[Mobs Engage in Anti-Muslim Violence in India as Rights Activists Criticize the Role of the Modi Government in Stoking Religious Tensions](#)

Troubling and large-scale religious violence has taken place throughout India in the preceding weeks. During a recent Hindu religious procession, mobs desecrated multiple mosques, chanted slogans inciting genocide against Muslims, and physically assaulted local citizens. Particularly worrying is the fact that instances like these have become far too common under the government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Rights activists and opposition members have criticized Modi and his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) for their inaction and downplaying of the rise in religiously-motivated violence – both of which have emboldened extremists. Additionally, the BJP has been accused of promoting divisive policies that inflame religious tensions and looking the other way while Hindu vigilante groups operate more freely within society. Many families have also documented the inability to register incident reports with authorities, some of whom even have links to the discriminatory riots.

In response to the latest violence, 13 opposition leaders signed and released an open letter condemning the behavior and Modi's lack of action. In the letter released this past weekend, the signatories voiced their shock "at the silence of the prime minister who has failed to speak against the words and actions of those who propagate bigotry" and on the contrary has "incited and provoked society, the eloquent testimony of which is the fact that such private armed mobs enjoyed the luxury of official patronage." It is the view of many that Modi is emboldening extremism. Modi and members of his BJP consistently react to such disturbing incidents by blaming "fringe elements" and downplaying the scale and prevalence of the increasing violence under his watch.

There have been numerous acts of violence whereby mobs assault Muslims, destroy their homes, and desecrate places of worship. Another incident took place at one of India's major universities, when students belonging to a nationalist club on campus incited a physical altercation with other students because of the non-vegetarian options being served at the cafeteria. Dozens of people were injured and a number of Muslim-owned houses and businesses were destroyed. Furthermore, those who opposed the actions of the destructive mob that was desecrating a mosque had their houses and shops demolished. These demolitions were carried out by police forces without notice or due process. Many rights advocates have called this a thinly-veiled attempt by Modi government authorities to continue to marginalize the Muslim population in India.

Activists also point to the fact that Modi's government has adopted multiple laws and policies that discriminate against Muslims in India. These include citizenship laws that were passed in 2019, making religion the basis for citizenship in India. There was another law passed earlier that year that revoked the constitutional autonomy granted to the only Muslim-majority state of Jammu and Kashmir as well. Additionally, the Modi government has restricted movement in these areas and continues to impose broad limitations on their freedom of speech and press. Any critics or dissidents are threatened with arrest. This growing trend of anti-Muslim policies and sentiment coupled with the increasing authoritarian leanings of the Modi government has alarmed humanitarian observers around the world. Experts fear that the religiously-motivated violence is likely to continue due to the existing circumstances.