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July 8, 2008

The Honorable Condoleezza Rice
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Rice:

It has come to my attention that Mr. Narendra Modi, Chief Minister of the state of Gujarat, India has been invited to attend and speak at the World Gujarati Congress, scheduled to take place August 29-31, 2008, in Edison, New Jersey. As a result of this invitation Mr. Modi may be seeking a visa to enter the U.S. In light of Mr. Modi's long documented record of violations of religious freedom in India, I am writing to urge the Department of State to deny Mr. Modi a visa to enter the U.S.

As you know, Mr. Narendra Modi was Chief Minister of Gujarat during the 2002 riots that resulted in the deaths of over 2,000 Indian Muslims and non-Hindus and the rape, gang rape, and molestation of hundreds of Muslim women. In 2003, the Indian Supreme Court found that the state government of Gujarat, led by Mr. Modi, had actively supported the anti-Muslim violence and ordered the police not to interfere. This grave violation of the freedom of India's religious minorities is simply intolerable and puts Mr. Modi in severe breach of the *International Religious Freedom Act*.

In 2005, under your leadership, the Department of State appropriately denied Mr. Modi a visa on the basis that any foreign government official responsible for 'particularly severe violations' of religious freedom is inadmissible under the *U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act*.

Since 2005, Chief Minister Narendra Modi has continued to violate the religious freedom of not only Indian Muslims, but also Christians. Mr. Modi has used state police forces to routinely beat Christian pastors and priests and to conduct extra-judicial killings of Muslim youth. In addition, Mr. Modi has interfered with the safe return of more than 100,000 people displaced from the 2002 riots.

Given the continuing violations of religious freedom in India, Narendra Modi should once again be denied admission to the U.S. under the provisions of the *International Religious Freedom Act*. Granting a visa to Narendra Modi would be contradictory to international law and would only serve to validate the Chief Minister's abhorrent policies and actions.

Maintaining an open and vibrant diplomatic, economic, and military relationship between the U.S. and India must be a continued foreign policy priority for Congress and the Executive Branch. Therefore I want to be clear that this letter is solely directed at Mr. Modi and not in any way directed at the Indian Government, the BJP as a political institution, or the Gujaratis community in India or the U.S. The Gujaratis community in the U.S. should be commended for their contributions to the U.S. and for supporting a strong U.S.-India relationship.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress