An open letter demanding action on the online targeting of Muslim women

We, the undersigned women's rights groups and concerned individuals are outraged by the reprehensible targeting of Muslim women on GitHub, a free web platform, where Twitter handles, and photographs of Muslim women were uploaded with the explicit aim of directing sexualised hate and harm at these women. More than 80 women were profiled, their images were sought to be “auctioned” by soliciting users to take their pick on the “deal of the day”, on the basis of their identity and for their views. This is a conspiracy to target women by creating a database of those Muslim women journalists, professionals and students who were actively raising a voice on social media against right wing Hindutva majoritarianism. The intention is to silence their political participation.

This attempt to de-humanise and sexualise Muslim women is a systemic act of intimidation and harm. This is not the first time this has happened. Before Eid, similar cyber violence against Muslim women was organized by stealing pictures of Pakistani women from their social media handles.

This is a targeted hate campaign against Muslim women in India and abroad amounts to sexual harassment, criminal intimidation, and cyber stalking. It violates their right to privacy, which is a travelling right, and it is an act of censorship. It puts their life and liberty at risk.

This is a targeted campaign to regulate their political speech and political participation in democracy as full and equal citizens of this country. It is part of the project to push Muslim women out of public spaces, offline and online, by causing them harm and censoring their speech. Having witnessed the leadership and power of Muslim women in the anti-citizenship amendment act (CAA) movement, right wing Hindutva men have used social media as a political tool to deny Muslim women their right to lead our collective fight for secularism, peace and citizenship.

We are deeply concerned that everyday new forms of intimidation and hatred are being allowed to invent, this time through GitHub Inc., a provider of Internet hosting for software development, to normalise violence against Muslim communities. Such use of public platforms is making the impunity for such attacks more entrenched. Twitter handles, YouTube channels and Facebook pages are routinely used to de-humanize and sexualize Muslim women. The men on these handles, channels and posts call upon majoritarian Hindutva nationalist men and mobs to abduct and rape Muslim women. These handles routinely spew pornographic abuse for both Muslim men and women and build online communities through chat boxes and posts to create violent online communities. This criminal use of social media uses openly misogynistic hate speech against minority communities and celebrates a rape culture against Muslim women targeted for their religious identity, and therefore, impacts the dignity of all women.
The use of sexualized political campaigns against women who speak against the ruling dispensation is fast becoming mainstream political culture. Such mass targeting of Muslim women in public spaces, whether online or offline, that treats them as objects in the political discourse of Hindutva is simply unacceptable. As the large number of such online hate violence surfaces, it is not abstract, this is real life for women- a violation of their human rights, an attack on the dignity, autonomy, and bodily integrity.

The undersigned express our grief and outrage to all the Muslim women harmed by this misogynistic hate campaign. We stand in solidarity with each one of these women. We pledge our support to them.

- We condemn the political campaign of hate against them, and we demand immediate action against the culprits.
- We demand that the internet be a safe space for women to express dissent and difference.
- We demand that commercial portals develop policies to prevent their users from treating women as objects and de-humanizing them.
- We demand that the cyber cell, social media platforms such as GitHub, Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook and the National Commissions for Women and National Human Rights Commission must at once take prompt action against the individuals who are responsible for such acts of terror and intimidation.
- We demand equal citizenship and political participation in offline and online spaces for Muslim women.

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569. Rajaram, advocate.
570. Rajashree.
571. Rajashri Dasgupta, independent journalist.
572. Rajeev Mehrotra, Amanaa
573. Rajender Kumar, social Activist
574. Rajesh Kumar Choudhary, PUCL
575. Rajesh Ranjan, Constitution Connect
576. Rajiv Gupta, former Professor of Sociology, University of Rajasthan Jaipur
577. Rakhi Sehgal, New Delhi
578. Raksha Kumar, journalist.
579. Ramesh Dixit, Samvidhan Bachao, Desh Bachao Andolan Uttar Pradesh
580. Rashmi Doraiswamy, Jamia Millia Islamia
581. Rashmi Menon, Publishing
582. Ravinder Mohan, JN Medical College, AMU Aligarh
583. Ravish Alam, People's Alliance
584. Ravish, People's Alliance
585. Reena Mohan.
586. Reena Puri.
587. Reeti, WIGH India
589. Renu Kaul Verma, Vitasta Publishing
590. Reymi Sekhhon, One Voice Canada Alberta
591. Ria Yadav, student, Faculty of Law, University of Delhi
592. Richa Singh.
593. Riddhi Dastidar, Khabar Lahariya
594. Rini Dasgupta, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi
595. Rita Manchanda, Author, Human Rights, Peace Advocate
596. Ritambhara Mehta.
597. Ritambhara Shastri, journalist. (Uni)
598. Ritika.
599. Ritu Dewan, Retd Head of Department of Economics, University of Mumbai
600. Ritu Kauahik, All India Mahila Sanskritik Sangathan,(AIMSS.)
601. Ritu Sinha, Ambedkar University Delhi
602. Rituparna Borah, Delhi
603. Rituparna Sengupta, IIT Delhi
604. Rituraj Pegu, Jawaharlal Nehru University
605. Rizwan Falahi, Taisir
606. Rizwana, Bebak
607. Rochelle Pinto.
608. Rochita Talukder.
609. Rohini Hensman, Writer and independent scholar
610. Rohit Tripathi, Young India, Inc
611. Ronita Chattopadhyay, independent Consultant (Process Documentation)
612. Roohi Rizvi.
613. Roohina K, Makemytrip
614. Rosaline Pereira, Asa
615. Rubi A.
616. Rukaiya Joshi, Academician
617. Rukmini Rao, Gramya Resource Centre for Women
618. Rumi Harish, Research Consultant ALF
619. Rushda Naqvi.
620. Rushda Siddiqui, National Federation of Indian Women (NFIW)
621. Rustam Kuraishi, advocate, Rohini Courts
622. S Hussain.
623. S. M. Faizan Ahmed, Sociologist
624. S. Raghunandana, Kannada Poet, Playwright, and Stage-Director
625. S.Q. Masood, social activist
626. Saad, Personal
627. Saadia S, Indian
628. Saba Hasan, Artist
629. Sabah Khan, Parcham Collective
630. Sabah Omar, Banker
631. Sabiha Hashmi, Ajjis Farm.
632. Sabira Mohammed.
633. Sadaf Jafar, Kalrav
634. Sadhna Arya, University of Delhi
635. Sadia Masroor, Campaign Against Hatespeech
636. Safia Faruqi.
637. Safoora Zargar, MPhil scholar, JMI
638. Sagari R Ramdas, Food Sovereignty Alliance, India
639. Sahana.
640. Sahba Syed.
641. Saheli Women's Resource Center, New Delhi
642. Sajida Begam Advocate, All India Lawyers Council
643. Saki Rezwana, Bangladesh Free Trade Union Congress (Member ITUC)
644. Salam Sayeed.
645. Salim Khan, Little India Foundation
646. Salma Ansari, Parcham Collective
647. Salomi Jacob.
648. Saloni Verma, Shiv Nadar University
649. Sam Thomas.
650. Sameera Iyengar, Theatre person
651. Sameera Khan, independent journalist, Writer, researcher
652. Samina Yasmin.
653. Samina, Forward Trust
654. Samir S.
655. Samiya Javed, Amu
656. Samiya Khan, Jamia Millia Islamia
657. Samta, Diet Special Officer Association Haryana
658. Samyak, Jan Natya Manch, New Delhi
659. Sana Farheen, Led By Foundation
660. Sandhya Gokhale, Forum Against Oppression of Women
661. Sandhya Phadke.
662. Sandhya Shaily, All India Democratic Women’s Association
663. Sangeeta Chatterji.
664. Sangeetha Arunachalam, Madras Bar Association
665. Sania Hashmi, Anhad Films
666. Sania Mariam, Muslim Women's Study Circle
667. Sanjoy Sachdev, Love Commandos
668. Sanya Khan.
669. Sarah Hashmi, Actor
670. Sareba Quasar, Private Employee
671. Sarika Chaudhary, Democratic Students' Federation, Jawaharlal Nehru University.
672. Sarika Sinha.
673. Sarita Jaitly, Retired
674. Sarla Kumari, PUCL
675. Sarojini N, Jan Swasthya Abhiyan
676. Satyadeo Bareth, Oran Foundation
677. Satyam Shrivastava, Writer
678. Saumya Dadoo, Detention Solidarity
679. Savad Rahman, journalist.
680. Savita, AIDWA
681. Savitri, AIDWA Haryana
682. Sayoni Basu, Duckbill Books
683. Seema Baquer, independent Consultant
684. Seema Nair, GFHR
685. Sehba Farooqui, All India Democratic Women's Association
686. Sejal Dand, Gujarat
687. Selvyn Jussy, University of Calcutta
688. Shaan Katari Libby, advocate.
689. Shabana Bano, Applyboard
690. Shabnam Hashmi, Anhad
691. Shabnam Parveen, Academics
692. Shafi Ahmed.
693. Shagufta Hakeem, Department of Public Safety
694. Shagufta Musvee.
695. Shaheen Khan, TISS Mumbai
696. Shaheen Shasa.
697. Shahid Mohammad, Mediator
698. Shahida Kidwai Farooqui, social activist
699. Shalendra Chaudhary, RBS
700. Shailja Patel, Five College Women's Studies Research Center
701. Shahrab, Teacher
702. Shahwar Kibria Maqhi, University of California, Los Angeles.
703. Shaibani Azam, Professor, Jamia Millia University
704. Shaik Salaududdin, Telangana Gig and Platform Workers Union
705. Shailendra Chaudhary, RBS
706. Shailja Patel, Five College Women's Studies Research Center
707. Shaista Siddiqui.
708. Shakaib Azhar Chaudhry.
709. Shakeel, Doctor
710. Shalini Gera, lawyer, Chhattisgarh High Court
711. Shalu Nigam, advocate.
712. Shama Bano, Citizens for Justice and Peace
713. Shambhu Ghatak, independent researcher
714. Shamim Ahmad, Igate Global Solution
715. Shamima Shafiq, former Member, National Commission for Women
716. Shams Tabrez, Educational Administration
717. Sharib Haroon, IAMC
718. Sharique Manazir, DIRF
719. Sharique, CAOP
720. Sharmila, IIT Bombay
721. Shazia Akbar, Girls Education and Welfare Fund
722. Shazin Siddiqui, Human Collective
723. Sheba George, activist
724. Sheeba Sibal.
725. Sheema Fatima, TISS, Mumbai
726. Sheena Jain, Retd Jamia Millia Islamia
727. Shefali Jha, Anveshi Hyderabad
728. Shevanti Narayan.
729. Shewli Kumar, Tata Institute of Social Sciences
730. Shikha Kapur, academic
731. Shikha Sen, Editor and Teacher
732. Shinani Bhaumik, AIMSS, Tripura
733. Shipra Narang, UN
734. Shiraz, PUCL
735. Shireen Maswood, Associate Prof of History (retd.), Calcutta University
736. Shireen Sethna Baria, Human Rights
737. Shirin Rai, University of Warwick
738. Sho, Jan Jagran Shakti Sangathan, Bihar
739. Shohini Ghosh, Professor, Jamia Millia Islamia
740. Shraddha Chickerur.
741. Shraddha.
742. Shravasti Roy
743. Shreshtha Das, activist and researcher
744. Shriram Dubey Azad, Azad Foundation
745. Shruti Ravi, independent researcher
746. Shubha Jindel, PUCL Rajasthan
747. Shuddhabrata Sengupta, Artist and Writer
748. Shukla Sawant, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi
749. Shweta Azad, freelancer.
750. Shweta Ghosh, University of Reading
751. Shweta R, researcher
752. Shweta Radhakrishnan, student.
753. Shweta Tiwary, NIH
754. Shyamala A.
755. Shyla K John, AIMSS.
756. Siddharth K J.
757. Siddhi, student.
758. Simar Puneet, NGMA
759. Simeran Gell, Cambridge
760. Simran Atwal.
761. Simreen Khatoon, St.Anns College for Women
762. Sindhuja Maurya, Teacher
763. Sitaram Shelar, Center for Promoting Democracy
764. Smita Chaudhari, Gs-Organisation Mumbai Mahila Congress.
765. Smita Gupta, Economist
766. Smita.
767. Soma KP, independent researcher
768. Sona Khan.
769. Sonal Sharma, Sewa Delhi
770. Sonal Sharma, student AUD.
771. Sonam Chaturvedi, OP Jindal Global University
772. Sonia Kidwai, Professional
773. Sonya Gill, AIDWA Maharashtra
774. Soofia Usmani, former Assistant Professor at Jubail University
775. Srabani, JMS
777. Sriram Varanasi.
778. Subhashini Ali, AIDWA
779. Subrath Mohanty.
780. Sucharita Sen, Jawaharlal Nehru University.
781. Suchetana Chattopadhyay, Jadavpur University
782. Sudha Kamath, AIMSS.
783. Sudha N.
784. Sudha Sundararaman, AIDWA
785. Sudhir Kumar Suthar, CPS, Jawaharlal Nehru University.
786. Sujata Gothoskar, Forum Against Oppression of Women
787. Sujatha, Dalit Women Collective
788. Sukanya N, AIDWA
789. Sunalini Kumar, Ambedkar University Delhi
790. Suneeta Dhar, activist
791. Sunita Pande, AIDWA Uttarakhand
792. Sunita Zaidi, Rhodes Fellow, JMI
793. Sunny Lyngdoh.
794. Sunny.
795. Supriya, Pradan
796. Suraj Sanap, independent lawyer.
797. Surajit Mazumdar, Jawaharlal Nehru University.
798. Surbhi Karwa, lawyer.
799. Surbhi Vatsa, Center for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University.
800. Suresh Kumar, lawyer.
801. Susie Tharu, independent scholar
802. Swati Shah, academic
803. Swati Chakraborty, Indian Institute of Cerebral Palsy
804. Swati Goswami.
805. Swati Kamble, University of Geneva/Dalit Bahujan Adivasi Vimukta Women Collective
806. Swati Narayan, National Institute of Advanced Studies
807. Swatija, FAOW
808. Swayamprava Nayak, AIMSS.
809. Syed Inam Ur Rahman, journalist.
810. Syed Mohammad Zafar.
811. Syed Munibuddin.
812. Syed Musanna.
813. Syed Yasser Ali, IISc
814. Syeda Saiyidain Hameed, Muslim Women's Forum
815. T. Toll, IIT Delhi
816. Tahini, Delhi High Court
817. Tahira Ghias.
818. Talat, School
819. Tanisha Nag, National Centre for Coastal Research, Chennai
820. Tanvi Sharma, Volunteers Collective
821. Tanya Singh, TISS, Mumbai
822. Tanzil Khan.
823. Tara Rai, Democracy Collective
824. Tara Shanker, University of Delhi
825. Tarana Sharfuddin, Women India Movement (Wim)
826. Tarannum Siddiqui, Women's Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia
827. Tariq Hasan, IAMC
828. Tarun Bhartiya, Raiot Collective
829. Tasneem Farzana, forward Trust
830. Teesta Guha Sarkar, Pan Macmillan India
831. Tehsina Sarwar, BHA
832. Teresa Barat.
833. Thahira Iqbal, Writer and dai of Islam
834. Thankachan Vpnf, Kerala Sastra Sahithya Parishath
835. TN Seema, AIDWA
836. Trishna Sarkar, University of Delhi.
837. Tuba Junaid, Led By Foundation
838. Udaya Kumar, Jawaharlal Nehru University.
839. Uma Bhrugubanda, EFL University, Hyderabad
840. Uma Chakravarti, filmmaker and independent researcher
841. Uma Chaudhury, AIMSS. Tripura
842. Umaruddin Ansari.
843. Umesh Chandola, Veterinarian
844. Umme Salma, Teacher
845. Urvashi Butalia.
846. Urvashi Gandhi, Breakthrough
847. Usman Jawed, independent researcher
848. Utpala Mukherjer.
849. Utsa Sarmin, independent journalist and researcher
850. Uzma Naheed, All India, Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawrat
851. Uzmaa Sayed, Morning Star Academy
852. Vahida Nainar.
853. Vaibhav Kumar, Civil Society worker
854. Vaishnavi Jayakumar, Disability Rights Alliance
855. Vandana Kulkarni, Women activist
856. Vandana Misra, PUCL
857. Vani Subramanian, independent Film Maker
858. Varghese Thomas.
859. Varna, POventures
860. Varsha Bhargavi, Where Are The Women
861. Vatsla Srivastava, Consultant, Women for Politics
862. Vedika Gupta, Amazon India
863. Veena Linda, AIDWA
864. Veena Padmanabhan.
865. Veena Shatrugna, Medical Scientist (retd.) NJP, Hyderabad
866. Venkat Srinivasan.
867. Vibhuti Patel, Retired Professor, TISS, Mumbai
868. Vidya Dinker, Indian Social Action Forum (INSAF)
869. Vijayalaxmi, Maharashtra Anis
870. Vijayshree.
871. Vikas Mehta.
872. Vikas Rawal, Jawaharlal Nehru University.
873. Vikrant Sidhu, Ambedkar Ekta Mission Punjab
874. Vimala Ramachandran, Retired
875. Vinata Nanda, The Daily Eye
876. Vinati Kastia.
877. Vinay Sreenivasa, advocate, Bengaluru
878. Vincent Ambrose.
879. Vineeta Bal, Scientist, Pune
880. Vinita Balekundri, National Hawker Federation
881. Vinutha Mallya, PARI
882. Virginia Saldanha, Indian Christian Women's Movement
883. Vishal S, advocate.
884. Wan Manan, Right To Food Malaysia
885. Yamini Mishra, Amnesty International
886. Yawer Yousuf.
887. Yogamaya M G, advocate. Supreme Court of India
888. Yogesh Govil.
889. Younis Syed.
890. Yousuf Syed, Canadians Against Oppression and Persecution(Caop)
891. Zaitoon Zia, UP Basic Education
892. Zaki Mohammedi.
893. Zakia Soman, BMMA
894. Zarin K.
895. Zeenat Mehtab, Member of Muslim Personal Law Board
896. Zeenat Shaukat Ali, Wisdom Foundation
897. Zoha Rahman.
898. Zoya Hasan, Professor Emerita, Jawaharlal Nehru University
899. Zoya Khan, My Pride Org
900. Zoya Khan.