



VOICE OF THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

VANI

Voluntary Action Network India

(an apex body of voluntary organisations)

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VANI's statement on lynching

The beauty of India has always been its diversity and co-existence. Various thinkers and preachers have always defined it as bouquet rather than single flower, because many faiths, cultures and sub-groups lived and flourished. We as a country had witnessed disturbances in the past but the threat to social fabric was never witnessed as it is today. The fear and respect of law is being replaced by mobocracy. In recent times the country has witnessed brutal killings on the name of religion, caste or groupings. Dalits, Muslims or even government officials performing their duties are being targeted and has perpetuated a sense of fear and alienation among these groups. The response to the #notinmyname protests all over the country lead us to believe that a significant number of people are alarmed by this growing trend.

Is this not a Talibanisation of our most vibrant democracy which is home to billions of people? The rises of such incidents make it evident that they can no longer be regarded as isolated events, but as a result of political agenda of hate and divisiveness. On one hand, such incidents are fueled by irresponsible statements and hate speeches from government spokespersons and fringe elements. On the other, lack of strong government action has further emboldened these targeted killings which are carried out sometimes in the name of beef, sometimes over the fear of unknown as in the case of killing of Kashmiri officer.

As civil society organizations working with the marginalized sections and towards the protection of human rights, we believe that these incidents will have far reaching implications on the social fabric of the nation. The failure of law enforcement to prevent these mob killings and public apathy is generating a feeling of helplessness amongst people. Thus we look up to government to enforce laws to prevent such hate crimes and ensure rehabilitation of the victims and their families.

VANI and its member's strongly condemn such actions. We also feel that deafening silence of government and society at large is going to harm everyone. We must remind ourselves that India is home to the oldest human civilisation, which has not only survived but also flourished for centuries. Government inaction, failure of law enforcement to prevent these mob killings and public apathy and fear is generating a feeling of helplessness amongst people. We look to the Government of India to uphold the rule of law and take necessary action to prevent such hate crimes. The government should not only ensure punishment for the perpetrators and instigators, but also rehabilitation of victims and their families.

VANI would also like to appeal to each and every citizen of the country to come forward in what ever way they can to preserve the essence of India. Indian civilisation is melting pot of all cultures, religions and castes and one has to work towards it. The intellectuals, business, media and civil society should come forward and speak for it as keeping silent is not an excuse.