



HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS' ALERT - INDIA

NATIONAL SECRETARIAT

No.32, Besant Road, Chokkikulam, Madurai - 625 002, Tamil Nadu, India.
P: +91-452-2531874 & 2539520 Fax: +91-452- 2531874 Mobile: 99943-68540

March 12, 2018

To

Mr. 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 - Urgent Appeal for Action the illegal and arbitrary arrest of Damodar Turi, Member of Jharkhand Visthapan Virodhi Jan Vikas Andolan (JVVJVA) and a human rights defender in a false and fabricated case by the Jharkhand Police in Ranchi, Jharkhand - 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 now writing to express our grave concern regarding the arbitrary arrest of Mr. Damodar Turi, Member of Jharkhand Visthapan Virodhi Jan Vikas Andolan (JVVJVA) on 15th Feb 2018 afternoon at Ranchi, Jharkhand.

Source of Information on the Incident:

- The Coordinator of HRDA for the East ,
- Media reports
- Communication with HRD Fr. Stan Swamy
- Communication with HRD Ms.Dayamani Barla

The Human Rights Defenders:

Mr. Damodar Turi is a human rights defender and has been active in Jharkhand for many years in raising issues related to forceful displacement of tribals (adivasis). He is the convener of “Jharkhand Visthapan Virodhi Jan Vikas Andolan” (JVVJVA). He

was also associated with number of national people's movements also like the antinuclear protest at Kudankulam in Tamil Nadu.

The Perpetrators:

1. Mr. Rajiv Kumar Director General of Police, Jharkhand
2. Mr. Prabhat Kumar, Superintendent of Police, Ranchi
3. Mr. Kranti Kumar. Superintendent of Police , Garhdeshi Giridhi
4. Officer in Charge of Lal bazar Police Station, Ranchi

Date of Incident:

February 15, 2018

Place of Incident:

Gossner Theological Hall near Club Road Ranchi, Jharkhand

Background:

Mr. Damodar Turi has been arrested in connection to a case lodged at Giridih Mufassil Police Station on November 7, 2017 when a public meeting and rally had been organised by the Mazdoor Sangathan Samiti (MSS) marking 100 years of Bolshevik Revolution in Giridih, Jharkhand. MSS was banned thereafter on December 22, 2017 by the Home Department, Governemnt of Jharkhand with several of its members facing arrest and its offices being raided and shut down by Jharkhand Police. This case at Giridih was registered against 12 members of the MSS and 800 unknown persons. Mr. Turi was only a participant in the programme.

The "*Jharkhand Visthapan Virodhi Jan Vikas Andolan*" JVVJVA which came into existence a few years after the formation of the state of Jharkhand, has been actively raising issues concerning displacement of tribal (adivasis). It has been actively involved in their struggle for *Jal-Jangal-Jameen*. Over the years the JVVJVA has raised issues including amendments to the Chotanagpur Tenancy Act, 1908 and Santal Parganas Tenancy Act, 1949. The JVVJVA has therefore been on the radar of the Government for a long time.

"*Loktantr Bachao Manch*" (LBM) has been formed by various organisations in Jharkhand in the face of the many undemocratic measures of the Jharkhand government. The LBM programme drew attention to the anti-people measures of the present government in Jharkhand including starvation related deaths

following the compulsory use of Aadhaar for availing public distribution services, the ban on MSS, and the fake encounter killings, etc.

Incident detail:

As per sources, on February 15, 2018 a meeting was organised at Gossner Theological Hall, Ranchi under a collective banner "*Loktantr Bachao Manch*". After completion of the meeting Mr. Turi was going to media offices to distribute the press release while was been arrested by police personnel from Laower Bazar Police station and was kept a night-long detention. Mr. Turi was arrested in a case registered under Section 353 (obstructing a public servant from performing his duty) of the Indian Penal Code at Mufassil police station in Giridih district on November 7, 2017. Then he was produced before the court, from where he was sent to a 14-day judicial custody. It is now been alleged by the wife of Mr.Turi that police are not allowing any one to meet Mr.Turi in Giridhi Jail.

Appeal:

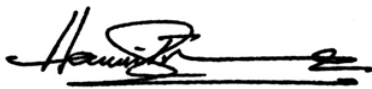
We, therefore urge you to immediately take necessary steps to ensure that the Commissioner of Police, Ranchi and the Collector and District Magistrate of Giridhi

- Guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of Mr. Damodar Turi who is still under risk of further reprisals from the perpetrators and provide a re-assurance of not engaging in such acts against HRDs;
- Direct the Jharkhand Govt. immediately to announce a full and thorough investigation into the incident and take urgent steps to ensure the safety of Mr. Turi and his family members.
- Ensure provision of reparation, compensation, apology to the defender for the psychological sufferings she is undergoing because of the threats and intimidation to her life and give this assurance to the NHRC of India in writing immediately and urgently;
- Put an end to all acts of attack and harassment of human rights defenders in the State of Jharkhand to ensure that in all circumstances they carry out their activities as journalist / defenders of human rights without any hindrances;

- 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 Jharkhand.

Looking forward to your immediate action in this regard,

Yours sincerely,



(Henri Tiphagne)

Honorary National Working Secretary

Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders,

Mr. Michel Forst

c/o Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights – Palais Wilson United Nations Office at Geneva

CH 1211 Geneva 10

Switzerland

Email: urgent-action@ohchr.org jgaziye@ohchr.org defenders@ohchr.org

Dr. Rameshwar Oraon,

Chairperson, National Commission for Scheduled Tribes

6th Floor, 'B' Wing, Loknayak Bhawan, Khan Market, New Delhi-110003.

Email: chairperson@ncst.nic.in

Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous people,

Ms. Victoria Tauli Corpuz

c/o Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights – Palais Wilson United Nations Office at Geneva

CH 1211 Geneva 10

Switzerland

Email: indigenous@ohchr.org

Mr. Michel Forst

Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders,

c/o Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights – Palais Wilson United Nations Office at Geneva

CH 1211 Geneva 10

Switzerland

Email: urgent-action@ohchr.org defenders@ohchr.org hrd-ra@ohchr.org

Ms. Christine Chung

Human Rights Officer- Asia Pacific Section

Field Operations and Technical Cooperation Division

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Email: cchung@ohchr.org

Front Line - The International Foundation for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders

Second Floor Grattan House

Temple Road , Blackrock
Co. Dublin
Ireland

Email : info@frontlinedefenders.org sayeed@frontlinedefenders.org asia@frontlinedefenders.org

Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders

World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT)
8 rue du Vieux Billard - 1211 Geneva 8 – Switzerland
Email: dr@omct.org

Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)

66/2, Pan Road, Silom Bang Rak,
Bangkok, 10500 Thailand.
Email: hrd@forum-asia.org

OMCT International Secretariat

PO Box 21
8, rue du Vieux-Billard
1211 Geneva 8
Switzerland
E-mail: omct@omct.org

Human Rights Watch

350, Fifth Avenue, 34th Floor,
New York
Email: gangulm@hrw.org bajorij@hrw.org

Amnesty International India

Ground Floor, # 235, 13th cross,
Indira Nagar II Stage,
Bangalore, Karnataka, India - 560 038.
Email: aakar.patel@amnesty.co.in

CIVICUS: World Alliance for World Participation

Johannesburg
South Africa
Email: Mandeep.Tiwana@civicus.org tor.hodenfield@civicus.org
cathal.gilbert@civicus.org dominic.perera@civicus.org

The Norwegian Human Rights Fund (NHRF)

P.O. Box 6890 St. Olavs plass, N-0130 Oslo, Norway
Email: liv.kvanvig@nhrf.no