



HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS' ALERT - INDIA

NATIONAL SECRETARIAT

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April 12, 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 – Odisha – Illegal arrest of
Human rights defender Promod Rath by Odisha Police - 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 illegal arrest of human rights defender Promod Rath by the Odisha Police.

Status of Human Rights Defender:

Mr.Promod Rath, is the state president of a national front, All Indian Kranti Kari Krusak Sabha (AKKKS) which works for the rights and welfare of unorganised labour. For last two decade, he has been engaged in the awareness generation for unorganised labour. He is also associated with many other labour frontal organisations.

Source of Information on the Incident:

- HRDA, Regional Coordinator for Eastern zone
- Interaction with Mr. Sibram, State Secretary, Community Party of India (ML) Red Star.

Perpetrators:

Police personnel of Polasara police station

Date of Incident:

30 March 2018

Place of Incident:

Resident of the HRD at Polasara, Dist Ganjam Odisha.

Details of the Incident:

As per the sources, on February 23 & 24, 2018 a state level convention was organised regarding the corruption in projects under the Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) at Polasara. During the state convention Mr. Rath and other office bearers of AKKKS came to know about fake MGNREGA labour cards issued to labourers at a cost of Rs. 1000/- by private agencies. Mr. Rath along with others had lodged a FIR in Polasara police station on the fake labour cards and a case was registered with No.. 28 of 2018 on February 24, 2018. Later, two persons have been arrested in connection with this case and then they were released after 8 days. Apprehending political interference into the case, Mr. Rath along with other party members met the Assistant Labour Commissioner at Berhampur and filed a memorandum on this issue and also addressed a letter to the Labour Commissioner, Bhubaneswar regarding this issue and was also brought to the knowledge of the District Collector for urgent action to stop the racket of embezzlement public funds using fake identity cards under MNREGA scheme.

Mr. Rath along with other trade unions and organised joint protests on this issue and created some pressure on the police and officials to act on the issue. Meanwhile, at the mid-night on 30 March, 2018 Mr. Rath was forcefully picked up by personnel from Polasara police station and he was illegally detained in the police station the entire night.

Appeal:

- Order an immediate, independent, thorough, transparent, effective and impartial investigation into the above-mentioned incident of arrest and illegal detention of Promod Rath

- Order for the State Legal Services Authority of Odisha to depute a senior criminal lawyer to represent Promod Rath at state costs and all the false cases against him are quashed

Looking forward to your immediate action in this regard,

Yours sincerely,



(Henri Tiphagne)

National Working Secretary

Copies to:

Chairperson, Odisha Human Rights Commission,

Toshali Bhawan(2nd Floor), Satyanagar,

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Bhubaneswar-751007

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Shri Naveen Patnaik

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Odisha

Govt. of Odisha,

Bhubaneshwar, Odisha -751001.

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Chief Secretary of Odisha

Secretariat

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Shri Kunwar Brajesh Singh, IPS

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