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Dated: 08/01/2020

**Press Release**

**All India Forum for Right to Education (AIFRTE)**

**On**

**Brutal Attack on JNU Students and Faculty by Fascist ABVP/RSS Thugs**

AIFRTE condemns the shocking assault on the students and teachers of JNU by an armed mob of about eighty to one hundred persons shouting slogans like “Bharatmata ki Jai”, “Vande Mataram” and “Goli Maaro Salon ko” on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2020. Despite the presence of the University’s security on the campus and the Delhi police outside the gate, the thugs entered with their faces covered and armed with iron rods, lathis and hammers. Some girl students stated that they were witness to the police facilitating their entry and informing them of the location of the hostels indicating that these illegal entrants were not students of JNU but ABVP members from Delhi University and RSS hoodlums.

The attackers proceeded to vandalize the hostels, smashed cars and other vehicles, and indiscriminately and savagely beat up women and male students and teachers. Aishe Ghosh the President of JNUSU was hit on the head with an iron rod, briefly lost consciousness and was bleeding profusely. She required 16 stitches for her wound. Prof. Sen of the Centre of Regional Development was also assaulted and suffered head injuries. More than thirty persons received injuries and many were only discharged from the Trauma Centre of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) after 24 hours.

The attackers had a free run of the campus for almost three hours while a group of their supporters were already mobilized and shouting slogans outside the gate. They were being protected by the police who did nothing to intervene as the rampage continued on the campus. Shockingly the Vice-Chancellor and senior members of the administration were nowhere to be seen. Responsible office bearers of the JNU Teachers Association were heard on national television actually holding them responsible, along with Delhi police and ABVP/RSS, for this well-planned fascist assault on the academic community. Messages on social media from supporters of these hoodlums also provide proof that this was a planned attack to derail the strong on-going protest against massive hostel fee hikes and resistance to registration for the next semester as decided by the students union after holding general bodies of all schools.

This descent to fascist methods of attack by thugs affiliated to the Hindutva regime led by Modi-Shah (viciously targeted police assaults had already been seen in JMI, AMU and other cities and towns in UP) points to the desperation in the Hindutva forces faced with the peaceful but resolute resistance of the university communities towards the new education policies of privatization, commercialization and centralization. Rising fees, budgetary cuts and job insecurity have brought almost all sections into united struggles.

A group of ten members from AIFRTE (including Organizing Secretary Dr. Vikas Gupta and Presidium member Prof. Madhu Prasad) were at the JNU campus for several hours in the night of 6<sup>th</sup> January 2020 to find ground level information and to express our solidarity with the students and teachers of the University. The deligation found that despite the brutal assault and the panic

शिक्षा नहीं कोई कारोबार, है यह जनता का अधिकार

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spread among the university community, JNU students and teachers have united firmly to stand against the hindutva goons, to resist their violent attempt to disrupt the struggle, and to continue the fight against the exclusionary National Education Policy 2020 (NEP) promoting centralized control, privatization, commercialization and communalization of education.

AIFRTE salutes the courageous struggle of the academic community at JNU and resolves to fight shoulder to shoulder with all students and teachers across the country who are fearlessly resisting the fascist attacks against them.

AIFRTE demands that

- Home Minister Amit Shah and the Delhi Police which functions under his control be held accountable for this outrageous assault on the peacefully protesting students and the faculty of JNU;
- Present Vice Chancellor be immediately dismissed and all senior members of his administration removed so that a fair judicial inquiry is possible as their complicity with the 'goons' is apparent;
  - The role of the ABVP/RSS in this criminal assault must be properly investigated so that appropriate administrative action can be taken against such fascist organizations which are spreading terror in campuses across the country.

AIFRTE Presidium