

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **I DENOUNCE THIS DASTARDLY ATTACK ON SWAMI SANDEEPANANDA GIRI**

**Swami Agnivesh**

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Those who mounted this murderous attack on the ashram of Swami Sandeepananda Giri in Trivandrum are the enemies of humanity and of Hinduism, even if they pretend to be defenders of Hinduism. The Vedic faith does not uphold or condone violence. Spoken word can be met only with spoken word; not with sword. Those who think and act otherwise are criminals. All who care for Hinduism need to stand united against them and frustrate their plan to sow seeds of hate and violence for political gains. It is a significant that this atrocity coincides with Amit Shah's visit to Kerala today with an intent to inflame communal passions.

Swamiji's effort to serve as a courageous voice of reason within Hinduism and serve as a force for social and religious reform is highly laudable. I am not surprised that this makes the agents of vested interests insecure and that they stoop so low as to resort to physical violence against a respected spiritual teacher of the masses.

I have no hesitation in concluding that the forces that attacked Swamiji are the very same forces that mounted two brutal attacks on me in recent times. These are danger signals to the country as a whole. Kerala has a laudable tradition of democratic secularism, which is seen as a hindrance by communal agents who want to capture power by communally abusing religious sentiments. They are wolves in sheep's clothing and I urge the people of Kerala to expose them. Tolerance of outright evil is worse than intolerance.

I urge the Chief Minister of Kerala to ensure that the criminals are speedily identified and made to pay for their dastardly crime. I plead with all Keralites to allow no one to vandalize their tradition of enlightened tolerance and respect for religious plurality.

