

Draft of letter to be sent ro members of Rajya Sabha.

Sir/Madam,

In the last few decades we have seen gross injustice meted out to religious and linguistic minorities as well as dalits and adivasis in different states of this country through organized communal and targeted violence. By religious minorities we mean Kashmiri Pandits in J&K, Hindus in some of the north eastern states as much as Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and Parsis across the country. Tamilians in Karnataka and Biharis in Maharashtra are among the examples of linguistic minorities.

Along with the vicious and repeated targeting of religious and linguistic minorities, dalits and adivasis too continue to face repression in many parts of the country. In the last two years recurring communal riots in Uttar Pradesh is a matter of shame for all Indians.

The prevailing culture of impunity has led to growing alienation and erosion of faith in the system among the targeted communities. By its failure to protect the life and liberty of a section of citizens, the state sows the seeds of extremism.

Until now governments have at best remained content with somehow restoring peace after protracted violence and transferring officers guilty of dereliction of duty. It is evident that we urgently need a new law to punish the perpetrators and masterminds of violence and to hold politicians, the bureaucracy and policemen responsible for law and order accountable for any dereliction of duty.

If the police and administration were to be held directly responsible for failure to enforce Rule of Law, perpetrators of recurring violence would be halted in their tracks. If the law could facilitate time-bound prosecution of those guilty, the political gains from engineered violence would diminish. If fair reparation commensurate to the loss were to be compulsorily paid within a short time-frame, the future would not benefit rioters.

In the 2004 Lok Sabha elections, the UPA coalition had included in its manifesto the promise to enact a new law to curb communal violence. But the nearly decade-old promise is yet to be fulfilled.

We therefore urge you to kindly prevail upon the UPA government to enable the tabling of the 'Prevention of Communal and Targeted Violence (Access to Justice and Reparations) Bill, 2011' in the Rajya Sabha without any further delay in the current winter session of Parliament.