



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

September 27, 2016

To,

Shri Srinivasa Kammath

National Focal Point - Human Rights Defenders

& Deputy Registrar

National Human Rights Commission

ManavAdhikarBhawan,

Block-C, GPO Complex, INA,

New Delhi – 110 023

Email: hrd-nhrc@nic.in

***Sub: HRD Alert - India - Urgent Appeal for Action - West Bengal –
MASUM: Attempt to intimidate and harass human rights
defender and secretary of Banglar Manabadhikar Suraksha
Mancha (MASUM), Mr. Kirity Roy through surveillance over his
email and phone – Regarding***

Dear Sir,

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 concern regarding the surveillance of email ids and phone numbers of Mr. Kurity Roy, secretary of Banglar Manabadhikar Suraksha Mancha (MASUM).

Status of the Human Rights Defender

Mr. Kurity Roy is the secretary of MASUM, a human rights organisation working for the promotion and protection of human rights in West Bengal. It works on the issues of torture and impunity through its district human rights monitors in different districts of the state. MASUM has been involved in campaigns against the use of torture by the state police and the paramilitary forces mainly the Border Security Force (BSF) deployed at the international border in the West Bengal region. MASUM also promotes human rights awareness against all sorts of torture practices in all sections of the society.

Source of Information on the Incident:

Mr. Kurity Roy, Secretary of MASUM

Details of the incident:

It is being apprehended that the communication instruments, email accounts and mobile phone belonging to Mr. Kurity Roy is being illegally tapped for surveillance. It has been illegally restricted to share the incidents of human rights violation to various forums.

Since the beginning of this year, in various ways Mr. Kurity Roy's electronic communication has been blocked. From March 19, 2016, his personal email account (kurityroy@gmail.com) has been blocked and since April 27, 2016, MASUM's email account (masumindia@gmail.com) has been blocked which is linked with their Youtube channel and thereby restricting people to view the videos of the human rights work done by MASUM. These emails did work occasionally but restricts him to send out

communications to larger groups. However, these email accounts have been completely blocked for any use whatsoever. It is pertinent to mention here that Mr. Kirity Roy has contacted the service provider and followed all the instructions diligently to reset his account but with no success.

On September 22, 2016, when Mr. Kirity Roy tried to pay the bill for his mobile phone, the OTP (one-time password) used to verify the authentication of the user was sent to a phone number belonging to a foreign country and it is apprehended that Mr. Kirity Roy's personal mobile phone is also hacked.

MASUM headed by Mr. Kirity Roy has been under continuous attack and HRDA has sent urgent appeals in each case of attack and the NHRC registration number of these cases are as follows:

- 1.) 1231/25/13/2013
- 2.) 1664/25/13/2014
- 3.) 668/25/6/2016

On August 16, 2016, HRDA also submitted a memorandum to the NHRC, endorsed by almost 100 individuals and organisations, in support of MASUM to express the deep concerns over the violent repression unleashed by the state government of West Bengal. These online attacks are perceived as attacks on the HRD restricting his legitimate peaceful work.

Appeal:

We, therefore urge you to immediately take necessary steps to ensure that the Hon'ble Commission

- ✓ Undertake an immediate, thorough, transparent, effective and impartial investigation into the above mentioned incident of surveillance through a team of technical experts on this issue;

- ✓ Based on the reports, recommend immediate and lawful action on the perpetrators for the intimidation and continuous harassment of Mr. Kirity Roy and team members from MASUM and using all provisions of law to ensure that the defenders are not harassed, intimidated or implicated in false cases in future.

Looking forward to your immediate action in this regard

Yours sincerely,

Sd/-

(Henri Tiphagne)

National Working Secretary