

December 17, 2019

Solidarity Statement by Students and Alumni of GNLU

We, the students and alumni of Gujarat National Law University (GNLU), condemn in the strongest possible terms the violence and use of force against our fellow citizens - students and otherwise - exercising their fundamental right to protest across India.

Over the last week, we have witnessed several protests and demonstrations against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 across the nation, particularly Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, Aligarh and Delhi. We have also seen, with worry, the excessive use of force by the government in dealing with such protests. The use of police force against citizens exercising their fundamental right to protest is a direct attack on the constitutional foundations of our country. We condemn and express our horror at the violent police and state action.

We are particularly alarmed at the violence unleashed on students in Jamia Millia Islamia (New Delhi), Aligarh Muslim University (Aligarh), Delhi University (New Delhi), Cotton University (Assam) and other educational institutions across India. The state violence against protesting students - physical assault, use of tear-gas shells, lathi-charge, and forceful entry into their university premises - is not only brutalisation of students but an attack on the autonomy of universities as non-militarised spaces for freedom of thought and expression. We demand an immediate end to all forms of violence against the protesting students and call for a judicial enquiry to fix accountability for the violence.

As law students and/or graduates, we understand the value of freedom of speech and expression and refuse to remain silent at the violence unleashed on our fellow citizens exercising this right.

We stand in solidarity with the students and others exercising their fundamental right to dissent and protest.