



The Chief Electoral Officer, Maharashtra,
General Administration Department,
6th Floor Annex Building, Madam Cama Marg,
Hutatma Rajguru Chowk,
Mantralaya, Mumbai - 400 032

Subject: Mangal Prabhat Lodha's communally inflammatory election speech

Dear Sir,

This is to bring to your attention a clear case of violation of Rule 3 of the Election Model Code of Conduct by BJP's Mumbai Unit President Mangal Prabhat Lodha. In a [communally charged speech](#) in Mumbadevi on Wednesday October 16, 2019, targeting Congress candidate and sitting MLA Amin Patel, Mr. Lodha called on the memories of riots and terror attacks, claiming that the bombs and bullets used in these incidents were manufactured "in lanes within 5 km". Lodha did not name any locality, but it is common knowledge that the Dongri and Nagpada areas in the vicinity have a large Muslim population.

The meeting was also attended by Shiv Sena's Aditya Thackeray who arrived after Lodha's speech. Lodha was campaigning for Shiv Sena candidate Pandurang Sakpal in the Kumbharwada area of the constituency, one with a sizeable Muslim population. "Aap yeh bhi yaad rakhiye ki 1992 ke dangon ke baad... is Mumbai ke andar kitne bomb blast hue, kitni goliyaan chali, kitne bomb ke dhamake hue, yeh saara udyog sthan kahan par hai? Yeh saara udyog sthan yahan ke aapke 5 km ki galiyon ke andar hai. Aur unke voton ke... unka saath lekar, jo vyakti chunke aayega, woh aapke aane wale samay mein kya dhyan rakhega?" Lodha said.

("Remember after the 1992 riots...how many blasts took place in Mumbai, how many bullets were fired, where were their manufacturing centres? They were manufactured in lanes within 5 km from here. A person who is elected with votes from those lanes, how will he take care of you in the times to come?")

Lodha reasoned that since there was a BJP – Shiv Sena government at the Centre, State and Municipal Corporation, it would be best for the voters to consider voting for the alliance again to keep Mumbai 'safe'.

"If you vote for Amin Patel, it will be burden on you and us, which we will not be able to forgive ourselves for... beech ke andar yeh jo jhanda lehrayega... toh humare liye kaise sweekarya hoga?"

("The flag that will fly in the middle... how can we accept it?")

Alleging that Amin Patel would look after the interests of only "one particular community", he said, "When an old building falls, the residents are not rehabilitated in transit camps in Ghodapdev (in the constituency) but have to go to Mankhurd, Dharavi. Why are they not kept in the transit camps here? (Because) It is allotted to one particular community... aur mere yahaan rehne wale Hindu Marathi bhaiyonko door-door jaana padta hai."

("...and my Hindu Marathi brothers who live here have to go far.")

Mentioning Pakistan he said, “*Ab toh nagaada baj hi chuka hai, sarhad pe shaitan ka, toh nakshepar se naam mita do papi Pakistan ka*”

(“The bell has started tolling for the demon at the border, wipe out the sinner Pakistan from the map”.)

The Indian Express has reported on this. The report may be read here:

<https://indianexpress.com/elections/mumbai-bjp-chief-refers-to-riots-blasts-to-describe-congress-voters-6072700/>

Lodha’s hate speech is a violation of Rule 3 of the Model Code of Conduct for Political Parties and Candidates set by the Election Commission of India. Rule 3 states, “There shall be no appeal to caste or communal feelings for securing votes. Mosques, Churches, Temples or other places of worship shall not be used as forum for election propaganda.”

This is a clear case of hate speech aimed at instigating disaffection and violence against minorities. Worse, it is a violation of Section 123 (3A) of the [Representation of People’s Act. Section 123\(a\)](#) states that relates to “Corrupt Practices” relates to promotion of feelings of enmity and hatred between different sections of Indians on grounds of religion, race, caste, community or language. 1987 (3 of 1988). This section pertains to, “The promotion of, or attempt to promote, feelings of enmity or hatred between different classes of the citizens of India on grounds of religion, race, caste, community, or language, by a candidate or his agent or any other person with the consent of a candidate or his election agent for the furtherance of the prospects of the election of that candidate or for prejudicially affecting the election of any candidate.”

Previous instances of Hate Speech by Mangal Prabhat Lodha

This is not the first instance that Lodha has slyly targeted minorities through his words.

In 2018, he had written to VinaySahasrabudde, President of the Indian Council of Cultural Relations for acquiring the [Jinnah House](#) and converting it into a cultural centre. Regarding his demand he had said, “Jinnah House falls in my Malabar Hill constituency. Sour memories of partition are attached with the Jinnah House which was used to hatch the conspiracy of dividing India into three parts.”

The real estate mogul, a partner in the construction of the Trump Tower in Mumbai, has previously not only played on sectarian anger against Muslims, but has also made hostile remarks against the Christian community.

Lodha has repeatedly pushed for an ‘[anti-conversion’ legislation](#), which he called the ‘Maharashtra Freedom of Religion Act’. The Act, according to him would criminalise certain types of proselytizing – especially [targeting Christian missionaries](#) for entering slums and converting low-caste Hindus. According to the bill, any one accused of proselytizing would be punishable with a year or more of jail time. He also proposed that anyone seeking to change their religion should first get approval from a state administrative office or a District Collector.

Not only this, he has consistently echoed the same sentiments of ‘[love jihad](#)’ as done by national BJP leaders. In a debate in the Maharashtra State Assembly in 2014, he alleged that 5000 Hindu girls from Aurangabad, Malegaon and Mumbai had been sold off in the Gulf countries after being converted to Islam.

Lodha was also the one to propose a [complete ban on cattle slaughter](#) in the entire state of



Maharashtra. He had blocked cattle coming into Mumbai for Eid, apart from calling a ban on loudspeakers over mosques.

Just days before, making these controversial, implied remarks against minorities, Lodha had begun an outreach to woo Muslim voters. Assuring that the party was committed for the welfare of all and that he didn't want Muslims to remain behind in the course of development, he campaigned along with BJP minority morcha chief Waseem Khan.

Gaining the trust of the Muslims through false assurances in one rally and slyly pitting the Hindus against the Muslims in another, it seems that raking the painful past to benefit in the present is a habit of the national party and its leaders.

If this isn't a clear-cut example of sectarian politics, what is?

Our prayer:

Our sources tell us that the Election Commission's representative was present during the program in Kumbharwada and recording the proceedings on a handycam. We request the Electoral Officer to view this footage and verify this incident independently.

We humbly pray, that you take cognisance of this serious violation of the Model Code of Conduct and Representation of People Act, 1951. We pray that you take strict action against the BJP, and pass necessary strictures against BJP's Mumbai Unit President Mangal Prabhat Lodha, and direct him to issue an unconditional public apology.

Authorised representatives of CJP

Anil Dharker, President

Teesta Setalvad, Secretary