



# Coalition Against Genocide

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## **NOTORIOUS INDIAN HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSER DENIED ENTRY INTO US!**

**Coalition of thirty five human rights organizations wins major victory**

***“Victory and a New Resolve for Justice” Rally to be held as scheduled  
on Sunday March 20<sup>th</sup> 4:30 PM Outside the Madison Square Garden***

NEW YORK— The American State department decision to deny Mr. Narendra Modi, the Chief Minister of Gujarat and chief architect of the Gujarat pogrom of 2002, a diplomatic visa and to revoke his existing tourist/business visa based on the International Religious Freedom Act is a landmark victory for the *Coalition Against Genocide* (CAG). The denial of a visa to Mr. Modi is not the outcome of a diplomatic battle between governments, instead it reflects the strength of the transnational alliance between South Asian organizations and human rights groups in the U.S. The CAG action against Modi that began February 24<sup>th</sup> 2005, ran simultaneous campaigns on multiple fronts and received strong support from international organizations such as Human Rights Watch (HRW), Institute on Religion and Public Policy (IRPP) and Amnesty International (AI). The 35 organizations in U.S. and Canada that constitute CAG represent a spectrum that include women's organizations, youth collectives, secular groups as well as Hindu, Sikh, Christian and Muslim organizations ([www.coalitionagainstgenocide.org](http://www.coalitionagainstgenocide.org))

Mr. Modi is directly implicated in the 2002 massacre in Gujarat, India, of more than 2,000 persons and is a member of a violent and chauvinistic Hindu nationalist organization called the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS – National Volunteers Corps). The RSS is a shadowy all-male organization drawing inspiration from Hitler and Mussolini that trains militia-like groups of men and indoctrinates them into ideologies of racial/religious cleansing. Mr. Modi currently faces two law suits for crimes against humanity in India, and is in violation of international laws and conventions including Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, and the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998.

The Coalition Against Genocide (CAG) campaign focus was to educate and inform the American public and policymakers about Mr. Narendra Modi's role in the 2002 Gujarat pogrom and in preventing justice being delivered to the victims of the pogroms. Although Mr. Modi is attempting to characterize the state department's visa denial as a nationalist issue, we would like to point out that he was not here to represent the Indian state. Instead, he was sponsored by a corporate entity, the Asian American Hotel Owners Association (AAHOA) that condoned his abysmal human rights record and invited him as chief guest for their annual convention in Fort Lauderdale, Florida on March 24, 2005. CAG's

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publicity and outreach actions included letters to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, a campaign to inform members of the U.S. Congress, and a phone and fax campaign against MSNBC host Chris Matthews, American Express and the California State University, Long Beach, who were sponsoring and participating in Mr. Modi legitimation process during his U.S. visit. CAG's first success came when Chris Matthews withdrew from the AAHOA convention. Further, the CAG campaign moved Rep. Conyers to introduce Resolution 156 in Congress condemning Mr. Modi and finally led to the denial/revocation of the visas by the State department. Responding to the announcement of visa denial, CAG spokesperson Usha Zacharias said the visa denial decision "is a testimony to the work done by large segments of the progressive organizations in India and abroad who documented in great detail the abuses of Mr. Modi. CAG's work in the U.S. was to use this detailed documentation and highlight the desperate need for justice to the victims of the pogrom in Gujarat."

CAG will continue with its plans to hold a rally on Sunday March 20<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 PM outside the Madison Square Garden where Mr. Modi was to speak, except that it will be a "VICTORY AND A NEW RESOLVE FOR JUSTICE" rally instead of a protest. The Sunday rally will highlight the continuing human rights violations in Gujarat and push further for the speedy delivery of justice to the victims of the 2002 pogrom. In addition the rally will challenge the role of the US supporters of the divisive politics espoused by Mr. Modi and his political party, and their attempts to direct money to institutions in India that promote hate-mongering and communal violence.

CAG considers the denial of visa to Mr. Modi as a clear victory for supporters of human rights and justice in the U.S. and in India. It sends a clear message that perpetrators of religious and political persecution can be held accountable for their actions through dedicated work by broad, inclusive coalitions. Indian and U.S. groups share a long, common tradition of battling for human rights, and securing justice for the oppressed that CAG and its partners will continue to build on. In this context, we call on the Indian government to legally follow up this decision by pressing criminal charges against Modi, and by choking the funding pipeline that runs from the U.S. to India to facilitate the growth of Hindutva's violent politics.

We also call on all organizations concerned with minority rights and women's rights to join us in our battle against the RSS ideology of ethnic cleansing we witnessed in horrific detail in the 72-hour pogrom in Gujarat. Amnesty International has clearly held the state of Gujarat, headed by Mr. Modi, responsible for gender crimes in its report, *Justice, the victim - Gujarat state fails to protect women from violence* <http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engasa200012005>, as has Human Rights Watch. The cancellation of Mr. Modi's visit represents the first step in a battle we must continue to fight.

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