

THE RECENT ANTI-MUSLIM VIOLENCE IN INDIA

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Edited by
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June 6, 2022

(Views expressed in the brief are those of the author, and do not represent those of ISSI)



Image source: The Wire

Introduction

April 2, 2022, marked the first day of the Hindu New Year and to rejoice the religious festivities; nonetheless, a traumatic communal incident occurred at Karauli in the Indian state of Rajasthan, where following a premeditated plan, the extremist Hindu activists of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) set Muslim homes, shops, garages, and vehicles on fire. According to media reports, anti-Muslim violence erupted in a Muslim majority area of Karauli after Hindu activists organised a bike rally and continuously chanted provocative slogans such as..... for Hindu New Year celebrations. Such slogans insulted Muslim faith and large speakers were used to broadcast Hindutva songs, inciting violence against Muslims.¹ After the violent incident, the authorities imposed a curfew and suspended internet services.² On April 4, the Rajasthan Police caught 46 individuals and confined seven others for cross-examination following the distressful episode.³

- 1 "Hindus Set Houses, Shops of Muslims on Fire in Rajasthan," *The News*, April 5, 2022, <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/947584-hindus-set-houses-shops-of-muslims-on-fire-in-rajasthan>.
- 2 "Curfew in Place After Communal Clashes in Rajasthan's Karauli," *The Wire*, April 3, 2022, <https://thewire.in/communalism/curfew-in-place-after-communal-clashes-in-rajasthans-karauli>.
- 3 Sharat Kumar, "Karauli Violence in Rajasthan Sparked by Planned Attack, Says FIR," *India Today*, April 6, 2022, <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/karauli-violence-riots-planned-attack-says-injured-rajasthan-cop-1934062-2022-04-06>.



Figure 1: Police was deployed after the unfortunate event in Karauli, Rajasthan.⁴

In a separate attack on April 5, 2022, numerous Indian Muslims were injured while a mosque was gravely harmed in an assault by saffron goons of Hindutva in the Indian state of Karnataka.⁵ Meanwhile, a video has come to the fore from the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh showing Hindu saffron extremists and ultra-nationalist leaders cheering and applauding in front of a Mosque, amid the presence of Police, and openly announced to kidnap Muslim women and to rape and kill them.⁶

In the aftermath of these premeditated unfortunate events, the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi did not bother to offer a few words of condolence and sympathy with the bereaved Indian Muslims. As a statesman, PM Modi has failed to behave both like a statesman and a human being.

Analysis and Afterthought

The attacks on the Muslim populace in the India is predominantly an indication of the rise of far-right ideologies in India which would have far reaching implications for the whole region, especially for Muslims in the region. Because India holds one of the biggest Muslim population in the world. It is pivotal to understand that if there is a rise of such narratives which are predominantly based on extremist exclusionary slogans are likely to be detrimental to the lives of Muslims living in India, as the contemporary scenario has proved the Indians at-large have been getting radical in their stance and the slogan of pure fabric of India. For the latter to realise, the BJP-RSS discourse is not only

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ "Hindus Set Houses, Shops of Muslims on Fire in Rajasthan."

⁶ "Hindutva Leaders at Haridwar Event Call for Muslim Genocide," *The Wire*, December 22, 2021, <https://thewire.in/communalism/hindutva-leaders-dharma-sansad-muslim-genocide>.

based on the propaganda narrative but is a pack of lies filled with historical inconsistencies which are debunked around the world in the academic circles.⁷



Figure 2: Najmuddin in tears after his dry fruit shop was looted and vandalised among other Muslim businesses.⁸



Figure 3: Mehroon, an elderly Muslim woman was attacked by Hindu terrorists by swords which slashed her face.⁹

⁷ Eviane Leidig, "Hindutva as a Variant of Right-Wing Extremism," *Patterns of Prejudice* 54, no. 3 (2020): 215–37.

⁸ Meer Faisal, "In Pictures: Victims of Islamophobic Violence in Rajasthan," *Maktoob Media*, April 13, 2022, <https://maktoobmedia.com/2022/04/13/in-pictures-victims-of-islamophobic-violence-in-rajasthan/>.



Figure 4: An Indian Muslim Ayub Khan standing in front of his demolished shops in Khargone, Madhya Pradesh.¹⁰

India has been protected as the bastion of secular utopia of democracy but inherently it has always been the birthplace of Hindu nationalism in the covert and overtakes, which at first were only hidden behind the secular jargon of democratic policies. However, recently it has been crystal clear in the far-right nationalist narratives. Though it is a self-inflicting phenomenon, but its impacts are far more drastic on the immediate neighbours of India especially Pakistan because of Kashmir and Muslim population living in India. As, the radical Hinduism could give impetus to the suppression of the Muslims.

Extremist Hindu Tactics

The Extremist Hindus belonging to the BJP, RSS, and Bajrang Dal are using certain tactics to inciting violence against the Indian Muslims. It was reported that extremist Hindus are using hate-filled songs which resulted in “Muslim neighborhoods resembling a war zone, with pavements littered with broken glass, charred vehicles and burned mosques.”¹¹ It is quite alarming that “The songs are, in fact, played with even greater vigor in front of the mosques to elicit a response from Muslims.” These tactics won’t just eliminate or kill Muslims but are aimed to decimate them especially in the economic terms by destroying their livelihoods and to inflict a certain level of intimidation among

⁹ Meer Fasial, “Photos: Burnt by Hindutva Mob and Bulldozed by BJP Govt; Muslim Lives in Khargone,” *Maktoob Media*, April 24, 2022, <https://maktoobmedia.com/2022/04/24/photos-burnt-by-hindutva-mob-and-bulldozed-by-bjp-govt-muslim-lives-in-khargone/>.

¹⁰ Kashif Kakvi, Rhea Mogul, and Esha Mitra, “His House Was Demolished Because He Is Muslim, He Says,” *CNN News*, April 22, 2022, <https://www.cnn.com/2022/04/21/india/india-hindu-muslim-violence-khargone-bulldozing-intl-hnk-dst/index.html>.

¹¹ Sheikh Saaliq, “In India, Hate-Filled Songs Are a Weapon to Target Muslims,” *Associated Press News*, April 22, 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/religion-india-violence-hindu-muslim-bf516bc2fbc0834c5822901f46c5d716>.

Muslims.¹² First the Hindutva mobs enter Muslim majority areas and incite violence and then the BJP Government protects the extremist Hindus and destroy Muslim properties.

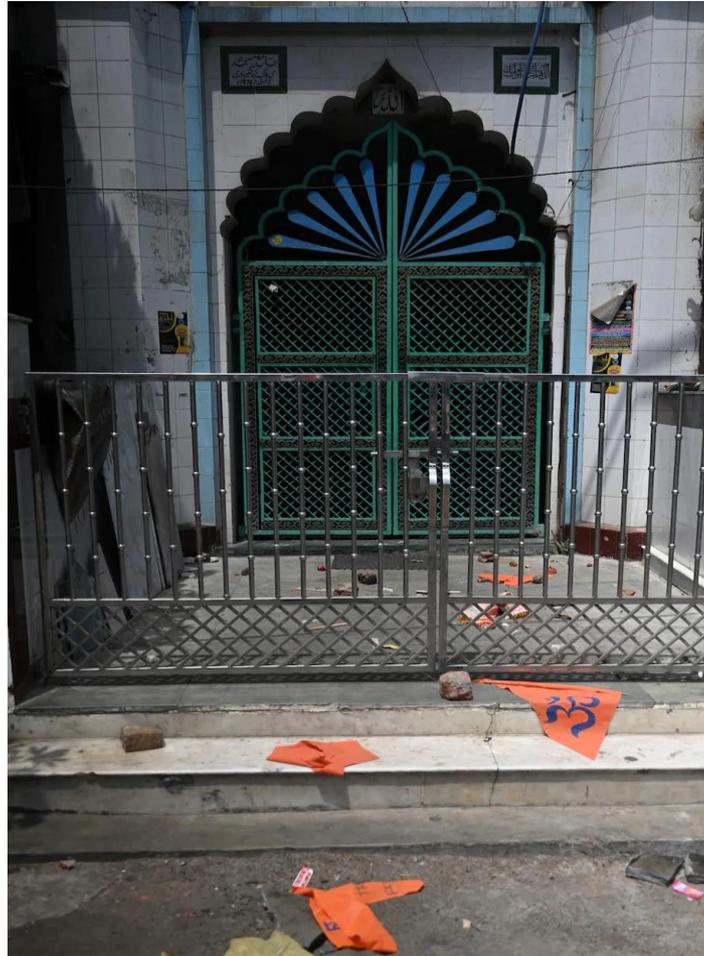


Figure 5: The entrance of the mosque in Jahangirpuri (New Delhi) whose front was bulldozed illegally by the BJP after the picture was taken. Note the Hindutva flags scattered.¹³

The stance of Pakistan

Pakistan being a responsible member of the international community and a neighbour of India, condemned the brutal act of burning the properties of the Muslims and said that it is equally alarming the indifference of the state machine, which deliberately took a different view and failed its fundamental obligation to ensure security and to protect the lives and property of its citizens. Furthermore, the spokesperson regretted that Indian minorities, especially Muslims are living a life

¹² Sumedha Pal, "One Sided Attempt to Target Muslims': Jahangirpuri Residents Angered by Demolition Drive," *The Wire*, April 20, 2022, <https://thewire.in/rights/jahangirpuri-demolition-driver-muslims-target-residents>.

¹³ Gerry Shih and Anant Gupta, "Religious Clashes across India Spark Fears of Further Violence," *The Washington Post*, April 20, 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/04/20/india-hindu-muslim-communal-violence/>.

of extreme fear and intimidation under the current regime.¹⁴ Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) spokesperson remorsefully said that the minorities in India, especially the Muslims, are living in a suspicious and terrorizing environment. The saffron mindset ultra-nationalists and blind followers of Hindutva ideology of Savarkar, are roaming openly and attacking the Muslims, since they believe that India is the land for Hindus only and consider the other minorities as the foreign objects injected in the Indian fabric.¹⁵ The ruling BJP and its ideological lynchpin i.e., Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) consolidation has empowered the propagation of senseless viciousness against minorities as a feature of its Hindutva agenda set apart by disdain and majoritarianism, he added. Furthermore, the spokesperson said that the new Indian history was packed with horrendous instances that mirrored the momentum regime's well-established hatred against the Muslims in India.¹⁶

The MoFA spokesperson said it was reprehensible that Prabodhanand Giri of Hinduism Raksha Sena and other Hindus calling for ethnic cleansing of Muslims expressed no regrets. The Government of India has not condemned or taken any action against them. Such a deafening act by the government is alarming for the interfaith harmony in India.¹⁷

Instead of yielding in their threats against the Muslims, the BJP-RSS activists have heightened the outrages. On April 3, 2022, Mr. Yati Narsinghan, the scandalous Haridwar cleric, boldly called upon the Hindus to wage war against the Muslims.¹⁸ Moreover, they proceeded with grave violations of human rights of minorities, particularly Muslims and their places of worship. Hostile to Muslim legislation by the Union Government of India and a few BJP-controlled states, always proceeded with such episodes of brutality against Muslims on wobbly appearances by Hindutva groups with complete exemption and frequently under state support feature the demolishing pattern of Islamophobia and present a terrible picture about the destiny of Muslims in India.¹⁹

Pakistan calls upon the international community to notify the stressing level of Islamophobia in India and sway Indian authorities to forestall clear human rights violations against minorities, especially

¹⁴ "Pakistan Strongly Condemns Vandalization and Burning of Muslim Houses in Karauli Rajasthan, India," *Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, April 5, 2022, <https://mofa.gov.pk/pakistan-strongly-condemns-vandalization-and-burning-of-muslim-houses-in-karauli-rajasthan-india/>.

¹⁵ For a detailed account on Hindutva, please see: Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, *Hindutva*, Fifth Edition (Bombay, India: Veer Savarkar Prakashan, 1969).

¹⁶ "Pakistan Strongly Condemns Vandalization and Burning of Muslim Houses in Karauli Rajasthan, India."
¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ "Pakistan Condemns Vandalism against Muslims in India," *The Express Tribune*, April 6, 2022, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/2351150/pakistan-slams-burning-of-muslims-homes-in-india-riots>.

¹⁹ "FIR Against Yati Narsinghanand for Giving Call to Arms at 'Hindu Mahapanchayat' in Delhi," *The Wire*, April 4, 2022, <https://thewire.in/communalism/fir-against-yati-narsinghanand-for-giving-call-to-arms-at-hindu-mahapanchayat-in-delhi>.

Muslims and find successful ways to guarantee the wellbeing, security, and prosperity of all minorities in India.²⁰

Conclusion

In post-2014 Modi's India, the rights of minorities were oppressed, and their voices were suppressed endlessly. The Indian Government has already failed to secure the fundamental rights of the minorities, especially Muslims, but now they also fail to protect their citizens' lives, liberty, and property. The Hindutva ideologues are sitting in the mainstream as the incumbent government. They are sitting idle and taking no specific measures against the saffron ultra-nationalist groups involved in the riots and violence against the Muslims. Moreover, the BJP leaders are ignoring the elephant in the room, in the shape of their leaders, calling for genocide and ethnic cleansing of Muslims multiple times openly in Hindu seminaries and "*Dharam Sansads*." These circumstances in the world's largest democracy are alarming for the whole South Asian region and beyond.

Such occurrences of blatant violence are becoming a new normal in Modi's Post-Truth India, where the value and dignity of a human life is on the decline and religious minorities especially Muslims are facing a systematic apartheid leading to extermination.²¹

²⁰ "Pakistan Strongly Condemns Vandalization and Burning of Muslim Houses in Karauli Rajasthan, India."

²¹ Ravi Joshi, "The Contours of India's Post-Truth State," *The Wire*, June 27, 2021, <https://thewire.in/politics/the-contours-of-indias-post-truth-state>.