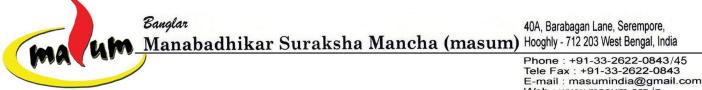
## MASUM < masumindia@gmail.com>

14 September 2020 at 17:55

To: NHRC <chairnhrc@nic.in>, hrd-nhrc@nic.in

Cc: Chief Secretary Gov of WB <cs-westbengal@nic.in>, "Home Secretary Govt of W.B." <wb.secyhome@gmail.com>, Secy Food & Supplies W B <itcellfswb@gmail.com>, "UN SR Food Ms. Hilal Elver" <srfood@ohchr.org>, DM Cooch Behar <dmcoochbehar@gmail.com>, SP Cooch Behar <spcbr@policewb.gov.in>, SDO Dinhata <sdodinhata@gmail.com>



Web : www.masum.org.in

14.09.2020

To The Chairman National Human Rights Commission Manav Adhikar Bhawan Block-C, GPO Complex, INA New Delhi-110023

Respected Sir,

I would like to draw your kind attention to a case of ration distribution problem in the village of Mothergani under Dinhata II Block and Sahebganj police station. The picture of this case reveals the gap between the promises made to migrant workers by the government and the reality they suffer.

Seventeen families in this village came from Delhi during the time of nationwide lockdown. They were migrant workers and belong to socially marginalized. The villagers had an ongoing dispute with the BSF for 25 long years regarding construction of fences, so no permanent fencing exists at this point. The BSF routinely shuts down roads and illegally restricts the life and livelihood of the villagers. For this unlawful restriction and oppression upon them by the BSF, most of the villagers of Motherganj have been migrated to other states for earning better livelihood.

On 23.03.2020 nationwide lockdown had been started due to the spread of Covid 19 virus and for this reason these seventeen families of migrant workers returned back to their own house at Motherganj village in the district of Cooch Behar. A few days after the Covid 19 lockdown was instituted, a cover of five kilograms of grains and one kilogram of pulses was announced to be distributed free under Public Distribution Scheme for the next three months, under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojona. Following that West Bengal Chief Minister announced extending of free ration to all till June, 2021.

These seventeen migrant workers' families did not get their rationing stuff during this critical situation. There are two ration dealers in the area (i) Mr. Abdul Barek (Registration number- 138900800032) and (ii) Mr. Bimal Chandra Burman. These two ration dealers in the area continued to harass these villagers of Motherganj. Ration dealers tell them every month that they will get their ration from the next month but till date they are not given their rationing items.

When the ration dealers turned them around again and again and finding no other alternative they went to meet with the Block Development Officer, Dinhata II Block. On 13.07.2020 they submitted one written complaint stating their rationing problems to the Block Development Officer, Dinhata II Block. The Block Development Officer gave the charge to Joint Block Development Officer, Dinhata II Block to listen to their problems.

Villagers of Motherganj informed our fact finding team that Block Development officer, Dinhata II Block did not listen their problem and gave the charge to Joint BDO because one month ago, villagers of Mothergang arguing with BSF personnel over border fencing problem and illegal restriction imposed upon them by BSF and at that time Block Development Officer, Dinhata II Block supported BSF activities. So, the people of the area insulted the Block Development Officer, Dinhata II Block in front of the BSF personnel. Therefore, it is alleged that in his anger, he has made arrangements so the people of that area do not get any government facilities.

Joint Block Development Officer, Dinhata II Block heard their problems and immediately called the ration dealer of that area over phone and instructed him to provide them the amount of their rationing items. He also called Mr. Bhaskar babu, an official of Food Supply Office, Dinhata II Block and instructed to provide the ration to the villagers of Motherganj who has digital ration bar code. But till date they did not get any amount of ration items. Six months have passed of this nationwide lockdown, but these villagers who have no work in their hand, are spending their days in the pain of hunger.

In 2019 these villagers applied to the Food Supply Office, Dinhata II Block for their digital ration card according to the specific procedure. Their all documents were verified by the Food Supply officials of Dinhata II Block and provided to some villagers digital bar code. But till date they did not receive their original digital ration card.

This situation again reveals that the West Bengal government has largely failed to get the promised help to stranded migrants. The right to food implies the right to food at appropriate nutritional levels and the quantum of relief to those in distress must meet those levels in order to ensure that this right is actually secured and does not remain a theoretical concept and these seventeen families till date have not received any amount of food grains for their sustainability. The acquiescence of people paid from public exchequer cannot force people to die due to hunger.

These villagers of Motherganj are living in misery. During this time of lockdown, they have no money in their hand and the Block and District administration also does not listen to their problems.

Through its landmark decision in the public interest litigation Petition (Civil) No. 196/2001, People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) v. Union of India & Others, the Supreme Court explicitly established a constitutional right to food and determined a basic nutritional floor for India's impoverished millions but in this case the ration dealer in the locality; district and block administration and Food and Supplies officials of Dinhata II Block did not take any steps over this matter. These public officials should be charged with contempt of court as they violated the guidelines of the Apex Court and were silent and inactive over this problem of the villagers.

This unresponsive attitude of the government and the district administration towards the people of Motherganj village is in violation of Articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution of India and Articles 11 of International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and Goals number 2 of Sustainable Development Goals and for both these international instruments Government of India is a party.

Are the provisions of Fundamental Rights dead during the Corona war? Life is life, all lives are as godly but the concerned authorities think otherwise. Is this our spirit of humanity? Why are these poor people being victimized by this situation or our governments becoming anti-poor?

I therefore, urge you to make urgent intervention into the matter by directing the concerned authorities to provide these seventeen families of migrant workers and villagers of the Motherganj village in the district of Cooch Behar with proper ration cards and get the required amount of ration stuffs as declared by the State of West Bengal and the Government of India.

Thanking you, Yours truly

Dipyaman Adhikary Assistant Secretary Banglar Manabadhikar Suraksha Mancha (MASUM)

## **Attached Documents**

The complaint copy before the Block Developments Officer of Dinhata- II Block

The BDO. Denhater II Block ביים שעת בותוב בנו ווצר ואיר הוווא 33 TON BOD Code - Sitte Sitter Sahebgrong Cooch B dunz Date - 13-07-20 dian - Orten and 2000 : TADIA 2006- TADI 312501-1 2123 - CI SI 300 Ba code- 63- 002188-19-02983 ठाँदु मज्ञाकाम नितीय कि ति ति व स्पेट्रे प जा मना NILL+PO- काल NITE (मार्गात्राकाट्र) Block Denhala II, P.3 - Sabebgay- Dist coochoche. कि या भावहत्वकात्री उाछिडात जा कात्रा की तिमिन वित्र मा भावहत्वका जी भाव, जलात्वायू व्यवसा क्राकी सानु-वर्मन 1 क्रा (2 08-002188-19-027-163 3 ৰহান dot 6 3 00 03-002188-19-003322 0 Committee gala कार्त - आयकि। - आ लामक जन्द्रनात - अष्ट्रिक मामक 5 मा आने B. इ. राज रहाजाती जगरा अठ GH अर्था (तह २०० माहिना। जा सहार ज्या त गड़ा जगताज स्टूटि जारा द्वे रे बाही कुला (b) লোৰ 1 GAT (7) र झंन Thy आराजारा भावतात् र के इसे मिल्से जामव जनसाहत जिल शाख्य का के का प्रायम T2PCT 0\_85 2151710 (8) - भूनिश लाखिता (1) क (तक लाहुरता हुने नि लन (9) TONTE Box code ang (hogin 21 10 Tage bigh जावा में देवान (देवाने (गादिक (HT2ac GMH (10) गार्ष्ट् ता । 2 - जातक जमग्राहा गतिमालुन याह मताता काम (को तकार कार - जामू -(कार माल का (क) रोग मिर्देष कर मिर्दे CAZ- (MI 2013 FM Food Supely Office A CATA 9800688516 AIM B.D.O office a strat 102 and and an that श्रातीन र्कात 21551 जिके जिलि कि इन 1 20 at CHA-512 1120 वाश्वाती दे 8 TARD 1019 Ont Ener अन्नत्यागिडां किंत् 20 Pohaken ton Born

## Declaration of State Government



## West Bengal to provide free ration to poor till June 2021, says Mamata Banerjee

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday announced that the state government has extended the scheme of free ration for poor till June 2021. Mamata's announcement came after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's address to the nation in which he announced that Centre's 'free food grains for poor' scheme will be extended till November end. swipe left for more at The Financial Express / few hours ago

'Our quality of ration better than Centre's' Tap to read what more she said