



HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS' ALERT - INDIA

NATIONAL SECRETARIAT

No. 555, West Cross 4th Street, K.K.Nagar, Madurai - 625 020, Tamil Nadu, India.

Mobile: 99943-68540

E.mail: hrda.india@gmail.com Web: www.hrdaindia.org

HRDA/NHRC-SM/West/MH/31/02/2024

February 22, 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

Respected Justice Mishra,

Subject: Requesting to initiate Suo Moto proceedings in the case of fabricated FIR and attack on senior journalist Mr. Nikhil Wagle, with HRDs Mr. Vishwambhar Chaudhary and Adv. Aseem Sarode in Pune Maharashtra

We are writing to you in bring to your kind attention the attack on the car of senior journalist Mr. Nikhil Wagle in Pune, Maharashtra, on the night of February 09, 2024, when he was going to participate in an event 'Nirbhaya Bano - Fight for Democracy and Freedom of Expression' along with activist Mr. Vishwambhar Chaudhary and senior lawyer Mr. Aseem Sarode.

The attack happened after an FIR was filed against Wagle for his remarks against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP leader LK Advani. Some BJP workers had already threatened to disrupt the program.

On the same day Bhartiya Janta Party leader Mr. Sunil Deodhar lodged an FIR against Mr. Wagle at Vishram Bagh police station in Pune under *section 153A-Promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, etc., and doing acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony, 500-Defamation and 505-Statements conducing to public mischief of Indian Penal Code*. The BJP leader Mr. Deodhar alleged in the FIR that Mr. Wagle has tried to disturb the peace in the society by hurting the sentiments of many people through his derogatory remarks on Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi and Mr. L.K. Advani.

Several prominent journalist organisations expressed their shock and outrage at the attack and the FIR, emphasizing that the escalation of violence against journalists is deeply concerning and detrimental to the fabric of democracy.

This incident has been widely reported in the media and links are shared here for your reference-

<https://www.newsclick.in/journalist-bodies-condemn-attack-nikhil-wagle-urge-maharashtra-government-take-action>

<https://www.abplive.com/states/maharashtra/pune-fir-against-journalist-nikhil-wagle-in-maharashtra-for-post-on-lk-advanis-bharat-ratna-2607580>

<https://theprint.in/india/attack-on-nikhil-wagle-journalists-hold-protest-in-mumbai/1963975/>

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/press-bodies-seek-action-against-those-involved-in-the-attack-on-senior-journalist-nikhil-wagle/article67838416.ece>

The dangerous attack on Mr. Wagle and his colleagues amounts to violation of multiple Constitutional rights that include freedom of speech and expression (Article 19(1)(a), freedom of association (Article 19(1)(c), (Article 19(1)(g) and right to life and liberty (Article 21) without any fear of intimidation and harassment.

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