

Sri Guru Ravidass Sabha UK, Europe and Abroad

16 August 2019

Open letter to the President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind

Dear Honourable President Kovind Ji

This year you have personally in the highest esteem paid homage to Sat Guru Ravidass Ji. It is with deep pain, sadness, and alarm to our community that now under your Government's watch, a significant religious heritage site of historical, archaeological, and monumental value, the Guru Ravidass Mandir situated at Ravidass Marg, Tughlakabad, New Delhi, has been allowed to be demolished. This has been carried out under a Supreme Court (SC) Order made with little consideration of its impact on the religion, faith and hearts of the followers of Sat Guru Ravidass Ji, in India and around the world.

The unjust judgement by the Supreme Court - a bastion on which no Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe has been elevated in the past years - and the silence of the Central Government on this outrageous demolition of a religious heritage site is unacceptable and hurtful to the followers of Sat Guru Ravidass Ji around the world.

We, the Ravidassia Community indigenous to and part of India's culture and history, have been subjected to injustices because of Caste for thousands of years. This continues even 72 years after independence in spite of India's Constitution providing protections including on religious grounds. The demolition of our religious site that is personally connected with our great Sat Guru for over 600 years is yet another example of the atrocities against our community. We believe the speed with which the Supreme Court sided with those calling for the demolition is alarming. It has not taken into account the pain and human rights violation the SC Order on the demolition would have, and has inflicted on our religion and faith. This is unacceptable to us NRIs and that is why hundreds of thousands have come out on the streets to protest in India and will continue to do so around the world. The demolition is an immeasurable loss to the faith of hundreds of millions of Ravidassia Samaj all over India and around the world.

We call on your urgent intervention to correct the dark episode of the 10 August 2019 demolition and for a new Mandir to be built on the same site immediately. We call on a 'Stay Order' on the Delhi Development Authority on any further tampering with the site or any proposed build. Sri Guru Ravidass Sabha UK, Europe and Abroad stand ready to support the re-build, working with our brothers and sisters in India. We would find it helpful if you could meet with our UK Sabha delegation in Delhi within the next seven days. We are ready to come at our own expense.

Ravidassia followers in India and around the world look to your early intervention in this grave matter.

Yours Sincerely

Dalawer Bagha

President, on behalf of Sri Guru Ravidass Sabha (UK), Europe and Abroad

Copies: Her Excellency Mrs Ruchi Ghanashyam, High Commissioner of India