

South Asian American Organizations Condemn Violence in Delhi

February 28th, 2020: As members of South Asian organizations in the U.S. that believe in the values of dignity, justice and inclusion for all, we are horrified by the violence targeting Indian Muslims in Delhi this week. Since Sunday, at least **40 people have been killed and hundreds more injured**. We are struck by the heart wrenching footage of Muslims fleeing their homes, stores and homes burnt to ashes, the desecration of mosques and violent attacks by mobs on Muslim communities.

What is most alarming is the role of the police in inciting the violence and the **speech of a local politician from the Hindu nationalist BJP party** warning protestors of the brutality that would be unleashed on them if they failed to clear the streets before Trump's visit. This is state sanctioned violence, as chief officers of the Delhi police have stood behind in solidarity.

As members of the Diaspora we cannot be silent.

These events are horrifying. And disturbingly, they are not entirely unexpected. They come after a series of exclusionary and unjust actions targeting religious and caste minorities and vulnerable populations, particularly since the re-election of Modi.

There have been wide scale protests throughout India since the government passed the inherently discriminatory **Citizenship Amendment Act**, which actively creates an unconstitutional, religion-based criteria to grant citizenship to select immigrants and lays the legal foundation to denaturalize millions of Indian minorities, effectively creating the largest network of concentration camps in the world. The CAA, in conjunction with the National Registration of Citizens (NRC) list, effectively renders **India's 200 million Muslims stateless**.

In Kashmir, India's ongoing military occupation has intensified since August 5th, when communications were cut and the region was placed under an intense crackdown. The Indian state has effectively silenced Kashmiris and **detained thousands of people** including minors and many Kashmiris fear a settler-colonial project that would change the demographics of the region from a Muslim-majority state to a Hindu-majority state.

And across the country, there has been a **surge in the number of lynchings of minorities**, mostly Muslims, Dalits and Christians, under Modi's leadership.

The Modi government is implementing a **Hindu nationalist agenda**, known as Hindutva, or right wing Hindu nationalism, which is rooted in the alarming notion that Hindus are racially

and culturally superior to others. Similar to white supremacy, which South Asians (including Hindus) in the United States contend regularly with, Hindutva threatens the rights, bodies, freedoms, and livelihoods of non-Hindus in India.

These supremacist ideologies implicitly and explicitly sanction hate – and put our communities in danger - both in the U.S. and in the subcontinent. SAALT has **documented** more than 542 incidents of hate violence in the U.S. targeting Muslims and those racialized as Muslim since November 2015.

The current situation in India, fueled by nationalism and Hindutva, has global implications. Over the past five years there has been a **dramatic increase in the number of Indian nationals seeking asylum in the U.S.** People seeking asylum from persecution **range from Sikh political activists to religious minorities to those facing caste oppression.** The anti-Muslim measures in India are a part of a tide of rising Islamophobia, and comes as the **Trump Administration just expanded its own Muslim Ban.**

As South Asian organizations working toward building power and capacity with our communities, we urge all South Asian Americans to understand the connections between white supremacy and Hindutva, to unite around human rights, to support policies that uphold dignity and inclusion for all, and to denounce hate violence in all its forms.

We urge South Asians to: ask their Members of Congress to join Representatives Beyer, Raskin, Omar, Castro, Tlaib, and Jayapal; and Senators Sanders and Warren in condemning the violence targeting Indian Muslims, caste oppressed communities and Kashmiris (including **co-sponsoring House Resolution 745**); to **educate themselves** and their own communities about the implications and impacts of Hindutva; and to organize their personal networks, temples, and cultural institutions to defund hate and stop supporting the BJP and RSS now. The time to stop genocide is now.

Signed,

South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)

Indian American Muslim Council (IAMC)

Equality Labs

Stand with Kashmir

Hindus for Human Rights (HfHR)

Sadhana: Coalition of Progressive Hindus

DesiQ Diaspora (DQD)

Sakhi for South Asian Women

South Asia Solidarity Initiative

Students Against Hindutva (SAH)

Atlanta Kashmiri Community

Alliance of South Asians Taking Action

Burmese Rohingya Community of Georgia

The Sikh Coalition

Council Of Peoples Organization

API Chaya

Desis Rising Up and Moving (DRUM)

South Asians Building Accountability & Healing (SABAH)

India Home

Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund (SALDEF)

Chhaya CDC

Coalition of Seattle Indian-Americans (CSIA)

South Asian Workers' Center – Boston

National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance (NQAPIA)

Jakara Movement