

11 April 2017

India: Human rights defender Bondita Acharya violently threatened on social media

On 10 April 2017, human rights defender, **Bondita Acharya**, filed a complaint with the Criminal Investigation Department in Guwahati, Assam state in Northeast India, after she was the target of violent threats on social media. After condemning the arrest of three people for the possession of beef on 4 April 2017, Bondita Acharya was threatened with death, rape and acid attacks by members of an extremist Hindu organisation.

[Bondita Acharya](#) is a human rights defender from Assam, in Northeastern India, and a member of **Women in Governance (WinG) Assam**. WinG is a network of women activists, leaders and civil society organisations with a common aim of bringing more women in to decision-making processes, as well as promoting peace, security and the empowerment of women. She is also the Northeast coordinator of **Human Rights Defenders Alert (HRDA)** and a member of the network **Women Against Sexual Violence and State Repression (WSS)**.

On 10 April 2017, Bondita Acharya filed a complaint with the superintendent of police at the Criminal Investigation Department in Guwahati after she received death threats on social media for condemning the arrest of three people in Jorhat for possessing beef on 4 April 2017. She was intimidated with threats of death, gang rape and acid attack issued by members of a right-wing Hindu organisation.

A local Hindu group, *Bajrang Dal*, issued a press statement demanding that Bondita Acharya issue a public apology for condemning the arrests. Bondita Acharya also stated that the organisation asked people on social media to identify her house in Jorhat. The three people were arrested under the Assam Cattle Preservation Act, which lays down the conditions which permit the slaughtering of cattle. However, the State of Assam does not criminalise the possession of beef, and many people questioned the arrest on social media.

Front Line Defenders expresses concern at the threats against human rights defender, Bondita Acharya, which it believes are solely motivated by her peaceful and legitimate work for human rights in Assam state.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in India to:

1. Carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the death threats against **Bondita Acharya**, with a view to publishing the results and bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards;
2. Take all necessary measures to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity and security of Bondita Acharya as well as of the members of her family;
3. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in India are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.