

Chief Minister of Manipur N Biren Singh
Manipur CM Office,
4th Block, Western Block, New Secretariat
Imphal, Manipur, India - 795001
Fax: +9103852451398
Email: cmmani@man.nic.in

Dear Chief Minister,

Kishorchandra Wangkhem, a journalist based in Manipur, has been held in administrative detention since 27 November 2018 under the National Security Act (NSA). The detention order against him references his Facebook posts criticising the government and declares that if he were released he would continue to act in a manner “prejudicial to the security of the state and maintenance of public order”.

This is not the first time Kishorchandra Wangkhem has been detained for his posts on Facebook. He was arrested on 9 August 2018, for Facebook posts two days prior, where he criticised the state government. He was arrested for the alleged offences of ‘making statements promoting enmity and ill will’ and ‘defamation’; he was subsequently released on bail. On 20 November 2018, he was arrested for the alleged offence of ‘sedition’, in relation to Facebook videos he posted on 19 November that criticised the Chief Minister of Manipur and the Prime Minister of India. He was released on bail on 26 November, as the Chief Judicial Magistrate, Imphal West, noted that he was merely expressing his opinion. However, he was taken into custody under the NSA the following day.

I am very concerned that Kishorchandra Wangkhem is being targeted using repressive laws for simply exercising his right to freedom of expression. Many of the laws and criminal provisions that he has been arrested under, such as criminal ‘defamation’, ‘sedition’, and the National Security Act do not meet international standards and have been criticised for being vague, overbroad, and repressive.

I call on you to

- a) Immediately and unconditionally release Kishorchandra Wangkhem from administrative detention and ensure that he is given a fair trial for all pending criminal cases, in accordance with international human rights standards. Pending his release, ensure he is not subjected to torture or other ill-treatment; and,
- b) End the use of administrative detention and desist from using the criminal provisions of defamation and sedition, against journalists and human rights defenders in Manipur.

Yours sincerely