

## **WCC expresses concern over mob violence in India**

The World Council of Churches, along with its member churches in India and the fellowship of Christians all over the world, expresses its deep sadness and concern over the communal mob violence that has taken place in Maujpur, Delhi, since Sunday, 23<sup>rd</sup> February which led to over 20 deaths and hundreds being injured, with properties being destroyed, and places of worship being desecrated and destroyed.

In a context where religion is being wrongly invoked as a basis for violence, we pray that hate-mongering and hostility will be replaced by peace, justice, reconciliation and healing. Our thoughts and prayers are with communities and families who have lost their loved ones or have been hurt, in this violence.

It is our prayer that at this point in history India, which has a long history of peaceful co-existence of people of different faiths, will uphold its secular and democratic foundations and the much cherished values of harmony and 'ahimsa' (nonviolence), which have sustained its social fabric. In the midst of the escalation of violence, we pray that the authorities, lawmakers and police can govern justly, maintain the rule of law, and protect the vulnerable people and their livelihood.

A situation such as this demands the joint and committed efforts of all religious communities and people of good will to overcome feelings of hatred and bitterness. As many Christians prepare to usher in the period of Lent on this Ash Wednesday we pray for our member churches in India. As we commemorate the crucifixion, death and resurrection of Lord Jesus Christ; let us in the light of the cross, the sign of hope, persevere as peacebuilders, confident that violence will not have the last say. We pray that our churches and Christian communities in India will be sanctuaries of safety and solidarity and become a community of the beatitudes, affirming that:

*"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*

*Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.*

*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.*

*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.*

*Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."*

Matthew 5:6-10

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