



HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS' ALERT - INDIA

NATIONAL SECRETARIAT

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May 6, 2019

To

Mr. Khaleel Ahmad

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

Dear Sir,

Sub: HRD Alert - India - Urgent Appeal for Action – Telangana- Illegal arrest and detention of Human Rights Defenders at Begumbazar Police Station by state police in Hyderabad, Telangana– 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 the illegal arrest and detention of Human Rights Defenders belonging to various civil society organisations by the police in Hyderabad in the state of Telangana on May 2, 2019. The defenders were detained at Begumbaz Police Station in Hyderabad. The defenders were arrested from intermediate Board where they had gone to meet the Secretary of Telangana State Board of Intermediate Examination (TSBIE) to submit a representation for justice for student's families who committed suicide after the declaration of the Telangana State Board of Intermediate Examination (TSBIE) on April 18, 2019 and register their peaceful protest against the discrepancies in the examination evaluation process. It was reported that the results shocked thousands of students as many who scored 90% in the first-year exams were found to have failed in the second-year examinations. Since the declaration of the results as many as 21 students have reportedly committed suicide in Telangana.

About the Human Rights Defender

The Human Rights Defenders belong to various civil society organisations including members and responsible citizens of the city. In this particular case they joined together to discuss and intervene in the unending suicidal deaths of intermediate students in Telangana state which were continuing daily creating a fear in the parents and civil society. The defenders were concerned that the state government was not taking necessary actions against those who were responsible for these unnatural deaths caused due to the discrepancies in the evaluation process. It was reported that as over 3 lakh students failed in the examinations this year. Among the other defenders, those arrested by the police are human rights activists Jaya Vindhya, Gaddam Ashok, M.Venkatesh Guna and Rabbani

Source of Information on the Incident:

- The Coordinator of HRDA for the South of India
- Communication with HRDA coordinator in Telangana

Perpetrators:

Police officials of Begumbazar police station, Hyderabad, Telangana

Date of incident:

2, May 2019

Place of incident:

Police officials of Begum bazar police station, Hyderabad, Telangana

Details of the Incident:

According to sources on May 2, 2019 a group of human rights defenders belonging to various civil society organisations including some concerned citizens of city of Hyderabad went to the office of Telangana State Board of Intermediate Examination (TSBIE) and asked permission to meet with the Secretary of TSBIE. The group of HRDs wanted to register their peaceful protest against the discrepancies in the evaluation process of the Board in the Intermediate Examination in which thousands of students as many who scored 90% in the first-year exams were found to have failed the second-year examinations. The media reported that of the nine lakh students who had appeared for the Intermediate-level examinations, about 3 lakh of them failed this year in their examinations in the second year. The students and parents have reportedly alleged that the Telangana State Board of Intermediate Education (TSBIE)

and Globe Arena Technologies Pvt Ltd, a firm hired by the board to handle the admission and examination process, have committed blunders in the evaluation process and the result declaration. It had been reported that as many as 21 students have committed suicide in Telangana since the results for Intermediate Board were declared on April 18, 2019. The group of HRDs wanted to submit a representation for justice of deceased student's families. The Telangana education officials reportedly accepted that there have been errors in the process. They said they would take action against the erring board officials as well as the private company. The defenders were demanding that the action should be taken against the government and company officials responsible for causing deaths of students.

Meanwhile the police were called and the police officials from Begumbazar police station, Hyderabad arrested the group of defenders from the venue of the Intermediate Board and detained them at Begumbazar Police Station, from 11.45 AM onwards on May 2, 2019, without providing them any facilities such as water, wash room etc and without stating them any reason for their detention and were released later in the same evening.

Freedom of speech and expression is a right guaranteed under Article 19 (1) (a) of the Constitution of India and is being considered integral to democratic values for it enables discovery of truth through dialogue, is crucial to the working of a democratic Constitution and is an aspect of one's self autonomy. Article 19 (1) (c) of the Constitution guarantees to all its citizens the right to form associations to be able to raise collective voices. Therefore police harassment (which again is illegal) of the Human Rights Defenders mentioned above by the State for raising a representation on a critical issue amounts to violation of the Constitutional provisions of the country and thus require urgent attention of this commission.

Appeal:

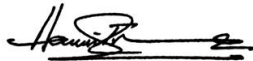
- Order an immediate, thorough, transparent, effective and impartial investigation into the above-mentioned incident of illegally arresting and detaining the abovementioned human rights defenders by the police;
- Take immediate action on the alleged perpetrators as mentioned above for illegally arresting and detaining human rights defenders and using all provisions of law to ensure that the human rights defenders are not harassed, ill-treated and falsely

implicated by the police in future as a result of the legitimate exercise of their rights to freedom of expression and assembly;

- Ensure provision of compensation and apology to the defenders for the physical and psychological sufferings they have undergone because of their illegal detention;

Looking forward to your immediate action in this regard,

Yours sincerely,



(Henri Tiphagne)

National Working Secretary

Copy to:

Shri K. Chandrashear Rao,
Hon'ble Chief Minister,
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Telangana Secretariat,
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Shri M. Mahendar Reddy, IPS
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