



Citizens for Justice and Peace

November 4, 2011

To,
Dr. Kamla
Hon'ble Governor of Gujarat

Dear Ma'am,

As citizens of India, deeply committed to the values of peace, justice and coexistence as enshrined in our Constitution we are deeply disturbed by media reports that there may be unnecessary and provocative attempts to provoke communal tension within the state of Gujarat.

Reports in the Ahmedabad editions of the newspapers yesterday, i.e. November 3, 2011, report concern expressed by local residents and the religious head of the Pirana Dargah (the 600 year old Dargah (shrine of Imam Shah Baba is located here) that the publicized intentions of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad to hold a three day "Dharm Prasar Akhil Bharatiya Kayakarta Sammellam" starting November 5 will be used as an occasion to utter hate speech and generate tension. The fact that the festival of Bakri Eid falls on November 6-7 makes these intentions of the VHP all the worrisome and suspicious.

We urge that you, in who the responsibility for the protection of Life, Liberty and Property lies ensure that the Police/State Government in the first instance ensure that the permission for this is revoked, failing which strict undertakings are taken from the organizers to ensure civilized and peaceful conduct of the proceedings. Observers may be delegated to this end. Special platoons of the RAF etc may need to be deployed.

It is a sensitive time for both Muslims and Hindus of Pirana who have lived together in peace for hundreds of years. In that tense atmosphere 2,500 of VHP members will come emotionally charged with passion induced by their anti Muslim rhetoric. Members of these organisations will be lodged at the Dargah of Sufi Saint Imam Shah Baba right in the center of the Village. There they will mix and mingle with the locals involved with their own religious duties of prayers and qurbani. The record of these organisations in their yatras to Ayodhya and back has been full of belligerence and anger on trains. Their behavior in Pirana is not likely to be different.

It appears as not a coincidence that the timing of the VHP's three day convention after years of silence comes at a time when efforts of the victims of 2002 and legal rights groups to get justice for the state sponsored violence of 2002. Only recently the

Supreme Court of India has directed further proceedings in the case filed against the chief minister and 61 others. (As you may be aware, this comes at a critical time when a sensitive and high profile case (Zakia Ahsan Jafri and Citizens for Justice and Peace v/s Chief Minister and 61 others) seeks to pin accountability for complicity in the mob violence that rocked the western state in 2002.)

We urge urgent action in this regard.

Yours Sincerely,



Teesta Setalvad, Citizens for Justice and Peace
J.S.Bandukwala, Vadodara
B .A. Desai, Senior Advocate, Mumbai
Mallika Sarabhai, Ahmedabad
Dr. Asghar Ali Engineer, Chairman, Centre for Study of Society and Secularism
R.L. Laureate (Alternative Nobel Prize)
Irfan Engineer, All India Secular Forum
Fr Cedric Prakash, Director, Prashant
Hanif Lakdawala, Sachetana, Ahmedabad
Sophia Khan, SAHR, Ahmedabad
Sukla Sen, EKTA (Committee for Communal Amity), Mumbai
Amita Buch, Ahmedabad
Ashoke Chatterjee
Adv Kamayani Bali Mahabal
M K Raina, Sahmat, New Delhi
Professor Prabhat Patnaik, Noted Economist
Irfan Habib, Renowned Historian
Sandhya Gokhale, Forum Against Oppression of Women
Ammu Abraham, Women's Centre Mumbai
Flavia Agnes, Mumbai
Dr. Frazer Mascarenhas S.J., Mumbai
Harsh Mander
Hasina Khan, Mumbai
Ramu Ramdas
Lalita Ramdas
Ram Rahman, New Delhi
Rohit Prajapati, Baroda
Trupti Shah, Baroda
Sheba George, SAHRWARU, Ahmedabad
Dolphy D'souza, Mumbai
All Members of the Committee for Defence of Teesta Setalvad and Justice in Gujarat
(700 members)

Hiren Gandhi
Saroop Dhruv
Hozefa Ujjaini
Madhu Prasad

<http://epaper.dnaindia.com/dnaahmedabad/epapermain.aspx?queryed=5&username=&useremailid=&parenteditioncode=5&eddate=6%2f10%2f2011>ack to Headlines

Why has VHP chosen Pirana for its meet, ask villagers Meeting coinciding with Bakr-Id can cause conflict in area, they say

Satish Jha | Ahmedabad

Pirana, a sleepy village 25 km from Ahmedabad city, is worried that Bakr-Id on November 7 this year may not pass off peacefully.

The village has an almost equal number of Hindus and Muslims, which seems but natural as the 600-year-old dargah (shrine) of Sufi saint Imam Shah Baba is located here. The saint had devotees from both the communities and his dargah is still visited by Hindus as well as Muslims.

However, despite its tradition of Hindu-Muslim amity, Pirana's fragile peace is again under threat. From November 5, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) is organising a three-day conference - called 'Dharm Prasar Akhil Bharatiya Karyakarta Sammelan' - in the village. The VHP has decided to lodge people coming for the conference at the dargah of the Sufi saint while the conference itself will be held at the village's Gurukul School which is run by the RSS.

Peace loving residents of the village are afraid that there may be conflict at the dargah on November 7, the day of Bakr-Id. |

VHP's conference sparks fears of communal tension at Pirana Dargah representatives request shifting of venue as conference coincides with Bakri Eid Ahmedabad Mirror Bureau amfeedback@indiatimes.com

Apprehending threats during the upcoming conference being organised by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad at Pirana, the members of local the Imam Shah Baba Roja Sanstha trust, has made a request to the local authorities for shifting the venue to some other place.

VHP has planned to hold a conference at Pirana on November 5, 6 and 7 in which around 2,500 members are expected to take part.

The conference will be held at Gurukul School but the visitors will stay at the dargah, the seat of sufi saint.

Besides a high turn over of participants, it is this arrangement which is said to be the bone of contention.

Descendant of the dargah's priest Azhar Saiyed said that the members of the trust have decided to give a fresh representation to the local authorities on November 3, suggesting that the venue of conference be shifted to some other place.

"The conference has been made to coincide with Bakri Eid which falls on November 7. A similar situation had arisen in the past which had led to communal tension," he said.

Saiyed added that a representation which apprised the local police authorities about the event, was sent way back in June early this year.

It also mentioned that the large number of participants could lead to a communal tension in the area. However authorities did not take any steps.

"We are still hopeful that authorities will take an appropriate action," he said.

Meanwhile, the police said that a proper assessment was being made to take stock of the situation.

<http://epaper.dnaindia.com/dnaahmedabad/epapermain.aspx?queryed=5&username=&useremailid=&parenteditioncode=5&eddate=6%2f10%2f2011>

Togadia to address Pirana meet, cops plan increased security

VHP leader will speak at meeting on Nov 7, the day of Bakrid this year

Satish Jha | Ahmedabad



[Enlarge Image](#)

The information that Pravin Togadia will be speaking on the last day of the three-day conference organized by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) at Pirana village seems to have spurred the police into action. Togadia, known for his allegedly 'inflammatory speeches', will be speaking on November 7 which coincidentally also happens to be Bakrid day this year.

The Ahmedabad district police have instructed the organizers of the conference as well as the trustees of the Sufi dargah located in the village, not to do

anything which could violate the sanctity of the shrine. They have also asked the organizers to give in writing the details of exactly what they plan to do during the three days of the conference.

On Thursday, a team of police officials went to meet the dargah trustees and asked them for details of all that they planned to do during the three-day event. Sources in the police said that the trustees agreed to give in writing the details sought by the police. However, what could create trouble in the village is the fact that around 30 members of the VHP will be staying at the dargah over the three days of the conference.

"Considering the situation, we have asked the organisers to ensure that the VHP members only stay at the dargah and not hold any event there. Since the shrine is a symbol of communal harmony, we have asked the organisers not to do anything which may be seen as a violating the sanctity of the shrine," said Rajiv Ranjan Bhagat, superintendent of police, Ahmedabad (rural). I Turn to p11

CC:

Shr Wahahat Habibullah, Chairperson, National Commission for Minorities (NCM), New Delhi