



Association for Protection of Democratic Rights

গণতান্ত্রিক অধিকার রক্ষা সমিতি

Eternal Vigilance is the Price of Liberty

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Press Statement

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ARREST OF UMAR KHALID: FROM FAILURE TO FRENZY?

To keep the CAA issue live and gain political mileage in the coming state-level elections the Central Home Ministry has entrusted police (particularly NIA and elite SIT of Delhi Police special Cell) with the task of indiscriminate arrests of people on concocted charges under UAPA targeting anti-CAA, Bhima Koregaon protesters. The central government wants a dissent-free smooth political play-field throughout the country because it's well aware of its series of failures in every field from economy, fiscal policy, neighbor relations, public health services in Covid-19 pandemic situation, relations with neighbors etc. to basic food, job and income security of millions of toiling people and migrant workers. It seems that leaders of our ruling elite are losing faith in their ability to run the country and in her people too; these 'failures' happen to become 'frenzy' for government suppression of the intense urge for rights of the Indian citizens today. OmInous!

A large section of the police in their eagerness to be politically compliant more to power than the laws and constitution of the land, have lost 'independence' and 'professionalism' (Justice K M Joseph rightly observed this degradation in the role of Delhi Police in Shaheen Bagh Case). Police tyranny today is the worst enemy of our Constitution and its democratic set-up.

Has anybody ever seen a 'dangerous terrorist' and 'worst conspirator' like a law-abiding citizen responding to police call knowing it fully well that police may arrest him? This is our query to our omnipotent and omniscient MHA and Delhi Police Authority in the manner in which the rights activist Umar Khalid was arrested and booked under UAPA on last Sunday. APDR condemns such arrest and hounding.

The current spate of witch-hunting (with frivolous application of UAPA, NSA and NIAA by the State) throughout the country compels APDR to demand once again long-awaited police

reforms along with reforms of our lower criminal judiciary (which is no longer 'fair, timely and cost-effective') in line with human rights, fundamental freedoms, democracy and rule of law.

We urge upon the Central government to constitute Commission/s for thorough and independent inquiries into the '**Delhi Riot**'(!) case of February 23-26, 2020 and **Bhima Koregaon violence** case of 1st January, 2018, and also take up with all the state governments the issue of releasing all political prisoners immediately. We also urge our hon'ble Prime Minister to make it a mission of his government.

The government knows the "Rule of Law" resides in the 'state power and the legitimacy of its exercise'. This legitimacy seems to be of no concern to our MHA and thereby it makes itself unfit for up-keeping India's internal security to the satisfaction of masses in general.

Let the government return to conscientious attitude and refrain from letting the police conspire and weave fictitious allegation against the people on road in peaceful protest.

The government may take a lesson from the history and it is better the sooner for it to realize that speaking, writing, protesting or singing voices of dissent can never be imprisoned forever.

Let's protest and protest.



(Dhiraj Sengupta)

