



## Human Rights Defenders Alert - India

National Coordination Office

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The Chairperson  
National Human Rights Commission,  
Manav Adhikar Bhawan,  
Block-C, GPO Complex, INA,  
New Delhi – 110 023  
Email: [covdnhrc@nic.in](mailto:covdnhrc@nic.in)

Dear Sir,

***Sub: HRD Alert - India - Urgent Appeal for Action – Manipur: Journalist issued life threats for making charges of corruption in TV Program on officers in Home Department – Reg***

Greetings from Human Rights Defenders Alert - India!

HRD Alert - India is a Forum of Human Rights Defenders for Human Rights Defenders. It endeavors 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 death threats faced by Khoirom Loyalakpa, a senior journalist after the journalist spoke against corruption in a televised discussion organised by a local news channel in Manipur.

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

- Human Rights Alert, an Imphal, Manipur based Human Rights Organization
- Media Reports

**The Human Rights Defender:**

Mr. Khoirom Loyalakpa is 51 years old and the Editor of a vernacular daily in Manipur named Naharolgi Thoudang. The daily was founded in 1996 and reports largely on human rights issues in the state and the region.

**The Perpetrators:**

- Four masked, armed, unidentified men in all probability sent by persons with political power whose corruption Loyalakpa hinted about in the television programme

**Date of Incident:**

17<sup>th</sup> of February, 2015 at around 10.30 a.m.

**Place of Incident:**

At the residence of the Journalist at Kontha Khabam Mayai Leikai in Imphal, the capital city of the North East Indian state of Manipur

**Incident detail:**

According to the sources, on 15 February 2015, Mr. Loyalakpa participated in a televised debate broadcast by local television station ISTV. In the programme Mr.Loyalakpa spoke against alleged misappropriation of union government funds provided to the Manipur state government. Mr.Loyalakpa claimed that officers in the Home Department of the state government have misappropriated large sums of money by way of corruption in the procurement of resources to be supplied to the state police officers. Mr.Loyalakpa claimed in the programme that he had information from his sources that persons having political power in the state along with the proprietor of a local hotel and high-ranking police officer were involved in the scam.

On 17 February 2014, at about 10:30 a.m., four men wearing facemasks visited Mr.Loyalakpa's house and enquired whether Mr.Loyalakpa was home. Mr.Loyalakpa's house is situated in Kontha Khabam Mayai Leikai, in Imphal. When the men were informed that Mr.Loyalakpa was not home, they forcibly entered and searched Mr.Loyalakpa's house. The masked men threatened Loyalakpa's nonagenarian parents that they will finish Mr.Loyalakpa off for speaking about corruption on TV. Following this, the masked men left.

Within a few days Mr.Loyalakpa received another death threat from persons identifying themselves as representatives of the Kangleipak Communist Party - MC group. This is a splinter faction of the Kangleipak Communist Party, an armed militia group operating in Manipur.

Mr.Loyalakpa has filed a complaint at the Heingang Police Station, Manipur. The police has registered a case, bearing number 17(2) 2015, for offenses punishable under sections 448, 511 read with section 34 of the Indian Penal Code 1860, and section 25 (1) C of the Indian Arms Act, 1959.

Since 23 February 2015, the state government has posted security officers to provide protection to Editors facing death threats in the state.

**Appeal :**

We, therefore urge you to immediately take necessary steps to ensure that the Superintendent of Police and the District Collector and Magistrate of Imphal

- Order an immediate, thorough, transparent, effective and impartial investigation into the above-mentioned events of threats issued to the human rights defender and take immediate action on the perpetrators as making comments on issues that the society faces is a freedom of expression guaranteed under the Constitution of India
- Guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of the defender and his family without hampering his freedom to operate as a journalist.
- Looking into the charges of corruption made by Mr.Loyalakpa in the Television Programme.
- Ensure provision of reparation, compensation, apology to the defender for the physical and psychological sufferings he underwent because of this assault and charges and provide a re-assurance of not engaging in such acts against HRDs such as Mr.Loyalakpa
- Put an end to all acts of harassment against all human rights defenders in the State of Manipur to ensure that in all circumstances they carry out their activities without any hindrances;

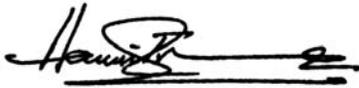
- Takes steps to conform to the provisions of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 9, 1998, especially:
  - Article 1, which states that “everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to promote and to strive 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”;
- Recommend urgently and speedily during the pendency of this complaint the SHRC in Manipur to also take necessary steps to establish a state focal point for HRDs in order that HRDs in the have a new protection mechanism in their own state .
- Recommend urgently and speedily during the pendency of this complaint the SHRC in Manipur to convene a meetings of all state human rights institutions in the state [ women, minorities, right to information, disability etc] to ensure that a coordinated strategy is developed within the State of Manipur for the protection of the rights of human rights defenders.
- Recommend urgently and speedily during the pendency of this complaint the State Government of Manipur in collaboration with the NHRC Focal Point on HRDs and the SHRC Manipur to provide sensitization training to law enforcement and security forces on the role and activities of human rights defenders as a matter of priority, with technical advice and assistance from relevant United Nations entities, NGOs and other partners.
- Recommend urgently and speedily during the pendency of this complaint, the State Government of Manipur in collaboration with the and the SHRC Manipur to publicly acknowledge the importance and legitimacy of the work of human rights defenders, i.e. anyone who, “individually and in association with others, ... promote[s] and ... strive[s] for the protection and realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms

at the national and international levels” (art.1 of the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders).

- 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.

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 drawn underneath it.

Henri Tiphagne

Honorary National Working Secretary