

Europe Solidaire Sans Frontières > English > Asia > India > Fundamentalism, communalism, extreme right, secularism (India) > **Communalisation normalised - 'Not In My Name': Activists fighting hate in India**

# Communalisation normalised - 'Not In My Name': Activists fighting hate in India

Saturday 16 December 2017, by [SABERIN Zeenat](#) (Date first published: 13 December 2017).

New Delhi, India - On a cold winter afternoon in the Indian capital, scores of writers, activists and students gathered under a poster of a blood-splattered pair of sandals on Wednesday, holding up placards that said, "Not In My Name".

The protest came in response to the brutal murder of Mohammed Afrazul, who was hacked to death in the western state of Rajasthan last week by a man who railed against "love jihad", a term used by Hindu nationalists to accuse Muslims of marrying Hindu women in order to convert them.

The killing was captured on video and uploaded to YouTube.

The alleged attacker, Shambu Lal, is seen hitting at Afrazul with a machete before dousing his body with kerosene and setting it on fire.

At least 11 other people have been killed on apparent religious grounds this year, according to India Spend, a group that tracks hate crimes in the country.

That makes 2017 one of the deadliest in recent years for violence against minority groups.

Many of the victims were either Muslim or Dalit, people who belong to the least-privileged of the Hindu castes, and the killings were often prompted by rumours over the slaughter of cows, an animal considered holy in Hinduism.

The activists who converged on New Delhi's Parliament Street blamed what they called inflammatory rhetoric by Narendra Modi, the prime minister, and officials of his governing Hindu nationalist BJP for the rise in killings.

Decrying what they called "an assault" on India's secular constitution, activists also called for the resignation of Rajasthan's state government.

Modi and BJP have denied allegations of stoking communal tensions.

*Al Jazeera* spoke to some of the activists fighting hate in India.

## **Saba Dewan, protest organiser**

We are gathered here today to demand that the guilty be punished.

We sincerely believe that Shambhu Lal is not the only one who murdered Afrazul.

The Rajasthan government and the Hindu nationalist groups who have made an industry out of hate videos are just as complicit.

Shambhu was apparently addicted to watching these hate videos.

We demand an immediate dismissal of Rajasthan's state government.

This murder is an assault on India's secular constitution and social fabric. It is also an attack on our right to life, liberty and equality, and freedom of religion and belief.

We are protesting to tell the government of India that, at least for some people, these hate killings are not acceptable. We want to tell the government - you are failing in your duty, protect the people of this land.

**Rahul Roy, filmmaker**

We need to stop the politics of hatred.

It's very clear now, as more and more reports of killings come in, that the poison of hatred has entered our villages, towns and cities.

It is critical that the citizens of India come out on to the streets and demonstrate that they will not be part of this hatred.

The government will hopefully respond if they feel there is anger about what is going on now, and that there are a lot of people who do not agree with this politics of enmity and hate.

What is new today is that government officials and ministers are making statements that incite hatred.

Instead of protecting the Constitution, the state is coming out as a partisan entity and allowing this hatred to spread.

**Saagnik Paul, activist**

There is a very toxic environment in India today, mostly owing to the inflammatory statements made by the people in power.

If you examine the statements made in the video by the alleged killer, you will find that most of his statements have been made by members of the ruling party.

So you know where the killer is getting his inspiration from. He is not a crazy person.

This country was founded on certain principles, and we are completely moving away from them right now. It is time for the people to stand up for what this country stands for.

I am here to register my protest. We need to start somewhere.

Today, if 10 people are standing, they will inspire 100 others, and that is how movements grow.

**Neena Verma, writer**

I am here to protest against this hatred and violence.

I am also here to raise my voice for humanity, peace, love and harmony.

I am here to raise my voice for the legacy that I want to leave to my children.

We should pressure the government, as well as a large section of our society.

It is with our participation, whether covert or overt, passive or aggressive, that this monster of hatred has grown so much.

The hatred is also coupled with fear. We are all in the grip of fear.

I think that Delhi's current toxic air is not entirely an environmental issue.

I feel that Delhi has also become cursed by its toxic politics. And that's not the kind of environment I want to leave for my child.

I follow the Nobel laureate poet Rabindranath Tagore who said: "If They Answer Not to Thy Call, Walk Alone".

### **Banojyotsna Lahiri, activist**

The recent killing of this Muslim man was heart-wrenching, but what was most shocking to me is the impunity and the confidence with which the killer acted. Instead of hiding his identity, he was flaunting it on social media.

That kind of impunity only comes when the entire ruling regime emboldens you.

It is people from the margins who are constantly being targeted - Dalits and Muslims. This is why we have come together to say "Not In My Name". We don't want to be part of this killing machinery.

The guy in the video thought he was representing all of Hindu society and that he was fighting "love jihad", which to me is a lot of nonsense.

We want to affect the public. A lot of people are afraid of speaking up. But the more we protest, the more people will get courage to speak up.

This is a much more difficult struggle than fighting corruption. It is becoming more and more difficult to fight communalisation because the hate is being constantly normalised through propaganda, through media, through everything.

### **Zeenat Saberlin**

---

### **P.S.**

\* 'Not In My Name': Activists fighting hate in India. AL JAZEERA NEWS. 13 Dec 2017:  
<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/12/activists-fighting-hate-india-171213160144358.html>