



## Human Rights Defenders Alert- India

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**March 3, 2017**

To,

### **Shri Srinivasa Kamath**

National Focal Point - Human Rights Defenders & Deputy Registrar  
National Human Rights Commission  
Manav Adhikar Bhawan,  
Block-C, GPO Complex, INA,  
New Delhi – 110 023  
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***Sub: HRD Alert - India - Urgent Appeal for Action – Karnataka – Mr. Srinath:  
Right to Information (RTI) Activist Mr. Srinath hacked to death for  
exposing corruption in Mandya District, Karnataka - 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 now writing to express our grave concern regarding the gruesome murder of an RTI activist Mr. Srinath for using Right to Information Act (RTI) to expose corruption and irregularities in land site allocation in Mandya district of Karnataka.

### **Status of Human Rights Defender:**

Mr. Srinath was aged 36 years, Right to Information Activist (RTI) activist and resident of Rajarajeshwari Nagar in Mandya District of Karnataka. He had exposed misappropriation of funds in layouts, which were being developed by the workers'

union attached to a central government agency and had also informed the anti-corruption bureau about certain officials who had amassed wealth through illegal sources and means.

Mr. Srinath and his family had been residing at Rajarajeshwari Layout developed by the local housing co-operative society since 2008. The society had allotted sites without providing basic amenities such as drinking water, streetlights and roads. Even after repeated petitions to the society, the authorities failed to provide facilities and Mr. Srinath had obtained related documents about the layout from Mysore Urban Development Authority (MUDA) under RTI Act.

Mr. Srinath's family members said that he brought to light anomalies like illegal allotment of sites, land encroachment and others through the documents he had procured. The society had obtained 105 acres of land from MUDA by providing fake documents and had encroached agriculture lands which were not acquired by the government and he had launched a legal fight against the society.

The site registration and transfer of site documents had stopped after Mr. Srinath launched the legal fight. Mr. Srinath provided documents to farmers who approached the court, questioning the encroachment of their land by the society. The society office-bearers had approached Mr. Srinath several times for a compromise and had also offered him three sites in order to silence him on the irregularities he had found.

**Source of Information:**

- Regional Coordinator of HRDA for South of India
- Communication from some sources who are familiar with the HRD's work
- Media Reports

**Date of Incident**

The dead body of the HRD was found on December 30, 2016.

**Place of Incident:**

The body was found in the Cauvery River near Srirangapatna in Mandya District of Karnataka.

## **The Perpetrators:**

Unknown persons who are aggrieved by the HRD's actions.

## **Incident detail:**

According to sources, on December 29, 2016, Thursday, at about 7.30 PM, RTI activist Mr. Srinath left home accompanied by an engineer, Mr. Chandrashekar and another worker, Mr Kumar, to attend to work in south Mysuru. When Mr. Srinath did not return home, his family filed a missing person complaint at the Kuvempu Nagar police station the next morning on Friday. The family members were not able to reach him through his mobile phone after 7.30 PM on December 29, 2016. Few hours after the complaint was filed, Mr. Srinath's body was found in the Cauvery river near Srirangapatna in Mandya. It is believed that, the perpetrators had killed him elsewhere, rolled up his body in a carpet, and dumped him in the river near the Nimishamba temple with the body bearing multiple stab wounds including his private parts.

The police found Mr. Srinath's body was wrapped in four bed sheets and a pit had been dug near the body where turmeric, kumkum, eggs and other items were found to make it appear as a case of black magic in order to mislead the investigation.

The RTI activist's brothers Mr. Srinivas and Mr. Pradeep told reporters that he faced threat openly from the MUDA engineer and some others from a housing co-operative society as he had exposed them. He had also given information about several government official for allegedly amassing disproportionate assets.

## ***Appeal:***

We therefore urge you to immediately take necessary steps to ensure that the Commissioner of Police, the Deputy Commissioner and District Magistrate of Mandya:

- Order an immediate, thorough, transparent, effective and impartial investigation into the above-mentioned murder of RTI Activist Mr. Srinath;
- Ensure provision of reparation, compensation, apology to the family of RTI activist Mr. Srinath for the psychological sufferings they have undergone and

also ensure to compensate for the trauma incurred during this time and give this assurance to the NHRC of India in writing immediately and urgently;

- Guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of the family and friends of Mr. Srinath of further attacks and intimidation from the perpetrators;
- Put an end to all acts of harassment against all RTI and human rights defenders in the State of Karnataka to ensure that in all circumstances they carry out their activities as activists without any hindrances;
- Ensure the right to seek information guaranteed by the RTI Act and the Article 21 of the Constitution of India which guarantees personal liberty.

Looking forward to your immediate action in this regard,

Yours sincerely,

Sd/-

**Henri Tiphagne**

National Working Secretary