



# HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS' ALERT - INDIA

NATIONAL SECRETARIAT

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May 10, 2017

To,

**Shri Srinivasa Kammath**

National Focal Point - Human Rights Defenders & Deputy Registrar  
National Human Rights Commission  
Manav Adhikar Bhawan,  
Block-C, GPO Complex, INA,  
New Delhi – 110 023  
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**Sub: HRD Alert - India – Urgent Appeal for Action – Meghalaya: Fabricated charge against womens rights activist Ms. Jaynie N Sangma for following a case of Witch Hunting - 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 writing to express our grave concern over filing of fabricated case against Ms. Jaynie N Sangma. Ms. Jaynie is supporting a family to fight a case of witch hunting where 5 members of a family were killed extra-judicially in Mrigre village of West Garo Hills.

**Source of Information on the Incident:**

The Coordinator of HRDA for the North East of India

Communication with WHRD Ms. Janyie N Sangma

**The Perpetrators:**

- Tamera T Sangma, eldest daughter of late Balla T Sangma and late Hallen T. Sangma who were killed in a suspected practice of witch craft.
- Sengme T Sangma, Nokma of Mrigre village.
- Lind B Marak, husband of Nokma and in-charge of Nokma.
- Lebalstone T Sangma, Member of District Council
- Aldrin B. Marak (younger brother of Lind B Marak)
- And 42 people of the Mrigre village (as mentioned in the FIR by Ms. Ringgat T Sangma)

*Note: Nokma is the village headman*

**Date of Incident:**

April 24, 2017

**Place of Incident:**

Tura, West Garo Hills District

**Details of the Incident:**

According to WHRD Ms. Jaynie N Sangma, on March 26, 2017, she was accompanied by the members of Manipur Women Gun Survivors Network team members Mr. Nadeem Ahmed - Media and Communication Officer and Mr. Ian Thomas Jansen Lonquist – photographer, to Mrigre village for a photo documentation on gender based violence, understanding superstitions in local community etc. The date of their visit contradicts the date of the complaint by the perpetrators, where it was mentioned that they visited the village on March 19, 2017. Before visiting the village, on March 25, 2017, a letter was submitted with the Deputy Commissioner of West Garo Hills for his support and cooperation concerning the above mentioned visit. The Deputy Commissioner Shri Pravin Bakshi assured to forward the letter to the Superintendent of Police of the West Garo Hills district. But on March 26, 2017, the Deputy Commissioner and the Superintendent of Police did not allow them to go to the village citing security reasons. Then they contacted the Nokma in-charge Lind B Marak of Mrigre village. Lind B Marak and Duel T Sangma (Another Nokma in-charge of the village) took them to the village. The villagers offered food to them and then they went to the victim's family. Tamera T Sangma, the eldest daughter of Bala T Sangma who

inherited the grandmother's house told them that she doesn't like her family because they practice witch craft. She told them that her uncle did not like her, he was her enemy. When Ms. Jaynie further questioned her about her parents in local language, if they practice witch craft, if she is fine with what had happened with her parents, the Nokma in-charge Lind B Marak stopped her from asking more questions to them. Ms. Jaynie noticed that the youngest daughter of Bala T Sangma, Ringgat T Sangma was disturbed and upset, so she asked the contact number of Ringgat( youngest daughter of Bala T Sangma) and Penthom (husband of Ringgat). In front of others, they exchanged phone numbers. Next day, Ringgat and Penthom came to meet them in Tura and their interviews were taken by them. Ringgat informed them that the villagers told them not to pick the phone calls from Ms. Jaynie and other members and also asked them to change their numbers. On April 6, 2017, they again met with the Deputy Commissioner to discuss about the case and a complaint letter was given to him for reinvestigation of the case. Ringgat and Penthom were brought to Shillong for press conference. The press conference was held on April 9, 2017. On April 21, 2017, Ringgat T Sangma sent a SOS message from her husband's mobile to Ms. Jaynie to send police to rescue her from home, because she was forced by the villagers and both the nokmas, Lind B Marak and Duel T Sangma, threatened her to take to Lind's house that night. Ms. Jaynie informed about this to Ms. Agnes Kharshiing, an activist from Shillong and Mr. Biplab Dey, a journalist to alert the police and request their intervention. Police rescued them and brought them to Ms. Jaynie's place. On April 22, 2017, they registered a complaint in the women police station Tura. The case number is 26/2017 under sections 448/506/34 IPC. On April 24, 2017, some people went to Ringgat Sangma's husband's village including the driver of the member of District Council, Lebalstone T Sangma to abduct Ringgatt T Sangma. Since then the member of the District Council, Lebalstone T Sangma is absconding. On May 1, 2017, Ms. Jaynie received court's notice to appear before the court on May 4, 2017. The allegation against her is that she has interfered the legal proceeding of the courts.

On April 24, 2017, a complaint letter was given by the accused persons of the case no 12 (10)/15 U/S 302/201/34 IPC in the court of the Additional District and Session Judge, District Court of Garo Hills Autonomous District Council, Tura, West Garo Hills district for interfering the legal proceeding of the court. The complaint is against Ms. Jaynie that on March 19, 2017, she along with two persons, of which one was

American national, visited the Mrigre village as tourist. They tried to get information about the witch craft practice of the village from the villagers. According to the complaint Ms. Jaynie asked the Nokma, the village head to prepare food for them and she told the member of the victim's family to apply for reinvestigation of the case where five members of the family were killed extra-judicially in the suspect of practicing witch craft. The complainants said that the visitors did not reveal their identities to the villagers and Ms. Jaynie told the victim family members that they would help them in the case to get compensation. In the complaint it is also mentioned that Ms. Jaynie sent press statement about the case, which was carried by the four news papers on April 10, 2017 namely- Meghalaya Guardian, The Shillong Times, The Eastern Chronicle and The Salantini Janera.

Now both Ms. Jaynie N Sangma and Ms. Ringgat T Sangma are constantly under threat from the accused.

***Appeal:***

Therefore, HRDA most respectfully appeals that this Hon'ble Commission to immediately take necessary steps and ensure that:

- Order an immediate, thorough, transparent, effective and impartial investigation into the above-mentioned incident of filing false case on women human rights defender Ms. Jaynie N Sangma;
- Takes immediate legal action on the perpetrators for filing false and fabricated case against WHRD;
- Ensures provision of reparation, compensation, apology to the WHRD for the psychological sufferings she underwent;
- Take steps to withdraw the false case filed against the WHRD Ms. Jaynie N Sangma;
- Put an end to all acts of attack and harassment against all human rights defenders in Meghalaya to ensure that in all circumstances they carry out their activities without any hindrances;
- More generally, ensure in all circumstances the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human

Rights and with international human rights instruments ratified by India is strictly adhered to in the state of Meghalaya.

Looking forward to your immediate action in this regard

Yours sincerely,

**Henri Tiphagne**

**National Working Secretary**

**Justice (Retd.) H L Dattu**

Chairperson, National Human Rights Commission

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**Dr. Rameshwar Oraon,**

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