

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED?

[A fact-finding committee comprising Bojja Tharakam (State President Republican Party Of India) Lateef Mohd Khan, G.Secretary. Civil. Liberties Monitoring Committee; Varvara Rao, VIRASAM; D Suresh Kumar, Secretary, APCLC visited the affected area on 20th May 2007 and filed a report. Excerpts:]

The committee in the first place strongly condemns the heinous act of bomb blasting at Mecca Masjid killing 5 and injuring about 35 people.

The committee equally condemns the police firing on innocent people killing 9 and injuring several others without any provocation.

The committee is of the opinion that the bomb blast at Mecca Masjid while the Friday prayers were going on was aimed at only to terrorize Muslim people and to shatter their confidence.

The committee also feels that the police firing was also aimed at terrorizing Muslim people and to crush even a small attempt of agitation from the Muslims.

The police firing was done at a place which is about 200 meters away from the Masjid which confirms the allegation that the police were aiming at people who were proceeding towards Masjid or going away from the Masjid.

According to the version of the injured in the police firing, the firing was aimed at people which have no concern to the incident. One was fired at while he was proceeding towards his house by that side and another 17-year-old boy was fired at when he was going in to the Asra hospital to donate his blood for one of his relatives. Yet another was fired at when he was trying to lift a fallen man of the bullet injuries. These are classic examples of how the police fired indiscriminately. According to police version which appeared in the press that they fired at the mob which was about to attack a petrol pump and a wine shop. In fact there were no signs of any attack. The petrol pump was closed on 3 sides and opened to road on one side which is well guarded. If the shutters of the wine shop were down it would be easily protected. It is ridiculous for the police to claim that they were to kill 9 people and injure about 25 people in order to save a petrol Pump and a wine shop.

More condemnable than the above incident is the police opening fire into the Masjid putting the rifle on the iron rails of the Masjid from the road side. An eye witness to this ghastly behavior of police is none else than Mr. Mohd Ghouse, a former cooperator from that area. When the people trying to rush out after the blast the police aimed at firing at such terror stricken people. The manner in which the police opened fire, one aiming inside the Masjid and the other-firing indiscriminately from a place away from the Masjid show that the police also aiming at terrorizing Muslims.

The police firing started after about an hour of the blast. People must have been by that time agitated and anxious to know about the condition of their relatives who have gone to offer namaz. The police did not warn them. Even if the mob became uncontrolled, the police should have used rubber bullets. All the injuries are from bullets only. There are no traces of any injury of a rubber bullet,

which shows that the police simply fired at the mob. Till to date there is no evidence of who gave the order to open fire.

The government till date is not in a position to give the exact number of deaths due to bomb blast and police firing. According to information gathered by the committee the deaths due to police firing are more than the deaths due to bomb blast. This fact alone speaks volumes.

According to version given by the police the bomb blast is of the handiwork of two Islamic organizations which operate from outside India. In fact the police has released a Muslim name who is said to be the master mind of the blast. According to facts revealed by a medical officer of Asra Hospital who treated the injured, some nails, door hinges, and briefcase handle were removed from the bodies of the injured. This establishes that the bomb used in the blast was a crude one made with indigenous technology. The injuries received during the blast and the foreign objects recovered from the bodies of the injured do not establish any connection with either RDX or TNT. The naming of the two Islamic organizations as responsible for the blast without any acceptable clue reveal the mind-set of the investigating agency either to mislead the public or to divert their attention. By identifying the probable accused and the organizations without any preliminary evidence show the attempts of the police to close all other areas of suspicion. The investigating agency can only come up with the names of the organizations which are responsible for the blast only after eliminating all other organizations which can be suspected in such nature of crimes.

The committee feels that both the bomb blast and the subsequent police firing are aimed at terrorizing Muslims and trampling minimum agitation from that side.

The state government should, take the responsibility for the whole incident. Even after the warnings by the central government about the possible terrorist attacks in states including Andhra Pradesh, the police did not take any necessary precautions to guard sensitive places like places of worship. It seems there will be regular check up at Mecca Masjid especially on Fridays by the concerned police. Surprisingly there was no regular check up on that Friday. Sufficient force was also not deployed when about 10,000 people gathered at the time of namaz. It is unfortunate to know that the government is appreciating the police for controlling the situation instead of taking action against the policemen who are responsible either for the lapse regarding arrangements at the Masjid or for indiscriminate killing people without any provocation.

This is the first time in the history of Hyderabad city or the for that matter of India where a bomb blast occurred when thousands of people were offering prayers in a mosque. It is a very serious matter and of concern for all to know the persons responsible for it. No investigating agency can simply wash off its hands by naming terrorist organization. When such incidents are likely to happen again, it is the duty of the investigating agency to clear of all possible suspicions and arrive at a definite conclusion. Even after lapse of several days no such traces are evident in the investigation. It is surprising to know that one more cell phone was recovered on 20-05-2007 from the ground. □□□