



# HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS' ALERT - INDIA

NATIONAL SECRETARIAT

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**HRDA/South/Telangana/01/11/2023**

04 November 2023

To,  
Mr. Indrajeet Kumar,  
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 – Urgent Appeal for Action – Telangana – Hyderabad – police brutality and detention of peacefully protesting student activists.**

Greetings from Human Rights Defenders Alert!

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 concern regarding the incident of police brutality and detention of student activists who were expressing solidarity with Palestinian civilians.

**About the Human Rights Defenders:**

- Anand – Activist, member of Naujawan Bharat Sabha
- Hina – Student activist, member of Disha Students Forum
- Sreeja – Student activist, member of Disha Students Forum
- Mahipal – Student activist, member of Disha Students Forum
- Bhargavi – Student Activist, member of Naujawan Bharat Sabha

**Source of Information:**

- Communication with the HRDs
- Communication of HRDA State Coordinator
- Newspaper reports

**Perpetrators:**

Police officials of Saifabad police station, Cyberabad Police Commissionerate.

**Date of Incident:**

October 13, 2023

**Place of Incident:**

Ambedkar Statue at Liberty Circle, Tank Bund Road, Hyderabad.

**Details of the Incident:**

On October 13, 2023, at 11 PM, a protest was scheduled by student activists of Naujawan Bharat Sabha and Disha Student Forum at Ambedkar Statue at Liberty Circle, Tank Bund Road, to express solidarity with Palestinians.

Before the HRDs reached the protest site, the police personnel were already stationed there; initially, the police allowed the students to protest peacefully. A dozen HRDs assembled at the protest site displayed handcrafted placards in support of Palestine-raised slogans denouncing Israel's bombarding of the Gaza Strip.

Two minutes into the protest, the police asked HRDs to turn off the speakers, and then the police seized the placards of the protestors and asked the HRDs to disperse from the protest site.

When the HRDs resisted, they were attacked by the police. The police targeted women Human Rights Defender Hina, manhandled her and dragged her into the police van. Then, the police detained 10 HRDs at Saifabad Police Station and collected their personal information, then released them at 5 PM on the same day.

HRDA strongly believes that the right to protest is an essential element of the right to participate in any democratic dispensation, and restrictions imposed on this right must be closely scrutinized with respect to their necessity and reasonableness.

The Right to protest is recognized under several international instruments, including:

- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Article 8),
- Article 5 (a) of the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders 1998 states that "For the purpose of promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to meet or assemble peacefully".

The Right to protest is an essential element of the right to participate in any democratic dispensation, and restrictions imposed on this right must be closely scrutinized with respect to their necessity and reasonableness (A/61/312, para. 56)

Human rights defenders play a pivotal role in ensuring that protest and criticism are expressed in a peaceful and constructive manner. States should legitimize and empower human rights defenders in this role and encourage defenders to take full ownership of this role (A/62/225, para. 102).

Women defenders often face more risks when participating in collective public action because of perceptions of the traditional role of women in some societies, and they become targets of non-state actors (A/61/312, para. 72)

States must Investigate and prosecute instances of gender-based violence against women defenders occurring during demonstrations as a matter of priority. It is important to give no-tolerance signals on gender-based violence (A/62/225, para. 101 (a)).

**Appeal:**

We urge the Hon'ble Commission to take cognisance of the above case and urgently:

- Direct the Director General of Investigation of the NHRC to initiate a transparent, independent inquiry into the illegal detention of the HRDs and submit the report to the NHRC within Two Weeks.
- Direct the Director General of the Police of Telangana to ensure the safety of HRDs and their family to protect them from further harassment by the police.

We hope to hear from you soon,

Yours Sincerely,

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

(Henri Tiphagne)

National Working Secretary