

## **Joint Press Release by Cong. Conyers and Cong. Pitts.**

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### **Cong. Conyers, Cong. Pitts legislation condemns persecution by Indian official**

Washington-Congressmen John Conyers (D, MI-14) and Joe Pitts (R, PA-16) today will introduce legislation condemning the actions of Narendra Modi, Chief Minister of Gujarat, India, and calling on the United States government to do the same. The legislation cites repeated attacks by Mr. Modi against Christian, Muslim, and tribal populations in Gujarat.

"Mr. Modi has not been shy about proudly professing his anti-Christian, anti-Muslim, and anti-tribal stances. He has repeatedly dehumanized the Muslim population of his state by accusing them of treachery; he has actively sought to interfere in the practice of the Christian faith in Gujarat, and he has caused wide-scale displacement of indigenous populations in the State in the face of stiff popular resistance," said Congressman Conyers, the ranking Democrat on the House Judiciary Committee and the Dean of the Congressional Black Caucus.

"The evidence is clear. Mr. Modi persecutes religious minorities in Gujarat. Our government should speak with one voice in condemning these policies and the actions of the Modi administration that has led to the death, torture, and imprisonment of thousands in Gujarat," said Congressman Pitts, a member of the India Caucus and the Congressional Human Rights Caucus.

Introduced just days before Mr. Modi is scheduled to speak at several events in the United States, the legislation:

- (1) Condemns the conduct of Chief Minister Narendra for condoning or inciting bigotry and intolerance against any religious group in India, including people of the Christian and Islamic faiths; and
- (2) Urges the United States to condemn violations of religious freedom, and to promote and assist other governments in the promotion of, the fundamental right to freedom of religion in India.

Mr. Modi's administration has, according to both India's highest court and many international human rights groups, condoned terrible, violent crimes against religious minorities. This includes the 2002 riots in which 2,000 Indian Muslims and non-Hindus were killed by Hindu mobs. According to the Hindustan Times, minorities in Gujarat are threatened with questions like, "Would you like to live as Hindus or die like Christians?"

"India is too strong an ally for us to stand idly by while extremists undermine its commitment to democracy, the rule of law, and human rights. This resolution is the least we can do to support India's efforts to protect religious and ethnic minorities within its borders," said Congressman Pitts.

Congressman Conyers concluded, "Mr. Modi has attacked Muslims and Christians with vile venom, and according to both India's highest court and many international human rights groups, has condoned terrible, violent religious hate crimes, all the while, shielding those said to have committed them. Such actions by high ranking government officials of any religion are unacceptable and must not be tolerated. The United States has a duty to set an example for other new democracies by condemning religious intolerance and promoting religious freedom, so that others may see what our great democracy stands for."