

PRESS STATEMENT

Americans ask Biden to rescind State Dinner invitation to Narendra Modi due to India's democratic backslide

Washington, DC, May 26, 2023

In view of India's sharp democratic backsliding and human rights violations against social, cultural and religious minorities, political opponents, journalists, and human rights defenders, we, the undersigned, call upon President Biden to rescind his White House dinner invitation to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Modi champions [Hindutva, a radical Nazi-inspired ideology](#) that seeks to transform India from a secular democracy into a Hindu ethno-state. The invitation to Modi as a state guest signals that the US supports India's [crackdown on fundamental democratic rights](#) and emboldens the Modi Administration to intensify its anti-democratic agenda.

The Modi Administration [routinely jails political critics and opponents](#); [enforces anti-minority laws](#); [engineers a monopoly over the media](#); [manipulates the judiciary](#); and provides impunity to [Hindu mobs that attack and kill Muslims and Christians](#). Modi has failed to act against Hindu extremists allied with the [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh \(RSS\)](#) who [repeatedly call for a genocide of India's 250 million Muslims](#). US-based Genocide Watch has said India's Muslims are at Stage 8 of their 10 Stages of Genocide tracking system.

The Modi Administration championed and implemented the [anti-Muslim Citizenship Amendment Act \(CAA\)](#), a law that [aims to strip 250 million Muslims of their citizenship en masse](#). It also implemented the [National Register for Citizens \(NRC\)](#), which is already being used to strip Muslims of their citizenship and confine them to [detention camps](#).

For [four years in a row](#), the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), an autonomous US federal panel, [has called upon the US Department of State to designate India as a Country of Particular Concern \(CPC\)](#) for its ongoing and egregious religious freedom violations against Muslims and Christians.

In its [annual International Religious Freedom \(IRF\)](#) report released on May 15, 2023, the US Department of State highlighted anti-Muslim and anti-Christian violence; the criminalization of religious conversion; demolitions of Muslim-owned properties; Hinduization of school curricula; arbitrary arrests of Muslims; denial of bail for jailed

Muslim activists; demolitions of mosques and churches; cow vigilantism; mob lynchings; and hate speeches by leaders of Modi's Bharataiya Janata Party (BJP) inciting violence.

[Mob violence in BJP-ruled states has become an epidemic](#), and state administrations routinely side with the perpetrators. This creates an atmosphere of complicity in which Hindu extremists feel emboldened to kill with impunity. The BBC has reported on the [public humiliation of Muslims by Hindu extremist mobs](#), who film their beatings and coerce them into chanting Hindu religious slogans. Muslim men are frequently abducted, brutally assaulted, stabbed, and even burned alive on groundless accusations of consuming beef or committing minor offenses. Muslim women regularly face threats of sexual violence and harassment. Their attackers recognize [the BJP-led demolition of Muslim homes](#) as an extension and justification for their violence.

Along with minorities, democracy as a whole is under attack in India. In May 2023, [Reporters Without Borders](#) (RSF) placed India at 161 out of 180 countries in the World Press Freedom Index, behind Afghanistan. Hate speech and negative depictions of Muslims are so common that the Editor's Guild of India has compared mainstream news outlets to [Radio Rwanda](#) prior to the Rwandan genocide. The BBC is facing ongoing judicial harassment and censorship from the Modi regime after it released a documentary critical of the prime minister, which was promptly banned in India.

[Freedom House](#) has downgraded India's democracy to "Partly Free." The [Committee to Protect Journalists](#) (CPJ) has tied India with Mexico for the highest number of journalist killings in the world. Journalists who refuse to adhere to the Hindu supremacist narrative are killed, jailed, harassed, and [flooded with rape and death threats](#). The Early Warning Risk Project of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum has warned that India is the second likeliest place in the world to see mass violence in the future.

Modi has played a direct role in inciting brutal mob violence, including the slaughter and rape of minors, against Muslims. According to the BBC, a UK government probe found that Modi was ["directly responsible" for the "climate of impunity"](#) surrounding the killings of 1,000 Muslim men, women and children in India's Gujarat state in 2002, "which had all the hallmarks of ethnic cleansing." The [New York Times](#) has written that Modi has "fallen squarely" into the camp of "populist and authoritarian leaders."

BJP leaders continue to call Muslims "insects" and "cockroaches," tell Muslims to [go to Pakistan if they wear the hijab](#) in schools, call for [Muslims to be beheaded](#), urge Hindus [to cut off Muslim men's genitals](#), and [threaten Muslims for not voting for the BJP](#) in elections.

We thus call upon the Biden administration to immediately rescind Modi's invitation to the White House and openly condemn his attempts to subvert Indian democracy.

Signed,

Indian American Muslim Council

Hindus for Human Rights

Dalit Solidarity Inc.

World Without Genocide

International Defenders Council

International Society for Peace and Justice

Genocide Watch

Jubilee Campaign