

Press Release by Joint Action Committee for Social Justice (UoH) dated 24-5-2016

It has been more than 4 months since Rohith's institutional murder and still he, his family, students of UoH and the larger dalit community await justice. Appa Rao Podile has been reinstated as the VC since the 22nd of March and the University of Hyderabad resembles a military camp since then. Even though the students passed an official mandate in the UGM against the entry of Appa Rao Podile as the VC, the Students' Union and several faculty members protested the Academic council meeting held by Appa Rao Podile. The continuous ongoing everyday protests against Appa Rao Podile and other culprits have yielded no response from the authorities. Rohith's mother, professors, media, activists, lawyers and students from outside continue to be barred from entering the campus.

The UoH administration and Apparao have shamelessly utilized the opportunity of the ongoing vacation period in campus to suppress the protests. They have unleashed their attack in 2 ways:

1. The students are being forcefully and unjustly evicted from their hostels (even the students who will come back next semester and the ones who have to stay back for preparations of various entrance exams). This has also been targeted towards students from dalit and marginalised section who require the university facilities more than others. The coaching for UPSC exams has been denied to SC/ST students by Appa Rao Podile-led University administration. This is also a means to hound and attack students active in the protests and the students who have been booked under fake cases by the University. The students who were arrested and are implicated in the cases filed by the administration have to report to the police station every week. Even these students are being forcefully evicted and targeted by the administration.

2. **The University has given out an order from Appa Rao Podile stating that the students are "advised" to remove the 'unauthorized' tents and structures from the shopping complex within 48 hours. This order by the VC is basically a threat to the students to remove the Velivada and the Rohith stupa that are the reminders of the murder committed by this University.** The administration has already gone ahead and evicted the students and washed off all the graffiti and posters put up by students over the months in the name of maintenance and renovation. They want to erase from the minds of the students and the University any memory of Rohith, his ideas and this struggle for justice for Rohith that has exposed how the casteist order along with the backing of BJP-led Central Government and institutional nexus operates.

If Appa Rao Podile-led University administration feels that they have no role to play in Rohith's death then why are they afraid of the posters bearing his name and face, of the Velivada where

he slept for 15 days because of the ‘punishment’ ordained by Appa Rao Podile and the Executive Council Sub-Committee? Why are they scared of his stupa that stands as a symbol of struggle and courage for other students who envisage a society free from the disease of caste system? Their threat to remove the Velivada is an evidence of their fear and guilt.

In Tsunduru massacre, the Velivada that lies in the outskirts of the village as a marker of the caste violence of our society came to the very center. The struggle for Tsunduru made sure that the memory of their dead will never be forgotten and the memorials/ graves are in the center of the village. Similarly the Velivada to which Appa Rao Podile and others had outcasted Rohith into will stand proud right in the center of the university as a reminder to all these culprits and the society in our struggle for social justice.

As a mark of protest and response to this adminsitration and Apparao, the stooges to the casteist and fascist BJP the JAC UoH organised a protest gathering where the copies of the order were burnt, as Babasaheb Ambedkar burnt the manusmriti, we burnt the copies of the threat order by the Kamma Fascist institutional murderer Appa Rao Podile.

The ‘Solidarity and Struggle Committee for Justice for Rohith Vemula’ formed in the Hyderabad city following the institutional murder of Rohith Vemula, conducted Round Table Meetings in the districts of Khammam, Mehbubnagar, Nalgonda and Ranga Reddy. The committee organized a Dharna at Collector’s office in Mehbubnagar district on 19th May and gave a representation to Telangana Government to work on the assurances that KCR gave in Telangana assembly. Dharnas for #JusticeforRohith will be organized in every district in Telangana until our voices are heard.

We demand the immediate arrest of the five culprits booked under the SC/ST Atrocities Act and Abetment of Suicide. We demand the introduction and implementation of Rohith Act that provides legislative protection to students from marginalized sections in all educational institutes. Jai Bheem! Inquilab Zimdabad!