



HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS' ALERT - INDIA

NATIONAL SECRETARIAT

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February 28, 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 – Uttarakhand-Harassment and intimidation of activist and Woman Human Rights Defender Ms. Shehla Rashid by foisting false case – 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 police case against woman human rights defender and former Jawaharlal Nehru University student leader and activist Ms. Shehla Rashid with the intention of intimidating and criminalising the human rights defender by the Uttarakhand police in Dehradun. Shehla Rashid is now being targeted for raising her voice for the safety and protection of Kashmiri women students studying in Uttarakhand's capital Dehradun.

About the Human Rights Defender

Shehla Rashid Shora is a Ph.D. student at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi and was vice-president of the Jawaharlal Nehru University Students Union (JNUSU) in 2015-16. She is vocal about the human rights situation in Kashmir, particularly for ensuring justice to minor under trials and has been active since 2010 when she was part of organising a youth leadership programme in Kashmir.

In February 2016, Shehla Rashid, as the vice-president of JNU students' union, had led a students' agitation against the arrest of her fellow-students Kanhaiya Kumar, Umar Khalid and Anirban Bhattacharya on charges of sedition. She has been vocal on social issues.

Source of Information on the Incident:

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

The Perpetrators:

Uttarakhand Police, Dehradun

Date and Place of incident:

17 February, 2019

Prem Nagar police station, Dehradun, Uttarakhand

Details of the Incident:

According to sources, a case against the former vice-president of Jawaharlal Nehru University's students' union, New Delhi and activist Ms. Shehla Rashid was registered on 17 February, 2019 night at Uttarakhand capital's Prem Nagar police station on the basis of a complaint by a local resident. The police filed an FIR, after Rashid tweeted on 16 February, 2019 that Kashmiri students are being harassed and assaulted in parts of the country after a terror attack in Awantipora area in Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir on February 14, 2019. Rashid in her tweet had claimed that 15 to 20 Kashmiri women students were trapped in a hostel at Dolphin institute/College in Dehradun, while an angry mob stood outside their university to demand their expulsion. She had claimed that police were present at the spot, but were "unable to disperse the mob". It was reported by the station house officer of Prem Nagar police station, Dehradun that Shehla Rashid has been booked under sections 505 (to incite any class or community to commit any offence against any other class or community), 153 (indulge in wanton vilification or attacks), and 504 (Intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of the peace) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). Police in Dehradun claimed that a first information report (FIR) was registered against former JNU Students' Union (JNUSU) leader Shehla Rashid for allegedly trying to incite "a

community to commit offence, indulging in wanton vilification and provoking someone to breach peace."

Shehla Rashid had tweeted about the alleged incident at the backdrop of attacks on Kashmiri people living in other parts of India after the terrorist attack on convoy of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel in Jammu and Kashmir on February 14, 2019. It is pertinent to note that Shehla Rashid in the past has been victim of trolling in social media due to her political views. This complaint against Shehla Rashid is to intimidate and harass a woman human rights defenders to deter her from expressing her views as guaranteed by the Constitution of India.

Appeal:

- Order an immediate, independent, thorough, transparent, effective and impartial investigation into the above-mentioned police case filed against woman human rights defender Ms. Shehla Rashid;
- Immediate withdrawal of all the false charges levelled against the abovementioned woman HRD Ms. Shehla Rashid;
- Guarantees in all circumstances the physical integrity of Ms. Shehla Rashid who still face the risk of further reprisals and using all provisions of law to ensure that the defender is not harassed or intimidated in future;
- Ensure provision of reparation, compensation, apology to the defender for the psychological sufferings she had to undergo because of the fabricated case against her and provide a re-assurance of not engaging in such acts against WHRD;
- Put an end to all acts of harassment and intimidation against all human rights defenders in general in Uttarakhand 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