

## **Press Release**

The Human Rights Forum (HRF) condemns the arrest of activist with United Against Hate and former Jawaharlal Nehru University student Umar Khalid late last night by the Delhi Police Special Cell. He has been charged under the obnoxious Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) for alleged involvement in the violence in North East Delhi during February this year. HRF believes the charges against Umar Khalid to be completely fabricated with evidence being sought to be systematically manufactured.

Over several months, the Delhi police has been relentlessly targeting and incarcerating anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) activists, most of them young, under plainly bogus charges. While organisations and individuals working for communal harmony are being vilified and booked in false cases, the real instigators and conspirators of the brutal violence this February continue to stalk Delhi roaming scot-free. They clearly enjoy State patronage, many of them being active functionaries of the BJP and its affiliates.

The ideological progeny of MS Golwalkar and KB Hedgewar who are presently ruling us imagine they can recreate our nation into an aggressive and deeply undemocratic power-mongering polity based on a hierarchical and monolithic society. Their project is bound to fail. In the words of Umar Khalid: “The rulers of India have lost one battle – that is the battle over young minds. They came to bury us; but they didn’t know we were seeds.”

Umar Khalid is among the finest of our Republic’s young. He has consistently evoked - in his speeches, writings and vibrant activism - a peaceful and non-violent defense of the best values of our Constitution and of the freedom to dissent and live without fear. His political life is marked by deep compassion for the poor and the marginalized and he has always espoused the values of equality, justice and dignity.

HRF demands that Umar Khalid and all anti-CAA activists arrested by the Delhi police be set free immediately and the farcical charges against them be dropped. We call upon democratic forces to build a strong campaign for repeal of the UAPA and scrapping of the Sedition law.

VS Krishna

S Jeevan Kumar

HRF AP&TS Coordination Committee members

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