



HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS' ALERT - INDIA

NATIONAL SECRETARIAT

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To

Mr. Debindra Kundra

National Focal Point - Human Rights Defenders & Assistant Registrar,
National Human Rights Commission
Manav Adhikar Bhawan,
Block-C, GPO Complex, INA,
New Delhi – 110 023
Email: hrd-nhrc@nic.in

Dear Sir,

Sub: HRD Alert - India - Appeal for Action –Rajasthan- *Brutal physical assault on journalist Mr. Dinesh Jangid by illegal sand mining mafia Ajmer, Rajasthan - 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 brutal assault with the intention to kill a local journalist and human rights defender Mr. Dinesh Jangid in Sarwar town in Ajmer district of Rajasthan on 18 February 2020. The journalist was severely beaten with rods and lathis by the local sand mining mafia while he was covering a protest by the local villagers in the area. HRD Mr. Dinesh Jangid was targeted and brutally attacked for reporting on issues related to illegal river sand mining in the region.

Status of the Human Rights Defender

Mr. Dinesh Jangid is a Rajasthan based journalist who has been associated with local Hindi Dainik "Navjyoti" for the past 4-5 years. He has been reporting for a number of news agencies for over 20 years in his capacity as a journalist. He has been reporting on local social and political issues including such as the illegal gravel and sand mining.

Source of the Information

- The Coordinator of HRDA for North of India
- The Coordinator of HRDA for Rajasthan
- Media Reports

The Perpetrators:

- Mr. Monu Singh s/o Prithvi Singh
- Mr. Govind s/o Mahavir Singh
- Mr. Honney Singh s/o Jitu Singh
- And 15 to 20 others unknown persons

Date and Place of incident:

18 February 2020

Ajmer District, Rajasthan

Details of the Incident:

According to the information received on February 18, 2020, Dinesh Jangid had gone to Kota Road highway in Sarwar town to report on a protest by villagers after a cow was injured by a truck that was transporting allegedly illegally extracted river sand. When Dinesh Jangid reached the Gulgau bus stand on the Kota highway he was stopped by a group of people involved in illegal sand mining in the region who threatened him for reporting on the issue of illegal sand mining activities in the area. The said incident happened at a site between Kekri and Sarwar sub towns of the district which is located around 95 kilometres from Ajmer. He was attacked with lathis and rods by the assailants and was mercilessly beaten and suffered severe physical injuries. Then Dinesh Jangid was admitted in the Kekri government hospital for medical treatment. The incident was reported in the Kekri police station. One of the attackers who was named has been arrested but the others remain absconding. The perpetrators were identified as Mr. Monu Singh, Mr. Govind, Mr. Honey Singh along with 15 to 20 other people.

The areas between Kekri and Sarwar of Ajmer district are known for gravel mines and river sand. The illegal sand and gravel mining in the state of Rajasthan is rampant. It is pertinent to note that the sand mining mafia in Rajasthan has been operating with a nexus of political figures, local police and powerful local leaders. This has been met with opposition by locals and has been raised as an issue at the Supreme Court yet illegal gravel and sand mining continues in the form of an organised crime. Sources informed that the accused who targeted the defender belonged to one of the many groups of powerful sand mafias which have been operating in the region. They not only threaten local people but also target journalists to forcibly prevent them from doing their legitimate work of reporting news on issues of social and public concern.

In the context of human rights violations by third parties, the obligation to protect, first, involves ensuring that defenders do not suffer from violations of their rights by non-State actors. Failure to protect could, in particular circumstances, engage the State's

responsibility. Even acts and omissions committed by non-State actors under the instructions, control or direction of the State can, under certain circumstances, give rise to State responsibility. Therefore, it is paramount that prompt and full investigations are conducted and perpetrators brought to justice. Failure by States to prosecute and punish such perpetrators is a clear violation of Article 12 of the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

Appeal

We, therefore urge you to immediately take necessary steps to ensure that this Hon'ble Commission to urgently:

- Order an immediate, thorough, transparent, effective and impartial investigation into the above-mentioned events of brutal physical assault on journalist and HRD Mr. Dinesh Jangid;
- Take immediate legal action against the perpetrators after identifying all of them and arrest them for assaulting the HRD Mr. Dinesh Jangid;
- Ensures complete medical check-up of HRD Mr. Dinesh Jangid totally at state cost in the best medical facility available in the state to ensure that the defender is not suffering from any internal medical ailments after this brutal attack;
- Guarantees in all circumstances the physical integrity of the journalist and HRD Mr. Dinesh Jangid who still faces the risk of further attacks from the perpetrators and using all provisions of law to ensure that the journalist and defender is not attacked or intimidated in Rajasthan in future and give this assurance to the NHRC of India in writing immediately and urgently;
- Ensure provision of reparation and apology to the defender for the physical and psychological sufferings he is undergoing because of the attack on his life while performing his legitimate duties and provide a re-assurance of not engaging in such acts against writers, journalists and HRDs;
- Ensures to protect the right to life and personal liberty guaranteed under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution;

Looking forward to your immediate action in this regard,

Yours sincerely,



(Henri Tiphagne)
National Working Secretary