



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

11th April 2017

To,

Shri Srinivasa Kammath

National Focal Point - Human Rights Defenders & Deputy 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 - Appeal for Action –Maharashtra: Murder of Right to Information Activist Mr. Suhas Haldankar who spoke against civic lapses in Pune, Maharashtra – Regarding

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 now writing to express our grave concern regarding the brutal killing of Right to Information Activist Mr. Suhas Haldankar who spoke against civic lapses in Pune.

Source of Information on the Incident:

- Reports from Media
- The Regional Coordinator of HRDA for South of India

Status of the Human Rights Defenders:

Mr. Suhas Haldankar, is a RTI activist who has exposed several civic lapses and has raised voice against the inefficiency of local corporators in Kharalwadi area of Pimpri-Chinchwad in Pune. He has made several enemies due to his activism and takes up cudgels in public interest.

The Perpetrators:

1. Sadguru Mahadev Kadam a former corporator Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC),
2. Kalya alias Sandip Tanaji Kalapure
3. Pratul Revji Ghadge
4. Abhijit Balasaheb Kalapure
5. Dattatreya alias Fetya Gulab Kalapure
6. Santosh Magan alias Mundy Arbekar
7. Pravin alias Zingrya Mahadev Kadam
8. Khandya alias Pravin Pandurang Savant
9. Santosh alias Babya Chandrakant Kadam
10. Amar Mohammed Pathan
11. Satish Mahadev Kadam
12. Ganesh Jadhav

(All are residents of Kharalwadi and allegedly members aggrieved by RTI's filed by Mr. Suhas Haldankar)

Date of Incident:

On Sunday evening 9th April 2017

Incident detail:

According to sources, on the evening of 9th April 2017, RTI activist Mr. Suhas Haldankar, who exposed several civic lapses and raised voice against the inefficiency of local corporators in Kharalwadi area of Pimpri-Chinchwad, was murdered allegedly by 11 people, including a former corporator Mr. Sadguru Mahadev Kadam.

Mr. Haldankar who was going home on his motorbike around 10 pm on Sunday was stopped by two of the alleged accused at a chowk in Kharalwadi area. He was then allegedly ridiculed by the accused over a board that he had put up, highlighting the lack of basic civic amenities in Kharalwadi put up just before the recent civic elections and the area represented by two corporators.

According to one of the witnesses, (there are at least five witnesses in the case) who has also reportedly given a statement to the police, the argument began between the

accused and Mr. Haldankar, while the others reportedly started thrashing Mr. Haldankar. In the melee, one of them picked up a concrete block and threw it at Mr. Haldankar which hit him on the head while others also threw concrete blocks towards him. He then collapsed in a pool of blood. He was rushed to the hospital but declared dead on arrival.

Appeal:

We, therefore urge you to immediately take necessary steps to ensure that the Commissioner of Police, the District Collector and District Magistrate of Pune city:-

- Orders an immediate, independent, thorough, transparent, effective and impartial investigation into the above-mentioned incident of death of Mr. Suhas Haldankar and reports the same to this Hon'ble Commission;
- Guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of the family members of Mr. Suhas Haldankar from further reprisals from the perpetrators and using all provisions of law to ensure that the witnesses in the case are not harassed or intimidated in future;
- Ensure provision of reparation, compensation and apology to the family of the defender for the psychological sufferings they are undergoing because of the brutal murder of Mr. Suhas Haldankar;
- Put an end to all acts of attack and harassment and attempt on the life of all human rights defenders like Mr. Suhas Haldankar in the State of Maharashtra and to ensure that in all circumstances that human rights defenders carry out their activities without any hindrances;
- Take 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:
 - o 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;
 - o 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 Maharashtra 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 SHRC in Maharashtra to convene a meeting of all state human rights institutions in the state [women, minorities, right to information, disability, children etc.] to ensure that a coordinated strategy is developed within the State of Maharashtra for the protection of the rights of human rights defenders;
- Recommend urgently and speedily during the pendency of this complaint, the State Government of Goa in collaboration with the NHRC Focal Point on HRDs and the SHRC Goa 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 Maharashtra in collaboration with the SHRC, Maharashtra 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 Maharashtra.

Looking forward to your immediate action in this regard,

Yours sincerely,

Sd/-

(Henri Tiphagne)

National Working Secretary