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PUCL PRESS RELEASE:**Stop the Mc-carthy style witch hunt of Academics and Human Rights Defenders!**

The People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) condemns the raid on DU professor, Dr Hany Babu's residence in Noida, Delhi, by the Pune police earlier today (10 September 2019).

The unending trial of democracy and unremitting assault on the Constitution and rule of law, in the name of Bhima-Koregaon, and the McCarthy-style With-hunt and victimisation of constitutionally minded academics and citizens questioning anti-democratic actions of the government in the Bhima Koregaon case continues unabated.

The latest incident occurred today, in the morning of 10 September 2019 when the house of Dr. Hany Babu was raided by a contingent of Pune Police between 6:30 am and 12:30. As Dr. Hany Babu lives in Noida, the Pune contingent was accompanied by the local UP police as well. The raiding team was comprised of DCP Crime Branch Bachchan Singh, ACP Shivaji Pawar, cyber experts, the UP Police from Sector 49 led by the SSP of Gautambudh Nagar. ACP Shivaji Pawar claimed to be the Investigating Officer of Bhima-Koregaon case. They searched the entire house and took away all electronic devices, laptops, pen drives, mobile phone, etc., belonging to Prof Babu. They even seized the documents related to his everyday teaching, such as student assignments, timetable, etc.. Furthermore, they locked him out of his email and other internet facilities.

It is significant that no search warrant was produced by the police when they raided Dr Babu's house. On being asked by Dr Babu about the legality of the raid, the police retorted that they did not need to explain their actions to him. At the time of the search Dr Babu's wife and child were present in the house. The police, including the UP police were very intimidating, and compelled Dr Babu to permit this illegal search of his home.

According to the statement issued by the Pune police, "the search was conducted ...under Section 153(A), 505 (1)(B), 117, 120 (B), 121, 121 (A), 124 (A), 34 IPC and Section 13, 16, 17, 18, 18 (B), 20, 38, 39, and 40 UAPA 1967". (Should this sentence be retained?). The range of charges, and the nature of the material seized (material on the Defence Committee for the Release of Dr G N Saibaba, of which he is a member) suggest that the state is on a fishing expedition, and hopes to incriminate Dr Babu one way or the other.

Dr. Babu has been with the English Department of the University of Delhi for more than a decade. He has been actively campaigning for the release of Dr G N Saibaba. It may be recalled that the deeply controversial arrest of Dr Saibaba was preceded by a similar set of illegal and intimidatory actions.

Dr Babu is also a prominent social justice activist academic of Delhi University. He has raised many issues pertaining to Dalits, other socially marginalised groups and minorities in the University. Dr. Babu has been actively fighting for the implementation of reservations of SC/St and OBC students for a long time. He has also been active in the teachers' struggles against the privatisation of higher education. To enable his work in social justice, he even completed a degree in Law from the University of Delhi.

What is shocking is that the police officials seized the phones of Dr. Babu's family members to prevent them from calling their lawyers and friends throughout the grueling 6 hours of the raid. PUCL strongly condemns such blatant abuse of law and high handed action of the Pune police.

Such actions and tactics on the part of the state, blatantly trample on the constitutional rights of citizens, and amount to state terrorism. Nothing else can be deduced from such arbitrary raids in the name of investigating Bhima-Koregaon incident. Dr. Babu has absolutely no connection with Elgaar Parishad. The main accused belonging to the saffron brigade, Sambhaji Bhide and Milind Ekbote, against whom there was a clear indictment by the initial inquiry conducted by the Pune Rural Police itself, are roaming free. Thanks to misuse of police machinery, which is distressingly compromised under the BJP-RSS led government in Maharashtra, the organisers of the peaceful meeting were targeted and one of them arrested. This so-called investigation has instead, taken turned into a witch hunt in which many human rights defenders, from all parts of the country, have been gradually turned into "accused" or "suspects" in the Bhima-Koregaon case, and have been peremptorily arrested and are now languishing in prison.

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