

Press release dated 31st march - by joint action committee for social justice UoH

Students inside the university have been resisting against the imposed blockade in the campus. The main gate and all the other gates have been blocked, wherein even Lawyers, doctors and human rights activists and organizations are being denied entry. On the 23rd of March we had staged a protest at the gate to allow the entry of Teesta Seteelvad and MP (Loksabha) M B Rajesh, P K Biju and P Sampath.

University of Hyderabad that became a graveyard for Dalit students is now being converted into a military camp. These strong use of words are not an exaggeration or a political rhetoric but is supported by substantial evidences. **The minutes of the VC's meeting with the deans held on the 24th of March**, which reads like a death sentence to the students of this university and the university itself, were leaked in the public domain. Our faculties who were arrested, after coming out made a statement that they felt that the jails were much more democratic than this university, this document proves them right

Whose security? Security from whom ?

- There is a consistent effort on the part of the university administration and the BJP (as minister Bandaru Dattatreya and Smriti Irani are also implicated in this situation) to manipulate the facts of the matter. For instance the lies about Rohith's caste, lies about the head of the EC subcommittee being a Dalit, hiding the affidavit filed by the commissioner of police on the 3rd of October etc. Even now, in order to justify the entry to Appa Rao and the use of brutal force upon the faculty and students they are trying to project that there is some uncontrollable crisis inside the university.

It is this administration that has blocked out the media, has prevented the entry of food, water, doctors, lawyers and parents of the students from entering into the campus in order to isolate the students from the outside and prevent the truth from getting out. They are using ways to punish, create fear and suppress the voices of the students because they are the accused and want to impede the process of justice for Rohith. The minutes of the meeting of the VC with the deans of the university is an outrageous evidence of the same, the conspiracy of Podile Appa Rao, the BJP and all their allied forces against the students and Rohith continues.

- Coming to the document, it mentions that the UGC guidelines that recommend the installation of a police outpost in university campuses will be mandated in UoH. It also states that CISF, the central industrial security forces force will be instated at the earliest. The document states that "It was also felt that the university should not hesitate on the expenditure incurred on security". It stated that the velivada and Rohith's stupa that has been installed by the students in memory of Rohith will be removed using police and security force regardless of any consent or consideration to the students. We are again witnessing a pre-planned ploy by the university to erase the memory of Rohith so that people will forget about the injustice and stop holding the university accountable.
- **Radhika Vemula**, whose son was forced to kill himself in this university, is being perceived as a threat by the administration. Podile Apparao, never once met the suspended students, Rohith or Rohith's family, he is also the one whom Rohith addressed the his letter of 18th December asking for a rope or Sodium azide to kill himself is rejoicing over the fact that they could successfully prevent Radhika Vemula from entering the campus.

All these acts and reactions by the university administration hand in hand with the police and the BJP reinforce the fact that they are guilty and want to push things under the carpet instead of addressing the issues.

- Against the women students who resisted the police when they were being shoved and dragged on the 22nd, and were sexually and physically assaulted by the male police personnel, the minutes in the meeting state that there should be focus **on recruiting more female security force**. In the month of August when the UGC recommendation came out mandating the presence of a police out-post in all university campuses, University of Hyderabad students opposed these recommendations. The UoH student's union called for a General Body Meeting where in a full quorum, the students unanimously passed a resolution against the presence of police in any campus. We can see that the University administration has again colluded with the government in power and brought back the mandate to install the police out post.
- The minutes mention that the non-boarders need to be evicted from university hostels as they are a stress on the scarce university resources. The same document mention that abundant money can be spent on employing CISF and private security. We understand this as a means to impose surveillance on campus over the excuse of conducting raids in the hostel. They have already mentioned their inclination to deploy high-powered gadgets, CCTV cameras, electronic identity card swipes etc. On one hand they crush our demands for increase in fellowships, but are willing to invest in anti-student and unnecessary security equipments.

There is already a huge presence of state police force and security guards, yet the VC who is booked under the SC/ST Prevention of atrocities act, and is out on campus without bail is planning to unleash immense police/para military/ private security force on the students who are fighting for justice and against social discrimination in the university. Such unwarranted use of state sanctioned force is understood by us as a means to create fear among students and protect the criminals.

State of siege

- **Prof. Vipin Srivastava** was the chair of the EC subcommittee that gave the order of suspension of the 5 students, a fabricated order, influenced by Bandaru Dattareya, susheel Kumar, Alok Pandey's lies that culminated into Rohith's murder. Vipin Srivastava was also implicated in the death of Senthil Kumar a dalit Phd scholar.

Prof. Vipin Srivastava is being appointed as the spokesperson of the university will mean that he is the only official communication from the university. While the students have been imprisoned inside the university and denied access to the outside public domain. Only the administration's versions will reach out and students are being shut up.

- There was another notice issued by the administration and it is also a part of the minutes of the meeting, a team will support Prof. Vipin Srivastava. It includes the names of Prof. Sanjay Subodh and Prof. Vasuki. Prof. Sanjay Subodh was one of the professors named in the '**task sheets**' that were leaked along with Alok Pandey, who is named in the FIR and had submitted the fraud proctorial committee report and Vipin Srivastava. Is it not suspicious that the same names that are implicated in the case are the lobby supporting and facilitating Appa Rao to hide the truth?
- The one point in the document that talks about the setting up of an anti-discrimination officer for the campus, seems like it is made in passing and is so insensitive that it recommends the deployment of a retired police officer as a anti-discrimination officer. The registrar **Mr. Sudhakar** who had filed the FIR against all the students and faculty is being given the responsibility to look into this matter.

The distribuion of duties to Vipin Srivastava, Alok Pandey, M Sudhakar etc. therefore fits into the pattern of reinstating the murderers of RohithVemula into the positions of power in order to crush all forms of resistance and destroy the movement for justice for Rohith and dismantling the fight for a discrimination free and democratic campus.

The decision clearly shows that those in power are bent upon safeguarding the Brahmanical structures that were responsible for the relentless persecution of the Dalit students which led to the institutional murder of RohithVemula. This is also testimony to the fact that the return of Appa Rao to the post of the Vice Chancellor is with the intention to preserve the various discriminatory structures and practices that prevail in the University of Hyderabad that have been challenged by Rohith Vemula and the movement for his justice.

- It should be noted that Podile Appa Rao decided to come back to the campus without any prior notice to the interim VC or most of the faculty. His entry was facilitated by a section of the faculty, the non-teaching staff and the ABVP students. Podile Appa Rao came back on the 22nd of March, the Joint Action Committee strongly feels that the return of Appa Rao was to defer the academic council meeting convened by the interim Vice Chancellor Prof. M. Periasamy with the pro student agendas such as setting up of anti-discrimination committees, raising of non-net fellowships and ensuring SC/ST representation in all types of governing bodies of the University.
- The University administration is trying its best to project that **the ‘normalcy’ of the campus** was disturbed by the students. At the outset we want to question this normalcy that allows for institutional murders to takes place. Secondly we want to repeat that the campus had returned to its academic schedule alongside the struggle for justice for Rohith when Appa Rao was not here. It is the conspicuous entry of Appa Rao into the campus along with the atrocious police action and **continued militarisation and consistent undemocratisation** of campus that has disrupted the university.

According to a notice issued on the university website Podile Appa Rao had called the JAC for negotiation. 4 out of the 7 professors named in the negotiation committee withdrew their involvement. The JAC does not recognise Podile Appa Rao as the vice chancellor and declines to be a part of any such deceitful efforts.

This campus is supposed to be a public institution that upholds the rights and concerns of the students. Increasingly it is being run like a military camp that is concerned only about the security of Podile Appa Rao and other complicit parties. The way that the event and actions of this administration in collusion with the BJP is working, it has also exposed the larger plans of these political forces to deride all the universities of any democratic rights. This struggle of justice for Rohith is also linked with the struggle in FTII, JNU, IIT Madras and all the other campuses.