



January 12, 2022

To,
Shri. Ashok Kumar
Director General of Police, Uttarakhand
12, Subhash Road,
Dehradun - 248001
Email id: dgc.police.ua@nic.in

Subject: Letter demanding arrest of accused in the Dharam
Sansad related FIRs

Respected Sir,

We, at Citizens for Justice and Peace (CJP) are concerned over the 'Dharam Sansad' that was held in Haridwar, Uttarakhand between December 17 and December 19, 2021 where several so-called religious leaders, espousing a hard, right-wing, exclusionist ideology, and activists of the same ilk, along with hardline fundamentalist speakers, and delivered incendiary and inciteful speeches. In these speeches, videos of which have gone "viral" and reached hundreds of thousands, they have exhorted mobs to targeted violence and even directly called for a genocide of the minority community.

Following these open calls for targeted violence, some incidents of violence have taken place, clearly drawing strength from this unchecked hate-driven speech, while some of the perpetrators, unchecked have also continued on their hate-inciting spree.

On January 7, 2022, reports surfaced of a youth from the minority community brutally beaten in Dhanbad, Jharkand. (<https://www.telegraphindia.com/jharkhand/hemant-orders-probe-after-muslim-youth-is-assaulted-in-dhanbad/cid/1846620>). Besides further hate speeches and calls for socio-economic boycott of the minority community have also surfaced.

The videos of the 'Dharma Sansad' or 'Religious Parliament' have, as mentioned above, gone viral over social media making it clear that the event was nothing but a platform for hate speech and a call for violence. Platforms like YouTube which have made possible for such illegal content to be hosted and shared in the first place, should also be held accountable. Action should also be taken against Twitter as may be permissible under the Criminal Law and Information Technology Act.

The persons who took part in this 'Dharma Sansad' and delivered hate speech and calls for genocide include (but not limited to) Swami Prabodhanand Giri, president of Uttarakhand



Hindu Raksha Sena; Yati Narsinghanand, Head Priest Dasna Devi temple; Sadhvi Annapurna aka Pooja Shakun Pandey, general secretary Hindu Mahasabha; Swami Anandswaroop; Swami Sagar Sindhu Maharaj from Roorkee; and Dharam Das Maharaj from Patna. Ashwini Upadhyay of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the party in power in the state, also unveiled a “Hindutva” Constitution during the said event. The presence of a ruling party member at the controversial event not only lent the affair an official stamp but also guaranteed an impunity and protection to the hate offenders.

Here are some excerpts of the speeches made at the event:

Swami Prabodhanand Giri, president of Uttarakhand Hindu Raksha Sena: “No more delay. Be ready to kill, ready to die. Start preparations, do not delay. Like in Myanmar, politicians, government, army, police and Hindu citizens will have to, the police here, the politicians here, the army and every Hindu will have to start this ‘cleansing campaign’ to pick up weapons and we will have to conduct this cleanliness drive (*safai abhiyan*). There is no solution apart from this. I say this upfront, before you get distracted elsewhere.”

Yati Narsinghanand: “No community will survive without taking up arms. They have good money power, good weapons. You need better weapons than them, forget swords, they look good only on stages. You need to update your weapons. Have more children, get better weapons. We are standing with you. Fight your own fight, save your own women and children. Speakers should not downplay the need for weapons.”

“...Swords won't be enough to kill Muslims. We need beater weapons. Without picking up arms no religion on earth is safe. When I was nine years old, even then we were speaking of economic boycott and even today we are speaking of the same. When will you update yourself?”

Sadhvi Annapurna aka Pooja Shakun Pandey, general secretary Hindu Mahasabha: “Nothing is possible without weapons. If you want to eliminate their population then kill them. Be ready to kill and be ready to go to jail. Even if 100 of us are ready to kill 20 lakhs of them (Muslims), then we will be victorious, and go to jail... Like [Nathuram] Godse, I am ready to be maligned, but I will pick up arms to defend my Hindutva from every demon who is a threat to my religion. I will raise swords, to save my Hindu dharma, and rip them with my tigress like nails. If we give a call, it will not be Islamic Bharat, Hindu rashtra will be declared.”

Swami Anandswaroop: “The decision of this Dharma Sansad would be a word of God and the government will have to listen to it. Else we will wage a war that would be more gruesome than the revolt of 1857. The street in which I live, every morning I used to spot a Mullah [slur used by right wing to refer to Muslims] with a big beard and nowadays they keep a saffron beard. This is Haridwar, Maharaj. There is no Muslim buyer here, so throw him out.”



Swami Sagar Sindhu Maharaj from Roorkee: “Babur came with a cannon and we did not have any arms to combat it. I say you must keep lathis, and weapons worth at least Rs. 1 lakh. So if anyone [Muslim] comes they should not return alive.”

Dharam Das Maharaj from Patna: “Half of India is Islamic... There are 500 Pakistans in India. If I was present in the Parliament when PM Manmohan Singh said that minorities have first right over national resources, I would've become Nathuram [Godse]. I'd have shot him six times in the chest with a revolver inside Parliament. But I am a fakir.”

Clippings of videos downloaded by CJP from twitter account of the Dharma Sansad have been annexed hereto as Annexures A-D

About the speakers

Swami Prabodhanand Giri has deep political connections and has been seen with prominent leaders of the ruling party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), on more than one occasion. In June 2021, he was also photographed with former Uttarakhand CM and BJP member Tirath Singh Rawat, giving him a sword. Other examples of his hate diatribe have been doing the rounds for years now. In a speech at Shamli in 2018, he said that only Muslims rape Hindu women and spoke about the bogey of ‘love jihad’, apart from expressing other anti-Muslim sentiments.

In June 2021, he made genocidal statements in a video with Yati Narsinghanand where he said, “In the entire world, if we want humanity to last, we will need to clean it of jihadis. There should be treatment, management for jihadis on this earth. A few days ago, someone said that in Islam, rapists are born, jihadis are born – I have been saying this for some time, there is a jihadi and a terrorist in each Islamic home... Hindu society needs to stand up and find a cure for jihadis, otherwise these jihadis will find a cure for Hindus, and there will be no place on this earth for us to live... One thing is certain, if he comes into my space and I find out, he will not leave. I have lived for 14 years among jihadis, I’m not that weak... They should not think that if Narsinghanand or I are killed, you can live happily. There will be a pile of corpses, across the country you will see corpses. This is certain, nobody will stop us.”

The video may be viewed here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eC_NM2UC_Y

Sadhvi Annapurna aka Pooja Shakun Pandey: In an interview to a YouTube channel called ‘Vishalviews’ shot at the Dharma Sansad, she said, “Today is the time when women need to take swords in one hand along with *belans* (rolling pins) in the other. I request my mothers to not become the weakness of their sons but instead become their strength. Tell them if adharm is happening anywhere I will come with you to cut them up. There won’t be any cases but only a little inconvenience for some days; call us, we will be there with you.”



In April 2020, when she made provocative comments against Tablighi Jamaat members an FIR was filed against her but she was also just arrested briefly. Before that, in May 2019, she distributed knives to minor girls on Savarkar Jayanti.

Swami Anandswaroop: Apart from the genocidal statements that he has made at the Dharam Sansad, he has his own portfolio and history of making inciteful statements in the past. Earlier this year, he had demanded non-Hindus should be banned from entering Uttarakhand.

In January 2021, he had given a call to Hindus to destroy them (Muslims) socially, politically and economically, so that they are compelled to convert to Hinduism. In the same video he said that people who read the Quran are “no longer human, they become a beast. For those who wish to remain connected to India, they must give up the Quran and *namaz*.” The UP Police had not taken any action in this matter until there was a furor on social media about the inaction. The police had begun the probe, however there has been no news of a case being registered against him.

Yati Narsinghanand: We, at CJP, have apprised the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) about his hate speeches and his ‘so-called’ young followers who get brainwashed by his hateful ideology and indulge in anti-minority acts. Not only that, it is clear that between Delhi and its outskirts in western Uttar Pradesh, now stretching to Uttarakhand, this eco-system of hate that he has created means that on the ground minorities, especially Muslims are vulnerable and at risk, their lives, liberty and dignity is under threat of attack.

Yati has made speeches in the past where he has said, “*Musalman hamari behen betiyo ko mil baat kar khana chahte hai* (Muslim want to share our Hindu women amongst themselves). He says that in Islam, they can sell and buy women and snatch women, rape them, this is real Islam; Islam is an organized gang of criminals.

We filed a complaint against him with the NCM in August 2021 detailing his hate speech.

The complaint filed by CJP with NCM dated August 11, 2021 is marked and annexed hereto as Annexure E

Further, given the fact that in both Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand, state elections are due, it is more than likely that these kind of hate speeches/writings generating targeted violent attacks are likely to spiral, making marginalized sections vulnerable and social harmony threatened.

Aftermath of the Dharam Sansad

It is undeniable that such a religious conclave where calls for genocide are made against a minority community stands to harm the social and communal harmony of the nation and the threat of a real genocide is also real.



We are aware that a Special Investigation team (SIT) has been formed to inquire into this case. However, we fail to understand why the accused, whose videos have gone viral on social clearly giving calls for genocide, have not been arrested yet?

The result of them not yet been arrested is that they announced that on January 16 they would hold a protest meet against the formation of SIT and against the FIRs lodged against them. They also alleged FIRs were lodged against them as the Uttarakhand government was scared of “jihadis”. Such inflammatory statements are being made despite FIRs against them which shows that they are not scared of the police in the State and there is no deterrent for them from making more such incendiary statements.

“The Uttarakhand government is acting under pressure. They are biased. There was no need for FIRs and an SIT, like we are militants,” said Maa Annapurna, one of the accused.

Another accused Sagar Sindhuraj Maharaj, when asked about the FIRs told the Indian Express, “I don’t even know about the case registered against me. No one from the police or the administration has informed me about the FIR or served any notice. The only information I have is through the media.”

The DIG of Haridwar Yogendra Singh Rawat said they have so far not been informed about the January 16 event. “I came to know about the event through the media. As of now, they do not require a prior permission if they follow all Covid guidelines. However, new directions regarding Covid are coming every day and rules and guidelines might change by then,” said Rawat.

The Indian Express report has been marked and annexed hereto as Annexure F

In the aftermath, even Pakistan has intervened, and its foreign Ministry summoned the most senior Indian diplomat at the High Commission in Islamabad to express its serious concern over this issue. In an official statement, the Pakistan ministry said: “Today, the Indian Charge d’ Affaires was summoned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Islamabad and asked to convey the Government of Pakistan’s serious concerns to the Government of India over the widely reported open calls by Hindutva proponents for carrying out genocide of Indian Muslims.”

Around a hundred people gathered at Dadar station, Mumbai on December 29, 2021 to condemn the hate-filled speeches. Protesters came with various messages such as “Together Against Hate” glued to their backs, and carrying placards with similar messages. People voiced dissent against the statements made by the extremist leaders during the Haridwar event.

The accused even filed an FIR against “The Quran, Maulvis of Haridwar and other unnamed Muslims”, the video of submitting the complaint also went viral on social media showed how a police officer happily receives the complaint from those accused. Maa Annapurna, is heard telling the policeman ‘show us that you’re not biased.’ Narsinghanand who is the main



organizer of the Haridwar hate assembly is also heard saying, "He (police officer) is on our side." To receive the 'anti-Muslim' complaint, the officer went to the ashram himself, and also posed for videos and photographs.

The video may be viewed here: <https://twitter.com/ashubh/status/>

We, at CJP, also filed a complaint before the National Commission for Minorities against 'Dharam Sansad'. However, it is the State Police that has the real power to take action in this matter which has not yet been taken.

The Supreme Court has now agreed to hear a plea against the Dharam Sansad filed by petitioners who have clearly stated that the police have not taken action in this matter; no arrests have been made and the Court has thus agreed to hear the matter.

The highest court of the land has now become apprised of the matter and it has become more pertinent that the Uttarakhand Police takes some strict action in this regard and as a first step arrest all those whose videos are available making them clearly culpable of the offences.

Pyramid of hate

On the basis on the multitude of these attacks, CJP Secretary, Teesta Setalvad has conceptualized a "Pyramid of Hate" which describes the various stages through which a pyramid of hate is built. Teesta Setalvad explains how minute biases and prejudices like looking down on one's appearance, their mannerisms, how one chooses to pray, has the capacity to consume us within a society and this prejudiced attitude is the first stage in the pyramid of hate. The next stage is acts of prejudice which involves name calling, social exclusion, targeting particular sections of the society by telling belittling jokes. The third stage is discrimination, where certain communities are subject to harassment, bullying, exclusion in housing, employment, education issues, based on their race, sexual orientation, caste, class, religion etc.

The fourth stage in the hate pyramid is that of violence, of targeted hate crime which includes threat, assault, battery, murder, and terrorism. India has already entered the fourth stage of the pyramid. The fifth and last stage is genocide, a deliberate systematic cleansing of a community.

The FIR

So far only two sections of the IPC 153A (Promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion) and 295A (Deliberate and malicious acts, intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs) have been invoked in this case while there are several other sections of the penal code that apply in this case.



These include sections 153 (Wantonly giving provocation, with intent to cause riot), 153B (Imputation, assertions prejudicial to national-integration), 298 (Uttering words, etc., with deliberate intent to wound the religious feelings), 505(2) (Statements creating or promoting enmity, hatred or ill-will between classes), 503 (Criminal intimidation), 504 (Intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of the peace), 509 (Word, gesture or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman) and 120B (criminal conspiracy), among others.

In ***Firoz Iqbal Khan vs Union of India (W.P Civil No. 956 of 2020)***, the apex court said, “The edifice of a democratic society committed to the rule of law under a regime of constitutional rights, values and duties, is founded on the co-existence of communities. India is a melting pot of civilisations cultures, religions and languages. Any attempt to vilify a religious community must be viewed with grave disfavour by this Court as the custodian of constitutional values.”

The 267th Law Commission Report on Hate Speech agrees with this stance and states that:

“Hate speech has the potential of provoking individuals or society to commit acts of terrorism, genocides, ethnic cleansing etc. Such speech is considered outside the realm of protective discourse. Indisputably, offensive speech has real and devastating effects on people’s lives and risks their health and safety. It is harmful and divisive for communities and hampers social progress. If left unchecked hate speech can severely affect right to life of every individual.”

We earnestly urge you to take action at the earliest and arrest all the speakers and organizers of the Dharam Sansad of Haridwar.

Yours sincerely,

Citizens for Justice and Peace

Nandan Maluste, CJP President

Teesta Setalvad, CJP Secretary



Annexures:

Annexures A-D: Video clippings downloaded by CJP of the Dharam Sansad

Annexure E: CJP complaint to NCM dated August 11, 2021

Annexure F: Indian Express report dated January 7, 2022.