

# NORTH EAST INDIA CHRISTIAN COUNCIL

(Regd. No. SR/NEICC/361/90 of 4/90)

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To  
Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad  
Hon'ble Cabinet Minister  
Ministry of Law and Justice  
Government of India

Date 4<sup>th</sup> July, 2017

**Subject: Request not to bring amendments to the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), 1973 as per proposal made by the Law Commission of India, namely, The Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 2017**

**Reference: Report No. 267 of the Law Commission of India, Dated March 2017**

Respected Sir,

On behalf of the North East India Christian Council, we would like to inform you that as Christians who are citizens of this Country, we are against any kind of Hate Speech that would disintegrate the social fabric of our diverse and pluralistic society. Over the years, our vision and mission too have been to promote social and communal harmony in the country.

But as indicated in the subject matter above, we wish to submit before you, your Ministry and Government that it is not necessary to introduce/bring amendments to the Indian Penal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 as proposed by the Law Commission of India in the name and form of the Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 2017 owing to the following facts:

1. That in the seventy years of India's independence from British Rule (1947-2017), it has not been found necessary to bring such a law termed as "Hate Speech" though we are very much aware that there are nations/countries having such a provision incorporated in their respective national laws and/ constitutions. If as a country, we have been managing all these years, and if such provocations have been contained within the gambit of the existing laws, we do not see the need of legislating new laws pertaining to hate speech.
2. That in case of breaches of peace, law and order, as mentioned above, there are provisions in the Constitution, namely, Article 19 (2) (a) (iv), (v), (vii), (viii) in that it is understood that Freedom of Speech and Expression in Article 19 (1) (a) are to be within the parameters set by Article 19 (2).
3. That it is feared that such proposed amendments to both IPC and CrPC may provide leeway for misuse and abuse as it will obviously rely on subjective and relative interpretation and could be used or abused due to personal/communal/racist/racial animosity against someone and/ second/third party. Instead of stopping so

called "Hate Speech," it may invariably open Frankenstein Hate Actions to be legally sanctioned against religious, ethnic and linguistic minorities.

4. That so far, the social fabric of pluralistic, multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic India, has not been broken though attempts have been made, off and on, here and there but not to the level of national magnitude. Therefore, we would urge for status quo to remain and instead, there should be concerted effort for positive communitarian approaches to maintaining and promoting communal harmony through peaceful co-existence of a multiplicity of religions, cultures, languages and ethnicities that has been the landmark of India till date. Inter-religious councils and interfaith relationships/dialogue may be encouraged as it is done in some parts of the country.

5. That it is apprehended by bringing such amendments, voices of dissent Government policies and programs may be instead choked in the name of Hate Speech but which should be welcomed and anticipated in a democratic polity and looked upon as positive contribution toward making improvements and ensuring justice, equality and fraternity for all in the form of human rights and minority rights.

In the light of the aforementioned and many more factors not spelled out here, we would urge you and your Government to kindly maintain status quo by deferring or better still, not acting upon the recommendations of the Law Commission though we do express our appreciation for the labor and research put in to justify such a proposed move.

Thank you for your time and patience. We anticipate a favorable response from you to our sincere request.

Yours Sincerely,



**(REV. W.C. KHONGWIR)**  
President  
North East India Christian Council



**(REV. R. LALNUNZIRA)**  
Secretary  
North East India Christian Council

Copy to for information and necessary action:-

1. Shri P.P. Chaudhary, Minister of State, Ministry of Law and Justice, Govt. of India
2. Shri Dr. Justice B.S. Chauhan, Law Commission Govt. of India
2. General Secretary, National Council of Churches in India, Nagpur
3. Constituent Members of North East India Christian Council
4. Presbyterian Church of India
5. North East India MPs' Forum
6. North East India Regional Catholic Bishop Council
7. Catholic Bishops Conference of India



**REV. W.C. KHONGWIR**



**REV. R. LALNUNZIRA**