

A statement on the Mumbai bomb blast

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South Asia Solidarity Group strongly condemns the horrific bomb blasts in Mumbai on July 11 that killed some 200 people and injured more than 700. We extend deep condolences to all those who have lost loved ones, and our hopes for the speedy recovery of all who have been injured. We salute the spirit of solidarity and resilience shown by the ordinary people of Mumbai in recent days. People of all communities have come together to give blood and support to the victims and their families, refusing to be manipulated by the forces of sectarian terror behind the blasts.

We fervently hope that this spirit can be sustained over the coming weeks in the face of a new onslaught by Hindu fascism. We deplore the blatantly provocative decision by the Sangh Parivar to invite Narendra Modi, Chief Minister of Gujarat to lead an 'anti-terrorist' march in Mumbai. The projection of the chief architect of the genocide of Muslims in Gujarat in 2002 as the leading face of the BJP at this juncture indicates the sinister intentions of the Hindutva forces. This comes in the wake of the Jammu and Kashmir BJP's recent call for an implementation of a 'solution' to the Kashmir problem on the lines of the 'Gujarat model'.

What has been the Congress Government's response?

We are disturbed to note that rather than send out a message that any attempts to make communal capital out of the bomb blasts will not be tolerated, the Congress Government has inadvertently strengthened the Sangh Parivar by once again invoking Pakistan as the ultimate enemy. The government has essentially brushed aside the Pakistani government's denials of responsibility and offers of cooperation and have held it responsible for what happened in Mumbai. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh is attending the G-8 meeting at St. Petersburg and is reported to be planning to pin-point Pakistan as the ultimate source of terrorism round the world. The process of normalisation of relations between India and Pakistan has already been affected, with India calling off the proposed meeting of the Foreign Secretaries later this month.

We are also concerned about mass arrests targeting the Muslim community. Already, around 250 have been taken into custody near the railway station of Mahim in Mumbai alone. Many more have been rounded up in other parts of Maharashtra. Previous experiences lead us to be concerned for the safety and human rights of innocent people in this context.

We call on the people of India to draw upon their deep reserves of mutual solidarity and resist the attempts of the ruling parties to draw them into further bloodshed.