



Coalition Against Genocide

Hindu American Foundation reveals its supremacist ideology through smear campaign against CAG and Indian Muslims ***HAF's Opposition to House Resolution 417 is a disservice to India and Hinduism say Indian Americans***

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Washington DC, Friday, December 6, 2013

Coalition Against Genocide (CAG - <http://www.coalitionagainstgenocide.org/>), has condemned the Hindu American Foundation's opposition to House Resolution H.Res. 417 [1] through a smear campaign against the coalition and one of its constituents, the Indian American Muslim Council (IAMC) and through its bogus claims about the roots of sectarian violence in India. H.Res 417 praises India's "rich religious diversity and commitment to tolerance and equality," while raising concerns over the erosion of religious freedom.

For over a decade US-based Hindu American Foundation has attempted to cultivate a soft, pro human rights, pluralist public image. The controversial ascendance of Narendra Modi, and America's growing awareness of extremist and divisive ideologies that seek to stifle religious freedom [2], has forced HAF to reveal its true identity as the US arm of the sectarian Hindu supremacist movement, known in India and across the world as Hindutva (which is different from Hinduism). In a series of missives issued over the last three days HAF has attacked House Resolution 417 introduced in the US Congress on November 18, 2013. The resolution not only celebrates Hinduism, but also seeks to include human rights within the ambit of the Indo-US strategic dialogue. A detailed fact check and rebuttal of HAF's reactions to the resolution is included as an appendix to this release.

HAF's Hindutva ideology was recently exposed by the Council for a Parliament of World Religions (CPWR), when the reputed interfaith organization rejected its attempts to get CPWR to co-sponsor an event with the extremist VHP-A, that featured the hate-monger Subramanian Swamy as keynote speaker. Narendra Modi, whom HAF defends ad nauseum, was described by Katrina Lantos-Swett, Vice-Chair of the US Commission for International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) as the "poster child for India's failure to punish the violent [3]."

"HAF appears to be particularly piqued about the hiring of a lobbyist by IAMC. For an organization that has a full-time employee lobbying in the nation's capital, HAF's hypocritical ire over our hiring of a lobbyist stems from its desire to monopolize the narrative about India and its desperate attempts to gain acceptability for Hindutva in the US." said Mr. Ahsan Khan, President of IAMC. "Contrary to HAF's wild allegations about the resolution being anti-India or anti-Hindu, our efforts are intended to advance Indo-US relations in the context of human rights and religious freedom," added Mr. Khan.

HAF's unbridled attack on the resolution and on CAG confirms its existential links to the Sangh Parivar - an ideological conglomerate of organizations that seek to subvert the secular moorings of India's Constitution and relegate religious minorities to the status of second-class citizens. The Sangh was modeled along the lines of Mussolinis Avanguardisti and Ballilla fascist youth organizations in the early 1920s and was responsible for the murder of Mahatma Gandhi in 1948. Five decades after the murder of Gandhi, Modi unleashed a reign of terror in Gandhi's home



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state of Gujarat [4].

"Only those who have something to hide are against including human rights as a non-negotiable guiderail in multilateral dialogues," said Alex Koshy, CAG spokesperson. "CAG's support for the resolution is based on the simple ethical principle that all countries - the US and India included - must respect human rights and protect religious freedom," added Mr. Koshy. By turning its back on a resolution that celebrates Hinduism, HAF has also revealed that it only pays lip service to Hindu principles while openly espousing Hindutva - a narrow, supremacist ideology that continues to cause untold human suffering.

"By characterizing IAMC as an 'Islamist' organization, HAF has betrayed its failure to understand the conjoining of the words 'Indian' and 'Muslim.' This is not surprising, since Hindutva ideologues consider India to be Hindu and simply cannot accept that Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Parsis and Jews are just as Indian as Hindu-Indians," said Mr. Kannan Srinivasan, CAG spokesperson. "CAG condemns HAF's reckless assertions that merely attempt to play into a broader environment of anti-Muslim bigotry," added Mr. Srinivasan.

Unlike HAF, whose "coalition" consists primarily of organizations belonging to one community, Coalition Against Genocide represents a diverse cross section of the religious and political spectrum of the Indian diaspora, including several Hindu, Christian, Sikh, Dalit, Muslim and Leftist organizations.

CAG calls on all Indian Americans and people of conscience to support House Resolution 417 and condemn HAF's narrow and sectarian interpretation of what it means to be a patriotic Indian. As a broad alliance dedicated to justice and accountability for the Gujarat pogrom of 2002, CAG is committed to democracy and pluralism and to projecting an accurate image of India internationally.

Appendix:

Rebuttal to HAF's claims against the resolution

HAF claims the Resolution:

"Blames only Hindu nationalism for communal violence and ignores the fact that 80% of attacks in India in 2012 were carried out by the Indian Mujahideen, with much of the remaining 20% carried out by Maoist terrorists;"

According to Pew Research Center's annual reports on the "[Rising Tide of Restrictions on Religion](#)", India has been listed consistently for the last 5 years as one of the top 3 countries in the world with the highest amount of religious violence. While India's constitution is praise worthy in its protection of civil rights for all, a fact that is acknowledged in the resolution H.Res 417, it is the Hindu Nationalist militia outfits in India that are the [primary and dominant contributors to religious violence](#) reported by the Pew Research report. It is worth noting that in their above claim, HAF does not contest this fact. Instead, they try to confuse the issue by diverting the subject to terrorism. Given that the resolution is concerned about religious freedom in India, it does not dwell on the subject of terrorism. In doing so, it equally ignores the numerous acts of terrorism perpetrated by Hindu Nationalist outfits such as Abhinav Bharat, Sanathan Sanstha and Hindu Janajagruti Samiti in the last 10 years. [\[a\]](#)[\[b\]](#)[\[c\]](#)[\[d\]](#)[\[e\]](#)[\[f\]](#)



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HAF claims the Resolution:

"Fails to mention the attacks on Akshardham, Bodh Gaya, and others in India as well as the communally charged public statements by Islamist leader Akbaruddin Owaisi, Andhra Pradesh MLA, in 2013 against Hindu deities and practitioners;"

Given the large scale of religious violence in India, the resolution rightly focuses on the most serious incidences of religious violence that involve rape, ethnic cleansing and mass murder. As a diversionary tactic, the HAF wants to convert the resolution into an encyclopedic work on objectionable statements made by every local politician in India. Where the resolution ignores the offensive statements of local politician Akbaruddin Owaisi, it also ignores similarly offensive statements made in public by Hindu nationalist leaders such as Praveen Togadia [g][h], Subramaniam Swamy, Varun Gandhi, Sadhvi Ritambhara and others. Mr. Togadia has publicly called for a "[new Indian Constitution that allows for anyone who converts Hindus to be beheaded](#)". Mr. Subramaniam Swamy has openly called on the establishment of a theocratic "Hindu State in which anyone who does not acknowledge their Hindu ancestry must not be allowed to vote". Similarly, Varun Gandhi called for "[cutting the hand of anyone who raises a finger at Hindus](#)".

HAF claims the Resolution:

"Calls for the creation of religious minority courts to conduct trials and appeals - a suggestion that neither Congressmen has offered to 1) countries, such as Saudi Arabia, Pakistan or Malaysia, where religious minorities face serious repression and; 2) the U.S., where courts, like in India, are secular in nature;"

This is again a false claim. The resolution:

"(8) urges the Government of India to empower the National Commission on Minorities with enforcement mechanisms, such as the ability to conduct trials and hear appeals;"

The National Commission for Minorities is not a "religious court". It is an existing Federal agency of the Indian Government which was established [in conformance](#) with the [UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities](#) adopted on 18th December 1992. Enforcement mechanisms, such as the ability to conduct trials and hear appeals, already exist in other Indian Federal agencies such as the National Human Rights Commission. The resolution simply urges the Indian Government to bring the National Commission on Minorities on par with other counterpart Federal agencies by enabling enforcement mechanisms for the agencies.

HAF claims the Resolution:

"Disregards the findings of the Indian Supreme Court's Special Investigative Team (SIT) absolving Modi of complicity in the 2002 Gujarat riots and omits the findings of the SIT which uncovered that some human rights activists deliberately falsified evidence and concocted macabre incidents of violence."

The claim is misleading to make it sound as though India's Supreme Court has absolved Narendra Modi of complicity in the 2002 Gujarat riots. Given an established bias in the Gujarat Judiciary and interference from the Gujarat government to close down cases by victims of 2002



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violence seeking justice, the Supreme Court has ordered a number of 2002 violence related cases to be conducted outside the state of Gujarat. In the instance of the criminal case against Chief Minister Modi, the Supreme Court intervened in the High Court's adjudication of the case by appointing a Special Investigation Team (SIT) and an Amicus Curiae to oversee the SIT. While the SIT concluded that there is not enough evidence to prosecute Modi, the Amicus Curiae appointed by the Supreme Court concluded that there is enough evidence to prosecute Modi. The case has now been referred back to the Gujarat High Court. Once the Gujarat High Court provides a verdict, the case can be taken by either party to the Supreme Court which will be the final arbiter of the matter.

It is worth taking into cognizance that as per protocol, the Narendra Modi administration, which is itself the accused, had named to the Supreme Court the majority of members constituting the Special Investigation Team. The key persons heading the SIT were officers of the Gujarat cadre reporting as subordinates to the Modi administration. Geeta Johri, a member of the SIT has been indicted by the Supreme Court for concealing evidence in an extrajudicial execution of one Sohrabuddin by the Gujarat police. Another SIT member, Ashish Bhatia has been accused of aiding the perpetrators of 2002 violence by filing incomplete charge sheets and pressuring the public prosecutor to go easy on the perpetrators of violence. For more information, please [see here](#).

The SIT has come under scrutiny for ignoring evidence and demonstrating clear bias in favor of Mr. Modi. Whistleblowers such as IPS officer Sanjiv Bhatt and former DGP Sreekumar have testified that Mr Modi sanctioned the Gujarat pogrom and instructed police officials at his residence that Hindus should be allowed to "vent their anger." SIT has gone on record to dismiss such damning evidence by senior police officers by claiming that Modi's instructions to the police top brass to look the other way while mass murder was under way [did not constitute a crime](#).

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3. The two faces of India
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4. "We have no orders to save you" - Report by Human Rights Watch
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