



Indian Muslims for Secular Democracy
Equality Justice Compassion & Peace

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IMSD condemns the assassination of the world's first openly gay Imam

"No God, gods, goddesses, prophets or saints may be invoked to justify the killing and/or terrorising of fellow human beings".

Indian Muslims for Secular Democracy (IMSD) strongly condemns the assassination of the South African Imam Muhsin Hendricks, a man widely regarded as the world's first openly gay Muslim imam.

The imam, a religious reformer and an activist, was ambushed by two masked men in a pick-up truck while visiting the southern city of Gqeberha on Saturday. While police have yet to establish the motive for the hate crime, political parties and LGBTQ+ organizations say Hendricks was targeted because he started a mosque in Cape Town for gay Muslims and called for members of the LGBTQ+ community to be welcomed into Islam. And was not deterred by the many death threats he had received over several years.

IMSD stands by the dictum: "No God, gods, goddesses, prophets or saints may be invoked to justify the killing and/or terrorising of fellow human beings".

A statement issued by the departed Imam's colleagues at the Center for Contemporary Islam at University of Cape Town said: "His theology was a liberation theology: God is a God of radical love and justice for all human beings. The safe space created by his work brought relief beyond the community of queer Muslims, extending to refugees, people who were homeless, those marginalised without community and belonging, for whom he provided a space of inclusion".

Deploing the fact some Muslims were condoning the imam's assassination on social media, the statement bemoaned that "the compounded horror of such violence and brutality has brought into sharp focus the intense homophobia permeating the Muslim community".

IMSD notes with concern that this intense homophobia permeating the Muslim community is sadly as true of South Africa as it is of the global Muslim community, India included.

We recall our statement issued in March 2023 strongly condemning the concerted effort by the Muslim rightwing in Kerala -- including leaders of the Jamaat-e-Islami, the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), and some Muslim-run websites -- to ridicule, vilify, denigrate and demonise Muslims who are part of the LGBTQIA+ community.

IMSD stands in solidarity with the South African colleagues of the departed Imam and fully supports the call by the US-based Muslims for Progressive Values (MPV) on all Muslims worldwide, "to build a culture of tolerance and curiosity for various interpretations of Islam".



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We call on Indian Muslims in particular, who as a community have been relentless targets of hate politics and hate crimes in today's 'new India', to deplore and eschew any hatred or violence in Islam's name.

Signatories:

1. Anand Patwardhan, IMSD, Documentary Film-maker, Mumbai
2. Arshad Alam, IMSD Co-convenor, Columnist, Delhi
3. Askari Zaidi, IMSD, Senior Journalist, Delhi
4. Feroze Mithiborwala, IMSD Co-Convener, Mumbai
5. Ghulam Rasool Dehlvi, an Alim and Fazil (a classical Islamic scholar), having graduated from a leading Islamic seminary of India, Jamia Amjadia Rizvia (Mau, U.P.)
6. Hasan Ibrahim Pasha, IMSD, Writer, Allahabad
7. Javed Anand, IMSD Co-convenor, CJP, Mumbai
8. Kasim Sait, Businessman, Social Activist, Chennai
9. Lara Jesani, Advocate, PUCL, Mumbai
10. Madhu Prasad, IMSD, Social Activist, Delhi
11. Mohammad Imran, PIO, USA
12. Muniza Khan, Citizens for Justice and Peace, Varanasi
13. Qaisar Sultana, Home Maker, Allahabad
14. Qutub Kidwai, IMSD, Islamic Feminist/ Peace Activist, Secretary General AMAN International, Mumbai
15. (Prof) Mohammad Sajjad, Historian, AMU, Aligarh
16. (Dr) Shahnawaz Alam, UP
17. Shamsul Islam, Author, Activist, Delhi
18. Sultan Shahin, Editor-in Chief, New Age Islam, Delhi
19. Teesta Setalvad, IMSD, Secretary CJP, Mumbai
20. Zakia Soman, Co-Convener, Bhartiya Muslim Mahila Andolan
21. Zeenat Shaukat Ali, Islamic Scholar, Director general, Wisdom Foundation, IMSD, Mumbai