

# Call for Action to



## in India and Elsewhere

Join us for a vigil at the Hamilton City Hall on  
Saturday, January 5, 2013, 12-1 pm

Distraught and angered by the horrific death suffered by a young Indian woman who was sexually assaulted and murdered in Delhi (we don't know her real name yet), in solidarity with women and men in India, as well as with all concerned people around the world, members of the Indian Community (Gandhi inspired organisation Mahila Shanti Sena), and of the Community at large wish to express their revulsion, their solidarity, but most importantly they demand that effective measures be taken in India and everywhere else in the world, including in Canada, to stop violence against women.

#### Speakers will include:

Anne Pearson, Dept of Religious Studies, McMaster University  
Maroussia Ahmed, Department of French and Women's Studies Program  
Virbala Kumar, Hindu Samaj Women's Outreach Group  
Denise Doyle, YWCA, Hamilton

#### Supported by:

Afghan Canadian Women's Society, Art and Peace Education Exchange Canada, Canadian Indo-Caribbean Association (CICA), Centre for Peace Studies, McMaster University, Culture of Peace Hamilton, Ecumenical Support Committee for Refugees, Gandhi Peace Festival of Hamilton, Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion (HCCI), Hamilton Centre for Newcomer Health, Hamilton-Burlington KAIROS, Hindu Heritage & Cultural Centre of Hamilton, Hindu Samaj Temple, Hindu Samaj Women's Outreach Group, Immigrant Culture and Art Association (ICAA), India Canada Society, Indigenous Elders and Youth Council, Indigenous Studies Program, McMaster University, Indo-Canadian Networking, Mahila Shanti Sena (Women's Peace Brigade International), McMaster University Gender Studies & Feminist Research (GSFR), Muslim Women Council of Hamilton, Native Women Centre of Hamilton, Physicians for Global Survival (Hamilton), Ploughshares (Hamilton), Russian House, Sexual Assault Centre Hamilton (SACHA), South Asian Heritage Association of Hamilton and Region (SAHAHAR), The Immigrant Women's Centre Hamilton (IWCH), The Malhar Group, YWCA Hamilton and many individuals.

#### For information contact:

Maroussia Ahmed <[ahmedm@mcmaster.ca](mailto:ahmedm@mcmaster.ca)>; phone: 905 529 2694  
Virbala Kumar <[virbalakumar@gmail.com](mailto:virbalakumar@gmail.com)>; Phone: (905) 575 7795  
Rama Singh <[singh@mcmaster.ca](mailto:singh@mcmaster.ca)>; Phone: 905-975-0152 (cell)

**Stop Violence Against Women: Rally to Support Women in India and Around the World**

We are horrified and saddened beyond words at the savage beating, brutal gang rape and death of Nirbhaya at the hands of her assailants in New Delhi.

On December 16<sup>th</sup>, Nirbhaya (not her real name) and her male friend were returning from a movie and took a bus to go home. Nirbhaya and friend were savagely beaten up; Nirbhaya suffered serious head, abdominal and genital injuries. She died on December 29<sup>th</sup>.

Our heartfelt condolences and prayers go to the family of Nirbhaya and we are determined that her death not be in vain. We admire the support and the courage shown by the youth of India in protesting this violence and we implore the Government of India and police to restore the confidence of the people that justice will be done, that women will be able to go about their daily life safe and unafraid.

Equally shocking is the deteriorating condition of law and order in India. Nirbhaya was the 637<sup>th</sup> rape case registered in the City of New Delhi alone in 2012 and according to Women Against Sexual Assault and State Repression, there are 100,000 rape cases currently pending in Indian courts. Right in the middle of Nirbhaya's fight for life, rape cases were being reported from other parts of the country and some rape victims were even taking their own life.

Violence against women is a worldwide scourge and a systemic social crime. Rape is not the only crime committed against women. At every stage of their life, women suffer in many ways: female feticide and infanticide, girl child neglect, female illiteracy, sexual harassment/abuse/ rape, psychological abuse, domestic violence/homicide, economic and sexual exploitation, nutrition deprivation, poor access to health-- all are taking place against women all over the world on a daily basis. Rape is also used as a weapon of war between warring parties (for example earlier in Bosnia or presently still in the Congo).

Violence against women is a worldwide affliction so common it frequently gets little official notice. For every Malala, there are tens of thousands of girls that are kept from going to schools, and for every Nirbhaya there are thousands that are killed, or go missing and unreported (The Native Women's Association of Canada has catalogued 520 cases of missing or murdered aboriginal women, half of them since the year 2000).

We hope that Nirbhaya's assailants will be brought to justice, but we also believe that a tough criminal justice system alone is not the answer. Educational, social and political remediation of the current gender inequality and of male attitudes towards women must take place before we will see any long term improvement in justice for women. Male attitudes must change; patriarchal cultural system which is premised on the belief in women's inferiority has no place in any society.

Gender equality is a women's right. Women's problems are also men's problems, and we trust that the majority of men are able to understand this.

We call upon the governments of all countries, all men and women and especially youth, to allow Malala and Nirbhaya's sacrifice to unleash the forces that will sweep clean unjust social systems.

**Press Conference: Saturday, January 5, 2012: 11:30 am, City Hall, Hamilton.**

**Demonstration: Saturday, January 5, 2012: 12:00 noon, City Hall, Hamilton.**

**Contact Persons:**

Maroussia Ahmed <[ahmedm@mcmaster.ca](mailto:ahmedm@mcmaster.ca)>; phone: (905) 529 2694

Virbala Kumar <[virbalakumar@gmail.com](mailto:virbalakumar@gmail.com)>; Phone: (905) 575 7795

Rama Singh <[singh@mcmaster.ca](mailto:singh@mcmaster.ca)>; Phone: 905-975-0152 (cell)

**This Press Release is supported and issued from:**

Afghan Canadian Women's Society

Art and Peace Education Exchange Canada

Canadian Indo-Caribbean Association (CICA)

Centre for Peace Studies, McMaster University

Culture of Peace Hamilton

Ecumenical Support Committee for Refugees

Gandhi Peace Festival of Hamilton  
Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion (HCCI)  
Hamilton Centre for Newcomer Health  
Hamilton-Burlington KAIROS  
Hindu Heritage & Cultural Centre of Hamilton  
Hindu Samaj Temple of Hamilton  
Hindu Samaj Women's Outreach Group  
Immigrant Culture and Art Association (ICAA)  
India Canada Society  
Indigenous Elders and Youth Council  
Indigenous Studies Program, McMaster University  
Indo-Canadian Networking  
Mahila Shanti Sena (Women's Peace Brigade International).  
McMaster University Gender Studies & Feminist Research (GSFR)  
Muslim Women Council of Hamilton  
Native Women Centre of Hamilton  
Physicians for Global Survival (Hamilton)  
Ploughshares (Hamilton)  
Russian House  
Sexual Assault Centre Hamilton (SACHA)  
South Asian Heritage Association of Hamilton and Region (SAHAHAR)  
The Immigrant Women's Centre Hamilton (IWCH)  
The Malhar Group  
YWCA Hamilton

**Individual supporters:**

Akash Gupta, Anju Joshi, Anne Pearson, Archana Rath, Ashok Dalvi, Ashok Kumar, Basharat Tayyab, Birbal Sahni (Montreal), Carolyn Kinsley, Chitra Passi, Chris Cutler, Dawn Martin-Hill, Deirdre Pike, Denise Doyle, Dinabandhu Rath, Dinesh Singh, Evelyn Myrie, Gail Rappolt, Gary Warner, Hara Padhi, Hara and Kakoli Ghosh, Hodan Ali, Indu Singh, Ines Rios, Jacob Joseph, Jahan Zeb, Janice Lukas, Jay Nair (Toronto), Jay Parekh, Jayashree Dighe, Surekha Parekh, Jessie Forsyth, Joy Warner, Judith Bishop, Jyoti Joshi, Kamal Shankardass, Karen Bird, Karen Trollope-Kumar, Karun Singh, Kathy Pead, Khursheed Ahmed, Kiran Jani, Lakshman Das, Lalitha Ananth, Laura Workman, Ludmila Miran, Mahendra Deonarain, Mahendra Joshi, Maliha Noori, Manju Bhaduri, Maroussia Ahmed, Marufa Shinwari, Mohan Juneja, Nafisa Sulaimankhail, Narendar Passi, Naresh & Sarog Agarwal, Nirmala Dalvi, Nithy Ananth, Nomita Singh, Nora Melara-Lopez, Om P Bhargava, Paul & Renu Ahuja, Paola Jani, Pradeep Kumar, Pramila Jha, Raj Sood, Rama Singh, Rano Shankardass, Rashid Ahmed, Rekha Singh, Renee Westelaar, Rick Monture, Rita Varma, Rupa Jani, Salim Yusuf, Sara Joseph, Saras Das, Satendra Varma, Shanti Mohanty, Sri Gopal Mohanty, Subhash Dighe, Sudesh Sood, Sumitra Padhi, Surekha Parekh, Susan Fast, Terri Bedminster, Vandana Juneja, Veena Juneja, Veronika Vahova, Vinod Kapoor, Virbala Kumar.