

## STATEMENT OF SOLIDARITY

The Hyderabad Muslim Women's Forum extends its whole-hearted support and solidarity to the students who have spoken out against sexual harassment and discrimination at the Department of Fine Arts, Jamia Millia Islamia University, Delhi. The HMWF fully supports their legitimate demands for justice and strongly condemns the assaults against protesting woman students, some of whom had to be subsequently hospitalized.

We applaud the courage of the JMI women in voicing these serious allegations and their struggle to bring it to the notice of the University as well as the public. Women in general, particularly women from minority and historically disempowered backgrounds, continue to battle huge odds and challenges to arrive at and to stay on in higher education. Hence, the bravery and the strength of the women of JMI needs to be congratulated and supported unequivocally.

The #MeToo campaign and conversations about consent and gender discrimination of the past year or so in India, particularly in academic contexts, have brought to light pervasive, toxic and habitual cultures of systemic abuse and harassment. Therefore, we strongly urge the JMI authorities to take stringent action against the guilty. We hope the authorities will ensure a robust, impartial and autonomously functioning Internal Complaints Committee with representation from all the stakeholders, as mandated by the UGC's *Saksham* (2013) report. In fact, accounts and experiences across the country also point to the urgent necessity to follow through on Section 5.2.6 of *Saksham* in particular, including the need to organize "mandatory training sessions for members of the ICC, so that they may discharge their functions in a law-abiding manner" (p. 77). We further urge the administration to initiate and encourage more conversations across the University community on gender discrimination and sensitization over gender inclusive and just relations.

Signed/-

**Hyderabad Muslim Women's Forum**

12 February 2019

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Asiya Khan, Activist  
Nazia Akhtar, Researcher  
Muqeta, Social Worker  
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Swathy Margaret, Academic  
Akhileshwari, Journalist, Academic  
Dr.Sujatha Surepally, Academic and Activist  
Vimala, Activist Writer  
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Arpita Jaya, Research Scholar, University of Hyderabad  
Vasudha Nagaraj, Advocate  
Vyjayanti Vasanta Mogli, Transgender Activist  
Rachana Mudraboyina, Transgender Peoples' Rights Activist  
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