



HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS' ALERT - INDIA

NATIONAL SECRETARIAT

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To
Sri. K. Chandrashekar Rao,
The Hon'ble Chief Minister
Govt. of Telangana,
Telangana Secretariat,
Hyderabad, Telangana – 500 022.
cm@telangana.gov.in

HRDA demands immediate withdrawal of UAPA and connected sedition charges on HRD Prof. Haragopal and 151 other HRDs.

Human Rights Defenders Alert-India is deeply concerned at the case filed on Professor G Haragopal, retired professor of University of Hyderabad and a visiting professor at the National Law School University, Bengaluru and 151 other human rights defenders by the Telangana police under draconian laws like the UAPA and other charges such as sedition etc. though there is news that the cases against him and a few others have been withdrawn.

The case was registered in August 2022, charging the 152 HRDs under Sections 120-B (criminal conspiracy), 124-A (sedition), and 302 (murder) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Section 3(2) of the UAPA, which accuses Professor Haragopal and others of planning to attack officials, destroying government property, recruit tribal youth, terrorise innocent people, and raise funds for the Maoists.

Other accused include Prof Padmaja Shaw, a retired professor of Journalism in Osmania University (OU), the Telangana Civil Liberties Committee President Prof Gaddam Laxman, Justice (Retd) H Suresh, activist Sudha Bhardwaj, human rights lawyer Surendra Gadling, and activist Arun Ferreira. All are distinguished professors, lawyers and civil rights activists who have worked for decades for the cause of human rights in India.

Professor Haragopal and others have firmly denied the accusations.

HRDA is of the firm opinion that the fake charges on Professor Haragopal and all the other HRDs have been filed as a reprisal for their social and political activities and to silence voices of dissent against the government.

Professor Haragopal is a distinguished Professor of law, retired from the University of Hyderabad. He has also been involved in the National Consultation on formation of a law to protect HRDs in India.

Article 21 of the Indian Constitution ensures all its citizen right to life – a life to live without fear, intimidation, harassment, or mental torture.

The Declaration on Human Rights Defenders adopted in 1998 by the UN General Assembly provides for the support and protection of human rights defenders. The Declaration makes particular reference to the role of States to take all necessary measures to ensure the protection of everyone against any violence, threats, retaliation, adverse discrimination, pressure or any other arbitrary action as a consequence of his or her legitimate exercise of the rights referred to in the Declaration.

In July 2011, Ms. Margaret Sekaggya issued a Commentary on the Declaration, according to which states bear the primary responsibility for protecting individuals, including defenders under their jurisdiction, regardless of the status of the alleged perpetrators (A/HRC/13/22).

The State's duty to protect defenders from violations committed by States and non-State actors is derived from each State's primary responsibility and duty to protect all human rights, as enshrined in Article 2 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which establishes the obligation of States to guarantee to all individuals within their territories and subject to their jurisdiction the rights recognized in the Covenant without discrimination (A/65/223, para. 30).

HRDA calls upon the Government of Telangana to urgently close all the cases on all those named in the FIR along with Professor Haragopal Rao and allow them to work in a safe environment in accordance with the national and international laws.

Yours sincerely,

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

(Henri Tiphagne)

National Working Secretary