



HRDA/UA/South/TN/05/11/2023

27 November 2023

To,  
Mr. Indrajeet Kumar,  
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](mailto:hrd-nhrc@nic.in)

Dear Sir,

**Sub: HRD Alert – Urgent Appeal for Action – Tamil Nadu – Tirunelveli – Threats and intimidation of HRD by Koodankulam police, for airing grievance during the Fishermen Grievance meeting organised by the government**

Greetings from Human Rights Defenders Alert!

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 concern regarding threats and intimidation of HRD Mr. Jesu Jeyaseelan by Mr. Shiyam Sundar, Inspector of the Koondankulam Police Station for speaking up during the Fishermen Grievance meetings conducted by the Department of Fisheries, District Collector and other officials.

**About the Human Rights Defender:**

Mr. Jesu Jeyaseelan (43 years) is an active member of fishermen's organisations and regularly attends Fishermen Grievance meetings conducted by the Department of Fisheries, District Collector and other officials.

**Source of Information:**

- Communication with HRDA South Co-ordinator
- Communication with the HRD
- Communication with the HRDs in the region

**Perpetrators:**

- Mr. Shiyam Sundar, Inspector, Koondankulam Police Station
- Other police officials of Koondankulam Police Station.

**Date of Incident:**

November 5, 2023

**Place of Incident:**

Koondankulam Police station, Tamil Nadu

**Background:**

On November 3, 2023, a fishermen's grievance meeting was conducted by the Department of Fisheries & Fishermen Welfare, Radhapuram Taluk, attended by the District Collector, Tirunelveli & and other higher officials.

The HRD Jesu Jeyaseelan participated in the grievance meeting and raised his grievance before the district collector and other officials.

**Details of the Incident:**

On November 5, 2023, around 10.42 AM, Mr. Jeyaseelan was called on his phone by a person claiming to be a Sub Inspector of Police, at the Koodankulam police station. He told the HRD to reach the Koodankulam police station by 12.00 PM compulsorily for an enquiry regarding a petition.

The HRD reached the police station at 11.50 AM, and waited till 12.40 PM, and called the inspector. At around 1.00 PM, the inspector of Koodankulam PS, Mr. Shyam Sundar, reached the station and started enquiring about the reasons mentioned in the grievance meeting by the HRD.

Then, the Inspector, Koodankulam Police Station threatened the HRD for speaking in front of the District Collector, Tirunelveli and other higher officials, stating that a complaint had been launched against the HRD but failed to mention complaint name, charges and reasons for the enquiry.

HRDA strongly believes that the intimidation and threats of police officials against Mr. Jeyaseelan is an act of reprisal for his activism as a human rights defender and for speaking up before the administration during the grievance committee meeting.

Every person has a the right to life and liberty enshrined under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution 1950, Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, and Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966. The Right to life includes the right against harassment and threats. The targeted attack on the HRD by the police amounts to a violation of life and liberty.

The United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders 1999 states the following:

- Article 12 (2) and (3) "*The State shall take all necessary measures to ensure the protection by the competent authorities of everyone, individually and in association with others, against any violence, threats, retaliation, de facto or de jure adverse discrimination, pressure, or any other arbitrary action as a consequence of their legitimate exercise of the rights referred to in the present Declaration. In this connection, everyone is entitled, individually and in association with others, to be protected effectively under national law in reacting against or opposing, through peaceful means, activities, and acts, including those by omission, attributable to States that result in violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as acts of violence perpetrated by groups or individuals that affect the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms.*"
- Article 9 (1) : "*In the exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the promotion and protection of human rights as referred to in the present Declaration, everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to benefit from an effective remedy and to be protected in the event of the violation of those rights*".

The Right to exercise freedom of Speech and Expression is enshrined under Article 19 (a) of the Indian Constitution. The Right to freedom of opinion and expression encompasses three different aspects:

- 1) The right to hold opinions without interference,
- 2) The right to access to information and
- 3) The right to impart information and ideas of all kinds.

We urge the Hon'ble Commission to immediately intervene in this matter of the police abusing their power to restrict fundamental rights to expression, dignity and liberty. As

the Apex national human rights institution of India, we urge you to intervene in this case and independently enquire into the conduct of the police officials and ensure safety of the HRD and his family by recommending the protection and stand in solidarity by issuing the public statement.

**Appeal:**

We urge the Hon'ble Commission to take cognisance of the above case and urgently:

- Direct the SSP of Radhapuram Taluk, Tirunelveli, to initiate a transparent, independent inquiry regarding the threat and intimidation of Mr. Jesu Jeyaseelan and submit the report to NHRC within two weeks.
- Based on the enquiry, direct the SSP of Radhapuram Taluk to take urgent action against the Inspector Mr. Shiyam Sundar who threatened and intimidated Mr. Jeyaseelan for speaking up in front of the administration and submit the report within two weeks to the NHRC
- Direct the Director General of Police Tamil Nadu to ensure the complete physical and psychological security of HRD and his family.

We hope to hear from you soon,

Yours Sincerely,



(Henri Tiphagne)

National Working Secretary