



Council for Social Justice and Peace (CSJP)
National Confederation of Human Rights Organizations (Goa Unit)
Concerned Citizens for Goa (CCFD)

Press Release

**Public gathering against CAA/NRC/NPR on 24th January, at 03.30
p.m. at Lohia Maidan Margao**

The Council of Social Justice Peace is joined by the National Confederation for Human Rights (Goa Unit) and Concerned Citizens for Democracy in registering its total disapproval against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), National Register of Citizens (NRC) and the National Population Register (NPR). It is our common conviction that these measures are unconstitutional and, therefore unacceptable.

The government must listen to the voice of the people and withdraw the Act. It can then engage in wide consultation if it still wishes to proceed with any form of legislation regarding citizenship. If it arrogates power to enforce the laws, it will face stubborn and unceasing resistance.

The government should also take note of the fact that this is the first time since partition that people across the country have demonstrated an unyielding show of unity cutting across all religions and social formations to register their protests on the streets. It is close to a month and the struggle is sustained by the citizen's own initiatives since this law endangers democracy and secularism.

The government is resorting to the abuse of law and order mechanisms and intelligence agencies to suppress this popular people's movement. We have noticed how, in many parts of the country, the government has been high handed in undermining the protests. They have unleashed violence and adopted intimidating tactics against peaceful protesters. Here in Goa, conceding to the threats by a fringe group, permission granted to citizens of Mapusa for a peaceful protest was revoked on flimsy grounds. We, as a people, in a democracy, have the right to resist any illegal

form of legislation. We demand that all the law enforcing institutions also respect the tenets of democracy and cease their undemocratic and punitive ways. Politicians and responsible government officials must recognize that they work for “we the people”.

Around the country, the police have repeatedly repressed the right to peaceful assembly by using needless force against people exercising their rights, including beating peaceful protesters and using tear gas, and reckless shooting. Detained protesters including children have also been severely beaten in custody and suffered other ill-treatment amounting to torture. Multiple instances of arbitrary and unlawful arrests have been reported. The police has even denied or delayed access to lawyers and medical care to the detainees. State violence is not an answer to legitimate protest.

As responsible citizens who wish to see to a just and peaceful society functioning demand the most transparent and strict forms of democracy. We demand that we have access to a Sovereign Socialist Secular democratic republic which grants all its citizens justice, social, economic and political.

The government is steamrolling laws which demand that we must prove our Indian citizenship despite having all relevant documents on record. It is unlawful to disenfranchise genuine citizens whose legal rights to stay in this country cannot be challenged. In view of this vicious and deceitful method of de-citizenizing millions of people, we as people must not only reject the proposed NPR process but refuse to cooperate with NPR. This is our firm and non-negotiable conviction. Towards this, we issue a call to oppose any illegal enforcements of the law.

Fr. Savio Fernandes
Executive Secretary
Council for Social Justice
and Peace

Ranjan Solomon
Working President
NCHRO – Goa Unit

Samir
President
Concerned Citizens of Goa

22nd January 2020
Margao