



HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS' ALERT - INDIA

NATIONAL SECRETARIATE

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May 16, 2017

To,

Shri 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

Sub: HRD Alert - India - Urgent Appeal for Action – Karnataka – Mr. Farook Ahmed : Right to Information (RTI) Activist Mr. Farook Ahmed attacked for using RTI to expose corruption in Hassan District, Karnataka - Regarding

Dear Sir,

Greetings from Human Rights Defenders Alert - India!

HRD Alert - India is a forum of Human Rights Defenders for Human Rights Defenders. It endeavors to initiate actions on behalf of Human Rights Defenders under threat or with security concerns.

We are now writing to express our grave concern regarding the attack on RTI activist Mr. Farooq Ahmed for using RTI to expose corruption in Hassan district of Karnataka.

Status of Human Rights Defender:

Farooq Ahmed, is a RTI activist residing in Channarayapatna Town in Hassan District.

Source of Information:

- Regional Coordinator of HRDA for South of India
- Media Reports

Date of Incident:

May 8, 2017

Place of Incident:

Hassan District, Karnataka

The Perpetrators:

- Mr. C.R. Abdul Haidi
- Mr. Siddiqui
- Mr.Mujahid
- Mr.Tanjim Pasha
- Mr.Jabiulla Baig

Incident detail:

According to sources, on the evening of May 8, 2017, HRD Mr. Farooq Ahmed was allegedly beaten up by four persons because of a social media post over the alleged misuse of funds by former members of a Muslim Burial Ground Committee (MBGC). Mr. Ahmed was assaulted by the relatives of Mr. C.R. Abdul Hadi, former Secretary of the burial committee and suffered injuries. He was treated at Hassan Institute of Medical Sciences in Hassan.

According to Mr. Ahmed, a portion of the burial ground had been acquired by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) for widening of the National Highway (NH) 75 and an amount of Rs. 1.92 lakh was awarded for the land acquired. MBGC utilised the compensation money themselves instead of remitting it to the State Wakf Board. There are also allegations that Mr. C.R. Abdul Haidi had misused the money. Mr. Ahmed had been following up on this issue since the year 2011. A probe was conducted by the State Wakf Board and they asked MBGC to remit the amount received by them. Mr. Ahmed had obtained a copy of the recovery notice through a RTI and shared it with his friend Mr. Akmal Javed, District Convener of the Aam Aadmi Party. Mr. Javed posted the notice on his Facebook account. After it was posted, Mr. Abdul Hadi's relatives came to Mr. Ahmed's shop at around 8.20 P.M. on May 8, 2017, and assaulted him.

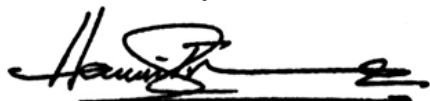
A complaint has been filled with the Channarayapatna Town Police Station regarding the above mentioned attack on Mr. Ahmed.

Appeal:

We therefore urge you to immediately take necessary steps to ensure that the Commissioner of Police, the Deputy Commissioner and District Magistrate of Hassan District:

- Order an immediate, thorough, transparent, effective and impartial investigation into the above-mentioned attack on RTI Activist Mr. Farook Ahmed ;
- Ensure provision of reparation, compensation, apology to the family of RTI activist Mr. Farook Ahmed for the physical and psychological sufferings they have undergone and also ensure to compensate for the trauma incurred during this time and give this assurance to the NHRC of India in writing immediately and urgently;
- Guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of the family and friends of Mr. Farook Ahmed of further attacks and intimidation from the perpetrators;
- Put an end to all acts of harassment against all human rights defenders and especially RTI activists in the State of Karnataka to ensure that in all circumstances they carry out their activities as writers / activists without any hindrances;
- Ensure the right to seek information guaranteed by the RTI Act and the Article 21 of the Constitution of India which guarantees personal liberty;
- 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 Karnataka.

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



(Henri Tiphagne)
National Working Secretary