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Dear Minister,

It is with some interest that we read your statement as Minister for India informing of the Government's change in policy and the meeting sanctioned by the Foreign Office between the British High Commissioner to India, James Bevan, and the Chief Minister of Gujarat State, Narendra Modi.

The meeting represents a U-turn in the policy formerly observed by Her Majesty's Government following the horrendous events seen in Gujarat state in 2002 with murderous pogroms attacking the province's Muslim population. Estimates place the number of Muslim dead conservatively at 2,000. The pogroms were the worst religious violence witnessed in India since the population transfers post partition in 1947. It was and is befitting to the victims of that horrific episode that our policy on engagement reflect the heinous crimes inflicted on the Muslims of Gujarat.

Mr Modi has been pursued in relation to the events of February 2002, but the special legal team mandated by India's Supreme Court, despite concluding that his speeches at the time were "sweeping and offensive" has been unable to bring charges due to lack of evidence.

Mr Modi has nonetheless, shown himself to be remorseless at the events which took place under his watch. He was earlier this year found in contempt of court for refusing to honour the compensation legally awarded to 56 victims whose shops and livelihoods were destroyed during the pogroms. Many other victims await their entitlement to due recompense.

Amnesty International in a statement marking the tenth anniversary of the Gujarat pogroms stated, *"The majority of the perpetrators of the Gujarat violence walk free, assuming that they will not be punished by the state institutions which have simply failed to ensure justice for the victims."*

This state of affairs Amnesty concludes is "offensive to any notion of justice". It is a view we too hold strongly.

While we duly recognise the Government's strategic responsibility in developing closer bilateral ties with the BRIC countries, we would draw attention to this aspect of your statement,

"We want to secure justice for the families of the British nationals who were killed in 2002. We want to support human rights and good governance in the state".

We very much hope the Government and Foreign Office *will* honour the memory of those British nationals who were killed in 2002, and the many more who lost family members or loved ones, as it paves the way for a re-engagement with Mr Modi's government.

Yours sincerely,

Shenaz Bunglawala