



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

May 17, 2018

Ref No:- HRDA/North/PB/3/5/2018

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 – Punjab: Harassment of RTI activist Mr. Harpreet Singh – 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 harassment of RTI activist Mr. Harpreet Singh in Punjab.

Source of Information on the Incident:

- The Regional Coordinator of HRDA
- Communication with the HRD, Mr. Harpreet Singh

The Human Rights Defenders:

Mr. Harpreet Singh is associated with “National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights” (NCDHR). Formerly, he was the fellow with “Dalit Foundation”. For the past three years he has been filing RTI petitions in different government departments to expose corruption in the district.

The Perpetrators:

1. Dr. Ketan Patil Baliram, Senior Superintendent of Police, Fazilka
2. Vinod Choudhry Superintendent of Police Headquarter, Fazilka
3. Abhinav Chauhan Station House Officer, Jalalabad
4. Bhajan Singh, Assistant Sub Inspector who threatened applicant in the police station at Jalalabad.

Place of Incident:

Police Station Jalalabad City, Fazilka District, Punjab

Background:

In October 2015, Mr. Harpreet Singh had sent a complaint to the Jalalabad Police Station regarding a theft in his shop, through registered post. But the police officer did not register his complaint. Subsequently Mr. Singh went to the police station personally and requested to register the complaint, but the police personnel refused to register his complaint again. Thereafter, he went to the Sub Divisional Judicial Magistrate's (SDJM) Court and filed a case on non-registration of his complaint and the court directed the Station House Officer (SHO) to take suitable action against the applicant's complaint. After the order of the SDJM Court, police prepared a false report and misguided the court. In the report, the date of inquiry was October 19, 2015 though the police received the complaint from Mr. Singh on October 20, 2015.

Since Mr. Singh was not satisfied with this report, he filed a writ petition in the High Court which directed the Sub Divisional Judicial Magistrate, Jalalabad, to monitor the progress of the action taken in his complaint. Only after these orders of High court, a case was registered by the police. After this, Mr. Singh sought for action against the police officer for negligence in his duty and upon departmental inquiry, Assistant Sub Inspector (ASI) Mr. Bhajan Singh was found guilty of not performing his duty after the inquiry by Additional Inspector General of Police, Bathinda. The departmental inquiry against Mr. Bhajan Singh is pending for final approval by Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Dr. Ketan Baliram Patil IPS.

Incident detail:

As per the statement of the HRD, on September 27, 2017, Mr. Singh went to the Jalalabad police station to accompany Mr. Kewal Krishna on his request. While Mr.

Singh was in the police station, he was called to another room by ASI Mr. Bhajan Singh who is facing departmental inquiry, threatened him for his RTI work.

As the SHO was busy in another official program, Mr. Singh went to the Senior Superintendent of Police and complained on the matter on October 4, 2017. Upon his complaint, the SSP directed the Superintendent of Police – Headquarters (SP) to enquire and submit a report.

It is alleged that the SP did not make a fair investigation and tried to save ASI Mr. Bhajan Singh. In the inquiry process he had examined three police officials and three civilians as witnesses. Mr. Singh filed an application under RTI Act to obtain a copy of the investigation report. He found in the report that the Munshi and other two police personnel had stated that Mr. Singh had abused ASI Bhajan Singh and that a complaint against Mr. Singh has been filed. It is alleged by Mr. Singh that a false complaint has been filed against him to intimidate him for his complaint against ASI Mr. Bhajan Singh.

Appeal:

We, therefore urge you to immediately take necessary steps and

- Ensure that a proper, fair and transparent investigation is ordered in this case;
- Ensure that the false case filed against Mr. Harpreet Singh is quashed;
- Guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of Mr. Harpreet Singh 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 defender for the psychological sufferings he is undergoing because of the threats and intimidation to his life and give this assurance to the NHRC of India in writing immediately and urgently.

Looking forward to your immediate action in this regard,

Yours sincerely,



Henri Tiphagne
National Working Secretary

Copies to:

Chairperson,
Punjab State Human Rights Commission,
SCO NO. 20-21-22, SECTOR 34 A,
Chandigarh 160 034, India
Email: pshrc.chd@gmail.com

Mr. Shri Sarvesh Kaushal
Chief Secretary,
Govt., of Punjab,
Secretariate, Chandigarh,
Punjab.
Email: cs@punjab.gov.in

The Director General of Police
O/o Addl. Director General of Police,
IT & T Wing Punjab Police Head Quarters,
Sector 9, Chandigarh.
E-mail Address: dgp.punjab.police@punjab.gov.in

Chief Information Commissioner,
State Information Commission Punjab
SCO 84-85,2nd Floor, Sector 17-C Phone: 0172-4630054
Chandigarh - 160017
E-mail- scic@punjabmail.gov.in / psic.nod@punjab.gov.in