

RUSSIA: DVORKIN SUED FOR LIBEL BY HINDUS

HRWF (12.01.17) – Prasad Prakash, an Indian Hindu residing in Moscow, has opened an international petition to help Hindus in Russia who face discrimination.

Prakash raises particular concerns about Alexander Dvorkin, a notorious anti-sect activist in Russia and the post-Soviet space. Dvorkin runs a website, iriney.ru, of which, Prakash claims viciously attacks and wrongfully depicts the Hindu religion.

In his open letter, Prakash describes Dvorkin as “misusing the Russian media to spread lies about Hinduism in general and my family in particular...”. Prakash continues to describe an example of this when the federal channel Russia-1 broadcast a two-minute news story on 14 December 2016, which was “aimed at diminishing the cultural and religious works of my father as a believer of Hinduism and to depict it as a ‘sect,’ which is purely incomprehensible.”

As a result of the erroneous and hateful messages about Hinduism distributed online, Prakash has sued Dvorkin’s website for libel. Prakash’s interests are being represented by Russian lawyer Shota Gorgadze, and the next court date is scheduled for 19 January 2017.

Since pressing charges, Prakash has made claims that Dvorkin and his associates have made violent threats towards Prakash and his family. In his letter, Prakash mentions one event that took place on 11 December 2016, when a group of people allegedly tried to illegally enter his home and issued threats of violence against his family. Prakash believes that this group had been paid by Dvorkin.

The petition urges Russian President **Vladimir Putin**, Indian

Prime Minister **Sri Narendra Modi**, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Russia and India, Mr. **Sergey Lavrov**, and Mrs. **Sushma Swaraj**, and the representatives of the Embassy of India in Russia, to turn their attention towards this urgent issue, and to enable the Hindu community in Russia to lead a peaceful and safe life without any kind of persecution.

According to a 2010 religious census, there are 140,000 Hindus in Russia, which account for 0.1% population of Russia.

Please follow the link below to learn more about this situation and to sign the petition.

[Read & sign the petition](#)

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