



Human Rights Defenders Alert - India

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Shri A. K. Parashar
Focal Point - Human Rights Defenders
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 – Odisha: RTI Activist
Kirasindhu Sahu murdered - Reg.***

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 concern over the alleged murder of Krupasindhu Sahu on the 26th of January, 2015 in Nacchinga, Cuttack, Odisha.

Source of Information on the Incident:

- Pradip Pradhan, an RTI Activist and Human Rights Defender from Odisha
- Media Reports

The Human Rights Defender:

Krupasindhu Sahu, aged 40 years was an RTI Activist and also a farmer, of Nachhigan village in Krushnaprasad Panchayat in the Niali Block. He had sought information on utilisation of funds under BGREI (Bringing Green Revolution to Eastern India) towards line sowing of paddy, fertiliser and seeds for development of agriculture in Niali.

The Perpetrators:

1. Politicians of the Ruling Party
2. Henchmen who carried out the murder at the behest of the above

Date of Incident:

26th of January 2015

Place of Incident:

In Niali in the Cuttack District of the Eastern Indian State of Odisha

Incident detail:

According to sources, following the RTI Application that the deceased Human Rights Defender had filed regarding utilisation of funds under BGREI (Bringing Green Revolution to Eastern India) towards line sowing of paddy, fertiliser and seeds for development of agriculture in Niali that exposed huge corruption and irregularities in the BGREI fund by influential and powerful political people, he had reportedly received threat calls. Krupasindhu Sahu is said to have gone missing on the evening of the 26th of January when he had gone to the local market. Police later retrieved the decomposed body of the farmer from the nearby riverbed.

Pratap Kumar Jena, Sushila Pani and Manju Sahu were arrested in this connection on the 31st of January while another accused Kartik Pani is said to be on the run. But sources have reason to believe that the investigation is callous and suggest that the independence of the investigating agency may have been compromised at the behest of powerful persons involved in Mr.Sahu's alleged murder.

The death of Mr. Sahu under such suspicious circumstances is close on the heels of the alleged murder of another RTI activist Mr. Ganesh Chandra Panda, in Odisha on the 28th of December, 2014. It only points towards the danger that all RTI users face from vested interests that are allowed to operate with impunity.

Appeal :

We, therefore urge you to immediately take necessary steps to ensure that the Superintendent of Police for Cuttack District in Odisha

- Orders an immediate, thorough, transparent, effective and impartial investigation into the above-mentioned events of the detention of the human rights defender and arrest not only the remaining accused but also the powerful persons at whose behest the murder was carried out.

- Along with local district officials guarantees in all circumstances due compensation to the family of the deceased and give this assurance to the NHRC of India in writing immediately and urgently;
- Conducts an inquiry into the corruption and irregularities in the BGREI fund that could have been exposed by the late Mr. Sahu and take due action if and when the same is proved;
- Along with local district officials puts an end to all acts of harassment against all RTI Activists and all human rights defenders in general to ensure that in all circumstances they carry out their activities without any hindrances;
- Conforms with the provisions of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 9, 1998, especially:
 - Article 1, which states that “everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to promote and to strive for the protection and realisation of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels”
 - Article 12.2, which provides that “the State shall take all necessary measures to ensure the protection by the competent authorities of everyone, individually and in association with others, against any violence, threats, retaliation, de facto or de jure adverse discrimination, pressure or any other arbitrary action as a consequence of his or her legitimate exercise of the rights referred to in the present Declaration”;
- More generally, ensures in all circumstances the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with 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 Odisha.

Yours sincerely,



Henri Tiphagne

Honorary National Working Secretary