



# HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS' ALERT - INDIA

NATIONAL SECRETARIAT

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**March 14, 2018**

**To**

**Mr. 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  
Email: [hrd-nhrc@nic.in](mailto:hrd-nhrc@nic.in)

**Dear Sir,**

***Sub: HRD Alert - India - Urgent Appeal for Action - Attack on journalist  
by Assam Police - 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 physical assault by Assam police while covering a dispute between Mizo students and Assam Police at Kachurthal, a border area of Assam and Mizoram.

**Source of Information on the Incident:**

- The Coordinator of HRDA for the North East of India
- Media Reports

**The Perpetrators:**

Assam police

**Date of Incident:**

March 10, 2018

**Place of Incident:**

Kachurthal area of Assam-Mizoram border

### **Details of the Incident:**

Ms. Emmy C Lawbei a woman journalist from Guwahati based news channel News18 Assam. She went to cover the ongoing disputes at the border between Assam Police and Mizo Zirlai Pawl activists. She along with her team reached the area at around 11 AM on March 10, 2018. she was reporting, members of a Mizo student's body clashed with the Assam Police and the dispute turned violent. While the journalists were covering the situation, Ms. Lawbei was beaten up by the police brutally. She repeatedly told the police officer in charge and showed her journalist identity card, but they did not listen to her even as she screamed in pain while being attacked. Due to the police attack, around 20 people were injured in the incident. Ms. Lawbei was rushed to the Bairabi Hospital for treatment.

### **Background Information**

The Mizo Zirlai Pawl, Mizoram's most powerful student organisation, built a wooden rest house at the Kachurthal area in the Inner Line Permit Reserved Forest along the Assam-Mizoram border on February 27, 2018. The wooden construction was made for resting purposes of the farmers who works in the paddy fields in that area. A day later in the evening of February 28, 2018, a joint team of Assam Police and State Forest Department demolished the house alleging that it has constructed in the Assam side and that amounted to encroachment. It escalated tension in the Assam-Manipur border since then. On March 8, 2018 Mizo Zirlai Pawl decided to reconstruct the house in the same area. Anticipating some trouble, a group of journalists also went to the spot.

As the activities of Mizo Zirlai Pawl unloaded their things, food from the bus, the Assam police personnel got aggressive and charged them without any warning. Mizo Zirlai Pawl went back that day but again they came on Saturday on March 10, when the situation got violent and lead to the attack on journalists.

### **Appeal:**

We, therefore urge you to immediately take necessary steps and:

- Order an immediate, independent, thorough, transparent, effective and impartial investigation into the above-mentioned incident of attack on journalist Ms. Emmy C Lawbei
- Ensure that adequate action is being taken against the police officers who attacked the WHRD

Looking forward to your immediate action in this regard,

Yours sincerely,



**Henri Tiphagne**  
**National Working Secretary**

***Copies to:***

**Assam State Human Rights Commission**

Gauhati Medical College Road,  
Bhangagarh, Guwahati-781005  
Assam.

Email: [secy-ahrc@nic.in](mailto:secy-ahrc@nic.in)

**Director General of Police, Assam**

Uluvar, Guwahati-781007, Assam

Email: [dgp@assampolice.gov.in](mailto:dgp@assampolice.gov.in)

**Committee to Protect Journalists**

Email: [info@cpj.org](mailto:info@cpj.org)