

# INDIA: RELEASE ALL IMPRISONED ACTIVISTS IN THE BK16 CASE



## ARTISTS, ACADEMICS, AND WRITERS DETAINED FOR YEARS FOR ADVOCATING FOR THE RIGHTS OF MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES

During Banned Books Week Amnesty International is calling attention to writers, artists, and academics who comprise the BK16, three of whom are members of the Kabir Kala Manch cultural group. It is likely that the body of published work created by these men and women contributed to their arrest, aggravated the charges against them, and affected their judicial pleas for bail and/or dismissal.



Human Rights defenders collectively known as the BK16 have used their professional and creative voices to advocate for human and civil rights, against the caste system, and for cultural, religious, and linguistic pluralism and, according to the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, have been detained for their human rights and civil rights work for marginalized religious communities.

Artists swept up in the BK16 arrests include: Varavara Roa, poet; Arun Ferreira, Cartoonist; Sudhir Dhawale, publisher and actor; and members of the Kabir Kala Manch cultural group: Ramesh Gaichor, Sagar Gorkhe, and Jyoti Jagtap. Academics and researchers swept up in the BK16 arrests include: Anand Teltumbde whose books address the caste system and Dalits; Shoma Sen, a professor and women's rights activist, has published articles that address Dalit feminism and the role of women in class struggles, Hany Babu, linguist and language activist published work that examines India's language policies that "pull towards unilingual identity", and Vernon Gonsalves wrote extensively on Dalit, Adivasi, and prisoner's rights. and Maybe Rona Wilson PhD student.

Amnesty International calls for the release of all BK16 activists, dropping related charges, and the repeal or substantial amendment of the draconian Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

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