

*Justice H.L. Dattu*  
Chairperson  
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**National Human Rights Commission**

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**MESSAGE**

On this day of the 9<sup>th</sup> December, 2019, in commemoration of the day when the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders was adopted in the year 1998 by the UN General Assembly, the Commission acknowledges and appreciates the important role played by the Human Rights Defenders in strengthening the human rights regime in the country and across the globe. The Commission is thankful to Human Rights Defenders, on whose instance, the Commission could take cognizance of a number of incidents of violation of human rights and recommend the relief to the victim. The Commission wishes that they will not only continue to perform this holy task, but will devote themselves with more energy and enthusiasm.

HRDs have always been instrumental in fighting for the cause of human rights. However, their efforts were provided impetus through the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders. NHRC, India too, right since inception in 1993, has considered HRDs as its partners in this pious crusade for promoting and protecting the rights of common man.

In its resolve to promote and protect the human rights of the HRDs many initiatives have been taken by the Commission. The creation of Focal Point for HRDs, who is round the clock accessible to Human Rights Defenders on Mobile No. 9810298900 and e-mail [hrd-nhrc@nic.in](mailto:hrd-nhrc@nic.in), inclusion of chapter on HRDs in the Annual Report and publications like **"NHRC and Human Rights Defenders: The Growing Synergy"** are just few of the many initiatives of the Commission. The Commission has convened a meeting of Core Group of NGOs and Human Rights Defenders, recently on 13.6.2019 to have close interaction with Human Rights Defenders and to streamline the efforts by the Commission to address the challenges faced by them. The Commission also associates the Human Rights Defenders with its Camp Sitings and Open Hearing.

NHRC gives special attention to complaints of alleged harassment of HRDs. These complaints are registered under a separate category for proper monitoring and follow up. During the year 2019, the Commission has registered over hundred cases under the category of harassment of Human Rights Defenders. The Commission takes all possible steps, as per law and based on merits, to provide an effective and substantive relief to the HRDs while dealing with complaints pertaining to them. Whenever a Human Rights Defender under distress, has made a call to the focal point or sent a complaint to the Commission, the Commission has promptly responded and called upon the authorities concerned to take appropriate action urgently and to provide protection to the Human Rights Defenders if the circumstance of the case warrants so.

The Commission is of the considered view that the State is under obligation to ensure that Human Rights Defenders may work freely for protection and promotion of human rights without any fear and threat. The Commission, therefore, urges upon the State authorities to sensitize the field level officials and to imbibe the respect for human rights, as well Human Rights Defenders amongst them.

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