

# Gujarat

## Ongoing Genocide



*Muslim homes on fire March 2002*

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## **Introduction**

On 27 February 2002, 58 passengers on the Sabarmati Express burnt to death at Godhra Railway Station in the Panchmahal district of Gujarat. Allegations raged that Muslims were behind the attack. The incident instantaneously unleashed an orgy of unimaginable violence unprecedented in a region already burdened with a legacy of horrific human rights atrocities. Hindu mobs systematically sought out Muslim men, women and children and subjected them to unspeakable horrors.

Eyewitnesses and survivors gave harrowing accounts of gang rapes, mass slaughter, brutal mutilation and burning of bodies illustrating the shocking level of brutality suffered by the Muslim population. Gujarat witnessed the worst violence since the partition of India. Over 2000 were killed, 150,000 displaced and over 800 women and girls raped. These atrocities were accompanied by widespread destruction; arson attacks, looting and ransacking of businesses, homes, personal property and the demolition of 132 mosques and religious tombs. Nearly all of the victims of the well organized pogrom were Muslim. The wounds remain raw, with thousands still destitute, living in relief camps, still in fear of their lives.

The massacres were initially described as a 'spontaneous reaction' by the Chief Minister of Gujarat, Narendra Modi. However the manner in which the massacre was carried out suggests a different story. It raises questions about the motivation behind the carnage. Was this really a response to the Godhra incident or was it, as many suggest, pre-mediated and part of a wider plan for the removal of the Muslim population from the state?

The immediate mobilization and 'retaliation' of massive numbers of Hindu mobs within such a short space of time, the nature and pattern of the atrocities and the similarity in manner and precision in which they were carried out and more disturbingly, the involvement of the state government and police authorities shed light on the above questions.

This report explores the issues raised beginning with a look at the incident at Godhra Railway station that apparently sparked the massacre of the Muslims. An examination of the rise of Hindu fundamentalism is necessary to provide light as to the reasons for the massacres as well as to put the atrocities in context. It is then necessary to chart the types of atrocities that were committed, to determine who was behind them and why the state apparatus failed to put an end to the cycle of violence.

## Chapter 1

### *The Origin of the Carnage*

#### **i. The Godhra Incident**

*“A mob of 5,000 came and we started running. We were cornered from all sides. SRP [State Reserve Police] personnel were also chasing us.... The mob caught hold of my husband and hit him on the head twice with the sword. They threw petrol in his eyes and then burned him. My sister-in-law was stripped and raped. She had a three-month baby in her lap. They threw petrol on her and the child from her lap was thrown in the fire. My brother-in-law was hit in the head with the sword and he died on the spot. His six-year-old daughter was also hit with the sword and thrown in the fire. My mother-in-law had with her the grandson who was four years of age and he was burnt too.... The police was on the spot but helping the mob. We fell in their feet but they said they were ordered from above [not to help]. Since the telephone wires were snapped we could not inform the fire brigade.”<sup>1</sup>*

This is a story of a resident of Naroda Patia. It is one of 1,500 testimonies of witnesses, victims and survivors collected by The Citizen’s Initiative, a coalition of non-governmental organisations that conducted fact-finding missions in the state of Gujarat.

#### **Introduction**

The date which marks the beginning of similar atrocities was 27 February 2002, when the state of Gujarat erupted into incomprehensible violence. On this day, fifty-eight people were tragically burnt to death at Godhra Railway Station in the Panchmahal district of Gujarat, on the Sabarmati Express. This train was travelling through Gujarat, carrying Hindu activists who were returning from the disputed site of a Hindu temple in the town of Ayodhya, Northern India. They were returning from supporting a campaign led by Vishwa Hindu Parishwad (VHP), a Hindu fundamentalist group<sup>2</sup>, to build a temple on the site of the destroyed Barbari Mosque. It was alleged that Muslims were behind the attack on the Sabarmati Express.

This terrible incident has been cited as the trigger for what followed. Immediately thousands of Hindu mobs mobilized and geared for vengeance.<sup>3</sup> What proceeded was a

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<sup>1</sup> Citizens Initiative, “Sub: Asking for appropriate action in the communal riots of 2000 in Gujarat”, March 2002 Cited by Kay, Joseph, ‘Report exposes role of government in communal violence in India’, 8 May 2002.

<sup>2</sup> See page 8 for background on VHP.

<sup>3</sup> Etter, Lauren, Digital Freedom Network Asia Observer, “Gujarat: A denial of justice in the wake of communal violence”, July 2, 2002.

three-day retaliatory massacre of thousands, with many more rendered homeless and dispossessed. Places of business and worship were looted, ransacked and demolished; girls and women were brutally raped, mutilated and burnt.

What really happened at Godhra became a matter of central importance. There was intense speculation as to who was behind the incident. Wild allegations raged. In particular, the Chief Minister of Gujarat Narendra Modi blamed the Pakistan intelligence services (ISI), as being the orchestrators. Exploiting the war on terrorism, 'Islamic terrorists' were also blamed.<sup>4</sup> These allegations were short lived and were refuted almost immediately by many leading figures, including B.K. Nanavati, the deputy police superintendent in Godhra, who held that the investigation did not support the contention by Gujarat's chief minister, that the assault on the train was a "terrorist attack."<sup>5</sup>

Even if these contentions of pre-meditation and involvement of the ISI, were given credibility, then serious questions would have to be raised about the lapse of intelligence - how such pre-planning and preparations were made without being detected, particularly in light of community tensions arising from the Ayodha programme.

The remaining popular assumption was that it was a pre-planned conspiracy by the local Muslim community to attack Hindu activists. However, a close examination of the events leading up to the Godhra incident as well as the incident itself reveals a different account than initially thought. Obvious flaws begin to surface, and questions are raised. For example, if allegations of pre-meditation by the Muslims are true, then why was only one carriage burnt, and if the attack was on activists why were other compartments consisting of *karsevaks* (Hindu militants) left untouched?<sup>6</sup>

Some of the events of the day are still unclear, but there is a certain amount that is well documented. It is necessary to take a closer look at the incident to understand what really happened and why.

### ***Events leading up to the Godhra incident***

Interviews with passengers on the train, witnesses to the incident, and police and railway officials initially suggested that the train fire was not a premeditated ambush by young Muslims, but rather a spontaneous argument, provoked by the Hindu activists, that went out of control.

According to numerous enquiries conducted into the incident at the railway station many witnesses testified to repeated incidents of provocation, misbehaviour and harassment in part of the *karsevaks* travelling on the trains days before the attacks. Newspapers reported incidents where *Bajrang Dal* workers (Hindu militants from part of the RSS movement)<sup>7</sup> armed with trishuls (tridents), travelling to Ayodha on board the Sabarmati Express on 24 February, let loose a reign of terror upon dozens of helpless Muslim passengers. They also

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<sup>4</sup> Rediff.com, "Attack on Sabarmati Express premeditated: BJP", February 27, 2002.

<sup>5</sup> Chandrasekaran, Rajiv, Milli Gazette, "What really happened at Godhra", 16-31 March 2002. Also Raval, Sheela, India Today, "Godhra Investigation: Tracking the Plan", March 18, 2002.

<sup>6</sup> The Milli Gazette, "If the attack was pre-planned why only one bogey was torched?" 16-31 March 2002.

<sup>7</sup> See p.8 for background on *Bajrang Dal*.

targetted the people waiting at the platform, forcing them to shout slogans of Jai Shri Ram. A few even declared themselves to be Hindus in order to escape their wrath.<sup>8</sup>

According to eyewitnesses, approximately 2,000 trishul carrying *Bajrang Dal* workers, on board the Sabarmati Express coming from the direction of Lucknow, began indulging in offensive activities from the Daryabad Station. Anyone identified as a Muslim on the train, was mercilessly attacked with trishuls and beaten with iron rods. Women and children were not spared, being beaten with iron rods with women being forcibly unveiled. People waiting at the platform were also similarly targeted.<sup>9</sup>

This continued between the Daryabad and Rudauli Stations. According to an eyewitness, a youth who protested against this behaviour was thrown off the train between the Patranga and Rojagaon Stations. Several women, badly wounded and covered in blood, jumped off the train as it pulled into Rudauli around 8 a.m. The *Bajrang Dal* activists also got off the train and started attacking those whom they identified as Muslims from among those present at the platform.

Local residents rang up the police. By the time the Bhelsar Police station chief arrived at the station, the train had left and the injured were being rushed to the hospitals. No report was registered at the Police station because the officer-in-charge was unavailable.

### ***Events at Godhra***

Various witness reports indicate the same type of behaviour re-emerged after an estimated 1,700 karsevaks boarded the Sabarmati Express to return to Gujarat on Monday 25 February at 5.30pm.

There were widespread reports of communally motivated misbehaviour along the way by the karsevaks in the Sabarmati, with some in carriages S-5 and S-6 engaging in lewd behaviour, including exposing themselves to passengers and pulling headscarves off Muslim women. A family of four were forced to disembark in the middle of the night for refusing to join in chants glorifying the Hindu god Ram. Local papers had reported this as early as February 25, days before the Godhra incident.

An argument broke out early on in the journey at Dahod station when some karsevaks consumed tea and snacks at a stall on the platform. They refused to pay, according to one account unless the tea vendor chanted 'Jai Shri Ram', a Hindu chant glorifying their god. They proceeded to smash up his stall for refusing to do so. The stallholder filed a complaint with the railway police. Similar types of behaviour ensued at various other

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<sup>8</sup> Jan Morch [Faizabad] Daily, 24 February 2002.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

<sup>10</sup> Ibid

<sup>11</sup> Milli Gazette, Thursday 13 June, 2002.

<sup>12</sup> Chandrasekaran, Rajiv, Milli gazette, "What really happened at Godhra", 16-31 March 2002.

<sup>13</sup> Peter Popham, The Independent, "The Hate Train", 22 March 2002.

stops.

Their reputation had preceded them and trouble was expected. Muslim vendors were ordered by police officials to temporarily suspend their business at the time of the arrival of the Sabarmati Express. However, as observed by the National Human Rights Commission in its Interim Report, no preventive action including a police escort was taken at the time, to prevent any mishaps. Preventative action should have been taken, particularly in light of the known communally charged atmosphere in Godhra.

An incident similar to the one at Dahod developed when the train pulled in on the morning of February 27 at 7.43am, five hours later than expected. Their unexpected and late arrival meant that the vendors *were* open for business.

Again, the karsevaks consumed tea and refreshments from the Muslim vendors at the platform. Accounts of what exactly happened vary, but all agree that an argument broke out between the vendor and the karsevaks. "They pulled his beard and beat him up... They kept repeating the slogan 'mandir ki nirmaan karo, Babar ki aulad ko bahar karo'." ("Build the temple and throw out the Muslims...") . According to some reports, when they refused to pay, scuffles broke out between the Muslim vendors and the karsevaks.

The karsevaks retreated and fearing further violent reactions took precautions and closed all the doors and windows of their compartments. It is then alleged that some Muslims went to a nearby petrol pump, and returned armed with petrol and diesel and set fire to coach number S5. The result was that most of them were safe while innocents, mostly women and children, became victims of the fire.

Other reports relate that as the retreating karsevaks were making their way to the train, they grabbed hold of a Muslim woman and dragged her back to the compartment.

According to some witness it was the sixteen-year-old daughter of the tea vendor who had come to rescue her father. According to others, it was a girl on her way to school wearing a headscarf and another told that it was a woman hanging her washing.

Despite the variations as to her identity, all witnesses, including a police officer, agree that a woman was dragged into compartment S-6. A crowd assembled quickly as word of this spread. They stopped the train and demanded her release. "But instead of returning the girl, they started closing their windows. This infuriated the mob..." It was alleged that at this point the mob attacked hurling stones and petrol, gas etc inside. The main target of the attack was coach S6 which was badly burnt.

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<sup>14</sup> Chandrasekaran, Rajiv, Milli Gazette, "What really happened at Godhra", 16-31 March 2002.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid

<sup>16</sup> Peter, Popham, The Independent, "The Hate Train", 22 March 2002.

<sup>17</sup> Chandrasekaran, Rajiv, Milli Gazette, "What really happened at Godhra", 16-31 March 2002.

<sup>18</sup> Peter, Popham, The Independent, "The Hate Train", 22 March 2002.

<sup>19</sup> Peter, Popham, The Independent, "The Hate Train", 22 March 2002.

<sup>20</sup> The Tribune India, "Sabarmati Express set ablaze, 57 dead", 28 February 2002.

It was these two incidents of harassment of an old Muslim vendor and the abduction of the women into one of the coaches that was initially thought to be the key trigger for the conflagration.

Such incidents are not uncommon and indeed they are, as recent history observes, a feature of any situation where a large number of such supposed "pilgrims" are travelling together. It was thus concluded by many that the attack on the Sabarmati Express was in response to provocation and misbehaviour of the karsevaks.

This confrontation resulted in the death of 58 Hindu passengers, mainly women and children, reduced to ashes by a fire that consumed carriages S-5 and S-6. Infuriated Hindu mobs descended on to Muslim communities across Gujarat state, subjecting them to inconceivable atrocities that had not been experienced since the partition.

### ***Contradictory forensic report***

However a forensic report, compiled by a government forensic laboratory in Gujarat contradicts the police's version of events that the fire on the Sabarmati Express was started from the outside by Muslim mobs throwing petrol on the train. Forensic experts re-enacted the burning of the carriage and established that, "The inspection of the tracks and burn patterns on the exterior of the coach confirm that the inflammable liquid did not come from outside".

According to the experts, the fire started from inside the carriage. At least 60 litres of inflammable liquid was splashed inside one end of the coach and set alight. However their re-enactment of the incident, using water, found that only 10 to 15 per cent of the liquid thrown from outside a coach went inside while the rest spilled onto the tracks. They explained that if the liquid had been thrown from outside, the fire should have started from underneath the coach. The details of how this was possible remains unclear.

If, as the forensic evidence suggests, the fire was started from the inside, then it raises questions of whether the karsevaks themselves started the fire, and if so, why.

The report further contradicted witness accounts that the passengers had locked the doors and windows to attacks by the Muslim mobs. Instead it was established that three of the four carriage doors were open at the time of the attack.

### ***Conclusion***

Questions regarding what really happened at Godhra will always remain open to speculation. Even if it could conclusively be shown that Muslims were behind the attack, there is no evidence to suggest pre-planning. The rapid assembling of a large Muslim crowd can be explained by the existence of a large Muslim settlement in the area. Also, it

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<sup>21</sup> Banaji, Murad, "Recent communal violence in Gujarat, India", August 2002.

<sup>22</sup> BBC Online, "News Doubts over Gujarat train attack", July 3, 2002.

<sup>23</sup> Rediff.com, "Forensic report contradicts police version of Godhra incident", 4 July 2002.

is possible that local Muslims were aware of the possibility of trouble having heard rumours of events at other stations on the way, but this is speculation.

However, the forensic evidence gathered sheds serious doubt on accusations of Muslims instigating the incident either with premeditation or even acting spontaneously. Whilst the identity of those responsible is unknown, it is clear that it is not as black and white as the ruling Hindu nationalist authorities in Gujarat have tried to portray.

## **ii. The Rise of Hindu Fundamentalism**

To fully understand the atrocities that ensued, it is necessary to contextualise the ideology and history of the Hindu Right in India. Ultimately the rise of the Hindu Right expresses internal tensions in Indian identity, encapsulated in the assassination of Gandhi by Hindu extremists, a revolt against a secular notion of India and pluralism. This forms a backdrop to the activities of the Hindu Right.

### ***Introduction***

This eruption of communal violence in Gujarat signifies a renewal of a centuries-old conflict between Muslims and Hindus, dating back to the mid-16th century.

Since the 1947 partition, violent clashes between Muslims and Hindus have been commonplace. Gujarat in particular has a history of violent episodes which commenced even prior to partition. In 1969 its main city, Ahmedabad was rocked by violent Hindu-Muslim clashes, the worst violence since partition in which nearly 2,500 people were killed. This was followed by a series of riots in the 1980s and 1992. For this reason it has been deemed as one of the country's most "communally sensitive" places.

Godhra, in particular, has witnessed violent communal clashes in 1948, 1965, 1980, 1990 and 1992. In 1980, the town was placed under curfew for an entire year after the town was rocked by rioting.

### ***Hindu Nationalism/ Fundamentalism***

Tensions between the Hindu community and the minority Muslim community have been exacerbated over the last decade by the rise of Hindu nationalism. The demise of the Congress Party and the inability of any other political party or coalition of parties to replace Congress's historical role presented an opportunity to the family of Hindu nationalist organizations known as the Sangh Parivar to flourish.

The Sangh Parivar is composed of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (National Volunteers Association - the mother organization after which the label Sangh Parivar is coined), the Bharatiya Janata Party (Indian People Party - Hindutva's constitutional front that fights elections etc.), the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP - World Hindu Council - the formation's activist front), the Bajrag Dal (the auxiliary militant wing), the Shiv Sena (the fascist front), the VHP of America (Hindutva's overseas arm) and the Hindu Students' Councils (VHP of America's student wing). These organisations have been named as being behind the recent

<sup>24</sup> BBC News, "Analysis: Why is Gujarat so violent?" September 25, 2002.

<sup>25</sup> Tillin, Louise, BBC News, "History of Indian communal violence", March 2, 2002,

Gujarat atrocities. Hindu nationalists maintain that the transformation of India into a “true Hindu state” is the only way to revive her glorious past. Reviving the alleged glory of India’s past will elevate her position to one of the most powerful nations in the world.

It is noteworthy that in addition to the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi, the RSS, Jana Sangh (now known as BJP), and VHP have been implicated in numerous communal riots all over India.

### ***The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)***

The RSS, a paramilitary vehicle for Hindu fundamentalism, first emerged during British rule in 1925, and were a mass organisation during the horrific communal violence surrounding the 1947 partition of the Indian subcontinent.

The ideology behind the group is to revive Hindu consciousness and turn India into a Hindu rashtra – a nation of Hindus only, vehemently opposing the notion that all Indians, irrespective of ethnicity, religion or caste, should enjoy equal citizenship rights. The RSS believes that the "majority of the Muslims of India are converts to that faith from Hinduism through force of circumstances. They are still Hindu in many essential ways, and in a free, prosperous, progressive India they would find it the most natural thing in the world to revert to their ancient faith and way of life."

Madhavrao Sadasivrao Golwalkar, hand-picked protégé of RSS founder Dr. Hedgewar, explicitly reveals the potential impact of the Hindutva<sup>29</sup> ideology and the creation of a Hindu rastra on the minority population, a lesson Sangh volunteers are indoctrinated with from an early stage:

"From this standpoint sanctioned by the experience of shrewd old nations, the non-Hindu peoples in Hindusthan must either adopt the Hindu culture and language, must learn to respect and hold in reverence the Hindu religion, must entertain no idea but the glorification of the Hindu race and culture, i.e., they must not only give up their attitude of intolerance and ungratefulness towards this land and its age-old traditions, but must also cultivate the positive attitude of love and devotion instead; in one word, they must cease to be foreigners or may stay in the country wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation claiming nothing, deserving no privileges, far less any preferential treatment, not even citizen's rights."<sup>30</sup>

This ‘fascist’ ideology is further evident in various other statements made by Hindu Right personalities. One statement in particular from Hindu Mahasabha leader Savarkar, a much-respected personality in RSS circles is noteworthy. "If we Hindus grow stronger in time Moslem friends...will have to play the part of German Jews."<sup>31</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Mosaddeq, Nafeez, Media Monitors, “State-sponsored terrorism in the Republic of India”, March 10, 2002.

<sup>27</sup> Banerjee, Partha, “ RSS - The "Sangh" What is it, and what is it not?"

<sup>28</sup> On the history and philosophy of the BJP, see "BJP History: Its Birth, Growth & Onward March," <<http://www.bjp.org/history/history.html>>. Cited by *Taimoor, Ashraf, CSIS Islamic Studies Program*, “The BJP in India: Religious Fundamentalists or Practical Politicians?”.

<sup>29</sup> a modernised and politicized form of Hinduism

<sup>30</sup> Cited by Chandra, Bipan, “The BJP’s Ideology”, *The Hindu*, May 11, 1998.

[http://www.geocities.com/indianfascism/fascism/rss\\_what\\_is\\_it.htm](http://www.geocities.com/indianfascism/fascism/rss_what_is_it.htm)

<sup>31</sup> Savarkar's presidential address to RSS members in Nagpur on 28 December 1938. *Indian Annual Register, 1938 (1939)*, Vol. II, Calcutta.

This statement has proved true particularly in recent times with rise of the Hindu Right. Alarming, throughout India, the Sangh Parivar operates over 100,000 schools that encourage militancy and hatred for minorities.

### ***The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)***

The history of violence of the RSS meant that their political wing, the BJP remained on the fringe of politics for many years. However the decline of the Congress Party created a political and ideological vacuum. This opportunity, along with well-organised efforts on the part of the BJP, using religious symbolism to try and arouse the passions of the majority Hindu population, quickly gained them support from the newly enlarged urban and rural middle classes.<sup>32</sup> This led to their dramatic rise to power and influence, particularly in the last decade. In 1998 the party won the national elections, backed by a wide range of mainly right-wing state parties. In conjunction with twenty-one other political parties, they currently head India's coalition government.

The fundamental principle of BJP ideology is that the self-conscious unity of Hindus as a religious and cultural group is the only way to ensure India's salvation.<sup>33</sup> This ideology is in consonance with the RSS project of a Hindu Rastra – a state based on the principles of Hinduism. Although, the BJP has 'toned down' its rhetoric since coming to power, it still continues to essentially advocate the imposition of a Hindu monoculture and a desire to establish Hindu rule in India. Indeed, it leads the 'hinduising' charge, both at the federal and state level, to rewrite textbooks and curriculum to indoctrinate the next generation into believing that India's minorities are either foreigners in India who therefore do not belong to the country or the great grand children of Hindus coerced into conversion who should be made to re-assimilate.

The BJP and the RSS make no secret of their close relationship and the permeation of RSS members means that they effectively control the BJP party apparatus and dominate the party's leading bodies.

Hard-liners, Atal Vajpayee and Home Minister L. K. Advani, two of the most prominent figures in both the BJP and the current government, are RSS members and supporters, as is party president, Khababhu Thakre<sup>34</sup>. It is estimated that 75 percent of the current BJP executives have RSS roots.<sup>35</sup> It should further be noted that the Chief Minister of Gujarat, Narendra Modi has been a long-standing RSS activist, having been trained by them for many years and is known to be one of the favourite protégés of Advani.<sup>36</sup>

### ***The Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP)***

The VHP, founded in 1964, is in charge of the social aspect of the RSS activities. Through its social service programmes it promote the RSS creation of Hindutva. Although it

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<sup>32</sup> Religion in India: The Rise in Hindu Nationalism, September 1995. <http://atheism.miningco.com/mbody.htm>

<sup>33</sup> Taimoor, Ashraf, CSIS Islamic Studies Program, "The BJP in India: Religious Fundamentalists or Practical Politicians?".

<sup>34</sup> Mosaddeq, Nafeez, Media Monitors, "State-sponsored terrorism in the Republic of India", March 10, 2002.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid

<sup>36</sup> Perry, Alex, Time Asia Magazine Modi's Law Vol. 160., No. 22, December 9, 2002.

operates under the guise of a religious organisation – of providing Hindus with a framework for their beliefs with a common god, a definitive book and a central church, their work neither begins nor ends there. Rather, they advocate an unbreakable tie between religion and nationalism, equating being Indian with being Hindu and vice versa. In line with RSS ideology they too push for the creation of a Hindu Rastra with limited minority rights.

Amongst other activities, the VHP and the *Bajrang Dal*, a pseudo militia wing of the RSS movement, formed in 1984, carry out highly publicised programmes wherein their cadres are given arms training in different parts of the country.

### ***The Conflict surrounding the Babri Mosque***

One of their most infamous activities was the campaign to build a Hindu temple dedicated to the Hindu God Ram marking his birth place at the site of the 16th Century Babri Mosque dating back to the Mughal period in Ayodha.<sup>37</sup>

After an intensive campaign by the Sangh Parivar, including the BJP, in defiance of Supreme Court orders, the Mosque was completely demolished by 200,000 Hindu militants on December 6, 1992.<sup>38</sup> This set off rioting across India in which more than 3000 people died in communal riots in Ayodha, Bombay and beyond.<sup>39</sup>

The Sangh Parivar argued that the demolition of their temples by Muslim rulers in the past is a wrong that must be rectified by ‘at least’ reclaiming the birthplace of their Lord Ram.<sup>40</sup>

However, the systematic manner in planned pogroms against Muslims in Ayodha and other parts of the country after the Babri Masjid had been demolished strongly suggest that religious sentiments were not the motivating factor behind it. Rather, the motivation behind it was the creation of an opportunity to carry out a genocidal campaign against Muslims, this being part of a bigger effort to ultimately exert Hindu domination.

The destruction of the mosque and the failure of the government in preventing it has always been a cause for long-held resentment between Hindu and Muslim groups and has acted as a catalyst to recent tensions. Plans of the Vishwa Hindu Parishwad (VHP) to begin building a Hindu temple on the site continues to fuel the prospect of further violence in the country. Indeed they have been strongly implicated in playing a significant role in the recent Gujarat atrocities, motivated by the desire to transform India into Hindu Rastra.

### ***Anti-Muslim campaign before Godhra incident***

The increasing support of Hindu nationalist groups can be attributed to their organised, sustained campaign of hate against the Muslim population over the last decade, intensifying in the last couple of years. Their anti-Muslim campaigns have been conducted

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<sup>37</sup> Chandrasekaran, Rajiv, Milli gazette, “What really happened at Godhra”, 16-31 March 2002.

<sup>38</sup> BBC News, “Timeline: Ayodhya crisis *Why Ayodha*,” 27 February, 2002.

<sup>39</sup> Tillin Louise, BBC News, “History of Indian communal violence,” March 2, 2002.

<sup>40</sup> Trivedy, Shikha, “The Followers of Godse, The Aftermath of The Babri Masjid Demolition in Ayodhya”.

through organizing meetings, distribution of leaflets etc. Certain catchphrases such as “Hindu women violated by Muslims”, “Muslims collecting weapons to attack Hindus” were used throughout the entire state.<sup>41</sup> The similarity across the region indicates the strategies employed.

Further, a VHP call for an economic boycott of goods and services offered by Muslims in the state was already in effect through distribution of anti-Muslim literature.<sup>42</sup>

The hate campaigns were complemented by ‘Hinduvising’ activities which were also on the increase with *Bajrang Dal* recruiting teenage activists and with the VHP stepping up its activities through distribution of idols of Hindu gods, holding Hindu festivals and prayer ceremonies.<sup>43</sup>

### ***BJP Electoral Losses prior to Gujarat Massacre***

Many believe that there is a hidden agenda behind the atrocities, that these were instigated and/or facilitated by the BJP to promote and exploit communal tensions to revive support and further the BJP’s political objectives; that the recent revival of the campaign and subsequent communal violence is the only way of regaining the party’s sharply deteriorating electoral popularity.

Indeed the revived campaign to build the temple comes at a time when the BJP has suffered heavy election losses in the politically important states of Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal, and Punjab, only holding on to the state legislatures in Gujarat, Orissa, Himachal Pradesh, and Jharkand in February 2002 elections.<sup>44</sup> Reviving the campaign to build the temple has proved extremely successful in the past, arousing and mobilising a Hindu support in the elections which propelled the BJP into power in the early 1990s.

### ***Revived Campaign in Ayodha***

The Godhra incident occurred amidst a campaign by the VHP to transport stone pillars to the site of the disputed Babri Mosque in order to begin building the temple. The deadline they had set for this was 15 March 2002. Indeed after the Godhra related violence, although a Supreme Court Order issued on 13 March 2002 prevented them from proceeding with the construction,<sup>45</sup> they held a symbolic religious ceremony where the pillar was handed over to Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee’s representative.<sup>46</sup>

In preparation for the campaign deadline, Hindu nationalists had been travelling back and forth to Ayodha, including on the Sabarmati Express, several weeks preceding the outbreak of violence.

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<sup>41</sup> “Maaro! Kappo! Baalo!”, State, society and communalism in Gujarat, People’s Union for Democratic Rights, Delhi, May 2002.

<sup>42</sup> See Human Rights Watch Report, “We have no orders to save you”, March 2002.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid

<sup>44</sup> Damodaran, Ashok, “BJP: The Party is Over,” *India Today*, April 15, 2002. Cited in HRW report, “We have no orders to save you”, March 2002.

<sup>45</sup> Choudhury, Uttara, “India’s Supreme Court bans religious ceremony in Ayodhya,” *Agence-Press France*, March 13, 2002.

<sup>46</sup> Myra MacDonald, Terry Friel, “India’s hardline Hindu prayer ceremony peaceful,” *Reuters*, March 15, 2002.

***Conclusion***

The rise of Hindu nationalist groups like the BJP, RSS, and VHP has meant oppression for many religious minorities in India. This movement has transformed the traditionally secular Indian government into a highly militant and nationalistic regime characterised by its overt intolerance and hatred of Indian Muslims in particular. Such is the backdrop within which this report proceeds in its analysis of the Gujarat atrocities.

## Chapter 2

### *Emerging Patterns of Violence*

#### **Introduction**

*“My house has a small grocery store and I was there in the store. A mob came from Charanagar. Five hundred strong mob came from Kubernagar. Two thousand strong mob came. They started riot, burning houses. We ran to nearby Gangotri society and took shelter on the terrace. The mob started burning people at around 5 or 6 o'clock in the evening. The mob stripped all the girls of the locality including my 22-year-old daughter and raped them. My daughter was engaged. Seven members of my family were burnt that includes my wife (age 40), my son (18), my son (14), my son (7), my daughter (4), my daughter (2). Police did not allow me to climb down from the terrace. My 8-year-old son has survived with 20 percent burn injuries and he remembers his mother. What can I do? My house and shop has been burnt.... They hit her on the head and burnt. She had 80 percent burn injuries.”<sup>47</sup>*

This was the story of a resident of Ahmedabad whose family was subjected to a terrifying ordeal, only four out of his eleven family members having survived. This story echoes the tragedy suffered by thousands more when Hindu mobs descended upon the Muslim population to avenge the deaths that resulted from the burning of the Sabarmati Express at Godhra.

The Godhra incident set off what has been described by many as genocidal activities, subjecting the Muslim population to a devastating nightmare, aided and sponsored by the Hindu nationalist state apparatus.<sup>48</sup>

#### **Statistics**

It is estimated by many NGOs that approximately 2,000 people were killed in the ethnic violence in Gujarat since 27 February 2002.<sup>49</sup> However there have been difficulties in ascertaining this actual number for several reasons. Firstly governmental listing of many persons as missing rather than dead makes the figures misleading. Further in some rural areas entire settlements were wiped out leaving no one to register the deaths or bury the dead bodies. On some occasions the Gujarat government has denied NGOs access to certain areas making estimation of the casualties difficult.<sup>50</sup>

An estimate of the number of displaced people again varies. The government figure (in mid May) showed that those staying in relief camps numbered at 86,963 while others estimated up to 150,000 displaced people.<sup>51</sup> Similarly, the numbers vary because the government did not officially recognise many relief camps and not all displaced persons were residing in them but rather with friends or relatives.

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<sup>47</sup> Citizens Initiative, “Sub: Asking for appropriate action in the communal riots of 2000 in Gujarat”, March 2002.

<sup>48</sup> See Chapter 3 of this report.

<sup>49</sup> Amnesty International Report, March 2002.

<sup>50</sup> *Banaji Murad*, “Recent communal violence in Gujarat, India”, August 2002.

<sup>51</sup> Report 6: A Continuing Crime: The relief and rehabilitation measures, the attitude of the judiciary and police investigation and arrests with regard to the genocide in Gujarat. A Joint Fact Finding Team Report. May 2002. Cited by *Banaji Murad* in *Recent communal violence in Gujarat, India*, August 2002.

The Gujarat tragedy was marked by the use of extraordinary levels of sexual violence against women and girls as part of a calculated strategy to attack the Muslim community.<sup>52</sup> Many were killed after being raped. Although it is not possible to derive a single figure, most reports on this document a large number of these types of attacks.<sup>53</sup>

A sample of atrocities that occurred are described here to provide a sense of both the extent and the horrific nature of attacks and to highlight the presence of distinct and similar patterns of violence that emerge across the state.

## **i. What followed the burning of the Sabarmati Express?**

It is imperative to note that, although there were isolated incidents of hostility, widespread violence did not break out immediately following the Godhra incident. Despite condemnation by Muslim leaders, and the opportunity for authorities to put into effect preventative measures, the Hindu nationalist regimes at local or state level did not respond in such a manner.

On 28 February, the VHP announced an illegal nation-wide bandh (general strike), supported by the BJP. It is widely acknowledged that this strike was used to mobilise mobs for the atrocities that followed.<sup>54</sup> As stated in one report<sup>55</sup> (5): "[The] Sangh Parivar bandh... marked a premeditated transition from a local riot to an organised and pre-planned State-wide protest which was bound to result in a bloodbath, especially in the light of the political signals to officialdom to intervene minimally."

Indeed on the same day, organized mobs began slaughtering, raping and burning Muslims and their properties in Gujarat, with both passive and active participation of the police and other law-enforcement agencies.<sup>56</sup> The violence spread quickly from Godhra to Ahmedabad, the main city to different districts in Gujarat including Ahmedabad, Panchmahal, Dahod, Mahesana, Sabarkantha, Anand, Kheda and Gandhinagar and spilling into rural areas.<sup>57</sup>

Sixteen of Gujarat's 24 districts were engulfed in the most organised armed mob attacks between February 28 and March 1-2, 2002, when most of the attacks were concentrated. Rampaging mobs were still at work until mid-March and there were a few outbreaks after then.

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<sup>52</sup> 'Were sexual crimes in Gujarat planned?', by Syed Ubaidur Rahman, Milligazette, Thursday 27 June.

<sup>53</sup> How has the Gujarat Massacre Affected Minority Women: The Survivors Speak. Fact-finding by a women's panel. Sponsored by Citizen's Initiative, Ahmedabad [India] April 16, 2002.

<sup>54</sup> "Maaro! Kappo! Baalo!", State, society and communalism in Gujarat, People's Union for Democratic Rights, Delhi, May 2002.

<sup>55</sup> Gujarat Carnage 2002: A Report to the Nation. By An Independent Fact Finding Mission, 10th April 2002. Cited by *Banaji Murad* in Recent communal violence in Gujarat, India, August 2002.

<sup>56</sup> Gera, Shalini and Agrawal, Girish, "Gujarat Riots, The Top 5 Myths and Facts", Coalition Against Communalism.

<sup>57</sup> "Maaro! Kappo! Baalo!", State, society and communalism in Gujarat, People's Union for Democratic Rights, Delhi, May 2002.

The methods employed in attacks across the state are extraordinarily similar, again suggesting premeditation and preparation. The mobs were usually more than five to ten thousand strong, mainly through large-scale mobilisation from local areas. The attacks were usually 7-8 hours long. Neighbours attacked neighbours. Rapes too were carried out by known figures from the village or locality. It appears that when there were insufficient numbers of attackers, outsiders were called in.

This, and the fact that they were armed with swords, trishuls and agricultural instruments, the fact that the manner of arson, hacking and killing was chillingly similar, all suggest a carefully laid out plan, with a high level of preparation behind the attack.

The Citizens Tribunal records the systematic manner in which residents in Vatwa were attacked:

“This entire area was targeted by Hindu neighbours living in nearby societies two days after the Godhra incident of February 27. The attack, all eye-witnesses maintain, was planned with meticulous precision as crowds of no less than 15,000, with saffron bands on heads, talwars, guptis and dharis in hand, arrived on four to six occasions over the next twelve hours to wreck systematic destruction on homes, reducing them to empty shells. The homes in Burhani society belonging to the Dawoodi Bohra community were totally gutted.”<sup>58</sup>

This level of organisation of the mobs suggests that they were not spontaneously mobilised mobs but rather privately trained militia. Weapons such as guns, trishuls, swords and arsenals and supplies for starting fires – Light Petroleum Gas (LPG) cylinders and incendiary materials were widely distributed. This is evident from the overwhelming amount of witness testimonies from across the state who confirm that the weapons used in the attacks were of the same brand, and therefore must have been distributed in advance. Meetings were held to exact out the operational details of the attacks and targets of a particular place.<sup>59</sup> Such extensive training and preparation is necessary for the Hindu mobs to have spilt out in such an organised fashion, in the thousands across the state of Gujarat within the ‘72 hours it took Chief Minister Modi to bring things to normal.’<sup>60</sup>

## **ii. Massacres**

In the main city of Ahmedabad Hindu mobs ranging from five thousand to fifteen thousand ran riot leaving death and destruction behind.

On 28 February, the day of commencement of the ‘riots’, one of the worst massacres took place in Naroda Patiya, a settlement of 25,000 Muslims. Mobs of 15,000, armed with trishuls, dharias, spears and other weapons attacked and killed women, children and men as the police stood by and watched. Over 200 lost lives. <sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Citizens’ initiative for justice and peace, “A trained saffron militia at work?”, , March 7, 2002.

<sup>59</sup> “Maaro! Kappo! Baalo!”, State, society and communalism in Gujarat, People’s Union for Democratic Rights, Delhi, May 2002

<sup>60</sup> Communalism Combat, “Mapping the Violence” Year 8 No.76, March-April 2002

<sup>61</sup> ‘Ethnic Cleansing in Ahmedabad’, a preliminary report by the SAHMAT fact-finding team to Ahmedabad, 10-11<sup>th</sup> March 2002.

As the Sahmat report documents:

“The Noorani Masjid was first attacked and burnt with the help of LPG cylinders, tyres, petrol and kerosene. When some of the Muslim youth tried to resist the mob, the police fired at them and even killed some. Residents in the camps claimed that the Special Reserve Police [SRP] force present refused to provide them sanctuary and forced them towards the waiting rioters. Once the resistance was broken with the help of the police, the rioters stormed inside the settlement, burning and looting at will. Eyewitness after eyewitness in the relief camps described gory incidents of children being burnt alive and women being raped.

“One expectant woman’s belly was cut open, her foetus wrenched out and dashed to the ground. The enormity and ferocity of the attack forced all the surviving residents of the settlement to run away. Every house was looted and burnt and the entire settlement completely devastated.”<sup>62</sup>

Although official figures state that only 70 persons were killed, this is contradicted by the testimonies of many survivors who had witnessed the gruesome deaths of their loved ones. The actual death toll is thought to be much higher.<sup>63</sup>

A survivor of the massacre recalls:

“By now it was 6.30 in the evening. The mob caught my husband and hit him on his head twice with the sword. Then they threw petrol in his eyes and then burned him. My sister-in-law was stripped and raped. She had a three-month old baby in her lap. They threw petrol on her and the child was taken from her lap and thrown in the fire. My brother-in-law was also struck on the head with the sword and thrown in the fire. We were at the time hiding on the terrace of a building.

“My mother-in-law was unable to climb the stairs so she was on the ground floor with her four-year-old grandson. She told them to take away whatever money she had but to spare the children. They took away all the money and jewellery, then burnt the children with petrol. My mother-in-law was raped too. I witnessed all this. Unmarried girls from my street were stripped, raped and burnt. A 14-year-old girl was killed by piercing an iron rod into her stomach. The mayhem ended at 2.30 am.

“Then the ambulance came and I sat in it along with bodies of my husband and children. I have injury marks on my both my thighs and left hand, which were caused by the police beating. My husband (48 % burns), my daughter (95 % burns) both died in the hospital after three days. The police was on the spot but they were helping the mob. We fell at their feet but they said they were ordered from above not to help. Since the telephone wires were snapped we could not inform the fire brigade.”<sup>64</sup>

*Naroda Patia, February 28, 2002.*

Another such horrific massacre took place in Meghaninagar, Chamanpura, where armed mobs of 20-22,000 held the whole Gulberg Society, including former Member of Parliament, Ehsan Jaffri, to ransom for over seven hours.

A mob gathered outside Gulberg Society from the morning of February 28. The size of the crowd was relatively small and Jaffri was able to emerge from his house. It is reported that on several occasions he spoke to then police commissioner Prashant Chandra Pande face to face, who assured him that police reinforcements would be dispatched to help him.<sup>65</sup>

However, as the mob size began to rapidly increase, many Muslims fearing attacks got into Gulberg Society and many took refuge in Jaffri’s home. Jaffri, met with then joint police

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<sup>62</sup> ‘Ethnic Cleansing in Ahmedabad’, a preliminary report by the SAHMAT fact-finding team to Ahmedabad, 10-11<sup>th</sup> March 2002.

<sup>63</sup> Genocide In Gujarat Report by SAHMAT Fact Finding Team To Ahmedabad, 10-11th March 2002.

<sup>64</sup> Citizens Initiative, “Sub: Asking for appropriate action in the communal riots of 2000 in Gujarat”, March 2002.

<sup>65</sup> Nag, Kingshuk, The Times of India, ‘Jaffri may not have fired at all’, June 9, 2002.

commissioner M. K. Tandon who arrived at Gulberg Society, and similarly promised to send reinforcements. The Citizens Initiative petition to the NHRC notes that countless other requests were made by Jaffri. However no reinforcements were sent.<sup>66</sup>

The siege ended with numerous rapes and around 70 persons hacked to death or burnt alive, including Jaffri who was killed in a similarly gruesome fashion.

Testimony after testimony tell the same story of rape, killing, burning, maiming looting, and destruction of homes, business and property. A chilling pattern of brutality emerges across the entire state of Gujarat.

The manner in which the killings took place were particularly brutal, the aim being not only to kill as many members of the victim population but to do so in a humiliating manner so that survivors would be left with haunting images of their loved ones being stripped, paraded naked, raped, killed and dismembered in a merciless fashion and then burnt. The burning of bodies was purposely done not only to destroy evidence but also to dispose of the bodies in a way that would deny them an Islamic burial.<sup>67</sup> This was yet another way of the mobs trying to exert both physical and psychological dominance over the victim Muslim population.

Again, there appears to have been elaborate planning with a particular section of the mobs assigned to the task of carrying out the killings, sexual assaults and other abuses. They handled all the weapons, moved around in vehicles carrying their unspecified chemicals for use in burnings and weapons. Many survivors testified that these mob members were carrying identical backpacks filled with pouches of chemicals.<sup>68</sup> The planning was so sophisticated that some were only assigned the task of loading guns.<sup>69</sup>

### **iii. Violence Against Women**

*"Fatima Bi was one of hundreds who tried to hide in the State Transport staff colony. "The police pushed us out of there," she says, "saying it was our night to die." The people who lived in the colony were giving the mob tyres and petrol to burn people with. While Fatima Bi found a place to hide, others were less lucky. She watched as her pregnant friend Saliya Behn had her belly slit, and was then set on fire along with her children, three-year-old Muskan and six-month-old Subhan. Her badly injured son Khwaja Husain now sits in the Shah Alam refugee camp, unable to talk." <sup>70</sup>*

The Gujarat violence saw some of the worst and most disturbing types of human rights violations, particularly towards Muslim women and girls many who were subjected to

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<sup>66</sup> Citizens Initiative, "Sub: Asking for appropriate action in the communal riots of 2000 in Gujarat", March 2002.

<sup>67</sup> "Maaro! Kappo! Baalo!", State, society and communalism in Gujarat, People's Union for Democratic Rights, Delhi, May 2002.

<sup>68</sup> Citizens Initiative, "Sub: Asking for appropriate action in the communal riots of 2000 in Gujarat", March 2002.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid

<sup>70</sup> Frontline, Saffron Terror, Volume 19 - Issue 06, March 16 - 29, 2002.

"unimaginable inhuman and barbaric" sexual violence including gang-rape.<sup>71</sup> Many survivors at relief camps gave harrowing accounts of how women were stripped paraded naked, molested, gang-raped, had objects inserted into their bodies, and then cut into pieces and burnt beyond recognition.<sup>72</sup>

The Citizen's Tribunal heard evidence of how girls as young as 11 years old were raped by mob leaders. They were made to remove their clothing in front of 1,000 strong mobs were paraded naked, and then gang-raped by 8 -10 men. They would then have sharp objects such as knives and swords inserted into their vagina and other parts of their bodies to torture them before being burnt alive. There was even a report of a three-year old girl being raped in front of her mother. According to their report<sup>73</sup>, the atrocities carried out against women in both urban and rural areas, have been grossly underreported and under-recorded by the police.<sup>74</sup>

An NGO report poignantly depicts the horrific extent of crimes of sexual violence against women:<sup>75</sup>

"Naseem and Mahmooda, from nearby Millat Nagar, work with Sahrwaru, a voluntary organization. They are presently working at the Shah Alam camp (Relief camp in Ahmedabad). They testified that many women arrived stark naked at the camp. Men took off their shirts to cover the women's nakedness. Some could barely walk because of torn genitals as a result of gang rapes.

While talking to them we met Zubeida Apa, an elderly woman who has witnessed girls being gang raped. Her trauma was writ large on her face. We did not dare to rake up her pain by asking her more questions. We were told about Najma Bano who was brought to the camp unconscious, her body covered with bites and nail marks. She was bleeding profusely. Pieces of wood, which had been shoved up her vagina were extricated by the women who dressed her wounds. Najma Bano herself was too traumatized to recount her own story. She says she does not remember anything, except being chased by the men from Gangotri Society. Accounts like these require further follow-up."

Even pregnant women were not immune to the atrocities. Horrific reports emerged of how their bellies were cut open, and fetuses were ripped out before both burnt and/ or killed.

Saira Banu, a resident of Naroda Patia recalled,<sup>76</sup> "But what they did to my sister-in-law's sister Kausar Bano was horrific and heinous. She was 9 months pregnant. They cut open her belly, took out her foetus with a sword and threw it into a blazing fire. Then they burnt her as well."

The panel reported this incident:

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<sup>71</sup>BBC News, 'Gujarat Muslim women 'rape victims'. 16 April 2002' 'How Has The Gujarat Massacre Affected Minority Women? The Survivors Speak', fact-finding by a women's panel. Sponsored by Citizens' Initiative, Ahmedabad, 16 April 2002.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid

<sup>73</sup> Ibid

<sup>74</sup> Nautival, Shefali, Indian Express News, "We got complaints of bezzat, this does not mean rape."

<sup>75</sup> 'How Has The Gujarat Massacre Affected Minority Women? The Survivors Speak', fact-finding by a women's panel. Sponsored by Citizens' Initiative, Ahmedabad, 16 April 2002. Also Rahman, Syed Ubaidur, 'Were sexual crimes in Gujarat planned?', Milligazette, Thursday 27 June.

<sup>76</sup> 'How Has The Gujarat Massacre Affected Minority Women? The Survivors Speak', fact-finding by a women's panel. Sponsored by Citizens' Initiative, Ahmedabad, 16 April 2002.

“During our fact-finding mission, we were to hear this story many times. We read about it in other fact-finding reports. We were told about it by many survivors at the Shah-e-Alam camp. Sometimes the details would vary – the foetus was dashed to the ground, the foetus was slaughtered with a sword, the foetus was swung on the point of the sword and then thrown into a fire. Each teller of the story owned it. It was as if it was their own story. Were these simply the fevered imaginings of traumatized minds? We think not. Kausar’s story has come to embody the numerous experiences of evil that were felt by the Muslims of Naroda Patia on February 28, 2002. In all instances where extreme violence is experienced collectively, meta-narratives are constructed. Each victim is part of the narrative; their experience subsumed by the collective experience. Kausar is that collective experience – a meta-narrative of bestiality; a meta-narrative of helpless victimhood. There are a thousand Kausars. Members of the fact-finding team have seen photographic evidence of the burnt bodies of a mother and a foetus lying on the mother’s belly, as if torn from the uterus and left on the gash. We do not know if that was Kausar Bano.”<sup>77</sup>

Human Rights Watch reported the testimonies of a gravedigger at a mass gravesite next to the Dariyakhan Ghummat camp in the Shahibaug area, "There were at least three pregnant women and one of the foetuses was partially hanging out. We had to stick it back in before burial. If the foetus was completely removed then we left it out but still buried it with the mother."<sup>78</sup>

### ***Complicity of the police authorities***

There was widespread reporting of not only the failure of the police officials to prevent the riots, but of their involvement in many of the incidents of sexual violence that were perpetrated. Various investigations conducted into the violence support these allegations.

India's National Commission for Women (NCW)<sup>79</sup> found that survivors of sexual assault and rape not only suffered at the hand of mobs but also more disturbingly at the hands of the police:

“Many governmental officials have helped perpetuate these crimes such as Maya Kodnani, the BJP (Bhartiya Janta Party) MLA (Member of Legislative Assembly) who was accused in an FIR. Mob violence was unleashed only in those areas where the mobs were sure of getting full support from local leaders and the state machinery. Often, police would open fire at the Muslims rather than the attacking mob or they would simply refuse to help the Muslims by claiming that they had orders from above to remain idle. Also, there is video footage of slogans written on gutted Muslim homes saying, “The inside story is the police is on our side.” Also, the police pick up young Muslim boys under the guise of ‘combing operations’ which forces the women to venture out of their homes for their daily activities leading to more violence against women. A common account in Gujarat is, ‘I heard girls screaming. I saw a naked girl running with 25 men chasing her. The sweet shop owner was distributing sweets to the rioters. The police fired on the Muslims rather than the mob’. She said that women were beaten with sticks. She saw her husband being killed in the police firing.”<sup>80</sup>

The complicity of the government and state official is also apparent from the way they dealt with the aftermath of the riots. Their actions highlight the lack of desire on their part to bring the perpetrators to justice.

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<sup>77</sup> ‘How Has The Gujarat Massacre Affected Minority Women? The Survivors Speak’, fact-finding by a women’s panel. Sponsored by Citizens’ Initiative, Ahmedabad, 16 April 2002.

<sup>78</sup> Human Rights Watch interview (name withheld), Ahmedabad, March 22, 2002. ‘We have no orders to save you’, March 2002.

<sup>79</sup> The Report of the Committee constituted by the National Commission for Women to assess the Status and Situation of Women and Girls in Gujarat in the Wake of Communal Disturbance April 24, 2002.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid

According to the Citizen's Initiative report entitled "The Survivors Speak":<sup>81</sup>

"There is evidence of State and Police complicity in perpetuating crimes against women. No effort was made to protect women. No Mahila Police was deployed. State and Police complicity in these crimes is continuing, as women survivors continue to be denied the right to file FIRs (First Information Report). There is no existing institutional mechanism in Gujarat through which women can seek justice."<sup>82</sup>

The report by The National Commission for Women<sup>83</sup> supports this contention, holding that there were complaints that First Information Reports (FIRs) against violence, arson and other crimes against women were not being registered or were not being registered accurately.

Moreover even where the complaints are registered, further investigation or appropriate medical examinations were not conducted. Nor were victims of severe shock and trauma given adequate treatment. The failure of the authorities to take FIRs will severely hamper attempts to prosecute as will their lack of will to even acknowledge rape as a specific act distinct from mob violence.

Journalist Harsh Mander wrote:

"I have never known a riot which has used the sexual subjugation of women so widely as an instrument of violence as in the recent mass barbarity in Gujarat. There are reports everywhere of gang-rape, of young girls and women, often in the presence of members of their families, followed by their murder by burning alive, or by bludgeoning with a hammer and in one case with a screw driver. Women in the Aman Chowk shelter told appalling stories about how armed men disrobed themselves in front of a group of terrified women to cower them down further."<sup>84</sup>

#### **iv. Demolition of Mosques and Holy Shrines**

There has been extensive documentation of mosques and holy shrines being razed to the ground by mobs, and the temporary construction of Hindu temples and idols on the sites. Reports say that saffron flags, symbols of Hindu nationalism, and Hanuman images were planted on top of burnt out mosques to symbolize the destruction of a Muslim holy site.<sup>85</sup>

"The 500-year-old masjid in Isanpur, which was an ASI [Archeological Survey of India] monument, was destroyed with the help of cranes and bulldozers. The famous Urdu Poet Wali Gujarati's dargah was also razed to the ground at Shahibag in Ahmedabad. While the Hanuman (Hindu god) shrine was built over its debris initially, all that was removed overnight and the plot was metalled and merged with the adjoining road. No authority claimed any knowledge about the entire episode."<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> 'How Has The Gujarat Massacre Affected Minority Women? The Survivors Speak', fact-finding by a women's panel. Sponsored by Citizens' Initiative, Ahmedabad, 16 April 2002.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid

<sup>83</sup> The Report of the Committee constituted by the National Commission for Women to assess the Status and Situation of Women and Girls in Gujarat in the Wake of Communal Disturbance April 24, 2002.

<sup>84</sup> Harsh Mander, "Cry, the Beloved Country: Reflections on the Gujarat massacre," *South Asia Citizens' Web*, March 13, 2002

<sup>85</sup> 'Ethnic Cleansing in Ahmedabad', a preliminary report by the SAHMAT fact-finding team to Ahmedabad, 10-11<sup>th</sup> March 2002.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid. Cited in Human Rights Watch "We have no orders to save you", March 2002.  
<http://www.hrw.org/reports/2002/india/India1402-03.htm>.

The mosque of Malik Asin (Asas, Imadul Mulk) at Ahmedabad, built in the reign of Sultan Mahmud Begada (1458-1511) has been destroyed. A protected monument built in stone, this structure was destroyed within hours with military precision, in an operation involving the use of a crane and bulldozers. At around the same time, the mosque of Muhafiz Khan at Ahmedabad was also badly damaged.<sup>87</sup>

These few examples highlight again the precision and the manner in which the attacks were carried out. The similar technique employed, as well as the use of such equipment again suggests that premeditation before the atrocities commenced.

## **v. Muslim Homes and Commercial Establishments**

One thing that was clear, both from the propaganda and the nature of the attacks, was that the aim was to cripple an entire community. Thousands of other Muslim-owned businesses, homes and properties were attacked, looted and burnt down, while those belonging to Hindus remained untouched. In Ahmedabad, Baroda and on the highways alone 1,100 hotels were torched with chemicals between February 28 and March 1.<sup>88</sup> Businesses that tried to conceal their Muslim identity by adorning Hindu names were easily identified by the mobs, raising questions of how such information was accessible by them.

Hindu shops that were leased to Muslims had their stock taken out of the premises and burnt. As journalist Barkha Dutt points out, "What's so spontaneous about an attack that is planned so meticulously that only the seventh shop in a crowded lane gets razed to the ground but everything around it is untouched and undamaged?"<sup>89</sup>

The exclusive selection of Muslim homes and businesses was facilitated by voters' lists and other official documentation. There has been extensive reporting of the involvement of the governmental apparatus and the police authorities. The attacks were led by local level VHP, *Bajrang Dal* and BJP leaders who had no fears of being identified or booked.<sup>90</sup> These leaders, as well as leading attackers were allegedly carrying both mobile phones as well as water bottles, again indicating a high level of preparation and organization.

To avoid accidental attacks, Hindu homes were marked with saffron flags or other religious symbols before the attacks. They too were left alone.<sup>91</sup>

One section of the mobs was assigned the task of looting property from the houses and shops, bringing vehicles along to take away the loot.

"In the name of Hindu-Muslim tensions I witnessed looting of the shops. I saw my laundry man being looted by people who are living in apartments (not slums)....I saw that my own clothes were being

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid

<sup>88</sup> Communalism Combat, "Mapping the Violence", Year 8 No.76, March-April 2002.

<sup>89</sup> Cited in Gera, Shalini and Agrawal, Girish, "Gujarat Riots, The Top 5 Myths and Facts", Coalition Against Communalism.

<sup>90</sup> See Chapter 3 of this report entitled "State and police complicity".

<sup>91</sup> Citizens Initiative, "Sub: Asking for appropriate action in the communal riots of 2000 in Gujarat", March 2002

stolen by not-so-poor people. I saw that people who own cars stealing. I was angry with myself because I could not stop them from looting. I was frustrated because police were just not around”.<sup>92</sup>

In the cases of factories and commercial establishments that had strong grills and metal shutters, gas cutters were used to gain access. Light Petroleum Gas (LPG) cylinders were used to blow up houses and commercial establishments.

As a witness recalls:

“On a Muslim settlement at Sundarnagar near the Bapunagar locality...A local Madrasa situated near the boundary of the settlement was attacked by a mob of nearly 15,000, accompanied by the police, who fired at the Muslims trying to offer resistance. Truckloads of LPG cylinders were brought and used to cause explosions inside the buildings. Trucks were also used to batter down the boundary wall to create a breach for the rioters to enter. A pitched battle was fought here between the Muslim inhabitants and the rioters who had surrounded them from three sides, which lasted nearly 36 hours. During this period, fresh batches of rioters were reportedly brought in luxury buses and fatigued ones taken away. Finally, the resistance collapsed and the Muslim dwellers had to run away for their lives. The rioters entered the settlement from all sides and carried out loot and arson on a large scale, using petrol bombs and gas cylinders. Most of the dwellings in the settlement, as well as private vehicles like scooters, bicycles and auto rickshaws, were burnt completely. Even metallic furniture and ceiling fans had melted under the impact of the explosions.<sup>93</sup>

Such massive provision and use of gas cylinders not only suggest pre-planning but also the existence of official collusion, to gain access to such resources and to avoid them being detected. Further it again highlights the level of organisation needed to bring in fresh batches to carry out the atrocities.

The total economic losses sustained by the victims are estimated by one report at Rs. 38,000,000,000, or over half a billion pounds sterling.<sup>94</sup> Total government compensation paid out by mid May stood at less than Rs 100,000,000 or less than a third of a per cent of the total losses.<sup>95</sup>

The attack on the economic infrastructure of the Muslim community is not simply just another part of the attacks but rather pre-planned with the aim of financially crippling the Muslim community. This intent is evident from right-wing activities beforehand calling for the boycott of Muslim services.<sup>96</sup>

Indeed it is evident that the entire Gujarat carnage was part of an organised effort to inflict terror and brutalise psychologically, physically and economically for the purpose of driving the Muslim community away from their settlements.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Rediff.Com on March 2, 2002.

<sup>93</sup> ‘Ethnic Cleansing in Ahmedabad’, a preliminary report by the SAHMAT fact-finding team to Ahmedabad, 10-11<sup>th</sup> March 2002.

<sup>94</sup> A Continuing Crime: The relief and rehabilitation measures, the attitude of the judiciary and police investigation and arrests with regard to the genocide in Gujarat. A Joint Fact Finding Team Report. May 2002.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid

<sup>96</sup> See Chapter 1 entitled “Origins of the Carnage”.

<sup>97</sup> Murad Banaji, Recent communal violence in Gujarat, India, August 2002.

**Conclusion**

The repeated use of the phrase ‘communal riots’ by commentators is severely misleading in connoting that the violence was the result of clashes between two sides. Instead it was a one-sided effort of the Hindu mobs determined to drive out the Muslim population by any means necessary. This intent and the high level of organisation that accompanied it, means that the atrocities can only be termed as ethnic cleansing or genocide. Moreover, the partisan role of the state, the government, police, civil administration, the ruling party, the VHP, *Bajrang Dal* and the rest of the Sangh Brigade, all point to this ethnic cleansing being state sponsored.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> See Chapter 3 entitled “State and Police Complicity.”

## Chapter 3

### ***State and Police Complicity***

#### ***Introduction***

*"Even those neighbourhoods in Ahmedabad which had escaped violence, the residents are gripped by a fear psychosis, as it became more than ever clear that the state and Central governments did not act in time and with the necessary will and force to curb violence.*

*"Senior citizens say that the mobs went about their murderous ways with the full knowledge that the state government supported the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), and they would not face the wrath of the police." <sup>99</sup>*

The complicity of the Hindu mobs and the Gujarat state apparatus and police authorities became immediately apparent to the victims from the onset of the massacres that raged unabated in Gujarat. The successes of the atrocities along with eyewitness accounts confirm that they were carried out in collusion with civic, administrative and political bodies.

#### **i. Involvement of the State Apparatus**

##### ***(a) Use of official documentation***

The attacks that broke out in Ahmedabad on February 28 and the following days were highly systematic. The appearance of distinct patterns of "communal cleansing" - the precise manner in which the Muslim population were identified, targeted and attacked, suggest the use of voters' list and other official documentation. Testimonies of victims have been documented that support the contention that licenses and other relevant papers only available to civic bodies were used to target the hotels and other business establishments owned by them. <sup>100</sup>

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Interim Report supports these assertions, pointing out there were "widespread reports and allegations of groups of well organized persons, armed with mobile telephones and addresses, singling out certain homes and properties for death and destruction in certain districts..."

"The voters' list has certainly made their task easier and the motivated mob knew exactly who stayed where," a female inmate at Sanklitpur relief camp in Johopura told The Times of India.<sup>101</sup>

Another consistent feature of most survivors' accounts is the presence of local VHP and *Bajrang Dal* leaders, elected representatives from the BJP, RSS and even cabinet ministers led large Hindu mobs consisting of thousands. They were seen carrying with them

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<sup>99</sup> Tehelka.com, "28, including 14 women, 4 children, burnt in Mehsana, Tehelka", March 2, 2002.

<sup>100</sup> The Times of India, 'Misuse of voters list in Gujarat riots alleged, March 2002.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid

computerized sheets that listed the names and addresses of Muslims in particular areas so as to direct them to the proper sites for destruction.<sup>102</sup>

In one of the worst attacks – in Naroda Patiya in Ahmedabad - residents identified five BJP/VHP workers, as having committed murder and rape before their eyes.<sup>103</sup> In Laxmipura Village in Khed Brahma Taluka of Sabarkantha District, two local VHP unit members were identified as leading the mob which torched Muslim homes.<sup>104</sup> As one report put it, "In testimony after testimony, people identified by name, members of the *Bajrang Dal* and Vishwa Hindu Parishad involved in inciting and committing violence".<sup>105</sup>

According to the Times of India, testimonies from several police officials also corroborate that, "They hardly failed in laying their hands on their target, thanks to the documents like voters' list," ... "the mission was accomplished with clinical precision".<sup>106</sup>

The VHP did not deny the existence of such lists of addresses, but its chairman in Gujarat, Prof. Shastri claims that they were prepared only on the morning of February 28<sup>th</sup>.<sup>107</sup>

However this claim is contradicted by media documentation of how in months preceding the violence there were painstaking efforts by the VHP to collect and compile the names of Muslim businesses from the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, names and addresses of Muslim students from universities and professional institutions, and also to draw up a list of 'undesirables' working for government agencies such as the Food Corporation of India.<sup>108</sup>

This demonstrates the high level of planning involved with meticulous attention to detail, contradicting claims of spontaneity and retaliation on the part of the Hindu mobs. It is reminiscent of the riots that took place in Gujarat in 1992, following the demolition of the Babri Mosque. The RSS then allegedly used community directories to target Muslims.

### **(b) Deployment of troops**

Violence raged in Gujarat for days, and only started to abate by March 3 with the arrival of the army. The government's extremely slow and wholly inadequate response to the death and destruction raised disturbing questions about their stance towards the crisis. An Editorial in *The Hindu* observes:

"True, any administration will necessarily require some lead-time to react to a sudden and potentially explosive development. The Narendra Modi [Chief Minister of Gujarat government] regime however showed little signs of having come to grips with the situation as late as Thursday evening, leaving the field absolutely free for rampaging mobs to go about their 'business' - looting, pillaging and setting blocks of houses afire at will - and there appeared to be a clear design behind all the 'senseless' violence,

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<sup>102</sup> Shalini Gera, Coalition Against Communalism, "The Indictment of the Gujarat Police".

<sup>103</sup> Ethnic Cleansing in Ahmedabad: A preliminary report: SAHMAT fact finding team to Ahmedabad, 10-11th March 2002.

<sup>104</sup> 'How Has The Gujarat Massacre Affected Minority Women? The Survivors Speak', fact-finding by a women's panel. Sponsored by Citizens' Initiative, Ahmedabad, 16 April 2002.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid

<sup>106</sup> The Times of India, "Misuse of voters list in Gujarat riots alleged", March 2002.

<sup>107</sup> Gujarat Carnage 2002: A Report to the Nation. By An Independent Fact Finding Mission, 10th April 2002.

<sup>108</sup> Bushan, Ranjit, Outlook, "Thy hand, Great Anarch", 18 March 2002.

going by the targets they had chosen - shops and houses owned by the minority community in revenge for the Godhra incident.”

As early as 28 February while the Hindu mobs were running riot in Gujarat the police commissioner of Ahmedabad, sensing the even greater potential for further degeneration of the situation, urgently requested more troops to be deployed in the city. The government however failed to put in any formal request for the deployment of troops, despite the fact that the air force was fuelled and ready at Jodhpur in neighbouring state of Rajasthan to transport the troops over by Thursday evening at the height of the atrocities. They were expecting to be called upon by the government.<sup>109</sup> Only the next morning were a thousand troops flown out.

The failure of the state and central government to respond promptly and effectively by deploying the army, points to the fact that they facilitated the riots. In other words the government is directly implicated in this instance through its refusal to uphold and protect the rights and the lives of its minority citizens.

The *London Telegraph* substantiates this assertion but also points out that this was not an omission of mistake on their part, but a deliberate ploy:

“Intelligence officials [in India] admitted, however, that there had been a deliberate delay by federal and state governments in deploying the army to give Hindu militants a free hand after a Muslim mob killed 58 Hindus on a train...”<sup>110</sup>

Moreover, when the army troopers finally landed in the devastated cities of Gujarat on March 1, three days after the inception of the crisis, the administration did not provide them with transport, information about communally sensitive areas, equipment or assistance in handling the situation. This resulted in further delays and further loss of lives.<sup>111</sup>

Furthermore, the army was not dispatched to the trouble spots, ‘... but merely asked to display itself in areas from which the Muslims had already fled,’ a security officer said. ‘It was a calculated decision by the state’s Hindu nationalist government.’<sup>112</sup>

As encapsulated by *The Guardian*, “[T]he army’s belated deployment seemed little more than political calculation that the Muslims had now got the beating they deserved”.<sup>113</sup> This analysis has been corroborated by various commentators who have also arrived at the same conclusion based on insider testimonies.

*The Telegraph* notes that, “Intelligence officials admitted that a ‘systems failure’, prompted by politicians, allowed the rioting to continue. They said some police connived and, at times, even helped Hindu mobs.”<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Bedi, Rahul, *The Telegraph*, ‘Soldiers “held back to allow Hindu revenge”’, 6 March 2002

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>111</sup> “Where Had All the Soldiers Gone?” *The Telegraph*, Calcutta, India, March 2, 2002

<sup>112</sup> Bedi, Rahul, *The Telegraph*, ‘Soldiers “held back to allow Hindu revenge”’, 6 March 2002.

<sup>113</sup> Harding, Luke, *The Guardian*, ‘Police took part in slaughter’, 3 March 2002.

<sup>114</sup> Bedi, Rahul, *The Telegraph*, ‘Soldiers “held back to allow Hindu revenge”’, 6 March 2002.

Similarly *The Hindu* points towards the strong likelihood that the BJP-backed Gujarat state apparatus intentionally engineered conditions which would allow Hindu nationalists to run riot through the state unhindered:

“If the law enforcing machinery in Gujarat has been notoriously politicized and communalized, the fact that all the current lawlessness that has been unleashed in the name of a VHP-sponsored ‘bandh’ to protest against the Godhead carnage more than explains the State BJP regime’s deliberate lack of firmness in containing the orgy of violence. There has also been an inexplicable delay in calling in the Army. Such a partisan approach to critical issues of governance like maintaining public peace and ensuring the security of citizenry will seriously undermine the legitimacy of the Modi administration.”<sup>115</sup>

The complicity of the governmental state apparatus is further apparent from the statements of leading Hindu nationalist politicians who made statements that either tried to exonerate the mobs or lessen the impact of their crimes. Showing support for the mobs, Narendra Modi, Chief Minister of Gujarat declared that, “The five crore (50 million) people of Gujarat have shown remarkable restraint under grave provocation”.<sup>116</sup> The following day he went on to infamously cite Newtonian law that “Every action has an equal or opposite reaction,” as a further validation of the atrocities<sup>117</sup>.

For many these statements came as no surprise from a man who allegedly gave his blessing for the carnage to continue<sup>118</sup> and has also been cited by numerous civil liberties and human rights organisations as being responsible for the atrocities. Their investigations concluded that the state government was to blame for the atrocities not only for its failure to contain the violence but also through its active participation.

Notably, the National Human Rights Commission in its second and final report held that the state government was completely responsible and said that the facts indicate “a complicity that was tacit if not explicit”. The Commission concluded “that there was a comprehensive failure of the state to protect the Constitutional rights of the people of Gujarat, starting with the tragedy in Godhra on February 27, 2002, and continuing with the violence that ensued in the weeks that followed.”<sup>119</sup>

## **ii. Complicity of the Police**

*“The Hindus called us outside to fight. When we came out, the police fired on us, twelve to thirteen people died.... They said come forward, then they started shouting, “Kill the Muslims, cut the Muslims, loot the Muslims.” The police were with them and picked out the Muslim homes and set them on fire. The police aimed and fired at the Muslim boys. They then joined with the Hindus to set fire to the homes and to loot the homes. The police were carrying kerosene bottles and shooting and setting the bottles on fire. The others were carrying swords and trishuls.*

*“Some of the attackers were wearing kesri pattis [saffron bandannas] on their foreheads with the words “Jai Sri Ram” [Praise Lord Ram]. The attackers consisted of both people from our neighbourhood and*

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<sup>115</sup> Cited by Mosaddeq, Nafeez in Media Monitors Network, “State-sponsored terrorism in the Republic of India”, March 10 2002.

<sup>116</sup> Times of India, March 1, 2002

<sup>117</sup> Times of India, March 2, 2002. Asian Age, ‘Gujarat used as Hindutva laboratory’, March 25, 2002.

<sup>118</sup> The Telegraph India, “When Guardians of Gujarat gave 24-hour licence for Punitive Action”, 17 December 2002.

<sup>119</sup> The Indian Express, “NHRC rubs it in, Modi: ‘Complicity was tacit’”, 1 June 2002.

*also people from outside. None of the deaths from our area were from the Bajrang Dal, it was all from police firing. One person also lost his eyesight as a result of police firing. One woman was burnt alive. She was old and couldn't run. She was cut in three pieces. The police came inside [the Chartoda Kabristan area] and fired.*"<sup>120</sup>

This was the testimony of twenty-two-year-old Mohammed Salim from Bara Sache ki Chali to Human Rights Watch describing the involvement of the police in the atrocities.

Despite enormous criticism of the role of the police in the Gujarat atrocities, the Chief Minister Narendra Modi maintained that they did an admirable job of upholding the peace, and the Union Home Minister, L. K. Advani praised the Gujarat government for their 'exemplary' handling of the situation.<sup>121</sup>

Further defending the role of the police force, Ahmedabad Police Commissioner Prashant Chandra Pande, said that the force had not demonstrated bias, nor had the state ordered them not to intervene. It concluded that the state government should be commended for the 'fact' that it managed to contain the violence within three days.<sup>122</sup>

However, these comments completely contradict the overwhelming documentation by the media and human rights organizations that maintain that police officials turned a blind eye to the atrocities, on the orders of Chief Minister Narendra Modi so that the militants could continue with their orgy of violence against the minority Muslim population.<sup>123</sup>

### **(a) Passive Involvement**

Human Rights Watch and the National Commission for Human Rights both cite in their reports that many of the sites that were attacked were in close proximity of police posts usually less than fifty feet from the site.<sup>124</sup>

"The fact that Mrs. Rochomal lived 80ft away from a police station reveals a bleak truth about the violence that has convulsed India over the past four days: it has been state-sponsored.

"The authorities have done little to prevent the inferno that has swept the western state of Gujarat - not because of incompetence but because they share the prejudices of the Hindu gangs who have been busy pulping their Muslim neighbours."<sup>125</sup>

There has been extensive media documentation of the passive involvement of the police. For the most part, the police failed to turn up to protect the minorities even when the victims managed to get through to them and ask for help.<sup>126</sup>

*The Hindu reports:*

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<sup>120</sup> Human Rights Watch Report, "We have no orders to save you", March 2002.

<sup>121</sup> Shalini Gera, Coalition Against Communalism, "The Indictment of the Gujarat Police".

<sup>122</sup> Asia Human Rights Commission, "India: Gujarat Riots point to need fir Police Reform", 16 August 2002.

<sup>123</sup> The Guardian, "Burned in bed as Indian violence spirals", March 4, 2002.

<sup>124</sup> Human Rights Watch, "We have no order to save you' Human rights Watch", March 2002.

<sup>125</sup> Harding, Luke, The Observer, "Police took part in slaughter", March 3, 2002.

<sup>126</sup> See the case of Jaffri in Chapter 2.

"In many places, shops were looted and set afire right under the nose of the policemen and they even collected a part of the booty. Even as the hooligans were breaking a small mausoleum in the middle of a road barely a few metres away from the police commissioner's office, the police vehicles passing by, not only did not bother to intervene, the police actually gestured to the hooligans to go ahead. There had been at least 15 incidents of damaging and destroying minority places of worship which were overnight converted into ``temples" with the police remaining a mute spectator."<sup>127</sup>

***(b) Active Involvement***

Even more disturbingly, there has been extensive documentation of the active participation of the police. In several cases, the police themselves handed over Muslims (who had come to the police for protection) to crowds thirsty for their blood. In another case, witnesses testified as to how a policeman "himself was seen helping the mob with his own diesel from his jeep prodding the mob to douse the slum and its 60 residents with fire."<sup>128</sup>

There were incidents where rioters were shouting the slogans, "*Andar ki baat hai, police hamare saath hai.* (It is an inside deal, the police supports us)."<sup>129</sup> In many instances, the police were seen clearing a path with gunfire for the mobs to attack.

An alarming aspect of police involvement was the direct firing of live ammunition on the victim Muslim community. Home Minister, L. K. Advani cited these incidents as proof of police intervention to bring these atrocities to an end, thus defending accusations of passivity on part of the police. However, the fact that Muslims again bore the brunt of police 'action' was not officially disclosed

*The Guardian* reports similar incidents:

"In some places, including Savala, the police even coordinated the destruction. A large group of local Hindus advanced on Savala on Friday afternoon, accompanied by six police officers. They set light to the village's outlying mustard fields, its main source of income. The police prevented Savala's farmers from intervening by shooting at them, injuring a youth in the hand."<sup>130</sup>

According to *Frontline*:

"In Ahmedabad, 249 bodies had been recovered until the midnight of March 5. Of these, six could not be identified, while 30 were of Hindus. Of the Hindus killed, 13 were shot by the police, while several others died in attacks on Muslim-owned establishments. Six bodies of Hindu workers were, for example, recovered from Hans Inn and Tasty Hotel. Although there were almost no attacks by Muslim mobs on Hindu-dominated areas, 24 Muslims were killed in police firing."<sup>131</sup>

Another role in assisting the mobs was to ensure that they were not brought to justice. Some token arrests would be made after incidents of extreme violence, but no long-term action was taken against them. There were widespread complaints of the failure of the

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<sup>127</sup> The Hindu, "Saffronised police show their colour", March 3, 2002.

<sup>128</sup> Mainstream, "Gujarat: Lab of Hindutva Comes Alive, March 3, 2002.

<sup>129</sup> Outlook, "Covert Riots And Media", March 25, 2002.

<sup>130</sup> The Guardian, "Burned in bed as Indian violence spirals", March 4, 2002.

<sup>131</sup> Frontline, "Saffron Terror", Volume 19, Issue 06, March 16-29, 2002.

police to file First Information Reports (FIRs) which are essential in bringing perpetrators to justice or to provide victims with compensation.<sup>132</sup>

Those that were filed were often deliberately mis-recording, with names being omitted, and the charges changed - for example from murder to rioting. Where rape was followed by murder, the rape would be omitted altogether as the "lesser crime". Further they refused to take statements which identified individual attackers, accusing mobs of being responsible, not individual persons. The National Human Rights Commission noted that there were numerous allegations that "FIRs [were] being distorted or poorly recorded, and that senior political personalities were seeking to 'influence' the working of police stations by their presence within them..."<sup>133</sup>

### **(c) Transfers of police**

On March 24, the Gujarat administration transferred 27 police officers in the State. Those transferred refused to engage in the state-sponsored atrocities and were thus relocated elsewhere. On the other hand officers who had engaged in such behaviour continued to be stationed at the same post with impunity.

In the aftermath of the atrocities decorated senior police officers such as Rahul Sharma (Bhavnagar), Vivek Srivastava (Kutch), Anupam Singh Gehlot (Mehsana), Himanshu Bhatt (Banaskantha) - all of who have previously earned praise maintaining peace in their cities have been transferred for their lack of loyalty to the Hindu nationalists.<sup>134</sup>

Another victim of the wrath of the BJP state apparatus was the Divisional Commissioner of Ayodhya in Faizabad district, State of Uttar Pradesh, who played a commendable role in the maintenance of peace in his area, was put on extended leave.<sup>135</sup>

On the other hand, police chiefs such as P.C. Prashant Chandra Pande (Ahmedabad) who not only failed to control the violence, but also actually justified the police inaction<sup>136</sup>, and Upendra Singh (Rajkot) who went 'missing' when the riots started<sup>137</sup> continue to serve the state with impunity.

These actions are intended to reward those that showed loyalty by engaging in the atrocities and to punish those who refused to take part. These types of actions are consistent with previous efforts of the BJP government, to move all police officers from the minority community away from field positions to less effective 'support positions.'<sup>138</sup> In effect this exclusion removes any obstructions that would prevent the exclusive 'Hindu' police force from taking punitive measures against the minorities. Further, it would result

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<sup>132</sup> Ethnic Cleansing in Ahmedabad: A preliminary report: SAHMAT fact finding team to Ahmedabad, 10-11th March 2002,

<sup>133</sup> Ibid

<sup>134</sup> The Indian Express, "Gujarat transfers: govt hits the panic button", 28 march 2002. *Bhavnagar SP: Advani praised, Modi disposed*,

<sup>135</sup> Abbas, Shahid, Rediff.com, "VHP mounts pressure on govt to transfer Faizabad officials", 18 March 2002.

<sup>136</sup> Swami, Praveen, Frontline, "Saffron Terror", Volume 19, Issue 06, March 16 - 29, 2002,

<sup>137</sup> The Times of India, "Police Chief vanishes as Rajkot burns", March 1, 2002.

<sup>138</sup> The Telegraph India, (*Minority Hole in Gujarat Police Force*), ... 2002, cited in Shalini Gera, Coalition Against Communalism, "The Indictment of the Gujarat Police".

in a psychological fear within the minority communities who already lacked sufficient protection.

### **iii. State Behaviour in the Aftermath of the Gujarat Atrocities**

Not only did the government deliberately delay all attempts to control the situation during the riots but is still failing in its responsibility to provide relief to the victims or ensure justice for them.

#### **(a) Lack of state assistance to survivors**

With thousands killed and tens of thousands more displaced, relief camps, severely lacking in facilities were set up after 6 March, even though survivors had begun to arrive at relief camps organised by NGOs on 1 March. The government gave nominal aid to the camps, further aggravating the suffering of the survivors instead of trying to alleviate their pain. For example, the sanitation and hygiene conditions were terrible, as illustrated by the Shah Alam relief camp in Ahmedabad where 10 toilet facilities served a population of 8000 refugees.<sup>139</sup>

The Gujarat state government went on to order the closure of all relief camps in Gujarat by 30 October, in a bid to show that the victims had been rehabilitated and returned to their homes. The result is that hundreds of Muslims have been left destitute, still not being allowed to return to their homes in many areas and villages which have been proclaimed "Muslim free".<sup>140</sup>

#### **(b) Lack of government will to investigate the riots.**

The State Government's submissions to the National Human Rights Commission blamed the Godhra incident of inflaming outrage within the Hindu community. It claimed that despite difficulties in containing the violence it managed to do so within 72 hours. It failed to mention the involvement of the VHP at all and provided a gross undercount of the number of Muslim holy places destroyed and Hindu temples erected on their sites.<sup>141</sup>

With regards to its own judicial investigation into the Gujarat violence, it initially limited the probe into the Sabarmati incident at Godhra and not the atrocities that followed. Only after widespread outrage was expressed, the government agreed to extend the scope of this inquiry to cover the post-Godhra violence as well.

Its judicial commission of inquiry, the Shah Commission prompted criticism as to its ability to investigate independently and impartially. This concern was raised by the appointment of Justice K.G. Shah a retired Gujarat High Court Judge who was to head the commission

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<sup>139</sup> Citizens' Initiative for Justice & Peace, Update, "Gujarat government evades relief, rehab responsibility", March 9, 2002.

<sup>140</sup> Gujarat riot relief camps closed, victims left to fend for themselves, Milli Gazette, November 3, 2002.

<sup>141</sup> Modi, Anjali, Hindu, "Gujarat Report White-washing reality?", April 5, 2002.

because of his close links to the BJP, representing them in the Supreme Court and a history of anti-minority judgements<sup>142</sup>.

His final report severely underplayed the reality of what occurred, blaming the worst violence in Gujarat as being initiated and provoked by the Muslims, with Hindu mobs retaliating.

### ***Conclusion***

Altogether the evidence strongly suggests that what occurred in Gujarat was a well-organised pogrom, carried out in conjunction with the state governmental apparatus and the police authorities. Such state-sanctioned pogroms can only be described as genocide. The complicity of the Gujarat state apparatus and the police authorities means that the victims of the carnage are unlikely to receive any kind of justice. Indeed, only a few perpetrators of the atrocities have been arrested. They were subsequently released on bail. They remain at large, having acted with the patronage and impunity of the ruling body.

The state's failure to compensate is also of importance. Little has been given out as token compensation, essentially meaningless amounts. Further repatriation with their communities is highly unlikely with no guarantees given for them to return to their homes. The victims of the carnage continue to be victimised, with no available avenues for justice.

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<sup>142</sup> Parekh, Shyam, The Times of India, "Riots probe panel faces credibility crisis", November 5, 2002.

## ***CONCLUSION***

What happened in Gujarat marks a turning point in the political and social culture of India, not only because of the horrifying extent or the brutal nature of the violence, but because of the startling level of premeditation and organisation of the 'pogroms', and the kind of extensive state involvement witnessed. It is important to clarify that describing the violence as a "riot", as many commentators have frequently done, is severely misleading. It connotes that the violence was the result of a clash of two or more communities. The various analyses of events however indicate clearly that it was a one-sided bid by one community to annihilate the other.

Moreover, what happened in Gujarat should not be seen as a one-off and spontaneous incident, but as expressed by the Hindu Right on many occasions, part of a project to dominate the minority population. It should be noted that the Hindu Right themselves are a minority within India's secular population.

The atrocities are highly reminiscent of the genocide witnessed in Rwanda in the 1990s, where one ethnic group systematically sought to annihilate another ethnic group. It is noteworthy that the hatred and rivalry between the ethnic groups in both Rwanda and India stem from the seeds of hatred sown by the colonial powers as part of their divide and rule strategy. The repercussions continue to be felt to this day.

It comes as no surprise that the Hindu nationalist state apparatus would be so complicity involved. Ethnic violence in the name of Hinduism has always reaped huge rewards for Hindu nationalist organisations, particularly the BJP. The destruction of the Babri mosque in 1992 and the violence that ensued caused a polarization which was a major factor in their rise to power. This episode of carnage is no different and has served them well. It has had an immensely positive outcome for them resulting in a landslide victory in Gujarat for the BJP, winning 125 out of a possible 181 seats, a tremendous comeback from their dwindling popularity.

Ironically, the then Chief Minister of Gujarat Narendra Modi, who is currently charged in Belgium as a international war criminal for "Crimes against Humanity," received an overwhelming mandate to return to power. Indeed the extent of the atrocities and particularly the involvement of such figures makes them guilty of various crimes under international human rights and humanitarian law.

Serious problems of penetration of the police force and the civil service of Sangh Parivar activists need to be addressed, especially when they have been implicated in the violence. This is necessary not only to restore the faith of the minorities but also to prevent corruption and the wielding of power by Hindu Right organisations even when they do not have political power.

Another key necessity is a genuine commission of investigation into the atrocities that happened. Prosecutions must be pursued not only to punish the foot soldiers but also

those working within the federal and state governmental apparatus that have been accused of instigating and assisting in the atrocities. Victims must not only be compensated for their losses, but measures for relief and rehabilitation must be put in place. Moreover, the role of the media and its inflammatory and biased reporting of the atrocities must be investigated. Appropriate action must be taken when possible.

These issues need to prevent the Hindu Right from further undermining civil society and democracy.

Many Hindu militant personalities have stated that the Muslims of India are to be treated as the Jews in Nazi Germany. Surely then it is time the international community rose up and took action against them as it did against the Nazis.

There is even a greater need now so with the BJP firmly in power in Gujarat, when one should anticipate and fear further efforts by the Sangh Parivar to advance its global propagation of religious hatred.

## **Appendix A: Police Involvement**

**Ahmedabad.** A group of Muslims dragged a police constable into a lane and stabbed him to death on Sunday. The police responded by going on a killing spree, shooting dead at least six Muslims in the Gomtipur area of the city. They included an 18-year-old girl, Nazimabanu Mehmood Hussain, and her 42-year-old father. She and the other victims of what is euphemistically known as "police firing," were shot in the head at point blank range.<sup>143</sup>

**Ahmedabad.** Fatima Bibi Md Yaqub Sheikh, whose family lost 19 members including her sisters and brothers, says that whatever they did could have been justified, except the way they raped women. She says that when her family tried to flee Naroda Patia, the area where 90 people were burnt alive they all requested the police to save them, but police instead of doing anything for their safety asked them to surrender themselves to the mob.<sup>144</sup>

**Ahmedabad,** 30 April: At about 1:30 am early Tuesday, a grave incident of police atrocity took place in Taiwada, Wadi area in Vadodra city. A few Muslims were sitting in front of their homes, keeping vigil against possible attacks by the miscreants. Suddenly about five policemen surreptitiously entered the area on foot and opened fire indiscriminately, killing two Muslims on the spot. These have been identified as Abid Delawala (29 years) and Noorbhai Karvania (45 years).

After this brutal killing the police party fled the area and a short while later it re-entered the same locality under the leadership of the area deputy commissioner of police, escorted by about 25 policemen. They took the two dead bodies in a push-cart (larri) and fabricated a story that the above victims of its own bullets were rioters who were attacking police with stones. Police has registered a false case claiming that these people were trying to attack the police and were in turn fired upon. There is not a single stone lying in that area.<sup>145</sup>

**Ahmedabad.** On 28 February, the police killed many Muslims, even though it was the minority Muslims that were being targeted by huge and well-armed Hindu mobs. Ahmedabad's police commissioner publicly excused police officers for their participation, "The police are equally influenced by the overall general sentiments."<sup>146</sup>

**Ahmedabad.** Around 6 p.m. one evening, the Vatwa police turned on a group of Muslims who had emerged after a plastic godown was burned down by aggressors living in the buildings across the relief camps. Two persons were killed, including a woman and a child and five others are injured, three of them seriously. Another person belonging to the minority community was stabbed in Ahmedabad this afternoon.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> 'Muslims trapped by India's apartheid', Guardian, UK. Tuesday April 23, 2002, by Luke Harding.

<sup>144</sup> 'Were sexual crime in Gujarat planned?', By Syed Ubaidur Rahman, Milligazette, Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> June 2002.

<sup>145</sup> <http://www.milligazette.com/dailyupdate/200204/20020430a.htm>

<sup>146</sup> <http://communities.msn.co.uk/ClearbookViews>

<sup>147</sup> 'The violence is relentless.' Carnage in Gujarat: Citizens' Initiative for Justice & Peace Update March 20, 2002. Teesta Setalvad, Fr Cedric Prakash, Wilfred D'Costa.

**Ahmedabad.** At the Naroda fruit mandi where we visited next, all 17 wholesale fruit godowns owned by members of the Memon community were gutted with military precision. Apart from the wares (fruit), offices, computers and trucks carrying fruits were destroyed. The total loss from this is an estimated Rs 2.5-3 crore. Though distraught, businessmen -- hearing news of the well-planned and selective destruction of their businesses -- made no less than 50 calls to the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee (APMC), but received no help or protection.

The police are reported to have aided the mob of 5,000 and there are unconfirmed reports of daily wage earners of Hindu businessmen being engaged to carry out the job.<sup>148</sup>

**Naroda Patia, Ahmedabad.** Forty-year-old Naseem Banu: “Wherever we hid, the police showed them where we were. The police remained standing when our home were burned down.”<sup>149</sup>

**Ahmedabad.** In Gulmarg Society, as mobs descended upon the community on the morning of February 28, over 250 people sought refuge in the house of Ehsan Jaffrey, a prominent Muslim in the community and former Member of Parliament. As the mob gathered around Jaffrey’s house, he made many calls to the police, all with no effect, even though the police station was nearby. The houses owned by Muslims in the neighbourhood were systematically torched, and eventually the phone lines from Jaffrey’s house were cut, leaving hundreds of people trapped and defenceless.

Earlier day, the police commissioner had visited the house and told Jaffrey not to worry, that something would be done, but by the late afternoon the mob attacked the house in a rampage that left at least 65 dead.

The pattern was similar to that which took place in Naroda Patia. Mehboob Mansoori lost 18 family members in the attack. He told Human Rights Watch: “All the women died. My brother, my three sons, one girl, my wife’s mother, they all died. My boys were aged ten, eight and six. My girl was twelve years old. The bodies were piled up. They first cut them and then burned them. Other girls were raped, cut, and burned.... Jaffrey was also killed.... There was no police at all.”<sup>150</sup>

Shabnam, Resident of **Vatva, Ahmedabad.**

Shabnam, 23, recounted the events of the afternoon of March 1, 2002: “The mob arrived, armed with trishuls and swords, shouting - Miya ne maro, Miya ne kato. (Kill the Muslims!). Some of them started pelting stones. We were 50 odd people, they were a few thousand. As we ran for our lives, the police blocked our escape, chasing us in the direction of the mob ‘Chalo maar do saalo ko’ (Kill the bastards!), they shouted. This is the first time this has happened here. Where can we go? What is to become of us?”

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<sup>148</sup> ‘Crippling a community every which way.’ Carnage in Gujarat: Citizens’ Initiative for Justice & Peace Update: March 8, 2002. Teesta Setalvad, Fr Cedric Prakash, Sushobha Barve.

<sup>149</sup> ‘Report exposes role of government in communal violence in India’, By Joseph Kay, 8 May 2002. WWSWS.ORG.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

(Qutb-e-Alam Dargah Relief Camp, Vatva, Ahmedabad. March 27, 2002).<sup>151</sup>

Kulsum Bibi and Jannat Bibi, Residents of **Jawan Nagar, Naroda Patia, Ahmedabad.**

Date of incident: February 28, 2002

“The day began like any other. We were all drinking tea when we heard that the (local) masjid had been attacked. The men and boys went out to see what was happening. They were confronted by a crowd of several thousands, armed with trishuls and swords. Some of the swords had Bajrang Dal written on it. They were wearing khakhi shorts. Some were carrying petrol. This we now know they had got from nearby Bipin Auto. The owner is a Bajrang Dal agyavan (leader). The trucks that had brought these men were stacked with gas cylinders...Suddenly the police fired. Some of our men were killed in the firing. The women and children started fleeing. Our colony is sandwiched between the State Reserve Police (SRP) Colony, the State Transport workshop and the Hindu housing societies-Gopinath and Gangotri. We all rushed towards the SRP Colony. We were not allowed inside. We begged but the gates remained shut. We kept running back and forth like caged animals. Then there was a lathi charge. Many of us got hit. We heard the police say things like - yeh aap logon ka aakhri din hai - (this is your last day).”

(Shah-e-Alam Relief camp, Ahmedabad. March 27, 2002).<sup>152</sup>

Saira Bano, Resident **Navapura, Vatva, Ahmedabad.**

“The maidan was full of thousands of trishul and sword wielding men. I have never seen so many people. Everyone was panicking. We lost all hope when the police came with the crowd. When we pleaded with the police that they were meant to protect everyone, they told us- “Tum lad lo. Jitni takat hain mukabala kar lo”. (You fight them with whatever strength you have.)”

(Qutb-e-Alam Relief Camp, Vatva, Ahmedabad. March 27, 2002).<sup>153</sup>

Saira Bano, Resident Hussain Nagar, **Naroda Patia, Ahmedabad.**

Date of Incident: February 28, 2002

Saira used to live in Hussain Nagar Chali in Naroda Patia. She is now at the camp with her 3 children. “I heard girls screaming. I saw a naked girl running with 25 men chasing her. The sweet shop owner was distributing sweets to the rioters. The police fired on the Muslims rather than the mob”. She said that women were beaten with sticks. She saw her husband being killed in the police firing. She was hiding on the terrace of someone’s house. “At least I saw him die. There are many women here who don’t know what has happened to their husbands. Are they widows or not? Should they mourn or not?”

(Shah-e-Alam Relief Camp, Ahmedabad. March 27, 2002).<sup>154</sup>

Shamshad Bibi, Resident **Khed Brahma (near dargah), Sabarkantha.**

Date of incident: February 28, 2002.

“On February 27th when my sons went to the dargah they heard rumours that a dhamal (incident) was about to take place. There were other rumours of impending tension. Four families slept at the dargah that night. In fact two policemen were posted outside. “Now

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<sup>151</sup> ‘How the Gujarat massacre has affected minority women? The survivors speak.’ Fact finding by a women’s panel, sponsored by Citizen’s Initiative, Ahmedabad. April 16, 2002.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

when I look back, the police had come around asking questions about the Muslim residents, like how much cattle we possessed.” One policeman asked – “Mutton vutton milega kya?” Nothing happened that night. I was cooking lunch the next day when the mobs came shouting - Maro, Maro (Kill! Kill!) They were carrying trishuls. We ran. We had to cross the river, which is dry. Finally we reached the dargah. I found many other Muslims there. About 300 to 400 of us were cramped into a room. Then they came and set fire to the dargah wall. The police was around but did not stop the crowd. In fact we could hear them shouting loot! All we could do was pray. The police squad finally came and took us to the Police Station. We could hear them talking on the wireless – sab tod diya, phod diya. (Everything is broken, destroyed) Then suddenly we were told - chale jao nahin to police station ko jala denge. (Go from here or they will burn down the police station)” (Vadali Relief Camp. Sabarkantha. March 28, 2002).<sup>155</sup>

Farzana: Resident of **Vatva, Ahmedabad** (Story narrated by her sister-in-law Naim)

Date of Incident: March 20, 2002.

Farzana, 25, lived behind the Dargah. She was shot dead by the police on the 20th of March. Her family members said: “First, we heard a commotion outside. Then we noticed a pall of smoke. As we came out into the courtyard to check what was happening, the police fired indiscriminately, killing Farzana. There were no men around as they had all gone to read the namaaz”. Among the policemen identified by the residents of the area are SP KC Patel, PSI Baluch, PSI Siddiq Sheikh and PI Singh. “The Hindu mobs were gathering near Ashopalo housing society, some distance away. Par Police ne wahan nahin, hamare par hi attack kar diya. (But instead of going there, the Police came here and started firing). In the same shooting spree a young man Sikandar, 20, was killed. Six others, including Mumtaz Bano, were wounded. She is a polio victim. Her neighbours are bewildered. “Why shoot at a handicapped girl? Poor thing had one bad leg, now she has two damaged legs.” Farzana’s older sister, Shahnaz Bano, was lathi charged when she came out to save her sister. Shahnaz is angry and bitter. “How can they enter our homes and kill us. We only ask for one thing - insaaf”

We saw the bullet holes in the wall and the memorial they had made for Farzana. A crumpled dupatta marks the spot in the courtyard where Farzana first fell. An aluminium pot covers the spot where she died.

(Vatva, Ahmedabad. March 27, 2002).<sup>156</sup>

Naseem and Ameena, Residents of **Bahar Colony** (an upper middle class colony)  
**Vadodora**

Date of Incident: March 17, 2002

When the fact-finding team arrived there shortly before noon, the road was deserted since the area was under curfew. Only women were allowed to venture out in the day. On the main road we were met by one of the residents, Naseem. She told us of the events of March 17.

The mob came at 11 PM but could not enter the colony because of police patrolling. Then they returned at 3 PM the next day. First, they blasted a godown. Then they began to burn

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

the few 'jhonpar pattis' (slum dwellings) nearby. These were owned by some Hindu families who had already been evacuated. Suddenly police jeeps were seen. 200-300 women tried to stop the police jeeps. It is alleged that the police just went ahead saying 'Ab to yahan aisa chalay ga!' (From now on, this is the way it will go here). Then they returned and started firing during which one bystander was shot. Since the women were outside on the road, the police started beating them with lathis to herd them inside. Amina Haroon Memon was one such woman.

Amina took us aside, removed her shalwar and showed the laceration mark from the police danda. "They hit me even as I was trying to get back inside my house. And such filthy gaalis. We went out to call the police because if our boys would have gone they would have forcibly taken them away. Even if I die it does not matter. I am forty plus. But not the young boys, they have a life ahead. The people who come they have 'sadhan' (arms) we have nothing."

(Vadodra, March 28, 2002).<sup>157</sup>

**Vadodra.** Farhana, an outspoken young woman, spoke to us about the daily harassment. "The mobs come on motorcycles. We can't recognize them because of the helmets. They threaten us. At night they clang the thalis, clang the electricity poles, whistle. We have not slept for one month, so acute is the tension. When the 'tola' (mob) comes the Police are at the vanguard. Maimuna's young son was picked up by the Police. Zehra, who was 3 months pregnant had gone out with the women to plead with the Police not to take him away. She showed us the spot where she was hit with a Police danda (stick)."

(Vadodara, March 28th, 2002).<sup>158</sup>

Twenty-five-year-old Abdul Aziz, a resident of **Panna Lal ki Chali**, near Chartoda Kabristan, witnessed the killing of his brother by police gunfire. He told Human Rights Watch: "On the 28th afternoon at 3 p.m. my younger brother was returning from work. The police said that a curfew was in place. A crowd gathered to attack. The police was leading the crowd. They were looting and the people followed, looting and burning behind them. The crowd was shouting, "Go to Pakistan. If you want to stay here become Hindu." The police very clearly aimed at my brother and fired at him. He was twenty-three years old. At 6 p.m., three hours later, we were able to get him to the hospital... We have not filed any complaints. All the doctors that have been coming here are private or from NGOs."<sup>159</sup>

Julamasul Abdul Bhai Kureishi, of **Danzi ki Chali** near Chartoda Kabristan, lost his son to police gunfire. He told Human Rights Watch: "They made us homeless and they took my son.... The police came from one side and the crowd came from the other. They started setting fire to things and firing shots. My son was shot and killed. He was twenty-two years old. They collected all the young men. The police were calling the crowds. The police had the mob behind them."<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2002/india/India0402-03.htm>

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

A resident of **Danzi ki Chali** told Human Rights Watch: “The police grabbed me and hit me with a sword and a lathi [baton]. They also shot my seven-year-old son. He spent eleven to twelve days in the hospital.”<sup>161</sup>

Twenty-two-year-old Mohammed Salim from Bara Sache ki Chali told Human Rights Watch that most of the deaths in his neighborhood were caused by police shooting. He described a pattern testified to by many interviewed by Human Rights Watch:

“The Hindus called us outside to fight. When we came out, the police fired on us, twelve to thirteen people died.... They said come forward, then they started shouting, "Kill the Muslims, cut the Muslims, loot the Muslims." The police were with them and picked out the Muslim homes and set them on fire. The police aimed and fired at the Muslim boys. They then joined with the Hindus to set fire to the homes and to loot the homes. The police were carrying kerosene bottles and shooting and setting the bottles on fire. The others were carrying swords and trishuls. Some of the attackers were wearing kesri pattis [saffron bandannas] on their foreheads with the words "Jai Sri Ram" [Praise Lord Ram]. The attackers consisted of both people from our neighbourhood and also people from outside. None of the deaths from our area were from the Bajrang Dal, it was all from police firing. One person also lost his eyesight as a result of police firing. One woman was burnt alive. She was old and couldn't run. She was cut in three pieces. The police came inside [the Chartoda Kabristan area] and fired.”<sup>162</sup>

A fifteen-year-old boy named Sanu from the **Riyaz Hussain ki Chali** was also killed. According to residents of the Chartoda Kabristan camp, “The police caught him from inside the Masjid, took him to the Hindu area and shot him at close range.”<sup>163</sup>

Nineteen-year-old Sheikh S., also from **Mehndi Kuva**, lived in a slum quarter adjacent to the government quarter. He told Human Rights Watch that his neighbors were involved in the attacks and that police gave them their blessing to loot Muslim shops and homes: It all started at 10 a.m. on February 28. They came after the Muslim shops. Around 8 p.m., they attacked my quarters. They were screaming, "Jai Shri Ram." They opened the locks with their iron pipes. They burned all the beddings but took all the nice things. They did not set fire to our house because it was a flat system and Hindu homes would also have been affected. We were calling the police all day. The police said, "You help yourselves, we are getting pressure from above, we cannot help you." We called fifty to a hundred times. Around 2:00 or 2:30 p.m., I saw a police inspector shake hands with the attackers and say, “You can loot peacefully, we won't do anything. We are with you.”<sup>164</sup>

**Naroda Patia, Ahmedabad.** A thirteen-year-old boy described the role of the police during the attack: “The police was with them. The police killed seventeen- and eighteen-year-olds. The mob also burned down our home. At 10 a.m. they went after our mosque. Thirty to forty tear gas shells were released by the police as we, about fifty boys, were trying to save the mosque.... They killed one seventeen-year-old and eight to ten other boys

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

were injured.... We kept calling the police but no one came.... The police would pick up the phone and hang up when they heard it was from Naroda Patia.”<sup>165</sup>

Fifty-five-year-old Salima Banu, a resident of **Naroda Patia** was a witness as her son was shot and killed by the police: “My son was running to save his life and the police shot him. Our home was behind Noorani Masjid. They were coming to set the mosque on fire. Then we started running. A bullet hit my son's arm and then his stomach. No one was answering the police phone. The police took their side and not ours. My son's name was Shafiq. He was eighteen years old... No one came to help. He was suffering so much. His arm fell off. I have received nothing from the government.... So many people are also missing. Some have lost their mother, their son, their father.”<sup>166</sup>

**Naroda Patia, Ahmedabad.** Samuda Bhen, a mother of two, lost all her valuables in the looting and burning on February 28 and the days that followed and identified members of the Bajrang Dal, Shiv Sena, and the police as the main culprits: “They took my daughter's dowry. This is my daughter [she pointed to her]. She is seventeen. Her name is Mumtaz. She was supposed to get married. Now the groom won't come. They also burned my son's rickshaw. They burned everything after we left. During the attack they were screaming "Kill them. Cut them." We left on March 1. We stayed at home until then. The police sided with them. They were Bajrang Dal people. They were wearing saffron bandannas. There were also Shiv Sena people. First the police came, they searched the mosque, they were checking for weapons to see if it was safe for the others to come. Then the others came. The police station is right near us. The police was with them for three full days. We kept telling them to help us.”<sup>167</sup>

**Naroda Patia, Ahmedabad.** (Name of victims have been omitted to protect their privacy). “It was morning and I was cooking. My husband, my three children and I were in my house while my mother-in-law, my brother-in-law and his wife along with their three children was in the adjoining house. A mob of 5,000 came and we started running. We were cornered from all the sides. SRP (State Reserve Police) personnel were also chasing us. It was 6:30 by now in the evening. The mob caught hold of my husband and hit him on his head twice with the sword. They threw petrol in his eyes and then burned him. My sister-in-law was stripped and raped. She had a three-month baby in her lap. They threw petrol on her and the child from her lap was thrown in the fire. My brother-in-law was hit in the head with the sword and he died on the spot. His six-year-old daughter was also hit with the sword and thrown in the fire. My mother-in-law had with her the grandson who was four years of age and he was burnt too. We were that time hiding on the terrace of a building. My mother-in-law with her heavy body was unable to climb the stairs so she was on the ground. My mother-in-law told them to take away whatever money she had but to spare the children. They took away all the money and jewellery and burnt the children with petrol. ([My] mother-in-law was raped too). I witnessed all this. Unmarried girls from my street were stripped, raped and burnt. A 14-year-old such girl was killed by piercing an iron rod in her stomach. All this ended at 2:30 A.M. The ambulance came on the scene and I sat in it along with the bodies of my husband and children. I have injury marks on both my

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<sup>165</sup><http://www.hrw.org/reports/2002/india/India0402-02.htm>

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

thighs and left hand that was caused by the police beating. My husband, my daughter and son had 48%, 95% and 15% burns respectively. Both my husband and daughter died in the hospital after three days.... The police was on the spot but helping the mob. We fell in their feet but they said they were ordered from above (not to help). Since the telephone wires were snapped we could not inform the fire brigade."<sup>168</sup>

**Naroda Patia, Ahmedabad.** (The names of the victims have been omitted to protect their privacy): "We were cooking and were informed to be in the house only as there was tension in the area. We went to the nearby society [neighbourhood] and took shelter on the terrace. People from the Hindu society told us to take shelter in their houses. There were only men in there and none of the women and children. Then they told us to escape towards Naroda (an area). We requested them to allow us escape towards the SRP (colony). SRP said, "24 hours have been given to beat you up." Society (place of refuge) brought us out on the road and told us to go to Naroda. We disagreed knowing that it is a far place. So they started beating us with sticks, hockey sticks and pipes. They accused us that we had come there to riot and asked us to get out. We came out to face a big mob armed with sharp weapons, kerosene and petrol cans.... All adult males were then beaten, fallen on the ground and burnt. The residents of the gopinath society [neighbourhood] segregated young girls (Muslims) and made them stand on one side. They were raped and we watched this as some of us were on the terrace.

We were 400-500 people on the terrace.... The girls were stripped and then two men held them down by legs and arms. Those who raped were 20-25 in number. The girls screamed so loud that even now when I remember my blood boils.

They [the attackers] were given twenty-four-hours time (to beat us). If we were given even two hours time we would have shown them (dealt with them). I know the face of the persons who raped. The rape started at 6:00 in the evening until 9:00 at night. The girls were then burnt. I still remember their loud screams. When Asif Khan, a 25-year-old youth pleaded SRP to let us go he was beaten up badly and he managed with difficulty to get out of their hold. We can identify the SRP men. We can also identify the residents of Gopinath society.... 11 of our youth died in private gun firing."<sup>169</sup>

**Ahmedabad.** A forty-five-year-old man named Yousuf Bhai told Human Rights Watch that the police commissioner "betrayed" the victims: They wanted to leave by the railroad behind Jaffrey's house, but the police commissioner said, "No, don't you trust me? You must stay here." Jaffrey even said, "Kill me and leave them alone." After the police brought people here [the camp] then all night they set bodies on fire, so there could be no cases against them, so there could be no evidence. Without police support, none of this could have happened."<sup>170</sup>

**Salatwada and Barot Mohalla** presented the gory sight of Mosque, madrasa and about 30 to 35 houses burnt down and destroyed by use of gas cylinders.

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<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

All the shops of Muslims located behind Bahuchiraji Jala Ram Temple were burnt and looted in the presence of local police. Two B.J.P. leaders, Gagan & Sadanand led the arsonists.<sup>171</sup>

**Ahmedabad.** Near Hathi Khana Mansoori Graveyard, Pardeep Joshi attacked with a large mob forcing the Muslims to come out of their hiding places, whereupon the accompanying police opened fire, injuring nine fleeing Muslims. The women were caned mercilessly. A pregnant woman was disrobed and beaten severely.<sup>172</sup>

**Vadodara.** The resistance from the youngsters was enough reason for the police to storm into the Machhipith and to fire tear gas shells and bullets. Police imposed a curfew and started nabbing whom ever they could get their hands on. By evening the police had fired close to 100 tear gas shells and 50 rounds of bullets, in the Machhi Pith area alone.

During all this BJP workers in the rally were seen freely advising the police what to do, where to fire, where to do combing etc.<sup>173</sup>

At a distance of about 32 KM from Himmatnagar, Sabarkantha, towards Ahmedabad in the town of **Parantij**, on 25th March, '02 at 12 noon , BSF was withdrawn while it had already been announced that an attack would be launched upon Muslim community. Keeping their promise a crowd of hoodlums accompanied by local police personnel attacked Muslims on Cinema Road and High Way. By the time the miscreants reached Hajjam Chauraha and Pathan Tola, the JUH team was in touch with I.G. and D.I.G. of BSF who condescended to come down to the affected spot personally, and thus the miscreants had to make retreat in haste, sparing the lives of fifteen thousand Muslim inhabitants of Parantij town out of a total population of sixty thousand.<sup>174</sup>

A family escaping from **Naroda Patia**, one of the worst-hit settlements in Ahmedabad, spoke of losing a young woman and her three month old son, because a police constable directed her to 'safety' and she found herself instead surrounded by a mob which doused her with kerosene and set her and her baby on fire.<sup>175</sup>

In the latest clashes on Sunday, another 17 people were killed and at least 91 injured in **Ahmedabad** and other towns. Nine of the dead were Muslims killed when police shot into what they claimed was a gathering mob in the state capital. Previously, army troops were dispatched to the state after police were accused of openly siding with the Hindu fanatics. A police curfew was imposed in several areas of Ahmedabad as well as other towns.<sup>176</sup>

**Ahmedabad.** During the first few days of violence, the police openly collaborated with Hindu gangs. In some cases police officers were sent into neighbourhoods to check on the situation before the mob descended. Police fired on Muslims seeking to defend themselves

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<sup>171</sup> 'Gujarat Carnage', a report by Jamiat Ulama-I-Hind.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

<sup>176</sup> 'Death toll in India's communal violence continues to rise.' By Arun Kumar and Sarath Kumara, April 23, 2002

and their neighbourhoods. One victim, who tried to hide in a state transport housing area, told the media: “The police pushed us out of there, saying it was our night to die.”<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*

## **APPENDIX B: Sexual Violence Against Women**

1. Naroda Patia, Ahmedabad. February 28, 2002.

“The mob started chasing us with burning tyres after we were forced to leave Gangotri society. It was then that they raped many girls. We saw about 8-10 rapes. We saw them strip 16-year-old Mehrunissa. They were stripping themselves and beckoning to the girls. Then they raped them right there on the road. We saw a girl’s vagina being slit open. Then they were burnt. Now there is no evidence.”

Source: Kulsum Bibi, Shah e Alam Camp, March 27, 2002.<sup>178</sup>

2. “I saw Farzana being raped by Guddu Chara. Farzana was about 13 years old. She was a resident of Hussain Nagar. They put a saria (rod) in Farzana’s stomach. She was later burnt. 12 year old Noorjahan was also raped. The rapists were Guddu, Suresh and Naresh Chara and Haria. I also saw Bhawani Singh, who works in the State Transport Department, kill 5 men and a boy.”

Source: Azharuddin, 13 years. He witnessed the rapes while hiding on the terrace of Gangotri Society. The Chara basti is located just behind Jawan Nagar.<sup>179</sup>

3. Ahmedabad. “The mob, which came from Chara Nagar and Kuber Nagar, started burning people at around 6 in the evening. The mob stripped all the girls of the locality, including my 22-year-old daughter, and raped them. My daughter was engaged to be married. Seven members of my family were burnt including my wife (aged 40), my sons (aged 18, 14 and 7) and my daughters (aged 2, 4 and 22). My eldest daughter, who later died in the civil hospital, told me that those who raped her were wearing shorts. They hit her on the head and then burnt her. She died of 80% burn injuries.”

Source: Abdul Usman, Testimony recorded by Citizens Initiative.<sup>180</sup>

4. Sultani, a rape survivor speaks.

Village Eral, Kalol Taluka, Panchmahals district. February 28, 2002.

“On the afternoon of February 28th to escape the violent mob, about 40 of us got on to a tempo, wanting to escape to Kalol. My husband Feroze was driving the tempo. Just outside Kalol, a Maruti car was blocking the road. A mob was lying in wait. Feroze had to swerve. The tempo overturned. As we got out they started attacking us. People started running in all directions. Some of us ran towards the river. I fell behind as I was carrying my son, Faizan. The men caught me from behind and threw me on the ground. Faizan fell from my arms and started crying. My clothes were stripped off by the men and I was left stark naked. One by one the men raped me. All the while I could hear my son crying. I lost count after 3. They then cut my foot with a sharp weapon and left me there in that state.”

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<sup>178</sup> ‘How Has The Gujarat Massacre Affected Minority Women? The Survivors Speak’, fact-finding by a women’s panel. Sponsored by Citizens’ Initiative, Ahmedabad, 16 April 2002.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

Source: Sultani, Kalol Camp, Panchmahals District, March 30, 2002

Additional facts about the case:

- We had heard about Sultani's case from her relatives in Halol camp.

The details and sequence of events of both testimonies matched.

- Sultani has not undergone a medical examination. Her leg had been swollen for three weeks as a result of the injury inflicted by a sharp weapon, but it is healing now.

- No FIR has been filed though a written statement has been submitted to the DSP. In her statement she names some men from the mob (Jitu Shah, PDS Shop owner of Delol village; Ashok Patel alias Don Dadhi of Ramnath village)

- When we spoke with her and her sister-in-law they both said they were feeling numb and lost, as they did not know where to go from the Camp. She categorically stated that they could not go back to her village. She was terribly worried about the future especially her children's. Sultani has still not been told that her husband had died in the attack. She believes he is missing.<sup>181</sup>

##### 5. A mother's account of her daughter's rape.

Village Eral, Kalol Taluka, Panchmahals district. March 3, 2002.

“My father-in-law, a retired schoolteacher, refused to leave the village with the other Muslim families who fled to Kalol on February 28th. He believed no one would harm us. From the 28th about 13 members of my family sought refuge in various people's houses and the fields. On Sunday afternoon (March 3rd) the hut we were hiding in was attacked. We ran in different directions and hid in the field. But the mob found some of us and started attacking. I could hear various members of my family shouting for mercy as they were attacked. I recognized two people from my village - Gano Baria and Sunil - pulling away my daughter Shabana. She screamed, telling the men to get off her and leave her alone. The screams and cries of Ruqaiya, Suhana, Shabana, begging for their izzat could clearly be heard. My mind was seething with fear and fury. I could do nothing to help my daughter from being assaulted sexually and tortured to death. My daughter was like a flower, still to experience life. Why did they have to do this to her? What kind of men are these? The monsters tore my beloved daughter to pieces. After a while, the mob was saying “cut them to pieces, leave no evidence.” I saw fires being lit. After some time the mob started leaving. And it became quiet.”

Source: Medina Mustafa Ismail Sheikh, Kalol camp, Panchmahals district, March 30, 2002

Additional facts about the case:

- Medina's testimony has been corroborated by the other two living witnesses - Mehboob and Khushboo. Khushboo in her testimony also recounted how her grandfather (Medina's father-in-law) and Huriben were killed. She also narrated how Ruqaiya's pajamas were taken off and then one by one the men started “poking her in the lower part with their body”.

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<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

· We saw a copy of Medina's FIR, where the police has charged 5 persons with murder under section 302. Charges of rape have not been included. The FIR uses the colloquial phrase 'bura kaam' rather than the specific term 'rape'. We were also given the case report prepared by the camp leaders. The names of some of the accused are mentioned in the FIR.<sup>182</sup>

**6. Gang rape of 25 year old Zarina: A husband's account.**

Hussain Nagar, Naroda Patia, Ahmedabad. February 28, 2002.

'It started at 9 am on February 28th. That's when the mobs arrived, shouting - Mian Bhai nikalo (Bring out the Muslims). Many of them were wearing kesari chaddis (saffron shorts or underwear) The mob included boys from the neighbouring buildings – Gopinath Society and Gangotri Society. I ran out of my house with the entire family – mother, father, sister, sister's daughter, my wife Zarina, my brother, my sister-in-law, and my niece...there were 11 of us. We all ran towards the Police chowki. The Police said, 'Go towards Gopinath and Gangotri'. In the melee, I was separated from my wife. What happened to her, she told me later. She tried to escape the mobs by leaping over a wall. But found herself in a cul-de-sac. They gang-raped her, and cut one arm. She was found naked. She was kept in the civil hospital for many days. Now she is recovering with her mother near the Khanpur darwaza.'

Source: Naimuddin Ibrahim Sheikh, 30 year old husband of Zarina.

Shah-e-Alam Camp, March 27, 2002. His family migrated from Gulbarga in Karnataka in 1971. He was born in Naroda. Naimuddin's testimony was corroborated by Mumtaz, who was among the women who found Zarina naked in the maidan.<sup>183</sup>

**7. Rape of 13 year old Yasmin.**

Village Delol, Panchmahals district. March 1, 2002.

The extended families of Mohammad Bhai and Bhuri Behn – about 20 people were chased by the mob to the river. Javed and another boy who managed to escape and hide behind a bush saw the mob kill Mohammad Bhai and rape Yasmin. They were about to kill the mother of the other boy who was hiding with him. So he screamed and ran out from behind the bush and was caught. He was made to walk around the dead bodies that were burnt (as if around a pyre) and he was then pushed into the fire.

Source: Women from Delol at Halol Camp, Panchmahals district, March 30,

2002. Javed, Mohammad Bhai's nephew, had come to Delol to help his uncle. He had narrated this to several of the women from Delol. Javed has returned to his village, Desar.<sup>184</sup>

**8. Stripping and brutalising of an entire family.**

Limkheda village, Dherol station, Halol Taluka, Panchmahals district. February 28, 2002

35 year old Haseena Bibi Yasin Khan Pathan along with her entire extended family of 17 people ran from Limkheda on the morning of February 28th. At 7 am they caught the train from Limkheda Station, disembarked at Dherol Station at 10 am. That's when they encountered the mob. Everyone ran helter-skelter and the family got separated. Haseena, her husband, and

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<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid.

young daughter managed to run towards Halol. Two children, Farzana (10 years old) and Sikandar (7 years old) escaped into the fields. Four boys – Ayub, (age 12), Mushtaq, (age 12), Mohsin, (age 10), and Shiraz (age 7) managed to hide behind bushes, and witnessed what happened. There was a large crowd. They were wearing pant-shirt and brandishing swords. According to Ayub, the mob caught his sister Afsana and cousins Zebu, Noorjehan, Sitara, Akbar, Rehana, Yusuf, Imran, Khatun (Aunt) and Zareef (brother). They were all stripped naked and made to run towards a nearby canal. That's the last Ayub saw of them. The bodies turned up charred near the canal the following day. He doesn't recognize the mob. No FIR has been lodged.

Source: Ayub, Halol Camp, Panchmahals district. The first part of the testimony is corroborated by his mother, Haseena Bibi.<sup>185</sup>

#### **9. Shah-e-Alam Relief Camp, Ahmedabad.**

Naseem and Mahmooda, from nearby Millat Nagar, work with Sahrwaru, a voluntary organization. They are presently working at the Shah Alam camp. They testified that many women arrived stark naked at the camp. Men took off their shirts to cover the women's nakedness. Some could barely walk because of torn genitals as a result of gang rapes. While talking to them we met Zubeida Apa, an elderly woman who has witnessed girls being gang raped. Her trauma was writ large on her face. We did not dare to rake up her pain by asking her more questions. We were told about Najma Bano who was brought to the camp unconscious, her body covered with bites and nail marks. She was bleeding profusely. Pieces of wood, which had been shoved up her vagina were extricated by the women who dressed her wounds. Najma Bano herself was too traumatized to recount her own story. She says she does not remember anything, except being chased by the men from Gangotri Society. Accounts like these require further follow-up.

Source: Naseem and Mehmooda, Millat Nagar.<sup>186</sup>

#### **10. Bilkees: Account of a rape survivor.**

Randhikpur village, Dahod district. March 3, 2002.

Twenty-one year old Bilkees was five months pregnant. When Muslim houses in her village were attacked on February 28th, by a mob comprising upper caste people from her own village and some outsiders, she and several of her family members fled. For two days they ran from village to village. At a mosque near Kuajher, her cousin Shamim, delivered a baby. But there was no respite for them. They had to leave immediately, including Shamim who could barely walk, carrying her newborn baby.

“On March 3rd we had started moving towards Panivela village, which was in a remote and hilly area. Suddenly we heard the sound of a vehicle. A truck came with people from our own village and outsiders too. We realised that they had not come to help us. They stopped us and

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<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

then the madness started. They pulled my baby from my arms and threw her away. The other women and I were taken aside and raped. I was raped by three men.

I was screaming all the time. They beat me and then left me for dead. When I regained consciousness I found I was alone. All around me were the dead bodies of my family, my baby girl, the newborn baby, their bodies were covered with the rocks and boulders used to kill them. I lay there the whole night and most of the next day. I do not know when I was conscious and when unconscious. Later I was found by a police squad from Limkheda police station .I was taken to the hospital and then brought to the Godhra Camp.”

Testimony to AIDWA and Anandi.

Additional facts about the case:

- Her FIR has been filed and a medical examination done on the insistence of the District collector, Jayanti Ravi, even though six-days had passed. Rape has been confirmed.
- She has named the people who killed her family members and those who raped her: Sailesh Bhatt, Mithesh Bhatt, Vijay Maurya, Pradeep Maurya, Lala Vakil, Lala Doctor, Naresh Maurya, Jaswant Nai and Govind Nai (the last three gang-raped her)
- Initially all her family members were missing. Her father and husband have been traced to another camp at Dahod and her brother, Saeed, is with her in Godhra.<sup>187</sup>

**11.** Naroda Patia. “But what they did to my sister-in-law’s sister Kausar Bano was horrific and heinous. She was 9 months pregnant. They cut open her belly, took out her foetus with a sword and threw it into a blazing fire. Then they burnt her as well.”

Source: Saira Banu, Naroda Patia (recorded at the Shah-e-Alam Camp on March 27th, 2002).

During our fact-finding mission, we were to hear this story many times. We read about it in other fact-finding reports. We were told about it by many survivors at the Shah-e-Alam camp. Sometimes the details would vary – the foetus was dashed to the ground, the foetus was slaughtered with a sword, the foetus was swung on the point of the sword and then thrown into a fire. Each teller of the story owned it. It was as if it was their own story. Were these simply the fevered imaginings of traumatized minds? We think not. Kausar’s story has come to embody the numerous experiences of evil that were felt by the Muslims of Naroda Patia on February 28, 2002. In all instances where extreme violence is experienced collectively, meta-narratives are constructed. Each victim is part of the narrative; their experience subsumed by the collective experience.

Kausar is that collective experience – a meta-narrative of bestiality; a meta-narrative of helpless victimhood. There are a thousand Kausars. Members of the fact-finding team have seen photographic evidence of the burnt bodies of a mother and a foetus lying on the mother’s belly, as if torn from the uterus and left on the gash. We do not know if that was Kausar Bano.<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> Ibid.

**12.** Ahmedabad. Fatima Bibi Md Yaqub Sheikh whose family lost 19 members including her sisters and brothers says that whatever they did could have been justified, except the way they raped women... She says that her sister and her niece both were repeatedly raped by the mob. She adds that her sister offered the rioters twenty thousand rupees that she had with her and asked the rioters to spare her and her daughter. But she says, those were not men, they were devils wearing Khaki shorts. Fatima Sheikh refers to the RSS men who were in the mob. She adds that those devils not only snatched those twenty thousand rupees from her sister but raped her and then burnt her alive. Her niece too was given the same treatment after being raped by men she lost count. And both of them were disgraced there on the road.<sup>189</sup>

**13.** Raheemabi who has taken shelter in Rakhyal camp. Her whole family was chased from Ansar Nagar area in Ahmedabad. No one has survived in her whole family and she alone has been left to tell the gory tales of the horrific crime the Sangh goons did with her family. Not only herself but her sister were both sexually targeted by the mob. She says that she recognizes the people who killed her sister and her family, but police is not ready to file FIR.<sup>190</sup>

**14.** Ahmedabad. Naimuddin Shaikh, who says he watched his wife being raped. "She was gang-raped and one of her arms was cut. She was taken to Civil Hospital. I am ready to give the police the details, no one has come as yet," he says.<sup>191</sup>

**15.** Ahmedabad. Asif Abdul says his wife was raped and burnt. "They raped my sister-in-law and other women and then threw them in the fire," he says. He wants to file a complaint, but has settled for his statement being recorded by a voluntary organisation.<sup>192</sup>

**16.** A 20-year-old resident of Naroda-Patia, now residing at Shah Alam camp, says she was sexually assaulted. "They tore off my clothes and beat me on my private parts," she says. But she refuses to talk to the police. "They will kill me. I don't want to talk about it. At least I am alive today," she says.<sup>193</sup>

**17.** "How can I go back and live among the people who did this?" asks 20-year-old Shaheen, from Panchmahals district where Godhra is located. She survived a brutal gang rape on March 2. A resident of Randikhpur village, Shaheen fled the area when it was attacked by mobs the day after the Sabarmati Express massacre. A group of around 17 people had left the village together, in search of shelter elsewhere. But three days later, they were waylaid by mobs from their own village who had tracked them down in Chhapparwad. She is now staying at the Godhra relief camp.<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> 'Were sexual crimes in Gujarat planned?', by Syed Ubaidur Rahman, Milligazette, Thursday 27 June, 2002.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

<sup>191</sup> "'We got complaints of beizzati, this does not mean rape'", by Shefali Nautival, Indian Express News.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

<sup>194</sup> Outlookindia.com, April 15, 2002.

**18.** The night of 19th March, Modasa town of Dist Sabarkantha witnessed the worst ever arson and plunder of Muslim community. On the morning of 19th March three Muslim young girls who were returning from school examination were forcibly held and molested. They were told why they had not applied teeka on their forehead. For punishment they were stabbed. They are presently under treatment in the local hospital.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> 'Gujarat Carnage', a report by Jamiat Ulama-I-Hind.

## **Appendix C: Destruction of Mosques, Dargahs, Shrines.**

1. In nearby **Himmatnagar district**, a mob of 5,000 set ablaze the Takiawala Masjid and a dargah before gutting down a hotel and a dozen shops, also owned by the minority.<sup>196</sup>

2. **Ahmedabad.** The Baben Shah Masjid on the Swami Narayan Chawl road, just behind the fruit market, was turned to rubble. When we reached there, we found torn and burned pages of the Koran strewn all over and the photograph of the idol of Hanuman, some diyas and 'Jai Sri Ram!' painted in red on the wall ruins.<sup>197</sup>

3. At **Balol, Anand district**, a Masjid has been completely demolished, its Imam and his wife were burnt alive. It is shameful for the state government that its capital is not spared. The offices of the Waqf Board, Minority Board and Hajj Office, which are housed in a high security zone within the Government Secretariat, are damaged and burnt. Here also, several houses/shops have been looted and burnt.<sup>198</sup>

4. Two bomb blasts took place almost simultaneously, one after the other, in the North Indian town of **Saharanpur's** Mangloo Wali Masjid early morning May 13, according to reports reaching here. One bomb exploded on the roof of the mosque while the other explosion took place near the gate of the mosque, resulting in damage to the door, tiles, and outer walls of the mosque.

A third, unexploded, time bomb was also discovered near the entrance to the mosque which was fitted with a battery, wire and a timing device. The first bomb exploded minutes before the Fajr prayers, while the third one, which was diffused, was meant to explode just after the prayers when people would be leaving the mosque.

According to a local explosive expert, the defused bomb was a very powerful device and had it gone off, enormous loss of life could have been caused. However, immediately after its discovery, it was defused by experts who rushed to the area with the police.<sup>199</sup>

5. **Ahmedabad.** On the night of March 3, the 400-year-old mosque owned by the Wakf board and located at Anjali Cinema, was broken down in the presence of state ministers Haren Pandya and Amit Shah. With deliberate cynicism, in many such locations, the Hulladiya Hanuman (riot Hanuman) idol has been installed there; darshans and artis have also been held.<sup>200</sup>

6. Among the other shrines destroyed is the tomb of Ustad Faiyaz Khan in **Vadodara**, which was attacked and wreathed in burning tyres in early March. Extensive damage has been inflicted on the façade of the structure commemorating a man who the erstwhile ruling dynasty of Varodara declared in 1912, was the greatest singer in the realm.<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> 'The violence is relentless', Carnage in Gujarat: Citizens' Initiative for Justice and Peace, March 20, 2002.

<sup>197</sup> 'Crippling a community every which way', Citizens' Initiative for Justice and Peace, March 8, 2002.

<sup>198</sup> 'Brief Report on Gujarat riots', *The Milligazette*, March 2, 2002.

<sup>199</sup> 'Blasts in Saharanpur', <http://www.milligazette.com>.

<sup>200</sup> 'Hindu Terrorists Damage Mosques in Gujarat, India', <http://www.sabrang.com>.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

**7. Naroda Patia.** The Noorani Masjid was first attacked and burnt with the help of LPG cylinders, tyres, petrol and kerosene. When some Muslim youth tried to resist the mob, the police fired at them and even killed some.<sup>202</sup>

**8.** The attack in **Bhavnagar** was launched on 1st March, 2002, due to provocation by local papers. Darul Uloom Kakor Nagar had been blockaded by a mob of miscreants. There were 455 students entrapped inside the Madrasa building. The surrounding area from all the four sides was engulfed by fire. The road outside was piled up with burning tyres two feet high making escape impossible. The entrapped children described their experience of horror of death thus: “We had lost all hopes and thought our last moment had arrived. In anticipation of death we started reciting Kalimah (Word of God). In the meanwhile we saw SSP Rahul Sharma driving through the fire approached our building and called us out to ride into the truck. We promptly obeyed and he drove us through across two feet high burning flames of tyres saving all the 455 of us. He did not appear to care for his own life then. We were later transferred to Ibrahim Masjid.”<sup>203</sup>

**9.** At **Rajkot**, Sunni Masjid Yateem khana was not so lucky and was completely gutted. Wakaner Morji Madrasa was demolished and replaced with a statue and flag which still continues to be there. Three Muslim men were brutally killed. A large number of them are alive, dressing their near-fatal wounds. Three young Muslim girls were collectively raped.<sup>204</sup>

**10. Himmatnagar,** March 20<sup>th</sup>. Some miscreants set a Mosque, a tomb, two hotels, and nine shops ablaze.<sup>205</sup>

**11. Vadodara.** Tajgira Mosque and the one located behind Aradhna cinema also was set ablaze and demolished.<sup>206</sup>

**12. Vadodara.** The tomb in front of S.S.G. Hospital was levelled to the ground and road was immediately laid upon it under the leadership of Dipikaben Thakkar (corporator).<sup>207</sup>

**13. Vadodara.** The Mosque in Nankeda Graveyard opp. Crematorium and all the garages located alongside were completely gutted. The tomb of Bade Hazrat Shah in Karelli Bagh was burnt under the command of BJP Councillor of the area.<sup>208</sup>

**14.** In **Rajkot**, a Madrasa which was being run by Maulana Noor Mohammad Ghazi has been demolished and some statues and flag has been planted there. Muslims were successful in removing the statues but the Police Commissioner does not allow rebuilding. The pressure from higher ups could perhaps be effective.<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

<sup>203</sup> ‘Gujarat Carnage’, a report by Jamiat Ulama-I-Hind.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

## **Appendix D: Arson Attacks**

**1. Ahmedabad.** Jawed, one of the worst victims of the riots, who has been left alone after his father, sister and all other family members were killed by the rioters, is another victim. All of eleven years old, he says, “unhon ne meri mummy, papa, aur baji ko zinda jala diya. Meri masi ke ladke ko jaan se mar diya aur meri masi ki beti aur bahu se badtamizi ki aur phir unko bhi jala diya (they burnt alive my mother, father and sister. They killed my cousin brother and then outraged his wife and sister).” Jawed saw all this being done to his closest relatives. This young boy, who has been brought to Shah Alam dargah camp in Ahmadabad by some strangers, will probably never forget what his innocent eyes saw being done by these beastly people.<sup>210</sup>

**2. Ahmedabad.** A boy of 11, Raja Bundubhai, recalled seeing his mother and sister stabbed then burned alive.<sup>211</sup>

**3. Ahmedabad.** "Some bodies had heads missing, some had hands missing, and some were like coal -- you would touch them and they would crumble. I washed 17 bodies on March 2; only one was completely intact. All had been burned, many had been split down the middle," the woman said.<sup>212</sup>

**4. Mansoori Abdulbhai,** a 53-year-old resident of **Ahmedabad's Gulmarg Society** neighbourhood said 19 members of his family were killed.

"First they cut people so they couldn't run, and then they set them on fire. One or two women were taken inside and gang raped. After five hours, the police came and brought us here (to a mass grave site). It was so well-planned," he said.<sup>213</sup>

**5. Shops** were looted and burned in the **Sarkhej district** of the city on Tuesday after a Hindu mob burned to death a Muslim teacher riding his motorcycle to work at a technical college. As rioting spread to other neighbourhoods, police found two bodies in the Khamasa Gate neighbourhood of the city. The identities of the dead were not immediately known, said police officer Bikash Sahay. Mobs defied a curfew in the Shah Alam neighborhood, roaming the streets to hurl rocks and homemade petrol bombs into shops and homes, killing two people. One person died in an Ahmadabad hospital, succumbing to wounds he suffered in an acid bulb attack on Sunday. Elsewhere in Gujarat, one person was killed in Sabarkantha district, 230 kilometers (145 miles) north of Ahmadabad, while another man died in a village near the city of Baroda, 100 kilometers (60 miles) to the southwest, said M.D. Solanki, a police superintendent in Sabarkantha.<sup>214</sup>

**6. In Vadodara city,** at least half a dozen houses of Muslims were torched in Bagwada because they didn't agree to drop charges against Hindus involved in a case of stabbing.<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> 'Were sexual crime in Gujarat planned?', by Syed Ubaidur Rahman, Milligazette, Thursday 27 June, 2002.

<sup>211</sup> 'Gujarat victims were 'stripped, burned and hacked', by Peter Popham, Independent, 27 April, 2002.

<sup>212</sup> 'Anti-Muslim riots pre-planned by India's ruling party': Agence France-Presse, April 30, 2002.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid.

<sup>214</sup> AMC media digest. May 8, 2002.

<sup>215</sup> [http://www.indian-express.com/full\\_story.php?content\\_id=2176](http://www.indian-express.com/full_story.php?content_id=2176).

7. Six-year-old Ramzane Abdul Rauf, who escaped from **Naroda Patia**, recounts in a deadpan tone, "There was a big mob shooting bullets. I was hiding under my bed. They started burning my house and I ran out. My father found me."<sup>216</sup>

8. **Ahmedabad**, 12 April - Mariam Bivi's 18-year-old, polio-stricken son was burned to death by a Hindu mob. Now she can't stop thinking about him begging his killers for mercy. Since her son was killed, all the 45-year-old Muslim woman has wanted to do is flee Gujarat state's main city, Ahmedabad, where she has lived for 40 years.

Bivi's husband Hassan Abubakker, 65, whose house and hotel was burned in the mayhem, said they had no choice but to leave. "I'll go to (the southern state of) Kerala from where I came. No one will kill us there," he said. Two of their sons are already in Kerala where it is less communally charged.<sup>217</sup>

9. One, whose 19-year old son was lynched and his body set on fire, vowed never to go home. "If I'm alive, it's only because of Allah's grace. The Hindus destroyed everything we had. I'd never go back to live among them," said Sultan Farid, head of the only Muslim family in **Khamod village** on the outskirts of Ahmedabad.<sup>218</sup>

10. **Ahmedabad**. Asif Ali sat displaying a blank expression with incomprehensible emptiness in his gaze as he cradled his badly burnt son. His wife and two other children were thrown into a fire by a Hindu mob and burnt alive before his very eyes. The cradled baby boy had not uttered a sound since his, no, our mother, brother and sister were killed - his fragile limbs and body scarred with wounds which seemed to weep for the loss of our loved ones.<sup>219</sup>

11. **Modassa**, that had witnessed severe tensions yesterday when eighty trucks owned by Muslims were torched, was not spared today either. The main market, Naushtakht bazar and Borwar, were burned and destroyed. The local Muslims were terrorised as a mob attacking from all four sides was unchecked by the police even as it kept them terror-struck within.<sup>220</sup>

12. **Ahmedabad**. "The mob, which came from Chara Nagar and Kuber Nagar, started burning people at around 6 in the evening. The mob stripped all the girls of the locality, including my 22-year-old daughter, and raped them. My daughter was engaged to be married. 7 members of my family were burnt including my wife (aged 40), my sons (aged 18, 14 and 7) and my daughters (aged 2, 4 and 22). My eldest daughter, who later died in the civil hospital, told me that those who raped her were wearing shorts. They hit her on the head and then burnt her. She died of 80% burn injuries."

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<sup>216</sup> Outlookindia.com, April 15 2002.

<sup>217</sup> <http://www.arabnews.com/Article.asp?ID=14286>.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid.

<sup>219</sup> <http://www.khilafah.com/home/lographics/category.php?DocumentID=3806&TagID=1>.

<sup>220</sup> 'The violence is relentless', Carnage in Gujarat: Citizens' initiative for justice and peace, March 20, 2002.

Testimony of victim Abdul Usman.<sup>221</sup>

**13.** At least seven people died yesterday, including a three-year-old Muslim boy, when gangs of Hindu rioters returned to the rampage in the Indian state of Gujarat, attacking and burning to death Muslim neighbours who were apparently trying to return home.

Two Muslims were burned alive in the main city, **Ahmedabad**. The Muslim boy was killed by a crude bomb exploded in a busy market. A Hindu man was stabbed to death and another man died when a police teargas shell hit him. At least 40 people were injured, officials said.<sup>222</sup>

**14. Ahmedabad**, 9 May. The latest outbreak was triggered when a Muslim teacher was dragged off his scooter on his way to work and burned to death.<sup>223</sup>

**15.** On April 14, gangs set fire to 10 shops and to houses in **Ahmedabad**. The following day two Muslims were stabbed to death and another person was shot dead by police. More than a dozen houses were set on fire in the Idgah area of Ahmedabad.<sup>224</sup>

**16.** Thirty-year-old Noorjehan belonged to a relatively affluent Muslim family and lived in the government quarter of **Mehndi Kuva**. Out of a total of thirty-six homes, only three belonged to Muslims. The rest belonged to Hindus. Noorjehan suffered severe head injuries but survived the attack after being left for dead. Visibly in pain and with fresh bandages around her head, she told Human Rights Watch: On February 28 we were all sitting at home and heard a noise, this was around noon. Our Hindu neighbour said, "Don't go out." If he said go then we could have run and saved ourselves. He was drunk. Everyone started to surround the house. They all had swords and pipes. I locked the doors. They then broke down the main door. They threw an iron pipe through the iron bars, which hit me across my eyes. I got dizzy. They then started to set fire to things. I tried to close all the doors as fast as I could, but they came in and hit me with pipes all over on my head, my legs. They were about to take out a sword and cut me with it. But one Hindu had pity on me I guess and said, "Don't cut her, set her on fire." When I heard that I fainted. When I fainted they took off all of my jewels. They were screaming, "Ram bol." [Say Ram]. I think they then put me on top of the fire. My twelve-year-old niece dragged me off and threw water on me to save me. I was covered in blood. I had sent my brothers away; they went to hide in another Hindu's house. They thought I was dead so they moved on to the next Muslim house. My mother took me inside the house. A Dalit scavenger brought the doctor to me. They gave me an injection because I was going to haemorrhage. Finally the family doctor came. I was vomiting for two days. The police were nowhere. They did not help anyone. When we called they said, "You protect yourselves." The police are only two minutes away from our home.<sup>225</sup>

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<sup>221</sup> "How has the Gujarat Massacre affected Minority Women" - Report by Women's Commission fact-finding team.

<sup>222</sup> 'Seven more die in Gujarat', Luke Harding, south Asia correspondent. Guardian, Monday May 6, 2002.

<sup>223</sup> 'Fear grips Ahmedabad after 14 die', ArabNews.

<sup>224</sup> 'Death toll in India's communal violence continues to rise', by Arun Kumar and Sarath Kumara, 23 April, 2002. WWSWS.ORG.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid.

**17.** In the neighbourhood of **Gulmarg Society, Chamanpura, Ahmedabad**, over 250 people took refuge on the morning of February 28, in the home of Muslim Ehsan Jaffrey, a former member of parliament. An ordeal that began at 10:30 a.m. ended seven hours later and left at least sixty-five dead, including Jaffrey himself, who was hacked and burned to death.

Early that day, at 10:30, the police commissioner came over and said don't worry. He spoke to Jaffrey and said something would work out then left. The name of the commissioner of police that visited in the morning is P.C. Pandey, commissioner of police Ahmedabad....

At 3:30 p.m. they started cutting people up, and by 4:30 p.m. it was game over. Ehsan Jaffrey was also killed. He was holding the door closed. Then the door broke down. They pulled him out and hit him with a sword across the forehead, then across the stomach, then on his legs.... They then took him on the road, poured kerosene on him and burned him. There was no police at all. If they were there then this wouldn't have happened.<sup>226</sup>

**18.** Thirty-eight-year-old Mehboob Mansoori lost eighteen family members in the attack at **Gulmarg Society**. He described the day's sequence of events to Human Rights Watch (full testimony in introduction): "They burnt my whole family."

At 10:30 a.m. the stone throwing started. First there were 200 people then 500 from all over, then more. We were 200-250 people. We threw stones in self-defense. They had swords, pipes, soda-lemon bottles, sharp weapons, petrol, kerosene, and gas cylinders. They began shouting, 'Maro, kato,' [Kill them, cut them] and "Mian ko maro." (Kill the Muslims). I hid on the third floor.

Eighteen people from my family died. All the women died. My brother, my three sons, one girl, my wife's mother, they all died. My boys were aged ten, eight, and six. My girl was twelve years old. The bodies were piled up. I recognized them from parts of their clothes used for identification. They first cut them and then burned them. Other girls were raped, cut, and burned. First they took their jewellery, I was watching from upstairs. I saw it with my own eyes. If I had come outside, I would also have been killed. Four or five girls were treated this way. Two married women also were raped and cut. Some on the hand, some on the neck."<sup>227</sup>

**19.** Fifty-three-year-old Mansoori Abdulbhai, also a resident of **Gulmarg Society, Chamanpura** lost nineteen family members in the attack. He told Human Rights Watch: "Nineteen members of my family were killed. My wife, my mother, my son, my daughters-in-law, my brother's daughter-in-law, and others. We found fourteen of the bodies, five are still missing. Those fourteen are buried here [at a mass grave site next to the Dariyakhan Ghummat camp in Shahibaug]. Sixty-two people were killed there, twenty-nine bodies have not been found. First they cut people so they couldn't run and then they set them on fire. One or two women were taken aside and gang-raped. After five hours the police came and

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<sup>226</sup> <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2002/india/India0402-02.htm>.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid.

brought us here. It was so well planned. We buried fourteen members of my family here on March 7.”<sup>228</sup>

**20. Ahmedabad.** Twenty-three-year-old Rasida Bhen, Ilias's wife, still bore visible head injuries at the time of the interview with Human Rights Watch. She spoke to Human Rights Watch about the murder of her husband's brother and his wife, twenty-three-year-old Aslam Usman Bhai, and twenty-one-year-old Naseem Bano: “They pulled them out and cut them up. When we came out then we saw that he was cut in the stomach, the chest and the head. They came with trishuls. My sister-in-law was burnt. First they took her jewellery. Then took her into the kitchen and exploded the gas cylinder. They wanted to get rid of all the evidence. They had been married for fifteen months and she was five months pregnant.”

Referring to attacks on other women, Rasida added: “First they took everyone's jewellery. Then they raped the women, then they cut them up, and then they burned them. They should get as strict a punishment as possible.... I was hit with a pipe. We ran outside when the gas cylinder exploded and then later the police came and we left.”<sup>229</sup>

**21. Dasij village.** Amongst the Patels In Dipra Darwaza Mohalla eleven men and hundred shops were torched to ashes.<sup>230</sup>

**22. Modasa town, Sabarkantha,** March 19<sup>th</sup>. Two persons, Abdul Rahman and Nizam Husain Imam, were burnt alive.<sup>231</sup>

**23. In Parantij,** despite all the efforts, sixteen shops, four houses, a tractor and a farm could not be saved from being burnt down.<sup>232</sup>

**24. Ahmedabad.** Hindu rioters exploded a bomb and burned Muslims alive, killing four people, including a baby boy, in renewed religious violence in western Gujarat state, where more than 900 people have been killed in the past two months, police said.<sup>233</sup>

**25.** Hindu rioters burned two Muslims alive in **Dani Limbda** and exploded a bomb that killed a three-year old Muslim boy in adjoining **Behrampura**, Deputy Commissioner of Police B.S Jebaliya told The Associated Press.<sup>234</sup>

**26. In Vadodara city,** at least half a dozen houses of Muslims were torched in Bagwada because they didn't agree to drop charges against Hindus involved in a case of stabbing.<sup>235</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> Ibid.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid.

<sup>230</sup> ‘Gujarat Carnage’, a report by Jamiat Ulama-I-Hind.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid.

<sup>233</sup> AMC media digest, May 5, 2002.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

## **Appendix E: Other atrocities**

**1. Naroda Patia.** Some, like 12-year-old Aslam Khan, have seen people being killed in front of their eyes. "I was at my father's cycle repair shop when people started throwing stones. My neighbour was killed by a police bullet. I run when I see the police. What if they shoot me?" he asks fearfully.<sup>236</sup>

**2.** A British national visiting Gujarat has been killed and two others were missing in communal clashes in Gujarat, a British High Commission spokesperson in Mumbai said on Saturday.

Mohammad Aswat Nallabhai (41), a resident of Batley in northern England, died when he was assaulted by unidentified miscreants.

He was on his way from New Delhi to Lajpur village in Gujarat for a social visit, along with three of his relatives, when he was assaulted in Himmatnagar, 160 km from Ahmedabad.

His three relatives were also assaulted, two of whom have gone missing.<sup>237</sup>

**3.** Hassan Suleiman showed stitches on the back of his head where he says he was struck by a stone 10 days ago when he went to his village, **Panvad**, to withdraw money from the bank. He said the Hindus of Panvad, north of Ahmedabad, had driven away every Muslim who dared to re-enter the village after they escaped rioters on March 10.<sup>238</sup>

**4. Ahmedabad.** Abdul Jabar has visible head and face wounds. He says six local men beat him up - the police did nothing to stop them.

"The men were shouting: 'Who do you Muslims think you are? Kill them!' There was a police post at the corner and I screamed for help. I said to the mob, the police are right there! They said: 'We don't care - they're on our side.'" <sup>239</sup>

**5. Mumbai.** Sporadic Hindu-Muslim clashes rocked an area near India's commercial capital of Bombay after three people died in a fresh outbreak of religious violence, police said yesterday. Mobs ransacked shops and huts in Thane district, 60 km north of Bombay, despite a curfew and the deployment of paramilitary forces to contain the violence, which comes just after India's worst religious bloodshed in a decade. "Stray incidents took place last night after 11 p.m. (1730 GMT). Some huts and shops were ransacked," Thane Police Commissioner S.M. Shangari told Reuters. "Over 100 people have so far been arrested in connection with the rioting on Tuesday night and arrests are continuing."<sup>240</sup>

**6.** Two batches of Std VIII and IX students belonging to the minority community were actually threatened by a mob while they were giving their Std VIII and Std IX terminal

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<sup>236</sup> Outlookindia.com, April 15, 2002.

<sup>237</sup> Rediff.com, Sunday, March 03, 2002.

<sup>238</sup> Reuters, May 13, 2002.

<sup>239</sup> 'Gujarat's Muslims live in terror', by Jill McGivering, BBC South Asia correspondent. Thursday, May 9, 2002.

<sup>240</sup> 'Muslims haunted by horror leave Gujarat', <http://www.arabnews.com/Article.asp?ID=14286>.

examinations. This writer spoke to three students who gave her this testimony. There are at least 15 other witnesses to the same incident. The names of the students have been withheld to protect their identity.

Witness: One

“My school is the Jyot Kanya Vidyalaya near Delhi Darwaza. I was giving my Std IX terminal examination in a room on the ground floor of the building when around 10.30 a.m. There are in total about 60 Muslim girls giving exams at this school. Suddenly we heard shouts from outside. We asked our teacher, ‘What is the noise?’ ‘Kuchh nahin’ said the teacher, ‘you carry on with the exam’. We wrote a bit of the paper. Suddenly, a group of 10-15 persons stormed into the ground of the school and stood in the ground just outside the class. We were terrified. ‘Maro, kato’ ‘Mussalmanon ko nikalon’ ‘Idhar aa jao (pointing to Hindu areas) were the cries we heard. We turned to our teacher who did nothing. She then said, ‘You better go.’ We started running frantically. One of the girls, a little stout, was a few steps behind; they managed to pull away her dupatta. We hope that she is safe. We did not see her after that. Some women came running from the adjoining Muslim mohalla and took us to safety there.

How can we give our exams now? Even though this area is not entirely safe, as it is this side of the border, we came today. Then this happened. How can we go back?”

Witness: Two

“I was giving my class VIII terminal examination on the ground floor but in another class at the far end of the corridor at the Jyot Kanya Vidyalaya. Suddenly we heard ominous shouts. I turned to the Sir who was the supervisor. ‘What is the noise, Sir?’ ‘Looks like a fight. You better not go anywhere’ he said. (The girl was stammering with fright as she recounted the frightening incident.) Suddenly the shouts grew louder. We just ran out of our class and the school. Six to seven of us ran towards the Kanichad mohalla where the residents had blocked their entrance for fear of attacks from Hindus. We were banging on the blockade frantically. They would not open. We were screaming, in tears, ‘We are Muslims, we are Muslims, please save us. Let us in. They finally pulled open the door and pulled us in to safety. We are not going to give the exam tomorrow. We are so frightened.’”

Witness: Three

“I am studying in the Std IX class in the KG Desai High school between Delhi Darwaza and Shahpur Darwaza. After the examinations when three of us were trying to leave the school to go home, a lamba tola (huge mob) came running towards the school. We turned to the Principal’s room and the Principal, Ramanbhai Patel, for help. He simply pushed us away. He shoved us and shut his door. We were left to the mercy of the mob and there were two other Muslims, a boy with me. It was the Hindus from the back who had attacked us. Others in our school who were Muslims had left earlier. Luckily, we were finally saved by an old lady, a Muslim lady. I just cannot think of going back to school and giving my examinations tomorrow.”<sup>241</sup>

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<sup>241</sup> “We are Muslims, we are Muslims, please save us. Let us in”, Carnage in Gujarat: Citizens’ Initiative for Justice and Peace, April 05, 2002.

**7. Ahmedabad.** Kazmi Apartments, Elite Apartments, Delite Apartments, Corner 2 and Tarana Apartments were totally gutted. Abdullah Motimahal, Nizamuddin Momeen and Iqbal Hasmani, all above 60, were attacked by men wielding swords. Despite the fact that the violence raged for seven hours, and not less than 100 calls went to the Police Commissioner, no help was forthcoming from the police or the fire brigade.<sup>242</sup>

**8. Ahmedabad,** March 6, 2002. The violence in and around Surat continued today and two women belonging to the minority community were beaten to death in a village just outside Godhra.<sup>243</sup>

**9. Panchmahals District.** Fatima Bibi, who was visiting her sister in Eral village said she hid in the forests for 4 days. She ran out of her home to escape the mob on the 1st and reached Halol camp on the 5th.<sup>244</sup>

**10.** Kulsum Bibi from **Eral**, where there are about 40 -45 Muslim families, had walked several kilometres and some had spent several days hiding in forests and fields, without food and water.<sup>245</sup>

**11.** Mumtaz, of **Ranjit Nagar**, reached the camp on the 29th [February], after walking several hundred kms, 24 days after she had left her village. She and her family, which included her husband, her in-laws and 3 children, fled their home when the mob arrived on the 28<sup>th</sup> [February]. They first hid in nearby fields for two days and then kept on moving from village to village in search of a safe haven. They kept moving as everywhere they reached there was tension. They could see fires. (Mumtaz's feet were swollen and full of blisters).<sup>246</sup>

**12.** Thirty-year-old Mumtazbano was stripped in public and stabbed to death by a mob in the **Vejalpur area of Ahmedabad** after being dragged off her husband's scooter.<sup>247</sup>

**13. Ahmedabad.** Sheikh added that in the looting and burning of his home, his education certificates and other valuables were also destroyed: "All my education certificates and medical reports that were in a suitcase were also destroyed. I have a blood disease and need those reports."<sup>248</sup>

**14.** An eighteen-year-old student in **Bharuch** was pulled off a rickshaw and hit on the head and killed while returning home after taking a board exam.<sup>249</sup>

**15.** A fifty-year-old woman named Fatu Bhen from **Sanjay Nagar Nanachiloda**, an area just outside of Ahmedabad, told Human Rights Watch, "When they attacked we ran into

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<sup>242</sup> 'Crippling a community every which way', Carnage in Gujarat: Citizens' Initiative for Justice and Peace, March 8, 2002.

<sup>243</sup> 'Ahmedabad: A tale of two cities', Carnage in Gujarat: Citizens' Initiative for Justice and Peace, March 6, 2002.

<sup>244</sup> 'How has the Gujarat massacre affected minority Women? The survivors speak', fact-finding by a women's panel. Sponsored by Citizens' Initiative, Ahmedabad, April 16, 2002.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid.

<sup>247</sup> <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2002/india/Indai0402-03.htm>.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid.

the fields. For one day and one night we hid in the fields. Then we walked to Gandhinagar. My brother brought me here. We didn't even have a chance to lock our doors. My brother went back to see and found that everything had been burned and looted."<sup>250</sup>

**16. Jinat A.**, a forty-year-old woman from **Naroda Patia**, told Human Rights Watch: "The riots came, we ran. We saw people getting cut up and burned. They used swords and sharp weapons. The first two days we were somewhere else and then we came to the camp. They stole all our things and burned our homes. They took our TVs, tapes, everything, even the beds. They took everything.... We have been here since March 1. We arrived at 3 a.m. Where will we go? The curfews are set. The police killed as well."<sup>251</sup>

**17. Naroda Patia.** Rehman Pata described the reaction of the police when he approached them for help during the attack on his home:

"I ran to the police station, I fought the crowds to get through. Two constables told me, 'You go and we'll follow you.' But they never came. I came home and saw that my sister had been hit by a pipe.... These were Shiv Sena and VHP workers. We know the names of some of the people who did this. After the attack one of them made a call and told the person he was talking to move on to the next Muslim home. They were coordinating everything on their cell phones. We filed a complaint against them. They didn't leave anything, even my childhood toys.... One of our Hindu neighbors told the mob not to burn our home otherwise theirs would catch on fire as well. He said, 'Don't burn it, just loot it.'"<sup>252</sup>

**18. Nineteen-year-old Sheikh** from **Mehndi Kuva** said:

"We filed a complaint and wrote down all the names. During the attack, thirty to thirty-five went to hide in a Goanese Christian home after 6 p.m. Then the crowd surrounded that home and said, 'You send them out or we will kill you too.' After that we came here to the camp with police escorts. We called the camp on our mobile phone and they sent the police to us to bring us here. We arrived March 1 at 1 a.m. We then called the Christian family from here and they told us the crowds started looting the homes on March 1. Our dowry, marriage money, machines, etc. all of them was looted. They even took the two lights and the wiring and the fan. They took everything. They took my brother's new cycle but set my old one on fire.

Sheikh also sustained head injuries during the attacks and still wore a dressing on the wounds at the time of the interview three weeks later: "At one point they surrounded me and started shouting, 'Miya, Miya' [Muslim, Muslim]. They started throwing stones and I ran upstairs."<sup>253</sup>

**19. Sardarpur.** 33 human beings had been entrapped in a house which was filled with water, and then a high tension electricity wire was dropped into the water burning them all

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<sup>250</sup> Ibid.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid.

alive. The innocent infants and children were snatched from the bosom of their mothers by cruel hands, raised into the air and dashed against the grounds, and finally thrown into the burning pyres in front of the very eyes of their mothers looking aghast.<sup>254</sup>

**20. Wishanagar.** A hospital is a place where people go to save their lives. But ironically the civil hospital there has come into limelight because it served as execution ground for three Muslims. Two brothers are reported to have brought their pregnant sister who had been a little while earlier grievously wounded by attackers and left for dead. But her misery was not over yet. The brothers finding her still gasping for breath brought her to the hospital's emergency, where they were brutally slaughtered. The unfortunate wounded pregnant Zainab was tossed from the roof of the hospital to the ground, freeing her and her unborn sibling from the burden of life forever.<sup>255</sup>

**21. Ahmedabad.** Eight Muslims were brutally attacked and thirteen were grievously injured. The JUH ambulance was stoned while carrying the wounded to the hospital and an attempt was made to burn it down along with the occupants but due to driver's presence of mind and boldness, the ambulance was able to deliver the wounded occupants to the hospital.<sup>256</sup>

**22. Parantij.** At 2 AM at night the house of Babu Bhai in Mansoori Mohalla encountered forced entry and two residents were severely beaten and were left with the warning of repetition of similar incident in the next night.<sup>257</sup>

**23.** A small boy of six in Juhapara camp described how his mother and six brothers and sisters were battered to death before his eyes.<sup>258</sup>

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<sup>254</sup> 'Gujarat Carnage', a report by Jamiat Ulama-I-Hind.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid.

## **Acknowledgements**

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