

Date: May 20, 2026

To,

Ms. Alka Upadhyaya

Hon'ble Secretary

National Commission for Minorities

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Subject: Complaint regarding incidents of provocative hate speeches with a potential to cause harm accompanied by communal mobilisation across Maharashtra between February and March 2026

Respected Secretary,

We, at Citizens for Justice and Peace (CJP), a human rights organization that works on communal harmony, rights protection and accountability, are hereby submitting a complaint against three individuals, namely Sharad Ponkshe, Sangram Bapu Bhandare Patil and Anil Maharaj Devalekar, for delivering provocative hate speeches with a potential to cause harm accompanied by communal mobilisation. These incidents had happened in Maharashtra on separate occasions, at different places. This complaint has the details of all the three events. Their speeches vilified religious minorities while normalisation of discrimination against them, and called for their boycott in several manners.

Given that the mandate of the National Commission of Minorities (NCM) is to safeguard minorities' interest, we respectfully seek the Commission's intervention in this incident by issuing appropriate directions in line with the Constitutional promises to the minority groups of India.

Below are the details of the incidents, the legal implications of the incident and the appropriate relief sought us.

The videos of the three incidents have been downloaded by CJP and are annexed with the complaint as Annexure A, Annexure B and Annexure C.

Details of the incidents

- 1) Sharad Ponkshe,
Location: Sangli, Maharashtra.
Date: February 15, 2026

“And because [Muslims] wants to make the whole world Darul Islam; they have entered every such profession.”

By claiming that the presence of Muslims in various professions is a conspiracy to take over the world, the speaker starts with fearmongering. This sets the tone and stage for the rest of the speech. This rhetoric when uttered in such charged environment carry grave ramifications. It leads to the stigmatisation of an already marginalised community. It is also showing the minority community mere existence in certain professions as a “threat” to Hindus. It is also creating an “othering” effect that causes a ridge between different communities and impede communal harmony.

“There should be a big stall or advertisement for this here. Everyone should have that number in their mobile. For any problem in my house, if I call that number, only a Hindu technician should come to my house to solve that problem... If I go to buy vegetables or fruits, I will only buy them from a Hindu man... Whether it’s a plumber or a wireman coming to your house—under any circumstances, call only a Hindu. Even if he is a bit arrogant, it’s fine. Even if he is late and says he will come today but comes after four days, it’s fine. Waiting four days is better than Dharmantar (conversion).”

Here, the speaker is calling for an economic boycott of the Muslims. He starts off with instilling fear in the audience (claiming Muslims wants to make the world Darul Islam), and then says that the way to prevent it is by economically boycotting Muslims. This acts as an effective divisive method as the audience is put into fear and then immediately given a solution (an economic boycott) to get rid of that fear. Such speeches of exclusion and economic boycott affect the livelihood of a marginalised community. It helps in creating a structure that is inherently violent towards the minority as they would be left without sufficient livelihood measures. It is, in fact, promoting segregation by asking Hindus to actively avoid Muslim vendors and other professionals, thereby fostering an unequal society—which is an anathema to the Indian Constitution. According to a [2022 report by Oxfam India and NCDHR](#), boycott-affected individuals suffer an average economic loss of 30 to 70%. Due to “social pressure,” Muslim shopkeepers’ businesses have shut down, and in some places, police have advised closing shops. Such calls for economic boycott thus, directly go against the fundamental right to carry trade and profession as provided for in our constitution. It also damages national unity and national economic growth.

Link of the video: <https://t.me/hindutvawatchin/4370>

- 2) Sangram Bapu Bhandare Patil,
Location: Alandi, Pune, Maharashtra
Date: March 23, 2026

“A strategy must be adopted. Now we fight against Love Jihad and we fight against Land Jihad.”

“Land Jihad” and “Love Jihad” are not just rhetoric’s at play, but rather, are divisive conspiracy theories. They are deployed to suggest that Muslims are collectively engaged in covert territorial aggression, and, that Muslim men deliberately lure Hindu women into marriages and forcefully convert their religion. These theories have been debunked by several Courts and independent media extensively. Therefore, this is an unmistakable act of vilification. Further, using phrases such as “*fight against*”, “*new strategy must be adopted*” leads to enemisation of Muslims. Enemisation is a socio-political process of creating a people (in this case Muslims) as perceived enemy or threat. It goes beyond mere “othering” and frames a group of people as direct enemies, such framing allows for

exclusion, aggression and control of that population. Sangram Bapu herein, is using the concept of enemisation to frame Muslims as enemies and asking Hindus to fight back against them.

“Our girls think, It’s just social media, what difference does it make to exchange a few words? They keep talking and talking, and eventually fall prey to a conspiracy. Their videos are recorded, their photos are taken... and then they are threatened. Those girls are forced into the flesh trade (prostitution). They are treated as ‘factories’ to give birth to children. The lives of our Hindu daughters and sisters are being destroyed.”

This fearmongering through peddling the conspiracy of “Love jihad” is worsened in these statements. As the content of the statements is explicit (“flesh trade”) (“factories for child birth”), the speech becomes increasingly charged, and the fear it perpetrates increases manifold as well. After instilling such fear in the audience, the speaker calls for a social boycott of Muslim men by furthering the conspiracy of “Love jihad.” The enemisation of Muslims that Sangram Bapu co-opts in his earlier statement is worsened here. By stereotyping Muslims as predators and evil, he is creating a visceral image of the perceived enemy (Muslims). Once such framing of Muslims as enemies is complete, he calls for a social exclusion/boycott of them. By generalizing Muslims to be evil he is categorically asking Hindu Women to stay away from them. This is a call for segregation. Such social exclusion hinders National unity, progress and peace.

When these statements are read together, a pattern shows; frame a group of people as enemies, show that the enemies are a vile group, and lastly, ask for exclusion and aggression against that vile group. Such vilification facilitates the acceptance of calls for social exclusion. Therefore, calls for social exclusion should be read alongside the vilifying statements. Once read together, such statement ipso facto becomes hate speech as it meets the legal criminal standards of hate speech as devised by the Supreme Court (see below).

Link of the video: <https://t.me/hindutvawatchin/4364>

3) Anil Maharaj Devalekar,

Location: Akluj, Solapur, Maharashtra

Date: March 30, 2026

“If Hindus are finished once, they will never come back.”

This statement demonstrates fearmongering. This statement sets the premise/context for the entirety of the speech that follows. By claiming that Hindus are going to get “finished”, it is creating an atmosphere of fear amongst the Hindus by making it seem that an entire community is vulnerable because of the presence of other communities, in this case, Muslims.

“Anyone who rises against Hindus... their very roots should be set on fire! If any Afzal, Shaista, Aurangzeb, or Tipu is born from a Jihadi womb, that Jihadi should be finished right there!”

Here, the speaker is deliberately conflating Muslims as Jihadis. By doing so, it is fuelling hatred against the Muslim community. Further, the speaker is directly calling for violence (death) against Muslim babies. This call for violence is further clarified in the next statement he makes.

“What is it? This “Gandhi-ism” and “Non-violence” (Ahimsa) in our heads has ruined this country. I salute and bow to the respected, Bharat-loving Pandit Nathuramji Godse! I am proud of it! My blood is Hindu!... I am proud of it! Whatever happens tomorrow will happen... we do not have weak blood in our veins. We are proud of being Hindus! Ask me again and I will say it again: My blood is Hindu!”

By outrightly rejecting the idea of nonviolence as a way of conducting life, and furthering support for Nathuram Godse (murderer of Gandhi), the speaker is encouraging to co-opt violence against minorities. This sentiment is heightened by the phrase *“we do not have weak blood in our veins”* hinting that non-violence is for the weak blood.

When the previous three statements are read together, it proves to be hate speech.

The speaker first shows that Hindus are a vulnerable community that needs saving from the other communities (Muslims), then he immediately follows it by demonstrating violence as a method of saving Hindus from Muslims. In the end, he gives a supposedly inspiring example of killing of Gandhi that encourages the audience to perpetrate violence against other communities, to prove that Hindus do not have “weak blood”. This showcases that he uses “fearmongering” and “othering” as tactics to show Hindus as a community that needs to be saved by Muslims, and then immediately calls for violence against Muslims in order to save Hindus—creating a false image displaying violence as the only way to protect Hindus from Muslims. Such calls for violence has no place in a democratic peaceful republic like India. They end up creating fluctuations and animosity in a heterogeneous society.

“Our history is based on weapons. I am telling you—every Hindu sister and mother—your children must know how to use the Lathi-Kathi (staff), Dandpatta (gauntlet-sword), and the sword. Our girls may use mobiles worth thousands or lakhs—I don’t care—but in every Hindu girl’s purse, there must be a dagger (Katyar) worth 500 rupees!

If any Jihadi comes in front and looks at her with an evil eye, you should have the strength to gouge out his eye! If someone holds your hand, don’t just say leave—first, sever his hand! Our children should become strong Hindutvawadis; Without weapons, there is no freedom.”

The previous call for violence is worsened with this statement. Herein, the speaker in pursuance to his call for violence is asking women to carry daggers and swords—lethal weapons—and use it when any “jihadi” looks at them with an “evil” eye.

Link of the video: <https://t.me/hindutvawatchin/4112>

Contextualising Anil Maharaj’s speech within the consistent incidents of hate speech at VHS:

The speech by Anil Maharaj Devalekar was made at a Virat Hindu Sammelan (“VHS”), these are events organised by far right extremist groups. It is important to put his speech in the broader context in which VHS operates. VHS has been a platform for far-right Hindutva speakers to utter contentious speech. For instance, on January 21, 2026, two speakers—Khushbu Pandey and Riddhima Sharma, both staunch Hindutva activists—had FIRs filed against them for speaking things such as *“If they kill two of yours, kill a hundred people (from their community) in retaliation”* and evoking the audience by reminding them of previous bloodbaths. Even on January 30, in yet another VHS event, Yati

Narsinghanand described Islam as a “*cancer on the earth*”, before going on to assert that Hindus should form “*ISIS-like*” terror squads (Yati has several FIRs against him). These events help in mobilising hate and communalism. Such events have deliberately invited speakers who are repeated offenders (such as Yati Narsinghanand), to vilify minorities. These speeches are not limited to vilification but have consistently included calls for violence—as can be seen from the impugned speech under this complaint as well. Uninterrupted occurrences of these events compound the environment of hostility, vigilantism, and social discrimination against Muslims and Christians. These events and speeches pierces through the values espoused by our Constitution.

Judicial precedents on hate speech

In *Pravasi Bhalai Sangathan v. Union of India* (2014), the Supreme Court defined hate speech as follows: “*Hate speech is an effort to marginalise individuals based on their membership in a group. Using expression that exposes the group to hatred, hate speech seeks to delegitimise group members in the eyes of the majority, reducing their social standing and acceptance within society. Hate speech, therefore, rises beyond causing distress to individual group members. It can have a societal impact. Hate speech lays the groundwork for later, broad attacks on vulnerable [groups] that can range from discrimination, to ostracism, segregation, deportation, violence and, in the most extreme cases, to genocide. Hate speech also impacts a protected group’s ability to respond to the substantive ideas under debate, thereby placing a serious barrier to their full participation in our democracy.*”

In the aforementioned speeches, the definition of hate speech as provided by the case of *Pravasi Bhalai*, squarely applies. Using conspiracy theories such as “Love jihad”, “Land jihad”, “Jihadis” (theories that portray Muslims as evil and aggressors) the speeches marginalise individuals by reducing their social standing. The speeches impugned under this complaint calls for social exclusion, economic boycott--these are forms of ostracism and segregation-- and in some cases are also calling for violence.

The Supreme Court in *Shaheen Abdulla vs Union Of India* (2022), urging that irrespective of religion held that hate crimes should be prosecuted promptly without waiting for someone to lodge a complaint: “*Immediately, as and when any speech or any action takes place which attracts offences such as Section 153A, 153B, 295A and 506 of IPC etc. without any complaint being filed suo moto action be taken to register cases and proceed against the offenders in accordance with law...We further make it clear that such action be taken irrespective of the religion of the maker of the speech, so that the secular character of Bharat as envisaged by the Preamble is preserved.*”

Therefore, it is an obligation on State machineries to file an FIR against the abovementioned individuals.

Laws violated by the inflammatory speech

Under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 (BNS):

S. 196 Promoting enmity between different groups on ground of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, etc., and doing acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony.

(1) Whoever,

(a) by words, either spoken or written, or by signs or by visible representations or through electronic communication or otherwise, promotes or attempts to promote, on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, caste or community or any other ground whatsoever, disharmony or feelings of enmity, hatred or ill-will between different religious, racial, language or regional groups or castes or communities;

S. 197 Imputations, assertions prejudicial to national integration.

(1) Whoever,

(a) by words either spoken or written or by signs or by visible representations or through electronic communication or otherwise, makes or publishes any imputation that any class of persons cannot, by reason of their being members of any religious, racial, language or regional group or caste or community, bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of India as by law established or uphold the sovereignty and integrity of India;

S. 352 Intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of peace.

Whoever intentionally insults in any manner, and thereby gives provocation to any person, intending or knowing it to be likely that such provocation will cause him to break the public peace, or to commit any other offence, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to two years, or with fine, or with both.

S. 353 Statements conducing to public mischief.

Whoever makes, publishes or circulates any statement, false information, rumour, or report, including through electronic means,

(b) with intent to cause, or which is likely to cause, fear or alarm to the public, or to any section of the public whereby any person may be induced to commit an offence against the State or against the public tranquility;

(c) or with intent to incite, or which is likely to incite, any class or community of persons to commit any offence against any other class or community, shall be punished with imprisonment which may extend to three years, or with fine, or with both.

The speeches made by the aforementioned individuals are violative of these sections owing to the very inflammatory nature of the speech.

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) – Protection of free speech, which do not extend to hate speech or incitement;

Article 21 – Right to dignity, every individual has a right to live with dignity and not a mere right to animalistic existence.

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. In these cases, the speeches are undermining all these constitutional principles that ought to be protected.

Reliefs sought

- 1) Take Legal Cognisance; Take immediate cognizance of this complaint under Section 9(1)(d) of the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992, and initiate a full-fledged inquiry into the matter.
- 2) Immediate FIRs; Direct the police to immediately register FIRs against the individuals and organizations responsible for the hate speeches, under relevant sections of the BNS as provided earlier.
- 3) Monitoring and prevention; Direct state governments to prevent such events, especially in communally sensitive areas. Furthermore, ensure that investigation into such cases by the police happen in an unbiased and fair manner.
- 4) Strict law enforcement: Ensure police action under Supreme Court directives on hate speech and immediate arrests of those making hate speeches.
- 5) We further urge social media platforms to immediately remove the documented hateful content and take action against the accounts that are systematically spreading communal disharmony.

Sincerely,

Nandan Maluste, CJP President

Teesta Setalvad, CJP Secretary

Annexures

Annexure A- Speech by Sharad Ponkshe at Sangli, Maharashtra on February 15, 2026.

Annexure B- Speech by Sangram Bapu Bhandare Patil, at Alandi, Pune on 23 March 2026.

Annexure C- Speech by Anil Maharaj Devalekar, at Akluj, Solapur, Maharashtra on March 30, 2026.