



HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS' ALERT - INDIA

NATIONAL SECRETARIAT

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June 22, 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 –Appeal for Action – Kerala: Poet and Dalit Activist Sathy Angamali intimidated, insulted and assaulted by staff of Kerala State Youth Welfare Board – 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 now writing to express our grave concerns regarding the intimidation, insult and assault faced by poet and dalit human rights defender Ms. Sathy Angamali.

Source of Information on the Incident:

- Communication with Dalit WHRD Ms. Sathy Angamali
- Media Reports
- HRDA Regional Coordinator.

Status of the Human Rights Defenders:

Ms. Sathy Angamali is a dalit poet, writer and Ambedkarite based in Ernakulam, Kerala. She is an anti-caste activist and is involved in the gender politics movement, the organiser of Dalit women's collective, a trainer for personality development of children, associate editor of a cultural Magazine and has organised the Beef fest on Ambedkar's birth anniversary in 2015.

The Perpetrators:

- Dr. Ajith, Co-ordinator, Kerala State Youth Welfare Board
- Mr. Shantan, Kerala State Youth Welfare Board
- Mr. Ajith, Kerala State Youth Welfare Board

Date of Incident:

May 7, 2018

Details of the Incident:

According to sources, On May 7, poet and Dalit activist Sathy Angamali was invited to participate in a programme titled 'Public's Signature for Freedom of Speech and Expression' in Trikkakara in Kerala. A government officer named Mr. Shanthan and Mr. Ajith of the Kerala State Youth Welfare Board, an autonomous body incorporated under Government of Kerala invited her to participate.

She was repeatedly invited to the programme saying that the programme would feature poets in and around Ernakulum District to which she agreed. She was told that she would be invited to the stage late, and she waited for a long time but was not acknowledged. She then contacted Mr. Ajith (one who invited her to the program) and asked him about the delay and he said that he had informed the person conducting the event and they would soon call her. Since even after a while she was not called, she told him that she would leave but was forced to wait again.

As it was getting delayed, she wanted to leave as it was difficult to get a bus for the return journey. Mr. Ajith and the organisers did not respond and kept her waiting and announced that the program was over.

Mr. Ajith then tried to board an auto to go away but was stopped by Ms. Sathy who asked him to apologise. He came out of the vehicle and talked about the issue for about 40 minutes and agreed for a written apology from the organisers which she learnt later that he was pretending.

Mr. Ajith then called one Dr. Ajith and Sakeer and they shouted at Ms. Sathy and threatened her. They called an auto for Ajith and allowed him to go and to which Ms. Sathy asked the driver not to go and tried to follow him. Soon Dr. Ajith and Sakeer pushed her on the shoulder, raised their hands to beat her and when she tried to block, they twisted her finger. She managed to run into an auto and asked the driver to go to the police station. Dr. Ajith entered the auto at the same time and asked the driver to get out and threatened him not to go to the police station. Soon the place was crowded with people who had noticed the issue and stood with her and they called the police.

Ms. Sathy's hand was injured and she had to go to a hospital for treatment. The police have registered a case against the perpetrators. She feels that she was treated this way because of her caste.

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 intimidation, insult and assault faced by poet and dalit human rights defender Ms. Sathy Angamali;
- Take immediate legal action against the perpetrators for the intimidation, insult, and assault on Ms. Sathy Angamali;
- Guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of Ms. Sathy Angamali and her family members as they continue to be under risk of further attacks by the perpetrators and give this assurance to the NHRC in writing immediately and urgently;
- Ensure provision of reparation, compensation, apology to Ms. Sathy Angamali and her family for the psychological sufferings they are undergoing because of the constant threats;

- Put an end to all acts of attack and harassment of human rights defenders in the State of Jharkhand to ensure that in all circumstances they carry out their activities as defenders of human rights without any hindrances; and
- 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 Kerala.

Looking forward to your immediate action in this regard,
Yours sincerely,

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

Henri Tiphagne
Honorary National Working Secretary