

Memorandum

Mr. Rajratna Ashok Ambedkar,
President,
The Buddhist Society of India,
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Andheri (East), Mumbai,
Maharashtra, India - 400059.
Date : 01st October, 2019

Tony Perkins, Chair
U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom
732 N. Capitol Street, N.W.
Suite A714
Washington, DC 20401

Dear Mr Perkins,

Re: Mob Lynching, violence on Scheduled Castes and reign of terror in India

I am writing to alert you to the horrific human rights abuses being perpetrated within India, under the guise of Hindu Nationalism led by the Prime Minister Modi particularly against Dalits and religious minorities and urge you to intervene to hold him and his government to account for these atrocities. We are outraged and shocked by the events unfolding in India today. The BJP regime has unleashed a tyranny of the majority in the guise of Hindu Nationalism.

72 years ago the Indian people gained independence from British colonialism after a long struggle. Today the Indian Constitution is being torn up by the ruling Hindu-supremacist government of the BJP under Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The violence of fascism has engulfed India and dictates the policies of the government.

PERSECUTION AND MURDERS OF SCHEDULED CASTES & SCHEDULED TRIBES: Since the Modi regime came to power in 2014 the number of crimes against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (so-called ‘untouchables’) has continuously risen, going from 37,670 in 2015, for example to 40,801 in 2016. In July, for example, a 25-year old man was hacked to death in front of his pregnant wife by 8 of his upper caste in-laws, while officials watched.

The National Crime Records Bureau does not, however, expand on what these crime statistics mean in everyday life, nor does it give the appalling details of actual cases. Annual Reports of The National Commission for Scheduled Caste do not accurately records atrocities to reflect ground realities faced by Scheduled Castes.

Hate Speech against Buddhist by RSS Worker Sambhaji Bhide : On 27th September, 2019 Mr. Modi addressed at United Nations Conference claiming that India has given the Buddha to the world. After his statement at UN Conference, U.S., the RSS worker Mr. Sambhaji Bhide is provoking the Hindus against the Buddhists of India saying that Buddha is of no use to India.

According to India Today TV, 27 September 2019: Two Scheduled Caste children, who did not have a toilet at home, were allegedly beaten to death by two upper-caste men for defecating near a village panchayat building in Madhya Pradesh's Shivpuri district. Speaking with India Today TV, the mother of one of the kids said, "They were defecating in the open and that's why they were killed.

Further as per report dated 17 September, Karnataka Scheduled Caste Member of Parliament from Chitradurga, A Narayanaswamy, was denied access into a village dominated by the Golla community as he belongs to a lower caste.

On 10th August , Delhi Development Authority controlled by the ruling BJP, in a shocking move, demolished a 15th century Delhi temple in Tughlakabad and surrounding complex dedicated to Shri Guru Ravi Dass, a saint who challenged caste orthodoxy. The manner in which demolition occurred disturbed and shocked the religious sentiments of followers of their saint.

We demand the immediate release of 96 persons arrested on fake and trumped up charges by the Delhi Police following a public outcry against the demolition of the Temple. Further, we demand that Delhi Development Authority immediately revert the Shri Guru Ravidass Temple and adjoining land to the Ravidassia Community whose religious freedom of right to worship has been violated by the demolition of their temple.

MOB LYNCHINGS: Muslims are being attacked solely on the basis of their faith. The Hindu greeting 'Jai Shri Ram' has been turned into a chilling murder cry on the streets to lynch and kill Muslims. These are mobs emboldened and often organised by the ruling party, the BJP, and its ideological parent organisation the RSS. In one recent murder Tabrez Ansari, was tied to a pole and tortured for 18 hours and then locked up in police custody where he died - just for having a Muslim name. Many perpetrators in these cases have been feted by BJP ministers and acquitted in biased judicial decisions

Over the last five years, India has seen an **outbreak of religious hate crimes**, with an average of one happening every week. Many of them have drawn mass protests, social media outrage, hashtags and even a response from the government.

In April this year, 55-year-old Prakash Lakda, a member of a Christian tribe, was lynched by a mob of Hindu villagers who suspected him of slaughtering a cow in the central Indian state of Jharkhand. Three other tribals from his village were also attacked, leaving them grievously injured. (<https://www.dw.com/en/india-struggles-with-religious-lynchings/a-49950223>)

According to a report in the *The Wire*, 7th September 2019, there is a wide-ranging perception that ‘culprits’ go unpunished, and that there is a chance that the accused in heinous crimes like rape, child lifting and cow-slaughter will go scot-free.

Furthermore, an analysis of several cases clearly shows that there is a higher level of acceptance of such so-called forms of justice if the perceived crime is allegedly committed by a Muslim, Dalit, Christian or tribal. As a **study published in *EPW*** noted, the discrimination faced by Muslims and Dalits “continue to blight the very institutions designed to create a fairer society.”

As per **Hate Crime Watch**, a *FactChecker.in* database, Muslims, who constitute “14% of India’s population, were victims in 60% of hate crimes; Christians, 2% of the population, in 14% cases; and Hindus, 79.8% of the population, in 14% cases.”

Moreover, the Common Cause and CSDS study also revealed that “50% cops feel Muslims (are) naturally prone to crime.”

DISPOSSESSION AND MASSACRES OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE: Adivasi groups are facing massive dispossession from their land and forests by Indian and foreign corporates close to the Modi government, and ongoing state violence. Most recently In a horrific massacre in Umbha, Sonbhadra, UP, 3 women and 7 men were killed when adivasi villagers were gunned down by nearly 200 upper caste landowners trying to grab their land. The attackers rained bullets for over half an hour while the police refused to intervene.

According to recent report in *India Today*, 23 September 2019, Mr Kalantus Barla , a tribal man was beaten to death by angry villagers in Jharkhand over suspicion of selling beef. Two other men were also injured in the mob attack. Villagers claimed that workers from Bajrang Dal - right wing outfit was behind the attack. It all started when word spread that the three tribal men--Kalantus Barla, Philip Horo and Phagu Kachchap--were selling beef. As soon as the news spread, several workers of Bajrang Dal came to the spot and beat the three men, villagers added.

They were brutally thrashed with sticks following which Barla succumbed to his injuries and the two others are receiving treatment at separate hospitals.

MASS DETENTION AND DEPORTATION: In Assam, 4 million people facing statelessness, incarceration and deportation under the National Register of Citizens are waiting to hear their fate on 31 August. Thousands are already in detention camps, The attack on citizenship rights is planned to be rolled out in other states too and is expected the lead to a crisis of statelessness and suffering on an even bigger scale than that of the Rohingya in Myanmar.

RAPES AND ATTACKS ON WOMEN BY BJP POLITICIANS: Currently the courageous 19-year old Unnao gang-rape survivor, who accused BJP MLA Kuldeep Singh Sengar of rape, is in a critical condition after the car she was travelling in was hit by a truck with its number plates hidden on 28 July. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and his government and police have done everything possible to protect the perpetrator and silence the survivor, including murdering her father and jailing her uncle. As other high-profile cases have shown, trying to bring BJP leaders and their associates who are involved in rape or murder to justice is now tantamount to courting death.

DISSENTERS ASSASSINATED AND IMPRISONED: Those who have dared to criticise and expose the Modi regime, including journalists, lawyers, human rights activists, and even police officers and judges have been assassinated by paramilitary groups associated with the ruling party or framed in false cases and imprisoned.

DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS ATTACKED: The Right to Information Act has been completely undermined with the Modi government enacting an amendment giving itself the power to dismiss the Information Commissioners. Meanwhile the repressive anti-terrorism law the UAPA has been made even more draconian, explicitly making individuals responsible for proving that they are not terrorists.

I would like to give you just a few examples from the huge number of such cases. In 2017, [three people were beaten up in Uttar Pradesh](#) because they didn't greet an 'upper-caste' man with 'Ram Ram'. In the same state, [a woman and her unborn child died](#) after she was beaten up all because she touched the bucket of an upper caste Thakur. In July this year, in Gujarat, [a 25-year old man was hacked to death in front of his pregnant wife](#) by eight of his upper caste in-laws, while officials watched.

Equally disturbing is the rise of cases of highly qualified Dalit scholars and promising Dalit students being driven to suicide by horrendous casteist bullying. These cases include that of [PhD candidate Rohith Vemula](#), at Hyderabad University, and more recently [Dr Payal Tadvi](#) in Mumbai. In the vast majority of such cases the perpetrators are either not charged or allowed to walk free.

In addition, in rural areas, there are almost routine social boycotts, denial of food and work from the upper castes, often forcing Dalits to flee their homes and some instances, even take their own lives.

I have summarised only a few of the kinds of human rights abuses faced by Scheduled Castes in India under Narendra Modi's regime. Seen together with the frequent threats to the Indian Constitution, the incessant mob lynching of Muslims, the attacks and killings of human rights defenders and principled lawyers and journalists, the rapes of women by BJP politicians who

go scot-free , we can only conclude that India is on the slippery slope to dictatorship and the creation of a fascistic Hindu state.

We look to the United Nations to uphold our basic human rights, including the right to life, this is why we are alerting you to our situation and urging you to hold Narendra Modi to account.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

(Mr Rajratna Ambedkar)

For and on behalf of

The Buddhist Society of India;

Ambedkar International Mission, London;

Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha of New York;

Begumpura Cultural Society of New York.