



HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS' ALERT - INDIA

NATIONAL SECRETARIAT

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Ref No: - HRDA/North East/MN/04/02/2019

February 22, 2019

To,

Mr. Khaleel Ahmed

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 – New Delhi/Manipur:
Arbitrary arrest and harassment of student leader Thokchom Veewon
under fabricated charges of sedition - 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 harassment and arbitrary arrest of student leader Mr. Thokchom Veewon under fabricated charge of sedition.

Source of Information on the Incident:

- The Coordinator of HRDA for the North East of India
- Media Reports
- Communication from the HRD Mr. Thokchom Veewon,

Perpetrators:

Delhi Police and Manipur Police

Date of Incident:

February 15, 2019

Details of the Incident:

Mr. Thokchom Veewon is the former president and present advisor of Manipuri Student Association, Delhi (MSAD). On February 15, 2019 at around 5.20 p.m. a four-member joint team of Delhi Police and Manipur Police came to his resident at Saket in search of him. The police physically assaulted him and took him away in the same

condition as he was, he was not even allowed to wear his slippers. At the time of the incident his younger sister was at home, who later informed the family members about his arrest. It is mention worthy that the team of police did not inform the arrestee about the reason of arrest and the physical assault.

After around one hour of his arrest, the family members came to know that Veewon was detained with the Special Brach of the Delhi Police at Janakpuri. Veewon's brother, Venus and some members of MSAD who went to Janakpuri Police Station were informed that his arrest was for sedition charges under Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code.

On February 13, 2019 at around 6 p.m. a team of Manipur Police from both Imphal East and West visited his residence at Lamlai Mayai Leikai, Imphal and searched his room, took pictures of his parents and threatened his parents and advised them to ask Veewon to concentrate on his studies.

Background Information:

MSAD had been protesting against the repeated arrest of journalist Mr. Kishorechandra Wangkhemcha on which HRDA has sent an Urgent Appeal for action to the National Human Rights Commission on December 20, 2018 and August 23, 2018 which has been registered with Case No. 28/14/4/2018. To mark their protest, they organized a series of protest rallies in Delhi and Manipur. They have been using both print and electronic media as well as social media to show their protest. Thokchom Veewon was always in the forefront of all the above-mentioned protest.

On December 16, 2018 also members of MSAD who were heading for a peaceful Protest march against the arrest of Kishorchandra Wangkhemcha at Manipur Bhawan in New Delhi were arbitrarily arrested.

On December 23, 2018, Manipur Police went to the residence of Javed Mehedi, General Secretary, MSAD at Keinou, Imphal and according to family members, the police personnel came to arrest Javed and asked about Thokchom Veewon and Damudor Arambam (Advisor of MSAD). The Police inquired about all the MSAD leaders and intimidated the family members on their recent protest activities.

It is being pointed out to the Commission that it has become a routine action for the police to harass people with dissenting voices and are peacefully protesting against any public action or policy. They are further being silenced or refrained from carrying

out their activities or rights-based work by detaining them under false and fabricated charges of sedition or other laws which carries complicated process of enlargement. This act of the state is continuously violating constitutional rights of HRDs of peaceful assembly, protest and free speech.

Appeal:

- Order an immediate, thorough, transparent, effective and impartial investigation into the above-mentioned incident of arbitrary arrest and harassment of Thokchom Veewon.
- Take immediate legal action on the perpetrators for arresting and harassing Thokchom Veewon and using all provisions of law to ensure his release and refrain from further harassment or attack through false implications in future.
- Ensure immediate appointment of a competent senior lawyer practicing on the criminal side in Imphal to defend the HRDs in all the criminal cases registered against them at state cost with the counsel so appointed reporting to National Human Rights Commission in periodic intervals;
- Guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of Thokchom Veewon by the perpetrators and give this assurance to the NHRC of India in writing immediately and urgently;
- Ensure provision of reparation, compensation, apology to the defender for the psychological sufferings the HRD is undergoing because of his arrest and provide a re-assurance of not engaging in such acts against HRD;
- Put an end to all acts of harassment against all human rights defenders in general in Manipur to ensure that in all circumstances they carry out their activities as defenders of human rights without any hindrances;

Looking forward to your immediate action in this regard,

Yours sincerely,



Henri Tiphagne

National Working Secretary

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