

Human Rights Defenders Alert - India

National Coordination Office

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Shri A. K. Parashar

Focal Point - Human Rights Defenders

National Human Rights Commission

Faridkot House

Copernicus Marg

New Delhi-110001

Email: hrd-nhrc@nic.in

Dear Sir,

Sub: HRD Alert - India - Urgent Appeal for Action - India: Tamil

Nadu/Chennai: RTI activist S.Bhuvaneshwaran hacked to death- 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 regarding the brutal murder of Mr.S.Bhuvaneshwaran RTI activist in Chennai by land Mafia .

Incident

Name of the Perpetrators: B.Renganathan, former

DMK Political Party legislator

Place of incident: Avadi, Outskirts of Chennai, Tamilnadu

Date and time of incident: On 10th of January 2012 around 12.15 p.m.

According to the information received, S.Bhuvaneshwaran, 38, a RTI activist was hacked to death in the presence of his four-year-old daughter in Kolathur on 10.1.2012. Bhuvaneshwaran had filed RTI applications to retrieve titles on about 18 acres of land belonging to his family and other acquaintances after

the plots were forcibly occupied by a gang, allegedly led by the former DMK political party MLA. He was in the process of filing more RTI applications to help other owners strengthen their claims on roughly 82 acres of encroached land in Veerapuram near Avadi.

Bhuvaneshwaran, who lived in Gandhi Nagar in Kolathur, was on a motorcycle with his daughter on Tuesday around 12.15pm when two bike riders intercepted them on Fifth Cross Street near his house. One of them grabbed the girl. The other got off the bike and hacked Bhuvaneshwaran with a sickle. They abandoned the child on the road and fled, police said.

Neighbours called the family who took Bhuvaneshwaran to a nearby hospital and later to Kilpauk Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him "dead on arrival."

Soon after the incident, the realtor's father Siva lodged a police complaint, accusing former MLA B Ranganathan of instigating his son's murder over a land dispute, the senior police official said. Siva (60) had retired as checking inspector from the State Transport Corporation, he added.

In his complaint, the bereaved father stated that he was granted power of attorney by one Madhavan for 30 acres of land at Moorai near Avadi. He had made layouts for 20 acres and sold them during the last five-six years. After undergoing a surgery on his leg due to diabetes, he passed on the real estate business to his son.

The ACP said the victim was secretary of Veerapuram New Colony Housing Welfare Association and had filed a number of petitions before several bodies, including the State Human Rights Commission, and RTI queries, protesting against the alleged encroachment by the ex-DMK MLA and his associates of the land.

"The victim had claimed that it was not zamindari property but was genuine patta land and had actively campaigned against the encroachment, making a lot of enemies in the process," the officer said.

On July 7, 2011, the realtor also filed a complaint at the Avadi Tank Factory police against Ranganathan and his associates Syed Bhai, Ambrose and

Rajendran, alleging that they had threatened him with dire consequences. Hence, the victim's father claimed that his son had no other enemy and had been murdered solely at the instigation of Ranganathan over the land dispute. Taking cognizance of Siva's complaint, a case had been registered against the former DMK MLA under Section 120-B (criminal conspiracy), the ACP said. Besides, a case of murder was also registered under Section 302 and four teams had been formed to nab the killers. Ranganathan and his aide T V Venkatesan alias Gowrishanker were arrested on August 2, 2011, on land grabbing charges, and subsequently booked under the Goondas Act.

Appeal

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

1. Carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the killing of Bhuvaneshwaran, with a view to publishing the results and bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with national and international standards; and that the family is paid proper compensation for the death of their bread winner who died only because of his being an HRD ;
2. Guarantee in all circumstances that whistle-blowers in India are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals, and free of all restrictions.
3. Ensure 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 and regional human rights instruments ratified by India.

Looking forward to your immediate action in this regard,

Yours sincerely,

Henri Tiphagne

Hon. National Working Secretary,

Human Rights Defenders Alert - India

