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Secular Muslims form body, call for common civil code

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IN AN attempt to portray the real picture of the Muslim community to the world, a group of Muslim intelligentsia from across the country on Thursday announced the formation of an organisation of common Muslims. The organisation, titled Muslims for Secular Democracy (MSD), would soon have branches in all cities and towns of India, specially targeting predominantly Muslim areas.

The MSD has demanded that the Union government immediately come out with a draft Bill for the Uniform Civil Code.

A copy of three resolutions passed by the MSD will soon be sent to Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, his deputy Lal Krishna Advani and other authorities.

Lyricist Javed Akhtar and eminent Muslim intellectuals, including Hasan Kamaal, Javed Anand, Askari Zaidi, Zafar Aga, advocate Kazmi, Ali Azgar and others, announced that MSD would vehemently fight extremism within the Muslim community, educate them on crucial issues and discuss with them the improvement of perception of the minority community.

"It is high time to call the bluff of extremists and the religious heads within our community who proclaim themselves to be the real representatives of Muslims," says Javed Akhtar.

"It is the need of the hour that the Muslim youth, women and common man were united to stress the community's strong faith in secularism and democracy," the renowned lyricist said.

"We want to highlight that the common Muslim is as committed to the country as any other Indian and the community should not be blamed for involvement of some Muslims in ghastly acts of terror," Akhtar stressed.