



Human Rights Defenders Alert- India

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28th December 2016

To,

Justice (Retd.) H.L. Dattu,
Chairperson,
National Human Rights Commission,
New Delhi
Email: chairnhrc@nic.in

Sub: HRD Alert - India - Urgent Appeal for Action – Assam: BJP Municipal Ward Commissioner in Jorhat attempted to incite communal tension over alleged cow slaughter and beef consumption - 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 endeavours to initiate actions on behalf of Human Rights Defenders under threat or with security concerns.

We are writing to express our grave concern over the attempt to inflict communal tension over the alleged cow slaughter and consumption of beef by BJP Municipal Ward Commissioner in Jorhat, Assam

Source of Information on the Incident:

Information from the members of AMSU, Purona Masjid Committee and Balibat Juba Mancha

The Perpetrators:

Ankur Gupta, Ward Commissioner, Municipality Board - Jorhat

Date of Incident:

24th December 2016

Place of Incident:

Purana Masjid, Jorhat

Details of Incident:

According to sources, on 24th December 2016, Mr. Ankur Gupta, the Municipal Ward Commissioner in Jorhat Municipality Board, entered the 185 years old Purana Masjid in Old Balibat in Jorhat town of Assam at around 6 PM with shoes and alleged of cow slaughter and preparation of beef inside the Masjid compound. The Masjid celebrates Fateha-Doaz-Daham every year on the occasion of birth and death anniversary of Prophet Hazrat Muhammad. On 24th December 2016, preparations were on-going inside the Masjid for the celebration of Fateha-Doaz-Daham on 25th December 2016. According to the custom, it does not allow anyone to enter the Masjid with footwear.

Mr. Gupta entered the Masjid kitchen without asking anyone and questioned them with abusive words about what they are preparing inside the kitchen. He checked the kitchen utensils and asked them what they have done with the two cows tied in the compound. Next day, on 25th December 2016, members of three organisations namely Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, Vishwa Hindu Parishad and Bajrang Dal filed a complaint in the Sadar Police Thana, in Jorhat Town against the Masjid Committee on the charges of cow slaughter and beef consumption. The Police registered the case under section of 153 (A) of IPC with case number 2737. Then the police called the Secretary of Masjid Committee and other members of the committee for inquiry.

After this incident, Muslim community living in Jorhat town felt insulted, intimidated and their religious sentiment being hurt by the members of the ruling government and local authorities in the name religion. It is a gross violation of freedom of religious expression. After the incident, the Masjid Committee, Balibat Juba Mancha and AMSU filed separate complaints against BJP leader and Commissioner Mr. Ankur Gupta for his act of hurting the religious sentiment of Muslim community and intimidating them at the Sadar Police Thana.

Appeal:

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

Orders an immediate, thorough, transparent, effective and impartial investigation, through special rapporteurs appointed by the commission, into the above mentioned incident of violation of the right to freedom of religion and belief.

Take immediate and appropriate action against Mr. Ankur Gupta for inciting communal tension in the city of Jorhat, Assam.

Take steps to ensure that the Government of Assam stops hounding and targeting the religious minority of the state in the name of religion and instead creates a conducive, non-adversarial, peaceful environment enabling people to freely perform their religious functions.

Looking forward to your immediate action in this regard,

Yours sincerely,

Sd/-

Henri Tiphagne

National Working Secretary