



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

HRDA/East/JH/6/7/2018

July 21, 2018

To,

Mr. Srinivasa Kammath,
Focal Point-Human Rights Defenders,
National Human Rights Commission,
Manav Adhikar Bhawan Block-C, GPO Complex, INA,
New Delhi-110023,
E-mail –ID: hrd-nhrc@nic.in

Sub: HRD Alert – India: Urgent Appeal for Action – Jharkhand: Mob attack on human rights defender Swami Agnivesh - 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 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 about the violent mob attack on Swami Agnivesh while he was in Pakur, Jharkhand to attend a program in the local stadium on July 17, 2018.

Source of Information on the Incident:

- HRDA Regional Coordinator
- Communication with HRD Mr. Stan Swamy
- Media reports

The Human Rights Defenders:

Swami Agnivesh is 80 years old and a prominent human rights defender. He was the member of the Haryana Legislative Assembly in 1977 and was cabinet minister for education in 1979.

Swami Agnivesh is best known for his work against bonded labour through the “Bonded Labour Liberation Front” which he founded in 1981. He also served as the chairperson of the United Nation Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of

Slavery from 1994 to 2004. He testified before the working group on contemporary forms of slavery at the UNHRC, Geneva.

He was involved in the Commission of Sati (prevention) Act of 1987 and advocated for women rights. In 2005, he was part of a two-week campaign against female feticide.

The Perpetrators:

1. Members of Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) and Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) in Pakur, Jharkhand
2. Mr. D.K.Pandey, Director General of Police, Jharkhand
3. Mr. Shailendra Prasad Barnwal, Superintendent of Police, Pakur, Jharkhand

Date of Incident:

July 17, 2018

Place of Incident:

Pakur District, Jharkhand

Incident detail:

As per the sources, on July 17, 2018 Swami Agnivesh arrived at Pakur to attend a program concerning the Paharia tribe under the banner of “Paharia Hill Assembly Mahasabha” at the “Littipara stadium”. While he was departing from his hotel (Hotel Muskan), a group of BJYM activists, Bharatiya Janata Party’s (BJP) youth wing, who were waiting outside the hotel began shouting slogans against him. The group got close to Swami Agnivesh, they assaulted him with fist blows and kicks, as a result he fell to the ground, his clothes were torn and his turban was pulled off. As reported in the media, Swami Agnivesh was assaulted because of his statement supporting the freedom of cultural practices and defending consumption of beef. It has to be noted that the attacks were without any provocation and the same is clear in the videos.

According to the news agency ANI, Swami Agnivesh stated, “There was no police personnel present there. Even when I repeatedly called Superintendent of Police (SP) and District Magistrate (DM) they didn’t turn up. I was told that ABVP & BJYM workers

want to protest. I told them there's no need to protest, they can come in and talk. No one came in at that time". Absence, negligence and non-responsive attitude of the police and administration is also questionable in this incident.

Appeal:

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

- Order an immediate, independent, thorough, transparent, effective, impartial and time bound investigation into the above-mentioned incident of the attack on human rights defender Swami Agnivesh.
- Based on the independent investigation, order for legal proceedings against those who attacked Swami Agnivesh.
- Call for records and action taken by the police against the attack on Swami Agnivesh.
- Ensure provision of reparation, compensation, apology to the HRD for the psychological sufferings he is undergoing because of the threats and attack to his life and give 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 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