



PRESIDENT

Jesuit Conference of South Asia

Godavari Statement

JCSA - Feb 2020

We, the Jesuit Major Superiors of South Asia, gathered for our Annual Conference in Godavari, Nepal (23-29 Feb, 2020), are appalled to learn of the recent communal violence in the capital city of Delhi where at least 47 people lost their lives, hundreds have been wounded and many more are made homeless with huge property losses. The various accounts of the apparent complicity of the police forces in the violence, and the inexplicable postponement of legal procedures for four weeks are deplorable.

The concerned citizens know that the hate speeches and divisive politics of the recent elections in Delhi, the all-pervasive hate-politics and mob lynching of the last one decade and the attempts to appropriate 'nationhood and religion' for majoritarianism would all lead to inconceivable consequences for the body politic. We urge the Central Govt to immediately withdraw the hastily enacted discriminatory Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), National Population Register (NPR) and the proposed National Register of Citizens (NRC), and initiate a process of dialogue with all concerned.

Meanwhile we invite all concerned citizens, especially the Indian Jesuits and our Institutions i) to initiate processes of reconciliation among peoples and religions, ii) to continue serious study and research on the ramifications of CAA and NRC for the conceptions of nation, citizenship and the Constitution, iii) to join peaceful protest movements opposing CAA, NPR and NRC whenever and wherever possible, iv) to support rescue works in the areas affected by communal violence.

We pledge to protect the integrity of the Constitution and to preserve the ethos of our nation that was shaped by the founding fathers and mothers of our motherland after prolonged struggles and sacrifices for independence, and has been nourished by sages and saints of many religions from time immemorial. Now is the moment of reckoning for India to reassert its soul of diversity, variety and the eternal quest for the Ultimate.

We believe that anti-CAA Movement will sustain itself as long as it remains non-violent yet courageous, resistant yet listening, audacious yet non-divisive, fearless yet compassionate.

Fr George Pattery, SJ
President, Jesuit Conference of South Asia

5th Mar, 2020