



HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS' ALERT - INDIA

NATIONAL SECRETARIAT

No.32, Besant Road, Chokkikulam, Madurai - 625 002, Tamil Nadu, India.
P: +91-452-2531874 & 2539520 Fax: +91-452-2531874 Mobile: 99943-68540
E.mail: hrda.india@gmail.com Web: www.hrdaindia.org

May 13, 2017

To

Justice (Retd.) H L Dattu

Chairperson, National Human Rights Commission

Manav Adhikar Bhawan, Block-C, GPO Complex,

INA, New Delhi – 110 023

Email: chairnhrc@nic.in

Sub: HRD Alert - India – Urgent Appeal: RTI activist Mr. Sankar Panigrahi threatened over phone by abusive language for his intervention and posting in social media Balangir, Odisha – Regarding

Dear Sir,

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 phone threats, including threat to murder Mr. Sankar Panigrahi and rape his wife from an unknown mobile number.

Source of Information on the Incident:

The Coordinator of HRDA for the East of India

Communication with the HRD

Status of the Human Rights Defender:

Mr. Sankar Panigrahi, permanent resident of Radharani Pada At-Hospital road, near mausi mandir, Po/Dist-Balangir, Odisha, 767001. He is the secretary of a local NGO "Satarka", which works at the local level on a right base approach on education, health, RTI, etc. Under organisation's banner, Mr. Panigrahi had initiated social audit of MGNREGA work, school mid-day meal and several other initiatives. He is also a part of the state budget analysis team. Mr. Panigrahi is also engaged in motivating youth in his district to undertake developmental work and also encourages and teaches them to use Right to Information Act to seek information regarding the ongoing developmental work. He is an active member of an unregistered RTI network, namely Odisha Sookhana Adikar Abhiyan (OSAA) involved in exposing cases of corruption in government funds earmarked for the implementation of social welfare schemes in Odisha.

The Perpetrators:

1. Sri Ashis kumar Singh, Superintendent of Police, Balangir, Odisha
2. Sri Narayan Naik, SDPO Sadar Police Station, Balangir, Odisha

Date of Incident:

May 10, 2017

Place of Incident:

In the residence of HRD.

Details of the Incident:

According to sources Mr. Sankar Panigrahi, had posted in social media (facebook) on date May 9, 2017, "GO BACK NARYAN NAIK". On May 10, 2017, at about 8.02 PM he received a call from a mobile number +91-7682955014. Without saying anything, the caller started abusing him in filthy language and threatened to kill him in an encounter and rape his wife. Mr. Panigrahi had recorded this conversation which is attached with this soft petition for your kind perusal.

It will be pertinent to mention here that, Mr. Panigrahi had filed one writ petition in Odisha High court bearing number W.P.C.(PIL) No 12071 Dt.10/06/2013. Seeking intervention on the police assault on the people protesting against Lower Suktel

Project at Pardhiapali and Mr. Naryan Naik was SDPO in town police station and a party in this writ petition. Subsequently he was transferred from the town police station after hearing started. Now he is again transferred to the Balangir Sadar police station.

HRD Mr. Panigrahi apprehends that looking to his posting in social media, Mr. Naryan Naik might have instigated someone on his behalf to threaten Mr. Panigrahi.

Appeal:

We, therefore urge you to immediately take necessary steps to ensure that the Superintendent of Police, the District Collector and District Magistrate of Balangir District:

- Order an immediate, thorough, transparent, effective and impartial investigation into the above mentioned incident of threat to the RTI activist and human rights defender Mr. Sankar Panigrahi;
- Take immediate action on the perpetrators for the threats made to the RTI activist and human rights defender by arresting all of them and using all provisions of law to ensure that the defender is not harassed or attacked in future;
- Guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of Mr. Sankar Panigrahi who is still under risk of further reprisals from the perpetrators and provide a re-assurance of not engaging in such acts against HRDs;
- Ensure provision of reparation, compensation, apology to the defender for the psychological sufferings he is undergoing because of the attack and threats to his life and give this assurance to the NHRC of India in writing immediately and urgently;
- Put an end to all acts of attack and harassment of human rights defenders like Mr. Sankar Panigrahi in the State of Odisha to ensure that in all circumstances they carry out their activities as defenders of human rights without any hindrances;
- More generally, ensures in all circumstances the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and with international human rights instruments ratified by India is strictly adhered to in the state of Odisha.

Looking forward to your immediate action in this regard,

Yours sincerely,

Sd/-

Henri Tiphagne

National Working Secretary

Chairperson, Odisha Human Rights Commission,

Toshali Bhawan(2nd Floor), Satyanagar,

PO:Satyanagar,

Bhubaneswar-751007

Email: ohrc@nic.in

Shri Radha Krishna Mathur,

Chief Information Commissioner,

August Kranti Bhavan,

New Delhi - 110 066.

Email: rk.mathur53@gov.in

Odisha Information Commission

Address- B-1 Block, Toshali Bhawan

Satyanagar, Bhubaneswar-751007

E-mail: odishasoochana@nic.in