



# INDIA COMMUNITY RELIGIOUS & CULTURAL CENTER, INC. (ICRCC)

A non-profit organization founded in 1984  
1990 Meadowbrook Drive, Syracuse, NY 13224

[www.icrcc.org](http://www.icrcc.org)  
[www.facebook.com/ICRCC](https://www.facebook.com/ICRCC)  
[icrccpresident@gmail.com](mailto:icrccpresident@gmail.com)




*Summer*

*2020*

## What's in this issue?

1. President's Message
2. Greetings from the Editor
3. ICRCC Membership and Contact Info
4. ICRCC Building Reopening update
5. COVID-19 Fundraising
6. Congratulations to our Graduates
7. Update on Recent Community Events
8. Upcoming Community News & Events
9. Special Article

## Upcoming ICRCC Events Summary:

Event	Time	Place	Contact	Additional Notes
India Day Special Brunch: \$10 	Sat, 15 Aug  12:00-2:00 pm	India Center  Meadowbrook Dr	Sunil Gupta (sunil4911@gmail.com)	Online pre-registration req. Details by email and on website. <b>See flier inside.</b>
India Day Celebration 	Sat, 15 Aug  TIME 3:00 pm	Virtual event via zoom	Bala Murthy (vidyubala@yahoo.com)	In coordination with the Southern Tier Indian Cultural Association. <b>See flier inside.</b>
Yoga	1st and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sat  9:30-10:30 am	Virtual event via zoom	Bala Murthy ( <a href="mailto:balakrishnanmurthy101@gmail.com">balakrishnanmurthy101@gmail.com</a> )	By Vibha Chandrasekhar. See info inside

Information on events is listed on our website, at <https://icrcc.org/ICRCC/EventList>

## President's Message

Fellow community members,

Welcome to our summer newsletter. As we adapt to the current environment, I would like to update everyone about our activities and successes within our community.

2020 has been exceptional. Like the rest of the world, we have transitioned to the virtual online world – from weekly yoga programs to our regular board meetings. This is the first year much of our large-scale programming will be presented digitally. The Virtual Spring Festival in May was a huge success. We look forward to “seeing” you at our next digital program – India Day on Saturday, August 15.

As the year progresses, certain programs that attract a huge crowd may be converted digitally for everyone's safety. We will be following all New York State guidelines to reopen the building. We sincerely hope that the community will continue to use our building (India Center) for small-scale programs where social distancing is a feasible option. We will update you through email and Facebook.

Two board positions have become available. With the recent acquisition of the India Center building, I find myself at the helm of an organization that has newfound energy – as we explore new offerings and innovative ways to reach out to the larger CNY community.

Please reach out to me if you would like to join the board and leave your mark on the organization. We are seeking individuals with new ideas who are passionate about marketing, community outreach and/or building-related projects.

A special mention to the medical community and all essential workers on the front-line working tirelessly in this pandemic. Words cannot express the gratitude we feel for the sacrifices you make and the risks you take to make the world a better place for the rest of us.

Our sincere thanks to the community for your generous donation towards the COVID-19 Relief Fund. Collectively we raised \$6,489, which was donated to CNY Community Foundation.

I hope you enjoy this newsletter.

Thank you,

Sanjeev Kumar  
President



**Stay Safe. Enjoy your summer**

## Greetings from the Editor

Namaste

After months of being locked down, I hope you are enjoying the few months of nice weather we see in central New York. I myself have been taking advantage of outdoor time to keep my mind off the pandemic that has so gripped us. In addition, the United States is in the midst of a crucial civil rights movement. While there is no end in sight to the turmoil, all we can do is keep a positive attitude and help where we can. I would like to hear how you have been spending time and coping during the lockdown period – whether that's self-care or services to the community. Feel free to contact me – I would especially like to hear from our younger community members.

I would also like to remind our members to avail of all the “virtual” activities ICRCC is offering during this pandemic. I know things are not the same, but we must make the best of the current situation.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic situation, ICRCC would be extending the current year's membership, till December 31st. Normally the membership would have expired on September 30<sup>th</sup>. We will be starting our 2021 membership drive again around India Day Picnic – August 15<sup>th</sup>. Hope you will continue to support ICRCC and our community.

We welcome all newcomers to our town. Please reach out for any help needed settling in.

Yours,

Shridevi Karikehalli  
[shridilip@hotmail.com](mailto:shridilip@hotmail.com)



**ICRCC is looking for volunteers to help operate and maintain the recently acquired center at 1990 Meadowbrook Drive.**

**Currently the ICRCC Board members and their families are tirelessly working in setting up the center to facilitate the much-anticipated community events. Please help us in any form you can.**

**High school students may be able to fulfill their community service hours requirements by helping at ICRCC, as this is a not-for-profit organization.**

**Please contact us at [icccpresident@gmail.com](mailto:icccpresident@gmail.com)**

## ICRCC Membership

- Regular Yearly Membership, Family: \$50, Single: \$30
- Permanent Membership, Family: \$1000, Single: \$750

**Due to the pandemic, Current Membership will be extended through December 31, 2020.**

**New membership for 2021 starting August 15th**

Preferred method of payment online: [www.icrcc.org](http://www.icrcc.org)

OR mail a check to:

**ICRCC, 1990 Meadowbrook Drive, Syracuse, NY 13224**

If you have any questions, please contact the membership committee:

**Shridevi Karikehalli (Coordinator): ([shridilip@hotmail.com](mailto:shridilip@hotmail.com))**

**Beena Kappil ([bjkappil@yahoo.com](mailto:bjkappil@yahoo.com))**

**Amina Akhtar ([amina54ascot@gmail.com](mailto:amina54ascot@gmail.com))**

ICRCC is a Not-for-Profit Corporation under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Your donations and contributions to the Permanent Member Fund may be tax deductible. Kindly check with your tax advisor.

### Connect With us:

By email at [icrccpresident@gmail.com](mailto:icrccpresident@gmail.com)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/ICRCC/](http://www.facebook.com/ICRCC/)

Written Material can be mailed to:

**ICRCC  
1990 Meadowbrook Drive  
Syracuse, NY 13224**

## India Center Building Reopening Updates

**Submitted by: Kishan Mehrotra**

New York State (NYS) is opening by regions and in phases. There are four phases, and as of July 10, 2020, Central New York is in Phase Four of reopening.

Guidelines for low-risk indoor entertainment can be found at [covid19.ongov.net](https://www.covid19.ongov.net) Onondaga County's key recommendations are – wear a mask, maintain 6 feet distance, and do not have large congregations in a small place.

The Building Committee feels that, since our county is in phase four of the NYS re-opening, we can open India Center for some events. Of course, we will follow all NYS and county guidelines. We would continue to provide “virtual programs” whenever possible. We would also like to take advantage of the beautiful paradise like summer weather and encourage outdoor activities as much as possible.

In celebration and observation of India's Independence Day, we expect to re-open the India Center for ***brunch takeout*** on August 15.



**1990 Meadowbrook Drive  
Syracuse, NY 13224**

## ICRCC COVID-19 Fundraiser

**Submitted by: Jayant Datta**

Welcome to the “new normal”. Young Greta Thunberg’s passionate speeches to world leaders could not achieve what an invisible virus has been able to accomplish. The world ground to a halt!

While an evanescent side-benefit is cleaner air, there are very harsh sides to the COVID-19 pandemic as we are all very aware. We have, unfortunately, been given a ringside seat as history is unfolding.

The scale and breadth of the widespread economic devastation – spanning entire nations, entire sectors of industry, and individual families – is a phenomenon that has not been witnessed in generations.

The large number of deaths and the impoverished conditions of many are the negative byproducts of this pandemic.

Set against this backdrop was ICRCC’s appeal to its members to contribute to ICRCC’s COVID-19 fundraiser. Many members of the community donated generously, contributing \$6,489 towards this laudable effort.

Thank you very, very much for your contributions!

The board decided to disburse these funds locally (within CNY) to the COVID-19 Community Support Fund. CNY Community Foundation [[cnycf.org/](http://cnycf.org/)], in partnership with a few other organizations (such as United Way of CNY, Allyn Foundation, the City of Syracuse, and Onondaga County) established this fund to support nonprofit organizations working with communities who are disproportionately impacted by economic consequences of the coronavirus pandemic.

We remain very grateful to all contributors who helped to make conditions for the local community a little more like the “old normal”.

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*Thank you*

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## Congratulations to our Graduates

Congratulations to our recent graduates in the community with wonderful academic achievements and moving on to the next steps in their promising careers. Below are the details of some of the students whose families have sent the information for this newsletter.

Listed below in the order received.



### **Shruti Zirath**

Graduated from Christian Brothers Academy.

Attending SUNY ESF/ Upstate Medical University Accelerated Scholars BS/ MD Program and plans to become a medical doctor.

Direct admission to Upstate Medical School from high school and admitted into accelerated 7 years program

Plays tennis, loves music and cooking. Volunteering and serving on the youth advisory board of Francis house and Ronald McDonald house charities of CNY.

Did Beautification projects of faith places and interfaith dialogues

### **Aniket Maini**

Class of 2020 Jamesville Dewitt High school

Parents: Atul Maini, Shyla Maini

Siblings: Trisha and Daksh Maini

Interest: Spanish Language, Badminton, Tennis, Music

Will be attending University of Buffalo Biology major

Future plans: To pursue a career in Medicine

### **Soor Vora**

Graduating college: Georgia Tech

Future plans: Masters in Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering at MIT

Noteworthy accomplishment: Published research paper in Chemical Engineering

Special interests and hobbies: Carnatic and Hindustani music, plays tennis

### **Priya Duraisamy**

Graduated from Liverpool High School with high honors and mastery in science.

Served as a Vice President of Chemistry Club and Science Olympiad.

She was also involved in tutoring elementary school kids and volunteered at St. Joseph Hospital for last four years.

She will be attending University at Buffalo to study Pharmacy this fall.

Her hobbies are playing soccer, running, swimming and skiing.

**Pranathi Adhikari**

High School: Jamesville-DeWitt

Parents: Binod and Pramila Adhikari

Plans for the next few years: Attend Cornell University to study Global and Public Health Sciences.

Career plans: Peace Corps and law school.

Would also like to work for a UN Agency such as the World Health Organization.

Interests: Bharatanatyam, Model United Nations (MUN)

**Shivam K. Nanavati**

High School: CBA

College Attending: Georgetown University

Special Interests: Oncology/Medicine/Nanotechnology

Hobbies: Tennis, Basketball, Ping Pong

Parents: Divija and Kaushal Nanavati

**Riya Sharma**

High School: Jamesville-DeWitt

Riya will be attending the University of Tampa in the fall. She plans on selecting a major after exploring a few areas of interest, during the first year. At JD she was the Captain of the Varsity Girls Tennis Team, leading JD in another successful season, and a member of the National Honor Society.

She is very passionate about giving back to the community and has been actively volunteering with the Syracuse Refugee Center for the past five years, as well as volunteer missions with Pratham and Young Life. Nowadays you will find her on the tennis courts or furthering her baking skills.

**Yash Patel**

High School: Fayetteville Manlius High school

Parents: Rita and Nitin Patel

College Attending: Onondaga Community College (OCC). Furthering my study's in Computer Science.

My special interests: Playing basketball, traveling around the world, and hanging around with my friends and family.

**Ayushi Patel**

High School: Fayetteville-Manlius High School

College Attending: Rochester Institute of Technology, furthering studies in business.

Special Interests and Achievements: I have been part of the school's theatre department for four years as technical crew. I have been president of Spanish Club for three years and treasurer of Tech Club for one year. I'm a member of National Honor Society, Science Honor Society, and Thespian Troupe.

Hobbies: I love to participate in musicals with my younger brother and hang out with my friends. I also enjoy making food with my family and taking naps.

**Nikhil Reddy**

College: Graduated at SUNY Geneseo

Career plans: Starting Medical School at University of South Florida, Tampa, FL



## Update on Recent ICRCC Events

### Financial Planning Seminar

**Submitted by: Shridevi Karikehalli**

The COVID-19 pandemic has thrown our lives into turmoil. In addition to our physical and mental wellbeing, it is equally important to pay attention to our financial needs. ICRCC was very fortunate to have Conor Gillen, a Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) and a Certified Financial Planner (CFP®), present a seminar on “Financial Literacy”. Conor works at Carswell Investments as Portfolio Manager and Partner, since 2013.

About 30 people participated in this seminar via zoom platform on May 16th, 2020. The seminar was well received. Conor covered a wide range of topics encompassing different stages of life that call for different approaches to financial planning. He also provided references to available resources. In addition to strengthening our existing knowledge on common financial topics, Conor also discussed in depth about investing, financial markets and portfolio management. Conor offered a complimentary copy of his book to interested participating members.

### Virtual Spring Festival

**Submitted by: Falguni Vora**

COVID-19 has thrown us many challenges and has disrupted normal life for almost everyone in the world. At the same time, it also gave us an opportunity to learn and discover new things and innovative activities. This year’s Spring Festival was one of those opportunities for the local Indian community in the greater Syracuse area.

Normally, the Spring Festival is one of our biggest gatherings of the year. We enjoy the cultural and social part of it, not to mention the delicious food served from different regions of India.

While we could not offer the social and food aspects this year, we brought the cultural element of the festival to the community in a unique setting: over Zoom on May 17

All items were submitted in advance and were compiled into a seamless presentation. There were 11 items, 30 participants and close to 150 viewers. There was a lot of variety, creativity, and artistry in the performances. With classical dances like Bharatnatyam and Kathak, Bollywood and fusion dances, karaoke singing, piano recitals, folk dance – the whole event was astoundingly diverse. The group performances took place with social distancing and was presented seamlessly, thanks to some brilliant editing and use of technology. Dr. Kaushal Nanavati did an amazing job at emceeding the event and entertaining the audience with his witty, impromptu remarks.

Overall, thanks to all participants, choreographers and organizers, it was a highly successful and supreme quality event for which ICRCC received very positive and encouraging feedback.

**\*\*\* If you missed this event, please visit the ICRCC website to find the YouTube link of all the performances. \*\*\***

## Introduction to Mindfulness by Mansi Brat

**Submitted by: Ramesh Gaonkar**

ICRCC sponsored the program – Introduction to Mindfulness – during the month of June 2020. It included four Saturday online sessions on the Zoom platform from 10 am to 11.15 am. It was offered by Dr. Mansi Brat from Syracuse University.

Dr. Mansi Brat serves as a Clinical Therapist at Syracuse University's Counseling Center. Her doctorate is in Counselor Education with a research emphasis in Mindfulness and Self-Compassion. She maintains a regular insight meditation practice, and a certified Yoga instructor.

Twenty members of our community attended the program. Based on the comments of the attendees, all four sessions were very well received. The group discussions were very thoughtful and challenging; with each session extending beyond 11.15 am.

## Yoga Class

**Submitted by: Bala Murthy**

ICRCC has introduced free yoga classes for its members, starting in January 2020. The classes were initiated and conducted for most part by Ms. Vibha Chandrasekhar, who is a certified yoga teacher.

Vibha has been teaching yoga in the US for the last 10 years. She started her yoga practice in the Iyengar Yoga style at the age of 12 in India and has explored several different styles since moving to the US. Over the last 10 years, she has shared her love for yoga by teaching at corporations, wellness centers and healthcare facilities. She believes that yoga should purify minds and hearts and should feel good in the body. Her instruction is always customized and adapted for her audience because one size does not fit all. Types of classes she has taught in the past include vinyasa, yin yoga, meditation, children's yoga, power yoga, restorative yoga.

Vibha has recently taken some time off and Ashok Sangani has helped substantially in her absence. Ashok is an excellent and avid Yoga practitioner and has fully made himself available for this cause. In addition to yoga, he also incorporated breathing and relaxing techniques in his program and the community has received this well.

Overall the yoga program has been received enthusiastically by the community with around 15 members enrolled in the program. Due to the COVID situation, classes were transitioned to virtual mode from spring of this year. Anyone who is interested in joining yoga classes, please communicate with Bala Murthy at [balakrishnanmurthy101@gmail.com](mailto:balakrishnanmurthy101@gmail.com).

ICRCC appreciates and thanks Vibha and Ashok for extending themselves in these tough times.



## Upcoming Community Activities

### 1. India Day Celebrations Saturday, August 15

Saturday, August 15  
Brunch: 12:00 – 2:00 pm  
Must pre-register at [www.icrcc.org](http://www.icrcc.org)  
Contact: Sunil Gupta ([sunil4911@gmail.com](mailto:sunil4911@gmail.com))

FRESH & DELICIOUS



## Homemade Food



Channa



Rice



Salad

Cost:  
\$10



Poori (2)



Kheer



Raita

August 15, 2020 12-2PM

1990 Meadowbrook Drive, Syracuse NY 13224

Must pre-register. Please register at [www.icrcc.org](http://www.icrcc.org)

**India Day Virtual Cultural Program**  
**Saturday, August 15**  
**Time: 3:00 pm**  
**Zoom access details will be provided soon**

## **India Day Virtual Cultural Program**

**Date: Saturday August 15, 2020**

**Time: 3:00 pm**

Contact: Bala Murthy ([Vidyubala@yahoo.com](mailto:Vidyubala@yahoo.com)),  
Falguni Vora ([Frvora@yahoo.com](mailto:Frvora@yahoo.com))  
Beena Kappil ([Bjkappil@yahoo.com](mailto:Bjkappil@yahoo.com))



Zoom access details will be provided soon

**Due to COVID-19 situation, ICRC has decided to hold India day celebration on a virtual platform.**

**ICRC will join hands with STICA (Southern Tier India Cultural Association) and deliver a combined virtual program.**

**Participants from both groups will be performing in the prerecorded virtual event. We request all to participate and celebrate this event.**

Contact: Bala Murthy ([vidyubala@yahoo.com](mailto:vidyubala@yahoo.com)),  
Falguni Vora ([Frvora@yahoo.com](mailto:Frvora@yahoo.com)),  
Beena Kappil ([bjkappil@yahoo.com](mailto:bjkappil@yahoo.com))

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***Best wishes on 74<sup>th</sup> Indian Independence Day***

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## 2. Yoga Program



**When:** First and third Saturday 9:30 am – 10:30 am

**Details:** Free for ICRCC members. Classes offered in virtual mode via zoom. Please check email from ICRCC for access information to the virtual zoom class.

**See additional details regarding the class in the newsletter.**

**Contact:** Bala Murthy ([balakrishnanmurthy101@gmail.com](mailto:balakrishnanmurthy101@gmail.com))

**Instructor:** Vibha Chandrasekhar

## 3. JNANA MANDIR



**Details:** Jnana Mandir program was initiated in ICRCC premises as of Sept 2019 by few members of Gita Vichara Group of Syracuse, in collaboration with Arsha Vidya Gurukulam (AVG) in Pennsylvania. The vision and mission is to promote spirituality and philosophy and devotion in the community. There are programs for adults as well as children. Currently, due to the pandemic, all the programs are offered in virtual mode via zoom.

**When:** Group chanting of Hanuman chalisa every Tuesday and Friday at 7:30 PM  
Every Saturday Bhagavatam discourses offered live by Swami Pratyagbodhanda from AVG.

Every other Saturday, Purna Vidya classes for children are offered. Currently they are learning Yoga, Ramayana, and Hindi.

**Contact:** For more details, please visit <http://www.jnanamandir.com> and any questions contact Bala Murthy ([jnanamandir101@gmail.com](mailto:jnanamandir101@gmail.com))

*Please contact [icccpresident@gmail.com](mailto:icccpresident@gmail.com), for inclusion of any Community News and Events in the ICRCC Newsletter for circulation.*

## ICRCC Board Members (2019-2020):

### Executive Board Members:

Sanjeev Kumar, [icrccpresident@gmail.com](mailto:icrccpresident@gmail.com) (President)\*\*  
Falguni Vora, [frvora@yahoo.com](mailto:frvora@yahoo.com) (Vice-President)  
Jayant Datta, [icrcc.fin@gmail.com](mailto:icrcc.fin@gmail.com) (Treasurer)  
Hemant Kale, [hkale@twcny.rr.com](mailto:hkale@twcny.rr.com) (Secretary)

### Board Members:

Amina Akhtar, [amina54ascot@gmail.com](mailto:amina54ascot@gmail.com)  
Sunil Gupta, [sunil4911@gmail.com](mailto:sunil4911@gmail.com)  
Beena Kappil, [bjkappil@yahoo.com](mailto:bjkappil@yahoo.com)  
Shridevi Karikeshalli, [shridilip@hotmail.com](mailto:shridilip@hotmail.com)  
Dayaprasad Kulkarni, [drdayaprasad99@gmail.com](mailto:drdayaprasad99@gmail.com)  
Kishan Mehrotra, [mehrotra@syr.edu](mailto:mehrotra@syr.edu)  
Bala Murthy, [vidyubala@yahoo.com](mailto:vidyubala@yahoo.com)  
Surabhi Raina, [sraina@syr.edu](mailto:sraina@syr.edu)  
Rachna Zirath, [rachnazirath@gmail.com](mailto:rachnazirath@gmail.com)

**Finance Committee:** Jayant Datta (Chair), Hemant Kale

**Membership Committee:** Shridevi Karikeshalli (Chair), Beena Kappil, Amina Akhtar

**Bylaws Review Committee:** Bala Murthy (Chair), Surabhi Raina

**Nominations Committee:** Chilukuri Mohan (Chair)

**Building Committee:** Kishan Mehrotra (Chair), Jayant Datta, Hemant Kale, Sunil Gupta

**Newsletter Committee:** Shridevi Karikeshalli (Editor), Jayant Datta

**Website Committee:** Sunil Gupta (Chair), Falguni Vora, Jayant Datta

**Marketing Committee:** Falguni Vora, Shridevi Karikeshalli

*\*\* The President is an ex-officio member of all committees, except the Nominating Committee.*

### Connect With us:

By email at [icrccpresident@gmail.com](mailto:icrccpresident@gmail.com)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/ICRCC/](http://www.facebook.com/ICRCC/)

Written Material can be mailed to:

ICRCC  
1990 Meadowbrook Drive  
Syracuse, NY 13224

**Submitted by: Chilukuri Mohan**

Oversight and regulation are essential to ensure all organizations perform their expected duties. If there are no consequences for bad behavior, the situation steadily worsens. This is the role that civil liberties defense organizations play. Lawyers, journalists, writers, and other intellectuals are often the active members of civil liberties organizations – and they are the ones who need strong support from all of us.

Recent weeks have thrown bright light onto the problems in police departments all around the USA. The gruesome video of George Floyd being pinned down by police officers cannot be ignored. Law enforcement officials who do not exercise restraint must have consequences. Even when attempting to restrain a criminal, they need to do so without causing permanent injury or death. Establishing and enforcing clear boundaries will help us regain faith in the law.

The problem is not limited to USA: the beating of protestors and others by Indian policemen has been well documented (cf. the newspaper website [www.thehindu.com](http://www.thehindu.com) for news about recent incidents). Extra-judicial killings (“encounters”) have also been used often by law enforcement authorities in India: apprehended “undesirables” are asked to run and then shot in the back. Last week, one was shot in the chest! Obvious questions, as to why arrested individuals are not handcuffed, are ignored. Law-enforcers must also obey the law. The police cannot serve as judge, jury and executioner, even if the arrested person is a criminal!

Another cause for concern is the targeted incarceration of individuals who prove troublesome to the government or powerful interests. A case in point is Sudha Bharadwaj, a courageous and dedicated lawyer who has been working for many years to defend the rights of tribal and illiterate peasants, who served as the general secretary of the People’s Union of Civil Liberties in Chattisgarh, and had been teaching as a Visiting Professor in the National Law University in Delhi when she was suddenly arrested with unfounded allegations linking her to protests in Bhima-Koregaon, and to banned organizations. Despite lack of evidence, she was denied bail and indefinitely incarcerated without a trial. She also has significant health risks. Although born in USA, Sudha Bharadwaj had given up American citizenship when she was a teenager, choosing to stay in India and work for the Indian people. Shame on the law enforcement authorities for imprisoning such a dedicated and selfless individual, whose arrest leaves the most vulnerable people in India without an important advocate for their rights. Several other widely respected intellectuals and lawyers have also been arrested in a similar manner, including the almost 80-year-old Telugu poet Varavara Rao, with multiple health problems, denied bail despite catching COVID-19 in prison, and unable to care for himself.

The freedom to express dissent and disagreement is the cornerstone of democracy. Whether in USA or India, that freedom is compromised when we look the other way, permitting violations of law and abuse of innocent individuals, especially by those who are powerful or are charged with the responsibility to enforce the law. We all need to speak up when we witness such violations, wherever these might occur.

**The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of ICRC**