

**AN OPEN LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER,
MINISTER FOR WOMEN & CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND
MINISTER OF SOCIAL JUSTICE & EMPOWERMENT**

Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi
Prime Minister's Office
South Block, Raisina Hill
New Delhi - 110011

Ms. Smriti Zubin Irani
Minister for Women and Child Development
Shastri Bhawan
New Delhi - 110001

Mr. Thaawarchand Gehlot
Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment
A-Wing, Shastri Bhawan
New Delhi - 110001

June 28th, 2021

Dear Prime Minister Modi,
dear Minister Irani, dear Minister Gehlot,

With this letter we, the Members of Parliament, would like to express our utmost concern regarding the rising number of grave incidents of rape and sexual violence against Dalit women and girls, which have been taking place in India over the last few years. The horrific crime of gang rape and physical attack committed in Hathras on 14 September 2020 resulted in the death of a young Dalit woman. The case drew widespread outrage globally and is sadly not an isolated incident. Rather, the Hathras case represents a worrying trend of rapes against women and girls in India, particularly against marginalized communities, who face additional atrocities and are at increased risk of sexual violence.

We are profoundly worried about the downplaying by key State officials of the grave criminal nature of sexual violence against women and girls, particularly when committed against marginalized communities. In the Hathras case, for instance, the Uttar Pradesh (UP) authorities initially denied that the rape took place, they cremated the body of the victim without the consent of the family, and arrested journalists and

civil society activists protesting against these actions or reporting on the case. Such procedure contributes to the prevailing culture of impunity for such crimes.

As per the National Crime Records Bureau's (NCRB) report of 2018, UP tops the list of number of crimes committed against Dalits, including Dalit women. The state has also recorded the maximum number of cases of rape (526), attempt to rape (48), incidences of abduction of Dalit women (381), and incidences of assault (711) in 2018 under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) (SC/ST [PoA]) Act. 50766 cases pending in UP which makes the pendency rate to be 95.3%.

Failure to adequately address cases of sexual violence and to improve access to justice complicates our current and future relations, as we are committed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and aligning with our shared international human rights commitments. Respect for human rights and rule of law requires strong actions by the Indian government, too. We would wish such actions to be implemented at the highest level to address in particular impunity for crimes of sexual violence against Dalit women and girls, and to effectively enforce and implement existing laws on sexual violence and caste-based atrocities.

We may also add that India's human rights situation, particularly women's rights, are critically considered by international bodies, such as the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, mandate holders of the UN Special Procedures as well as within the UPR mechanism.

We would like to consider India our partner in a joint effort for a better world. A world that protects human rights, achieves equality for women and girls and promotes justice for all. Sexual violence should not be tolerated irrespective of which community the victim belongs to.

Yours sincerely,

- Omid Nouripour, Member of the German Bundestag
- Margarete Bause, Member of the German Bundestag
- Ulle Schauws, Member of the German Bundestag
- Claudia Roth, Vice-President of the German Bundestag
- Britta Hasselmann, First Parliamentary Secretary of the Alliance 90/The Greens parliamentary group in the Bundestag

- Anton Hofreiter, Leader of the Alliance 90/The Greens parliamentary group in the Bundestag
- Lisa Paus, Member of the German Bundestag
- Katja Keul, Member of the German Bundestag
- Cem Özdemir, Member of the German Bundestag
- Beate Müller-Gemmeke, Member of the German Bundestag
- Maria Klein-Schmeink, Member of the German Bundestag
- Tobias Lindner, Member of the German Bundestag
- Luise Amtsberg, Member of the German Bundestag
- Kordula Schulz-Asche, Member of the German Bundestag
- Kai Gehring, Member of the German Bundestag
- Anna Cavazzini, Member of the European Parliament
- Frank Schwabe, Member of the German Bundestag
- Margit Stumpp, Member of the German Bundestag
- Harald Ebner, Member of the German Bundestag
- Filiz Polat, Member of the German Bundestag
- Lisa Badum, Member of the German Bundestag
- Terry Reintke, Member of the European Parliament
- Uwe Kekeritz, Member of the German Bundestag
- Bettina Hoffmann, Member of the German Bundestag
- Julia Verlinden, Member of the German Bundestag
- Renate Künast, Member of the German Bundestag
- Ottmar von Holtz, Member of the German Bundestag
- Steffi Lemke, Member of the German Bundestag

- Sylvia Kotting-Uhl, Member of the German Bundestag
- Franziska Brantner, Member of the German Bundestag
- Frithjof Schmidt, Member of the German Bundestag
- Frank Heinrich, Member of the German Bundestag
- Hannah Neumann, Member of the European Parliament
- Christian Kühn, Member of the German Bundestag
- Jensen Gyde, Member of the German Bundestag
- Heidi Hautala, Member of the European Parliament
- Alviina Alametsä, Member of the European Parliament
- Peter Heidt, Member of the German Bundestag
- Heike Hänsel, Member of the German Bundestag
- Christopher Gohl, Member of the German Bundestag
- Nicole Bauer, Member of the German Bundestag
- Jürgen Trittin, Member of the German Bundestag
- Katharina Dröge, Member of the German Bundestag