



HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS'ALERT - INDIA

NATIONAL SECRETARIAT

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February 22, 2019

To

Mr. Khaleel Ahmed

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 – Uttar Pradesh- Brutal attack and fabricated case filed against human rights defenders in Uttar Pradesh – 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 writing to express our grave concern over the brutal attack and filing of fabricated case against woman human rights defender Ms. Rich Singh, the first woman president of the Allahabad University Students Union, Uttar Pradesh. She was attacked reportedly by the Uttar Pradesh police and members of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidhyarti Parishad (ABVP), the students' wing of the right wing Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS) for participating in a peaceful protest rally in Allahabad (now Prayagraj), Uttar Pradesh.

About the Human Rights Defender

Ms. Richa Singh was the first woman president of the Allahabad University Students Union since Indian independence. She is known for her staunch opposition to hard line to Chief Minister Mr. Yogi Adityanath, taking on the ABVP, and her alleged harassment by the university administration for on-campus activism and raising

gender sensitivity issues. An M.Phil. Gold medallist, Ms. Richa Singh has been involved in activism since 2008 when she founded the Stri Mukti Sangathan for women's welfare. In 2012, she founded the Students Friends Union, as an alternative platform, independent of students' wings of established political parties. In 2015, she contested the student union elections independently.

Source of Information on the Incident:

- The Coordinator of HRDA for the North of India;
- Media Reports.

The Perpetrators:

- Uttar Pradesh Police
- Unidentified members of the ABVP, students' wing of the right wing Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS).

Details of the Incident:

According to sources, on February 12, 2019, woman human rights defender Ms. Richa Singh, was brutally attacked by Allahabad police and ABVP members during a student's protest at Allahabad University. According to the sources, she was allegedly physically assaulted by the police personnel and left bleeding and unconscious on the road. She suffered injuries in her jaw and head. She was treated in a local hospital for her injuries. Later the police filed an FIR against her under false charges. The peaceful protest or shanti march was organised at Allahabad university in Uttar Pradesh against the move of the Uttar Pradesh government to stop the Mr. Akhilesh Yadav, chief of Samajwadi Party (a political party in the region which ruled the state earlier) at the Lucknow airport from flying to Prayagraj (Allahabad) to participate in a function at the Allahabad University, where he was scheduled to attend an event of the students' union. According to one eyewitness, "*The police physically assaulted several people including political leaders who were present at the protest site. But they were particularly brutal in the manner in which they beat up Richa Singh. She sustained head injuries and they also broke two of her teeth! She fell unconscious but we were not even allowed to take her to the hospital. She was arrested and taken to police lines.*" Ms Richa Singh had earlier been subject to police brutality and institutional violence for protesting against the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath of the Indian right wing Hindu nationalist party's visit to the University and showing him black

flags on which HRDA has sent an Urgent Appeal for Action to the National Human Rights Commission on March 2016.

Appeal:

- Order an immediate, independent, thorough, transparent, effective and impartial investigation into the above-mentioned incident of brutal attack on woman human rights defender Ms. Richa Singh;
- Take immediate action on the perpetrators and ensure proper protection to woman human rights defender Ms. Richa Singh;
- Immediate withdrawal of all the false charges levelled against the above mentioned woman HRD;
- Ensure provision of reparation, compensation, apology to the defender for the physical and psychological sufferings she had to undergo because of the brutal physical attack and provide a re-assurance of not engaging in such acts against WHRD;
- Put an end to all acts of harassment against all human rights defenders in general in Uttar Pradesh to ensure that in all circumstances they carry out their activities as defenders of human rights without any hindrances.

Looking forward to your immediate action in this regard,

Yours sincerely,



Henri Tiphagne

National Working Secretary