

Press Release: Sept 4, 2020

WE THE CITIZENS OBJECT TO THE MANNER OF THE DELHI RIOTS PROBE

Over 1000 citizens from all walks of life including, filmmaker **Aparna Sen**; former Culture Secretary culture **Jawahar Sircar**; Historian **Ramchandra Guha**; former Chairperson, Delhi Minority Commission **Dr. Zafarul-Islam Khan**; Former Governor, **Margaret Alva**; Academics – **Zoya Hasan, Partha Chatterjee, Jayati Ghosh, Poonam Batra, Nivedita Menon, Sucharita Sen**; former senior civil servants - **Wajahat Habibullah, Madhu Bhaduri, Deb Mukherjee, Amitabha Pande, Sundar Burra, Aditi Mehta**; feminists and trans rights activists – **Meera Sanghamitra, Vani Subramanian, Chayanika Shah, Hasina Khan**; Journalists – **Vidya Subrahmaniam, Geeta Seshu, Manoj Mitta, Anjali Mody, Antara Dev Sen, Priyanka Borpujari**; political leaders, **Brinda Karat, Annie Raja, Kavita Krishnan**; Artists **Kiran Sehgal, Shuddabrata Sengupta & Writer Aruna Vasudev**; Social activists – Magsasay Awardees **Aruna Roy and Sandeep Pandey**; Democratic rights activists **Jagdeep Chhokar, Henri Tiphane, Teesta Setalvad, John Dayal, Lara Jesani**; Former Chief of Naval Staff, **Admiral Ramdas**; Scientist, **Amitabha Basu**, along with scores of others - have issued an urgent statement, strongly objecting to the manner in which Delhi Police has been conducting the probe into the riots cases, and calling on them to restore the public's faith in the investigation.

Citing strong evidence of coerced 'confessional' statements and manufactured evidence, the signatories have sought assurances from the Delhi Police Commissionerate that these practices will be stopped, and have urged them to conduct a fair and impartial investigation to book the real culprits of the riots.

FULL STATEMENT

DELHI POLICE – WE THE CITIZENS OBJECT TO THE MANNER OF THE DELHI RIOTS PROBE RESTORE THE PUBLIC'S FAITH IN YOUR INVESTIGATION

Stop coercing 'confessional' statements to manufacture evidence

Stop falsely implicating people, including Umar Khalid

Stop wrongly invoking UAPA to give the colour of conspiracy against the state

We are alarmed by the news that on Sept 1, 2020, Umar Khalid sent a letter to the Delhi Police Commissioner, Shri SN Shrivastava, with shocking evidence of the Delhi Police manufacturing evidence against him, through extorted statements. The letter reveals that a young man was interrogated by the Delhi Police (Special Cell) and a false confession against Umar Khalid, related to Delhi riots, was extracted and videotaped. The young man was threatened that he would be arrested under UAPA if he refused. He submitted to the coercion for he was scared, and yet his conscience allowed him to speak up about what had transpired. (<https://thewire.in/rights/citing-instance-of-witness-coercion-umar-khalid-accuses-police-of-framing-him-in-riots-case>).

We are gravely concerned that Dr. Umar Khalid, a young scholar, already vilified and targeted relentlessly by a section of the media, is now being implicated in riots cases on the basis of manufactured evidence. Umar Khalid is not above the law, and must support any

police investigation. But when the process of law is sought to be short circuited and undermined, then any citizen's liberty is gravely threatened.

Other people have earlier reported being coerced during police interrogation in Delhi riots cases (<https://www.thepolisproject.com/manufacturing-evidence-how-the-police-framed-and-arrested-constitutional-right-defenders-in-india/#.X00TkS2B2qA>)

A scrutiny by independent media has found the following: In the Ankit Sharma charge-sheet (FIR 65/20), Dayalpur Police station, presented by the Delhi Police, there were **4 identical 'confessional' statements**. There were **7 identical statements** in the Ratan Lal (FIR 60/20), Dayalpur police station, charge-sheet. And there were **10 identical statements** in the Jaffrabad police station, (FIR 50/20) charge-sheet. (<https://scroll.in/article/967881/delhi-polices-grand-riots-conspiracy-where-is-the-evidence>) In a fourth charge-sheet of the Dilbar Negi case (FIR number 39/20) Thana, Gokulpuri, the Indian Express found that **9 out of 12 confessional statement were near verbatim copies** of each other. (<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/delhi/delhi-riots-9-of-12-confession-statements-near-copies-of-one-another-6485967/>).

This pattern of coerced statements and false evidence is alarming. We ask the Delhi Police to confront this evidence of fabrication and coercion, uphold the sanctity of law and procedures, and conduct a fair and just investigation. So that the real culprits of the terrible violence that caused 53 deaths, injured hundreds and damaged property of thousands, are arrested.

We, as citizens of this country, bring on record our objections to the manner in which the North East Delhi Riot cases are being investigated, what this means for the rule of law, the protection of the civil liberties and booking of the real culprits.

It is important that the faith of the public be restored in the police. The investigation of the North East Delhi riots has undermined this faith as it is being undertaken in a prejudicial manner, targeting the anti-CAA protestors and supporters, alleging a conspiracy.

We seek an urgent assurance from the Delhi Police Commissionerate, that practices like extorting 'confessions' to manufacture evidence will be immediately ended; that those who indulge in them will be held accountable; and that no action will be taken against Umar Khalid or anyone else on the basis of these so called confessions and fabricated evidence.

Even these coerced confessional statements do not make for UAPA offences, and invoking this law appears to be done without application of mind, to give acts the colour of a conspiracy against the state. We ask the police to drop the application of UAPA in all these cases.

Signed/
Full list of Signatories attached

Contact: pucl.natgensec@gmail.com