

Human Rights Defenders Alert - India

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**Honorable Chairperson,
National Human Rights Commission**

Faridkot House, Copernicus Marg,

New Delhi, PIN 110001

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Dear Sir,

Sub: HRD Alert - India - Urgent Appeal for Action –India/Tamil Nadu: Cuddalore-False charges and threats against Mr. Sundararajan, a News reporter who addressed traffic related issues – 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 acts of intimidation and the false charges leveled against Mr. Sundararajan, Dinamani (Newspaper) Reporter of Chidambaram region.

Name of the Perpetrators: Mr. Kannapiran, Chidambaram City Transport Inspector, New Murthi Café Hotel owner Mr. Mohan and the Chidambaram Police

Place of incident: Chidambaram, Cuddalore District, Tamil Nadu

Date and time of incident: 22nd May 2012 at around 6 pm.

Incident:

Mr. G. Sundaraarajan, a resident of Chidambaram region, Cuddalore District of Tamil Nadu is a reporter working for Dinamani Newspaper for the last 26 years. Mr. Sundararajan has addressed several issues related to the irregularities in the city traffic through his reports published in Dinamani. It is alleged that Mr. M. Kannapiran – who

has been serving as City Transport Inspector for the past 2 years had threatened Sundararajan of dire consequences if he do not stop publishing such issues.

In this situation, Mr. Sundararajan has complained to Mr. Kannapiran, about the traffic related problems near his residence due to the vehicles parked in front of New Murthy vegetarian café which causes road accidents and unnecessary traffic in the area. But Mr. Kannapiran did not taken any action on his part to resolve the problem. Hence Mr. Sundararajan filed complaints to the police due to which Mr. Kannapiran had developed personal enmity for Sundararajan and started threatening him directly and indirectly.

On 22.5.2012 at around 6 pm Mr. Sundararajan was informed that there was a fire broke out in the New Murthi Café Hotel and thus he passed on the information to the Fire Service immediately. Mr. Kannapiran allegedly triggered the Hotel owner Mr. Mohan and other staffs to attack Sundararajan. A team under the head of Special Sub-Inspector of police of Chidambaram Mr. Ramakrishnan along with the Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) arrived at the spot and they stood in front of Mr. Sundararajan's house.

Around 15 men including the Hotel owner rushed into Sundararajan's house to attack him. As the police commandos resorted to take steps, Mr. Kannapiran asked them not to interfere in the issue.

The gang attacked Mr. Sundararajan and also his wife who came for his rescue. Later, the City Police Inspector Mr. TamilMaran asked one of the commandos to write the complaint and obtained signature from Mr. Sundararajan. The police had arrested about 7 persons who were working in the hotel instead of arresting the real attackers. At 12 in the midnight the Hotel owner's brother lodged a complaint against Mr. Sundararajan and his wife. The attackers who were from different districts are still working in the same hotel and giving continuous threats to the victim. The police failed to record proper statements from the victim and no action has been initiated in this regard. Instead they have registered false cases against Mr. Sundararajan and his wife.

Appeal

We, therefore, urge you to immediately take necessary steps to

1. Order an immediate investigation into the allegations of threats made to Mr. Sundararajan by the City Transport Inspector Mr. Kannapiran and take legal action against him;
2. Initiate departmental action against the police perpetrators (Chidambaram City Police) under the appropriate provisions of law for registering false charges against the victim and his wife and for not taking legal action against the real attackers;
3. Immediately withdraw all the false charges leveled against Mr. Sundararajan and his wife;
4. Ensure in all circumstances respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with international human rights standards and international instruments ratified by India.

Looking forward to your immediate action in this regard,

Yours sincerely,

Henri Tiphagne

Hon. National Working Secretary,

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