



HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS' ALERT - INDIA

NATIONAL SECRETARIAT

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March 14, 2018

To

Mr. Srinivasa Kammath

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

Dear Sir,

Sub: HRD Alert - India - Urgent Appeal for Action – Sexual assault on women human rights defender Ms. Shangnaidar Tontang in Manipur - 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 sexual assault of a women human rights defender Ms. Shangnaidar Tontang by the Chairman of Kangsang Village Authority while handling a quarrel between villagers of Kangsang village and Khangshin village in Manipur.

About the WHRD

Ms. Shangnaidar Tontang is a very senior Women Human Rights Defender from the state of Manipur. She is the chief functionary of Weaker's Section Development Council, steering committee member of Women in Governance (WinG)-Manipur, Management Board member of State Cooperative Union, Chandel District, and Member of Khangshin Village Authority. She has been very actively advocating for peacebuilding amongst the different ethnic communities since 2006.

Source of Information on the Incident:

- The Coordinator of HRDA for the North East of India
- Communication from WHRD Ms. Shangnaidar Tontang

The Perpetrators:

Brownson Makunga, Chairman of Kangsang Village Authority

Date of Incident:

March 9, 2018

Place of Incident:

Village bazar of Khangshin Village, Manipur

Details of the Incident:

On March 9, 2018, at around 3.30 PM Ms. Shangnaidar Tontang was having coffee in a shop in the village market. She saw some quarrel going on amongst the villagers of Kangsang and Khangshin on village bazar issue. The quarrel turned violent at one point and she intervened the matter on the spot and tried to stop the violence by making them calm and asked them to resolve their disputes in a peaceful manner. They did not listen to her, instead, Mr. Brownson Makunga, Chairman of Kangsang Village Authority sexually assaulted her in the public by saying that “he will kick her on her breasts”.

She filed a complaint at the Kakching police station on March 10, 2018 and the police registered the complaint under Section 354 of the Indian Penal Code (outraging modesty of a woman). After the police complaint has been filed, Mr. Brownson has absconded.

After filing of the complaint Ms. Shangnaidar has received tremendous pressure from the community leaders of other villages to withdraw the case. They have demanded to settle the issue in the village by asking him to apologise to her. One of the leaders of the Kangsang village called a villager of Khangshin village and threatened them that if Mr. Brownson is arrested, they will not let the villagers to live that has led to fear amongst the villagers of Khangshin village, which might trigger a conflict between them. Mr. Brownson belongs to Maring community, which is ethnically dominated community whereas Shangnaidar is belonged to Khoibu community which is a very small community amongst the Nagas in Manipur. Even now she has been told by some of the villagers of her village to withdraw the police case and settle the matter in the village if Mr. Brownson apologises to her. As these villages have witnessed violent ethnic conflict in the past, peace, safety and security of the villages and if the WHRD is of the prime concern.

Appeal:

We, therefore urge you to immediately take necessary steps and:

- Order an immediate, independent, thorough, transparent, effective and impartial investigation into the above-mentioned incident of sexual assault on WHRD Ms. Shangnaidar Tontang
- Ensure that adequate safety and protection is given to the WHRD Ms. Shangnaidar Tontang
- Ensure that dispute between the two villages is settled by the government officials and ensure the safety and peace of the villages
- Ensure provision of reparation, compensation, apology to the defender for the psychological sufferings she has undergone because of the perpetrator

Looking forward to your immediate action in this regard,

Yours sincerely,



Henri Tiphagne
National Working Secretary

Copies to:

The Chairperson,
Manipur State Human Rights Commission,
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