



# HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS' ALERT - INDIA

NATIONAL SECRETARIAT

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July 09, 2021

To  
Mr. CS Mawri,  
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](mailto:hrd-nhrc@nic.in)

Dear Sir,

**Sub: HRD Alert-India – Urgent Appeal for Action – Manipur: Police inaction in the case of intimidation of columnist and former bureaucrat Dr. RK Nimai for authoring articles critical of the Manipur Government's actions.**

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 concern over Manipur Police's inaction in a case of mob threatening and intimidating columnist and former bureaucrat Dr. RK Nimai for authoring articles in the English daily the *Imphal Free Press*, critical of the acts of the Manipur Government.

## **About the Human Rights Defender:**

Dr. RK Nimai is a member of All Manipur Working Journalists' Union (AMWJU), and also a retired member of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS). He is also the treasurer of the Manipur Cultural Integration Conference (MCIC) working for emotional and cultural integration of various communities in Manipur. He is a regular contributor to local English dailies and other journals, focusing on governance.

## **Source of the Information:**

- HRDA North East Regional Coordinator
- Other HRDs in the region
- Media reports

## **The Perpetrators:**

Officials of Porompat Police Station, Imphal East

**Date of Incident:**

July 02, 2021

**Place of Incident:**

Imphal East, Manipur

**Details of the Incident:**

On July 02, 2021, the *Imphal Free Press* published two articles by Dr. Nimai, critical of the Manipur Government removing Kanglasha's props from the Kangla fort, Imphal. Kanglasha is a historical monument depicting as lion-like dragon god in the Manipur kingdom. Kangla fort was the administrative centre of the erstwhile Kingdom of Manipur. The two articles can be found at the following links -

- 1) <https://www.ifp.co.in/8213/pseudo-experts-on-the-forefront>
- 2) <https://www.ifp.co.in/8215/burying-the-issue>

On July 02, 2021, at around 10:30 AM, a mob of about 20 persons arrived at Dr. Nimai's house, shouted slogans and burnt copies of The Imphal Free Press newspaper and his articles. They left by the time Dr. Nimai came out from his house. A video of this incident went viral on social media. It is believed that the mob intended to intimidate Dr. Nimai for being critical of the government.

On the same day itself, Dr. Nimai filed a complaint in the Porompat Police Station describing the mob demonstration and threats, and appealed to the police to take appropriate legal actions. However, the police hasn't registered the FIR and refrained from taking any action.

The next day, several civil society organisations including the All Manipur Working Journalists' Union (AMWJU) and Editors Guild of Manipur (EGM), addressed the Director General of Police of Manipur, expressing their dismay and condemning the act as "*muffling the freedom of speech and expression of journalists*". They also demanded that the police should arrest the culprits involved in the incident within seven days and raised concerns about other cases of police inaction where journalists are targeted.

Unfortunately, till the filing of this appeal, there has been no investigation and action taken by the Manipur police. We believe that a mob harassing a renowned columnist and burning newspapers in front of his house, threatening and intimidating him, is an act of political reprisal against him for being critical of the actions of the Manipur Government. Article 19, of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) mandates freedom of opinion and expression and is protected in all relevant human rights treaties. Freedom of opinion and expression are fundamental rights that contain both a personal and a social dimension.

As per General Comment No. 34 on Freedoms of Speech and Expression, Human Rights Committee has observed that free speech and expression is an "indispensable conditions for the full development of the person", "essential for any society" and a "foundation stone for every free and democratic society".

Some powerful actors, seeking to escape scrutiny and stifle dissent, often respond to critical reporting or activism with attempts to silence them. The protection of journalists

and human rights defenders, and ending impunity for attacks against them, is a global priority for safeguarding freedom of expression. States are under an obligation to prevent, protect against, and prosecute attacks against journalists and human rights defenders.

**Appeal:**

We appeal to the Hon'ble Commission to urgently –

- Direct the Director General of Police of Manipur to undertake an immediate, thorough, transparent, effective and impartial investigation into the above-mentioned incident of mob intimidating Dr. RK Nimai and the negligence of the Manipur police in initiating any legal action.
- Direct the Director General of Police of Manipur to ensure that an FIR is immediately registered based on the complaint filed by Dr. RK Nimai.
- Direct the Director General of Police of Manipur to ensure the safety and security of Dr. RK Nimai and his family and provide them with protection. The Director General of Police of Manipur must ensure that Dr. Nimai is not harassed or intimidated in future and should give this assurance to the NHRC in writing immediately and urgently.
- Direct the Director General of Police of Manipur to ensure that in all circumstances journalists and HRDs are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of restrictions including police and judicial harassment.

Looking forward to your immediate action in this regard,

Yours sincerely,



**Henri Tiphagne**

National Working Secretary