

1st September 2020

Sh. S.N. Srivastava, IPS
Commissioner of Police, Delhi
Police Headquarters
New Delhi – 110095

Subject: Complaint for the commission of offences of criminal breach of trust, cheating, mischief, misappropriation of property under Sections 403, 405, 406, 409, 415, 420, 425, 426, of IPC, 1860; Illegal Receipt and Retention of Stolen Property under Sections 379, 410, 411 of IPC, 1860 read with Section 72 of Information Technology Act, 2000; Criminal intimidation and statements creating and promoting enmity between classes under Sections 503, 505, 295A of IPC, 1860; Infringement of Copyright under Section 63 and 69 of the Copyright Act, 1957

Details of Accused: Bloomsbury Publishing India Pvt. Ltd
The Quint (editor@thequint.com)
Newslaundry (info@themediarumble.com)
Mrs. Nandini Sundar, Mr. Aatish Tasser (@AatishTaseer) , Mr. William Dalrymple (@asouEIF), Mr. Saket Gokhale (@SaketGokhale), Ms. Arfa Khanum Sherwani (@khanumarfa), Ms. Meena Kandasamy (@meenakandasamy) and other unknown persons

Sir,

1. The instant complaint is being instituted by Mrs. Monika Arora who is the author of the book “Delhi Riots 2020: The Untold Story” (Hereinafter referred to as “Book”).
2. The present complaint seeks investigation against the above-named accused persons; namely Bloomsbury Publishing India Pvt. Ltd for the offence of criminal breach of trust, cheating, mischief, misappropriation of property under Sections 403, 405, 406, 409, 415, 420, 425, 426 of IPC, 1860 for being the publisher of my authored book and having deliberately, willfully with dishonest intentions expunged my work, effort and skill thereby diminishing my goodwill, reputation and standing, without my knowledge and consent rescinded from performing its obligations under the terms of the agreement dated 29.5.2020 and leaked a PDF version of the book in public to hamper any future sales; for the offence of illegal receipt and retention of stolen property by Mrs. Nandini Sundar, The Quint, Newslaundry knowing and having reason to believe the same to be stolen property under Sections , 379 410, 411 of the IPC, 1860 read with Section 72 of the Information Technology Act, 2000; for the offences of criminal intimidation and statements creating and promoting enmity, hatred, and ill will between classes under Sections 503, 505, 295A of the Indian Penal Code by Mr. Aatish Tasser, Mr. William Dalrymple, Mr. Saket Gokhale, Ms. Arfa Khanum Sherwani, Ms. Meena Kandasamy for having pressurized the publisher into withdrawing the book; for copyright infringement under Sections 63 and 69 of the Copyright Act, 1957

3. Brief facts leading to the commission of the aforesaid offences are being narrated as under:
4. That I had entered into an agreement with Bloomsbury Publishing India Pvt. Ltd. a company incorporated under the Indian Companies Act, 1956 having its registered office at DDA Complex, LSC Building No.4, Second Floor, Pocket-C-6&7, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi – 110070 (Hereinafter referred to as the “Publisher”) on 29.5.2020.
5. The publisher was granted sole and exclusive license to reproduce copies of my authored book “Delhi Riots 2020: The Untold Story (provisionally titled ‘Delhi Riots 2020: A Ground Story of Exploited Faultlines)’”.
6. The initial talks on the modalities of book i.e. number of pages, size, number of copies, tentative pricing was discussed between the Publisher and Author on 11.3.2020. Thereafter, between 17.5.2020 and 4.7.2020, numerous communication(s) were exchanged over email, SMS, WhatsApp relating to the contents of the book, its cover page, proof reading etc. Multiple changes / revisions were suggested by both parties during this period, which were duly incorporated into the final version. Necessary due diligence, scrutiny and vetting had also been carried out by the Publisher’s legal team. On 13.7.2020 the final text version in PDF format titled “Txt_DelhiRiots.pdf” was shared by the Publisher through Mr. Raj B Prasad (Custom Publishing Division) on email. The same was approved by the Author on the very same day.
7. The official book launch was scheduled for 22.8.2020 at 4PM. An invitation along with an e-poster of the event was sent to the Publisher vide email dated 20.8.2020. A list of confirmed speakers had been already shared on 17.8.2020. The Publisher acknowledged the invitation and responded on 21.8.2020. The contents of Publisher’s response were as follows:

*“Dear Sonali Ma’am,
I hope this finds you well. Thank you for sharing the invite for the launch. I really wish I’d know about this earlier so that I could’ve made the time to attend the event. I have an extremely important meeting with our UK managing committee, which I am afraid clashes with the book discussion. As a result, I’d like to humbly ask you to excuse me....
.....*

*With all good wishes,
Paul”*

8. The book launch event was widely publicized on social media platforms with full knowledge of the Publisher. 100 physical copies of the book were delivered as per the terms of the agreement by the Publisher to the Author on 1.8.2020. The book was put up on the Amazon Website and Amazon App for Pre-bookings, by the Publisher. On the date of the launch, at 3:30 PM, the Publisher phoned the Author to say that it was considering withdrawing the book on account of pressure of its parent company

Bloomsbury UK, and from certain other persons on social media. While the book launch event was live, a statement came to be issued by the Publisher that it had decided to withdraw the book. The book was taken down from the Amazon website, by which time it had already become the number one Bestseller in the “Political” category. This left a large number of interested readers high and dry as they were left with no other medium / platform to place their booking orders. Despite the Author’s repeated requests to reconsider its decision, the Publisher refused to budge.

9. Such unilateral actions of the Publisher put the Author in a precarious position, as despite a successful book launch and a huge demand from readers there was no way to place orders. It is usual practice in the publishing industry that the date of the book launch is the most anticipated where maximum sales are recorded. The Publisher through deliberate and dishonest means attempted to scuttle the Author’s voice, freedom, reputation and goodwill by rescinding from its obligations on the date of the launch. The Publisher gave in to pressure and intimidating tactics of certain individuals having a despicable agenda who had not even read the contents of the book, and who did not want the book to see the light of the day or let the truth of Delhi riots be shown to the people of India.
10. A venomous campaign emerged on social media especially Twitter when this group of individuals / propagandists widely known as the “Urban Naxal Gang” conspired and went all out to kill the book by pressurizing, intimidating, bullying and blackmailing the Publisher. They even thanked and congratulated one another for being able to put a stop on the release of the book. The details of few such tweets are as follows:

| S No. | Date and Time | Name | Details of Tweet |
|-------|-------------------------|---------------|---|
| 1. | 21.8.2020 at 6:24 PM | Saket Gokhale | <i>Publisher @BloomsburyIndia is releasing a book which seeks to blame minorities for the Delhi Pogrom. Nupur Sharma of OpIndia & CRIMINAL KAPIL MISHRA OF BJP are guests of honor at the release. An int’l publishing house openly pushes sanghi communal agenda.</i> #BoycottBloomsbury https://twitter.com/SaketGokhale/status/1296792765552984065?s=20 |
| | at 6:27 PM | | <i>All authors across the world working with @BloomsburyBooks & @BloomsburyPub should know that their India division propagates fake communal propaganda & tries to justify a pogrom. To give a platform to hate speech in India while virtue signaling overseas is the new</i> |

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| | | | tactic.https://twitter.com/SaketGokhale/status/1296793448196894722?s=20 |
| 2. | 21.8.2020 at 7:47 PM | Aatish Taseer | <i>I'm so shocked to see this. There's something especially cynical about @BloomsburyBooks and @BloomsburyPub professing one set of values in the West, while quietly giving cover to those who instigate religious hatred and murder in India. @englishpen @PENamerica</i> https://twitter.com/AatishTaseer/status/1296813689610305536?s=20 |
| 3. | 21.8.2020 at 9:19 PM | Aatish Taseer | <i>This is how liberals in the West cede ground to illiberal forces elsewhere. What is the point of a multinational company, like @BloomsburyBooks and @BloomsburyPub , if it won't defend the use of its brand from an event which gives a platform (and legitimacy) to fascists in India?</i> https://twitter.com/AatishTaseer/status/1296836825957519360?s=20 |
| 4. | 22.8.2020 at 4:05 PM | Meena Kandasamy | <i>Well done. No pasaran. Smash Hindutva fascism.</i> https://twitter.com/meenakandasamy/status/1297120183723720705 |
| 5. | 22.8.2020 at 4:29 PM | Aatish Taseer | <i>PS: I know we haven't always got on, but I'm extremely grateful to @DalrympleWil for his efforts in putting a stop to this shameful bit of state propaganda. It could not have happened without him.</i> https://twitter.com/AatishTaseer/status/1297126334322311168?s=20 |
| 6. | 22.8.2020 at 4:31 PM | Ahdaf Soueif | <i>Delighted that @BloomsburyIndia have responsibly cancelled publication. We've been assured that they will never publish anything similar. @saliltripathi</i> https://twitter.com/asoueif/status/1297126801916010496?s=20 |
| 7. | 22.8.2020 at 7:07 PM | Saket Gokhale | <i>Delighted to hear @BloomsburyIndia has withdrawn the fake communal book about the Delhi Pogrom. The launch was today with Nupur Sharma of OpIndia & Kapil Mishra as "guests of honor". Full power to all who spoke up. Be it Facebook or this - we MUST fight & reclaim all spaces.</i> https://twitter.com/SaketGokhale/status/1297165897904173060?s=20 |

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|-----|-------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| 8. | 22.8.2020 at 8:18 PM | Saket Gokhale | <i>Special shout out to @persistara who started the battle yesterday & led all of us. She was relentless & persistent in this noble effort.</i> https://twitter.com/SaketGokhale/status/1297183888674942976?s=20 |
| 9. | 23.8.2020 | Aatish Taseer | <i>There we are! The book is not banned. White nationalists in the UK and US publish books too; but they don't publish them at distinguished publishing houses. There is a place for everything. For @BloomsburyIndia to publish this book was to abandon its values and to legitimise hate</i> https://twitter.com/AatishTaseer/status/1297562198366093313?s=20 |
| 10. | 23.8.2020 | Arfa Khanum Sherwani | <i>Inside the RW mind: We have the Govt, institutions & the entire state machinery. Even with all this power we can't get a book published. Quest: When you can anyway spread all lies & propaganda why crave the respectability of a book? You can capture power but respect you have to earn</i> https://twitter.com/khanumarfa/status/1297499024853876738?s=20 |

11. From 27.8.2020, I was informed by some of my well wishers that a PDF copy of the book was circulating online via WhatsApp and Twitter with the following message:
"This book has been successfully blocked by the Muslim Appeasement Lobby of India. Let's make it our mission to spread the truth of these riots. Kindly distribute the pdf file of the book to as many people"

12. As time went by I started receiving more such messages. Readers also started posting on Twitter saying it was a cheap act by the Publisher to hurt the author. I was alarmed and shocked since this version of the Book had the Publisher's name on it, and such unauthorized circulation would only be possible if the Publisher released it or someone from the Publisher's office had leaked it. Articles started getting published by some media houses (namely "The Quint" and "NewsLaundry") critiquing the book and attempting to discredit my work. I even received a legal notice from Ms. Nandini Sundar questioning the Foreword and one chapter of the book. How in the world would they have got their hands on the book if not for this unauthorized circulation. As on date, there is no other physical copy in existence except for those 100 copies that had been delivered to me. Thus, despite knowing such a version was "stolen property" neither the aforesaid media houses nor Ms. Sundar chose to take any appropriate legal measures to bring it to the notice of authorities. The details of the articles published by relying on the unauthorized stolen version in circulation are:

Newslandry dated 25.8.2020: *The Delhi riots book tells an overtold, not untold, story* available online at <https://www.newslandry.com/2020/08/25/the-delhi-riots-book-tells-an-overtold-not-untold-story>

The Quint dated 28.8.2020: *Factual Errors in 'Delhi Riots 2020' Book Fuel Conspiracy Theories* available at <https://www.thequint.com/news/webqoof/delhi-riots-book-is-full-of-factual-errors-and-conspiracy-theories-rejected-by-bloomsbury-published-by-garuda-prakashan> wherein it is mentioned that:

"The Quint has accessed and scanned the Bloomsbury draft of the book and we found that far from being based on a "fact-finding mission" it is replete with factual errors, unsubstantiated claims and conspiracy theories"

13. The Publisher till date has not returned the final text of the book to the authors along with any of the previous drafts. The author's copyrighted material and intellectual property is still in the publisher's possession. No official communication has been made by the Publisher to the Author explaining its actions. Yet, an unauthorized version of the book has been mischievously released on social media through WhatsApp to hurt my goodwill, reputation and subvert any future sales of the book. I am a senior lawyer practicing at the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, Delhi High Court. I have been part of numerous prominent cases and a large number of reported judgments throughout my years of practice. I am a Standing Counsel for the Union of India since 2014. I have campaigned for women issues most notably the Delhi High Court took suo moto cognizance of the Nirbhaya Case on an application I had moved leading a group of women advocates. My social media profiles on Facebook and Twitter have over 2.5 lakh followers. For the last so many years I have regularly addressed talks on National and legal issues explaining their facts and law etc. I was the Delhi University Students Union President in 1993-94
14. In light of the aforesaid reasons, we beseech you to take immediate and necessary action against accused persons in a prompt and effective manner.

Yours sincerely,

Monika Arora

Copy to:
The DCP Cyber Crime

@dcpcybercrime

Enclosed as Annexure:

1. Agreement dated 29.5.2020
2. Email dated 13.7.2020 the final text version of the book in PDF format titled "Txt_DelhiRiots.pdf" received from the Publisher
3. Email dated 20.8.2020 containing invitation of the book launch event and the Publisher's response dated 21.8.2020
4. Screenshot showing that the book had become No.1 Best Seller on Amazon
5. Statements issued by Bloomsbury Publishing India Pvt. Ltd. on 21.8.2020 and 22.8.2020
6. Screenshots of incriminating tweets of Mr. Atish Tasser, Mr. William Dalrymple, Mr. Saket Gokhale Ms. Arfa Khanum Sherwani, Ms. Meena Kandasamy
7. Screenshots of readers informing that an unauthorized PDF version of the book is in circulation
8. Screenshot of the first four pages of the unauthorized PDF version of the book.