

Resolution in support of the student protests in India against the militant suppression of intellectual freedom and dissent by the BJP-government

Passed on February 19, 2016

Plenary

WHEREAS, on 12 February, the Delhi Police raided student hostels at the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) and arrested the JNU Students' Union President Kanhaiyya Kumar on the arbitrary and anti-democratic charge of sedition; and

Executive Committee

Steering Committee

Constitution and Bylaws

Grants

WHEREAS, this application of a draconian, colonial law which criminalizes dissent stands in stark contradiction to the very democratic character of the nation that affirms an individual's right to free speech, however radical and unpopular the opinion; and

Health & Wellness

Outreach

Student Services

WHEREAS, this arrest of an elected student representative and the subsequent militarization of the campus with an overwhelming police presence is sanctioned and sponsored by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) led ruling regime, in conjunction with its affiliate organizations RSS and ABVP, its student wing; and

USS Advisory Committee

Advocate Advisory Board

OpenCUNY Board

Governance Task Force

EDLAB

WHEREAS, this coercive presence of the police on the university premises and elsewhere is compounded by their complicity in the physical assaults by lawyers of the Hindu Right on JNU teachers and students at the courthouse before Kanhaiyya's hearing; and

Student Tech Fee

WHEREAS, this constitutes a brazen disregard for the due process of the law, a violent refusal of recourse to justice through the judicial process for those persecuted by the state, and an administration of mob justice in its place; and

WHEREAS, this assault on the student body of JNU is supplemented by a manufacturing of consent among the people through the appropriation and manipulation of the mainstream media to vilify and paint the students as "anti-nationals" and "terrorists" and demand the shutting down of JNU; and

WHEREAS, this vilification of JNU, a premier public university that not only provides education to students from the widest spectrum of social and economic backgrounds but also stands as a formidable center of knowledge production, by the Indian state and its apparatus is a concerted effort to weaken an institution that has consistently critiqued the Hindu Right's monolithic imagination of the nation; and

WHEREAS, the assault on JNU by the BJP/RSS/ABVP/Police nexus is part of a larger pattern of increasing state intervention in autonomous universities in order to stifle intellectual freedom and dissent, as in the case of the institutional murder of Rohith Vemula, in the protests at FTII, JU, IIT-M, among others; and

WHEREAS, what is at stake is not only the autonomy of universities as spaces of free debate and thought, the conditions for a sound education, but also the very democratic principles that underpin the constitutional rights of Indian citizens; therefore, let it be

RESOLVED, that the Doctoral Students' Council strongly condemns the actions of the Indian state, rejects its capitalist, Brahmanical hegemony, and opposes the criminalization of dissent, the militarization of campuses, and the suppression of intellectual freedom in universities across India; and

Further **RESOLVED**, that the Doctoral Students' Council stands in solidarity with Kanhaiyya Kumar, Rohith Vemula, Umar Khalid, other students being unlawfully targeted by the state, and with the teachers and students of not just JNU, but also HCU, FTII, JU, and other universities, in their struggle for the autonomy of academic spaces and for the right to dissent.