

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

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## India: Amnesty International denied access to Gujarat for investigations

Amnesty International expressed its deep regret at the *de facto* refusal of the Indian government to allow its delegates access to the state of Gujarat. The delegation planned to carry out investigations into recent massacres and other human rights violations, and monitor the progress made in bringing perpetrators to justice.

The Indian government failed to provide a response to the visa application submitted by the organization before the mutually agreed deadline of 12 July 2002. As agreed with government representatives in London, Amnesty International is therefore compelled to assume that the visa will not be granted.

Amnesty International believes that the refusal of the Indian government to grant access to the state will only reinforce the concerns that the government of Gujarat and the state police might have been accomplices in preparing the ground for the violence and in allowing it to occur, and could be attempting now to cover up involvement of their officials.

"This refusal damages the image of both the Indian and Gujarati governments before their citizens and the international community. A government which fully accepts its responsibilities in protecting its citizens and upholds their constitutional rights to life and equality does not shy away from international scrutiny," the organization said.

Amnesty International remains committed to exposing the truth on the Gujarat massacres and campaigning for justice for the victims. The organization calls on the international community to strengthen its efforts to ensure that Gujarat does not fall off the agenda until the perpetrators of the violence are brought to justice, and the victims and their families receive adequate reparation, including compensation, and rehabilitation.

### **Background:**

Amnesty International believes that human rights are the legitimate concern of the international community, and therefore seeks to engage all governments, inter-governmental agencies and others, in protecting human rights both within their own country and in abroad. The Indian government has made international commitments to uphold human rights by ratifying human rights treaties such the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Amnesty International pursues a policy of transparency in its relations with governments all over the world: the organization always seeks to obtain research visas for its delegates entering a country in the frame of a research mission and informs governments of the overall purposes of its visits.

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