



HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS' ALERT - INDIA

NATIONAL SECRETARIAT

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Ref No: HRDA/South/TN/17/01/2020
January 13, 2020

To

Mr. Debindra Kundra

National Focal Point - Human Rights Defenders & Assistant 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 – Arbitrary arrest of journalist Mr. Anbalagan by Chennai City Police - 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 arbitrary arrest of journalist Mr. Anbalagan by Chennai City Police.

Status of Human Rights Defender:

Mr. Anbalagan is journalist based in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. He is also the Treasurer of Chennai Press Club. He has been running a book publication house called “Makkal Seithi Maiyam”.

Source of Information on the Incident:

- State Coordinator for HRDA in Tamil Nadu
- Communication with other HRDs in Tamil Nadu

Perpetrators:

Chennai City Police

Details of the Incident

Mr. Anbalagan has been publishing various books based on information received from government departments under Right to Information Act and have exposed corruption in Tamil Nadu. He has been taking part in the Chennai Book Fair organised by Book Sellers and Publishers Association of South India (BAPASI) and has a stall for his publication. He has been selling books regarding corruption in Tamil Nadu government.

On 11.01.2020, the organisers of Chennai Book Fair had asked Mr. Anbalagan to vacate his book stall and told him that he has been selling books against the government. Mr. Anbalagan has asked for a written communication from the organisers to vacate the stall and after receiving the same, he had vacated the stall on the same afternoon.

As soon as he had cleared the stall from Chennai Book Fair, he was arrested by the Chennai Police on a case under sections 341 (wrongful restraint), 249(b) (sings, recites or utters any obscene song, Ballad or words, in or near any public place) and 506(2) (punishment for criminal intimidation) of IPC.

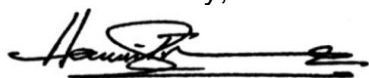
Appeal:

We, therefore urge you to immediately take necessary steps and:

- Order an immediate, independent, thorough, transparent, effective and impartial investigation into the above-mentioned incident of arbitrary arrest and false charges against Mr. Anbalagan;
- Ensure that all the false complaints filed against the HRD to harass and threaten them should be quashed;
- Ensure provision of reparation, compensation, apology to the defender for the psychological sufferings she has undergone because of the threats and provide a re-assurance of not engaging in such acts against Mr. Anbalagan.

Looking forward to your immediate action in this regard,

Yours sincerely,



Henri Tiphagne
National Working Secretary