



# Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative

New Delhi, India • London, UK • Accra, Ghana

NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic & Social Council of the United Nations

Date: 11/04/2017

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**To,**  
**The Secretary General**  
**National Human Rights Commission**  
**Manav Adhikar Bhavan**  
**Block-C, GPO Complex, INA**  
**New Delhi- 110 023**  
**Fax: 011-24651329**

Dear sir,

**Sub: Submission of complaint for monitoring the police  
investigation into the alleged murder of RTI activist and  
human rights defender Shri Suhas Haldankar in Pune  
district, Maharashtra**

I wish to bring to your notice a recent incident of murder of an RTI activist and human rights defender in Maharashtra. The deceased is one Shri Suhas Haldankar, aged about 35 years, resident of Pimpri-Chinchwad area in Pune district, Maharashtra. The murder is said to have occurred late in the evening of 9<sup>th</sup> April, 2017.

Shri Suhas Haldankar is said to have filed several requests for information under *The Right to Information Act, 2005* (RTI Act) regarding the manner of working of the Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation in order to expose irregularities in the provision of civic amenities in that area. According to media reports (enclosed), Shri Haldankar is said to have exposed the poor conditions of roads, overflowing state of drains and broken footpaths despite the municipal authorities claiming to have spent taxpayer funds on their repair. He is also said to have exposed the filthy conditions of public toilets meant for women constructed under the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. Media reports quote local officials who held him in high regard.

Shri Haldankar is said to have exposed several instances of maladministration through RTI. In the most recent case which is being directly linked to his murder, he is said to have exposed the diversion and misuse of security personnel meant to guard the Bal Bhawan run by the local municipal corporation.

When inducements and threats failed to curb his activism, a group of 11 persons some of whom were affected by the expose of diversion of security guards, are said to have battered him to death with cement concrete blocks, last Sunday.

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CHRI urges the Commission to take cognizance of this complaint in the manner as it has done in similar cases of murders of RTI activists in the past and seek reports from State Government about the action taken to bring the perpetrators to book. Such interventions in the past by the NHRC have resulted in those cases being investigated more rigorously by the State Police, leading to the discovery of the identity of conspirators of such crimes and bringing them to book.

I will send you any other reports that I may receive from local civil society groups that inquire into the circumstances leading to the murder of Shri Suhas Haldankar in due course.

Thanking you,  
Yours sincerely,

*S. S. Venkatesh Nayak*

Venkatesh Nayak  
Programme Coordinator  
Access to Information Programme

11/4/17