

## Hindu activists accuse their leader in India riots

By Y.P. Rajesh

Reuters

Thursday, October 25, 2007; 3:49 PM

NEW DELHI (Reuters) - Hardline Hindu activists blamed for one of [India's](#) worst religious riots have accused a state leader of failing to stop the killing of hundreds of Muslims, a magazine report said on Thursday.

Gujarat state Chief Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) rejected the report, saying the activists wanted to switch political loyalties before state elections set for December.

Modi's office said he was not interested in commenting on the report.

About 2,500 people, mostly Muslims, are estimated to have been beaten, stabbed or burned to death in the western state in 2002 after suspected Muslims set fire to a train carrying Hindu pilgrims, killing 59 people.

The activists said Modi, who is seeking re-election, gave Hindu mobs a free run for three days after the train fire, encouraged them to riot and prevented police from stopping the violence.

India's Supreme Court has judged that Modi's government had looked the other way while innocent people were burning and was probably deliberating how to protect the killers. It compared Modi to the Roman Emperor Nero, who in popular legend played his lyre while Rome burned.

Modi and the BJP have in the past rejected similar charges from Muslim victims, human rights groups and political opponents. They have said they did all they could to control the reprisal attacks.

However, the expose in Tehelka magazine, based on hidden video camera interviews, is the first in which Hindu leaders and their supporters suspected of involvement in the riots have pointed a finger at Modi.

Arvind Pandya, a Gujarat government counsel at a riot inquiry panel, said Modi's "blood was boiling" when he first heard of the train fire.

"His reaction was like this, 'if he were not a minister he would have burst bombs ... detonated a few bombs in Juhapura'," Pandya said, referring to a Muslim suburb in Gujarat's main city Ahmedabad.

Haresh Bhatt, a leader of Bajrang Dal, a hardline Hindu group affiliated to the BJP, said he was at a meeting addressed by Modi after the train fire.

"He had given us three days to do whatever we could. He said he would not give us time after that, he said this openly," Bhatt said.

Tehelka said the report was the result of a six-month investigation by one of its reporters who posed as a research scholar and spoke to the activists.

The BJP said the activists quoted by Tehelka had colluded with India's ruling Congress party, which is in the opposition in Gujarat, to discredit Modi ahead of the election.

"It was expected from the Congress and some dissidents," said BJP spokesman Prakash Javdekar. "This is a collusive sting based on rumors and hearsay."

(Additional reporting by Rupam Jain Nair in Ahmedabad and Onkar Pandey in New Delhi)

© 2007 Reuters



---

October 26, 2007

WORLD BRIEFING | ASIA

## India: Claims That State Sanctioned Gujarat Violence

By AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

A private television news network showed what it said were secretly videotaped interviews of several men identified as Hindu activists boasting of their involvement in deadly Hindu-Muslim riots in Gujarat in 2002 and referring to the involvement of the police in the Hindu-governed state and the tacit support of politicians. The videotaping was carried out by Tehelka, a weekly magazine in New Delhi that is to publish its account today. At least 2,000 people, mostly Muslims, were killed in the rioting.

Copyright 2007 The New York Times Company

---

[Privacy Policy](#) | [Search](#) | [Corrections](#) | [RSS](#) | [First Look](#) | [Help](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Work for Us](#) | [Site Map](#) |

## BJP dismisses Gujarat riot claims

By Sanjoy Majumder  
BBC News, Delhi

**India's main opposition party has dismissed claims that its government in the state of Gujarat supported violence against Muslims in 2002.**

The allegations against the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) were made in secret video recordings by the Tehelka magazine.

They have also been broadcast on local television.

The BJP has described the allegations as a conspiracy hatched by India's governing Congress party.

Elections are due in Gujarat next month.

### 'Election stunt'

According to official figures, more than 1,000 people, mostly Muslims, died in the 2002 riots. Independent groups placed the figure closer to 2,000.

A spokesman for the BJP, Prakash Javdekar, described the Tehelka report as an election stunt stage-managed by Congress.

He said it was a sting operation based on rumours and hearsay.

In the secret video footage, apparently filmed over six months, several hardline Hindu politicians, mostly belonging to the BJP, are seen describing how they carried out the violence against the Muslim community, often with graphic details.

The Congress party has asked for all those shown in the videos to be charged with murder.

The Gujarat riots had been sparked by the death of 59 Hindus after a Muslim mob allegedly attacked a train on which they were travelling.

India's Supreme Court and rights activists have accused the BJP state authorities of failing to prevent the riots, the worst religious violence since India's partition in 1947.

More than a dozen people have been convicted over the violence, but many others have yet to be brought to justice.

Story from BBC NEWS:  
[http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/south\\_asia/7063327.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/south_asia/7063327.stm)

Published: 2007/10/26 08:34:31 GMT

© BBC MMVII

## **Report: Hindu extremists say they killed Muslims with consent of top Indian officials**

**The Associated Press**

Friday, October 26, 2007

**NEW DELHI:** Hindu extremists accused of killing hundreds of Muslims claim they had the support of a top official long suspected of quietly directing the slayings during riots in western India, according to a news magazine report published this week.

The killings took place over a few days in February 2002, when Hindu mobs rampaged through Muslim neighborhoods in Gujarat state. More than 1,000 people, most of them Muslim, were killed in the violence.

The riots were sparked by a fire that killed 60 passengers on a train packed with Hindu pilgrims — deaths that Hindu extremists blamed on Muslims, although the cause of the blaze still remains unclear.

The left-leaning news magazine Tehelka reported late Thursday that their reporter, using hidden cameras, had spoken to some of the main rioters. The men told the reporter that Gujarat's chief minister, Narendra Modi, had encouraged them to massacre Muslims and prevented police from stopping the killings.

Modi, who remains the state's chief minister — a post equivalent to a U.S. governor — is a leading member of the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party.

Calls to Modi's office went unanswered Friday, and he has offered no public comment on the Tehelka report. Modi has insisted in the past that he did all he could to prevent the killings.

The BJP dismissed Tehelka's story as political manipulation ahead of Gujarat state elections in December.

Human rights groups have long accused Modi's government of protecting the rioters as well as police officials who did little to control the carnage. The Supreme Court has also criticized the state's lenient handling of Hindus accused of killing Muslims.

On Friday, roughly 125 supporters of an Islamic separatist group protested in Srinagar, the biggest city in the Indian-controlled portion of Kashmir. The demonstrators chanted "Death to killer Modi," "Down with BJP."

There were similar protests in Hyderabad, a southern city with a large Muslim population that has suffered three bomb blasts since May.

Thelka said the reporter was posing as a researcher studying the growth of Hindu nationalism.

Thelka's story quotes activists of the BJP and affiliated right-wing Hindu groups, such as the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and the Bajrang Dal, as saying that bombs were assembled and hundreds of swords

collected ahead of the planned violence.

Transcripts of the recordings quote Bajrang Dal leader Babu Bajrangji as saying the killing of the Hindus on the train made him feel like killing Muslims and "hacking them apart."

"I am proud of it. If I get another chance, I will kill even more," he is reported to have said.

Bajrangji, who was arrested and then quickly released on bail for his alleged role in the rioting, was also quoted as saying Modi manipulated the legal system to protect the rioters.

"He kept on changing judges ... he set it up so as to ensure my release, otherwise I wouldn't have been out yet."

Bajrangji was not immediately available for comment but told the Indian Express newspaper that he did not make any such comments.

A leader of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Rajendra Vyas, reportedly told Tehelka: "As chief minister, Narendra bhai (Modi) couldn't say kill all the Muslims. I could say it publicly because I was from the VHP."

"He gave us a free run to do whatever we wanted to since we were already fed up of the Muslims ... the police was with us."

—

On the Web:

Thelka news magazine: <http://www.tehelka.com>

---

Notes:

---

**ADVERTISER LINKS**

**Coffee Exposed**

A shocking secret coffee  
co's don't want you to know.  
[www.CoffeeFool.com](http://www.CoffeeFool.com)

**Jewish Ringtone**

Send this complimentary  
ringtone to your phone right  
now!  
[RingRingMobile.com](http://RingRingMobile.com)

**Military & War Videos**

Check Out History.com's®  
original content on Wars &  
Warfare.  
[www.history.com](http://www.history.com)

**Discounted History  
Books**

New Titles! Join Today and  
Choose 4 Books for \$1 Each  
plus Free Gift  
[www.historybookclub.com](http://www.historybookclub.com)

---

**IHT**

Copyright © 2007 The International Herald Tribune | [www.ihrt.com](http://www.ihrt.com)

## Hindus Detail Involvement In Deadly '02 Riots in India

On Video, Assailants Tell of State Collusion

By Rama Lakshmi  
Washington Post Foreign Service  
Friday, October 26, 2007; A13

NEW DELHI, Oct. 25 -- Five years after one of [India's](#) worst episodes of Hindu-Muslim violence, a series of videotaped confessions released Thursday showed Hindu activists acknowledging their roles in the killings and detailing blatant state collusion.

In the video footage, recorded as part of an undercover exposé by a [New Delhi](#)-based weekly magazine called *Tehelka*, Hindu activists and politicians bragged about hacking Muslims to death and burning their bodies. One assailant said he slit open a pregnant woman's stomach.

The violence began in February 2002 when a Muslim mob torched a train in India's western [Gujarat](#) state, killing 58 Hindu passengers. Angry Hindu groups launched a wave of reprisal killings and set fire to Muslim homes and shops across the region. In all, an estimated 1,000 people died.

Human rights groups in India and the United States have charged that Gujarat's ruling party, the Hindu nationalist [Bharatiya Janata Party](#), tacitly supported the mob violence against Muslims. Several thousand cases related to the riots are still pending in Indian courts and state inquiry committees.

At a packed news conference on Thursday, the editor of *Tehelka*, Tarun Tejpal, released the magazine's forthcoming issue, which contains 106 pages of coverage on the killings. Two national television channels broadcast images that had been taken as part of the exposé. In some parts of Gujarat's capital, [Ahmedabad](#), where the issue of the riots remains sensitive, cable operators reportedly switched off their service to block stories on the subject.

"It is a very disturbing story; it is not a story you can take joy from," Tejpal told reporters. "There is a complete absence of remorse in these confessions. The perpetrators of the violence have themselves confessed to the crime. It is a story that makes me worry about the kind of India we are living in."

The video footage, by Ashish Khetan, a reporter for the magazine, showed Hindu activists confessing to dousing petrified Muslims in kerosene and burning them alive. The footage also showed a Hindu nationalist politician saying that the chief minister of Gujarat, [Narendra Modi](#), had "given us three days time to do whatever we could. After three days, he asked to stop and everything came to a halt."

Modi has previously said the Hindu violence was a spontaneous reaction to the attack on the trains.

A Hindu religious activist who has been accused of slitting open a pregnant woman's stomach said he showed Muslims "what kind of revenge we can take if our people are killed."

The disclosures come in the run-up to a December state election in Gujarat, where the Bharatiya Janata Party is still in power. The party's spokesman in New Delhi, Prakash Javdekar, dismissed the Tehelka story as a political conspiracy by the opposition Congress party.

For many Muslim leaders, the video footage released Thursday did not come as a surprise.

"None of these confessions are new to us. We have experienced all this firsthand," said Shakeel Ahmed, a legal activist in Gujarat and a member of the Association for the Protection of Civil Rights. An application for a new investigation into the violence has been pending in the Supreme Court for the past two years.

"But this will mount enormous moral pressure on the state government, because the perpetrators themselves are admitting to the heinous crimes," Ahmed said. "Whether it will bring justice depends on political will. Many of the accused are our rulers today. Who will investigate them?"

#### **Post a Comment**

Comments that include profanity or personal attacks or other inappropriate comments or material will be removed from the site. Additionally, entries that are unsigned or contain "signatures" by someone other than the actual author will be removed. Finally, we will take steps to block users who violate any of our posting standards, terms of use or privacy policies or any other policies governing this site. Please review the [full rules](#) governing commentaries and discussions. You are fully responsible for the content that you post.