

January 8, 2026

Shri S. Chockalingam

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State Election Commission, Maharashtra

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Subject: Complaint seeking urgent action under the Model Code of Conduct against Kajal Shingla for communal, hate-based and gendered vilification of Muslims at a religious event in Mumbai on December 25, 2025

Respected Sir,

We, at Citizens for Justice and Peace (CJP), hereby submit this complaint seeking urgent intervention against Kajal Shingla, also known as Kajal Hindustani, for delivering explicitly communal, inflammatory, gendered, and hate-based speech at a public religious gathering held in Mumbai, Maharashtra, on December 25, 2025, during a period when the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) is in force in connection with the ongoing electoral process concerning Municipal elections (BMC). The MCC for the same came into effect on December 15, 2025, with the declaration of the election date.

Shingla was the principal speaker at a Hanuman Katha organised by Dayanidhi Dham Seva Sanstha, where she used the religious platform to propagate the discredited conspiracy theory of “love jihad,” make sweeping and unverified allegations against Muslim men, publicly demean Muslim women, and exhort women to reject Muslim identity through incendiary slogans. The speech, delivered to a public audience and subsequently disseminated through video recordings, constitutes a serious and deliberate attempt to communalise the electoral environment through fear, misogyny, and religious polarisation.

Factual background and content of the speech

At the said event, Kajal Shingla made the following statements and claims:

1. She asserted that her organisation or associates had “*brought back 2,500 women in Mumbai from Abduls*,” a phrase that:
 - o Uses a Muslim name as a proxy for criminality;
 - o Implies that Muslim men systematically target Hindu women; and
 - o Casts interfaith relationships as coercive, criminal, or conspiratorial.

2. She repeatedly invoked the “love jihad” narrative, a claim that has been found by multiple courts and investigating agencies to lack any empirical basis and to function primarily as a tool for communal suspicion.
3. She encouraged or led the chanting of the slogan: “*Be Durga, be Kali, never be a ‘burqewali.’*”

This slogan directly contrasts Hindu religious symbolism with Muslim women’s attire, framing Muslim identity as something to be rejected, shamed, and eradicated.

The speech was delivered in a religious setting, before a public audience, and in a manner designed to emotionally mobilise listeners by invoking religion, gender, fear, and hostility toward Muslims.

The video of the speech may be viewed here: <https://t.me/hindutvawatchin/3546>

The video of the speech has been downloaded by CJP and is marked and annexed hereto as **Annexure A**.

Nature and gravity of the violations

The impugned speech is not incidental or rhetorical. It involves multiple, layered forms of prohibited conduct, namely:

A. Communal vilification: By portraying Muslim men collectively as predators engaged in a covert conspiracy, the speech imputes criminality to an entire religious community. Such collective attribution is a classic marker of communal hate speech.

B. Gendered and misogynistic targeting: The speech instrumentalises women’s bodies and choices to advance communal narratives, portraying Muslim women as symbols of threat (“burqewali”) and Hindu women as needing rescue. This constitutes gendered hate speech, compounding religious hostility with misogyny.

C. Religious mobilisation through fear: By invoking Hindu goddesses and juxtaposing them against Muslim identity, the speech creates a binary of “pure” versus “threatening” identities, encouraging listeners to view democratic participation through a religious lens.

D. Use of a religious platform for political polarisation: The utilisation of a Hanuman Katha—a religious gathering—as a site for communal messaging during an election period directly violates the principle that religious spaces must not be used for political mobilisation.

Violations of the Model Code of Conduct

The Model Code of Conduct, particularly Part I (General Conduct), prohibits:

1. Appeals to religious sentiments to influence voters;
2. Use of places of worship or religious events for election propaganda;

3. Statements that aggravate differences or promote hatred between communities; and
4. Campaigning methods that vitiate the electoral atmosphere.

Shingla's speech violates each of these prohibitions. The Election Commission has consistently held that communal speeches by non-candidates also fall within the MCC when they are intended to influence the political climate or voter behaviour during elections.

Violations under the Representation of the People Act, 1951

The impugned speech attracts the following provisions:

Section 123(3) – Appeal on grounds of religion: The invocation of Hindu religious symbols (“Durga,” “Kali”) in direct opposition to Muslim identity (“burqewali”) constitutes a religious appeal aimed at influencing political consciousness.

Section 123(3A) – Promotion of enmity or hatred: The portrayal of Muslims as conspirators engaging in “love jihad” promotes enmity and hatred between religious communities, a practice expressly prohibited during elections.

Section 125 – Promoting enmity in connection with elections: The speech, delivered during an election period and designed to polarise voters on religious lines, falls squarely within the scope of this penal provision.

Constitutional violations

The speech undermines fundamental constitutional guarantees, including:

- **Article 14** – Equality before law, violated by collective suspicion and stereotyping;
- **Article 15** – Prohibition of discrimination on religious grounds;
- **Article 19(1)(a)** – Limits of free speech, which do not extend to hate speech or incitement;
- **Article 21** – Right to dignity, particularly of Muslim women publicly demeaned;
- **Preamble** – Secularism, fraternity, and dignity of the individual.

The Supreme Court has repeatedly emphasised that speech which erodes fraternity and equality cannot claim constitutional protection, especially in the electoral context.

Impact on the electoral environment

Mumbai is a religiously diverse and politically sensitive metropolis. The dissemination of conspiracy theories like “love jihad” and the chanting of exclusionary slogans:

- Generate fear and mistrust between communities;
- Intimidate minority voters and discourage political participation;

- Normalise communal hostility as an acceptable campaign tool; and
- Risk creating conditions conducive to social tension and unrest.

Such speech directly vitiates the level playing field required for free and fair elections.

Role of the organising body

The complaint also raises concern about the role of Dayanidhi Dham Seva Sanstha, which permitted its religious platform to be used for communal mobilisation. The Election Commission has previously emphasised that organisers of religious events bear responsibility when such platforms are used to violate the MCC.

Prayer

In light of the above, we respectfully request that the State Election Commission, Maharashtra:

1. Take immediate cognisance of this complaint and the accompanying video evidence;
2. Initiate proceedings under the Model Code of Conduct against Kajal Shingla;
3. Issue prohibitory directions restraining her from making further communal speeches during the election period;
4. Examine the responsibility of Dayanidhi Dham Seva Sanstha for permitting communal speech at a religious event;
5. Issue a general advisory reiterating that religious platforms cannot be used to propagate communal narratives during elections.

Yours faithfully,

Nandan Maluste

President, Citizens for Justice and Peace

Teesta Setalvad

Secretary, Citizens for Justice and Peace

Annexure

Annexure A: Video clip of Kajal Shingala delivering the speech