

# Hindus for Human Rights

June 16, 2023

President Joseph R. Biden  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

As Indian Americans, human rights organizations, and concerned allies, we are writing to urge you to engage publicly and meaningfully to push back against the Indian government's escalating attacks on human rights and democracy, especially ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's state visit to the United States.

Despite objective evidence that India's democracy is under critical attack, you have not spoken out about this crisis. In early 2023, Indian authorities conducted [retaliatory raids](#) on the BBC's Delhi and Mumbai offices for releasing a documentary about Prime Minister Modi. The week before the Summit for Democracy, the Indian government made three successive attacks on Indian democracy. First, the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party [expelled Rahul Gandhi](#) from Parliament. Second, the Indian government [shut the internet down](#) in Punjab, severely impacting the rights for Sikhs to peacefully organize and protest. And third, the Indian Supreme Court [ruled](#) that Indians can be found guilty by association for terrorism. And yet, not one representative from the Biden Administration said anything about even one of these developments. Instead, while [Islamophobic violence gripped India](#) in late March, you [invited Prime Minister Modi to speak](#) at the Summit for Democracy. Mr. Modi visits DC at a time when the state of Manipur [has experienced heavy communal and anti-Christian violence](#) after Modi's ruling party pushed an initiative to undermine Indigenous rights in the state.

Even when confronted with questions by Indian reporters about human rights in India, your administration has only had private [two-way conversations](#) about how both of our governments can always improve. Quite frankly, we find it unacceptable to see such equivocation on Indian democracy from an administration that has been strident in its defense of American democracy and the rule of law.

India is one of the fastest autocratizing nations in the world, mostly thanks to the current government. [Freedom House](#) has rated India as a "Partly Free" country for the past three years, and has blamed Prime Minister Modi's government for a rise in discriminatory policies, including persecution against Muslims and caste-based violence against Dalit and Adivasi communities; harassment of civil society, protestors, academia, and the media; and the targeting of political opponents. It has also rated Indian-Administered Kashmir as "Not Free," citing violations of human, civil, and political rights after the Modi government revoked the territory's autonomous status. In [Reporters Without Borders'](#) press freedom ranking, India has dropped to 161st out of 180 countries in 2023. India has appeared in the [Committee to Protect Journalists'](#) [Impunity Index](#)—which examines accountability for unsolved journalists' murders—every year for the past 15 years, and currently ranks in 11th place worldwide. According to [PEN America's Freedom to Write Index](#), in 2022, India was one of the top 10 countries that jailed writers globally. The [Varieties of](#)

[Democracy Institute](#) characterizes India as an “electoral autocracy” and blames India’s descent into autocracy on Prime Minister Modi. And the [U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum](#) has said India has been one of the top 15 countries at risk for a mass atrocity event every year since 2017, which reflects the toxicity of Indian politics under Modi.

Given the magnitude of this crisis, we ask you to engage directly with Indian-American and human rights civil society leaders to explore solutions to address India’s human rights crisis. We also ask you to employ the tools at your disposal to ensure that the Indian government cannot attack Indians’ human rights with impunity. As the [2022 Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor report details](#), several government individuals have committed human rights violations that, under U.S. law, would qualify them to be sanctioned under the Global Magnitsky Act. Indian security forces that have engaged in human rights violations should have security assistance rescinded, under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961.

Finally, we urge you to publicly call on the Indian government to honor its commitments to human rights, including calling on Prime Minister Modi and his cabinet to halt the use of anti-terror laws to arbitrarily detain political critics. You can publicly denounce the rising numbers of political prisoners and the weaponization of the rule of law in India to shut down criticism. Even if you are not willing to personally criticize the Prime Minister, you have ample opportunity to criticize the Indian government’s misuse of public trust and public institutions to consolidate power and undermine the will of the Indian people.

As President of the United States of America, you hold a unique position to lead the fight against authoritarianism. Prime Minister Modi will listen to you when you speak. But he and his allies will only change if you take a stand publicly. We urge you to listen to those of us who care about India and ensure that one man cannot steal the futures and the rights of our loved ones in India.

Signed:

*Organizations*

12Ummah

18 Million Rising

Alliance of South Asians Taking Action

Aotearoa Alliance Of Progressive Indians

Asian Children’s Education Fellowship

Bangladeshi Americans For Political Progress

Caribbean Equality Project

Center for Pluralism

Center for Security, Race, and Rights

Chicago Coalition for Human Rights in India

Coalition of Seattle Indian Americans

Collective Knowledge Works

Council on American-Islamic Relations

Council on American-Islamic Relations - Minnesota

Dalit Solidarity Forum

Democratic Socialists of America, Religion & Socialism Working Group

Desis Rising Up and Moving  
Engage Action  
Ensaaf  
Federation of Indian American Christian Organizations  
Food Empowerment Project  
Freedom Road, LLC  
Friends of India - Texas  
GEMS USA  
Global Bahujan Group  
Great Truth  
GreenFaith  
Hindus for Human Rights  
Hindus for Human Rights (Australia-New Zealand)  
Hindus For Human Rights UK  
India Civil Watch International  
Indian American Muslim Council  
Indian Muslim Association of Carolinas  
Insaf Bulletin  
Interfaith Community of Treasure Coast  
International Campaign for Justice in Bhopal  
International Commission for Dalit Rights  
International Network of Democratic Indians Abroad  
Islamic Education Center of Lexington  
Jewish World Watch  
Justice for All  
Justice For All Canada  
LittleSis / Public Accountability Initiative  
Muslim Public Affairs Committee UK  
MPower Change Action Fund  
Muslim Anti-Racism Collaborative  
Muslims for Progressive Values  
New York State Council of Churches  
North American Network of Malayali Muslim Associations  
Pax Christi USA  
Peace Action Montgomery  
Polis Project  
Queer Crescent  
Religions for Peace USA  
Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund  
Sikh Coalition  
Social Harmony Federation  
South Asian American Coalition to Renew Democracy  
South Asian Network  
The India Observer

United Against Racism and Fascism-NYC  
Virginia Muslim Political Action Committee  
World Sikh Parliament

*Individuals*

A Syed  
Aadita Chaudhury  
Abdul Gundru  
Abhi Nimmagadda  
Abusaleh Shariff  
Ajay Kumar  
Amar Shergill  
Amrita Shodhan  
Amritjit Singh  
Anamika Haksar Sahu  
Anand Patwardhan  
Andrew J. Nicholson  
Angana Chatterjee  
Angela Rudert  
Anjalee Dave  
Anjali Enjeti  
Anjum Rafiqi  
Anne Murphy  
Antara Dev Sen  
Arjun Singh Sethi  
Ashok Daryani  
Ashwin Rodrigues  
Audrey Truschke  
Azra Menon  
Balaji Narasimhan  
Brian A. Hatcher  
Cedric Prakash  
Chad Haines  
Charles Shopsis  
Chinnaiah Jangam  
Choudhri M Naim  
Christine Marrewa-Karwoski  
David Lelyveld  
David Ludden  
Deenu S  
Deepa Iyer  
Dolly Daftary  
Eliza Kent

Filipa Vicente  
Gaurav Sabnis  
Ghanshyam Shah  
Govind Acharya  
Halima Khan  
Hannah Davidowitz  
Haripriya Rangan  
Harsh Mander  
Harsha Ram  
Hassan El-Tayyab  
Imama Mian  
Indira Hirway  
Indu Prasad  
J. Barton Scott  
Joel Lee  
John Clifford Holt  
John Dayal  
Joseph A. Camilleri  
Juliet Schor  
K Chida  
K Ram  
Kalyani Menon  
Kamran Quraishi  
Karan Mahajan  
Kavery Kaul  
Kiran Desai  
Kumar Rao  
Kunal Sen  
M. V. Ramana  
Madhusree Mukerjee  
Malini Ranganathan  
Mansoor Nooruddin  
Maqbool Patel  
Masood Ansari  
Mohamed Q. Amin  
Mohamed Sageer  
Mohammed Siddique Pathan  
Moideen Moopen  
Mrinalini Mazumdar  
Mujeeb Puzhakkaraillath  
Naureen Akhter  
Navina Haykel  
Navjot Pal Kaur  
Nayaz Ahmed

Nazia Shariff  
Neha Ramu  
Nikhil Mandalaparthu  
Nilita Vachani  
Nirmal Kulkarni  
Nityanand Jayaraman  
Noor Nisar  
Noorudeen Aliyar  
Odelia D'Souza  
Oskar Eustis  
P K Vijayan  
Parijat Desai  
Parvez Khan  
Pieter Friedrich  
Prasad Venugopal  
Pratip Mandal  
Priya Chacko  
Pushkar Sharma  
Quaid Saifee  
Rabbi Bonnie Margulis  
Rabbi David Wirtschafter  
Rachel Fell McDermott  
Rahul P.  
Raj Kumar  
Rajeev Kinra  
Raju Rajagopal  
Ram Puniyani  
Ramya Vijaya  
Rashid Makhdoom  
Raza Mir  
Reshma Nazir  
Rev. Abhi Janamanchi  
Rev. Chloe Breyer  
Rev. Evangeline Anderson-Rajkumar  
Rev. Jennifer Butler  
Rosa Maria Perez  
Ruth Messinger  
S. Ansari  
Sadaf Afshan  
Safoora Zargar  
Sahil Kalyani  
Sakina Nayaz  
Sami Uddin  
Samit Chatterjee

Sanjana Rajesh  
Sanjay Kanvinde  
Sasi Menon  
Shabana Hameed  
Shabana Mir  
Shagufta Hakeem  
Shaifali Puri  
Shailja Sharma  
Shakeel Syed  
Shan Sankaran  
Shana Sippy  
Shayan Malik  
Sheldon Pollock FBA  
Shima Nayaz  
Shruti Ganguly  
Simranjeet Randhawa  
Sonia Sikka  
Soraya Deen  
Steven M. Poulos  
Sumathy Vijayakumar  
Suvir Kaul  
Sylvia Vatuk  
Tahir Mulla  
Tharackandathil O Shanavas  
Trisha Chakrabarti  
Valarie Kaur  
Varsha Gandikota-Nellutla  
Veena Dubal  
Victor Begg  
Vidura Jang Bahadur  
Vijay Iyer  
William Sites  
Xavier Jeyaraj  
Zakia Akhtar

Daljit K. Soni, Esq.  
Joyce Flueckiger  
Ayesha Mehrotra  
Rebecca George  
Smera Singh  
Prateek Paul  
Malini Ranganathan  
Vivek S  
Alekyia kumar

Sam Beera  
Elizabeth Mangalwadi  
Sarah gecus  
Paul Sudhindran  
Robert De Rose  
Roger Samuel  
BabuRao Renikuntla  
Rishi bayya  
Roshani Thakore  
Prakash Kashwan  
Jessie Monisha  
Yogesh Dayma  
Probeshika Dutta  
Rahul Sen  
Bansri Manek  
Wajhiulla Smith-Khan  
Riti Sachdeva  
Venkatesh Ranjan  
Ayesha Akhter  
Venkat Maraju  
Zoe Sherinian  
Premkumar Stephen  
Patricia Sauthoff  
Varsha R  
Roopa Shivaprasad  
John Nidhiry  
Grace Hills  
Prasannan Parthasarathi  
Preeti Chopra  
Lalit Kanaparthi  
Sunita Viswanath  
Divya Cherian  
Dr. P.K.Sarkar  
Rachna Dhingra  
Nalini Visvanathan  
Chukka Srinivas  
David Gilmartin  
Pranav Prakash  
Lauren B. Homer  
Aliya Karmali