



HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS' ALERT - INDIA

NATIONAL SECRETARIAT

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June 22, 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 - Appeal for Action – Assam: Arrest of KMSS activists and RTI activist Akhil Gogoi and crackdown on SMSS activists while protesting against the visit of BJP president Amit Shah to Assam on May 20, 2018 – Regarding

Dear Sir,

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 arrest of KMSS (Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti) activists including RTI activist Akhil Gogoi and the police attack on SMSS (Satra Mukti Sangram Samiti) activists by Assam police.

Source of Information on the Incident:

- HRDA Regional Coordinator
- Media Reports
- Members of SMSS

The Perpetrators:

Assam police

Date of Incident:

May 20, 2018

Place of Incident:

Guwahati, Assam

Details of the incident:

On May 20, 2018, ahead of BJP president Amit Shah's visit to Assam, activists associated with KMSS and SMSS staged protests in several parts of Guwahati against the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016. KMSS urged the people of Assam to protest against the BJP president's visit by displaying black flag. Since May 20, 2018 morning, Mr. Akhil Gogoi, President of KMSS, along with other KMSS activists had staged a protest near Srimanta Shankardeva Kalakshetra in Guwahati. It is said that, some BJP members tried to disturb the peaceful protest after which the police personnel from Dispur police station detained Akhil Gogoi along with 500 KMSS members around 10 AM at the 4th Assam Police Battalion at the Kahilipara, Guwahati. All of them were released at 4 PM on same day.

In front of Guwahati University, the students and members of SMSS staged protest since the morning on May 20, 2018, against the visit of BJP president. When the members of SMSS and students were gathered at the Bidyanagar market and preparing for the protest, police searched the university hostels (boys and girls) and detained 13 students from the hostel while some of the students were detained after the police chased them. When the Mr. Amit Shah's convoy crossed the area, the students and SMSS activists again staged the protest near the Bhupen Hazarika's grave, shouted slogans against BJP government and burnt Amit Shah's effigy. Police from Jalukbari police station attacked the protesters, in which three students were injured. Saddam Hussain, a LLB student at the JB Law College and Rabiul Islam, an MA student from Guwahati University were detained and taken to Jalukbari police station. All together around 50 SMSS activists were arrested from various parts of Guwahati.

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 the arrest and detention of all HRDs;

- 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;
- Put an end to all acts of attack and harassment of human rights defenders in the State of Assam to ensure that in all circumstances they carry out their activities as defenders of human rights without any hindrances; and,
- 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 Assam.

Looking forward to your immediate action in this regard,

Yours sincerely,



Henri Tiphagne

Honorary National Working Secretary