

Shia Board submits 'settlement' before SC

Waseem Rizvi

Shia Waqf Board chairman Syed Waseem Rizvi has moved the Supreme Court for permission to place on record a "settlement" worked out by the Uttar Pradesh Shia Central Waqf Board with a majority of non-Muslim stakeholders in the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid land dispute.

The application comes ahead of the scheduled hearing of the dispute in the Supreme Court on December 5.

Under the settlement, the Ram temple could be built on the Ayodhya site while a mosque would be constructed in Lucknow.

The application filed by Mr. Rizvi said the Shia Board has mooted the proposal for a "long-term settlement of this dispute which has resulted in a feeling of acrimony among these communities".

"The Uttar Pradesh Shia Central Board of Wakfs proposed a compromise before the Hindu brothers, who are fighting the cause of the Ram Mandir and majority of whom are parties in the litigation," the application said.

Mr. Rizvi, in the application filed through advocate M.C. Dhingra, said the settlement proposal was worked out after a series of meetings, discussions and deliberations with the concerned Hindu brothers and stakeholders," including the various mahants.

The application reinforced the right of the Shias to take a decision on the fate of the Babri Masjid, which it claimed is a "Shia wakf".

"The *mutawallis* of Babri Masjid have always been Shia Muslims and the last known/recorded *mutawalli* of the Babri Masjid was a Shia Muslim," it said.

Shia rights

The Shia Board has "all the rights to take a prudent decision on the issue which in fact relate to larger national interest", the application said.

It gave a list of mosques in Islamic countries which "have been removed". In connection with "the sanctity of mosques being constructed by unjust people", the application recounted an "incident recorded in the books of Islamic theology where a masjid named Masjid-al-Diirar was ordered to be demolished and burnt down by the Prophet of Islam".

In August, the Shia Board moved the Supreme Court claiming that the 15th century Babri Masjid was a Shia waqf (endowment) and the Sunnis, who have been at the frontlines of the 70-year-old Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid title dispute, were mere interlopers led by "hardliners, fanatics and non-believers" who do not want an amicable settlement with the Hindu sects involved.

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