



HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS' ALERT - INDIA

NATIONAL SECRETARIAT

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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 – Tamil Nadu - Brutal murder of environmental activist and human rights defender Mr. B Mohan on June 2, 2019, by a soil (savudu) mining gang – 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 deep concern on the brutal murder of environmental activist and human rights defender B Mohan of Ramanathapuram district of Tamil Nadu by a soil (savudu) mining gang on June 2, 2019. He, along with a few other villagers, questioned the accused for illegal sand (savudu) quarrying in a water body in violation of the permissible limit set by the district revenue authorities.

About the Human Rights Defender

B Mohan was 45 year old and a resident of Palangulam, Melakottai of Ilamanur village in Ramanathapuram District of Tamil Nadu. He was an environmental activist and a former Panchayat President. Mohan with the help of his fellow villagers had formed a group to monitor and check illegal quarrying from water bodies in their area such as Purandi water tank and Puluthikulam water tank. These tanks serve as a source of water for the entire village and used for irrigation and drinking water

purposes for the village people. The objective of the group was to protect and enhance the quality of water bodies in the area. The sand mafia often target water tanks to illegally mine the sand.

Source of Information on the Incident:

- HRDA Coordinator in Tamil Nadu
- Fact-Finding undertaken by People's Watch

The Perpetrators:

- Mr. Jeyabharath and Mr. Karthik of MSK Nagar
- Mr. Anand of Marappalam
- Mr. Muniasamy of Peravur
- Mr. Harish of Vandikkara Nagar and Others

Date and Place of incident:

June 2, 2019 at Ilamanur village, Ramanathapuram, Tamil Nadu

Details of the Incident:

According to sources, on June 2, 2019, in the evening around 3.30 pm, Mohan along with his friends Murugesan, Selvam, Lakshmanan, Kumar and Sathaih, went to the Purandi tank in the village for bathing. Suddenly they heard some noise from a nearby place called Puzhithikulam and at this moment they moved towards Puzhithikulam. Upon their arrival in Puzhithikulam, they found that Jeyabharath and Karthik of MSK Nagar, Anand of Marappalam, Muniasamy of Peravur, Harish of Vandikkara Nagar and some others were illegally extracting sand from Puzhithikulam tank using a JCB.

Mohan told Jeyabharath that according to the government regulations sand can be extracted up to 3 square feet from Puzhithikulam and questioned him for extracting sand up to 15 square feet depth. On being questioned, Jeyabharath got angry and he along with his group attacked Mohan and his friends with iron rod and sticks.

In order to save life, they all ran. Mohan was chased down by the perpetrators and was again taken to the Puzhithikulam tank. They pushed him in the tank, forcefully drowned him in the water and killed him. The perpetrators took Mohan's body in a

Maruti Alto car to Ramanathapuram Government Hospital and threw the body outside.

Mr Padmanabhan s/o Raju, brother in law of Mohan. went for a bath around 4:15 pm on June 2, 2019 to the Purandi tank. On his way he met Lakshmanan, who was running back to the village to save his life and inform villagers regarding attacks on him, Mohan and others. Lakshmanan told Padmanabhan about the events and Padmanabhan then rushed to the crime spot. On finding no one there, he rushed towards the hospital where he found Mohan's body. He called the police from mobile number 8300031100 around 4:40 pm and they arrived around 5:15 pm. Lakshmanan, Selvam, Murugesan, Sathiah, and Kumar were also seriously injured and were taken to the government hospital by 108 Ambulance almost an hour after the incident.

On June 2, 2019, nearly 200 people gathered and protested on the Madurai-Ramanathapuram road. Again on June 3, 2019, village people organised peaceful protests at the district collector's office. Some villagers also tried to self-immolate themselves in protest against Mohan's brutal murder.

Despite registration of the FIR 166/2019 at 8 pm on June 2, 2019, the accused are still not arrested.

Appeal:

We request the Hon'ble Commission to:

- Order an immediate, thorough, transparent, effective and impartial investigation into the above-mentioned events of the brutal killing of environmental activist and human rights defender Mr. B Mohan;
- Take immediate action against the police officers for negligence and not arresting any of the accused till date;
- Take immediate action on the alleged perpetrators by directing the police to arrest Jeyabharath and Karthik of MSK Nagar, Anand of Marappalam, Muniasamy of Peravur, Harish of Vandikkara Nagar and others for the brutal murder of Mr. B Mohan;

- Appoint a senior lawyer practicing on the criminal side to appear for the human rights defenders in the court in this case and update the commission on the proceedings periodically;
- Recommend the district administration to provide protection to the victims' family members;
- Recommend immediate compensation as a measure of interim relief to the family of the deceased and those severally injured;
- Recommend that those injured are able to access adequate and quality treatment for the injuries at a hospital of their choice at state cost;
- Recommend that government job is provided to the son of the deceased as they are a family of six members and need financial support to run their family. The job should be according to the qualifications and skills possessed by deceased's son;
- Recommend that immediate actions are taken against district revenue officials and police official who are responsible for the illegal sand mining to continue;
- Put an end to all acts of harassment and attacks against all human rights defenders in the State of Tamil Nadu to ensure that in all circumstances they carry out their activities as human rights defenders without any hindrances;
- More generally, ensures in all circumstances the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and with international human rights instruments ratified by India is strictly adhered to in the state of Tamil Nadu.

Looking forward to your immediate action in this regard,

Yours sincerely,



(Henri Tiphagne)

Honorary National Working Secretary