



HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS' ALERT - INDIA

NATIONAL SECRETARIAT

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April 20, 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 – West Bengal: Journalists – Brutal attack on journalists in Kolkata – 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 inaction of West Bengal police while journalists were assaulted, stripped and forcibly undressed by the supporters and cadres of political parties in Kolkata, West Bengal

Source of Information on the Incident:

- The Coordinator of HRDA for the East ,
- Interaction with journalist Mr. Tanmoy Bhaduri and others.

The Human Rights Defenders:

- Mr. Biplab Mondal, Photo Journalist Times of India
- Mr. Bhaskar Mukherjee, Journalist with a Bengali daily Bartaman.
- Mr. Manas Chatterjee, Journalist, ETV Bangla

All of them are member of Media Journalist Welfare Association (MJWA), South 24 Parghana district. MJWA is a registered body of Journalist in South 24 Parganas district.

The Perpetrators:

Unknown persons, allegedly supporters of political parties

Date of Incident:

April 9, 2018.

Place of Incident:

Alipore, Kolkata

Incident detail:

As per the sources, on April 9, 2018, while nominations were being filed for the upcoming local body elections in West Bengal, there were violent clashes between cadres and supporters of various political parties in which many people including contestants were brutally attacked. The journalists at Kolkata were covering once such incidence of violence in Alipore, Kolkata. The violent mob suddenly started attacking journalists who were recording with cameras the attacks and clashes between supporters of political parties. The mob started thrashing the journalists, clothes torn and stripped and their cameras were damaged.

Mr. Biplab Mondal from Times of India while refusing to delete the videos and photos from his mobile, was beaten up badly and stripped by the mob. They forcibly deleted all the video and photos from the mobile phones and cameras of other journalists.

While they tried to snatch the camera of Mr. Manas Chatterjee, he resisted and was attacked brutally. There were reports of violence and attacks of similar kind from other districts like Murshidabad, Hooghly, Birbhum where photojournalists were facing assault.

Though the journalists and media houses have complained to the police about the brutal attacks on journalists, the police did not take any action on the matter.

Appeal:

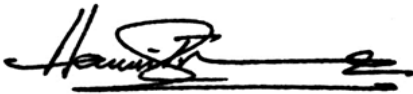
We, therefore urge you to immediately take necessary steps and -

- Order for immediate, transparent and independent investigation on this matter on brutal attack on journalists by NHRC's independent investigation team;

- Record the statements of the above-mentioned journalists, order registering of FIRs against the perpetrators and take appropriate legal actions against the police for the inactions;
- Guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of all journalists in the state who is still under risk of further reprisals from the perpetrators and provide a re-assurance of not engaging in such acts against HRDs;
- Ensure provision of reparation, compensation, apology to the defenders for the psychological sufferings they are undergoing because of the violent attack on them
- Put an end to all acts of attack and harassment of human rights defenders, especially journalists who have been continuously targeted during clashes between political parties in the State of West Bengal to ensure that in all circumstances they carry out their activities as journalist / defenders of human rights without any hindrances.

Looking forward to your immediate action in this regard,

Yours sincerely,



(Henri Tiphagne)

National Working Secretary

Copies to:

The Chairperson,

West Bengal State Human Rights Commission

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