

URGENT ACTION

DETAINED JOURNALIST AT RISK OF TORTURE IN INDIA

Journalist and human rights activist Prashant Rahi was arrested on 1 September 2013 on suspicion of having links with a banned organization. He is being held in police custody in Aheri, Maharashtra state, and is at imminent risk of torture or other ill-treatment.

52-year-old **Prashant Rahi**, also known as Prashant Sanglikar, is a freelance journalist and activist from the state of Uttarakhand. He has been actively working to secure legal aid for people arrested on suspicion of having links with the Communist Party of India - Maoist (CPI - Maoist), a banned armed group fighting for more than a decade to overthrow elected governments in several Indian states.

The Maharashtra police have stated that they arrested Prashant Rahi in Gondia, Maharashtra while he was heading to meet a senior member of the CPI - Maoist. However, Prashant Rahi's family say that he was arrested in Raipur, Chhattisgarh, while on his way to meet a lawyer.

Prashant Rahi is being held under India's principal anti-terror legislation, the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA), for allegedly being involved in unlawful activities, and being a member of and supporting a terrorist organization. The police also suspect Prashant Rahi of involvement in criminal conspiracy. A local court has remanded him in police custody until 16 September 2013. Reports of torture in custody and forced confessions conducted by police in India are very common, especially for suspects arrested under anti-terror laws.

Prashant Rahi had been arrested in 2007 in Uttarakhand on similar charges, and allegedly tortured in detention by police officers. He was released on bail in 2011 after three years in prison. The allegations of torture during that detention have not been investigated. A trial court in Rudrapur, Uttarakhand that is hearing the 2007 case is expected to deliver its judgement later this month.

Please write immediately in English or your own language:

- Calling on Maharashtra authorities to ensure that Prashant Rahi is protected from torture and other ill-treatment while in custody;
- Urging authorities to ensure that Prashant Rahi is given a fair trial;
- Urging them to investigate the alleged torture of Prashant Rahi in police custody in 2007, and prosecute suspects, including those with command responsibility, in fair trials.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 23 OCTOBER 2013 TO:

Aheri Sub-divisional Officer of Police

Suhash Bawche
Aheri Police Station
Aheri
Maharashtra 442705
India
Fax: (via Gadchiroli Police Station)
+91 7132 222159
Salutation: Dear Sir

Superintendent of Police

Suvez Haque
Gadchiroli Police Station
Near Telecom Office
Rampuri, Gadchiroli,
Maharashtra 442605
India
Fax: +91 7132 222159
Email: sp.gadchiroli@mahapolice.gov.in
Salutation: Dear Sir

And copies to:

Home Minister, Maharashtra
R.R Patil
Home Department
7th Flr, World Trade Centre,
Cuffe Parade, Mumbai 400005
India
Fax: (via Home Secretary)
+91 22 2215 1733
Email: min.home@maharashtra.gov.in
Salutation: Dear Sir

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Since 2005, a number of socio-political activists and human rights defenders around central India have faced false charges and imprisonment for highlighting the human rights situation in the region.

Among them are Binayak Sen of the People's Union for Civil Liberties; Kartam Joga, an Adivasi leader of the Communist Party of India; and Soni Sori and Lingaram Kodopi, Adivasi activists.

Human rights groups in India have highlighted several instances where the UAPA has been abused, with the use of fabricated evidence and false charges to detain activists defending the rights of Adivasi and Dalit communities and peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression and association.

Parts of the UAPA do not meet international human rights standards and are likely to lead to human rights violations. Amendments to the Act in 2008 extended the minimum period of detention of suspects from 15 to 30 days and the maximum period of such detention from 90 to 180 days. These amendments also avoided adequate pre-trial safeguards against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of detainees, they reversed certain evidential burdens of grave crimes and required, in certain circumstances, the accused persons to prove their innocence.

Name: Prashant Rahi
Gender m/f: m

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