



# HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS' ALERT - INDIA

NATIONAL SECRETARIAT

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Ref No: - HRDA/North East/TRI/01/02/2019

February 12, 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](mailto:hrd-nhrc@nic.in)

Dear Sir,

***Sub: HRD Alert - India - Urgent Appeal for Action – Tripura - Fabricated charges of sedition against human rights defenders in Tripura - 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 arbitrary and fabricated charges of sedition against Mr. Jagadish Debbarma, Mr. Aghore Debbarma, and Mr. Anthony Debbarma who participated in a protest rally against the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016 in a democratic way at Khumulwng, Tripura.

### **Source of Information on the Incident:**

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

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

According to sources, on February 5, 2019, a suo motu case of sedition has been filed against Mr. Jagadish Debbarma leader of (Indigenous National Party of Tripura) INPT, Mr. Aghore Debbarma, leader of Tipraha faction of Indigenous People's Front of Tripura (IPFT) and Activist Mr. Anthony Debbarma of Borok People's Human Rights Organisation (BPHRO) and many others at Radhapur Police Station on charges of

sedition under sections 120 (B)/124(A)/153(A) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) for participating in a protest rally against the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016.

There were widespread protests against the passing of the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill in Assam since 2016. Now as the present central Government had presented the Bill in Lok Sabha, it has hurt the sentiments of the indigenous people of Tripura as well as other North-Eastern states of India and provoked them to protest against the bill. There has been rampant protest against it through-out North-Eastern states of India. More than hundreds of organization and citizens have joined the protest very strongly. As a supporter of the protest the above-mentioned HRDs attended a public rally at Khumulwng, Tripura on January 30, 2019 where they expressed their views against the Citizenship Amendment Bill, 2016 and opposed the passing of the said Bill by exercising their fundamental rights guaranteed under the Constitution of India. The rally was organized by Tripura United Indigenous Peoples Council, a joint body of 48 groups led by the former All Deb Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF) Chief Ramjit Debbarma. The rally was also led by Tripura Congress working president Prayot Manikya.

When family members of the HRDs approached the Radhapur Police Station, the then officer in-charge refused to provide a copy of the First Information Report (FIR) nor the FIR Number. To approach the court for anticipatory bail, the HRDs require the certified copy of the FIR and moreover it is a legal right of any person accused of an offence to be given a copy of the FIR, as per the guidelines of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India. Thus, the HRDs were denied of their right to apply for a bail and also to know on what charges they have been accused of.

To suppress the voice of the peaceful protesters the state has resorted to arrests, detentions, prohibitory orders etc. Many were also injured in police firing and lathi charge during these protests. We also bring to your notice of the incident of open firing by police against protestors in Khumulwng, Tripura on January 8, 2019 leaving a person dead and many injured on which HRDA issued an Urgent Appeal for action to the Hon'ble Commission on January 11, 2019. It is brought to your notice that these kinds of fabricated charges levelled against peaceful protesters are just to systematically silence the dissent and prohibit them from carrying out peaceful protest through lawful assembly, free speech and gathering.

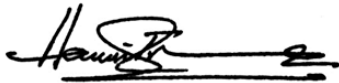
**Appeal:**

- Immediate withdrawal of all the false charges levelled against the above mentioned HRDs;

- Ensure that the HRDs are given a copy of the FIR;
- Ensure provision of reparation, compensation, apology to the defenders for the psychological sufferings they had to undergo because of the detention and provide a re-assurance of not engaging in such acts against HRD;
- Put an end to all acts of harassment against all human rights defenders in general in Tripura to ensure that in all circumstances they carry out their activities as defenders of human rights without any hindrances;

Looking forward to your immediate action in this regard,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Henri Tiphagne', with a horizontal line underneath it.

**(Henri Tiphagne)**

National Working Secretary

**Copy to:**

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