

VIOLENCE IN HARYANA

*Organized Hatred, Intimidation,
and Violence by Hindutva Groups*

AUGUST 2023

**A CPIML-AICCTU
FACT FINDING REPORT**



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Sohna Chowk, Haryana

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ORGANIZED HATRED,
INTIMIDATION, AND VIOLENCE
BY HINDUTVA GROUPS

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FACT FINDING REPORT

August 2023 | Digital Edition

Communist Party of India (Marxist–Leninist) Liberation
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*Hindu-Muslim baith ke khaye ek thali mei,
aisa Hindustan bana de ya Allah
(Ya Allah let there be an India where Hindus and
Muslims sit together and eat from the same plate)*

-excerpt from the video of a prayer recited by Mohammad Saad,
a 22 Year old odf Naib Imam, who was killed in Anjuman Jama Masjid Attack
on August 01, 2023 in Gurugao.



Anjuman Jama Masjid,
Gurugram's Sector 57

SUMMARY

On August 3, 2023, two CPIML-AICCTU fact finding teams visited Sohna and Nuh (originally Mewat, renamed as Nuh in 2016) in Haryana. These areas witnessed intense communal provocation by right-wing groups on July 31, 2023, which was followed by violence in which 6 people were killed, several homes were destroyed, and shops owned by Muslims were burnt down.

One team comprising (FFT₁) of members of the CPIML Central Headquarter Team: Com. Prem Singh Gahlawat, Com. Ravi Rai, Com. Shweta Raj, Com. Akash Bhattacharya, and Com. V. Arun met several affected families and visited the affected areas in Nuh, Sohna, and their surroundings.

A second team (FFT₂) composed of AICCTU members Com. Abhishek, Amarnath Sharma and Advocate Ganesh (a Human Rights Lawyer) visited Muslim working-class colonies in Parla Village near Sector 70A, Bhondsi, and similar colonies in Sohna village.

The teams tried to piece together the correct sequence of events that led to the violence and crosschecked the current ground situation with what was being reported in the leading news channels. Both the teams reached similar conclusions: the media portrayal of the violence as anti-Hindu riot do not stand the test of facts.

The recent incidents are part of a pattern of Hindu majoritarian violence centred primarily on cow vigilantism over the last few years. The highly provocative Shobha Yatra, which triggered the violence, has also grown in aggression in the recent past under the patronage of the infamous Bajrang Dal known for indulging in communal violence.

Indeed, Hindu majoritarian groups have made consistent attempts in the recent past to rip apart the syncretic fabric of the region. The Anti Cow Slaughter Act has been cleverly used to foster cow vigilantism which has led to multiple lynchings. These have often been followed by

mahapanchayats which have called for vengeance against Muslims. The administration failed to check the growth of these violent tendencies and failed to prevent the recent incidents despite ample warnings. This turn of events was thus unprecedented in the region but not unexpected.

The recent attacks were well-orchestrated and targeted the Muslim community – both local residents and migrant workers – while the administration looked the other way. Despite requests by citizens and local leaders to stop the Shobha Yatra and act against the provocative videos which had been let loose prior to the Yatra, the police did nothing. Neither did they do enough to check the violence once it had started. In the aftermath, instead of conducting a free and fair investigation, the police have arrested scores of young Muslim men and dished out ‘bulldozer justice’ to Muslims.

The incidents in Haryana dovetail with the nationwide attempts to spread hatred, violence, and fear in the run up to the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. Manipur and Haryana: the two states are geographically distant and distinct, but politically proximate. Both states elected the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) to power, only to witness an orgy of violence targeted at particular communities and with a specific purpose: to maintain Hindu majoritarian rule beyond the 2024 Lok Sabha election, and to produce an irreparably majoritarian social fabric in the long run.



Sohna, Haryana

KEY FINDINGS

1. **Bajrang Dal and Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) played a key role in stoking communal violence, not only on the last few weeks but in a systematic way over a period of time.** Their Shobha Yatra is strikingly similar to other aggressive Shobha Yatras held in the last few years in Bihar, West Bengal, and Delhi's Jahangirpuri, which have invariably culminated in communal violence.
2. **The quick action by local Meo community leaders helped in limiting the spread of clashes in Nuh:** Despite the silence by the police and authorities, it was the local Meo leaders who intervened to prevent the violence from spiralling into a full blown riot.
3. **The complicity of the state is also stark.** Despite the provocative videos by Monu Manesar and clear threat of violence, the police took no preventive action. Its refusal to promptly investigate and punish mob lynchings and hate speech in the last few years has contributed a great deal to the current situation.
4. **False Flag - Nalhar Temple Incident:** The BJP led Haryana government¹ and right-wing groups began fanning rumours of the Nalhar temple being attacked and devotees being held hostage. This was used as a false flag to incite anti-Muslim violence across Haryana.
5. **The police are trying to shift the blame on to Muslims,** arresting young Muslim men, bulldozing houses of Muslims, labelling Rohingyas and Bangladeshis as aggressors. This does not stand the test of facts. It is a way of giving continued protection to the cow vigilantes and associated perpetrators of Hindu majoritarian violence.

[1] <https://www.thequint.com/news/india/nuh-temple-pandit-denies-claim-that-yatris-were-held-hostage-were-taking-shelter>

6. **Criminalisation of Young Minds:** As witnessed during the violence in West Bengal and Bihar during the VHP Shobha Yatra, Nuh also saw large number of children armed with swords and other kinds of weapons indulging in provocation and acts of violence. There is an eerie pattern of criminalising the young mind by right-wing groups; sowing their minds with hatred and violence in an attempt to create an India on divisive lines.
7. Mewat is home to the third largest population of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) registered Rohingya Refugees in India. **Already persecuted and facing genocide in Myanmar, Rohingyas in Mewat, who are struggling to meet their ends are facing intense xenophobic onslaught and also have been at the receiving end of the hatred campaign and state bulldozers.**
8. **The role of the Anti-Cow Slaughter Act in fomenting communal violence needs urgent investigation.** The lynchings by cow vigilantism have played an instrumental role in polarizing Mewat. Cases registered under this Act are many but the convictions abysmally low. The Act seems to be serving a particular purpose: providing a legal basis for cow vigilantism to stoke communal hatred and violence.
9. **The mainstream media, yet again, has failed to capture the essence of events.** They have often apportioned the blame equally between Hindus and Muslims, if not shifted the responsibility to Muslims alone, thereby obscuring the Hindu majoritarian character of the violence and the complicity of the administration.
10. **Unity Among Locals Across Community Lines:** Amid the violence in Nuh and surrounding areas, the fact-finding team witnessed a strong fabric of harmony among local population across community lines. Sikhs came out to rescue Muslims in Sohna and Jat farm leaders strongly rejected the right-wing call for boycott and orchestration of Muslims in Haryana.

UNDERSTANDING NUH / MEWAT

THE ‘MEOSTAN’ QUESTION

If you travelled from Delhi towards Alwar soon after the violence broke out, you would first encounter the burnt shops and damaged mosques in Sohna and then reach Nuh – the site of the Shobha Yatras which kickstarted the violence. Nuh, or Mewat was the epicentre of the provocation, Gurgaon of the violence. The twitter trends however suggested otherwise.

Soon after the violence broke out on 31 July, the hashtag #AntiHinduRiotsMewat started trending on twitter. That’s not how it happened, but that is how it was meant to be. The spatial geography of the violence and its deliberate misreporting made us wonder what lay behind it. The answer lay in Mewat itself, in its history and its society.

Mewat is a historical region consisting of Nuh district, eastern part of Alwar district and western part of Bharatpur district, as show in the map below. It borders Gurgaon and is merely a 2-hour drive away from South Delhi. Home to a 400,000 strong Meo Muslim community (from whom the region derives its name), Mewat is a Muslim majority region at the heart of north India and within touching distance of the national capital.

Mewat – or ‘Meostan’ in right-wing parlance – is an eyesore for the VHP and Bajrang Dal, as well as an opportunity. It is potentially a communal hotbed right next to the southern parts of the capital city whose northern parts had been attacked by rioters from Western Uttar Pradesh back in February 2020. Mewat is potentially a second front, if the Hindu majoritarian forces were to feel the need of launching another attack on Delhi in the future. It is also a region which could potentially be manipulated in order to keep the state of Haryana in permanent communal tension.

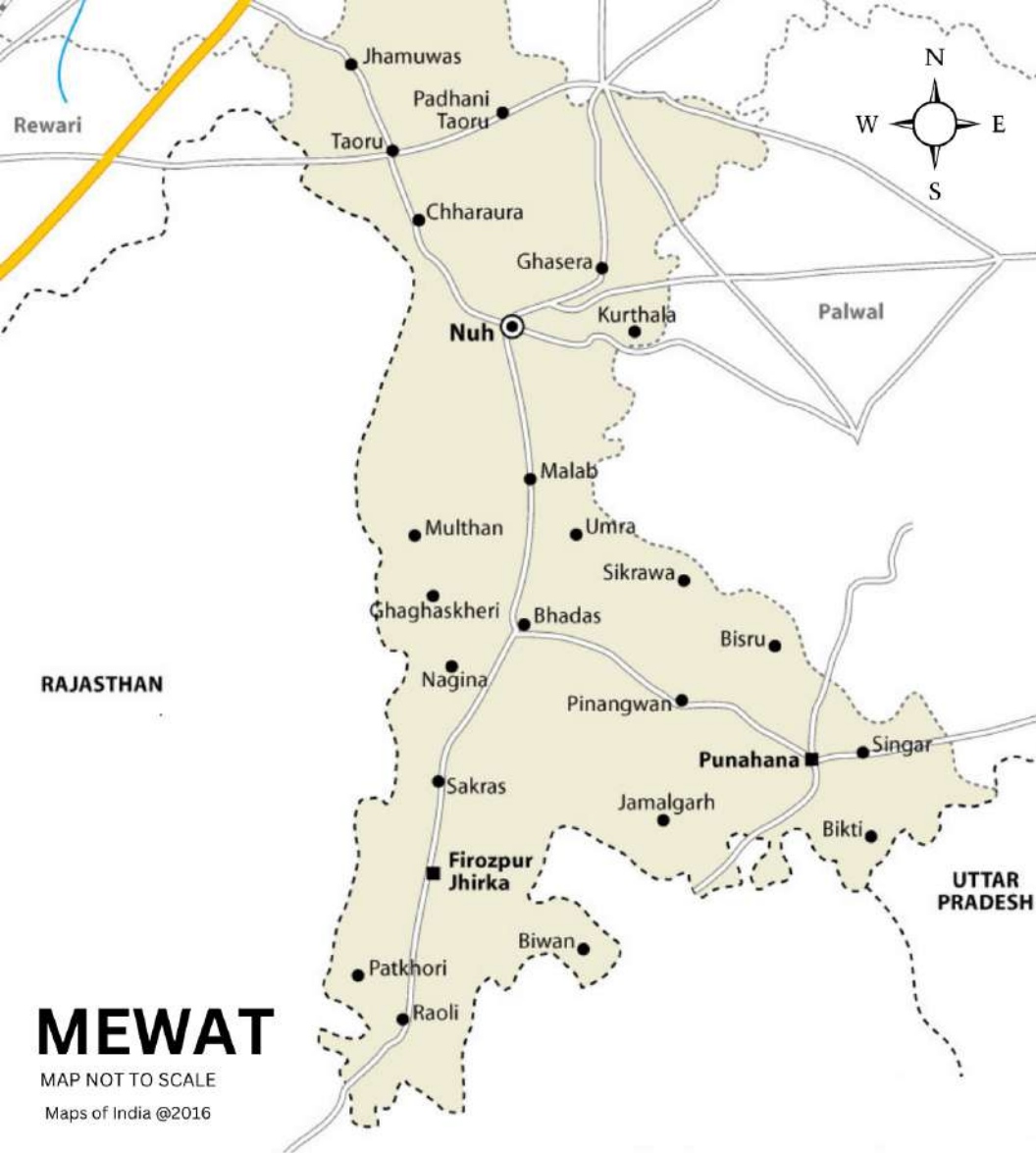


Image 1:
*Map of the Mewat region
 (over and above the Nuh district) | @ Maps of India*

MEWAT'S COMPOSITE CULTURE

As per the 2011 census, Meo's population consisted of 79.2% Muslims, 20.37% Hindus and a few thousand Buddhists, Sikhs, Jains, and Christians. Mewat's uniqueness lies in the composite social practices of its Muslim population. Meo Muslims trace their origins to Hindu figures such as Rama, Krishna and Arjuna and celebrate many Hindu festivals like Diwali, Dussehra and Holi. Their marriages often combine the Islamic nikah ceremony with a number of Hindu rituals – like maintaining exhaustive gotras, a distinctly Hindu practice.¹ We refer to these practices as a matter of fact and not of judgement. Irrespective of one's stance towards specific elements of these practices, these cultural traits certainly exhibit a once-powerful idiom of shared living which animated both 'Hindu' and 'Muslim' communities across the subcontinent.

Ghasera village at heart of Mewat is famous for a historic meeting held by Mahatma Gandhi in 1947, in which he urged the Meos to remain in India, and most of them did. Members of the ruling classes – the Khanzadas and their associates – however migrated, creating a temporary political vacuum in the community. Since then, the community has consolidated itself and sent its elected leaders to the state assembly.

The three seats under the Nuh district are Nuh, Punhana and Ferozepur Jhirka. Currently, all the three seats are held by Congress MLAs, and all of them are Meo Muslims — Aftab Ahmed from Nuh, Mohammad Ilyas from Punhana, and Mamman Khan from the Ferozepur Jhirka assembly constituency.

Economically, Nuh or Mewat is a rural society. As per the 2011 census, 88.61% population of the Nuh district lives in rural areas. While Delhi, Gurgaon and Jaipur are all close by, no urban agglomeration exists in this district or in the whole of Mewat for that matter. Meos are both landowners and agricultural workers, and the community suffers from the challenges of unemployment due to the gradual erosion of

[1] *Saba Naqvi, 'Meet the Muslims who consider themselves descendants of Arjuna.' The Scroll, 30 March 2016.*

opportunities in agriculture. This has led to a gradual upshot in crimes, which the right-wing media has promptly use to stereotype Muslims. Many Meo Muslims are petty traders, businessmen, and daily wagers.

COW VIGILANTISM, TENSIONS, AMITY

If the partition violence marked the first watershed in inter-community relations in India, the ascendancy of Hindu nationalism in the 1980s and 1990s marked the second. Both had negative impact on inter-community relations in Mewat, but tensions escalated greatly since the promulgation of the Anti-Cow Slaughter Act in 2015.

Under the protection of the BJP-led ‘double engine’ union and state governments, Hindu majoritarian forces have consistently and systematically used cow vigilantism to stoke communal tensions. As we shall see in the timeline given below, the recent incidents have been preceded by several lynchings of Muslim men – all in the name of cow vigilantism. Two key figures behind the recent episode– Mohit Yadav alias Monu Manesar and Raj Kumar alias Bittu Bajrangi – are Bajrang Dal leaders and cow vigilantes.

According to data provided by the Nuh police to The Hindu, very few cases registered under this act actually end in conviction.² Of the 69 cases decided by the Nuh district and sessions court in the second half of 2022, only four ended in conviction – an acquittal rate of 94%. Despite an abysmally low conviction rate, almost one case every second day has been registered under this act in Nuh district alone over the last seven years. As of December 2022, there were 1,192 such cases pending before the Nuh court.

Based on our conversation with the local people, and on published reports on lynchings and communal tensions in Haryana, **we believe that the current events must be situated in this pattern of cow vigilantism induced communal polarization which is accompanied by deliberate administrative inaction. We trace this pattern in the timeline given below.**

[2] Ashok Kumar, ‘94% Acquittal Rate Under Haryana’s Cow Slaughter Law in Muslim-dominated Nuh.’ *The Hindu*, 05 February 2023.

Without downplaying the horror of the last one week, it must also be acknowledged that quick intervention by local leaders and the fabric of harmony in the region prevented a full scale riot. On 1 August, after the Haryana Home Minister Anil Vij claimed that around 3,000 to 4,000 people were 'held hostage' by Muslim rioters at the Nalhar Mahadev temple, the temple priest was the first one to publicly refute the minister. Even as the polarizing efforts have succeeded to a significant extent, parts of Mewat have retained its culture of communal amity. In the immediate aftermath of the violence, a *mahapanchayat* held in Kot village reaffirmed solidarities between Hindu Jats and Meo Muslims.



Nuh Rural, Haryana



Bhondsi Village, Haryana

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

November 2015: The BJP led Government of Haryana enacts the Gauvansh Sanrakshan And Gausamvardhan Act, which provides for imprisonment between 3 to 10 years for uncertified cow slaughter.

April 2017: Pehlu Khan, a dairy farmer from Nuh is attacked and killed by a group of cow vigilantes in Alwar district of Rajasthan (part of the broader Mewat region). Six others who are with Pehlu Khan are also beaten by the cow vigilantes.



November 2017: Umar Khan is lynched by cow vigilantes while transporting cattle in Ghatmeeka (in Alwar, around 50 km. from Nuh town).

July 2018: Akbar Khan alias Rakbar is lynched on the suspicion of smuggling cows by a mob in Alwar's Ramgarh village.

June 2019: The Haryana government makes the Anti-Cow Slaughter Act more stringent. It authorised the police to seize a vehicle involved in the transportation of animals for slaughtering and search the premises used for such a purpose.

May 2021: Asif Khan, a 27-year-old gym trainer and resident of Khalilpur Kheda (Nuh district), is lynched by a group of people on May 16. His cousin Rashid later tells the media that the mob was asking him to chant 'Jai Shri Ram' and talking about killing all Muslims. Asif's family members claim that it is a lynching, but the police maintain that Khan was murdered due to personal animosity and filed an FIR against four unidentified people. Despite the COVID-19 lockdown in the state, *mahapanchayats* are held in multiple Haryana villages (including Nuh and its surrounding districts)



in support of those arrested for lynching Asif Khan.³

April 2022: At least four videos of mobs attacking and torturing Muslim men in Haryana go viral. They are shared on social media by Monu Manesar and Rambhakt Gopal (also known as the Jamia shooter). In response to the viral videos, VHP and Bajrang Dal leaders organise a mahapanchayat. The promotional messaging for the event has distinct and provocative communal overtones, such as being a show of strength to ‘those with jihadi mentality’, and this is brought to the notice of the district administration.



Yet, despite all of this, the district administration grants them permission to go ahead with the event.

May 2022: The mahapanchayat is held in the village of Sangel (Nuh district). The mahapanchayat threatens the police and the administration to revoke the FIR regarding videos of anti-Muslim violence, even though the FIR itself was against unidentified persons. Multiple hate speeches are delivered and calls for violence are given out. No arrests are made in this case.⁴

January 2023: Waris Khan, a 22-year-old Muslim man of Nuh district is killed by cow vigilantes on the suspicion of smuggling cattle on January 28. Khan worked as a car mechanic and was allegedly killed when he was returning from Bhiwadi. Shahid Khan, Waris’s brother, claims that Monu Manesar of Bajrang Dal went live on Facebook and showed how he and his associates were assaulting Waris Khan and pushing him into his vehicle. The Bajrang Dal men



[3] Waqar Hasan, ‘Haryana: Several Mahapanchayats Held to Support Those Arrested for Lynching Muslim Man.’ *The Wire*, 05 June 2021.

[4] ‘Hindu Mahapanchayat in Haryana’s Nuh demands special fast-track court for cow smuggling cases.’ *The Hindu*, 9 May 2022.

were carrying weapons as well, Shahid Khan says.⁵

February 2023: The charred skeletons of two Muslim men are discovered near Loharu police station in Haryana's Bhiwani district. The duo is identified as **Nasir and Junaid**, and Monu Manesar's squad is accused of the killings. Manesar is supposedly on the run, but he continues to make provocative statements through his social media handle.



June 2023: Bittu Bajrangi is booked by the police for 'abusing the Muslim community' and allegedly flashing weapons.

July 2023: The VHP and Bajrang Dal prepare for a Shobha Yatra on 31 July. These large scale yatras are a new phenomenon and have been growing in size over the last few years. Locals said that local level Yatras were going on peacefully for decades, and that the VHP started organising massive processions with an overt anti-Muslim tone only three years back. Videos stoking anti-Muslim sentiments are circulated in Nuh. Rumours are rife that **Monu Manesar** and Bittu Bajrangi will join the Yatra.



Local leaders plead with the police to stop the Yatra. The local peace committee warns the administration of provocations. The Yatra still goes ahead, although the police supposedly warn the organizers against the incitement of violence. The Superintendent of Police (SP) is out of station on the day of the Yatra (officials at the District Collector's Office denied this when we asked them about it).

[5] *Muslim man's family claims he was killed by Bajrang Dal members on suspicion of cow smuggling.* *The Scroll*, 30 Jan 2023.

Surendra Jain, the VHP's joint secretary, is spotted at the Nalhar Mahadev Mandir in Nuh shortly before the Yatra, where hate speeches against Meo Muslims are delivered with warnings about the 'character of Mewat'. In his speech that surfaces on social media, Jain says that Mewat is Krishna's homeland.

31 July 2023: The Yatra features highly provocative speeches and its participants brandish weapons. Members of Yatra harass local children saying that 'your brothers-in-law [members of the procession] are in the city, welcome them.'

The provocative and aggressive behaviour by the members of Yatra along with the hate videos creates a communally volatile situation in Nuh. There is wide-spread anger and anguish at the participation of Mansear and Bajarangi. At around 1330 hrs in Edward Chowk in Nuh, an altercation takes place between the locals and the Bajrang Dal-VHP members in the Yatra. This soon takes the shape of widespread clashes. Local Meo leaders intervene to prevent the clashes from growing into full blown riots.

Police deployment is feeble despite warning of possible violence, including inputs from the intelligence unit at the district level.

The intense clashes in Nuh, though short-lived, then spread to neighbouring areas in Sohna. Right-wing mobs attack Muslim localities at around 1700 hrs. Gunshots are fired, bombs are hurled, and homes and shops are set on fire in **Sohna Chowk**. At around 1800 hrs, Hamidia mosque in Palwal (south Haryana) is attacked by a mob and several bikes parked outside are set ablaze.



After the riots, deputy chief minister Dushyant Chautala alleges that the procession's participants did not fully inform the authorities of their yatra.

The right-wing social media influencers portray this as anti-Hindu violence. Rumours are spread about Hindus being attacked

and held hostage in the Nalhar temple and about many Hindus supposedly being butchered. These claims are denied by Hindus themselves – some through social media and others during personal conversation during our visit. Violence was reported in surrounding areas of Nalhar temple, but there was no attack on the temple (as corroborated by the temple priest⁶). This was used as false flag by right-wing groups, including Haryana government to create anti-Muslim sentiment. Verified visuals show right wing mob firing weapons inside Nalhar temple in presence of police.



Right-wing mobs unleash attacks in Sohna Chowk (~ 23km from Nuh) and waylay the highway to attack Muslims. Mob attacks a Muslim colony in Sohna with guns and gas cylinder bombs, burning down several shops and destroying mosques. All this is happening with the criminal complicity of the police as the forces remain mute spectators.

Internet services are suspended in Nuh, and schools and colleges in Gurgaon and Faridabad remain closed. Section 144 is imposed in both Nuh and Gurgaon to control the situation.

01 August 2023: *Violence Spreads to Gurgaon.*

The Anjuman Jama Masjid in Sector 57, an under construction mosque, is vandalized at around 00:10 hrs and **Mohammed Saad**, a 22-year-old naib Imam is killed. Our team learnt that a few weeks back there was another attempt to attack the under-construction mosque. The cleric had registered a police complaint but later withdrew it under pressure from local people and upon the promise of police



[6] <https://thewire.in/communalism/nuh-temple-priest-refutes-haryana-home-ministers-claim-that-people-are-held-hostage>

protection. It all came to naught as he was shot dead days before he was supposed to leave for his home in Bihar. Other mosques are also attacked, including a Mazar. Local Sikhs intervene as a large mob attacks another mosque – Shahi Masjid in Sohna – and manages to save 30 people of Muslim community, including 12 children. Further attacks against Muslims takes place in Sohna, Badshahpur areas of Gurgaon as shops and vehicles are vandalised and set on fire by mobs in presence of the police.

Muslim migrant workers from West Bengal bear the brunt of the attacks in Gurgaon. In Gurgaon's sector 70, a Muslim owned puncture repair shop is burned to ground by a right-wing mob. With threats of violence, hundreds leave their work and travel back to Bengal over the following days. The death toll reaches five. Many more are hospitalized.

02 August 2023: *Tensions continue in Nuh, Sohna and Gurgaon and threatens to spread to Delhi (Image 2, Page 23).*

A petition is moved in the Supreme Court seeking to stop the rallies announced by VHP and Bajrang Dal in Delhi-NCR. These rallies are supposed to register protests against the 'anti-Hindu' violence. The Court refuses to stop the rallies but asks them to be video graphed. The rallies do not lead to further violence.

The situation in Nuh and Gurgaon remains tense, but there are no further reports of violence. The death toll in Haryana reaches six. As questions are raised about state failure, Haryana government attempts to portray the violence as a conspiracy and floats the possibility of a 'Pakistan' angle.

Muslim migrant workers leave in hordes. Muslims shut shop along the Delhi Alwar highway. In Nuh and Sohna, many homes are deserted as people seek refuge with relatives elsewhere. In many places the men lock the women inside and hide elsewhere. 156 people are arrested, and 56 FIRs registered. A sense of fear of reprisal hangs over areas as Nuh witnesses



Communal violence in Haryana

Haryana witnessed violent clashes in multiple locations since July 31, 2023.



Image 2:

The geographical spread of violence: Reported incidents marked as Red dots. | @ The Hindu

indiscriminate raids and arrests of young Muslim men by police.

04-06 August 2023: The authorities demolish hundreds of houses, shops, and other structures of Muslims in the Nuh district. Rohingya refugees face the initial brunt of the bulldozers, with hundreds of homes (shanties) demolished. Later other houses are also demolished. All these houses belonged to Muslim workers and they are demolished either without notice or on the very day on which the notices are served. Right-wing media outlets hail the use of ‘bulldozer justice’.

07 August 2023: Panchayats of 14 Haryana villages write to the police and administration, informing them of the decision to boycott members of the Muslim community.⁷ The panchayats took the decision ‘not to rent out houses and shops to people from the Muslim community’ after the communal clashes and informed the authorities in Haryana through a letter.

On the same day, the P&H High Court stays the demolition drive and observes that whether the buildings belonging to a particular community in Nuh and Gurgaon are being brought down by the authorities under the guise of law-and-order problem and an exercise of ‘ethnic cleansing is being conducted by the state.’ August 11 is set as the next date for hearing.

09 August 2023: Leaders of farmer bodies and khap panchayats in Hisar’s Baas village in Haryana announce that they won’t allow anyone to touch members of the Muslim community, days after violence hit the Nuh district.⁸ The panchayat is attended by nearly 2,000 farmers from Hindu, Muslim and Sikh communities and strongly condemn the attempts to stoke communal and caste conflicts.

[7] <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/panchayats-haryana-villages-write-police-decision-boycott-muslims-after-riots-nuh-gurugram-sonapat-2417276-2023-08-07>

[8] <https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/chandigarh/farm-leaders-hisar-panchayat-protest-muslim-nuh-violence-8885118/>



Aftermath of ‘Bulldozer Justice’ in Nuh | Meer Faisal



TESTIMONIES

Here are some short excerpts from the testimonies collected by the two FFTs. *Some of the names of the respondents have been changed to protect their identity. The testimonials have been edited for length and clarity.*

Idrees (Sohna)

Around 5 pm, a large mob started gathering here. At that time all the shops were open in the market. The mob specifically targeted Muslim owned shops in market. Hindu owned shops were not touched. Police was present there, but they were just silently watching. Till now, no one from the government or authorities have come to meet us after the violence, nor has any compensation been provided.

Rafeeq (Sohna)

A neighbor of our colony, who is a driver, was returning from his work. They [right-wing mob] broke both his hands. When his friends went to pick him up, the mob pelted stones. Several Muslims owned shops were attacked and set blaze. The mob also fired shots into our colony and it lasted for almost one and a half hours. In our colony there are 3-4 houses which belong to Hindus. Here they are. [Points towards Vishnu]

Vishnu, a laborer says he was born in the colony itself and they have lived with their Muslim neighbors in harmony.

Waris (Sohna)

The people in our locality are poor laborers or vendors. They have small road-side kiosks selling fruits and vegetables.

The mob was huge and the whole chowk was blocked. Knowing that we were Muslims, they mercilessly thrashed people. The injured were fully soaked in blood. In two or three houses, the mob threw gas cylinders using it as improvised bomb. There was widespread looting too.

The mob mostly comprised of people from outside. No one from this colony, whether Hindu or Muslim, was involved in it. The Hindu owned shops in the market had no hand in the violence.





Saifuddin (Young Lawyer, Nuh)

The atmosphere in Mewat was of harmony and brotherhood. There had been no animosity among people of different communities here.

The provocative video released by Monu Manesar created an atmosphere of tension. The hatred has been fuelled by social media and now everyone is under curfew here. Both the administration and the government have failed the people of Nuh. Despite warning by locals, no concrete arrangements had been made by the government to prevent provocation and clashes. Government officials were also absent. The SP of Nuh district was also on leave.

Today, there is an atmosphere of fear among the Meo community about the possible reprisals by the government. Many have left their homes to stay with their friends and relatives. But despite the violence on July 31, there is no conflict among the local people here.

Akhtar (Educator and local leader, Nuh)

The Hindus and Muslims have all lived together in Mewat. Even today, in Kot village, which is part of the Hathin Legislative Assembly, a panchayat to foster the brotherhood of Meos and Jats is being held. We hope that good results will come due to it....

Shobha Yatra was held last year also, but this time the provocation was of a different level. The threatening video of Monu Manesar, who killed Nasir and Junaid, was the key. He laid the foundation for the violence.

When the video went viral on social media, locals informed the administration about it. The members of the Peace Committee submitted a memorandum demanding that Monu Manesar should not participate in this yatra and come into the area. Had the administration acted swiftly, the events of July 31 would have never unfolded.

When the clashes began, local leaders swiftly intervened to control the situation from becoming a massive riot. The police and administration were missing from the scene.

It has come to be known that the Additional SP talked to Usha Kundu and told her that this Shobha Yatra was coming. She was asked to make concrete arrangements regarding this. But the administration did not make the concrete arrangements that should have been made.





Shafique (Retired Doctor and local leader, Nuh)

When the Shobha Yatra started, we heard that he [Monu Manesar] had joined the Yatra with swords. During the Yatra provocative slogans were raised that if you want to live in India, you must do so and so. There has been a lot of damage due to this incident. Whatever happened, it happened because of the weakness of the administration. When the responsible officers go on leave, this is what happens.

Earlier also, there used to be local level Yatras and they were peaceful. These big processions only started three years back and these have been used by the RSS to spread hatred. These RSS people were agents of the British and had nothing to do with the freedom movement.

The whole thing is part of Modi Government's script. The script was written in Gujarat [2002 pogrom]. They want to create such a situation everywhere.

This is a secular country. Here the dress, language and food habits change after every few kilometres, that is India. And the conspiracies have been hatched to destroy it, to spread hatred to destroy this diversity.

Akhtar (Sohna)

You [Fact-finding team] must tell the true story and appeal for peace. We also demand for the survey of damaged shops, and the government must give compensation.





Sohna Chowk, Haryana

DEMANDS

1. Take immediate action against Monu Manesar, Bittu Bajrangi and others responsible for the provocation and violence. The Haryana government and police must not allow them to roam around scot-free.
2. Initiate a Supreme Court monitored investigation to ensure free and fair enquiry. The role of Hindutva groups in the Mewat violence should be investigated.
3. End the regime of indiscriminate raids and arrests of young Muslims.
4. End the intimidation against local leaders of Meo community.
5. Immediately stop the bulldozers and all forms of reprisal acts against Muslims. Full compensation to all those whose houses have been demolished in contravention of existing laws.
6. Stop the persecution of Rohingya refugees in Nuh.
7. Confidence building measures based on truth and justice must be initiated.
8. Strict action against media outlets spreading fake news.
9. Ban VHP and Bajrang Dal rallies in the region in the foreseeable future.
10. Promptly investigate all cow vigilante killings and hate speeches that have happened in the last few years. Bring the culprits to justice.
11. Repeal the Gauvansh Sanrakshan And Gausamvardhan Act, 2015.

END



Sohna Chowk, Haryana

Photo Credits: Timeline of Events Section

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