

Amid 'rising intolerance', US asks India to do 'everything in its power' to protect citizens

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The United States has expressed concern over reports of "rising intolerance and violence" in India, asking New Delhi to "do everything in its power" to protect citizens and to bring to justice the perpetrators.

Intolerance

"We stand in solidarity with the people and Government of India in supporting exercise of freedom of religion and expression and in confronting all forms of intolerance," State Department Spokesman John Kirby said.

"We're obviously concerned by reports of rising intolerance and violence...As we do in countries facing such problems around the world, we urge the government to do everything in its power to protect citizens and to hold the perpetrators accountable," Kirby added.

Kirby was responding to questions on reports of alleged violence against people eating beef and assault on two Muslim women carrying buffalo meat in Madhya Pradesh.

Kirby said the US looks forward to continuing to work with the Indian people to realise their tolerant-inclusive vision, which is so deeply in the interests of both India and the US.

In an instance of cow vigilantism earlier this week, two Muslim women who were carrying buffalo meat were assaulted by people at a railway station in Mandsaur on suspicion that it was beef in the presence of police which arrested the duo.

The incident came close on the heels of the attack on dalit youths in Gujarat by cow vigilantes for skinning a dead cow.

The issue of intolerance has once again rocked the India with Gujarati writer Amrutlal Makwana returning a state award he got to protest against the beating of some Dalit youths in the state by cow vigilantes.

Makwana was given the Dasi Jeevan Shreshth Dalit Sahitya Kruti Award for 2012-13 for the best work of the year for his work "Kharapat Nu Dalit Lok Sahitya". The award includes Rs 25,000 in cash and a citation.

Makwana, who lives in Wadhwan town in Surendranagar district, said such attacks on Dalits had become a regular event in Gujarat and the government had not done enough to give justice to Dalits.

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