

To,

29th April 2020

Shri Prakash Keshav Javadekar

Honourable Minister for Information and Broadcasting,

Government of India.

Subject: Appeal to protect media personnel doing evidence based reporting of COVID-19 situation

Dear Shri Javadekar ji,

We, the undersigned civil society groups, and individuals would like to raise concerns about the following issues, and request you to kindly look into the same:

- a) In the current context of COVID-19, there is a serious problem of fake news, and, science and health reporters who are reporting based on evidence are being harassed. We should be encouraging the reporting of evidence based stories, and using these to understand the evolving situation and to investigate any lapses in our response. Reporting about indisputable facts-- like shortages of test kits and PPE, struggles faced by non-COVID-19 patients seeking care, and the extent of transmission in the community – has generated a series of attacks on journalists when these should be used as leads for improving our COVID-19 response.
- b) Cases have been filed against journalists or media houses for reporting on incidents like the lack of social distancing in certain states is troubling as it impedes the freedom of speech & makes truthful reporting on the pandemic difficult by intimidating journalists/media.
- c) Harassment, especially sexual in nature of women reporters, primarily on social media has been increasing and this dissuades reporters and discourages them from doing their job which is to bring truth to the public realm.
- d) Linked to the above is the need to bring in protections for reporters and media colleagues, so that they are protected from attacks on social media/online, security provided where required, and personal comments on reporters/journalists (especially female) are discouraged, and action taken against those propagating or indulging in such acts. We request you to extend the new order protecting doctors, nurses, paramedical professionals, frontline health workers, ASHAs to media personnel too.

We urge you to kindly take urgent action in this matter.

Thank you,

Sincerely,

1. Amulya Nidhi, Indore amulyabhai@gmail.com
2. Dr Anant Bhan, Bhopal dranantbhan@gmail.com
3. Dr Shyam Ashtekar , Nashik
4. Dr Vandana Prasad , New Delhi
5. Jagdish Patel, Baroda
6. Dr Anand Phillip, Bangalore
7. DR Anant Phadke, Pune
8. Prof Mohan Rao, Delhi

9. Dr Shakeel Ur Rahman, Patna
10. Dr. Peehu Pardeshi, Mumbai
11. Dr. Amar Jesani, Mumbai
12. Dr. Sabu M George, Delhi
13. Radha Holla, New Delhi
14. Dr Sunita Sheel, Pune
15. Sarojini N, Delhi
16. Dr. Rakhi Ghoshal, Kolkata
17. Nachiket Udupa
18. Dr. Veena Shatrugna, Hyderabad
19. Dr K R Antony, Kochi
20. Pradeep Ninan
21. Sulakshana Nandi, Raipur
22. Deepa V, Delhi
23. Dr Lakshmi Lingam, Mumbai
24. Ravi Duggal, Mumbai
25. Dr Rajalakshmi R, Chennai
26. Dr. Indranil Mukhopadhyay, Delhi
27. Dr Suhas Kolhekar, Pune
28. Rohini Kandhari, New Delhi
29. Bijoya Roy, New Delhi
30. Sanjai Sharma, Delhi
31. Charul Bharwada, Ahmedabad
32. Vinay Mahajan, Ahmedabad
33. Dr. Sana Contractor, New Delhi
34. Sandhya Y K, UP
35. Pervin Jehangir, Mumbai
36. Devika Biswas, Bihar
37. Dr Ritu Priya, New Delhi
38. Pallavi Gupta, New Delhi
39. Sumegha Asthana, New Delhi
40. S Srinivasan, Vadodara
41. Sanjeeta Gawri, Delhi
42. Madhavi Y, Delhi
43. Deepak Kumar
44. Inayat Singh Kakar, Delhi
45. Rajeev B R, Bangalore
46. S.R Azad, Bhopal
47. Sudhir Vombatkere
48. Sanjeev Kumar, New Delhi
49. Sanjay M.G , Mumbai
50. Arundhati Dhuru
51. Meera Sanghmitra
52. Dwiji Guru

53. Dr Priyadarshi
54. Dr Nidhin Joseph
55. Anuj Ghanekar, Pune
56. Amit Ranjan Basu, Delhi
57. Savithri D, Chennai
58. Dr Thelma Narayan, Bengaluru
59. Dr Sylvia Karapagam, Bengaluru
60. Sudha N, Bangalore
61. Chennaiah poguri, Chittoor
62. Mahendra Yadav, Bihar
63. Pradip Chatterjee, Kolkatta
64. Inamul Hasan, New Delhi
65. Gurwant Singh
66. Vijaya Seethappa, Karnataka
67. Syed Tousif Masood
68. Dinesh S Thakur
69. Dr Sunilam, MP
70. Dr G.D Verma, MP
71. Rajkumar Sinha, Jabalpur
72. Nakul Singh Shawney Delhi
73. Mudita Vidrohi , Ahmedabad
74. Vinod Patheriya ,Vidisha
75. Naveen Srivatstava, Gopalganj
76. Dr Bishwajeet, Cuttack ,Orissa