



HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS' ALERT - INDIA

NATIONAL SECRETARIAT

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Ref No: HRDA/NE/AS/07/07/2019

July 18, 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-Appeal for Action against-False charges against activists and writers in Assam regarding a poem on NRC - 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 regarding false charges against activists and writers in Assam regarding a poem on NRC process in Assam.

About the Human Rights Defenders:

- Dr. Hafiz Ahmed is the President of Char Chapori Saahitya Parishada literary body propagating Assamese language and literature in Char Chaporis of Assam and a writer
- Rehana Sultana is a social activist and a writer
- Karishma Hazarika is a poet and a research scholar
- Abdur Rahim is a writer and teacher
- Ashraful Hussain is a student leader and poet
- Abdul Kalam Azad- is a social activist and a research scholar

- Kazi Sharowar Hussain is a poet
- Shalim M Husa in is are search scholar at Jamia Milia Islamia University at New Delhi and a poet
- For had Bhuyan is a journalist
- Banamallika Choudhury is a member of Women in Governance (WinG) Assam

Source of Information on the Incident:

- Regional Coordinator HRDA
- Information from social activists from the state
- Media reports

Perpetrators:

- Mr. Pranabjit Dolo
- Station House Officer, Pan Bazar police station, Guwahati

Date of Incident:

July 10, 2019

Background of the incident:

Recently a poem named “Miya Poetry” went viral in social media which is being circulated widely within and outside Assam. Above mentioned human rights defenders, activists, writers, scholars and journalist also had posted and discussed on the poem in their social media accounts. The lyrics of the poetry are as follows

*“Write down I am a Miya
 My serial number in NRC is 20,543
 I have two children
 Another is coming next summer
 Will you hate him as you hate me
 Write, Write down I am a Miya
 A citizen of a democratic secular republic without any right
 My mother is a D voter
 Though her parents are Indian
 Write, Write I am a Miya of the Brahmaputra
 Your torture has burnt my body black
 Reddened my eyes with fire*

*Write, I am a miya
The land makes my father an alien
That kills my brother with bullets
My sister with gang-rape
The land where my mother stokes in heart live burning coals”*

Details of the Incident:

On 10 July 2019, a complaint was filed at Pan Bazar police station, Guwahati by one Mr. Pranabjit Doloi and was registered as a First Information Report in Case No. 479/19 under Section 120 (B), 153 (A), 295 (A) 188 of Indian Penal Code read with Section 66 of Information Technology Act against the above-mentioned human rights defenders, activists, writers, scholars and journalist. After filing of FIR, a group of people have started threatening, Ms. Rehana Sultana and Ms. Karishma Hazarikan with sexual remarks, threat of rape and life on their social media accounts.

The poem written by Kazi Sharowar Hussain expresses the experience on the present status and life experience of the people who are harassed in the NRC (National Register of Citizens) process in Assam. The poem is been wrongly interpreted by the complainant and falsely accused the above-mentioned human rights defenders, activists, writers, scholars and journalists for posing serious threat to the national security of the country. Hence the action of the police in filing false complaints as First Information Report (FIR) and threatening of human rights defenders, activists, writers, scholars and journalist of their life, liberty and body is entirely condemnable and therefore requires immediate intervention.

Given the background, it is evident that the above said people in question are being targeted for their rights based work towards defending the human rights of the minorities in Assam. More so propaganda has been launched against the activists which is further accentuated by the insinuating FIR that has been filed by the police. In response to the complaint which is the basis of the FIR, it is stated that the action of the activists through Miya poetry is just to express their protest against the present process of NRC and the widespread discrimination displayed by the State through its application on minorities.


Appeal:

We, therefore urge your good office to immediately take necessary steps to ensure that;

- Order an immediate, independent and impartial investigation into the above-mentioned incident.
- Ensure adequate protection from arrest of the human rights defenders in this case who apprehends further chance of threat by the perpetrators.
- Take immediate legal action against the people who are giving threatening posts in the social media accounts of Ms. Rehana Sultana and Ms Karishma Hazarika and other HRDs.
- Ensure provision of reparation, compensation, apology to the defender for the psychological sufferings both are undergoing because of the threats, intimidation and harassment and give an assurance to the NHRC of India in writing immediately and urgently.

Looking forward to your immediate action in this regard,

Yours sincerely,



(Henri Tiphagne)

Honorary National Working Secretary