

# Biden urged to discuss human rights in India with Modi

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The [U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom](#) urged President Joe Biden to raise concerns about religious freedom and human rights in India during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's state visit this week.

The Indian government, led by the Bharatiya Janata Party, has supported discriminatory policies that severely hinder and restrict the religious freedom of minority groups, commissioners said.

"With India's upcoming state visit, the Biden administration has a unique opportunity to explicitly incorporate religious freedom concerns into the two countries' bilateral relationship," said USCIRF Commissioner David Curry.

"It is vital the U.S. government acknowledge the Indian government's perpetration and toleration of particularly severe violations of religious freedom against its own population and urge the government to uphold its human rights obligations."

Discriminatory policies commissioners noted include hijab bans, anti-conversion laws and the Citizenship Amendment Act, which excludes Muslims from the fast track to citizenship offered to other migrants from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan.

"During this state visit, we ask President Biden to raise religious freedom with Prime Minister Modi directly, including by urging him to amend or repeal policies that target and repress religious minorities," Commissioner Stephen Schneck said.

USCIRF repeatedly has recommended the U.S. Department of State designate India as a Country of Particular Concern for engaging in systematic, ongoing and egregious violations of religious freedom.

Eighteen members of the U.S. Senate and 57 members of the House of Representatives—all Democrats—also sent a letter to the White House urging Biden to discuss human rights issues with Modi, [Reuters reported](#).

## Violence continues in Manipur



More than a month after mob violence began in the Manipur State of northeast India, at least 250 churches have been burned, and casualty reports grow daily. Officials report more than 300 people have been injured, and about 37,000 displaced people are in relief shelters. More than 4,000 cases of arson have been reported. (Photo distributed by CSW)

In the Manipur State of northeast India, mob violence that began May 3 has developed into “ethnic cleansing” and “religious persecution” against

Christians, said Pastor Thong Lun of Greater Houston Burmese Christian Fellowship.

Thong's church has a longstanding ministry among Burmese refugees in northeast India, and he has maintained close contact with sources there.

[At least 250 churches have been burned](#) in the Manipur State, a month and a half after mob violence began there, Thong reported.

Conflict between the predominantly Christian Kuki ethnic group and the mostly Hindu Meitei people began as a political dispute over land rights and scheduled tribal status. Scheduled tribes have constitutionally granted property protection, and tribal members are entitled to political representation, educational benefits and affirmative action in employment.

However, after mobs raided police stations and seized more than 5,000 weapons, both Kuki and Meitei Christians have been targeted.

On June 2, Manipur Chief Minister Biren Singh [announced the death toll](#) reached 98, but other sources estimate a significantly higher number of fatalities.