Lecture Series on Governance and Politics in South Asia

Department of Political Science

The Making of the Indian Constitution

Dr. Harsh Mander

Renowned human rights and peace worker, writer, columnist, researcher and teacher

During the epic struggle of the Indian people against British colonial rule, public discussions had already begun about the contours of free India. Freedom came in 1947 amid cataclysmic religious violence of Partition, culminating in the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi. The people of India chose after freedom to write their own Constitution. Each clause in this, the world's longest Constitution, was debated for years in the Constituent Assembly. Seven decades later, in a countrywide uprising against an amended citizenship law that gave lesser rights to citizenship to undocumented Muslim minorities, the Constitution became the icon of the protest. Harsh Mander will speak of the making, the morality and the significance of India's Constitution, and of its key pledges and guarantees. Including significantly of equal citizenship rights to people of every faith, caste, language, ethnicity and gender, and the freedoms of conscience, dissent and worship. He will also argue that the foundational idea of the Constitution is an iridescent idea, little understood or debated, and even less practised, of fraternity.

Dr. Harsh Mander is involved in different initiatives related to human rights. From the autumn of 2017, he established and led the important national initiative which he called the Karwan-e-Mohabbat (www.karwanemohabbat.in), literally, the Caravan of Love. This tries to counter rising hate and fear in the country, but not with hate; instead with love and solidarity. The Karwan visits the families of those who lost loved ones to hate violence and lynching, for atonement, solidarity, healing, conscience and justice; and to promote goodwill and trust between communities.

Date: Wednesday, June 28, 2023
Time: 16:30 – 18:00, CET
Venue: SAI, Seminar Room 010.00.06, building 4130,