



# HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS' ALERT - INDIA

NATIONAL SECRETARIAT

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**Ref: HRDA/North East/Manipur/1/10/2018**

**Date: October 3, 2018**

To,

**Shri Khaleel Ahmad**

National Focal Point - Human Rights Defenders & Deputy Registrar

National Human Rights Commission

Manav Adhikar Bhawan,

Block-C, GPO Complex, INA,

New Delhi – 110 023

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**Sub: HRD Alert - India - Appeal for Action –Urgent Appeal for Action by Human Rights Defenders Alert (HRDA) – Imphal – Manipur.**

## IN THE MATTER OF

1. Heavy deployment of security forces in the campus of Manipur University;
2. Firing of numerous rounds of tear gas shells, mock bombs and live bullets, into the hostel rooms;
3. Arbitrary arrest, illegal detention, torture, inhumane and degrading treatment of arrested students and professors.

**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 writing to express our grave concern over the arbitrary arrest and harassment of students and teachers of Manipur University and unauthorized deployment of security forces in an educational campus like Manipur University (MU).

**Source of Information on the Incident:**

The Coordinator of HRDA for the North East of India

HRD of Manipur

Media Reports

**The Perpetrators:**

Combined security forces under the leadership of Inspector General of Police (Law and Order, Zone II) consisting of:

1. Manipur Police Commando;
2. Manipur Civil Police;
3. Central Reserved Police Force;
4. Indian Reserved Battalion; and,
5. Manipur Rifles.

**Date of Incident:** 12.15 AM, approximately, on September 21, 2018.

**Place of Incident:** Inside Manipur University Campus.

**Details of the Incident:**

MU was limping back to normalcy after the protracted three month long agitation. Semester examination was going on and students were preparing for their respective exams. In the evening of September 20, 2018, a small group of students were gathered in the traffic island of MU to discuss the emerging situation following the Pro-VC's attempt to takeover, but the police dispersed the gathering and the students ran helter-skelter.

After midnight at around 12.15 AM of September 21, 2018, the students were shocked to see a large number of security forces walking inside their hostels in search of the office bearers of Manipur University Students' Union (MUSU). Even the girl's hostels were not spared, causing much panic and chaos. The security forces used excessive force and destroyed hostel properties such as doors, windows, etc. to carry out their pre-planned surgical strike. The students resisted the security forces from entering their respective hostels without permission from hostel authorities. Scuffle ensued between the students and security forces. The security forces resorted to shelling of tear gas shells, mock bombs and even live bullets. Many students were subjected to torture, inhumane and degrading treatments. One Additional SP of Imphal West District Mr. Hemanta of Manipur Police was even caught red handed when he was trying to plant a gun on the bed of Mr. Bisheshwar, MUSU counselor of Department of Mathematics, in Hostel no 5.

A large number of panic stricken students spontaneously assembled near the traffic island of MU. The security forces retaliated again with another round of tear gas shells to disperse the peaceful assembly. The helpless students had to frenzy inside their hostel campus. The security forces carried out another round of combing operation at boy's hostels 1,2,3,4 and 5 at around 3:30 am.

The police action continued till dawn. The students were not allowed to buy medicine or seek medical attention of the injuries sustained in the scuffle. It was only around 2 PM that ambulance was allowed inside the MU campus to ferry the injured students.

At least 89 students were picked up by the police and detained in different police stations. Official quarters of many professors were raided and at least 6 professors were also arrested.

Six professors and seven students are in judicial custody and two students are in police custody.

**Details of the professors who are in Judicial Custody:**

- 1) Professor Sougaijam Dorendrajit
- 2) Professor L. Vishwanath Sharma
- 3) Professor L. Sanju Kumar
- 4) Professor Chungkham Yashowanta
- 5) Professor N. Sanatomba
- 6) Professor Yengkhom Raghmani

**Details of the students who are in Judicial Custody:**

- 7) Mr. L. Peter,
- 8) Mr. M. Santosh,
- 9) Mr. Kh. Sushilkumar,
- 10) Mr. L. Reynold,
- 11) Mr. P. Romarjit,
- 12) Mr. Kh. Joychand,
- 13) Mr. Ngamkholen Mate,

**Details of the students who are in Police Custody:**

14) Mr. Laishram Robindro,

15) Mr. Irom Kennedy

**The charges against the students and professors:** FIR No. 223 (9) 2018 U/S 147/148/149/365/342/307/506/ 384/ 120-B/34 Indian Penal Code & 7 Criminal Law Amendment Act, 2013 at the Singjamei Police Station.

**The nature of violations:**

1. Heavy deployment of security forces without informing MU authority;
2. Search and cordon of university hostels without warrant;
3. Attempt to implant incriminating articles at the hostel by one police officer;
4. Firing of numerous rounds of tear gas shells, mock bombs and live bullets into the hostel rooms while students were studying for examination scheduled on the following day;
5. Blocking the injured students from getting medical treatment for hours by the security forces; and,
6. Arbitrary arrest, illegal detention, torture, inhumane and degrading treatment of arrested students and 6 professors.

**Background Information:**

HRDA earlier submitted an urgent appeal to NHRC dated July 26, 2018, for the matter of Manipur University regarding Brutal police action (lathicharge without provocation and use of tear gas) on protesting students demanding removal of Professor Adya Prasad Pandey the Vice-Chancellor of Manipur University at Raj Bhawan and State Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) office, located at Sinjamei and Uripok areas of Imphal, Manipur and for the Government Order of July 19, 2018 for temporary suspension of internet and all telecom services except voice calls for 5 days.

MU was established in 1980 and designated as a Central University in 2004. The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) appointed Prof. Adya Prasad Pandey of Banaras Hindu University as Vice Chancellor of MU in October 2016. But gradually his incompetence, arrogance and high-handedness coupled with his stratagem to spread the tentacles of Hindutva as well as his personal aggrandizement

provoked the University community. The brewing resentment escalated into a three month long agitation from the students, teachers and staffs of MU even as the administrative block of MU remained closed since May 30, 2018. Following the protracted agitations, the Government of India signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with the agitators instituting an Inquiry Commission into the alleged misconduct of the Mr. Pandey on August 16, 2018.

Mr. Pandey was put under forced leave and as per the university statute the senior most professor, Mr. W. Vishwanath was designated VC-in-charge by MHRD. When the inquiry commission is in progress, Mr. Pandey appointed Prof. Y. Jugindro as Pro-VC under controversial circumstances. Then, on September 17, 2018, the President of India (visitor) suspended Mr. Pandey from the office of VC.

When the Pro-VC came to take charge, the agitators who saw him as nothing more than a clone of Pandey with the same agenda, vehemently protested. Thereafter, the Pro-VC met the Chief Minister of Manipur and claimed that he had been harassed by the agitators and a FIR was registered at the Singjamei Police Station. In pursuance to the FIR the security forces swung into action and cracked down at the middle of the night without informing the university authority, except the Pro-VC.

**Present situation inside the University:**

1. Heavy deployment of security forces in and around Manipur University Campus.
2. Hostellers are made to confine themselves in the hostel causing much anxiety and panic.
3. All classes, examinations and other academic related programs remains suspended.
4. On-going silent protest by girl students and boycotting the Pro-VC who took charge of the VC.

It is urged that this action of the police as against the professors and students of MU amounts to violation of right to life, life with dignity, liberty, peaceful assembly, freedom of speech and expression as guaranteed by the Constitution of India.

**Appeal:**

We, therefore urge you to immediately take necessary steps and order –

- Immediate withdrawal of security forces from MU campus;
- An immediate, thorough, transparent, effective and impartial investigation into the above-mentioned incident of arbitrary arrest and harassment of the students and professors of Manipur University;
- Take immediate legal action on the perpetrators for arresting and harassing the teachers and students and using all provisions of law to ensure that the teachers and student HRDs of MU are not harassed or attacked or falsely implicated in future;
- Ensure immediate appointment of a competent senior lawyer practicing on the criminal side in Imphal to defend the HRDs in all the criminal cases registered against them at state cost with the counsel so appointed reporting to this Hon'ble Commission in periodic intervals;
- Guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of teachers and students of MU as they continues to be under risk of further attacks by the perpetrators and give this assurance to the NHRC of India in writing immediately and urgently;
- Ensure provision of reparation, compensation, apology to the defenders for the psychological sufferings they are undergoing because of his arrest and provide a re-assurance of not engaging in such acts against HRDs such as students and teachers;

Looking forward to your immediate action in this regard,

Yours sincerely,



**(Henri Tiphagne)**

National Working Secretary