

from the massive movement, 5 JNU students including past and present JNUSU office bearers and well-known activists have come back to the campus and have made it very clear that they are ready to co-operate with law and investigations. Alongside the police crackdown and vilification by sections of media, JNU administration has unleashed a biased 'enquiry', which has no credibility both in terms its composition as well as intent as it started its very process by suspending 8 students (including most of us) without giving them any hearing!

Over the past week, we have seen doctored videos, fake twitter accounts and unsubstantiated 'IB' reports being used to whip up a frenzy. A Zee news producer has resigned over deliberately malicious and FALSE media reporting. And yet, despite all the bogus and concocted 'evidence', the witch-hunt of JNU students and faculty members continues unabated. In Gwalior yesterday, goons from the BJP's youth wing shot at JNU Prof. Vivek Kumar when he addressed a seminar organised by the Ambedkar Vichar Manch. It isn't just 'Afzal ki baat' but Ambedkar ki baat too that are being met with Sanghi bullets and sedition charges. In HCU, the witch-hunt leading to Rohith Vemula's institutional murder started with the letter by BJP MP and minister and the HCU administration following the diktats. In JNU, in a repeat of the same method, police crackdown and sedition charges followed after local BJP MP's initiative and JNU administration followed suit. What a chilling replay. The battle in HCU demanding justice for Rohith and the ongoing struggle in JNU for democracy are NOT separate. We as JNU student activists are committed to defending freedom of expression of students and will fight criminalisation of dissent. We are the ones fighting against 'bharat ki barbadi' at the hands of communal and corporate fascism. FTII, IIT-Madras, HCU and now JNU-there is an all out attack of saffron emergency. In every institution of higher education, state machinery and administrative power is being used to crush all voices which differ from that of the RSS-BJP-ABVP brigade. Students are fighting back in every campus. Students and teachers of JNU have rose up in rock solid unity and determination to defend the heart and soul of JNU against this attack. We'll defend Babasaheb's and Bhagat Singh's vision of India, and we're not scared of Sanghi sedition charges.

**#JusticeforRohithVemula! #StandWith**

**JNU HCU to JNU: Save the Constitution, Save Democracy, Save Universities**

Against the Institutional Murder of Rohith Vemula

Against Brahminical Discrimination in Higher Education

Against Crackdown and Sedition Charges on JNU Students

Join Joint Action Committee for Social Justice's Call of

**Chalo Delhi 23 Feb Tuesday 11 am Ambedkar Bhawan to Jantar Mantar!**  
**Assemble at Ganga Dhaba at 9.30am**



On 17 January this year, Rohith Vemula died. His 'suicide' or rather institutional murder, was the result of a systematic campaign by ABVP-RSS-BJP branding him 'anti-national', 'extremist' and 'casteist'. Since then, HCU has witnessed a historic battle and we in JNU have been an integral part of this movement. On 23 February, let us join thousands of students from across the country to demand justice for Rohith, against the institutional barriers of caste, against political victimisation and criminalisation of dissent:

**Caste-based and political victimisation:** At a time when we in JNU are battling with a state-sponsored crackdown on our democratic spaces, let us remind ourselves of the questions raised by Rohith Vemula's death: On the one hand, it is yet another grim remainder of the terrible, institutional discrimination and alienation faced by Dalit students who enter our higher education institutions against all odds. But what this tragic episode also reveals is the absolute dangerous use of state power by the ABVP-RSS-BJP. Now, we are in a situation when the entire state machinery and university administration are being blatantly used to punish, victimise and ostracize ALL differing and dissenting opinion! In IIT Madras, the ABVP-RSS-BJP tried to ban the Ambedkar Pariyar Study Circle for their uncomfortable questioning of RSS's vision of the 'nation'. In HCU, they slandered and vilified Ambedkarite activists and hounded Rohith to his tragic death. The very same self-proclaimed 'nationalists' have dubbed the entire JNU campus as a hub of anti-nationals, seditionists and terror sympathisers. And today, Soni Sori - an adivasi school teacher and iconic symbol of resistance to state repression in Chhattisgarh - has been brutally attacked with strong chemicals and is battling for her life. The message is clear. All dissenters against entrenched caste hierarchies, all those speaking of adivasi rights, all those defending democracy, will be hounded and 'punished', arrested and jailed, attacked and even pushed to death.

**ABVP-RSS-BJP's campaign of slander, lies and intimidation :** In HCU, the ABVP-RSS used its favoured weapon of lies, slander and political intimidation against Rohith and his friends. An ABVP leader's health condition due to appendicitis was attributed to a 'violent attack'. Facts, evidence, and even statements in the court by medical authorities and the HCU administration were ignored. Rohith's position against the capital punishment, and his opposition to Yakub Memon's killing was used to brand him 'anti-national'. The local RSS machinery, BJP Union Ministers and the MHRD intervened to act as storm-troopers for the ABVP, and the University administration was dictated to toe the RSS line.

Even after his death, Rohith was called a liar and his Dalit identity and experience was questioned. On 30 Jan, Rohith Vemula's birth anniversary, the ABVP and the saffron brigade declared that they would run a "countrywide campaign" to prove that Rohith

was not a Dalit and that he falsified his caste certificate! The same day, Union Minister Sushma Swaraj amplified this lie, saying publicly that Rohith was not a Dalit. **It has also been reported that even the IB is spending public money 'investigating' Rohith's caste and submitting 'reports' to the National Security Advisor.** *Let there be no mistake: Rohith was subjected to a political witch-hunt by Union Ministers of the BJP, and expelled from his University, because these powers knew him to be Dalit, and an Ambedkarite activist to boot. It is based on this social identity and ideological viewpoint of Rohith and his friends, that the BJP minister Bandaru Dattatreya dubbed them as 'casteist', 'anti-national' and what not and used the govt machinery to victimise them. Much in the same way as the case of murder of Akhlaq in Dadri where the police and Sangh machinery was more interested in investigating the meat in the fridge rather than booking the culprits who had beaten him to death, in Rohith's case as well the culprits of his institutional murder are now spending public money to enquire into his caste identity rather than taking action on the UoH VC and Union Ministers responsible for his death.*

**Caste-based Discrimination, Denial of Social Justice and Forced Drop Outs: Reality of Indian Campuses:** Rohith Vemula's suicide is not the first instance of institutional murder of Dalit student in so called premier institutions of learning. Several other cases have brought out the reality of discrimination at every step faced by students from socially marginalised communities. There have been up to 11 cases of suicides by students, mostly Dalits, in various institutions in Hyderabad alone between 2007 and 2013.

It is high time that we challenge the **entrenched bias** against students from marginalised communities in our campuses. Even after a constitutional law directing reservation for SC/ST and OBCs in faculty, staff positions and students admissions, we see the rigid administrative structures hell-bent on denying the mandated reservations. In Presidency University of Kolkata for instance, SC reserved seats were not filled, and were *illegally* converted into general category! A Dalit faculty member in the Presidency University has recently openly spoken out against discrimination and harassment he faced for years, condoned by the university administration.

There are in fact huge back-logs in reserved seats of teaching positions almost in all Universities of the country. **Mandated reservations for students are routinely scuttled** by University administrations. In several cases, students have to fight in courts to get their rightful seats in Universities. Moreover, the **spate of privatisation** of education has ended all possibility of social justice, as the private institutions are exempted from implementing reservations!

Even if students from deprived sections enter the universities, we see a completely insensitive academic and institutional structure making it impossible for those students to complete their education with dignity. In almost all universities, it is the students from marginalised backgrounds who are mostly at the receiving end of **forced drop-outs** from these institutions. The case of IIT-Roorkee brings out this reality most clearly. In 2014, 73 students were failed from the institutions for not having the required CGPA. Is it a mere co-incidence that 90 percent of those students were from SC/ST/OBC community?

Our educational institutions are failing to be platforms of social justice, equality and dignity for the historically marginalised communities. The mass movement for justice for Rohith Vemula must challenge and defeat the crass caste based prejudices along with elite and discriminatory institutional and academic structures existing in our educational institutions even today.

**Defeat the ABVP-RSS-BJP's politics of vilification, intimidation and crushing of dissent :** Today, in campuses across the country – HCU, JNU, FTII, JU – we continue to battle against the ABVP-RSS-BJP's campaign of vilification, intimidation and crushing of dissent. It is now 8 days since the JNUSU President is in jail, charged with sedition. The Delhi Police is hounding and witch-hunting several other JNU students, including past and present JNUSU office bearers and Left activists. Fake parody accounts are being used to 'prove' that protests in JNU are funded by the LeT. Slanderous 'news' reports appear claiming that Umar Khalid is a ISIS/JeM sympathiser. Doctored videos and photoshopped images are used to whip up a frenzy against JNU students and activists who have dared to lead the OccupyUGC and JusticeForRohith protests. There are open exhortations by RSS/BJP ideologues demanding that JNUSU Vice President be interrogated simply because she happens to be a Kashmiri Muslim and opposed Baba Ramdev's visit to JNU as to speak at a programme organised by the JNU administration. Several Left activists are receiving threats and vile abuse, and are at the centre of scurrilous campaigns.

**Today, the need is to unite and tell the RSS-BJP clearly: we will fight for justice for Rohith, for Left activists in JNU, against their campaign of slander and intimidation.**

**We appeal to the student community to participate in a massive Chalo Delhi March on Tuesday, 23 February, to strengthen the ongoing movement for justice for Rohith, punishment for the culprits, for an end to institutionalised caste discrimination and for defeating BJP-RSS-ABVP's cult of criminalising and crushing all dissenting voices.**

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