



HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS' ALERT - INDIA

NATIONAL SECRETARIAT

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April 13, 2019

To,
Mr. Khaleel Ahmed,
National Focal Point – Human Rights Defenders and Deputy Registrar,
National Human Rights Commission,
Manav Adhikar Bhavan,
Block-C, GPO Complex, INA,
New Delhi – 110023
E-mail: hrda-nhrc@nic.in

Dear Sir,

Subject: HRD Alert – India – Urgent Appeal for Action – Arbitrary and Unlawful detention of human rights defenders Prof. Haragopal, N. Venugopal Rao, Prof. Katyayani Vidmahe and other teachers in Hyderabad, Telangana.

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 unlawful and arbitrary detention of well-known academics and human rights defenders Prof Haragopal, Mr. N. Venugopal, Prof Katyayani Vidmahe and many others were detained today morning at about 10 AM in Hyderabad.

Source of Information on the Incident:

- A communication from the defenders in the region
- Reports from Social Media
- The Regional Coordinator of HRDA for South of India

Status of the Human Rights Defenders:

- Prof. Haragopal is a widely known and respected academic and civil liberties activist. He retired as Professor of the Hyderabad Central University. He is part of numerous

people's fronts including the All India Forum of Right to Education.

- N. Venugopal Rao is the Editor of Veekshanam, a socio-political magazine and is known for his progressive writing work in the state.
- Prof. Katyayani is a respected academic, litterateur from Kakatiya University, Warangal and is a member of Telangana Democratic Front.
- The scores of teachers arrested along with them are also active in the civil liberties movement in the state.

The Perpetrators:

Police of Hyderabad City

Date of Incident:

April 13, 2019

Incident detail:

According to sources, on April 13, 2019, the Democratic Teachers Federation was planning to have an indoor meeting in solidarity with jailed veteran poet and activist Mr. Vara Vara Rao. When the said meeting was taking place, personnel of Telangana police barged into the NGO Bhavan, Hyderabad. As the police barged in, the Telangana NGO Bhavan building was locked and up to two hundred teachers attending the meeting along with the speakers were detained. In a bid to stop teachers and common public from coming to the venue, the police even blocked the road connecting to the meeting hall.

The meeting was disrupted due to this action by the police .While some of those detained have been taken to Narayanguda Police station, another set of people have been taken to the Ramgopalpet Police Station and yet another to Nampally police station.

It is indeed noticeable that this arbitrary detention comes just days after Ms. Hemalatha, partner of Vara Vara Rao, penned an open letter to Mr. K. Chandra Shekhar Rao, Chief Minister of Telangana, calling upon him to express his opinion on the allegedly false cases foisted on Mr. Vara Vara Rao by the Union Govt. and Maharashtra Govt in the 'Bhima Koregaon' matter.

HRDA unequivocally condemns this draconian and undemocratic act of the Telangana police on teachers and activists who were planning to assemble peacefully for deliberating and formulating certain demands and resolutions. The detention is a clear violation of the fundamental right to peacefully assemble and express opinions as guaranteed by Article 19 of the Indian Constitution.

Appeal:

We, therefore urge you to immediately take necessary steps to ensure that the Commissioner of Police and the District Collector and District Magistrate of Hyderabad City:

- Order an immediate, independent, thorough, transparent, effective and impartial investigation into the above-mentioned incident of detention and arrest of all the HRDs;
- Order for and ensure that all the detained persons are released forthwith and the teachers are allowed to carry on their meeting as planned;

- Take immediate action on the perpetrators, in this case the Hyderabad City Police;
- Guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of human rights defenders Prof Haragopal, Mr. N. Venugopal, Prof Katyayani Vidmahe and many others who are detained;
- Ensure provision of reparation, compensation, apology to the human rights defenders and the families of the defenders for the psychological sufferings they are undergoing;
- Put an end to all acts of attack and harassment and killing, arrest, detention against all human rights defenders like Prof Haragopal, Mr. N. Venugopal, and Prof Katyayani Vidmahe;
- To ensure that human rights defenders like Prof Haragopal, Mr. N. Venugopal, Prof Katyayani Vidmahe and others 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,

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

(Henri Tiphagne)

National Working Secretary