

**STATEMENT ISSUED BY THE LIKE-MINDED STUDENTS AND ALUMNI OF THE TAMIL NADU NATIONAL LAW UNIVERSITY STANDING IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE STUDENTS OF JAMIA MILLIA ISLAMIA, ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY AND ALL OTHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS ACROSS INDIA WHO HAVE FACED VIOLENCE AT THE HANDS OF THE INDIAN STATE**

*"Dissent is a symbol of a vibrant democracy. Voices in opposition cannot be muzzled by persecuting those who take up unpopular causes."* – Justice D. Y. Chandrachud

*"If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor."* – Desmond Tutu

We, the undersigned students and alumni of the Tamil Nadu National Law University, stand in solidarity with the students who have been brutalized at the hands of the Indian Police force for exercising their democratic and constitutionally guaranteed right to free speech and expression. We believe that the root of democracy lies in educational institutions and the horrifying violence against these students marks one of the darkest moments in our democracy. It is our moral responsibility as students and as members of the legal fraternity to stand against this wave of inhuman violence and join hands with those students.

We also vehemently condemn the Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019, which interplays with the National Register of Citizens (NRC) to delegitimize the existence of our fellow Indians as citizens of this country. We believe that these policies attack the secular values of our nation which form the core of Indian democracy. The founders of the Indian Constitution out-rightly rejected the 'two nations theory' and struggled to build an India based on our collective identity as Indians rather than on any single religious identity. Basic humanity and morality dictates that we, as students and as members of the legal fraternity, join in this fight to preserve the dignity of the Indian Constitution and the values embedded within it by its framers.

We believe that education forms an integral part in the self-actualization of an individual by fostering one's capacity for democratic debate and dissent. The continuous and systemic attacks on our educational institutions coupled with the aggressive tactics of isolation and violence adopted by the Indian government in suppressing peoples' fundamental right of democratic dissent is a deeply distressing development in the history of our nation. We observe these tactics in places such as Assam as well as in the silencing of various educational institutes across India such as JMI and AMU. We lend our support to all who are holding their ground against such injustice and stand hand-in-hand with them.

Ultimately, we believe that crises such as these test our very moral fabric, which in turn demands that we speak truth to power at all costs. We call upon our fellow Indians to join us and numerous others in this struggle to save our secular democracy that has been built on a century of blood and sweat contributed by our freedom fighters. At these times, we wholeheartedly side with the students, we wholeheartedly side with the Constitution, we wholeheartedly side with justice.