



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

Ref No:- HRDA/North/JH/02/01/2018

January 9, 2019

To

Mr. 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
Email: hrd-nhrc@nic.in

Dear Sir,

Sub: HRD Alert - India – Urgent Appeal for Action on the murder of human rights defender and journalist Mr. Amit Topno in Jharkhand - 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 on the murder of journalist and human rights defender Mr. Amit Topno whose dead body was found by locals under Ghaghra Bridge on December 9, 2018.

Status of Human Rights Defender:

Mr. Amit Topno aged about 35 years was a resident of Nichitpur village of Torpa, in Khunti district. He belongs to the tribal family. Mr Amit began his career with Video Volunteers as a community correspondent from Khunti district of Jharkhand. He had reported on issues like illegal sand mining and the poor implementation of rural schemes for toilet construction in the district.

He was also associated with a news portal 'News Code' Jharkhand as a reporter from Khunti district and had extensively reported on the Pathalgadi movement. His report includes the repeated attack of state police during Pathalgadi protest gathering near

Anigarha village. He also reported about the incident where Jharkhand police charged 20 senior Adivasi activists with sedition for publishing posts critical of the state government.

Source of Information on the Incident:

- Regional Coordinator HRDA for East of India
- HRDs from Jharkhand
- Media reports

Date of Incident:

December 09, 2018

Details of the Incident:

As per the sources, Deceased Amit Topno's dead body was found by locals on December 9, 2018 under the Ghaghra Bridge. It is alleged that he was murdered for his fearless reporting as a journalist in the news portal 'News Code'. It will be pertinent to mention here that Mr. Amit Topno toured the trouble zone of Khunti extensively, and posted in social media against the illegal sand mafias, the poor implementation of rural schemes for toilet construction and the false case registered against 20 innocent adivasi in July 2018 during Pathalgadi movement. Now it is been confirmed from the post-mortem report that he was murdered by firing from a close distance under his ear

Appeal:

We, therefore urge you to immediately take necessary steps to ensure that the Superintendent of Police and the District Collector and District Magistrate of Khunti & Ranchi District:

- Order an immediate, thorough, transparent, effective and impartial speedy investigation into the above-mentioned incident of the journalist and human rights defender Mr. Amit Topno
- Guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of Mr. Topno's family members who is still under risk 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 she is undergoing because of the threats and

intimidation to her 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Henri Tiphagne', with a horizontal line drawn underneath it.

Henri Tiphagne
National Working Secretary