 attack on the car of the Activist Dr. Sunitha Krishnan hours after she shamed rapists by posting their video online, by unidentified men on the 6<sup>th</sup> of February 2015.

### **Source of Information on the Incident:**

- Mr. R. Manohar, the Regional Coordinator of Human Rights Defenders Alert – India for the South of India
- Media Reports

### **The Human Rights Defender:**

Dr. Sunitha Krishnan, aged 42, is a renowned social activist and is a member of the State Women's Commission, Andhra Pradesh. She is the Chief Functionary and Founder of *Prajwala*, a non-governmental organization that rescues, rehabilitates

and reintegrates sex-trafficked victims into society. When in 1996 sex workers living in Mehboob ki Mehendi, a red light area in Hyderabad, were evacuated, Krishnan started a transition school at a vacated brothel to prevent the second generation from being trafficked. She earlier worked with People's Initiative Network also in Hyderabad.

**The Perpetrators:**

1. Unknown men who are the rapists in the video posted by Krishnan to shame them.

**Date of Incident:**

6<sup>th</sup> of February 2015

**Place of Incident:**

Outside the Defender's home-cum-office in Hussainialam, Old City, Hyderabad, in the Southern Indian State of Telengana

**Incident detail:**

According to sources, Sunitha has been carrying out an online campaign against rapists who have been uploading videos of their victims being molested. She had sought help from all the people viewing them, to trace them. The two videos were sent to her by her friend on WhatsApp where it has been in circulation for the past 6 months. The videos show young men molesting women and laughing and joking after committing the heinous crime.

Sunitha edited the video in order to protect the victims and posted the video which had the faces of the perpetrators visible so that the public and the law enforcement authorities could identify and apprehend them.

The attack on her car happened soon after she posted the two videos. Stones were hurled at the windscreen at the back of her car. Immediately after the incident, she filed a complaint with the Hyderabad Police following which a case under Section 427 of the Indian Penal Code was registered.

It is to be noted that the papers and TV have extensively carried out the news and also that she was attacked more than 10 times for her work against trafficking.

**Appeal :**

We, therefore urge you to immediately take necessary steps to ensure that the Superintendent of Police for Hyderabad

- Orders an immediate, thorough, transparent, effective and impartial investigation into the above-mentioned events of attack on the human rights defender and arrest the accused.
- Along with local district officials guarantees in all circumstances the physical and psychological safety and security of Dr. Sunitha Krishnan as the perpetrators continue to be at large
- Conducts an inquiry along with the Cyber Crime Police into the videos shared by Dr. Krishnan and take due action against the rapists who themselves posted the videos of the rape;
- 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;
- Conforms 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, ensures 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 the state of Telengana.

Yours sincerely,



**Henri Tiphagne**

Honorary National Working Secretary