



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**The Advocates for Human Rights commends members of Congress for their bipartisan support for maintaining the ban on Narendra Modi's United States visa**

**Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN and Washington, DC (December 4, 2012)**

The Advocates for Human Rights joined Congressmen Joe Pitts (R-PA), Frank Wolf (R-VA) and Keith Ellison (D-MN), as well as representatives from the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom and the Coalition Against Genocide, at a press conference today on Capitol Hill to call on the U.S. Department of State to maintain the ban on a U.S. visa for Mr. Narendra Modi, Chief Minister of the Indian State of Gujarat.

Mr. Modi's U.S. visa was denied in 2005 under the authority of the International Religious Freedom Act for his complicity in human rights violations in Gujarat state in 2002. Mr. Modi served as chief minister of Gujarat in 2002 during violence that targeted Muslims and other religious minorities, resulting in widespread sexual violence against women and girls, the destruction of homes and businesses, and the killing of more than 2,000 people. Numerous human rights organizations have investigated and reported that the state government, led by Chief Minister Modi, provided leadership and material support to the non-state perpetrators of these crimes.

The Advocates for Human Rights commends the recent convictions in Gujarat of high level officials and others for their role in the communal violence. This is a significant improvement, as many non-governmental organizations and the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief have found that efforts to investigate and prosecute those responsible had been completely ineffective for almost a decade. Yet many victims have still had no access to justice, large numbers remain internally displaced, and lawyers, journalists and police who speak out about the complicity of state officials in violence against minorities face retribution. "Instances of violence and discrimination against religious minorities have continued in India since Gujarat. Government officials in India have failed to comply with India's human rights obligations to protect religious minorities," says Deputy Director Jennifer Prestholdt.

No one, no matter their position in government, who has participated in human rights violations should be legitimized with the grant of a visa to enter the United States. The Advocates for Human Rights commends and joins in the request of the 25 members of Congress who have called upon the U.S. Department of State to maintain the ban on a visa for Narendra Modi to enter the United States.

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The Advocates for Human Rights, a nonprofit organization headquartered in Minneapolis, Minnesota, is dedicated to the promotion of internationally-recognized human rights. The Advocates has received international recognition for a broad range of innovative programs and holds Special Consultative Status with the United Nations. To learn more about The Advocates' local, national, and international work, visit [theadvocatesforhumanrights.org](http://theadvocatesforhumanrights.org).