We, citizens of India, are deeply concerned at the recent escalation of tensions between India and Pakistan, and at the climate of intolerance that is developing around it.

Nothing can justify the act of terrorism that took the lives of more than 40 CRPF personnel in Pulwama on 14 February 2019. Nor can anything justify the Pakistan government’s covert support of armed groups that have carried out this sort of attack in Kashmir over the years.

Nevertheless, India’s response to this incident must abide by international law in letter and spirit. It must also be responsible and take into account the risks involved in an armed conflict between two nuclear powers.

The history of war across the world has repeatedly shown how easily and speedily an armed conflict can escalate well beyond what was initially expected. The first World War, we may recall, began with a single assassination, which set in motion a chain of attacks and counter-attacks that eventually led to millions of casualties. Similarly, it would be easy for seemingly “safe” strikes and counter-strikes between India and Pakistan to lead to a major confrontation, possibly even nuclear war, with disastrous consequences for both sides.

Even a limited confrontation would resolve nothing – neither the tensions between India and Pakistan, nor the Kashmir dispute. On the contrary, it would aggravate tensions and delay the process of conflict resolution.

The principal victims of this conflict are the civilian residents of Kashmir, who have endured immense suffering over the years, including gross human rights violations. In recent days, Kashmiris have also been a target of brutal attacks across the country. If the conflict intensifies, this hostility is likely to be extended to other minorities and dissidents.

The victims also include hundreds of thousands of military and para-military personnel, largely drawn from underprivileged groups, who are exposed to the most trying service conditions in Kashmir and may soon be exposed to further danger.

The victims of continued hostility also include the Indian population at large, in so far as it absorbs valuable financial and human resources that could be used for better purposes. Perhaps the biggest national damage is the erosion of democracy including the freedom of expression and dissent.

Unfortunately, the climate of jingoism that tends to develop around this sort of situation is obscuring these simple truths. Even reasoned demands for a peaceful solution tend to be conflated with anti-national sentiment.

We appeal to the governments on both sides to refrain from further hostilities, overt or covert, and to resolve their differences within the framework of international law and human rights.
List of signatories

1. A P Shah [Former Chief Justice, Delhi High Court]
2. A. Osika [Graduate Student]
3. Aabha Muralidharan [Member, Ek Potlee Ret Ki & NATION]
4. Abida Khatoon [Concerned citizen, Uttar Pradesh]
5. Aaditeshwar Seth [Academic and Social entrepreneur]
6. Aarushi [Student]
7. Aashish Gupta [PhD Student, University of Pennsylvania]
8. Aayushi Verma [Concerned citizen]
9. Aban Raza [Artist, Delhi]
10. Abdul Shakeel [Activist, New Delhi]
11. Abheek Barman [Consulting Editor, The Economic Times, New Delhi]
12. Abhi Saxena [Student, University of Washington]
13. Abhishek Shaw [Journalist, The India Forum]
14. Abhishek Verma [Associate Director, IT - Insurance]
15. Abidali Patel [Concerned citizen, Gujarat]
16. Abinash DC [Independent scholar and activist]
17. Achin Vanaik [Retired Professor, Delhi University]
18. Aditi Routh [Ph.D. student, The University of Georgia]
19. Advaita Rajendra [PhD student, Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad]
20. Afeeda K T [Delhi University]
21. Aftab Seth [Former Indian Administrative Services (IAS) officer]
22. Aishwarya Mohapatra [Delhi University]
23. Ajitha George [Researcher and Women Rights' activist, Jharkhand]
24. Akash Ranjan [Concerned citizen]
25. Akeel Bilgrami [Professor of Philosophy & Committee on Global Thought, Columbia University]
26. Akhil Pratap Singh [Serving for Government of India, Delhi]
27. Alamu Rathinasabapathy [Concerned citizen]
28. Aloka Kujur, Women Against Sexual Violence and State Repression, Jharkhand
29. Aman Chokshi [Concerned citizen]
30. Amar Bhattacharya [Concerned citizen]
31. Amar Jesani [Independent Researcher and Teacher (Bioethics, Public Health), Mumbai]
32. Ambika Nair [The Leaflet]
33. Ameer Sultana [Concerned citizen]
34. Amit Bhaduri [Concerned citizen]
35. Amit Kumar [Law Student, Delhi University]
36. Amit Singh [Ambedkar University Delhi]
37. Amita Pitre [Consultant, Public Health and Gender Justice]
38. Amitabha Pande [Indian Administrative Services (IAS), retired]
39. Amitav Ghosh [Writer]
40. Amla Pisharody [Student, Azim Premji University]
41. Amman Madan [Azim Premji University]
Ammu Joseph [Independent Journalist, Bangalore]
Amrita Chhachhi [Associate Professor, International Institute of Social Studies, The Hague]
Amrita Johri [Satark Nagrik Sangathan, Delhi]
Amritananda Chakravorty [Advocate, Delhi]
Anand Chakravarti [retired Professor, Delhi University]
Anant Phadke [Concerned citizen]
Ananya Goyal [National University of Singapore]
Ananya Vajpeyi [Scholar and Writer, New Delhi]
Anil Laad [Concerned citizen]
Anindita Adhikari [Research scholar, Brown University]
Anindya Jana [Journalist]
Aninjit Pakhale [Student, Maharashtra]
Anita Agnihotri [Indian Administrative Services (IAS), retired]
Anita Cherian [Concerned citizen]
Anita Singh [Concerned citizen]
Anjali Bhardwaj [Satark Nagrik Sangathan, Delhi]
Ankita Aggarwal [Research Scholar, City University of New York]
Ankur Sarin [Faculty Member, Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad]
Anmol Narain [Concerned citizen]
Anmol Somanchi [Independent researcher]
Anna Dani [Indian Administrative Services (IAS), retired]
Anna Dragonette [Concerned citizen]
Antara Dev Sen [Journalist]
Antima [Concerned citizen, Nainital]
Anuj Goyal [Independent Researcher]
Anumeha Yadav [Reporter]
Anup Dhar [Professor of Philosophy, Ambedkar University Delhi]
Arati Chokshi [Concerned citizen]
Arvinda Potluri [Software professional]
Ardhendu Sen [Concerned citizen]
Aparajay [Madras Institute of Development Studies, Chennai]
Anuradha Raman [Concerned citizen]
Anuradha Talwar [Activist, West Bengal]
Anusha Ravishankar [Student, Shanmugha Arts, Science, SASTRA University, Tamil Nadu]
Anwar-ul-Haq [Activist, New Delhi]
Aparajay [Madras Institute of Development Studies, Chennai]
Apoorvanand [Professor, University of Delhi]
Arun Kumar [Researcher, Delhi]
Arati Chokshi [Concerned citizen]
Aruna Roy [Concerned citizen]
1 March 2019

86 Arjun Sheoran [Advocate and National Organising Secretary, People's Union for Civil Liberties]
87 Arumugam Shashank [Concerned citizen]
88 Aruna Rodrigues [Concerned citizen]
89 Aruna Roy [Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan]
90 Arundathi [Kodaikanal]
91 Arundhati Dhuru [National Alliance of People's Movements]
92 Arundhati Roy [Writer]
93 Arvind Krishna Mehrotra [Poet and translator]
94 Asha Dey [Concerned citizen]
95 Asha Hans [Concerned citizen]
96 Asha Khera [Concerned citizen]
97 Asha Mishra [Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti]
98 Ashish Mehta [Concerned citizen]
99 Ashish Ranjan [Assistant Professor, Unitedworld School of Business]
100 Ashok Choudhary [General secretary, All India Union of Forest Working People ]
101 Ashok Kotwal (Professor Emeritus, Vancouver School of Economics)
102 Ashok Kumar Sharma [Indian Foreign Services (IFS), retired]
103 Ashok Nehru [Retired consultant to Swedfund]
104 Ashwini Desphande [Former Professor of Economics, Delhi School of Economics]
105 Atma Prakash Pandey [Concerned citizen]
106 Ayan [Concerned citizen, New Delhi]
107 Ayesha Kidwai [Professor, Jawharlal Nehru University]
108 Aysha [Activist, New Delhi]
109 B Vittal Bhat [Retired Civil Servant]
110 B.K. Raghuram [Software Engineer]
111 Bajrang Lal Sharma [Concerned citizen, Udaipur]
112 Balasubramaniam K. M. [Concerned citizen]
113 Bandish Soparkar [Advocate, Ahmedabad]
114 Basant Hetamsaria [National Alliance of People's Movements, Jharkhand]
115 Beena [Activist, New Delhi]
116 Bela Bhatia [Writer and human rights lawyer, Bastar]
117 Bënil Biswas [Assistant Professor, Ambedkar University Delhi]
118 Bezwada Wilson [National Convenor of the Safai Karmachari Andolan]
119 Bharat B [Concerned citizen]
120 Bhawna [Student, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai]
121 Bhim Reddy [Concerned citizen]
122 Bina Agarwal [Economist]
123 Bindu K C [Ambedkar University Delhi]
124 Bipin Soni [Concerned citizen, New Delhi]
125 Biraj Patnaik [Activist]
126 Bitiya Murmu [Concerned citizen]
127 BJ Vaz [Veteran Wing Commander]
128 Both Prakash [School of Open Learning, Ambedkar University Delhi]
129 Brijesh Shivhare [Concerned citizen, New Delhi]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>130</td>
<td>Brinelle Dsouza</td>
<td>[Faculty, Tata Institute of Social Sciences]</td>
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<td>131</td>
<td>C. Balakrishnan</td>
<td>[Indian Administrative Services (IAS), retired]</td>
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<td>132</td>
<td>C. Rammanohar Reddy</td>
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<td>David Solomon</td>
<td>[Concerned citizen]</td>
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<td>Debdatta Chowdhury</td>
<td>[Assistant Professor in Gender Studies, Centre for Studies in Social Sciences Calcutta]</td>
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<td>Debjani Sengupta</td>
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<td>[Professor of Economics, New York University]</td>
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<td>[Public Health Advocate]</td>
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<td>[Dean of School of Culture and Creative Expressions, Ambedkar University]</td>
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<td>[Assistant Professor, Azim Premji University]</td>
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<td>Dev Desai</td>
<td>[Act Now for Harmony and Democracy (ANHAD), Gujarat]</td>
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<td>[Honorary Professor, Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi]</td>
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<td>Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad</td>
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<td>Githa Hariharan</td>
<td>Author and Editor</td>
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<td>Gopalji Pradhan</td>
<td>Professor, Ambedkar University Delhi</td>
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<td>Harsh Kapoor</td>
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<td>190</td>
<td>Harsh Mander</td>
<td>Director, Centre for Equity Studies</td>
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<td>191</td>
<td>Hemanshu Kumar</td>
<td>Ashoka University</td>
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<td>192</td>
<td>Hilal Ahmed</td>
<td>Associate Professor, Centre for the Study of Developing Societies</td>
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<td>193</td>
<td>Himani Wadhwa</td>
<td>Development research professional</td>
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<td>Himanshu</td>
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<td>Indian Administrative Services (IAS), retired</td>
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<td>Homi K. Bhabha</td>
<td>Rothenberg Professor of the Humanities, Harvard University</td>
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<td>Honey Oberoi Vahali</td>
<td>Ambedkar University Delhi</td>
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<td>198</td>
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<td>Filmmaker, Ahmedabad</td>
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<td>199</td>
<td>Imrana Qadeer</td>
<td>Distinguished Professor, Council for Social Development, New Delhi</td>
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<td>Inayat Sabhikhi</td>
<td>Student, Harvard Kennedy School</td>
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<td>Indira Jaising</td>
<td>Lawyers’ Collective, New Delhi</td>
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<td>Iqbal Nushaiba Shuaib</td>
<td>Madras School of Economics</td>
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<td>Ira Raja</td>
<td>Faculty, Department of English, University of Delhi</td>
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<td>205</td>
<td>Ishan</td>
<td>Social worker, Jharkhand</td>
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<td>Ishita Mehrotra</td>
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<td>International Institute of Social Studies, The Hague</td>
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<td>211</td>
<td>Janaki Abraham</td>
<td>Associate Professor, Delhi University</td>
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<td>212</td>
<td>Janaki Nair</td>
<td>Professor, Jawaharlal Nehru University</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Janaki Srinivasan [Researcher and teacher]
Javed [Concerned citizen, New Delhi]
Javid Chowdhury [Former Union Health Secretary]
Jawhar Sircar [Former Culture Secretary, Govt of India]
Jayati Ghosh [Professor of Economics, Jawaharlal Nehru University]
Jean Drèze [Visiting Professor, Ranchi University]
Jeevika Shiv [Lawyer]
Jignesh Mevani [Social Activist and lawyer]
Joe Athialy [Concerned citizen]
Joseph Antony [CEO & Founder, The Exponential Foundation]
Jothi SJ [Director, Udayani Social Action Forum, Kolkata]
K B Garg [Retd. Prof. of Physics]
K Velentina [Ambedkar University Delhi]
Kade Finnoff [Associate Professor of Economics, Azim Premji University]
Kalpana Kannabiran [Professor & Director, Council for Social Development, Hyderabad]
Kalyani Chaudhuri [Retd. Additional Chief Secretary, West Bengal]
Kalyani Menon Sen [Independent researcher]
Kamal Patel [Concerned citizen]
Kamayani Bali Mahababal [Concerned citizen]
Kamayani Swami [Activist, Bihar]
Kanika Sharma [Independent researcher]
Karuna DW [Researcher, Chennai]
Kasturi Adhikary [Member, Ek Potlee Ret Ki & NATION]
Kathyayini Chamraj [Freelance Journalist]
Kaushambi Bagchi [Researcher]
Kaushik Kumar Majumdar [Professor, Indian Statistical Institute, Bangalore]
Kavita Srivastava [Human rights worker]
Kavitha Ranganathan [Faculty, Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad]
Keshav Desiraju [Retired Secretary to Government of India]
Kiran Shaheen [Writer/Anti Poverty Activist]
Koninika Ray [Activist]
Kopal [Assistant Professor, Ambedkar University Delhi]
Krishan Chand [Former Director General, Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development (CRRID)]
Krishna [PhD scholar, Jawaharlal Nehru University]
Krishna Ghosh [Concerned citizen]
Krishnakant [Concerned citizen, Gujarat]
Kritika Pandey [Ex- Young India Fellow, Ashoka University]
Kumar Rana [Concerned citizen, Kolkata]
L. Ramdas [Admiral (retired)]
Lakshi Tyagi [Concerned citizen]
Lakshmi Krishnamurthy - Alarippu [Concerned citizen]
Lalita Ramdas [Founder, Greenpeace India]
Lima Kanungo [Concerned citizen]
Lokesh [Concerned citizen, Delhi]
262 Lt Gen Madhav Datar (Veteran)
263 M.M. Naazim [Pakistan-India Peoples' Forum for Peace and Democracy - NATCOM member]
264 M.Y. Rao [Indian Administrative Services (IAS), retired]
265 Madhu Bhaduri [Retired Ambassador of India]
266 Madhulika Reddy [Post-doctoral researcher, Deccan College, Pune]
267 Magna Mohapatra [Student, South Asian University]
268 Mahnoor Yar Khan [Concerned citizen]
269 Maidul Islam [Assistant Professor of Political Science, Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta]
270 Maitreesh Ghatak [Professor of Economics, London School of Economics]
271 Mala Devi [Concerned citizen, New Delhi]
272 Mala Mukherjee [Photographer]
273 Malik Altaf Hussain [Research Scholar, Jawaharlal Nehru University]
274 Malvika Gupta [DPhil student, University of Oxford]
275 Mamatha Karollil [Ambedkar University Delhi]
276 Mamta [Activist, New Delhi]
277 Manorama Bhat [Retired Civil Servant]
278 Maria Julien [Teacher]
279 Mausumi Das [Associate Professor of Economics, Delhi School of Economics]
280 Md Adnanuddin [Student, Aligarh Muslim University]
281 Meena Gupta [Indian Administrative Services (IAS), retired]
282 Meena Kandasamy [Writer]
283 Meera Samson [Collaborative Research and Dissemination (CORD), Delhi]
284 Megha Mitra [Student]
285 Meghna Yadav [Delhi School of Economics]
286 Mehak Malhotra [Consultant, PricewaterhouseCoopers]
287 Mehnaz [Concerned citizen]
288 Menaka Rao [Student, Ambedkar University Delhi]
289 Mira Sadgopal [Independent Social and Health Researcher, Medico Friend Circle, India]
290 Mitali Saran [Journalist]
291 Moggillan Bharti [Assistant Professor, Ambedkar University Delhi]
292 Mohammad Samad [Concerned citizen, Uttar Pradesh]
293 Mohan Bhagat [Emeritus Professor, University of Maryland]
294 Mohan Rao [Retired Professor, Jawaharlal Nehru University]
295 Mohd. Kamran [Concerned citizen, New Delhi]
296 Mohinderpal Singh Aulakh [Indian Police Services (IPS), retired]
297 Mohit P. Gandhi [Ph.D. student, Jawaharlal Nehru University]
298 Moinak Biswas [Professor, Department of Film Studies & Coordinator, The Media Lab, Jadavpur University]
299 Monica Das Gupta [Anthropologist and demographer]
300 Mridula Sridhar [Freelancer]
301 Mrinal Pande [Senior journalist and author]
302 Mukta Srivastava [Concerned citizen]
303 Mukti Bosco [Concerned citizen]
304 Mukul Kesavan [Writer]
305 Mukul Mangalik [Faculty, Delhi University]
1 March 2019

Rajan Kurai Krishnan [Ambedkar University Delhi]
Rajarshi Dasgupta [Centre for Political Studies Jawaharlal Nehru University]
Rajat Kanti Sur [Documentation Officer, Durbar Mahila Smanwaya Committee & Researcher, Calcutta University]
Rajat Kumar Sonkar [Student, Delhi University]
Rajeev Bhargav [Centre for the Study of Developing Societies]
Rajendran Narayanan [Assistant Professor, Azim Premji University]
Rajesh Jha [Journalist]
Rajinder Chaudhary, Former Professor of Economics, Maharshi Dayanand University, Rohtak
Rajiv Khanna [Corporate Executive]
Rajni Palriwala [Delhi University]
Rajshri Jayaraman [Professor of Economics, The European School of Management and Technology (ESMT Berlin)]
Raju Sharma [Indian Administrative Services (IAS), retired]
Rakhi Ghoshal [Assistant Professor, Karnavati University]
Rakshita Swamy [Concerned citizen]
Ram Dayal Ahirwar [Independent Political Analyst]
Ram Lal [Activist, Uttarkhand]
Rama Devi [PhD scholar, Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati]
Ramesh Bajaj [Concerned citizen]
Ramnik Mohan [Formerly Associate Professor, Rohtak]
Rana [Retired Company Director]
Rashim Singh [Post Doctoral Fellow, University of Houston]
Ratnpriya Mishra [Concerned citizen]
Ravi Duggal [Independent Public Health Researcher and Activist, Mumbai]
Ravi Jagan [Concerned citizen]
Ravi Vira Gupta [Indian Administrative Services (IAS), retired]
Ravinder Kaur [Professor, Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi]
Ravindra Kumar Singh [Activist, New Delhi]
Reetika Khera [Associate Professor, Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad]
Rekambha T L [Social worker, Shivamogga, Karnataka]
Reva Yunus [Assistant Professor, Azim Premji University]
Revathi Narayanan [Gender and Development Consultant, Bangalore]
Rhythm Parikh [Student, Azim Premji University]
Richa Pandey [Student, Azim Premji University]
Ridhima Mehra [Concerned citizen, Delhi]
Rimi Hembrom [Student, Indian Institute of Technology, Madras]
Ritambhara Mehta [Concerned citizen]
Roderick Wijunamai [Independent Researcher]
Rohini Mohan [Independent Journalist]
Rohini Pande [Professor of Public Policy, Harvard Kennedy School]
Rohini Patil [Teacher]
Rohit De [Assistant Professor, Yale University]
Rohit Prajapati [Activist, Gujarat]
Rohit Shah [Doctoral Scholar, Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay- Monash Research Academy]
Rohith P [Assistant Professor, Deen Dayal Upadhyaya College, Delhi]
Romyorup Mitra [Activist]
Ronald Abraham [Concerned citizen]
Rosamma Thomas [Pune]
Ruby Hembrom [Founder, Adivaani]
Ruchhita Kazaria [Peace-Activist with Aman Ki Asha]
Rukmini Bhaya Nair [Concerned citizen]
Rupinder Kaur [Social worker]
S. Anandalakshmy [Concerned citizen]
S. Arun Kumar [Professor, Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi]
S. Mona Sinha [Founder, Raising Change]
S. Anburose [retired Junior Engineer]
S.P. Ambrose [Indian Administrative Services (IAS), retired]
S.Q. Masood [Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan]
S.V. Nadkarni [Ex-Dean Lokmanya Tilak Municipal Medical College Mumbai]
Sachin Jain [Vikas Samvad]
Sadhna Arya [Associate Professor, University of Delhi]
Sagarika Ghose [Senior Journalist]
Sagolsem Pavel Meitei [Program Manager, Nazariya: Queer Feminist Resource Group]
Sakina Dhorajiwala [LibTech India]
Saksham Pal [Concerned citizen]
Salahuddin Ahmad [Indian Administrative Services (IAS), retired]
Salik Shah [Writer and Filmmaker]
Sameena Kader [Enterprise Risk Analyst]
Sameer Khera [Entrepreneur]
Sameer Panda [Activist, Odisha]
Sandeep Mertia [New York University]
Sandeep Pandey [Lok Rajniti Manch]
Sangeeta Chatterji [Postdoctoral Fellow]
Sanghamitra Sen [Retired Engineer/Scientist]
Sanghita Chandra [Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Kolkata]
Sanjeeb Mukherjee [Concerned citizen]
Sanjoy K Roy [Arts Producer]
Saranga Ugalmugle [Advocate, Bombay High Court]
Sarbajaya Bhattacharya [Research Scholar, Jadavpur University]
Sarika Sharma [The Tribune, Chandigarh]
Saroj Dahiya Ratnoo [Concerned citizen]
Satinath Choudhary [Retired Professor of Computer Science]
Satya Gopal Dey [Vikramshila Education Resource Society]
Satyabhama Subramanian [Indian Administrative Services (IAS), retired]
Saumyajit Bhattacharya [Associate Professor, Kirori Mal College, University of Delhi]
Sayandeep Chowdhury [Assistant Professor, Ambedkar University Delhi]
Seema Chishti [Senior Journalist]
Seema Kazi [Concerned citizen, New Delhi]
Sejal Dand [Mahila Kisan Adhikar Manch]
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482 Shabnam Aziz Khaled [Social Activist]
483 Shabnam Hashmi [Social Activist, Act Now for Harmony and Democracy (ANHAD)]
484 Shailaja Menon [Assistant Professor, Ambedkar University Delhi]
485 Shailesh Yadav [Concerned citizen]
486 Shantha Tara [Student]
487 Sharad Raj [Filmmaker]
488 Sharad Sarin [Concerned citizen]
489 Sharada Gopal [Freelance writer]
490 Sharda Prasad [Indian Administrative Services (IAS), retired]
491 Shashank Kela [Writer and scholar]
492 Sheila Kumar [Author and Journalist, Bangalore]
493 Sherebanu Frosh [Concerned citizen]
494 Shiv D Sharma [The New School for Social Research]
495 Shiva Shankar [Chennai Mathematical Institute]
496 Shivani Nag [Assistant Professor, Ambedkar University Delhi]
497 Shobhit Mahajan [Delhi University]
498 Shomen Mukherjee [Faculty, Azim Premji University]
499 Shreya Munoth [Lawyer]
500 Shubham Negi [Student, Delhi School of Economics]
501 Shubham Negi [Student, Delhi University]
502 Shweta [Concerned citizen]
503 Shweta Sundar [Architect, People in Centre]
504 Sibaji Bandyopadhyay [Formerly, Professor of Cultural Studies, Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta (CSSSC)]
505 Siddharth Gupta [Advocate]
506 Siddharth K J [Independent Researcher, Bengaluru]
507 Siraj Dutta [Right to Food Campaign]
508 Sivakumar Padmanabhan [Concerned citizen]
509 Smita Gupta [Concerned citizen]
510 Sobhanlal Datta Gupta [Formerly Surendra Nath Banerjee Professor of Political Science, University of Calcutta]
511 Soma KP [Independent researcher/policy analyst, New Delhi]
512 Somasundaram [Member, Ek Potlee Ret Ki & NATION]
513 Sonia Faleiro [Writer]
514 Soumya Pancholi [Student, National Law School of India University, Bangalore]
515 Souparna Maji [Researcher and Academic Tutor, Kolkata]
516 Sreekumar Menon [Faculty, Asian College of Journalism]
517 Srinivas Goli [Concerned citizen]
518 Stan Swamy [Human Rights Activist]
519 Stuti Khanna [Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi]
520 Subhash Gatade [New Socialist Initiative]
521 Subhashis Banerjee [Professor, Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi]
522 Subrahmanya Shastri [Filmmaker and Media Professional]
523 Sucheta De [National President, All India Students Association]
524 Sudhadeep Mukherjee [Student, Jadavpur University]
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569 Tashi Choedup [Buddhist Monastic, Human Rights and Interfaith activist]
570 Tatsita Mishra [Student, Azim Premji University]
571 Tejaswini Niranjana [Writer and professor, Lingnan University-Hong Kong]
572 Udvas Das [Student, Indian Statistical Institute, Bangalore]
573 Uma Chakravarti [Historian]
574 Usha Mudiganti [Assistant Professor, Ambedkar University Delhi]
575 Usman Jawed Siddiqi [Senior researcher, Centre for Equity Studies, Delhi]
576 Valay Singh [Concerned citizen]
577 Vandana Mahajan [Concerned citizen]
578 Vandana Prasad [Community Pediatrician]
579 Vappala Balachandran [Journalist]
580 Varnica Arora [Ph.D candidate, City University of New York]
581 Varnika [MA student, Conflict Analysis and Peacebuilding, Jamia Millia Islamia]
582 Varsha Poddar [Concerned citizen]
583 Vasundhara Rangaswamy [Concerned citizen]
584 Vibhuti Duggal [Assistant Professor, Ambedkar University Delhi]
585 Veena Ravikumar [Academician]
586 Vibha Puri Das [Concerned citizen]
587 Vibhina Ramdev [Freelance Choreographer]
588 Vijayan Madhavan [Concerned citizen]
589 Vijendra Sharma [Activist, New Delhi]
590 Vika Dubey [Ph.D. candidate, Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur]
591 Vikas Bajpai [Assistant Professor, Jawharlal Nehru University]
592 Vikram Nehru [Faculty, John Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies]
593 Vikram Vyas [Physicist]
594 Vinata Nanda [Writer, Filmmaker, Creative Activist, Head Asian Centre for Entertainment Education]
595 Vineeta Bal [Scientist, Pune]
596 Vinod C. Khanna [Indian Foreign Services (IFS), retired]
597 Vinod Kumar [Journalist, Jharkhand]
598 Vipul Vivek [Student, Jawaharlal Nehru University]
599 Virginia Saldanha [Concerned citizen, Mumbai]
600 Virginius Xaxa [Sociologist]
601 Vivek Kumar [Right to food campaign, Jharkhand]
602 Vivek Sundara [Concerned citizen]
603 Wajahat Habibullah [Indian Administrative Services (IAS), retired]
604 Xavier Dias [Editor, Khan Khaneej aur Adhikar]
605 Yogesh Snehi [Assistant Professor, Ambedkar University Delhi]
606 Yug Mohit Chaudhry [Lawyer]
607 Zaibun [Concerned citizen, Uttar Pradesh]
608 Zoya Hasan [Former Professor of Political Science, Jawaharlal Nehru University]

*The list was compiled at break-neck speed and minor gaps or inaccuracies are possible.
*A few signatories are 'Overseas Citizens of India (OCIs)’