



Coalition Against Genocide

For Immediate Release

Contact: Biju Mathew (917) 232 8437
Dr. Shaik Ubaid (516) 567-0783
Dr. Ashwini Rao (917) 279 4923
Usha Zacharias (413)-534-8281

COALITION AGAINST GENOCIDE REAFFIRMS STRUGGLE AGAINST EXTREMIST HINDU GROUPS

"We demand justice for victims of the Gujarat violence" says Coalition against Genocide Spokesperson.

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NEW YORK- The Coalition Against Genocide (CAG) held a press conference and successful demonstration against the event organized by the Association of Indian Americans in North America (AIANA) at Madison Square garden in New York city, that included a speech by Narendra Modi via satellite from Gandhinagar in the state of Gujarat, India.

Mr. Narendra Modi is the chief minister of Gujarat and has been implicated for his complicity in the genocide against the Muslim community in 2002 and continued violence against the Christian, Dalit and tribal communities in Gujarat. Since the genocide which occurred in 2002, not a single person has so far been convicted.

The demonstration included many constituent organizations of the Coalition Against Genocide in the New York area. Members of the New York based sister umbrella organization, the Tri State Coalition Against Genocide also participated in the rally. CAG's focus has been to educate and inform the American public and policymakers about Mr. Narendra Modi's role in the 2002 Gujarat pogrom and the continued harassment of victims under his regime. CAG reaffirmed its commitment to working against extremist Hindu organizations in the US and for fighting for justice for victims of the Genocide in Gujarat.

Addressing the rally, several speakers countered Modi's claim about the denial of his visa being an insult to India. Dr. Shaik Ubaid, President of Indian Muslim Council-USA said "It was Modi and his human rights abuses, not the revocation of his visa, which brought shame to India. If supporters of militant Hindutva had the interests of India close to their heart, they would not have invited a fanatic like Modi to the United States."

Dr. Ubaid denounced Modi's incitements and hate speeches against the United States and the subsequent destruction of American businesses in Gujarat by Modi supporters. He demanded that the Association of Indian Americans in North America (AIANA) not add further fuel to this anti-Americanism by supporting Modi and demanding the reinstatement of his Visa. Supporters of Modi had destroyed several American businesses in Gujarat after Modi addressed a rally in India lambasting United States.

Smita Narula, a former Asia specialist at Human Rights Watch (HRW), who authored the damning HRW report "We Have No Orders To Save You" on Gujarat violence, spoke at



Coalition Against Genocide

length about the complicity of Modi's administration in the massacres of 2002 and the subsequent policies of religious persecution adopted by his administration.

Speakers called upon the Prime Minister of India, Mr. Manmohan Singh to focus on delivering justice to the victims of the Gujarat pogroms rather than campaigning for the reinstatement of visa for a mass murderer who presided over the violence and feels no remorse for his actions. No perpetrator of violence in Gujarat has yet been convicted.

Anu Gurnani of Manavi (an organization for South Asian women) said "We condemn the state-sponsored violence and systematic targeting of women and children that took place under Modi's leadership. We demand that the perpetrators of sexual violence be brought to justice and that victims receive adequate assistance to rebuild their lives".

Addressing the youth in the audience, Miabi Chatterji of the Youth Solidarity Summer organizing collective said "Hindutva forces often take for granted that Hindu youth will blindly follow their ideology of intolerance and anti-minority hatred. Today we see that there are strong, knowledgeable and active contingents of second generation South Asian American youth who resist that brand of religious nationalism and stand for justice in Gujarat. We stand together for secularism and peace".

Biju Matthew, member of the Coalition Against genocide (CAG) and coordinator for the rally, spoke about the major victories of CAG in its campaign against Modi. Among the accomplishments of the coalition, he cited the withdrawal of MSNBC Hardball host, Chris Matthews' from the Asian American Hotel Owners Association (AAHOA)'s convention where Modi was invited to speak. American Express, one of the cosponsors of the AAHOA convention also withdrew its sponsorship. Biju emphasized on the power of the common masses to affect change and achieve justice and cited the spectacular accomplishments of CAG as a case in point.

On the political front, Congressman Kendrick Meek (D-FL 17th), who was to host a reception for Modi at the AAHOA convention also withdrew upon pressure from CAG. In addition, CAG also worked with 21 congressmen who wrote to the US State Department to not allow Modi to enter United States. Congressmen John Conyers (D-MI 14th) and Joseph Pitts (R-PA 16th) introduced a resolution in the House condemning Modi's human rights record. The US State Department finally rejected Modi's visa upon a sustained campaign orchestrated by Coalition Against Genocide.

Wilson Jose of the Indian Christian Forum (ICF) spoke about the perils of the monochromatic "saffron" vision that Hindu nationalists have for India and emphasized on the need for the celebration of plurality and diversity in the Indian polity.

Some of the other speakers who addressed the gathering were Dr. Ashwini Rao (Coalition Against Genocide), Dr. Usha Zacharias, Ranjit Singh (President of Tri State CAG), Abraham Mammen (ICF).

Posters Galore

The activists brought to the rally a large number of eye catching posters. Some of these stated



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***Love India? Save India?
Stop funding Hate, Stop funding Hindutva***

Modi, forget about US visa, you can easily get a visa to the Hague

***Silence is violence
Speak up against Hindutva***

***Rally for justice, Rally for peace
Rescue Gandhi's Gujarat from communal atrocities***

***Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians,
Brothers and Sisters, we are all Indians!
United, lets all work for a Harmonious, Peaceful and Prosperous India !***

While CAG considers denial of a diplomatic visa to Mr. Modi a significant victory, it is the first step towards the fight against extremist Hindu organizations in the US and their role in spreading hate in our communities. CAG invites all progressive organizations concerned with social justice and peace to join our struggle.

The rally and press conference were organized by members of two umbrella groups, the Coalition Against Genocide (CAG) and its New York based associate, the Tri-State CAG. These umbrella groups represent over 50 organizations and have come together to promote pluralism and tolerance and voice their opinion against sectarian politics in India. Members of CAG and Tri-State CAG include organizations representing a diversity of faiths, ethnicities and ideologies. They include women's groups, human rights organizations, representatives of Hindu, Christian, Muslim and Sikh communities as well as organizations of secular persuasion.

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