



HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS' ALERT - INDIA

NATIONAL SECRETARIAT

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September 10, 2021

To,
Mr. C S Mawri,
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 - Urgent Appeal for Action – Karnataka: RTI activist T Shridhar murdered after RTI against relatives of powerful politicians.

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 regarding the murder of RTI Activist Mr. T Shridhar who was murdered days after he expressed fear for his life because of his RTI against the relatives of power politicians in Karnataka.

Source of Information:

- HRDA South Regional Consultant
- Family of the HRD
- Media Reports

Date of Incident:

July 15, 2021

Place of Incident:

Bangalore, Karnataka

The Perpetrators:

R. Vagish and 4 others

About the Human Rights Defender:

Mr. T Shridhar, a 40-year-old RTI activist based in Harapanahalli in Bellary, was a journalist who had filed multiple RTIs in connection to land encroachment and other issues with the authorities. He also did news stories on illegal mining, encroachment, government land encroachment, unauthorised stone quarries etc. Many of his cases against powerful figures were pending with the Lokayukta and High Court.

Details of the Incident:

On July 13, 2021. Mr. T. Shridhar called his wife Shilpa and informed her that he feels his life is under threat as he has filed a case against Mr. Bharath, the son of a politician Mr. PT Parameshwara Naik and HK Halees, also a relative of a powerful politician, for land encroachment.

On July 15, 2021 at 07:15 pm, Mr. Shridhar was drinking tea at the ADB College, GS, Channaweeragowda hotel, when R. Vagish along with 4 other men attacked T. Shridhar with iron rods and cement bricks. The attack resulted in grave scalp injuries, bled profusely from his head and by the time he was taken to the Harapanahalli Government Hospital, he died.

An FIR No. 0108/2021 was filed under IPC U/s – 34, 302 (Murder) at the Harapanahalli Police station and 5 people along with Vagish were arrested for murder. However, no action has been taken against the people against whom, associated with powerful politicians, Mr. Shridhar expressed feared for his life. He had already expressed this fear of his life being at stake due to RTIs filed by him against relatives of powerful politicians.

Furthermore, this is the second murder of an RTI activist and HRD in Karnataka in the month of July 2021.

Appeal:

We urge the Hon'ble Commission to –

- Direct the investigative division to conduct an immediate, thorough, transparent, effective, and impartial investigation into the threats received by HRD Mr. T Shridhar and his murder and submit the report to the Commission within two weeks.
- Direct the Director General of Police of Karnataka to provide security to the family of Mr. T Shridhar who continue to remain vulnerable to further attacks by the powerful politicians.
- Direct the Chief Secretary of Karnataka to pay compensation to the family of Mr. T Shridhar.
- Direct the Chief Secretary of Karnataka to take necessary steps for providing congenial atmosphere to human rights defenders and activists as directed under national and international guidelines.

Yours sincerely,



Henri Tiphagne
National Working Secretary