



Human Rights Defenders Alert – India

National Coordination Office

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27th June, 2016

To

Shri Srinivasa Kammath

National 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 – Odisha: Attempt to kill social activist and human rights defender Mr. Kedarnath Ranjit near Khurda Industrial Police station in the district Khurda of Odisha - Regarding

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 writing to express our grave concerns regarding social activist and human rights defender Mr. KedarnathRanjitin Odisha who was attacked by two unidentified miscreants. The assailants fired gun shots at HRD Mr.KedarnathRanjit while he was travelling with his daughter towards Bhubaneswar from his village on June 20, 2016 early morning.

Status of the Human Rights Defender:

Mr. KedarnathRanjithas been associated with “*AtmaSakti Trust*” since 2013 which works on issues of livelihood development and awareness generation work in Khurda district. He began his career in development Sector after post-graduation in poverty and development from Search Bangalore in 1983. He worked 30 years in different training projects and programmes in almost every part of Odisha. During the course of his career he worked in Search Bangalore, Gram Vikas and CYSD. However after leaving CYSD in 1998 he started doing freelancing. He has been part of many training courses or programmes at national and

international levels. During his diploma course on Grassroots Development and NGO Management from School of International Training (SIT), USA in 1993, he was involved and exposed to innovative grassroots experiments and initiatives in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Ethiopia, Nepal and Sri Lanka. He also facilitated several Participatory Training and Evaluation programmes for international agencies such as USAID, NOVIB, GRFC AID and UNICEF.

The Perpetrators:

Unknown Assailants

Date of Incident:

June 20, 2016.

Place of Incident:

About 100 meter away from Khurda Industrial Police station in NH 16, Khurda, Odisha

Incident detail:

According to sources, on June 20, 2016 at about 8 am early morning, the HRD Mr. KedarnathRanjit was travelling to Bhubaneswar with his daughter from his village Kantabania, under Mandarabast gram panchayat in the National Highway no.16 in Puri district of Odisha. When he reached at a spot about 100 meter away from Khurda Industrial Police station in NH 16 in Khurda district, two unknown assailants fired at him. The assailants were following the HRD on a pulsar motor bike. Mr. KedarnathRanjit suffered serious injuries in the attack. He was admitted in a nearby private hospital for medical treatment.

Appeal:

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

- Order an immediate, thorough, transparent, effective and impartial investigation into the above-mentioned incident of attack on the life of human rights defender Mr. KedarnathRanjit with the intention to kill;
- Take immediate legal action against the perpetrators after their identification and arrest them for attacking the human rights defender Mr. KedarnathRanjit and using all provisions of law to ensure that his physical safety is ensured and give this assurance to the NHRC of India in writing immediately and urgently;

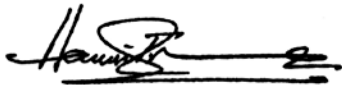
- Guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of Mr. KedarnathRanjit, who is still under risk of further reprisals from the perpetrators;
- Ensure provision of reparation, compensation, apology to the defender for the psychological sufferings he underwent because of the attack on his life and provide a re-assurance of not engaging in such acts against HRDs such as Mr. KedarnathRanjit;
- Put an end to all acts of attack and harassment against all human rights defenders like Mr. KedarnathRanjit in the State of Odisha to ensure that in all circumstances they carry out their activities as defenders of human rights 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 Odisha to also take necessary steps to establish a state focal point for HRDs in order to ensure that HRDs have a new protection mechanism in their own state;
- Recommend urgently and speedily during the pendency of this complaint, the NHRC to convene a meeting of all state human rights institutions in the state [the SHRC, the SCW, the SCPCR, the SCM, the SIC, State Commissioner for PWDs, etc.] to ensure that a coordinated strategy is developed within the State of Odisha for the protection of the rights of human rights defenders;
- Recommend urgently and speedily during the pendency of this complaint, the State Government of Odisha in collaboration with the NHRC Focal Point on HRDs and the SHRC Odisha 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 Odisha in collaboration with the SHRC, Odisha 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 the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and with international human rights instruments ratified by India is strictly adhered to in the state of Odisha.

Looking forward to your immediate action in this regard,

Yours sincerely,



(Henri Tiphagne)

Honorary National Working Secretary