



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
E.mail: hrda.india@gmail.com Web: www.hrdaindia.org

March 8, 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 – Harassment and intimidation of women human rights defender Ms. Ranjeeta Sadokpam and her family by Army personnel in Manipur - 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 writing to express our grave concern over the harassment and intimidation of women human rights defender Ms. Ranjeeta Sadokpam and her family in Manipur by Indian Army personnel.

Status of Human Rights Defender:

Ms. Ranjeeta Sadokpam is a Researcher with Human Rights Alert (HRA), a human rights organisation in Manipur. Human Rights Alert has been documenting human rights violations and organizing the victimized communities of Manipur and north-east India to access human rights redressal mechanisms – for more than two decades, both at national and international levels including the United Nations' human rights mechanisms.

Source of Information on the Incident:

Communication from Mr. Babloo Loitongbam, Executive Director – Human Rights Alert, Ms. Ranjeeta Sadokpam, the WHRD herself.

Perpetrators:

Personnel of Indian Army

Personnel of Manipur Police

Some masked persons in Army dress

Details of the Incident

On the night of February 27, 2018 at around 1.00 AM, Ranjeeta heard someone calling out the name 'Somendro' at her door. She replied back saying there's no one by that name in her house. But the person who was outside insisted to open the door. Then Ranjeeta went to her balcony in the first floor of her house to see who was outside, she saw a person in police uniform. When she again said that there's no one by that name, the person demanded to open the door as they wanted to search her house. When Ranjeeta asked the person for warrant and authorization for the search, the person in army uniform came to a place which had some light and said that he is an Army Major and an authorized office. Meanwhile, the knocking at the door increased.

Then Mr. Dhiren A. Sadokpam, elder brother of Ranjeeta contacted an army officer on the phone. Ranjeeta took the mobile phone and kept the phone online as she opened the door. She immediately handed over the phone to the Army Major who led the combined team to speak to the officer who was on phone. Once Ms. Ranjeeta stepped outside, she could see around 10 Army personnel and others were taking positions all around her neighbourhood. She could notice one person from Manipur Police accompanied by two masked persons in Indian Army dress.

The officer who led the combined team asked to identify Mr. Dhiren. Ms. Ranjeeta took Dhiren's Identity Card and showed it to the Officer. The officer showed the identity card to one of the masked man. The masked man nodded in the negative. Then, the officer spoke to Dhiren and checked for the particulars of all the family members. Dhiren's younger brother Ronen who stays in an adjacent apartment was also called by the Army persone along with his wife. One masked man who came along with the combined team responded positive by nodding his head by seeing them. The allegations against 'Somendro' were that he is a member of UNLF, involved in ambush etc. Seeing that, Ms. Ranjeeta confronted the Army officer pointing out that Ronen is not 'Somendro' whom they were looking for. The officer and the army personnel

cornered Ronen at a little distance from the house and spoke to him. Then, the officer demanded the identity card of Ronen and it was shown to the. Thereafter, the officer asked the family members to sign a declaration which was not read over to them. The family members reluctantly signed on the paper and the combined team left the location. In their area where Ranjeeta resides there is another family with the surname they were looking for, but till today army nor the police has not visited that house.

There is every reason to believe that this act of the Army and the police disturbing the family at the midnight such unwarranted action in an intimidating way, is nothing but an act of harassment of human rights defenders for carrying out their legitimate human rights work. This act of intimidation very serious, particularly at a time when the Central Bureau of Investigation and National Human Rights Commission is conducting investigation on extrajudicial execution of several cases involving the combined team of Manipur Police and the Army under the orders of the Supreme Court of India in a case in which HRA is petitioner. Today a complaint has filed at the DGP office, Imphal, Manipur.

Appeal:

We, therefore urge you to immediately take necessary steps and:

Order an immediate, independent, thorough, transparent, effective and impartial investigation into the above-mentioned incident of intimidation and harassment of Ms. Ranjeeta and her family members

Ensure that a FIR is filed against the concerned officials of Army and the police who has intimidated the WHRD Ms. Ranjeeta and her family members

Ensure provision of reparation, compensation, apology to the defender for the psychological sufferings she has undergone because of the threats and provide a re-assurance of not engaging in such acts against HRDs

Looking forward to your immediate action in this regard,

Yours sincerely,



Henri Tiphagne

National Working Secretary

Copies to:

The Chairperson,
Manipur State Human Rights Commission,
Courts Complex,
Lamphelpat,
Imphal – 795 004.
Ph: 0385-2451017
Email: mhrc@man.nic.in

Mr. Biren Singh
Hon'ble Chief Minister, Govt. of Manipur,
Secretariate, Imphal,
Manipur.
Ph: 0385-2220137
Fax: 0385-2421171
Email: cmmani@man.nic.in

Mr. Rajani Ranjan Rashmi
Chief Secretary,
Govt. of Manipur, Secretariate,
Imphal, Manipur.
Ph: 0385-2451144
Fax: 0385-2452629
Email: cs-manipur@nic.in

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