

Raid on NewsClick: An Attempt to Muzzle the Voices of Dissent

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NewsClick, a progressive website based out of Delhi has been raided by the Enforcement Directorate. The raid comes at a time when NewsClick has been bravely covering the farmers' agitation and other issues of the marginalised when most of the mainstream media are keeping silent or toeing the line of the government. The raid on NewsClick is a continuation of the attempt of the Modi regime to silence the voices of dissent across the country.

Recently an independent journalist Mandeep Punia was arrested for reporting from the farmers' protest site. He was later given bail. However, another independent journalist Siddique Kappan is in jail for more than two months. He was arrested under a stringent anti-terrorism law, UAPA, when he was on his way to report the Hathras rape incident.

Sixteen intellectuals and activists are in jail for over two years, arrested under UAPA, allegedly trying to overthrow the government. This includes 83 year old Jesuit priest Stan Swamy and 81 year old poet Varavar Rao. Washington Post today came out with a [report](#) that in fact, the evidence was planted on the laptop of Rona Wilson using a malware. The present raids on NewsClick is an attempt to muzzle the voices of dissent in India.

NewsClick wrote an editorial today on the raids. We are reproducing it in full:

Govt Raids on NewsClick: Our Voice Can't be Muzzled

Since the morning of February 9, officials of Enforcement Directorate (ED) have been searching through NewsClick's office and at homes of senior persons in order to find evidence for what are alleged to be financial irregularities, as reported by media. The raids are still ongoing at the time of writing, some 30 hours after they started.

Media reports have quoted from what appears to be the official narrative that alleges that NewsClick was involved in "money laundering" by channeling funds received from abroad. During the raid, NewsClick has cooperated with the officials and will continue to do so. If the ED and the government are truthful and follow the course of law, no wrong doing will be found and this unfortunate event will be closed. NewsClick has nothing to hide.

It has become a routine practice with the present government to deploy government-controlled agencies to deal with all those who disagree with and criticise the government. In the past, the income tax department, the ED, various Central investigative agencies like the Central Bureau of Investigation

and National Investigation Agency, have been selectively used in this manner against a range of people – from journalists to political leaders, to even farmers' leaders.

The whole panoply of the legal instruments available with the government have been deployed for such politically motivated coercive actions, including filing cases of sedition, defamation, harming harmony, breach of peace, etc. under the Indian Penal Code, and use of other laws like the Disaster Management Act, the draconian Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), the Information Technology Act, and others.

The present raid at Newsclick appears to be on the same lines, and its purpose appears to be the same: to cow down an independent and progressive voice through a vindictive course of action.

In the meantime, Newsclick will continue to report and record voices of the unheard and unseen people of India, and the world, who are struggling to build a life of dignity and well-being. Efforts such as these raids, to suppress protests and indeed, any striving for progressive thought, will not deter those who stand for justice.

There has been an outpouring of support and solidarity for Newsclick from across the country and the world over, for which Newsclick is thankful.

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