

To,

**Smt. Rashmi Shukla**

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**Subject: Complaint against police officers of Jamner, Jalgaon District, for participating in a public rally organised by Shiv Pratisthan Hindustan — the outfit linked to accused in the Suleman Pathan lynching case — in gross violation of the constitutional oath of office, professional neutrality, and ethical standards of policing**

Respected Ma'am/Sir,

We, Citizens for Justice and Peace, a human rights organisation based in Mumbai, write this complaint with grave concern and anguish regarding a disturbing and unprecedented incident involving certain police officials of Jamner Police Station, Jalgaon District, who are directly or indirectly involved in the investigation into the mob lynching and murder of 20-year-old Suleman Pathan on 11 August 2025.

Credible national media report published in *The Wire* (October 2025) have documented, verified and published visual evidence that these same officers, including Inspector Murlidhar Kasar, the original investigating officer (IO) in the case, publicly participated in a rally organised by Shiv Pratisthan Hindustan, the Hindutva organisation to which at least four arrested accused belong.

Here is the link for the article on which this complaint has relied upon:

<https://m.thewire.in/article/communalism/in-jamner-police-officials-join-march-by-hindutva-outfit-under-scanner-for-a-muslim-youths-lynching/amp>

The incident is not merely a breach of decorum. It is a grave affront to the Constitution of India, to the principle of impartial policing, and to the very idea of justice.

## **Background: The lynching of Suleman Pathan**

On August 11, 2025, 20-year-old Suleman Khan Pathan — a resident of Betawad Khurd, Jamner taluka — was brutally lynched by a mob of Hindu men for sitting in a café with a Hindu girl.

- The attack occurred barely a few metres from Jamner Police Station.
- The mob kidnapped him, drove him around several locations, assaulting him repeatedly for over six hours, before dragging him to his home village and killing him in front of his parents and sister.
- His family members who attempted to intervene were beaten as well; his mother and sister were threatened with sexual violence.
- The assault was accompanied by communal slurs — “*Musalmaan hai, maar daalo isko*” — as reported by *Article 14*.
- Suleman’s nails were pulled out; he suffered multiple fractures and bled to death in his father’s arms.

An FIR was registered under Sections 103(1) and 103(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, invoking the new provisions on mob lynching.

However, even in the initial days, the family reported that their statements were dismissed, eyewitness accounts ignored, and influential accused persons protected.

## **Organisational links of the accused**

Investigations by *The Wire*, *Scroll.in*, *Article 14*, and *NDTV* have established that four of the arrested accused — Aaditya Devre, Krushna Teli, Sojwal Teli, and Rishikesh Teli — are active members of Shiv Pratisthan Hindustan, an outfit led by Sambhaji Bhide, a known Hindutva ideologue and former RSS member.

- The accused are regularly seen in public photos, social media posts, and event videos participating in activities of Shiv Pratisthan Hindustan.
- The outfit’s social media pages have openly celebrated the accused as “protectors of dharma” and justified Suleman’s killing using hate propaganda that labels Muslim men as “love jihadists”.
- The same outfit has campaigned against the Indian tricolour, calling for its replacement with a saffron flag, and its leader Bhide has made anti-constitutional and Islamophobic statements, including calling Islam the “real enemy” of the nation.
- The organisation has also been implicated in the 2018 Bhima Koregaon violence, as noted in multiple police FIRs and reports.

Thus, the accused were not random individuals but part of a systematic, ideologically driven network of hate, operating openly with communal intent.

## Police Officers' Participation in Shiv Pratisthan's Rally

According to *The Wire*'s detailed report (October 2025) and videos available on social media, on Dussehra, barely weeks after Suleman's murder, Jamner Police officials, including Inspector Murlidhar Kasar, were seen participating in uniform in a mass procession organised by Shiv Pratisthan Hindustan, known locally as the *Durga Mata Maha Daud*.

This procession:

- Featured thousands of participants, including minors, carrying swords, lathis, and tridents,
- Was marked by anti-Muslim slogans, such as: “Durga ban, tu Kali ban, kabhi na burkhe wali ban. (*Become Durga, or Kali, but never a woman in a burkha.*)”
- Was led by saffron-clad Shiv Pratisthan members holding the organisation's flag, which was falsely proclaimed to be the “national flag of India”.
- Included a plaque and banner showing “Akhand Bharat”, implying an expansionist religious vision.

The visuals published by *The Wire* show Inspector Kasar leading the march, wearing a saffron turban, carrying the outfit's flag, and welcoming participants with *tilaks* and flower petals — not as a law enforcer, but as a participant and sympathiser.

No disciplinary action or even public clarification has been issued by Maharashtra Police till date.

The video may be found here: <https://x.com/kunalpurohit/status/1974139754984968254>

## Breach of the police oath, constitutional mandate, and conduct rules

The conduct of the police officials from Jamner — particularly Inspector Murlidhar Kasar, who was not only the original Investigating Officer (IO) in the Suleman Pathan lynching but also a public participant and apparent sympathiser in a rally organised by Shiv Pratisthan Hindustan, the very outfit linked to the accused — constitutes a direct violation of the oath of office, constitutional duties, and professional ethics of a police officer in a democratic and secular republic.

1. **Violation of the oath of office:** Every police officer of the Maharashtra Police swears an oath upon appointment, affirming that he or she shall “bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of India, uphold the sovereignty and integrity of India, and discharge duties without fear or favour, affection or ill-will.”

This oath is not symbolic; it is a solemn constitutional covenant binding the officer to the values of equality, secularism, and impartial justice. By publicly aligning with a communal outfit known for denigrating the Constitution, rejecting the national flag, and demonising a minority community, these officers have betrayed that oath.

To march under a flag that symbolically replaces the tricolour — India’s constitutional emblem of unity in diversity — is to renounce the very foundation of allegiance they pledged to uphold.

2. **Breach of constitutional principles:** The Constitution, under Articles 14, 15, 21, and 25, enshrines the principles of equality before law, non-discrimination, protection of life and liberty, and freedom of faith.

The police, as the most visible arm of the state, bear a positive duty to uphold these principles and to protect citizens from communal violence and hate crimes.

When officers investigating a communal lynching choose to participate in a rally led by the very organisation ideologically linked to the accused, they transgress the principle of “state neutrality in matters of religion and ideology.”

This conduct strikes at the heart of Article 14’s guarantee of equal protection — for how can victims of communal violence ever believe that the state will protect them, when its agents stand in open solidarity with those accused of hate crimes?

3. **Violation of statutory and service conduct rules:** The Maharashtra Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1979, which govern all state government employees including police personnel, impose explicit obligations:
  - **Rule 3(1):** Every government servant shall at all times maintain absolute integrity and devotion to duty, and do nothing unbecoming of a government servant.
  - **Rule 5(1):** No Government servant shall be a member of or be otherwise associated with, any political party or any organization which takes part in politics, nor shall he take part in, or subscribe in aid of, or assist in any other manner, any political movement or activity.
  - **Rule 24:** No Government servant shall, by writing, speech or deed, or otherwise indulge in any activity which is likely to incite and create feelings of hatred or illwill between different communities in India or religious, racial, regional, communal or other grounds.

By their participation in the Durga Mata Maha Daud organised by Shiv Pratisthan Hindustan, these officers have violated all three of these provisions.

The outfit’s well-documented positions — including rejection of the national flag, glorification of violence, calls for “Hindu Rashtra”, and vilification of Muslims — make it unambiguously anti-constitutional under Rule 24. Participation in its activities therefore constitutes gross misconduct and acts prejudicial to the integrity and impartiality of public service.

4. **Conflict of interest and compromise of investigation:** The cardinal principle of policing is that the investigator must not only be neutral but must also be seen to be neutral.

The Supreme Court in *Tehseen S. Poonawalla v. Union of India* (2018), while issuing detailed directions on mob lynching, emphasised the “duty of the police to ensure independent, timely and impartial investigation” and warned that any officer showing communal or political bias would be liable for departmental and legal action.

By leading a rally of the same organisation whose members they are investigating, the Jamner police officials have created an irreconcilable conflict of interest. The appearance of bias is now overwhelming, and the investigation cannot be viewed as credible or independent.

No citizen should ever have to fear that the same officer investigating a hate crime is celebrating alongside those who incite such crimes.

5. **Dereliction of duty and abuse of uniform:** A police uniform is not merely attire — it is a symbol of the Republic, worn on behalf of the people of India. When officers wear it while marching in a rally of a sectarian organisation carrying weapons and chanting anti-Muslim slogans, they are not exercising their right to religion or expression, but abusing state power and authority to legitimise hate.

The presence of uniformed police at such an event normalises extremism and signals to perpetrators that the state stands with them, not with the victims. This erodes the sanctity of the uniform, demoralises honest officers, and gravely damages the institutional reputation of the Maharashtra Police.

6. **Dereliction of the Supreme Court’s “Police Code of Ethics”:** The National Police Commission’s First Report (1979) and the Indian Police Code of Ethics — later reaffirmed by the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D) — require that every officer “uphold and enforce the law impartially, and to protect life, liberty, property, human rights, and dignity of the members of the public.”

Participation in a communal rally, while handling a communal crime, is a textbook violation of this code. It indicates not mere lapse of judgment, but wilful bias — a betrayal of both ethical and constitutional obligations.

7. **Moral and institutional consequences:** This breach is not a private failing; it carries grave institutional consequences. If such conduct goes unpunished, it will signal to the rank-and-file that sectarian alignment is tolerated, that investigative neutrality is optional, and that the constitutional oath is negotiable.

For the victims of hate crimes — especially minorities who already face deep mistrust — it sends the chilling message that the state machinery is aligned with their oppressors. In effect, it transforms the police from guardians of justice into instruments of intimidation, and corrodes the very idea of rule of law.

### **The question of neutrality and the appearance of bias**

No investigation can be credible when its investigators are seen marching with the accused’s ideological mentors. The principle that “*justice must not only be done, but must also be seen to be done*” applies squarely here.

For the family of Suleman Pathan — already shunned by sections of the local police, ignored in their statements, and humiliated when they sought updates — this participation confirms their worst fears of bias.

It erodes the very foundation of public trust upon which criminal investigations rest, and emboldens communal organisations to act with impunity.

### **Pattern of institutional complicity and silence**

The silence of senior police leadership and the absence of corrective action reflect a dangerous trend of institutional tolerance of communal behaviour within the force.

The Maharashtra Police, historically respected for professionalism, must not allow itself to be seen as partisan or captive to sectarian ideologies.

If not addressed immediately, this incident risks setting a precedent of permissive bias, where officers feel free to participate in the public activities of accused groups under the pretext of cultural or religious expression.

### **Reliefs and demands**

In light of the above, I most respectfully request your immediate intervention and the following urgent actions:

1. Immediate suspension of all police officers, including Inspector Murlidhar Kasar, who participated in the Shiv Pratisthan Hindustan rally while the investigation was ongoing.
2. Departmental inquiry under the Maharashtra Police Act and Conduct Rules for misconduct, dereliction of duty, and breach of oath.
3. Transfer of the Suleman Pathan lynching investigation to an independent, high-level agency such as the CID or a Special SIT under a senior IPS officer unconnected to Jalgaon district.
4. Public clarification from the DGP's office regarding the official stance of Maharashtra Police on this incident, to reassure citizens of its commitment to secular, constitutional values.
5. Protection for Suleman Pathan's family and witnesses, who have repeatedly expressed fear and loss of faith in the ongoing probe.
6. A directive to all police personnel reiterating that participation in events organised by religious, political, or communal outfits shall invite immediate suspension and disciplinary proceedings.

### **The larger moral imperative**

Sir, policing is not merely a profession; it is a constitutional calling. The oath sworn by every police officer binds them not to caste, creed, or ideology — but to the Republic of India and its secular fabric.

When those entrusted with enforcing justice choose to march beside the accused, beneath a flag that rejects the tricolour, and amidst chants that denigrate an entire community, they dishonour both their badge and their oath.

This complaint is therefore not just about one incident. It is about restoring the moral and constitutional integrity of the Maharashtra Police, preserving the secular character of law enforcement, and ensuring that Suleman Pathan's death is not followed by the death of justice itself.

We, therefore urge your immediate and personal intervention to initiate disciplinary, administrative, and corrective measures, and to publicly reaffirm that the Maharashtra Police stands with the Constitution — not with those who desecrate it. Justice cannot coexist with complicity.

Yours sincerely,

Nandan Maluste, CJP President

Teesta Setalvad, CJP Secretary