

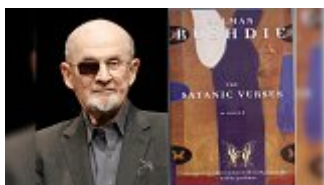
Europe Solidaire Sans Frontières > English > Asia > India > Fundamentalism, communalism, extreme right, secularism (India) > **Fight words with words, Indian Muslims for Secular Democracy (IMSD) opposes (...)**

Religion Rights - Press statement

# **Fight words with words, Indian Muslims for Secular Democracy (IMSD) opposes banning of books**

Tuesday 31 December 2024, by [IMSD](#) (Date first published: 30 December 2024).

**Indian Muslims for Secular Democracy (IMSD) does not support the call by certain Muslim organisations for a re-ban on Salman Rushdie's book Satanic Verses.**



IMSD calls upon Muslims to recall the views expressed by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan well over a century ago. In his time, he staunchly opposed Muslims who made a bonfire of books they did not like, or demanded its ban by the authorities. His advice was simple. Fight words with words if the book in question is worthy of a reasoned critique. Burning or banning such books implies that Muslims are incapable of an intellectual and moral defense of their faith. If the book (cartoon, play, film) is nothing but a gratuitous, salacious or malicious attack on Islam or its Prophet, his suggestion was: ignore it.

In 1861, an English writer William Muir had written a book in which he had made disparaging remarks against Prophet Mohammad. In response, Sir Syed travelled to London to study the books and journals that Muir had relied on and eight years later published a reasoned critique debunking Muir's work.

Sir Syed's advice to his fellow Muslims long ago is all the more relevant in today's 'new India' where minorities are daily targets of Hindutva's hate politics. Any ill-advised or hotheaded response to the publication of Satanic Verses - a book not Many Muslims are likely to have read earlier or will read now - will only provide more fodder to the Muslim-baiters. Besides, it will only give free publicity to the very book they want banished.

IMSD does draw the line between Free Speech, which it fully supports, and Hate Speech, which it staunchly opposes. While, the Constitution of India guarantees the right to freedom of speech, the law of the land also provides for penal action against hate speech.

Muslims, or anyone else for that matter, have the right to be offended by a book, cartoon, play or film and they have the right to protest in peaceful manner. They are also within their right to invoke existing provisions of criminal law to seek redressal of their grievance. But they do not have the

right to silence the offender. A fatwa, firman or call to kill Salman Rushdie, as also the demand for a ban on Satanic Verses amounts to just that: silencing the offender.

Indian Muslims for Secular Democracy (IMSD). December 30, 2024

*Signatories:*

1. Aarefa Johari, Gender rights activist, journalist, Mumbai
2. Akbar Shaikh, IMSD, Bhartiya Muslim Yuva Andolan, Solapur
3. Ahmad Rashid Shervani, Educationist, Hyderabad
4. A. J. Jawad, IMSD, Co-convener, Advocate, Chennai
5. Amir Rizvi, IMSD, Designer, Mumbai
6. Anwar Hussain, Corporate Executive
7. Anwar Rajan, IMSD, Pune
8. Arshad Alam, IMSD, Columnist, New Age Islam, Delhi
9. Askari Zaidi, IMSD, Senior Journalist, Delhi
10. Bilal Khan, IMSD, Activist, Mumbai
11. Farhan Rahman, Asst. Prof., Ranchi University, Ranchi
12. Feroz Abbas Khan, theatre and film director, playwright and screenwriter, Mumbai
13. Feroze Mithiborwala, IMSD, Co-convener, Bharat Bachao Andolan, Mumbai
14. Gauhar Raza, Anhad, Delhi
15. Hasan Ibrahim Pasha, Writer, Allahabad
16. A. J. Jawad, IMSD, Co-convener, Advocate, Chennai
17. Irfan Engineer, IMSD Co-convener, CSSS, Mumbai
18. Javed Anand, IMSD Convener, CJP, SabrangIndia Online, Mumbai
19. Kasim Sait, Businessman, Philanthropist, Chennai
20. Khadija Farouqui, IMSD, Gender rights activist, Delhi
21. Lara Jesani, IMSD, PUCL, Mumbai
22. Mansoor Sardar, IMSD, Bhiwandi
23. Masooma Ranalvi, IMSD, We Speak Out, Delhi
24. Mohammed Imran, PIO, USA

25. Muniza Khan, IMSD, CJP, Varanasi
  26. Nasreen Fazalbhoy, IMSD, Mumbai
  27. Qaisar Sultana, Home Maker, Allahabad
  28. Qutub Jahan, IMSD, NEEDA, Mumbai
  29. (Dr) Ram Puniyani, IMSD, Author, Activist, Mumbai
  30. Sabah Khan, IMSD, Parcham, Mumbra/Mumbai
  31. Shabana Mashraki, IMSD, Consultant, Mumbai
  32. Shabnam Hashmi, Anhad, Delhi
  33. (Dr) Shahnawaz Alam, IMSD
  34. Shalini Dhawan, Designer, Mumbai
  35. Shama Zaidi, Documentary Film Maker, Mumbai
  36. Shamsul Islam, Author, Delhi
  37. Sohail Hashmi, IMSD, Sahmat, Delhi
  38. Sultan Shahin, Editor-in chief and publisher, New Age Islam, Delhi
  39. Teesta Setalvad, Secretary, CJP, IMSD, Mumbai
  40. Yousuf Saeed, Documentary Film Maker, Delhi
  41. Zakia Soman, Co-convener BMMA, Delhi
  42. Zeenat Shaukat Ali, IMSD, Wisdom Foundation, Mumbai
- 

**P.S.**

- Sabrang India. December 30, 2024:  
<https://sabrangindia.in/fight-words-with-words-imsd-opposes-banning-of-books/>