



HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS' ALERT - INDIA

NATIONAL SECRETARIAT

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Ref No: HRDA/South/TN/02/01/2020

January 06, 2020

To

Mr. Debindra Kundra

National 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 – Arbitrary arrest and manhandling of Mr. Nagai Thiruvalluvan while protesting against the death of 17 persons in Mettupalayam, Tamil Nadu - 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 arbitrary arrest and manhandling of Mr. Nagai Thiruvalluvan while protesting against the death of 17 persons due to collapse of a 'discriminatory wall' in Mettupalayam, Tamil Nadu.

Status of Human Rights Defender:

Mr. Nagai Thiruvalluvan is the President of Tamil Puligal Katchi, a political party working for the welfare of Arundhathayar community in the state of Tamil Nadu.

Source of Information on the Incident:

- Communication from the HRDs in the region
- Fact – finding report of the HRDA
- HRDA State Coordinator for Tamil Nadu

Perpetrators:

- Mr. Sujith Kumar IPS, Superintendent of Police, Coimbatore District
- Mr. Mani, Deputy Superintendent of Police, Periyanaickenpalayam Sub-division, Coimbatore District.
- Mr. Chennakesavan, Inspector of Police, Mettupalayam Police Station

Details of the Incident:

On the midnight of 02.12.2019, 17 Dalit persons were killed due to a wall collapse at Nadur village in Mettupalayam, Coimbatore district due to collapse of a 'discriminatory wall', which was built by a caste Hindu blocking the households of Dalits. There have been previous complaints about this wall, which is built to a length of 100 feet and height of 23 feet to government officials including Mettupalayam panchayat officials. The collapse of the wall is only due to the negligence of the government officials including the District Collector, Coimbatore for not taking necessary preventive actions during rainy season.

On 02.12.2019, around 4 am, the 'discriminatory wall' collapsed over the Dalit households in Nadur village. But the police personnel arrive only after 3 hours after the incident at around 7 am. Also, when the reason for death of 17 persons is only due to a caste based discriminatory wall against Dalits, the case was not registered under relevant provisions of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 2015. Also, the police personnel under lead by the Superintendent of Police Mr. Sujith Kumar IPS gathered police force in Nadur village to intimidate the families of the deceased and also hurried to perform the post-mortem of the deceased persons and threatened the families of the deceased persons to cremate the bodies immediately.

Mr. Nagai Thiruvalluvan, the President of Tamil Puligal Katchi was actively involved seeking justice to the families of the deceased. On 02.12.2019, group of people including the families of the deceased persons and residents of Nadur village lead by Mr. Thiruvalluvan were protesting in front of the Government Hospital, Mettupalayam seeking necessary action in the incident. Suddenly, under the orders of the Superintendent of Police Mr. Sujith Kumar IPS, Deputy Superintendent of Police, Mr. Mani, Inspector of Police, Mettupalayam PS Mr. Chennakesavan and nearly hundred other police personnel started to disperse the protestors in a violent manner and also attacked them using lathis and also pushed and stamped them. Mr. Mani, the Deputy Superintendent of Police insulted and threatened Mr. Thiruvalluvan and abused him using caste names and ordered the police personnel to arrest him. Immediately, Mr. Chennakesavan, the Inspector of Police pulled him and forcibly took him to the police jeep and also teared away his shirt. Nearly 20 other persons were detained along with Mr. Thiruvalluvan were taken to a private marriage hall without giving any medical

treatment. They were detained for nearly 16 hours until 9 am at 03.12.2019 and were taken to Mettupalayam Government Hospital and were treated and then remanded in prison.

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 arbitrary arrest of Mr. Nagai Thiruvalluvan and other HRDs
- Ensure that all the false complaints filed against the HRD to harass and threaten them should be quashed
- Ensure provision of reparation, compensation, apology to the defender for the psychological sufferings she has undergone because of the threats and provide a re-assurance of not engaging in such acts against HRDs

Looking forward to your immediate action in this regard,

Yours sincerely,



Henri Tiphagne
National Working Secretary