

STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF VARAVARA RAO

Sunday 19th July 2020, Midnight, BST

Varavara Rao, poet, writer, activist and long-time speaker of truth to power has been imprisoned for two years now, along with ten other scholar-activists. They have been charged with inciting violence in Bhima Koregaon, a charge widely regarded as false, and over the past two years the government has failed to bring the charges to court and start the trial. Conditions in the jails in which these prisoners of conscience have been kept are said to be unhealthy and the threat of spread of infection has grown. Mr Rao, who is 80 years old, has now tested positive for COVID-19 and is seriously ill with several co-morbidities. His condition suggests clear neglect of his health by the authorities. We join other international scholars in appealing for the immediate release of Varavara Rao and the other Elgar Parishad activists.

Signed:

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Dr Hugo Gorringe, Co-Director Centre for South Asian Studies, University of Edinburgh, UK

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Jan Breman, Emeritus Professor University of Amsterdam, Honorary Fellow of the International Institute of Social History, Netherlands.

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