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India: Statements in solidarity with the struggling students and faculty members of JNU

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Press Release

All India Forum for Right to Education (AIFRTE)

On

Brutal Attack on JNU Students and Faculty by Fascist ABVP/RSS Thugs

AIFRTE condemns the shocking assault on the students and teachers of JNU by an armed mob of about eighty to one hundred persons shouting slogans like “*Bharatmata ki Jai*”, [Victory for Mother India] “*Vande Mataram*” [Bowling down to mother] and “*Goli Maaro Salon ko*” [Shoot those rascals with bullets] on 5th January 2020. Despite the presence of the University’s security on the campus and the Delhi police outside the gate, the thugs entered with their faces covered and armed with iron rods, lathis and hammers. Some girl students stated that they were witness to the police facilitating their entry and informing them of the location of the hostels indicating that these illegal entrants were not students of JNU but ABVP members from Delhi University and RSS hoodlums.

The attackers proceeded to vandalize the hostels, smashed cars and other vehicles, and indiscriminately and savagely beat up women and male students and teachers. Aishe Ghosh the President of JNUSU was hit on the head with an iron rod, briefly lost consciousness and was bleeding profusely. She required 16 stitches for her wound. Prof. Sen of the Centre of Regional Development was also assaulted and suffered head injuries. More than thirty persons received injuries and many were only discharged from the Trauma Centre of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) after 24 hours.

The attackers had a free run of the campus for almost three hours while a group of their supporters were already mobilized and shouting slogans outside the gate. They were being protected by the police who did nothing to intervene as the rampage continued on the campus. Shockingly the Vice-Chancellor and senior members of the administration were nowhere to be seen. Responsible office bearers of the JNU Teachers Association were heard on national television actually holding them responsible, along with Delhi police and ABVP/RSS, for this well-planned fascist assault on the academic community. Messages on social media from supporters of these hoodlums also provide proof that this was a planned attack to derail the strong on-going protest against massive hostel fee hikes and resistance to registration for the next semester as decided by the students union after holding general bodies of all schools.

This descent to fascist methods of attack by thugs affiliated to the Hindutva regime led by Modi-

Shah (viciously targeted police assaults had already been seen in JMI, AMU and other cities and towns in UP) points to the desperation in the Hindutva forces faced with the peaceful but resolute resistance of the university communities towards the new education policies of privatization, commercialization and centralization. Rising fees, budgetary cuts and job insecurity have brought almost all sections into united struggles.

A group of ten members from AIFRTE (including Organizing Secretary Dr. Vikas Gupta and Presidium member Prof. Madhu Prasad) were at the JNU campus for several hours in the night of 6th January 2020 to find ground level information and to express our solidarity with the students and teachers of the University. The deligation found that despite the brutal assault and the panic spread among the university community, JNU students and teachers have united firmly to stand against the hindutva goons, to resist their violent attempt to disrupt the struggle, and to continue the fight against the exclusionary National Education Policy 2020 (NEP) promoting centralized control, privatization, commercialization and communalization of education.

AIFRTE salutes the courageous struggle of the academic community at JNU and resolves to fight shoulder to shoulder with all students and teachers across the country who are fearlessly resisting the fascist attacks against them.

AIFRTE demands that

- Home Minister Amit Shah and the Delhi Police which functions under his control be held accountable for this outrageous assault on the peacefully protesting students and the faculty of JNU;
- Present Vice Chancellor be immediately dismissed and all senior members of his administration removed so that a fair judicial inquiry is possible as their complicity with the `goons' is apparent;
- The role of the ABVP/RSS in this criminal assault must be properly investigated so that appropriate administrative action can be taken against such fascist organizations which are spreading terror in campuses across the country.

AIFRTE Presidium

People's Union for Democratic Rights (PUDR)

Press statement

5 January Attack on JNU: An Orchestrated Conspiracy

8 January 2020

PUDR strongly condemns the violence unleashed by right-wing hoodlums inside Jawaharlal Nehru University campus on the evening of 5 January 2019. A group of around 100 masked goons carrying rods, hammers, canes/lathis among other weapons barged into the closed campus in the evening and violently assaulted students and professors. Doctors at AIIMS Trauma Centre have confirmed to PUDR that thirty-four students with injuries caused by sharp/blunt weapons were treated. The JNUSU President Aishe Ghosh also received severe injuries on the head. Of these thirty-three have been discharged now. Five Professors including Sucharita Sen, Ameet Parmeshwar and Saugata Bhaduri have also been severely hit. The sequence of events points to complicity of the university

administration and the police, which stood outside campus gates and enabled the murderous mob to unleash violent assault on students inside the campus.

While the press statement of the JNU administration and reports of some news channels have been calling this a “clash” between the ABVP and left groups, it is sufficiently clear that the attack was one sided, the street lights were turned off, entry was closed, the campus security let a murderous mob enter and even doctors and ambulances were attacked – all under the watch of Delhi Police that stood by as a mute spectator. The police did not apprehend any of the attackers. WhatsApp group messages shared by some news outlets show a careful planning behind the attack. These also confirm the involvement of the ABVP and related individuals in the planning of the attack.

JNU has been witnessing peaceful protests by students against the fee hike. 5 January was the last date of registration for the new semester. The JNU Students’ Union was demanding a roll back of the new fee structure and the ABVP was supporting the administration and encouraging the students to sign up. The attackers were allegedly waiting outside the university since around 4:00 pm and were waiting for somewhat a signal to start the attacks. At around 6:00 pm, the attackers entered the university campus and conducted the attacks till around 8 p.m.

JNUSU twitter confirms that female students had to lock themselves in Sabarmati and Koyna hostels. The masked goons were walking across corridors with rods and sticks. Mahi, Mandvi and Periyar hostels were under siege.

In addition to these attacks, eye witnesses have confirmed that the mob vandalised personal belongings of students, university property and private property on the campus, including cars of professors. Activist Yogendra Yadav and several journalists were heckled and manhandled by Bajrang Dal goons outside the JNU gate.

Four FIRs have been filed concerning the incidents at JNU. Three of these concern the protest actions by the JNUSU in connection with their demand for withdrawal of the fee hike and name the JNUSU President and other students for vandalism in the campus, curiously filed after the hoodlum attack. The fourth FIR includes the hoodlum attack but fails to record the murderous attack under section 307 IPC (attempt to murder). This FIR has been registered suo moto by the police despite the fact that a number of those grievously injured and other witnesses to the attack were available. The sequence of events mentioned in the FIR is contrary to the accounts available to us and attempts to obfuscate the issue.

In the light of the above, PUDR demands:

1. Registration of an FIR on the basis of witness accounts taken from those seriously injured.
2. Registration of FIR against Delhi police into the shameful criminal inaction and deliberate acts of omission that reek of complicity on the part of the police.
3. Independent and impartial inquiry monitored by retired judges into the incident of 5 January.

Secretaries, PUDR

Radhika Chitkara and Vikas Kumar

NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF PEOPLE'S MOVEMENTS

India won't tolerate violence on its campuses by the right wing goons, nation wide protests today

NAPM stands in solidarity with the struggling students and faculty members of JNU

New Delhi, January 6 : NAPM strongly condemns the unprecedented violence unleashed by the masked goons on the JNU campus specifically targeting Student Union activists, students active in anti fee hike agitation and the faculty members supporting them and some Kashmiri and Dalit students. The attack has left more than 20 students and faculty members with grievous injury, fracture and cuts including severe head injury to JNUSU President Aishe Ghosh, Prof Sucharita Sen and others. In a well guarded university, the complete breakdown of the law and order, deliberate switching off of the street lights, lockdown of the main entrance, stopping of Ambulance and any help from entering the campus, points towards the complicity of the JNU administration and the Police authorities as well, who played along with the right wing protesters at the main gate, events following the attack late in the night.

This attack is in line with the continued attack on the Universities by the right wing and Hindutva forces and sustained propaganda often aided by mainstream news channels who have tried to portray Universities as a hotbed of anti national and naxal politics. This is nothing but the political vendetta because the Universities across the country have consistency opposed the neo-liberal, anti-people and fascist policies of the NDA government. These attacks are a desperate attempt by the BJP to deflect attention from the continued protests against the CAA and other policies and a move to impact the Delhi elections sensing defeat. The heartening fact is that the resistance is only growing and peoples movements of this country are not going to cede to the terror and violence unleashed by the State and right wing forces.

The recent attack has come in the light of the continuing anti fee hike protests led by students of JNU for past few months now. The unprovoked violence on the protesting students was started by the JNU security staff on January 4, who were ordered to break the strike. Later in the day, some ABVP activists were caught on camera attacking the protesting students including women students and pelted stones at them. Some of the female students had sustained grave injuries and fractures in the rampant attack by ABVP goons on the 4th of January 2020 as well.

It was against this violence that the JNU Teachers' Association had given a call for a peace meeting on campus on January 5, 2020. While the meeting was taking place, a group of masked goons from outside the campus started attacking the peacefully assembled students and teachers with rods and bricks. From the narratives of the students it has emerged that more than 50 armed goons entered the campus around 6:30 pm.

It is alleged that in a well planned and pre-meditated attack people from outside were called in, including former DUSU President from ABVP Satinder Awana and many others who targeted hostels namely Periyar, Mahi-Mandavi and Sabarmati. They entered the hostel premises with lathis, rods and stones. Some miscreants also went on to attack School of Social Sciences II building. Hooligans from outside broke glasses, smashed cars and destroyed JNU property. They did not shy away from even assaulting the dhaba workers. But most disturbing and shameful event took place when they went inside the girls wing of Sabarmati. The goons wearing masks indiscriminately hit the women students in their hostel and intimidated them with verbal abuse and death threats. The 'Cyclops' security which has a mandate to protect the students, faculty and campus of JNU campus unfortunately became the facilitators and perpetrator of the violent act. JNUSU and student bodies have alleged that they did this at the behest of the Vice Chancellor's orders.

The chronology of events that unfolded on the 5th evening is a shameful episode for Delhi Police as well who gave safe passage to masked right wing goons to carry out their violent deeds on the students who were peacefully protesting against the fee hike in JNU. For days now the JNU administration has been unable to break the students protest regarding the imposed fee hike in JNU. Swaraj India Leader Yogendra Yadav, CPI General Secretary D Raja, NFIW leader Annie Raja, NAPM Conveners Amrita Johari & Anjali Bhardwaj, and many other senior activists who later reached JNU main gate were also manhandled by the right wing activists and goons present there and were shouting slogans against JNU. Delhi Police remained a mute spectator to all this and as Yogendra Yadav has alleged that even Delhi Police officials engaged in manhandling him. Such shameful acts and continued dereliction of duty by Delhi Police in preventing acts of violence, intimidation and harassment by right wing activists only points to the patronage of the right wing party in power. Delhi Police inaction in defending rights of the citizens to protest peacefully and high handedness has become a regular occurrence now, as seen in anti CAA Jamia, or JNU protests.

We are forced to conclude that the JNU administration and the police are complicit in facilitating this attack and have abetted the right wing goons in carrying out this attack. We demand that,

1. JNU Registrar Pramod Kumar and the Vice Chancellor M Jagadesh Kumar take moral responsibility for their failure to guarantee the safety of their students and faculty and resign immediately.
2. We also demand that independent judicial enquiry is conducted to ascertain the people behind this dastardly act and due punishment is given to them.
3. Prompt medical aid and assistance and security is provided to those injured.
4. Strict action be taken against the police officials who have engaged in the manhandling of the senior activists at the JNU gate in the aftermath of the violence and failed to ensure peace and security.
5. Lastly, given complete breakdown of the law and order in Delhi, continued violence in and around Delhi, Police Commissioner Amulya Patnaik and Home Minister Amit Shah must resign for their failure in protecting rights of the people.

We stand by the struggle of the JNUSU in demanding the roll back of the fee hike and feel heartened by the unprecedented support and solidarity with them which has poured in from various campuses and corners of the country overnight. NAPM stands in solidarity with struggling students and faculty of JNU.

Medha Patkar, Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA) and National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM); Dr. Sunilam, Adv. Aradhna Bhargava, Kisan Sangharsh Samiti; Rajkumar Sinha, Chutka Parmaanv Virodhi Sangharsh Samiti, NAPM, Madhya Pradesh;

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Sister Celia, Domestic Workers Union; Maj Gen (Retd) S.G.Vombatkere, NAPM, Nawaz, Dwiji, Nalini, NAPM Karnataka

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