



HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS' ALERT - INDIA

NATIONAL SECRETARIAT

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Ref No: HRDA/North/JK/05/10/2020

October 21, 2020

To,
Mr. C.S.Mawri,
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 – Threatening protests outside the residence of WHRD Adv Deepika Rajawat and police inaction.

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 regarding the threat to the life of Adv. Deepika Singh Rajawat, who has been receiving death threats on social media and was surrounded last night by a mob of young men chanting death threats to her outside her house. The protests have resumed again today around 3 pm.

Source of Information:

- Communication with the HRD
- Communication with the HRDA North Regional Consultant
- Media Reports

Date and Time of Incident:

October 20, 2020, Midnight and October 21, 2020, around 3 PM

Place of Incident:

Gandhi Nagar, Jammu

The Perpetrators:

Mob of 25-30 men. At least one of them was from the Bajrang Dal.

About the Human Rights Defender:

Adv. Deepika Singh Rajawat (40) is a lawyer at Jammu and Kashmir High Court since 2008, as well as a human rights defender. She is the chairperson of Voice for Rights, an NGO working for human rights. She is also associated with several social and human rights organisations. Adv. Deepika has also been a lawyer in the Kathua rape of a minor girl.

Details of the incident:

On October 20, 2020, Adv. Rajawat posted a cartoon on twitter showing a man touching the feet of the deity during Navratri and the same man holding both the legs forcefully of a woman during the rest of the days with caption “*vidambana*”.
(attachment 1)

After this post, a section of social media users started criticizing her and demanding her arrest for allegedly “shaming Hindu and their festivals”.

She also received threatening messages and phones calls which said “*Tujhe Maut ke ghat utaarna padega.*” (we will have to kill you). In the evening Adv. Rajawat came on Facebook live and said that “I have not hurt anyone's feelings, nor did I have any such attention nor any religion sentiments. It is a matter of posting the cartoon, it was only about the increasing rape incidents in India.”

However, at around midnight on October 20, a crowd of 25-30 men, with faces covered in masks, gathered in front of her house at Gandhi Nagar in Jammu. The crowd started shouting death threats for Adv. Rajawat like, “*Deepika teri qabar khodenge- Jammu Kashmir ki dharti par*” (Deepika we will dig your grave in Jammu and Kashmir). Some of the local media was also present with them. At least one of the men in the mob was recognized as a member of the local Bajrang Dal.

Adv. Rajawat posted a SOS messages on her Facebook and Twitter account tagging the Jammu and Kashmir Police which said: “Alert. Mob assembled outside my

residence and raising slogans against me. Urgent Help. Not feeling safe. They can cause damage to me.”

She also posted a photo of those who were shouting slogans (*attachment 2*) and shared a live video of mob on her Facebook account. In in this video the mob raising slogans like “*Deepika teri qabr khodenge.*” “*Deepika Rajawat Chor hai*”, “*Deepika Murdabad*” etc can be heard.

At around 11:45 pm, feeling extremely scared she called the IGP Jammu apprising him of the situation. In about 10 minutes, 2 policemen from the nearby Gandhi Nagar police station came in a car. The SHO of Gandhi nagar police station, Mr. Gurnam Singh, also came but did not even bother to get out of the car. The mob of men shouted death threats to Adv. Rajawat in front of the policemen while they stood watching. The policemen talked to the leaders of the mob and the mob then dispersed.

The Gandhi Nagar police did not even come up to Adv. Rajawat’s house to reassure her or ask for her complaint or if she needed further security. They did not take any action anyone despite hearing death threats being chanted to her in front of them. The policemen left along with the mob and after that she has not heard from the police.

At around 3:10 am in the night, Adv. Rajawat heard sound like blasts going off in front of her house. She suspects that it might be further tactics to intimidate and harass her. We contend that this was not a spontaneous protest but a planned attack at midnight to intimidate her and put her in fear for her life; or even harm her physically.

Grave concerns regarding the behaviour of the policemen remain. Why only 2 policemen sent to disperse an aggressive crowd of 30 men? Why did the policemen leave at the same time as the mob instead of waiting back and ensuring that Ms. Rajawat was safe and the mob did not return? Why did the police not arrest anyone in the mob despite hearing death threats being shouted at a woman in front of them? Why has no one been arrested despite some people being clearly identified by Ms. Rajawat in her photos and videos? Who planned the protest that the local media was also informed beforehand?

Adv. Rajawat has clearly said that that she is constantly getting threats and need protection. She stays alone with her 8-year-old daughter. She is assigned 2 SPOs during the day for court but they leave at 5 pm. She fears very much for her safety in future and that the mob can return any time to harm her or her child. She is planning to file an FIR with the police station regarding the mob attack on her.

We now have information that the protests have commenced again outside her residence at around 3 pm on October 21, 2020 by the BJP's women wing shouting violent slogans like "agar hinduon ka virodh karoge toh teri kabar khudegi" (if you oppose Hindus, you will be killed). The protest also included a former minister from the BJP Ms. Priya Sethi. There is serious threat to her life and liberty.

Appeal:

We appeal to the Hon'ble Commission to –

- Immediately direct the Director General of Police (DGP) of Jammu and Kashmir to direct concerned police officials to take immediate strict legal actions against those involved in threatening sloganeering outside Adv. Deepika Singh Rajawat house.
- Immediately direct the Director General of Police (DGP) of Jammu and Kashmir to provide Adv. Deepika Singh Rajawat 24-hour police protection urgently.
- Immediately direct the Director General of Police (DGP) of Jammu and Kashmir to hold independently inquire into the conduct of the officials of Gandhi Nagar police station, Jammu.

We hope to hear from you soon.

Yours sincerely,



(Henri Tiphagne)

National Working Secretary