



# HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS' ALERT - INDIA

NATIONAL SECRETARIAT

No.32, Besant Road, Chokkikulam, Madurai - 625 002, Tamil Nadu, India.  
P: +91-452-2531874 & 2539520 Fax: +91-452- 2531874 Mobile: 99943-68540  
E.mail: hrda.india@gmail.com Web: www.hrdaindia.org

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**November 28, 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](mailto:hrd-nhrc@nic.in)

Dear Sir,

***Sub: HRD Alert - India - Urgent Appeal for Action – Karnataka: Raichur, Eminent journalist, thinker, entrepreneur and social activist Mr. Doddipalya Narasimha Murthy arrested in a false case-Regarding***

**Greetings from Human Rights Defenders Alert - India!**

Human Rights Defenders Alert - India is a forum of human rights defenders. It endeavours to initiate actions on behalf of Human Rights Defenders under threat or with security concerns. Upon various occasions previously, we have written to the Hon'ble Commission appealing cases of human rights violation of human rights defenders across the country.

We are now writing to express our grave concern regarding the arrest of eminent journalist, thinker, entrepreneur and social activist Mr. Doddipalya Narasimha Murthy in a false case.

**Status of Human Rights Defender:**

Mr. Doddipalya Narasimha Murthy (DN Murthy) is an eminent journalist, thinker, entrepreneur and social activist and is involved in the public movement in Karnataka,

for the last 20-25 years. From 2011, he was working as a journalist in “The Sunday Indian”. He is the General Secretary of Swaraj India - Karnataka since its inception, and the Secretary of Gauri Media Trust which was started after the death of Gauri Lankesh in September 2017. Mr. Murthy has been active in the struggle against the Bengaluru Mysore Infrastructure Corridor (BMIC) since 1992.

**Source of Information:**

- The Regional Coordinator of HRDA for South of India
- Communication from the HRDs in the region
- Media Reports

**Date of Incident:**

- October 24, 2019

**Place of Incident:**

- Raichur

**The Perpetrators:**

- Raichur Police

**Incident detail:**

According to sources, on October 24, 2019, Mr. Murthy was in Raichur district of Karnataka to attend a seminar on ‘Alternative Media’ organised by the “Gauri Lankesh Balaga’ (Gauri Lankesh Fraternity).

He was picked by police at around 2.20 PM from the site of the event and taken for questioning to a traffic police station and was questioned for many hours while the media had gathered to know why he was picked. The police were unable to provide an exact information till that night and maintained that the matter was being probed. Later, Mr. Murthy was shifted to the Raichur Rural Police station in the Superintendent of Police (SP) office compound for further questioning.

In the afternoon on October 25, 2019, a press briefing was addressed by the SP Mr. Veda Murthy and Dy SP Mr. Sheelavantar. In the press briefing it was stated that since 1990 to 2000, a person named Vinod was working underground in Karnataka Raithu Kooli Sangha (Karnataka Farm Labour Organisation). He had a pending warrant in his name and is alleged to be a Naxalite. Moreover, there were some cases against him, but he was never arrested and it only came to police’s information through an anonymous tip, a day ago, that Mr. Murthy was the person who was known as Vinod earlier. Mr. Murthy was absconding for the last 25 years and goes by multiple names like Vinod, Basvaraj, etc. and was wanted in several cases in Raichur.

Mr. Murthy has been actively engaged in journalism, writing articles for The Sunday Indian, Gauri Lankesh, Business Guru and Nyaya Patha papers. He is active socially and has addressed numerous public meetings for the past 25 years in Bangalore and other districts in Karnataka. Despite so many open and public appearances, it is difficult to believe that Mr. Murthy was never arrested at any other earlier occasion. Let alone arrest, if it is to believe that Mr. Murthy was in fact 'absconding', how is it that the police not even once got him in questioning. The arrest of Mr. Murthy is termed as '*politically motivated*' by HRDs in the state.

On the arrest, Mr. Kumar Samatala, Executive Committee Member, Karnataka Jana Shakti, said that:

*"Since 1990, Doddipalya Narasimha Murthy is part of several people's movement and is in public and has fought against the BMIC for years together. DN Murthy has a house in Bengaluru and lives there with his family. He also runs a Silk mill business with his elder brother. There is proof of all this. But now he is being arrested in the cases that happened in Raichur. This is totally false and politically motivated."*

Mr. Murthy is being implicated in a false case by police under Criminal Misc No: 1125, 1227, 1228 and 1229, in which all other named accused have been acquitted. Mr. Murthy has denied all the allegations made by the police and has categorically said that all the cases filed against him are false and fabricated.

It is brought to the notice of the Hon'ble Commission that this is yet again an example of numerous such cases wherein journalists and HRDs are being entangled in false cases just to plug their dissenting voices. In the present case the police have barely followed the guidelines of arrest and detention as laid in the D.K. Basu case nor the arrest guidelines as laid down by the Hon'ble Commission. The action of the display of high handedness, excess, arbitrary and authoritarian misuse of laws by the police especially in the present situation where a public figure Mr. Murthy is being framed on the basis of a police informer who is claiming Mr. Murthy to be an identity who has been underground for years. This tactic of the police just to silence Mr. Murthy amounts to violation of right life, liberty and equality before law as guaranteed by the Constitution of India amongst other such rights.

There is an urgent need to address violence against journalists and HRDs and to put an end to the wave of violence as they play a critical role in exposing corruption and demanding government accountability. Unless the State addresses the impunity for crimes against HRDs and journalists, those looking to silence the critics will continue to feel emboldened to do so.

**Appeal:**

We therefore urge you to immediately take necessary steps and:

- Order an immediate, thorough, transparent, effective and impartial investigation into the above-mentioned false case filed and arrest of Mr. Doddipalya Narasimha Murthy;
- Seek the intervention for the release of Mr. Doddipalya Narasimha Murthy;
- Ensure provisions of reparation, compensation, apology to the family of journalist and HRD Mr. Doddipalya Narasimha Murthy for the psychological sufferings he has undergone and also ensure to compensate for the trauma incurred during this time and give this assurance to the NHRC of India in writing immediately and urgently;
- Guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of the family and friends of Mr. Doddipalya Narasimha Murthy;
- More generally, ensure 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 Karnataka.

Looking forward to your immediate action in this regard,

Yours sincerely,



**(Henri Tiphagne)**

Honorary National Working Secretary