



AMERICAN JUSTICE CENTER
PRESS KIT



Background: The American Justice Center is a non-profit human rights organization established recently for the purpose of securing justice for victims of mass violence and genocide, especially in cases where the perpetrators are deemed to be too powerful to be held accountable.

The lawsuit against Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India has been filed in regards to his complicity in the genocidal attacks on Muslims during the mass violence in Gujarat in 2002. The massacres claimed the lives of over 2,000 people and displaced over a 100,000. International human rights organizations, citizens' tribunals and whistleblowers from Mr. Modi's own state administration, have described in detail how the violence was organized, with the active connivance of the state administration and law enforcement machinery, presided over by Mr. Modi.

Why Now?

Prime Minister Modi, before his election to India's highest executive office, had been banned from entering the United States, under the International Religious Freedom Act, for his "egregious violations of religious freedom." He has now arrived in the US, under exemptions normally accorded to heads of state. Neither Mr. Modi's election to the Prime Minister's office, nor the time elapsed since the horrific massacres of 2002, have diminished the enormity of the crimes committed. The struggle for justice remains as urgent today as it was when the Gujarat was engulfed in the flames of hate unleashed by Mr. Modi and his cohorts.

Mr. Modi's arrival in the US, provides a special opportunity to charge him under the Alien Tort Claims Act (ATCA) and the Torture Victims Protection Act (TVPA). These laws were enacted to enable victims of human rights abuses to pursue justice against their tormentors even when the crimes were committed outside the US.

Why AJC?

AJC is providing legal support and advice to the survivors in their effort to pursue this case against Mr. Modi. The decision of the plaintiffs to remain anonymous is a reflection of the terror that Mr. Modi has instilled in the hearts of all those that have been victims of his hateful, violent and divisive agenda. Mr. Modi is known to be vindictive towards all those who seek to hold him accountable. The harassment and intimidation of human rights activists, police officers and whistleblowers who have spoken out against Mr. Modi shows the level of disregard Mr. Modi has for the law. It is in this context that the survivors believe remaining anonymous gives them the best chance to pursue justice without putting their own lives in danger.

Indian PM Narendra Modi & Gujarat 2002 Genocide

Narendra Modi, the current Prime Minister of India, has a checkered past in severe human rights abuses. As the Chief Minister of the state of Gujarat, Modi oversaw one of the worst anti-minority pogroms in Independent India. Some 2,000 people, mostly minority Muslims, were killed by rampaging mobs while the police was asked to look the other way. This prompted Human Rights Watch to title their investigative report on this violence “We Have No Orders To Save You”. This slaughter was also marked by unprecedented sexual violence against minority women. Hundreds of women were chased on the streets of major cities and gang-raped in public view before being burnt alive. Properties belonging to Muslims were destroyed in a targeted fashion, resulting in an estimated loss of \$760 million. Subsequent social and economic boycotts organized by Hindu militias further crippled the community.

During the pogrom, over 300 mosques, religious monuments and heritage sites belong to the Muslim community were destroyed. National and International human rights groups, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and India’s own National Human Rights Commission (a federal government body), have accused Modi of presiding over the 2002 massacres and subverting state apparatus to facilitate the pogroms. This not only includes the participation of the state police forces in the massacres of minorities but also their refusal to register police complaints by the victims, the appointment of state prosecutors belonging to the Hindu militias that perpetrated the pogroms, and the denial of medical services to victims at hospitals. Several senior bureaucrats, who were eyewitnesses to one of his meetings, have accused Modi of urging law enforcement agencies to allow the Hindu militias to ‘vent their anger’.

Several senior ministers in Modi’s government were involved in the violence. Former home minister Amit Shah along with revenue minister Haren Pandya participated in the destruction of a 400 year old heritage mosque in the city of Ahmedabad. Other ministers accused by eyewitnesses of involvement in violence include Gordhan Zadaphiya, Ashok Bhatt, Narayan Laloo Patel, Prabhatsinh Chauhan and Ranjitsingh Chawda. Maya Kodnani, a

cabinet minister in Modi administration has been convicted for life imprisonment for leading a massacre of 97 people.

Fourteen out of Gujarat's 25 districts were allowed to burn as Ministers were specifically deployed by Modi to interfere with police functioning by taking over the police control rooms and provide logistical support to the rampaging mobs.

Mr. Modi has ignored the need to rehabilitate the victims of the 2002 pogroms or to apologize for the horrific violence that occurred under his watch. After 12 years, over 16,000 victims that were driven from their homes continue to live in refugee colonies which do not meet basic standards of sanitation. According to Amnesty International, 21,000 people whose houses were burnt are yet to receive their entitled compensation from the Gujarat state government. The state government refuses to rebuild religious monuments that were destroyed during the 2002 violence.

A number of victim families from Gujarat and their next of kin reside in the United States, and continue to face mental trauma for the violence inflicted upon them and their family members.

When the Indian Supreme Court has vindicated Modi, Why does AJC seek to press charges?

The Supreme Court of India has not vindicated Modi. He was found not guilty by a magistrate's lower court at the recommendation of the Special Investigation Team (SIT). The SIT was constituted by the Supreme Court to help the lower court. An appeal against the lower court's decision is pending in the Gujarat High Court. Once a decision is made by the Gujarat High Court, India's Supreme Court can be appealed, whose decision is final.

In a large number of legal cases relating to the 2002 pogroms, verdict given by lower courts of Gujarat was overturned by India's Supreme Court, demonstrating a pattern of corruption and bias among the lower courts of Gujarat, from where Mr. Modi has obtained his "clean chit" verdict.

Exacerbating the long walk to justice is the paralytic pace at which the Indian judiciary works. According to a statement made by former Prime Minister Singh to the Indian Parliament, India has the largest backlog of cases in the world and it would take over 450 years to clear this backlog. On average, it takes a decade to clear a case from one court, and a final verdict by the Supreme Court and take up three to four decades.

Under these conditions of corruption, bias and judicial paralysis, it is imperative for victims to explore international legal fora for securing justice. The American Justice Center is an avenue for victims to seek judicial redress as per US laws.



American Justice Center
Holding Human Rights Abusers Accountable

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