



Organizing a Legal Aid Group for HR Protection in J&K

3 Nov 2014, Jammu

“You are the only one who made this dream come true; otherwise I floated this idea to many others before you... You are real asset... may you live long.. Sir, you have done a great work, for the first time you made it possible... you always live in my heart and soul, rest we have lost in the floods”-wrote writer-poet Sahil Maqbool, on Swaraj Peeth bringing together a group of lawyers in Jammu for legal aid to wrongfully detained youth under public Safety Act and such other provisions in J&K



The purpose is to provide nonpartisan support to the youth from the Valley (also from Jammu region) who have to appear in Jammu Court and who find the environment inhospitable, at times hostile due to differences between the two regions, affecting the process and the course of justice. Fifteen lawyers and activists participated in the deliberation and supported the idea with concern in a meeting in Jammu on 3rd November 2014, offered to work for

the cause of intra- region confidence building and HR protection. Shri Rohit Sharma and Yassir Khan took the responsibility to coordinate the group.

Background: This problem was brought to our notice during Rajiv Vora’s Srinagar visit in July 2014 by a senior journalist/radio/TV personality, writer and poet Shri Sahil Maqbool who himself was incarcerated for 6 years on false charges, including solitary confinement. (He wrote 8 books in the jail; his Jail Diary was adjudged 2nd best book in conflict literature by RSF *Reporters Sans Frontiers*, France) and adopted as a reference book by The International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) See “Sahil Maqbool” by Rajiv Vora)



In a meeting of 15 youthful lawyers in Jammu on 3rd Nov we put this forum in place. Sahil Maqbool wrote

Mandate of this group was worked out in Srinagar during Rajiv’s next visit 15th to 18th Nov. 2014 and then finalized in Jammu the next month. **It will be a major confidence building measure, besides nonviolent protection to the vulnerable Kashmiri youth coming to Jammu who are implicated in various police cases. A nonviolent answer to the silent**

Human Rights abuse, which, at a deeper level reinforces negative stereotypes, intra-region bitterness, distancing and reactionary radicalization among the youth.