

In the name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.  
All praise and thanks belong to God, the Lord of the Worlds.  
May peace and prayers be upon Prophet Muhammad and his family.



Council on American-Islamic Relations  
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Tuesday, June 6, 2023

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Senate Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Speaker of the House  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Senate Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries  
House Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20510

**RE: Inviting Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Speak Before a Joint Meeting of Congress Further Represses Christians, Muslims, Dalits, Sikhs, Other Minorities in India**

Dear Leader Schumer, Leader McConnell, Speaker McCarthy, and Leader Jeffries:

I am writing on behalf of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), the nation's largest Muslim civil liberties and advocacy organization. We believe asking Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to address a Joint Meeting of Congress sends the message that repressing Christians, Muslims, Dalits, Sikhs, and other faith minorities is not an issue for the U.S. Congress.

Modi's anti-democratic policies, such as smothering critical journalism, are also the opposite of what the U.S. Congress should be seen as celebrating. If the Joint Meeting occurs, we plan to urge Members to boycott it.

The evidence of Modi's expanding effort to place a boot firmly on the collective heads of India's religious minorities is extensive. CAIR has already noted that under Modi his political allies have banned young Muslim women from wearing hijabs at school, ignored widespread lynchings of Muslims, and censored a BBC documentary about Modi's role in an anti-Muslim pogrom.

On August 23, 2022, the Congressional Research Service noted, "The scope and scale of [human rights] abuses reportedly has increased under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party, particularly since their convincing national reelection in 2019."

The U.S. Department of State's recent Report on International Religious Freedom expressed concern regarding the treatment of Muslims, Christians, and other religious minorities in India and highlighted violence by law enforcement and pro-government Hindu nationalists targeting Muslims. The report makes mention of a leader in Modi's political party calling for Muslims "to be set ablaze."

A few weeks earlier, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom's (USCIRF) "2023 Annual Report" again recommended that State designate India as a "Country of Particular Concern." Rather than the honor of addressing the U.S. Congress, USCIRF thinks targeted sanctions should be imposed on India.

This year, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) rated journalism in India as less free than under Afghanistan's strict authoritarian regime. RSF reports, "All the mainstream media are now owned by wealthy businessmen close to Prime Minister Narendra Modi." RSF adds, "At the same time, Modi has an army of supporters who track down all online reporting regarded as critical of the government and wage horrific harassment campaigns against the sources."

Hindutva movements are at the core of anti-Muslim, anti-Christian, and anti-minority persecutions in India. They have also stoked hatred between Muslim and Hindu groups in the U.S.

Modi's India is an exporter of hate. In 2022, researchers at Australia's Islamic Council of Victoria concluded "55.12 percent of anti-Muslim hatred tweets now originate in India." It has arrived here in the States. In California last year an *LA Times* reporter filmed alleged Modi supporters grabbing protest signs and physically and verbally harassing a group of people protesting the persecution of religious minorities and caste discrimination in India at La Palma Park in Anaheim. One of those shown allegedly harassing the protesters shouts "stupid Muslims, get out."

In New Jersey, organizers of an Indian Independence Day parade in Edison were forced to apologize after local outrage over the inclusion of a bulldozer. The bulldozer has become a symbol among Hindutva extremists for the demolition of Muslim homes by India's far-right government.

Some politicians argue we need India as a strategic counterbalance to China. Since Putin invaded Russia, Modi's India has expanded its imports of Russian oil and remains a major buyer of Russian weapons.

Embracing the higher cause has always been where our nation does its best work. The American values behind the 2005 visa cancellation should be just as unwavering as Modi's commitment to persecuting Christians, Dalits, Muslims, Sikhs, and other minorities. Please reconsider hosting Prime Minister Modi at a Joint Meeting of Congress.

We look forward to receiving communication from your respective offices regarding this serious issue of concern.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Robert S. McCaw". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Robert S. McCaw  
CAIR Director of Government Affairs Department