



# HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS' ALERT - INDIA

NATIONAL SECRETARIAT

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HRDA/NHRC-SM/SOUTH/TN/09/01/2024

January 20, 2024

To  
Justice (retd.) Mr. AK Mishra  
Chairperson,  
National Human Rights Commission,  
Manav Adhikar Bhawan,  
Block-C, GPO Complex, INA,  
New Delhi -110 023  
Email: [chairnhrc@nic.in](mailto:chairnhrc@nic.in)

Respected Justice Mishra,

***Subject: Requesting to initiate suo moto proceedings in the case of detention of 60 farmers by Coimbatore City police before the protesting in front of the district collectorate on January 4, 2024.***

We are writing to you to bring to your kind attention that on January 4, 2024 the farmers from J Krishnapuram village in Sulur taluk demanded the revenue department to convert the cart track land to a geological cart tract at the village near Sulur. The farmers said that they were unable to transport cattle feed, vegetables and fertilisers through the cart track hence the revenue department should convert the cart track to a geological cart track. But the officials kept the files pending; aggrieved by this, farmers started a waiting protest at the district collector's office. The Race Course police, Coimbatore, detained 60 protesting farmers and kept them in a marriage hall.

The incident has been reported widely in the media, and a link is shared here for your reference - [Farmers: 60 Farmers Detained For Staging Protest Without Permission | Coimbatore News - Times of India \(indiatimes.com\)](#)

Media reference to this incident is shared for your reference - <https://simplicity.in/coimbatore/english/news/117081/farmers-arrested-for-protesting-against-rdo-coimbatore>.

The Right to protest is recognized under several international instruments, including:

- I. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Article 8),

- II. Article 5 (a) of the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders 1998 states that “For the purpose of promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to meet or assemble peacefully”.

The Right to protest is an essential element of the right to participate in any democratic dispensation, and restrictions imposed on this right must be closely scrutinized with respect to their necessity and reasonableness (A/61/312, para. 56)

Human rights defenders play a pivotal role in ensuring that protest and criticism are expressed in a peaceful and constructive manner. States should legitimize and empower human rights defenders in this role and encourage defenders to take full ownership of this role (A/62/225, para. 102).

The right to exercise freedom of speech and expression is enshrined under Article 19 (a) of the Indian Constitution. The right to freedom of opinion and expression encompasses three different aspects:

- I. The right to hold opinions without interference;
- II. The right to access to information and
- III. The right to impart information and ideas of all kinds.

We believe that the detention of the protesting farmers is an act of reprisal against their activism.

We urgently appeal to you to exercise Section 12 (a) of the Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Act, 2019, and take *suo moto* cognizance of this incident and initiate an independent inquiry through NHRC’s investigation wing.

We hope and expect that the NHRC will intervene in this case impartially and in a time bound manner.

Yours Sincerely,



(Henri Tiphagne)

National Working Secretary