



Human Rights Defenders Alert- India

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March 3, 2017

Shri Srinivasa Kamath

National Focal Point - Human Rights Defenders & Deputy Registrar

National Human Rights Commission

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Sub: HRD Alert - India - Urgent Appeal for Action – Andhra Pradesh – Mr. Tella Hanumanta Rao: RTI activist Mr.Tella Hanumanta Rao attacked by unidentified persons, injured grievously for exposing and unearthing corruption of over Rs. One Crore Rupees – Regarding

Dear Sir,

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 the attack and grievous injuries on RTI activist Mr. Tella Hanumanta Rao for exposing and unearthing corruption.

Source of Information on the Incident:

Media Reports

- The Regional Coordinator of HRDA South
- Communication from Mr. Ravichadra s/o Mr. Tella Hanumanta Rao

The Human Rights Defender:

Mr. Tella Hanumanta Rao is a resident of Kalavakuru Village, Addanki Mandal in Prakasam District of Andhra Pradesh. He has been writing to the various departments Panchayat Raj, Revenue department and Education department since 2012 seeking information about the works undertaken under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme and the construction of side drains in various villages which run into several crores of rupees.

The Perpetrators:

Unknown person aggrieved by the action of the HRD

Date of Incident:

January 17, 2017

Place of Incident:

Addanki in Prakasam District of Andhra Pradesh.

Incident detail:

According to sources, on the night of January 17, 2017, Mr. Tella Hanumanta Rao was waylaid by a group of three persons and was attacked causing severe injuries while he was returning from Addanki on his motorcycle. The assailants attacked Mr. Rao indiscriminately with crowbars after smashing the streetlights in order to cover their identity. They also intimidated him for seeking information from various government offices against them. The police rushed to the spot after the family members of Mr. Rao informed them and shifted him to the RIMS hospital at Ongole as he suffered injuries on both the legs. The doctors told the family members that the right leg was severely injured which might lead to amputation. The family members alleged that the former sarpanch of the village and some other people's representatives who feared that their misdeeds would be exposed attacked Mr. Rao. They said that a case under Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act was also foisted against Mr. Rao in the past. Mr. D Emanuel, the co-convener of *Lok Satta* movement said that Mr. Rao has been trying to unravel the scam worth Rs. One Crore that

occurred in the village and that must be the reason for the attack against him. The police registered a case of grievous assault against six persons - Kaluva Elisha, K Venkateswara Reddy, A Srinivasa Reddy, Koti Reddy, Patas Reddy and Siva Reddy.

Appeal:

We therefore urge you to take necessary steps to ensure that the Commissioner of Police, the Deputy Commissioner and District Magistrate of Prakasam District:

- Order an immediate, thorough, transparent, effective and impartial investigation into the above-mentioned attack on the human rights defender and RTI Activist Mr. Rao;
- Take immediate action on the perpetrators named in the FIR and report within a short period of time to the Hon'ble Commission;
- Guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of the human rights defender and his family without hampering his freedom to operate as an RTI Activist;
- Specifically look into the charges of corruption exposed by Mr. Rao through his RTI Interventions by calling for the RTI responses and see what they actually reveal and if they reveal any gross violations of the law of the country to recommend necessary action on the same from the Hon'ble Commission;
- Ensure provision of reparation, compensation, apology to the defender for the physical and psychological sufferings he underwent because of this assault and provide a re-assurance of not engaging in such acts against HRDs such as Mr. Rao;
- Put an end to all acts of harassment against all human rights defenders in the State of Andhra Pradesh to ensure that in all circumstances they carry out their activities without any hindrances;

Looking forward for your action in this regard,

Yours sincerely,

Sd/-

Henri Tiphagne

National Working Secretary

Justice (Retd.) H.L. Dattu,

Chairperson,

National Human Rights Commission,

New Delhi

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Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders,

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