

'ACT AGAINST ATTACKS ON RELIGIOUS MINORITIES'

Relevant for: Developmental Issues | Topic: Rights & Welfare of Minorities Incl. Linguistic Minorities - Schemes & their performance; Mechanisms, Laws, Institutions & Bodies

A group of senior journalists from all over India issued a collective appeal to constitutional institutions on Wednesday to step in and discharge their mandate in the wake of "attacks" on India's religious minorities, especially Muslims.

In the appeal, 28 senior journalists and presspersons expressed concern over "hysteria" being built up nationwide that "Hinduism is in danger" and portrayal of Muslims as a "threat".

The appeal referred to the recent attempts to incite anti-Muslim sentiment at the screening of the film *The Kashmir Files*; the controversy over the hijab in Karnataka, targeting of Muslim women on social media platforms including the Bulli Bai app and other incidents and called for intervention of the President, judges of the Supreme Court and various High Courts, the Election Commission of India and other constitutionally provisioned and statutory bodies. "Only prompt and effective action by our constitutional, statutory, and democratic institutions can challenge, contain, and stop this disturbing trend," it said.

Signatories of the appeal include former Editor-in-Chief of *The Hindu* and Director of The Hindu Publishing Group N. Ram; Mrinal Pande; editor of *The Telegraph* R Rajagopal; founder editor of *The Wire* Siddharth Varadarajan; and executive editor of *Caravan* Vinod Jose.

Amplification of hatred

It asserted that the concerted amplification of hatred has been growing over the past years and months, as has the attendant advocacy of violence. They also called for an urgent response of the Press Council of India, the News Broadcasters and Digital Association, unions and associations of working journalists, and all media-related bodies, alleging that some sections of the media have allowed themselves to become "conduits for hate speech".

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