

Press Statement by Joint Action Committee for Social Justice (UoH) dated 13th May, 2016

Appa Rao Podile, the institutional murderer of Rohith Vemula has stooped down to a new low and has left no stone unturned in retaining ownership of the Vice-Chancellor's chair that DOES NOT belong to him. The only way he has been able to sustain himself so far in University of Hyderabad is by setting ploys, playing slanderous and dirty tricks to sabotage and delegitimize the long-standing struggle for Justice for Rohith Vemula. Earlier, he had successfully driven a wedge between Non-Teaching Staff and students by luring a section of Non-Teaching Staff Union leaders. By creating an atmosphere of tension and conflict, Appa Rao Podile enforced a complete shutdown of basic amenities on campus on 23rd & 24th March, 2016. Similarly, Appa Rao Podile had polarized the teacher's community and made sure that students are targeted in classrooms for taking part in the struggle. Seeing no hope of ray that he would be able to continue as Vice-Chancellor of University of Hyderabad, he has shifted his focus on dividing the students taking part in the struggle who form the backbone of the protests demanding justice for Rohith Vemula.

Apart from two representatives from each organization, UoH Students' Union President Zuhail and Vice-President Venkatesh Chauhan represent the Students' Union in Joint Action Committee for Social Justice (UoH). UoH Students' Union as part of the Joint Action Committee has been instrumental in mobilising students and carrying forward the struggle for #JusticeforRohith. When Appa Rao Podile shut the hostel messes, Students' Union ensured that food is provided to all the students on campus by running few messes with the help of student volunteers. Many alumni of UoH took the task upon themselves to ensure none goes hungry on campus. Besides, the overwhelming support and solidarity from students of other Universities and members of civil society gave us strength to fight back in the most difficult times when University was turned into a prison.

The Students' Union representatives boycotted the Academic Council meeting held on 6th April, 2016 demanding the resignation of Appa Rao Podile from the post of Vice-Chancellor. On 12th April, 2016, UoH Students' Union held the University General Body Meeting (UGBM), the highest decision-making body of the students and passed five resolutions. One of the resolutions demanding the removal of Appa Rao Podile from the post of Vice-Chancellor was passed with an astounding majority even when end-semester exams were around the corner, in which 1 student voted against and 948 students voted in favour of the resolution. This is the official mandate of the student community of UoH and amply testifies that the majority of the students of UoH are part of the struggle demanding justice for Rohith. On May 3rd, 2016, when the institutional murderer Appa Rao Podile along with police escort visited the Department of Fine Arts to see the final year students' display of their

artwork, students did a flash protest by doing an art performance and covering their artwork with cloth pieces. It is in this context that the desperate Appa Rao Podile's administration has taken recourse to horse trading by dividing the elected Students' Union and therefore, trying to crush the students' movement that has uncompromisingly demanded for the arrest of culprits booked under SC/ST Atrocities Act and Abetment of Suicide. It is shocking and disappointing to know that Raju Kumar Sahu has betrayed and backstabbed the student community and sold himself to the culprits' side. ABVP has found another match who can chant their words supporting the killers of Rohith Vemula. The allegations levelled against SFI, ASA and the Joint Action Committee (JAC) are baseless and ill-founded. He, not surprisingly, failed to provide any evidence backing his allegations against students and faculty members who are integral to #JusticeforRohith struggle.

Raju Kumar Sahu is trying to accomplish more than what he is paid for, by refuting the police violence on students that even administration was unable to deny. There is an ample evidence and therefore, firmly established that the students' narratives of police atrocities are factual and authentic. There are several videos shot by students and media that show the police brutality inflicted on students on 22nd & 23rd March, 2016. Several reputed independent teams of lawyers and civil rights activists confirmed the atrocious act of police brutality after conducting their independent inquiries. Another atrocious allegation that came is that the Joint Action Committee is "receiving huge funds from political parties". The financial account of Joint Action Committee is maintained and is open for anyone to verify. The financial statements of the Joint Action Committee will prove that the propaganda orchestrated by the stooges of Appa Rao Podile-led administration and ABVP are utterly false. Being a General Secretary of Students' Union, it is highly shameful that he has blatantly lied about the judicial commission enquiry. This is to inform everyone that this is yet another false allegation because we had deposed in front of the one-judge judicial commission in the month of March.

The allegations that the placements at the University are affected by the agitation are as farcical and baseless. According to the figures provided by the University administration, the placements for the current year have increased by more than 20% over the last year. In 2015-16, a total of 230 students have been placed in contrast with 190 students placed in 2014-15 academic year. The placement drive is not yet over. Raju Kumar Sahu should have done his homework properly before pointing out that campus placements were affected by the struggle and that Oracle refused to come to University of Hyderabad. This is to inform everyone that Oracle came to University of Hyderabad to recruit students from two Departments and one Centre. In fact, a final year M.A. student from Department of English cleared the test and got recruited in Oracle. It is highly shameful that the General Secretary of Students' Union is misleading the student community by spreading lies about the activities taken up by

Students' Union he has been part of. This in itself shows how Raju Kumar Sahu has blindly sold himself to Appa Rao Podile and betrayed the struggle for #JusticeforRohith.

An insightful reminder for Raju Kumar Sahu is that the General Secretary of the Students' Union has to abide by the official mandate of the students and is bound to implement the resolutions passed in the UGBM. By aligning with the killers of Rohith Vemula, Appa Rao Podile-led administration and ABVP, Raju Kumar Sahu has betrayed the students' mandate. He has violated the constitution of Students' Union and therefore, has no right to continue as the General Secretary of the Union. It is highly insulting to Babasaheb Ambedkar and Rohith Vemula that their words have been quoted by Raju Kumar Sahu to justify the blatant caste discrimination and witching hunting of Dalit research scholars by the saffron brigade. We demand that Raju Kumar Sahu must resign immediately from the post of General Secretary for betraying the students' struggle for social justice and appropriating the writings of Babasaheb Ambedkar and Rohith Vemula. If Raju Kumar Sahu does not resign on his own, he should be ready to face impeachment as directed by Students' Union constitution. Joint Action Committee for Social Justice (UoH) will extend complete solidarity to Students' Union when it gives a call for sacking Raju Kumar Sahu from the post of General Secretary.

The latest move by Raju Kumar Sahu to write a letter to Commissioner of Police for security is not just inane but also hilarious. The way in which this dramatic resignation is manoeuvred and a quick response from BJP top brass congratulating and supporting Raju Kumar Sahu's move makes it crystal clear how Appa Rao Podile and his political masters from BJP are attempting to malign our struggle yet again. It is shameful and disgusting on the part of the anti-Dalit BJP Minister Venkaiah Naidu to label #JusticeforRohith struggle as "funded by Congress and Left parties". Such an allegation is not just untrue but also baseless because our financial statements will clearly show that this struggle has been run collectively by raising funds from students, teachers and people of the country who visited Velivada (Dalit ghetto) after the institutional murder of Rohith Vemula. All the political parties except BJP have condemned the high-handedness of Appa Rao Podile, BJP ministers and political interference in University of Hyderabad in the wake of social boycott of five Dalit research scholars that eventually led to Rohith Vemula's institutional murder. The anti-Dalit BJP Minister Venkaiah Naidu and his team are playing dirty tricks to support Appa Rao Podile. Venkaiah Naidu has surpassed the constitutional ethics and is openly playing caste politics. Joint Action Committee for Social Justice (UoH) demands a public apology from Venkaiah Naidu for maligning Rohith Vemula's death and the struggle for #JusticeforRohith in the name of funds. We condemn, in the strongest possible words, the nefarious attempts of Raju Kumar Sahu backed by Appa Rao Podile, ABVP and BJP, to suppress our struggle and reiterates that #JusticeforRohith struggle will not spare any effort to bring all these

culprits down. In times of tyranny and oppression, being “neutral” is same as taking the side of the oppressor. Far from being “neutral”, Raju Kumar Sahu has stated clearly which side he is on. There cannot be any ‘reconciliation’ or ‘cooperation’ with the institutional murderers of Rohith Vemula. Joint Action Committee for Social Justice (UoH) will not be deterred by such cheap tactics employed by ABVP and Appa Rao Podile-led administration. We resolve to fight for justice for Rohith Vemula and introduction and implementation of Rohith Act in educational institutes that provides legislative protection to students from marginalized sections. We will continue our struggle against the powers that be come what may until justice is delivered to Rohith Vemula.
