

Gujarat riots weren't a sudden backlash

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HEADLINES TODAY

THE 'instantaneous reaction' explanation of the Gujarat riots seems to be a fanciful construct if police control room messages and state intelligence bureau reports of February 27, 2002 are factored in.

Headlines Today has accessed some of these inputs from field officers about VHP leaders making provocative speeches, crowds being mobilised, and warnings about the possibility of major riots. It is established fact that no curfew was imposed in Ahmedabad till noon the next day. The BJP government supported the VHP bandhs that, as events turned out, proved to be the pretext under which violent mobs were mobilised.

The most intriguing aspect of these messages is that they don't find mention in the 541-page closure report filed by the Special Investigation Team (SIT). No attempt seems to have been made by the SIT to reconstruct events as they unfolded immediately after the Sabarmati train incident.

Flurry of warnings before riots broke out

There were two centralised police control rooms in Ahmedabad in 2002. The Ahmedabad Police Control Room, a few km from Naroda and the now infamous Gulberg Society, received messages of the buildup in the city, while the State Police Control Room in Gandhinagar got similar messages from across the state. A third control room at the State Intelligence Bureau Headquarters in Gandhinagar, the State DGP's office is located, was also flooded with field intelligence reports from across Gujarat; copies of these too are with Headlines Today.

For instance, a field level officer faxed this message to the SIB:

Feb 27, 2002 Time: Not Known
Sender: D.O, Ahmedabad
Recipient: Intelligence Office, Virangam (Ahmedabad)
■ 75 VHP & Bajrang Dal members gathered at Virangam Town Chali & Golwada area
■ Situation in the area very tense
Similarly, SIB messages show that there were



As many as 790 Muslims and 254 Hindus were killed in the 2002 Gujarat riots.

ZAKIA JAFRI CHALLENGES CLEAN CHIT TO MODI

ZAKIA Ehsan Jafri, the widow of former Congress MP Ehsan Jafri who was killed in the Gulberg Society massacre during the 2002 Gujarat riots, filed a protest petition on Monday.

It comes more than a year after the Supreme Court-appointed SIT submitted its report stating that they couldn't find anything against Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi and 62 other

accused in the case.

Jafri, in her fresh petition, demanded that the SIT report be rejected and that all the accused, including Modi, be charge-sheeted. She also sought that the case be transferred to an "Independent agency".

In her petition, Jafri alleged that the SIT had adequate documents and statements to come to a prima facie finding against all the accused.



Zakia Jafri

three alerts about the impending massacre at Gulberg.

Date: 28.02.02 **Time:** 12:15
Sender: Police Inspector CJ Bharwad

To: State SIB Control Room
■ Muslims reside in Gulberg Society

■ Mob is surrounding the place

■ Strict watch should be kept there.

Date: 28.02.02
Time: 14:50
Sender: Police

Inspector CJ Bharwad

To: State SIB Control Room
■ Mob of 3000 rioters has surrounded Gulberg Society
■ take immediate action.

Date: 28.02.02 **Time:** 17:00
Sender: Police Inspector CJ Bharwad

To: State SIB Control Room
■ Mob attacked the society from all sides

■ Ehsan Jafri and women and children burnt alive
■ Houses are ablaze
■ Mob is looting from homes

REPEATED WARNINGS

■ Headlines Today has uncovered the police control room messages and the state intelligence bureau reports which show that the police had received a constant stream of inputs from its field officers about VHP leaders making provocative speeches, about crowds being mobilised and warnings about the possibility of major riots breaking out

■ Despite the flurry of ground reports and advance warnings, no curfew was imposed in Ahmedabad till noon the next day

■ The BJP government supported the VHP-called bandhs that proved to be the pretext under which violent mobs were mobilised

■ VHP leaders were not warned or put under preventive detention

The PCR messages don't find any mention in closure report filed by the SIT