

STATEMENT CONDEMNING THE BLATANT ATTEMPT TO COMMUNALISE THE PANDEMIC BY SOME BJP LEADERS, INCLUDING TEJASVI SURYA

06/05/2021

On 4/5/2021, the BJP Member of Parliament from Bangalore South Tejasvi Surya, accompanied by Basavanagudi MLA Ravi Subramanya, Chickpet MLA Uday Garudachar and Bommanahalli MLA Satish Reddy visited the BBMP South Zone control room. The objective was to supposedly unearth a scam that has been underway in the bed allotment process of the municipal corporation. A video of this encounter where three men are intimidating a woman officer of the BBMP has been circulating on whatsapp and other social media. Despite the fact that the control room had more than 200 people from various communities, Mr. Surya cherry-picked and singled out a list of 17 Muslim workers alleging them of the scam. Mr. Subramanya provoked further by asking “have you appointed them for a Madrassa or a corporation?” Questioning the appointment process, another MLA asked “How can he appoint 17 members like a Haj committee?”

Soon after, a WhatsApp message began to be circulated listing out the same Muslim names read out by Mr. Surya and called them terrorists. Further, the highly respected, Joint Commissioner Solid Waste Management, Mr. Sarfraz Khan was accused that the war room headed by him was responsible for many deaths. Pained by these false allegations, Mr. Khan, wrote a [Facebook post](#) dismissing the allegations. Mr. Khan’s exemplary commitment to humanity is well known among officials and civil society members. News reports indicate that many of the 17 Muslims listed by the BJP legislators have been fired.

These antics by Tejasvi Surya and other BJP legislators can only dishearten volunteers from various communities, whose selfless work has been the backbone of the state’s response to the pandemic. It is also a signal to other communal groups that the pandemic can again be communalised by such vigilante actions, much like in the first wave when Tablighi Jamaat members and Muslim communities were targeted.

Every hour in the last month or so has been a rapid unfolding of a tragedy for India, including Karnataka. The criminal negligence and ineptitude of both state and central government has never before had such widespread disastrous consequences. The death of over 25 patients in Chamarajanagar district and five in Kalaburagi district due to lack of medical oxygen has is one such instance among hundreds of others we have been witness to everyday. The need of the hour is more and better medical infrastructure, supplies and management.

But what the four BJP legislators have done is to dish out communal hatred in the name of uncovering a scam in his own government. This is a criminal offence under the Indian Penal Code, 1860 which states that anyone who makes, publishes or circulates any statement containing rumour or alarming news on grounds of religion (among others) that can promote feelings of enmity, hatred or ill-will between different communities can be fined or imprisoned.

Tejasvi Surya’s listing out of Muslim volunteers only is a desperate and pathetic attempt to communalise the pandemic. This is prejudicial to the maintenance of communal harmony,

another criminal offence under the IPC, 1860. It also appears that there is a clear attempt to circulate this message with an intent to create and incite enmity.

Apart from the fact that the actions of the BJP legislators are decidedly criminal offences, such communalising actions, consume crucial time of the media and administration. We have seen that with the first wave of the pandemic, time and effort that could have gone in strengthening the public health system and in containing the infection, was lost when media and certain legislators began to sensationalise and communalise the pandemic. Such tactics are clearly meant to divert public attention and scrutiny from the negligent and inept management by central and state government. We need to remember that on ground it translates directly to more deaths in the state/country.

As concerned citizens and organizations, we ask that

1. The Bangalore Police should immediately take suo moto cognizance and register a criminal case against Tejasvi Surya, Ravi Subramanya, Uday Garudachar and Satish Reddy and everyone involved in this operation for their attempts to communalise the pandemic. This will act as a deterrent to other vigilante groups who can also indulge in violent targeting of minorities.
2. The BJP government should focus their attention on urgently setting up primary and secondary High Dependency Units (HDUs) so that patients do not crowd the tertiary facilities and ICUs.
3. The Karnataka State Government should issue strong statements condemning the acts of these members of the legislature and encourage volunteers to come together across religion, caste, gender, geography, physical ability, sexual orientation etc and the ministers should tender an apology. It is well known that responsive government and an engaged community goes a long way in addressing disasters and pandemics of this nature.
4. We urge the Central government to allocate oxygen, medicines and vaccines as they are being demanded by the Karnataka State government.

Contact email: ethicalmediacampaign@gmail.com

Signatories to the statement

Individuals

1	Dr. Sylvia Karpagam	Public health doctor
2	Basawa Prasad Kunale	Advocate
3	Alice Mathew	Associate Professor
4	Rajendran Narayanan	
5	Isha barthwal	Volunteer
6	Shashank SR	Research Scholar & Journalist
7	Nitya V	Teacher
8	Sakina	
9	Apurva	PhD Student, University of Pennsylvania
10	Swaliha Asiya	Content Strategist
11	Ashika Shetty	Child rights worker
12	Vidya Subramanian	Assistant Professor, OP Jindal Global University
13	Vandana Srivastava	
14	swati	
15	Haris belgami	Software engineer
16	Arundhati	
17	Umair Khan	Dr
18	Zia Nomani	AIMIM
19	Jonaid Alam	A concerned Indian
20	Oscar Fernandez	
21	Bittu K R	Karnataka Janashakti
22	Mohammed younus	
23	Deepak Manian	
24	Sharjeel	
25	Asad Khan	
26	Rahul shah	Student
27	Nagaragere Ramesh	Retired Professor
28	Lalita Ramdas	Individual

29	Prof. Mohan Rao	Former professor, Centre of Social medicine and Community Health, JNU
30	Sulekha Nair	None
31	Hasham uddin	Graduate
32	Rohini Malur	
33	Vijayalakshmi Harish	Citizen of India
34	Mohammed Sameer	Engineer
35	Tarangini	Teacher
36	Praveen Kumar	
37	Swati	
38	Karthik	Migrant worker.
39	Anurag P	Psychologist
40	Motika Anand	
41	Nandakishore Varma	
42	Divya Sridharan	Private individual
43	Dee S	
44	Vivek Jadhav	Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru
45	Kumar	
46	Anjali	
47	Pooja Lathkar	
48	D.W. Karuna	Academic
49	Rufus B	Accountant
50	Srinivas	None.
51	Siddharth K J	Independent Researcher, Bengaluru
52	Vimal Simha	
53	Anjali	Consultant
54	Snehal Sinha	
55	Chandni Ganesh	
56	Meghana Rao	Assistant Professor
57	Nithin M	

58	Gitanjali R	N/A
59	Anusha Hegde	Development practitioner
60	Umesh Rao	Software Developer
61	Runu	Independent activist
62	K Menon	
63	Dev Desai	Human Rights activities
64	Rajakumari	
65	Siddharth Mandrekar Rao	
66	Trisha Chandran	Advocate
67	Sadath	QA
68	Poorna	Advocate
69	Kishan	All India Students' Association
70	Roopesh Kumar	
71	Ved Mathai	Engineer
72	Manogna	Student
73	Sagar	Private employee
74	R Srinivasan	Retd (Prof) IIMB
75	AL -FURAN TRUST	Tax Consultant
76	Irfan	Concerned citizen
77	Tajuddin	Engineer
78	Imtiyaz Ahmed	Tax consultant
79	Tejaswini Nalegave	Student
80	Nizamuddin Davangere	
81	Tarangini	Student
82	Nagarjun	Concerned Citizen
83	Prabhu M	Journalist
84	Kruthika	
85	Vinay Kumar	Consultant - IISc
86	Shwetha	Working Professional - research
87	Hussain	Director of a company

88	Abhishodh Prakash	Postdoc, ICTS-TIFR
89	AISA	Member
90	N. Jayaram	PUCL
91	Ershad	Proprietor
92	Ershad	Proprietor
93	Rohini	Writer
94	Fiyaz Pasha	
95	Gurumoorthy	IT professional
96	Sudha Nagavarapu	Researcher/Activist
97	Gunjan Jena	Advocate
98	Karthik Ranganathan	
99	TOUSEEF AHMED	Director Hospital
100	MAQHBULAHMED	Salaried
101	Hema Swaminathan	
102	Shahnaz begum	
103	Gunjan	None
104	M.K Rahman	None
105	Azeem khan	Retired Government service
106	Mohammad Sikkandar	Relationship Executive
107	Avani Chokshi	CPI(ML) Liberation
108	Niveditha GD	Student
109	Manavi Atri	Advocate
110	Arindam Roy	CPI ML Liberation
111	All India People's Forum	Bengaluru
112	Shariff	Professional
113	Arati Chokshi	Citizen
114	Senthil	Teacher
115	Saurabh Bhattacharjee	WBNUJS Kolkata
116	Shahin Akel	Student
117	Amod Shah	PhD Researcher

118	Fizal	NA
119	N Devadasan	
120	Kumaraswamy BN	Advocate
121	Ayesha Samah	Citizen
122	Leo	
123	Aamira	Home maker
124	Shaheen Shasa	
125	Shashank SR	Research Scholar and Journalist
126	TANVEER	
127	Deepak Malghan	
128	Siddique	JIH
129	Ashwath Ram	Product manager
130	Nasreen syed	Bangalore
131	Alagammai	Undergraduate Student
132	Dilshad	Student
133	Efi Gauthier	
134	Andleeb Shadman	
135	Javed Ahmed	Professional
136	Madhura	Student
137	Firdaus	Home Maker
138	Guru	Homemaker
139	Jyotsna jha	
140	Dalia	
141	Mariyam Saigal	Law student
142	Laxmi Priya	CITIZEN CONCERNED
143	Shabil	Student
144	Prasanna	
145	Sanjana	
146	Hasib	
147	Rajeev	Assistant professor

148	Poornima Kumar	Social worker
149	Syed Rameez	Manager
150	Lalitha Matthew	
151	Naheeda Naz	
152	Zaid	
153	Jagrat	
154	Nabeel	
155	Waheedunnisa	
156	Mohammad zikriya	Media
157	Alwyn D'Souza	
158	FAYAZ	Administrator
159	Manisha Shastri	Social Worker & Researcher
160	Vandana Srivastava	
161	Rishav Raj	
162	Snehal Shah	Independent Reseracher
163	Prakhya CV	Student
164	Savitha Suresh Babu	Teacher
165	Harini Gopalswami	None
166	V Bhargav	
167	Khadeer	
168	Fasi Rahman	
169	Syed Abrar Ahmed	Dr
170	Nabarun Gogoi	Professional
171	Nidhisha Philip	
172	Malik	Businessman
173	Riaz Azam Khan	
174	Ali	Advocate in process
175	Nandini	Social worker
176	Sachit	
177	Ananya	

178	Mazzy	Indian
179	Waseem khan	
180	Prateek Raj	Assistant Professor, IIM Bangalore
181	Kshiraja K	
182	Malcolm Carvalho	Writer
183	Waseen	Business man
184	Apoorva D	independent
185	Sadique Hussain	Self employed
186	Syed Tippu Ahmed	Citizen
187	Imran Khan	Sela employed
188	Surekha	
189	Shivani SP	Citizen
190	R.kaleemullah Swaraj Abhiyan Bangalore	Aman committee state convenor
191	Mohammed Mustafa	Self employed
192	Akash Bhattacharya	Azim Premji University.
193	Jayanth	Business man
194	Vishwathika	Student
195	Manidip Mandal	
196	Ameer Mazhar Pasha	Private Service
197	Swati Simha	Student/ volunteer
198	Anna P.	
199	Anna.P	None
200	Fatema	Individual
201	Peggy devaraj	
202	Imthiyaz	
203	Aziz Kassam	
204	Swathi Shivanand	Independent researcher
205	Parameshwara Bhat	none.
206	Tanya Singh	

207	Najma Nazeer	Principal
208	Shuhaib	Business man
209	Karthik Krishnaswamy	
210	Ganesh N	Journalist
211	Manar taj	None
212	CS Dwarakanath	Advocate
213	Soundarya Iyer	
214	Kavitha srinivasan	Women farmers organisation
215	Dwiji Guru	Sustainable food systems advocate and activist
216	Shalom Gauri	Student
217	Lingaraju TS	Doctor
218	Meenakshi S N	Student
219	Nanditha	Citizen.
220	Manidip Mandal	Citizen
221	Satyajit	Artist
222	Rafia	Teacher
223	Dhanapal	private sector
224	Pallab	Researcher
225	Asha R	
226	Shashank	Medical social worker
227	Noor Ayesha	
228	Vishesh Kumar	None
229	Keerti	Research Scholar
230	Mohammed Saalim	None
231	Sudhir Jha	Self
232	Yash M	
233	Bala Panchanathan	Student.
234	Dada Khalander	Writer
235	Darshan Karthik	Indian
236	V. Shivakumar	Advocate

237	Asjwini	House wife
238	Revanth	Student
239	A Karthikeyan	Retired Manufacturing professional
240	Patel	Business
241	Ashwini	Accountant
242	Rabia	TEACHER
243	Krishna prasad	Teacher
244	Salomi Jacob	
245	Priscilla	Coordinator
246	Mahadev	Self employed
247	Chris Kurian	
248	KAuser	House wife
249	Faseeha Rubbiya	Student
250	Azmuda	Home maker
251	Munawar	Butcher
252	Rutam Rane	
253	Xi lu	
254	Arhaz Khan	
255	Hema Venkat	Journalist
256	Karthik	Gram seva sangh
257	Pushpa S	Political and Social Activist
258	Dilip Paramesh	Self
259	Dilip Paramesh	Individual
260	Ashwini R	Professor
261	Akshay	
262	Khan	Individual/ Lead
263	Yukti Garde	
264	Aijaz	IT expert

Organisations

- 1 Karnataka janaarogya Chaluvai
- 2 All India Students' Association

- 3 The Creasent Hub
- 4 Scottish Indians for justice
- 5 India Solidarity Germany
- 6 Indian Social Action Forum (INSAF)
- 7 Indian Solidarity Finland
- 8 Canadians Against Oppression And Persecution (CAOP)
- 9 Sabudana Things
- 10 Whitefield Rising
- 11 Law Associates Web
- 12 Campaign Against Hate Speech