From *Vatani* to *Visthapit*: Displacement in the 2002 violence

On the 28th of February 2002, as black smoke emanated from shops, kiosks and houses, it looked like Ahmedabad was burning. For Zakia, who climbed to her terrace in her house in Paldi for a bird’s eye view, she could see the smoke but was unable to judge where exactly it came from and her own experience in the past made her feel like it was all around and not far from her own house. The communal violence that began on February 2002 went on till June and sporadic incidents of violence continued in the tense atmosphere in the state right up to the end of the year and into the first few months of the next year as well. As one man pointed out, these days in Gujarat even if two motorists clash, it becomes *quami*, a communal issue.1 The insecurity that the violence created caused Muslims to flee their homes so that at one time there were around one and a half lakh people in relief camps across the state and relief colonies were constructed for people who could not return while ghettoisation across urban and rural areas have increased. This chapter seeks to provide a chronological account of the violence and the displacement it produced. However while time is the thread of this account produced more than 8 years after the violence and therefore gives a bird’s eye view, it is individual narratives that shed light on processes and causes of displacement.

Through newspaper accounts and the significant amount of independent reportage in both print and visual media an attempt has been made to provide an account of the violence and displacement. The government however refuses to call this displacement and insists that Muslims living in these “resettlement colonies” do so of their own volition. This chapter therefore seeks to address the migration-displacement debate by chronicling what happened. Newspaper reports and interviews have been used to reconstruct circumstances and processes in the journey from being *vatanis* which refers to the place that you belong to or are a resident of, to having to flee their homes through their stay in temporary dwellings such as relief camps, rented accommodations or houses of relatives and friends to relief colonies or houses in

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1 Interview with Yusuf Sheikh, Convenor, Antarik Visthapith Hak Rakshak Samiti, Baroda 25/02/2009.
places of Muslim concentration and being identified by NGOs as *visthapith* or displaced people.

While almost all Muslims felt their safety was under threat, a large number of Muslims of all classes in areas that were worst affected felt compelled to move to safety at least during the worst days of the violence. Different aspects of displacement such as flight, camps and return are sought to be understood through experiences of the displaced in Ahmedabad, Vadodara and rural areas.

**The immediate context**

On 27th February 2002, a large number of *kar sevaks* were returning to Gujarat from Ayodhya by the Sabarmati Express when some of them were caught in an altercation in the early hours of the morning when the train stopped at Godhra railway station, a town with a large Muslim population. They were returning from a *shila dan* or brick donation movement organized by Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) where bricks were brought from different parts of India for mobilizing popular support and construction material was collected near the disputed site for the construction of the Ram temple over the medieval Babri mosque in Ayodhya believed to be the birthplace of Ram.\(^2\) After the altercation at the Godhra railway station, the train stopped a few metres away from the station again and subsequently as a mob from the nearby *basti* of Muslims surrounded the train, the compartment caught fire and 57 people including women and children were killed in the fire. The Chief Minister, Narendra Modi visited the station at 2 o clock the same day and the bodies were brought to a hospital in Ahmedabad in a motorcade. By the evening of the same day the Chief Minister announced that he suspected an ISI (Inter Services Intelligence of Pakistan) hand in the killings and announced that there would be a state bandh the next day to mourn the deaths. Already, right wing groups of Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and Bajrang Dal (BD) had given a call for state bandh the next day and for a Bharat bandh on 1st March. The newspaper Sandesh, a leading Gujarati daily carried a front page report that stated that before the burning of the train 10-15 Hindu girls were taken from the train compartment and burned and their bodies were badly

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\(^2\) *The Hindu*, 31/1/2002. The Ramjanmabhoomi movement led by the BJP has sought to mobilize national support since the late 1980s for the construction of a temple over what is believed to be the birthplace of Ram over which stands the 16th century Babri masjid mosque. Despite the matter being sub judice right wing activists continued to mobilize around the disputed site by such campaigns as brick collection.
mutilated. As shops and establishments remained closed the next day i.e. on the 28th of February, mobs of thousands began to take to the streets armed with sticks, swords, petrol and cooking gas cylinders in Ahmedabad, Baroda, Kheda and Panchmahal districts.

Ahmedabad, 28th February 2002: Demographic and Topographical aspects

With a chuckle at her own ingenuity 60 year old Noorjahan Kalamiyan Sheikh says she left her home in Asarwa Kadiye ki Chali, Ahmedabad along with her family after hearing about what had happened in Godhra in the wee hours of 28th itself. Having witnessed violence of 1969 where a mob burned Muslims in a house in her locality, she knew that if it happened in Godhra it would happen there as well.

“We knew that if it happened in Godhra it will definitely happen here. In 1969 we had seen it in front of our eyes ahko dekhi haal kara ne? isliye chet jawe we had seen them do it in front of out eyes, that why we were alert. We first removed son and daughter in law and we came to the station and from there we all got scattered. Like she went to her mother’s house, I went to mine. Then the dhamaal happened. We couldn’t take anything, everything got cleaned out. Ours was the only house there so moving becomes important didn’t it? Otherwise if we get surrounded then the woman will get trapped. For a woman then there will be nothing else to take. If we don’t take her and leave then if she stays here she will be in trouble.”

Few other Muslims were as quick to anticipate the violence that was to come even in the “city with many borders,” Ahmedabad. The city’s layout has traditionally been that of communities living together distinctly and in close proximity with one another. This is commonplace in the city even today not just with the fabled ‘pols’ of the walled city but also in working class neighbourhoods with chawls like Vohra ni Chali and Asarwa Kadiye ki Chali and even residential colonies in the upmarket western side of Sabarmati river for instance, with names like Muslim Society, or Thakorwas indicating the residence of Thakors. Like in any city, Muslims of Ahmedabad are also spread out across varied types of residential facilities such as the poor and working

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class who stay in slums along Sabarmati, in the chauls in the working class neighborhoods initially constructed for mill workers; in the walled city which includes the middle class, working class and poor; the rich who stay in the more serviced localities on the west side of the river of Sabarmati; and the more recent development of areas of Muslim concentration on the periphery of the city such as Juhapura, Vatwa and Bombay Hotel areas. Due to previous instances of violence that had led to Muslims increasingly moving to places of Muslim concentration, the demographic spread of Muslims even prior to 2002 was clearly visible in pockets in the walled city, slums in the industrial suburbs in the eastern periphery of Ahmedabad, chauls i.e. one room living quarters constructed in a row to house workers of the mills where Muslims and Dalits lived side by side, among middle class and upper middle class living in pockets in Paldi and a few colonies in Navrangpura on the western side of the river Sabarmati and in large settlements like Juhapura which houses Muslims of all classes from IAS officers to people below the poverty line in an area that a word like ‘ghetto’ seems inadequate to describe.

Like Noorjahan a few, in the walled city and in the working class neighborhoods who had witnessed violence earlier, also anticipated trouble when they heard of fire in the train at Godhra. Earlier when riots broke out, many Muslims from such neighborhoods would head straight to the railway station and to their respective villages from there. They would return after about 10-15 days when tensions in the city cooled down.\(^5\) According to Khatunbibi Sayyed who had also witnessed the 1969 riots when she fled with her family, many Muslims in Bapunagar and Chamanpura had left the locality on the same day the train coach caught fire in Godhra i.e. the 27\(^{th}\) of February 2002 itself. She left in the morning of 28\(^{th}\) of February as soon as her neighbours warned her of arson that had broken out with the burning of a bakery in her locality. She left with whatever money she had and a few important papers, apparently familiar with the possible course of events. In 1969, Khatunbibi had to leave her home when her husband seeing the violence around got anxious and they moved out with their children and a small sack of belongings or potli to seek refuge in a chawl in Kalupur, a locality with a Muslim majority. Her 45 year old son reminds her about another time they had to flee their homes for safety in 1985-86, after the anti reservation riots turned communal. Then they had to flee in the middle of the

\(^5\) Interview with Norrjahan Kalumiyan Sheikh, Siddiqabad Relief Colony, Ahmedabad, 27/10/2008.
night. There was rioting on the streets maaram kati-maarum kati, (killing and bloodshed all around) and her Hindu neighbours hid her in their house since pehle wale Hindu acche the (the earlier ones were good Hindus). In 1985, she had fled with her family to Jamalpur, another locality where there are a large number of Muslims who had set up a camp for those displaced then. In 1985 their house was broken into and looted. Like several others they could not take any of their possessions with them save some money and important papers like the ration card. Again in 1992, in the riots after the Babri masjid demolition she had to flee again and take refuge in a camp in Bapunagar. In 2002, Khatunbibi knew she had to go to a camp again for safety but was prevented from going there because of the restriction of movement and police bandobast, so she went instead to a locality of Muslims called Patel ni chali. She did not know the Muslims there, but they welcomed her and gave her and many like her refuge and they eventually set up a camp where she stayed on for up to 4 months.

Places like Bapunagar and Gomtipur that are known to be communally sensitive also saw a lot of violence on the 28th of February. Every riot produces some amount of displacement and the years of riots that these localities have witnessed have led to communities clustering together within the same locality, so that the Hindu side is distinct from the Muslim side and the point where one side ends and the other begins is commonly referred to as ‘border’. It was after the 1985 riots that Bapunagar came to be partitioned into Hindu and Muslim areas through a distress selling of both communities into their respective ilakas areas separated by the border. During the 2002 violence, in the case of such localities, the ‘border’ became the frontier to be defended. Khatunbibi’s son was Sirajbhai was living on the ‘border’ in Old Bapunagar at the time of the violence in 2002. He sent his children to the interior of Bapunagar, where he knew it would be safe and stayed back with his wife to face the mob ‘samma karne’ at the border where his house was. After 3 days he decided to pull back and go to the interior of Bapunagar himself where other Muslims of the locality had started collecting food and clothes among themselves for people who had fled their homes.

Most Muslims however, seemed to be caught unaware by the violence that started on the 28th of February. The worst case, in terms of casualties was that of

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6 Although this chawl was called Patel ni Chali, Muslims had moved in there, probably again due to the process of ghettoisation and migration.

Naroda Patiya. Naroda is an industrial suburb on the eastern periphery of Ahmedabad where there are a large number of small scale industries that have attracted a large number of migrants. To house these migrants, slums have come up on the agricultural land around the area, where only after much struggle over the years have basic facilities like water become available in this locality. Naroda Patiya was a “mixed basti”, in the sense that Muslims as well as Hindus lived in the area, although Muslims usually lived in clusters or in the same row, like in Noorani Mohalla. Several people who had lived in Naroda Patiya for years have affirmed that despite the frequency of communal incidents in Ahmedabad, that area was not prone to violence.  

The residents of Naroda Patiya were therefore caught completely unaware as a mob began to gather in front of the entrance of the locality since 9 o clock in the morning of 28th February. Mohamammad Khalid was among the few men near the entrance when the mob had gathered, when the police fired in their direction, injuring him with a bullet in his spine and killing several others. BJP Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) Mayaben Kodnani was reportedly present at the time at Naroda Patiya and left after speaking to the police who, it is important to note, were already present at the spot.  

Soon however, the mob advanced into the basti and chased its Muslims residents around in their own locality for hours. Many families were separated and gruesome killings, rapes and the burning alive of men, women and children continued from morning till evening. Only those Muslims who managed to go to the nearby State Reserve Police quarters before 11-12 o clock or those who hid themselves somehow managed to escape that day. At 11:30 in the night, when the police came to escort the survivors, people initially refused to come out for fear of being attacked again. Some of the survivors still believe it was the organizers of Shah Alam camp who came to take them and not the police. The violence in Naroda Patiya and Naroda Gam had claimed 106 victims although the estimated death toll remained half of that for years as officials waited for 7 years before declaring the missing as

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8 Among others, interviews with Aishabibi Abid Ali Pathan and Noorjahan Abdul Kadir Shiekh, Faisal Park, Vatwa, Ahmedabad, 19/12/2008. Both these women had lost their husbands in the violence on 28th February 2002.

9 This is being investigated by the Special Investigation Team (SIT). The MLA Mayaben Kodnani has been imprisoned and charged along with others for murder, attempt to murder, rioting, loot and destruction of evidence. *Times of India*, 4/5/2009.

10 Interview with Noorjahan Abdul Kadir Sheikh, Faisal Park, Vatwa, Ahmedabad, 19/12/2008.

The police van took the survivors to Shahibaug, a Muslim majority area and to Shah Alam.

Gulbarg Society was another colony located in a ‘mixed’ area where communities lived side by side in a working class locality. In the chawls that surrounded the area, Muslims lived alongside Dalits. Older people in the locality recall having to flee their homes in 1969 riots as well, in order to seek safety in Shahibaug, a Muslim dominated area. In earlier riots like the anti reservation riots in 1985, when tensions were running high, some families also left their houses temporarily for a school in Bapunagar for 2-3 days and returned when the situation got better without much loss to property. Gulbarg Society was a colony surrounded by chawls on one side and railway tracks at the back. In previous instances of violence such as in 1992-93, the colony had already witnessed mobs surrounding the area and indulging in arson on the nearby shops.

Ehsan Jafri, its prominent resident who came from a humble background, had managed to achieve success and had been Congress Member of Parliament (MP) when Amar Singh Chaudhary was Chief minister of Gujarat. The housing society was reportedly “built like a fort” with “two feet wide and 20 feet high boundary walls in addition to a barbed fence surrounding it”, which itself is an indication of the feeling of insecurity that already existed. Whenever a riot broke out, some people from the neighbouring slum would take shelter in Gulbarg since there was always a State Reserve Police (SRP) post outside his house and Jafri reportedly used his influence to secure protection. On 28th February, in the morning Ehsan Jafri reportedly spoke to the Ahmedabad Commissioner of Police, P. C. Pandey who came to Gulbarg Society in the morning and assured him of protection and left. Soon a mob of thousands including people whom the survivors have identified as residents of the locality

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13 Interview with Sarfaraz Abdul Qadar Munshi, Siddiqabad Colony, Juhapura, 30/11/2008 and Interview with Aisha Asuben Siddiqabad, Siddiqabad Colony, Juhapura, 29/10/2008.
14 Interview with Noorjahan Lalsahab Sheik, Siddiqabad Relief Colony, Ahmedabad, 29/10/2008.
15 Interview with Professor Ansari, Paldi, Ahmedabad, 11/12/2008.
18 Interview with Imtiaz Shahid Pathan, Ahmedabad, 12/7/2008 and Sarfarazbhai Abdul Qadar Munshi. 30/11/2008. See also Concerned Citizens Tribunal Report, Crimes Against Humanity: An Inquiry into the Carnage in Gujarat, Vol. 1. This matter is under investigation by the SIT.
gathered in front of the society. Some Muslims from the chawls nearby had fled to Gulbarg society for refuge, others fled to the railway station nearby even as the mob increased in number and started breaking down shops belonging to Muslims. Only some of those who fled to Gulbarg lived to regret their decision. The restive mob started pelting stones which the young men from inside the colony threw back in defence. The mob kept up the offensive for hours demanding the surrender of Ehsan Jafri who went out to the mob at 2:30 pm and was hacked to death and his body burned.

A gas cylinder was used to bring down one portion of the wall and the mob stormed in devouring everything and everyone who came their way. At 5:30 pm the police came to escort the remaining few who had climbed up to the 2nd floor of Jafri’s house even as the rest of the structures and building burned. The survivors of Gulbarg society, as in the case of Naroda Patiya recall their reluctance to come out when the police came to escort them in the evening. The mob surrounded the police vehicle as well and it took 2 more hours till the harrowed survivors reached Shahibaug. 69 people had died, and many women raped and burned in the rampage of the mob on that single day in Gulbarg society.

Violence in other parts of Ahmedabad

Besides the instances of mass murders in Naroda Patiya and Gulbarg Society, violence caused several deaths in other parts of Ahmedabad on the 28th of February 2002 particularly in Saraspur, Shahwadi on the southern periphery of Ahmedabad and in Meghaninagar, Sundaramnagar and Behrampura as well. Another Muslim ghetto on the periphery that was attacked was Vatwa. Vatwa is a settlement among industrial suburbs on the eastern periphery in the south of Ahmedabad. On the 28th of February itself a large number of housing colonies of Muslims were gutted in fire forcing the residents to flee.

But it wasn’t only the periphery or the eastern side of Sabarmati that was attacked on that day. Paldi, an upmarket locality on the more serviced side of the city in western Ahmedabad which is known for the presence of rich Banias, Jains and a few colonies that house upper middle class Muslims that was attacked. While mobs

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19 Interview with Suraiyabano Pathan, Ahmedabad, 12/7/2008.
20 Interview with Noorjahan Lalsahab Sheikh, Siddiqabad, Juhapura, Ahmedabad, 29/10/2008.
surrounded and threw kakdas (burning rag) and hand made bombs into some of these housing societies of the Muslims, one colony that particularly attracted the wrath of the mob was one Delite Apartments with eyewitnesses claiming to have seen the Revenue minister who was subsequently murdered, Haren Pandya accompanying the mobs. In other colonies that were a few meters interior from the road, residents had to keep a constant vigil every night for their security for 3 months till the violence continued as no amount of personal contacts with the state came in useful to assure them of their safety. Almost all the residents of the colonies including doctors, advocates, a retired judge of the High Court and social workers surrounding Delite fled their home as soon as they had a chance to in the evening, for houses of relatives and community halls in Juhapura which became a haven for several Muslim families all over Ahmedabad.

Among the islands of peace in the city where no violence was reported were Ram-Rahim Nagar and Janata Nagar in Ramol, where among the residents was a survivor of the fire in the train carnage at Godhra. The VHP apparently dithered from any action because the proportion of Hindus and Muslims was 50-50. A common observation that several newspapers, particularly English dailies made was the lack of police presence or their being far out numbered by the mobs. There were even reports of fire brigades being prevented from reaching spots to douze the fire by mobs armed with swords and lathis.

**Violence in other parts of Gujarat**

While close to 200 deaths had taken place in a single day of violence in Ahmedabad, other cities like Vadodara, Surat and Viramgam also witnessed stabings, arson and stone pelting. In Vadodara, fourteen people were killed when a mob set fire to Best Bakery, owned by a family in Hanuman Tekdi. Curfew was imposed in the old city areas of Vadodara that are known for their communal sensitivity such as Karelibaug, Wadi, Navapura, Raopura, Panigate and City police stations after mobs initiated burning and looting of property and incidents of

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23 Interview in Paldi (name withheld), Ahmedabad, 29/1/2009.
stabbing.\textsuperscript{28} Curfew was imposed in 26 towns and cities in the state including parts of Ahmedabad, Vadodara, Surat, Rajkot, Anand, Nadiad and Kaira.\textsuperscript{29} Even the capital city of Gandhinagar witnessed violence with groups of people attacking the old secretariat building and the building of the Wakf Board was burned down.\textsuperscript{30}

By the afternoon of the 28\textsuperscript{th} of February violence had picked up in rural areas in several parts of Gujarat as the provocative reporting of the vernacular press got circulated and meetings and rallies were held in to discuss what had happened. Already on the 28\textsuperscript{th} in several villages of districts of Ahmedabad, Vadodara, Panchmahal, Kheda, Mehsana, Sabarkantha mobs started burning Muslim fields, shops, establishments and houses. In rural Ahmedabad, in several villages that had witnessed violence in 1992 as well (after the demolition of the Babri masjid), mobs surrounded and burned down houses of Muslims. Muslims hid in fields or wherever else they found refuge and some of them from villages like Kuha, Onganej and Chiloda found their way to camps in Ahmedabad.

In Panchmahal district as tribals participated in the violence for the first time, Muslims who were from trading communities like the Bohras who had been shopkeepers in remote adivasi villages for generations were caught completely unawares and fled to the jungles and hillocks.\textsuperscript{31} Interestingly in Godhra, where it all began and where there is the highest proportion of Muslim presence at 40\% as compared to 4.6\% in the whole district of Panchmahal\textsuperscript{32}, Muslims did not have to flee their homes because of attacks.\textsuperscript{33} However, in Visnagar town, in Mehsana district 11 family members of two Khan brothers were hacked and some burnt thereafter, in one of the Hindu-predominant localities, Deepda Darwaza, leaving just three survivors. In the districts of Anand, Dahod, Kheda and Sabarkantha as well attacks on Muslims properties forced Muslims to flee for their lives. The chief minister requested for additional troops and the army was kept on standby but after the first day of rioting itself 140 people were estimated to be dead from preliminary reports. As violence,

\textsuperscript{28} Naroda Patiya accounted for 95 deaths, Gulbarg 69 and The Hindu approximated around 30 deaths in other parts.
\textsuperscript{29} The Hindu, 1/3/2002.
\textsuperscript{30} The Hindu, 1/3/2002.
\textsuperscript{31} Interview with Nooruddinbhai and Fakruddin Najmuddin Mandalowala businessmen based in Godhra with shops in interior villages in Panchmahals, Vadodara, 24/2/2009. Also Interview with Memon family in Kifayatnagar, Kifayatnagar Relief Colony, Himmatnagar, Sabarkantha, 30/3/2009.
\textsuperscript{33} Interview with Nooruddinbhai and Fakruddin Najmuddin Mandalowala, Op.cit.
considered by many to be unprecedented since partition. The army was called in and deployed by 1st March after a two day inexplicable delay.

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35 *Times of India* 2/3/2002. The incident of the burning of the coach of Sabarmati Express took place on the 27th of February. After 24 hours Chief Minister Narendra Modi asked the Home Ministry for the army to be sent in at 6 pm on the 28th of February. After another 24 hours, on 1st March the army was finally deployed.
36 Interview with Nooruddinbhai and Fakruddin Najmuddin Mandalowala businessmen based in Godhra with shops in interior villages in Panchmahals, Vadodara, 24/2/2009. Also Interview with Memon family in Kifayatnagar, Kifayatnagar Relief Colony, Himmatnagar, Sabarkantha, 30/3/2009.
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*Map: 3.1: Location of Relief Camps and Violence Affected Areas Ahmedabad, 2002*

considered by many to be unprecedented since partition\textsuperscript{39} continued, the army was called in and deployed by 1\textsuperscript{st} March after a two day inexplicable delay.\textsuperscript{40}

The violence seemed to intensify in the rural areas on the next day which was a Friday. Muslims fleeing from their village in Dellol by foot were hacked to death. In Panderwada village 26 Muslims were hacked and some burned to death. In Ode village in Anand district which is known as an NRI village due to the large number of Patels who have migrated to developed countries, and who have also contributed towards the village infrastructure, Yusufbhai Vohra whose house was located next to his brother’s among the houses of Kanbi Patels had returned from his Friday prayers while the rest of his family was watching TV when the villagers gathered in a mob in front of their house. Out of Yusufbhai’s extended family only a few of them who were not on the ground floor, managed to escape to the vacant house of an NRI person, while the rest were trapped in the house when the mob surrounded it and set it on fire.\textsuperscript{41} Further up ahead another house was set on fire as well and 24 Muslims from the village were burned alive that day. The members of the Vohra family who managed to escape at night walked to Sureli, a village with a significant Muslim population 6 kms away. Even the other mohallas in Ode came under attack and were burned to the ground. In the early hours of the morning when the mob went away, some Muslims tried to flee to Sureli. “At night some stayed back here, some left for Sureli. Where one found a way they left there, to save one’s life.”\textsuperscript{42} Villages like Sureli that were villages of predominantly Muslim population became places of refuge for fleeing Muslims in rural areas.\textsuperscript{43}

However, even residence in an area of Muslim concentration was not a guarantee of safety for villagers in Nava Station, a village populated by Muslims and surrounded by Hindu-dominated villages near Deodar in Banaskantha district in north Gujarat. A group of around 200 people attacked it and killed at least four persons before police dispersed the mob and at least six persons were killed. Explains a community worker for Nyayagraha, villages with Muslim population such as Haripur

\textsuperscript{40} \textit{Times of India} 2/3/2002. The incident of the burning of the coach of Sabarmati Express took place on the 27\textsuperscript{th} of February. After 24 hours Chief Minister Narendra Modi asked the Home Ministry for the army to be sent in at 6 pm on the 28\textsuperscript{th} of February. After another 24 hours, on 1\textsuperscript{st} March the army was finally deployed.
\textsuperscript{41} Interview on 19/2/2009.
\textsuperscript{42} Interview with Rafiq Mohammed Sayyed, Ode, Anand, 6/3/2009.
\textsuperscript{43} How has the Gujarat Massacre Affected Minority Women: Survivors Speak, \textit{Op. cit.}
and Kesarpura in Sabarkantha that had become places of refuge for Muslims from neighboring villages “were not attacked, because they had a Muslim majority, but even these places were on alert because if 20-25 villages got together and attacked then again they would be in trouble.” The size of population of a pocket of Muslim concentration therefore seems to have played an important role in their ability to be ward of an attack and protect themselves at that time of violence. The Bharat Bandh declared by VHP on this day had turned violent in a few places outside Gujarat as well such as in parts of UP, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh and Haryana.

The army was finally deployed after a delay of two days. But that could not guarantee the security of villagers in Sardarpura in Mehsana district where mobs attacked and surrounded Muslims who had taken shelter in a house and electrocuted it leaving 33 dead. In Kidiad village in Sabarkantha as well Muslim villagers waited in the house of their ex sarpanch Salimbhai Sindhi for up to two days where they had hoped the violence would not affect them. When the police came to their village on 2nd April they warned them of danger and advised them that as they were minorities, it would be better for them to leave their women and children to a safe place. However when the villagers packed themselves on to two tempos (a process which took several hours) and left the village, they were stopped on the highway in Panchmahal district and 74 among them including women and children were brutally killed.

Even as the chief minister claimed that the situation was returning to normalcy, official figures of death and destruction reported a total of 289 deaths from over a dozen trouble spots, including Ahmedabad, Mehsana, Sabarkantha, Dahod, Vadodara, Bhavnagar, Rajkot and Surat. Violent incidents continued even on the 3rd of March such as the one involving the death of two UK nationals who were murdered by a mob on the highway close to Prantij. While central Gujarat and the rest of the state remained calm with sporadic incidents of violence, Ahmedabad simmered again for a fifth day of continued violence as mobs were back on the streets, indulging in large scale arson and killings even as a large number of migrant workers started to

44 Interview with Usmanbhai and Harenbhai, Nyaya Pathiks (Peace and Justice Community Worker) with Nyayagraha, Deshotar village, Sabarkantha, 19/3/2009.
47 Interview with Salimbhai Sindhi, survivor and ex sarpanch of Kidiad village, Al Falaha Colony, Modassa, Sabarkantha, 22/3/2009; Also Interview with Ayyubhai Sindhi and Ayeshabibi Sindhi ex resident of Kidiad, Al Falaha Colony, Modassa, Sabarkantha, 22/3/2009.
flee the city.\textsuperscript{49} On 5\textsuperscript{th} March among other deaths, 12 people who were told to wait in a house for the police to come and pick them up were killed in Ajanwa village.\textsuperscript{50} After six days of violence despite stray incidents of stabbing and burning of people a scaling down of violence was finally reported and curfew was lifted in majority of the 30 towns and cities where it had been imposed. Despite the scaling down of violence there was no respite for threatened Muslims. 150 Muslims were found hiding in the fields after mobs attacked and killed six Muslims in Ajanvah village. For a few days after that however, although the situation was tense there were no reports of violence except for that of rioting in Panvad village in Vadodara district, where villagers from 15 surrounding villages attacked the village on the 11\textsuperscript{th}}.\textsuperscript{51}

A striking aspect of the 2002 violence was the high incidence of sexual violence against Muslim women. Kallol taluka in Panchmahal district reportedly had the most extreme brutality against women.\textsuperscript{52} From elsewhere as well incidents of women being raped, gang raped and their private parts being mutilated and pierced with objects. Derogatory language was also used against women and mobs had even scrawled abusive language on burned houses, shops as reminder. There were incidents of rape on girls as young as 12 and even on pregnant women.\textsuperscript{53} Given the insecurity during that situation some women who had been raped and needed urgent medical attention did not even get medically examined which is crucial inorder to initiate legal action. Their case was worsened by the fact that in the case of mobs, some women were not even in a position to identify their rapists.\textsuperscript{54}

**Flight**

Since 28\textsuperscript{th} of February when the violence began, more and more Muslims had begun to flee their homes and seek refuge in Muslim dominated areas in cities like Juhapura in Ahmedabad, Tandalja in Vadodara, Ismail Nagar or Hadgood in Anand. In the case of rural areas people fled to villages and towns with significant Muslim populations such as Modassa, Idar and Himmatnagar. For many however who were

\textsuperscript{49} The Indian Express, 4/3/2002.
\textsuperscript{50} Times of India, 7/5/2002.
\textsuperscript{51} Times of India, 12/03/2002.
\textsuperscript{52} How has the Gujarat Massacre Affected Minority Women: Survivors Speak, Op.cit.
\textsuperscript{53} Interview with Neera and Rafi who worked with women in relief camps of Ahmedabad, Paldi, Ahmedabad, 16/2/2009.
caught unawares by the violence, finding these safer places to escape to involved much trial and error that too with their with their family in tow. Shamim Bano and her family who lived in the outskirts of Ahmedabad in Chiloda, on the North eastern periphery did not realise the gravity of the situation even when a hotel on the crossroad of her locality was burned since earlier whenever riots happened in Ahmedabad, they had remained unaffected.

Shamim Bano and her husband who was a contractor who took on construction of buildings had good relations with their neighbors who gave them shelter and refused to allow anyone to come into the locality when a mob came to attack their house. For 15 days they lived in fear as they continued to receive threats, and finally when their neighbors were also threatened with dire consequences if they continued to protect them, their joint family of three brothers left their house. They had no idea about camps and the only place that they could think of was their uncle’s house that was under construction in Gandhinagar. So the extended family of the three brothers and their children along with two other families traveled to Gandhinagar and stayed in the unfinished house for 2 days but they didn’t want to make themselves too conspicuous. So Shamimbano’s family looked for another house and got one for which they had to pay Rs. 2500 per month just to be able to sleep there. For meals they would go to their uncle’s house where food for the five families was made together. Her daughter says her uncle had to sell his wife’s jewellery to be able to provide for the extended family since there was no means of livelihood for those two months. She recalls going to different people’s houses for meals depending on whoever among their uncle’s friends invited them out of generosity. The uncertainty of the situation still left them feeling very unsafe and they decided to move to Shamim’s mother’s house on the outskirts of Gandhinagar. While traveling to her mother’s house in the village with her family she and her daughters dressed as Hindus.\textsuperscript{55} This is the story of many Muslims who had some means and connection with friends or relatives and who took refuge with them. For many women, the traditional place of safety where one can have the least reserve or formality, their mother’s home (maiden home) pier was the place they took refuge in.\textsuperscript{56} In Himmatnagar, since when the violence began, in the house of a retired college Principal there were 40 members of his extended family and friends from

\textsuperscript{55} Interview with Shamim Bano, Asim Park, Juhapura, Ahmedabad, 23/10/2008.
\textsuperscript{56} A large number of women who were interviewed went to their mother’s house, pier in Gujarati.
Khedbrahma, a communally sensitive town in Sabarkantha. Some lived on rent or in relatives houses but came to the camp to eat food.\textsuperscript{57}

Hundreds of youth continued to roam the streets, brandishing swords, daggers, axes and iron rods\textsuperscript{58} and creating panic among Muslims of all classes in all areas of Baroda as well. A retired employee of Gujarat Tractor Company described how he and his family felt watched as they continued to stay in their home in a colony made by the government housing board, and therefore of mixed residency. They continued to be on guard themselves and decided to leave their house at the crack of dawn when they thought the mob would be away on a break. They could only lock their house that they had invested much on over the years and leave with their daughter on a scooter to their relatives home on the outskirts of Baroda in Nimeta village. Their relatives were in no better position than them because they were also the only Muslim family in the village and the continuing reports of violence began to make them feel unsafe again. Again in two days relatives from Baroda sent a police escort for them and they came to Machipeeth in the old city in batches, after sending women and children first, the family reached another relatives place where they stayed for a month before finding a rented house in Tandalja, a huge area of Muslim concentration whose population has shot up even more after the 2002 violence. Even an eminent resident of Baroda, Professor Bandukwala had to escape his house, and tellingly, without involving the policeman on guard at his house before a mob attacked and burned it.

Mansoori Abbas Dawoodbhai was a successful shopkeeper who traded in grains in new Shinol village in Sabarkantha district. When he was threatened by some members of his own village on the 28\textsuperscript{th}, he sent his wife and children to his uncle house in Old Shinol. Some of his friends among the villagers also accompanied him there. He hid and watched as a mob burned his shop and house. He was fortunate that his son’s house that was attached to his did not burn because it shared a wall with the Bank of Baroda. This was true of most places where mobs burned entire houses of Muslims but only looted and burned possessions while sparing the house when the house shared a boundary or was too close to a Hindu house. They returned back to their house in 2 days for the lack of a better alternative. For about 22 days they stayed in the part of their house that had been spared because of its common wall with Bank

\textsuperscript{57} Interview with Ghulamhaji Walibhai Memon, Noor Colony, Sabarkantha, 30/3/2009.

\textsuperscript{58} Times of India 2/3/2002.
of Baroda but with little to sustain themselves except onion and roti as their entire shop with provisions and most of their possessions had been burned. The situation however was so tense that their son suggested for they move to Modassa, a town with Muslim concentration and stay on rent for a while. Their move to Modassa however, turned out to be longer than they had ever imagined.\(^{59}\)

One community worker joked that when man first landed on the moon, they found a Bohra was already doing business there. Such is the reputation of the community that is known for its business skills, and for having set up shops in remote villages especially in the district of Panchmahal and in surrounding districts. Muslims in this region also controlled a sizeable chunk of the money lending business in this region. 2 Dawoodi Bohra businessmen who ran shops in remote adivasi villages had to undertake long journeys to get to their families in Godhra because of the curfew there since the very same day that the Sabarmati Express incident happened and the violence in the neighboring areas around Godhra. One businessman whose shop was in a village in Baroda district drove all the way to Alirajpur, Indore in the state of Madhya Pradesh, before could return to his house in Godhra. Another Dawoodi Bohra businessman who had a shop in a tribal village called Dhadia said his family had to pay 40,000 to the police to escort him out of the jungles around Dhadia where he had been hiding for 3 days. It was interesting how these two residents vatani of Godhra saw riots as nothing out of the ordinary because their immediate answer to the question of whether they had seen a riot before was no. In 2002 however Godhra turned into a place of refuge where camps were put up.

At least in the districts of north and central Gujarat that were most affected by the violence no class or segment of society among Muslims seemed to have been unaffected. In Ahmedabad, even a sitting judge of the High Court had to flee his house. No amount of his official and personal contacts within the state machinery could guarantee his security.\(^{60}\) In the city of Anand as well, each and every shop in a chain of bakery stores called Everfresh belonging to one family was burned down and the family themselves had to move out of their plush apartment in the upmarket area of the city and take shelter in a Muslim village called Hadgood outside the city.

\(^{59}\) Interview with Abbasbhai Dawoodbhai Mansoori, Akram Park, Modassa, Sabarkantha, 20/3/2009.

\(^{60}\) See Concerned Citizens Tribunal, \textit{Op.cit.}
limits. Other small time businessmen and shopkeepers of Anand left with their families to stay with friends and relatives who have homes in 100 feet road near Ismail Nagar, a pocket of Muslim concentration on the periphery of the city.

"You have to understand that 2002 was no surprise for Muslims in Gujarat," says a Muslim journalist with a reputed national daily who covered the riots herself and had to move with her family on the 11th of March from their home of more than 15 years in a mixed middle class locality in Baroda to a friend's house in an area of Muslim concentration. They moved house very quickly and put green curtains on the windows of the car so it looked like an ambulance. "This was always happening," she says, "we were always used to seeing riots. What people don't understand is that this is a part of the Gujarati ethos and culture. Till the time that any issue ends in a Hindu Muslim conflict people don't feel it is resolved."62

During the violence not just migrant Muslim workers who had begun to leave Ahmedabad, but those who had made Gujarat their home for even 3 generations, fled the state to find refuge in other states. 63 Naroda Patiya which had a significant population of Muslims who came from Gulbarga in Karnataka fled to their native villages after they had witnessed the violence and found themselves in camps. Some of them even eventually returned but there is no account of those who probably didn't.64 The Bangladeshi press also reported that nearly 200 Muslims from Ahmedabad had made their way to Bangladesh. It was alleged that the group who were residents of slums near Chandola lake in Ahmedabad were illegal Bangladeshi migrants who fled Ahmedabad for their lives.65 Hindu families who lived on the periphery of Hindu areas as well as those that were in the middle of Muslim areas were also burned and for a while its residents took refuge in a camp. But these were very small in number compared to the lakhs of Muslims who were displaced.66 By the end of the month, according to official figures the violence had left 783 dead.

**Camps and other temporary dwellings: relief work in the midst of continuing violence**

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62 Interview with Ayesha Khan, Journalist with Indian Express, Ahmedabad, 13/12/2008.
64 Interview with Rukaiyaben Sheikh, Asim Park, Juhapura, Ahmedabad, 23/10/2008.
Those who had the means and who had relatives or acquaintances in such places that were less affected by violence took refuge with them. But a large number of poor people who had fled with nothing but the proverbial shirt on their back “pehnele kapde” and sometimes without even footwear, as well as the traumatized survivors of mass carnage and gruesome incidents of violence including women who had been raped and people who had been burned found safety only with others who had fled their homes in open spaces in between Muslim dominated localities, dargahs, madrasas, fields and even graveyards. These places then turned into ‘camps’. On the 28th of February, as many Muslim houses were torched in Vatwa, Ahmedabad in an offensive that went on for 72 hours, its residents fled to ‘safe’ places, i.e. places in the middle of pockets of Muslim concentration. After they had fought with stones and bricks and whatever came into their hands the residents of Jehangir Nagar turned their attention to the families whose houses had been burned and who were “just sitting on the maidan” in the middle of the locality. Some of the young people then decided to give them some tea and water. Soon the numbers increased, and by night time they realized that these people needed food, so again they collected it from the locality of Muslims who were predominantly poor themselves but who gave for those who were left with no possessions. Some elders also came forward to help organize, and once people realized that there was some help available the numbers swelled “from 500 to 5000” and the maidan became Jehangir Nagar camp, one among 60 similar camps in the city in sites like maidans or unused buildings, dargahs, madrassas, schools and even graveyards in the middle of Muslim dominated areas or in villages of Muslim majority.

An independent fact finding committee that visited Gujarat 11 days after the violence broke out on 10th and 11th March 2002 reported that “the Muslim camps are being run mainly through the support of community leaders and organizations, NGOs, missionaries and other private sources including some political organizations have

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67 Interview with Altaf Bhai and Afroze Sayyed, Sayyedwadi, Vatwa, Ahmedabad, 15/12/2008.  
68 As Altaf Bhai explained, ‘safety’ was in the middle of the locality, as the houses on the periphery were being burned by the attacking mobs and defended by the Muslims. This is why those who fled came to the middle of the locality.  
also made significant donations." After one month of violence according to one estimate there were 97,998 people in 101 relief camps across the state.

In a pocket of Muslim concentration in the north west periphery of Ahmedabad in Ranip, a place recently included in the Ahmedabad municipality with an old animal slaughter house Bakrao ni Mandi (meat market) surrounded by a Muslim settlement of about 2000 families living in shanties, during the violence transformed in to a Noah’s ark of sorts where women and children took shelter and cooked in the mandi market area with its high walls for days together while the men in turns fought pitched battles with the attackers. During the violence the mandi became a fortress for people and then a camp for those whose houses on the ‘border’ had been damaged and destroyed. Kinship networks seem to have played a crucial role in Muslims finding shelter during the violence. Nearly 500 refugees, mostly relatives from neighbouring villages had gathered from a radius of up to 50 kms in Ramayan in Sabarkantha. Unlike other camps where refugees sought shelter in common public places like cinemas or schools or in a maidan where they put up a tent, the displaced there took shelter in the homes of extended kin members and gathered in a large hall only for meals where they were fed from a common kitchen.

After a few quiet days, violence broke out again in parts of Ahmedabad, Vadodara, Bharuch and in smaller towns of Kheda district with VHP’s Ram dhun programme on 15th March where they organized mass prayers, processions, beating drums and bursting fire crackers. Already pamphlets calling for the economic boycott of Muslims were found circulating in Ahmedabad. Seeing the teeming Muslims in the relief camps, a member of the National Commission for Minorities even requested the government that land be given to resettle the victims. However, first timers like Altaf who were among the organisers of a camp in Vatwa, never imagined that people would stay for more than 3 days. Altaf and his sister Afroze got involved as part of the youth group of the locality and gradually got pulled into what became a task of feeding and providing relief to 5000 people. Only after a little over a week did the government step in to provide basic essentials like grain along with an

72 Interview with Ghulam Nabi Mohammed Sheikh, Bakrao ni Mandi, Ranip, Ahmedabad, 10/12/2008.
74 Times of India, 16/3/2002.
additional Rs. 5 per person daily. The provision of grains by the government provided relief for camp organisers from having to collect from the people in the locality however, that was just the beginning as all the other arrangements such as large vessels, cooks etc. that go into converting raw material into edible food for so many thousands had to be made by camp organisers themselves. According to a report by a fact finding team till about 10-11 days after thousands of people had been huddled in camps under tents there was shortage of most basic aid such as blankets, clothes, medicines and sanitation. In Shah Alam there is only one mobile toilet with 4 chambers for nearly 9000 people.  

In the walled city and industrial areas as well, Muslims in areas of Muslim concentration who had previous experience of managing displaced population during the time of violence managed to provide food for the thousands of displaced gathered in their midst. In working class neighborhoods like Bapunagar that had seen violence, displacement and camps before, riots became occasion for local leaders to build their base on sectarian lines. The conflict and curfew would make the availability of basic commodities scarce for those in pols and chawls. This is how right wing groups such as VHP spread their base by helping Hindus as social workers during the 1985 and 1992 violence. Similarly among Muslims, the leader ‘agevan’ of the locality sometimes were people like Latif Khan seen by the state as an anti-social element, who took the lead in the 1985 violence in organizing basic commodities for people in the locality.

These camp organizers arranged for some shelter from the sun by putting up a tent, but the teeming number of displaced cramped inside the tent created unhygienic conditions causing heath problems. At this time i.e. in March 2002 there were nearly 12,000 people in Shah Alam camp and approximately 7000 people in the Daria Khan Ghummat camp in Ahmedabad. In some of the worst affected districts like Sabarkantha and Mehsana there were 19 relief camps with 11,184 displaced people by 28th March. Not only did Muslims in localities where camps came up provide food from amongst themselves initially but some also allowed the displaced to use their

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77 Interview with Lalsab Sheikh, Siddiqabad, Ahmedabad, 29/10/2008.
78 Supreme Court Writ Petition Civil No 530/2002. p 29.
79 Times of India, 27/7/2002.
bathroom and toilet facilities. Many from the camp also used open spaces around the camp for toilet facilities for a while which created more unheigeinic conditions.

Those who found themselves in such camps either walking from their village for kilometers over jungles or on the bank of a river in the case of rural areas or who were dropped there by the police, had only their lives to hold on to. On reaching ‘safety’ the next concern was locating family members who had got separated when they were fleeing. Amidst tension and curfew it took up to 2-3 days for some survivors from Naroda Patiya and Chamanpura in Ahmedabad as also for Muslims from villages in Sabarkantha and other affected districts to be united with the rest of their families in camps and some while waiting even feared that their family members who were missing were dead. Says, Yunusbhai Sindhi, those days were such that “it was like a father would not save his son but get away himself. It was such a time that you wouldn’t get to see where your mother or wife was.”

Initially there was complete chaos and photographs of the camps in 2002 are evidence of this. According to an independent report, for more than 10 days after some of the most gruesome incidents of violence when survivors found themselves in camps, there had been no significant effort by the administration to set up police camps to lodge their complaints or FIRs let alone any official effort to record the number of displaced. Before NGOs got involved with work among riot victims, for days, many even did not know that they could register an FIR. Says, “we had no idea what FIR or panchnama was.” Besides ignorance, some did not even see the point of making an FIR given that they were convinced that the police was not on their side.

Some of those who were attacked and forced to flee their homes do not have an FIR to date. In the case of women who were sexually abused and who survived to find their way to a relief camp, recording a complaint was a difficult task. Even among some women who did file an FIR, according to a women’s fact finding mission charges of rape were not included. “The FIR uses the colloquial phrase ‘bura kaam’ (bad deeds) rather than the specific term ‘rape’.” Even among those who did go to register an FIR for other crimes committed against them, only a few have been able to register the names of the accused. In some places the police eventually went to camps to take down the FIR of the affected people. However, only a few FIRs have

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80 Interview with Yunusbhai Sindhi, Imarat-e-Shariya, Juhapura, Ahmedabad, 30/10/2008.
the names of the accused, the rest only have mention of a mob attacking. This was because in a large number of cases, when it came to putting down the names of the accused, the police who were writing the FIR simply wrote that the attackers were ‘mobs’ as a result of which a large number of cases had to be summarily closed for lack of evidence. Moreover, a vast majority of affected people have only a photocopy of a ‘samooha’ collective FIR that has a mention of the locality where they were attacked in their homes, but this is of little use as it is almost impossible to successfully prosecute a case where the perpetrators are not identified. Also in a large number of cases the displaced were in relief camps or had fled elsewhere for safety when the police made the panchnama of their destroyed homes in their absence. So in most cases the losses estimated by the officers of the Collectorate or District officials are far below the actual losses, which meant the compensation they received was also far below what was due to them.

After isolated incidents of violence broke out again, by the end of March i.e. a month after the violence started, the population of the already overcrowded camps was still increasing. According to one report by an international NGO in Ahmedabad larger camps, including those in Aman Chowk and Shah-e-Alam Dargah, housed between 8,000 and 9,000 refugees, and smaller ones, such as those in Nagoripatel Ni Challi, Sundaramnagar and Saraspur Pathrewali Masjid, sheltered up to 4,000 people. The report also held that according to community leaders and NGOs at that time at least 40,000 people were living in similar conditions in other relief camps situated in other cities including Baroda, Rajkot, Godhra, Khera, Mehsana, Chota Udaipur and Kalol, as well as in nearby towns and villages.

In camps in Himmatnagar in Sabarkantha, where thousands of Muslims from neighboring villages had gathered, camp organizers tried to bring a semblance of order by creating partitions within the large tent with the names of different towns and villages that the displaced had fled from. Camp organizers also drafted women among the displaced to help in the huge task of making food by asking them to do jobs like sifting the grain or rolling out the rotis while most of the men who were rendered jobless during the course of the violence had little to do. In some camps women were given flour so they could make their own rotis while the camp organizers arranged for

84 Ibid.
cooks, sometimes among the displaced to make the vegetables etc. The men however had little to do but sit around the whole day. The atmosphere of insecurity in the state affected most people at least during the month of March. However, it was casual workers chootak major and pavement sellers and such others who were self employed such as electricians, painters who did colour kaam, who were prevented from carrying out their usual activities and thus deprived of their means of livelihood. These workers and their families are therefore forced to rely on the camps for food. The presence of 500-5000 people in camps for an extended period, most of whom were jobless as the repeated outbreaks of violence and curfew closed opportunities for earning livelihood, meant that sometimes fights would break out among people within the camp.

Some Muslims who had fled their homes found the conditions in the camps too overwhelming to live there, "Wahan rehne jaisa nahi tha". This is why some people who had the means lived on rent rather than live in the tents of the camp. Some would live on rent but go to the camps to eat as it was very difficult to find livelihood in those days of uncertainty. Many among those who could afford it simply stayed with relatives or friends. Although the conditions did get squalid and unlivable, for most of the affected people, the fact that they got refuge and that they were provided basic necessities by members of their own community when they were completely dispossessed, gratefulness for help received is the common sentiment.

One aspect of camp life that they had to get used to was waiting in lines, for food, for going to the bathroom, for receiving aid, medical attention or whatever else came in through charitable organizations. What the camps turned out to be however was some kind of official recognition of the condition of being a person affected by the violence. Those who stayed in camps got a Rahat Chavni Card i.e a Relief camp card for ration supplies and in the case of all camps, they were the site of disbursal of ghar vakhr or cash assistance for loss of household goods of Rs2500 in two installments of Rs1250. Cash doles of Rs 2500 were a paltry sum that in most cases got used up in getting food but they served as evidence of being a riot affected person in later years when the UPA government initiated additional ex gratia compensation. Camps also turned out to be a place of encounter for the displaced with the state.

Although gradually medical aid for the victims of violence was arranged and doctors and nurses regularly attended to people in the camp, hygiene continued to be

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85 Interview with Sabina, Asim Park, Ahmedabad, 21/10/2008.
an issue. In Ahmedabad and few other cities local authorities did set up portable toilets but even then it fell far short of the requirement with one toilet for an average of 400 people. Due to these conditions there was the threat of malaria, gastroenteritis and other water borne diseases. A doctor attending to people in the camp then reportedly said, "the hygienic conditions are unbelievably bad. People are forced to defecate in the open behind the camp making the children vulnerable to diseases." Psychiatrists who visited the relief camps estimated that at least nine out of 10 persons in the camps have one or the other symptoms of post traumatic stress disorders, fearfulness, insomnia, and depression and other mental health problems. Psychiatrists reportedly also saw cases of people who were scared of crowds and of going out of the house. The trauma of watching loved ones being killed, raped or burned was so serious that doctors estimated that "30 per cent of the population could develop serious problems if immediate psychiatric help is not provided." 

According to one estimate as many as 290 women lost their husbands and 150 children were orphaned out of which 55 had lost both their parents in the violence, most of whom were from the worst hit parts of Ahmedabad city. The overcrowded conditions of camps were especially trying on women and children. Children who had witnessed violence suffered from post traumatic illnesses and needed urgent counseling. Women who had been sexually abused also need urgent care and counseling. Volunteers from NGOs tried to address these needs as best they could. In a large number of cases of sexual violence, FIRs were not recorded, not only because of the social stigma, but also because of the police’s insensitive questioning. Even families of victims who had been sexually abused were often not willing to admit that someone in their family had been sexually abused due to considerations of family honor. The camp conditions were especially trying for women who were pregnant, although a number of deliveries were successfully conducted in the camps themselves.

Violence broke out again from the 16th of March in the walled city and main market areas of Ahmedabad and Vadodara and the next day in many towns in central Gujarat. Incidents of arson and stabbing kept Ahmedabad tense and the displaced

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88 Dr. R. Srinivasa Murthy, Professor of Psychiatry at National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences, Bangalore, cited in Times of India, 20/5/2002.
89 Interview with Lawyer Sohail Tirmizi who is representing the victims of the Gulbarg case in court, Ahmedabad, 3/3/2009.
stayed put in the camps. At such a time when even the National Commission of Minorities sought to draw the then Prime Minister's attention to the 90,000 people in camps and according to one report there were an estimated "53,000 women, men and children huddled in 29 temporary settlements", even camps were not entirely safe havens for the displaced. On 18 March, the Odhav camp in Ahmedabad was approached by a group of people who started throwing stones and petrol bombs within its confines. The then state civil supplies minister even asked 3 camps including the Shahibaug camp in his constituency to be shifted because they posed a security risk for Hindus around the camp area who felt insecure among so many riot victims. In April one of these camps Daria Khan Gummait camp which at that time had 6,052 displaced was even attacked and two tear gas shells lobbed into the camps starting a near stampede among the inmates. A mob demanding for the Daria Khan camp to be shut down even turned violent at the police commissioner's office in the presence of the police commissioner himself.

In Chhota Udepur town of Vadodara district, according to the police, tribals from the surrounding villages who had been in instigated for creating trouble tried to enter the town which had the only relief camp in the area with more than 2000 Muslims who had been affected by the violence. Even in Sureli village in Anand, where the Muslims of Ode had fled to after 26 people had been burned alive, people like Yusufbhai recall how they would take turns to guard the camp and keep a watch for miscreants and mobs who turned up to intimidate the people in the camp. By the end of the month the number of displaced persons in the relief camps had gone up to 1 lakh persons and there were 101 camps across the state that were run by members of their own community with the help of NGOs. This was probably because it was not just those who were rendered homeless because of an attack on their houses who made their way to camps, but in the five to six districts where rioting was the most intense, most Muslims who lived outside areas of Muslim concentration or on the

93 The Indian Express, 22/3/2002.
98 Times of India March 27, 2002.
periphery of such areas made their way to camps if not to homes of relatives or rented accommodation in safe areas. According to a fact finding team by a women’s panel an estimate of the number of people in 7 relief camps by mid April was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relief Camp</th>
<th>No. of Women</th>
<th>No. of Men</th>
<th>No. of Children</th>
<th>Total*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shah-e-Alam (Urban)</td>
<td>2744</td>
<td>3008</td>
<td>4755</td>
<td>10,537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qutb-e-Alam (Urban)</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>495</td>
<td>1228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramayan (Rural)</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memdabad (Rural)</td>
<td>500 (approx)</td>
<td>500 (approx)</td>
<td>500 (approx)</td>
<td>1500 (approx)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vadali (Rural)</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>597</td>
<td>1777</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halol (Rural)</td>
<td>449</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>1070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalol (Rural)</td>
<td>674</td>
<td>667</td>
<td>910</td>
<td>2500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table No. 3: Estimate of Population in Relief Camps


This was an estimation as the population in relief camps was fluid even as the report clarified, “These figures are changing daily as people leave to seek sanctuary with relatives, or as new people, particularly in rural areas, finally make their way to the camp.”

Continuing violence and increasing displacement

In the case of working class neighbourhoods of Ahmedabad where Muslims and Dalits lived side by side, the curfew and continuous violence left some Muslims trapped in their houses for several days. Yunusbhai Sindhi lived right in front of Nutan Mills where he worked before the mill shut down after which he became a casual labourer selling shirts on the street side markets. Although in previous years whenever violence broke out, his family would leave for his village in Degam, Gandhinagar district only to return after tensions had cooled down, this time, with the violence everywhere, he and his family stayed put in their house in Ramanlal Dayalalni Chawl, a chawl that had only Muslim residents but was surrounded by chawls of other communities. Mobs had surrounded their house and miscreants would try to provoke them but they probably expected to hold fort like other places in the
walled city and working class neighbourhood where turfs had to be defended by the residents themselves in pitched battles between the two communities till the violence cooled down. Since all the residents of the chawl were Muslim, instead of fleeing they could hold off attackers and prevent them from entering the chawl. However, given the fact that they were the only chawl with Muslims surrounded by those of Hindus, they could only hold off the attackers till the 24th of March when they were rescued by the military and escorted to a camp. Each riot that the city of Ahmedabad witnessed in the past had produced some amount of demographic change with people migrating within the city and the concentration of communities in certain localities. In 2002, a large number of chawls like this in mixed working class areas got “cleaned out”. Says Yunusbhai Sindhi, “In these 15-20 years the possessions I had set up got completely cleaned out, everything completely, only the clothes that we were wearing we ran away with...the clothes that we are wearing no, they just put us in the vehicles with them. All the possessions that we had set up all got cleaned out.”

While pitched battles continued in the walled city of Ahmedabad and in parts of Vadodara and Anand, Kutch which had not witnessed a single instance of violence till then despite having the highest proportion of Muslims in the state at 19.64%, also witnessed sporadic incidents of violence on the 2nd of April. Another case of mass murder that shocked people was in Abasana village where 6 members of a Ghanchi family were murdered on the 3rd of April. In the next ten days no incident of violence was reported in most parts, however contrary to expectations that numbers in camps would come down as the violence scaled down, the numbers in camps remained stagnant at one and a half lakh in April. Meanwhile, despite the fact that government supplied ration to camps there was no acknowledgement of the situation of displacement, as even the BJP MLA of the constituency of which Naroda Patiya was a part denied having any knowledge of where the Muslims in her constituency had fled to as she had not visited the camps.

Attempts at Return:

In Ahmedabad, at the end of March itself, after a few days of no report of untoward incidents and some signs of the return of ‘normalcy’, some among the displaced from camps in Ahmedabad did go to check on their shops themselves when

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an angry mob surrounded them and they had to run for their lives again. In parts of Sabarkantha and Vadodara, the administration took some initiatives to help Muslims return because of which some of them could return. However after a lull, violence broke out again in parts of Ahmedabad from the 21st of April and went on till the end of the month. Parts of Vadodara, Kheda, Kaira and Mehsana districts also saw violence. Fresh violence pushed at least 4,700 people back to camps. The administration was eager for people in camps to go back to their homes and camp leaders even tired to help some of those who were displaced to return back homes but they seemed to bounce back every time in greater numbers either with fresh violence or with rumors. In Sabarkantha district according to one estimate, 24,000 Muslims villagers from 207 villages who fled because of arson and attack refused to return home. While the poor lived in 10 registered camps and other unregistered ones, those who could afford it lived with their relatives in six villages of Muslim majority or on rent in the periphery of towns with sizable Muslim population such as Modassa, Idar and Himmatnagar. Even in early May parts of Ahmedabad, Vadodara, Jamnagar, Ankleshwar and Viramgam saw incidents of communal violence. 400 victims in Sanjiri Park camp in Ahmedabad for instance, did return home at the end of April, only to return a day later when violence erupted in this locality.

Besides such repeated outbreaks of violence that fed the threat perception among the Muslims, one reason why the number of people in camps remained stagnant for more than a month, despite their overcrowded and squalid conditions, was because there were several instances of people being attacked when they tried to return to their homes. In Makarpura in Vadodara two persons were lynched by a mob when they returned to the homes that they had deserted to get their belongings despite being accompanied by police protection. In another instance when 4 out of 450 Muslims returned to check on their houses in Panvad village in Vadodara on two occasions they were attacked by a mob and later adivasis threatened to kill them if they tried to return. The villagers had a list of demands which ranged from asking the returning Muslims to withdraw all cases against them to asking them to refrain

104 The Indian Express, 26/4/2002.
from raising slogans. The same resistance according to newspaper reports was seen from villagers across the state barring a few isolated instances where families had actually returned.\textsuperscript{109} Thus despite a great scaling down of violence and the stifling heat in summers, by the month of May there were still 50 odd camps in Ahmedabad alone and a large number of displaced continued to stay in them many of which had only a tent for a shade.\textsuperscript{110}

In the month of May however, the government wanted to close down camps by the end of the month. By this time out of the approximately 70,000 displaced in camps, a reported 101 families i.e. 14,000 people had left the camps i.e. 20% had returned, some of whom even came back when violence broke out in their locality again.\textsuperscript{111} The government also drastically reduced the amount of food supplied to the camps. Although in some camps, due to aid from NGOs, camp organizers could continue to keep the camp afloat, by the end of June according to official estimates “80% inmates” had left the camps and “some 15,433 inmates remained in 15 camps” mostly in Ahmedabad\textsuperscript{112} while an unofficial estimate held that there were 27 camps in Ahmedabad in June.\textsuperscript{113}

The onset of monsoon presented another problem for the relief camps which were housed in cloth tents. The administration directed some camps to be shifted to pucca buildings\textsuperscript{114} like municipal schools and some NGOs along with camp organizers managed to build rain proof shelters but they were hardly adequate to keep wind and rain out. In relief camps on the outskirts of Himmatnagar, Sabarkantha, among the thousands of displaced some who took shelter in an unfinished Road Transport Office (RTO) near the camp while others like Abbasbhai humour intact, recall the time when they simply got wet and waited to dry off.\textsuperscript{115} A large number of those in camps however, especially in North Gujarat and some districts of central Gujarat that were worst affected, people had moved out of the camps but into rented accommodations in places of Muslim majority and not their original homes while others had begun to make their way back to their burned and looted homes. Those who left relief camps

\textsuperscript{109} Times of India, 23/4/2002.
\textsuperscript{110} Supreme Court Writ Petition No 530/2002. p 33.
\textsuperscript{111} Times of India, 21/5/2002.
\textsuperscript{113} Supreme Court Writ Petition, No 530/2002. p 33.
\textsuperscript{115} Interview with Abbasbhai, Kifayatnagar Relief Colony, Himmatnagar, Sabarkantha, 8/4/2009.
that were closed down received two months ration and some received a relief camp ration card that entitled them to supplies from a fair price shop for up to 6 months and a kit of basic essentials like a few vessels, soap etc.

The return to their earlier homes however was a continuing ordeal from the camp for many of the displaced. For Yunusbhai’s family that had to be rescued from their chawl in Saraspur by the military, the return to their house which had been burned, defecated on and the walls filled with obscene graffiti was a difficult experience. For a few days, after their return to their earlier homes, the impoverished residents of the chawl would cook meals together by pooling in with supplies they had received from the camp and cooking in large common pots quite like the camp.\textsuperscript{116} Even though the violence had scaled down by May when Yunusbhai’s family and other members of the chawl returned, the prolonged situation of conflict had ruptured social relations to the extent that Muslims were warned against using certain roads in the locality.\textsuperscript{117}

There were few instances where people who went back did not meet any untoward incident on return.\textsuperscript{118} In many villages of North and Central Gujarat however, the violence had affected a complete breakdown of communication among the two communities. In Mogri village, in Anand district on the Muslim villagers attempts to return to the village there was stone pelting and the threat of violence again because of which as late as 2009 only one Muslim family had returned. There were 2 families of businessmen dealing in firecrackers who had returned after the violence but they could only return to their houses outside the village just off the highway and tellingly, not their houses in the village. They had to first clean up and rebuild their houses, which were mainly extensions of their shops and keep watch while they did that. They give credit to their return to one police officer (PSI) who did the rounds and was serious about not allowing any untoward incident to happen. For months this man and his son took turns with keeping vigil at night. The village however, was clearly off limits for Muslims who had filed cases against the attackers. Since these villagers refused to compromise and withdraw charges, they were not allowed to return.

\textsuperscript{116} Interview with Yunusbhai \textit{Op.cit.}

\textsuperscript{117} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{118} Interview with former tenant in Doctor Gandhi ki Chali, Chamanpura, Ahmedabad, 29/10/2008 and Interview with Khatunbibi Sayyed, Siddiqabad Relief Colony, Ahmedabad, 23/10/2008.
In villages where Muslims agreed to compromise and not press charges against the attackers who involved people from the same village, like a village in Prantij in Sabarkantha district, of the 50 Muslims families among 400 Hindu households, many of whom were farmers and owned land, all 50 families could return. Misuben Punjamiyan Sindhi, a Muslim woman who had been elected sarpanch of the village for 5 years in 1999 said that the Muslims from the village had no option but to return to their land. She said Muslims collectively owned 700 bighas of land and had many wells in the village, and they simply did not know how else to make a living elsewhere. Initially villagers refused to talk to the Muslims who had returned there since some of the villagers involved in the attack had been arrested. However, after negotiations eventually a compromise was effected and now, she says, even while acknowledging that the police take a round to check if everything is normal at every Muslim festival, relations between the two communities are cordial in the village.\textsuperscript{119}

One instance in Deshotar village in Sabarkantha where an accused in a case of attack on Muslim houses in the village was among the clients getting his farm equipment fixed from a Muslim's shop that he had attacked during the violence, depicts the predicament in many villages where Muslims tried to return, coming face to face with the very people who had attacked them. As tribal activist Ganesh Devy explained, "You can’t hide behind anonymity in a village. Everybody knows everybody, making it very difficult to build bridges. It is comparatively easier where there is a sizeable presence of the minority. In a city, on the other hand, you can merge with a crowd."\textsuperscript{120} Muslims in this same village had returned to their shops in 2003 gingerly testing the waters each day, amidst threats to leave. Explaining how he returned, one shopkeeper said, "first we came for an hour. Then the next day we stayed for three quarters of an hour and went, the third day we stayed for one and a half hours, on the fourth day we stayed for 2 hours. Like that we gained our ground. (humne jamaya). In this way we sit the whole day now, this is how we gradually came and sat." They did gradually establish their presence in this way, but this was only with regard to their shops.

\textsuperscript{119} Interview with Misumiyan Punjamiyan Sindhi, ex Sarpanch of Hanmaitya village, Sabarkantha, 23/3/2009.
\textsuperscript{120} Quoted in Times of India, 23/4/2002.
Their families continued to live in Kesarpura, a village with almost 90% Muslim population and they commuted to their shops from there daily. It was only after two years that some of them got their families to live with them in their houses which were extensions behind their shop, while some continued to commute to and from their business in the village.\textsuperscript{121} Even in Randhikpur, the village from where Bilkis Bano, a resident was fleeing with other women when she and 13 others with her were raped and hacked to death in March, 50 males returned to rebuild their houses after three and a half months of living in camps despite the fact that not a single arrest had been made.\textsuperscript{122} In affected districts like Kheda and Anand people simply stayed away from Muslim shops and businesses. At the end of June however, violence broke out in the communally sensitive places of Vadodara city again.\textsuperscript{123}

Since April itself, NGOs from among the Muslim community had started repair and rebuilding of homes in areas like Naroda Gam in Ahmedabad, Gupta Nagar etc and Ode in Anand. Jamiat ulema e Hind, Islami Relief Committee and Gujarat Sarvajanik Relief Committee were organizations that got involved in the resettlement of people in a big way. However, given that this was a private initiative by organizations of the minority community themselves, as is often seen in humanitarian work, the urgency of the situation and the lack of co-ordination among the various NGOs and faith based organizations working towards rehabilitation, a large number of displaced who returned had to do so on their own strength.\textsuperscript{124} In many cases however, particularly those among displaced who had seen carnages where mobs had committed great atrocities in the localities of their former homes, like those from Gulbarg Society, Sardarpura, Ode, Kidiad etc, returning to their earlier houses did not seem a solution for the restoration of their lives. Even villages where no deaths had occurred, hostility towards the Muslims remained. Officials of the Collectorate and District Development Officers held meetings between villagers and the displaced but tensions continued to run high. In Panderwada where 26 Muslims were killed, the Islami Relief Committee managed to rebuild the houses of the displaced who returned, a few who owned houses in Naroda Patiya in Ahmedabad where 95 people

\textsuperscript{121} Interview with Abdul Razzak Chand Mohammed, Deshotar village, Sabarkantha, 19/3/2009.
\textsuperscript{122} The Indian Express, 20/6/2002.
\textsuperscript{123} Times of India, 25/6/2002.
\textsuperscript{124} Interview with people whose family business was of making firecrackers in Mogri as well as several interviews where people said they did not get any help from the government or any organization.
were killed also returned, although most of those who owned rented accommodation there stayed away.

Many in camps could only see a chance of getting on with their lives if they settled in areas of Muslim concentration. In fact during the time of the violence itself, a lot of people bought houses in areas of Muslim concentration on the periphery of cities like Bombay Hotel and Juhapura in Ahmedabad and Tandalja in Vadodara which of course led to the shooting up of real estate in these places. It also led to a lot of illegal development and slumming in such areas where in response to the urgent need for housing for a large number of Muslims many of whom could not afford it, builders offered plots of land, that in many cases they didn’t have papers for, in installments so that people could begin to live there by paying Rs 500 or more a month. Some among the displaced however, could not even afford that and in a bid to resolve the situation as quickly as possible, in the month of May,\textsuperscript{125} NGOs among the Muslim community began to look for land to construct colonies of very basic houses to house the displaced in places of Muslim concentration in the periphery of the cities and villages and where land was cheaply available. The goal was to give the displaced a roof over their head as soon as possible and most of these houses constructed in relief colonies without proper sanitation and other basic facilities, turned out to be literally houses that were little more than a roof over the head as the next chapter shall illustrate.

In Ahmedabad, Muslims from the walled city and working class neighborhoods that had witnessed much violence like Chamanpura, Bapunagar and Gomtipur had just about put together their homes that were looted, burned or destroyed since they had begun to trickle back to their houses under CRPF or SRP protection since May,\textsuperscript{126} when they realized it was time for the annual \textit{rath yatra}. The \textit{rath yatra} is a tradition in Gujarat, and particularly famous in Ahmedabad where once a year, a chariot with the idol from Jagannath temple winds its way in a procession down the narrow by lanes of the old city of Ahmedabad. The yatra attracts huge crowds of devotees and the procession passes through areas of Muslim concentration as well. Although in previous years, such a large movement of people in congested places had posed law and order challenges for the authorities, in 2002 the feeling of

\textsuperscript{125} Interview with Afzal Memon, Gujarat Sarvajanik Relief Committee, Paldi, Ahmedabad, 19/12/2008. Also, \textit{Times of India}, 28/5/2002.
\textsuperscript{126} \textit{The Indian Express}, 20/5/2002.
insecurity was so high that Muslims from these areas who had just returned home from relief camps a few weeks back, left their homes for relief camps or homes of friends and relatives in Muslim dominated areas again for a few days to pre-empt trouble. The rath yatra led to riots in parts of central Gujarat where pitched battles between the two communities were witnessed in Petlad and Kheda towns so that curfew had to be clamped in these areas. In Ahmedabad however, violence did not break out because of strict measures taken by the police as the administration did not want hurdles in the assembly elections that were due in the state and a few days after the rath yatra had passed peacefully, many of those who had taken refuge in the camps started moving back to their homes again.

The Election Commission after a visit to a few camps and areas that had witnessed long periods of curfew was not convinced that conditions in the state were conducive to hold elections. According to the Election Commission at least 154 of the 182 assembly segments in the state had been affected by the riots and that almost one lakh voters had been disenfranchised. Nearly 992 villages and 151 towns under 225 police stations had been direct victims of the communal riots. The Supreme Court also ruled in favour of elections being pushed to the end of the year in 2002.

In July, according to official figures, there were 12,524 people in 10 relief camps across Ahmedabad city, even as in camps that were declared closed there were an estimate of 4000 people. Shah Alam, the largest still had about 3500 Muslims, most of them who were residents of Naroda Patiya, Naroda Gam and Saijpur Patiya. That the situation was far from normal was evident from the fact in places like Ahmedabad, displaced persons who had returned to their homes, once again left for relief camps when the VHP declared a national bandh in September. The violence had left 1,169 people dead according to official figures and injured 2,548 although unofficial sources put the death toll as also the figure of the injured much higher.

While camps were folded most places and the villagers told to return, very few returned home and many who were too sacred to return or to wait on voluntary organization to provide them shelter had settled down in minority dominated villages in North and Central Gujarat. Moreover, till the end of the year communal clashes

127 The Indian Express, 27/6/2002.
129 The Indian Express, 20/7/2002.
continued to break out during religious festivals, and almost any altercation, even motor accidents threatened to turn communal.

What has now come to be known as the post Godhra violence had gone on for about three months with sporadic incidents of violence continuing in the tense atmosphere in the state right up to the end of the year. An analysis of newspaper reports, reports of constitutional bodies and independent reports on the events that followed the burning of the railway coach of Sabarmati Express in Godhra on the 27th of February till June reveal that the violence took place in phases. From 28th February till 6th March when the violence continued unabated the worst carnages took place leaving 500 dead.131 After a few days of apparent abatement, even as the magnitude of violence in moffusil areas, towns and villages began to sink in, violence erupted again from 11th March to 3rd April with incidents of violence spreading to newer areas like Kutch which had till then been an island of peace. There were a few days of tense calm with school children wary of stepping out to take their final exams when violence erupted once again from 13th April and went on till the end of the month spreading to Saurashtra while renewed violence went on in walled city areas and main streets of Ahmedabad and Vadodara. A total of 154 of 182 assembly constituencies in the state had been affected by the violence.132 Even as the central government announced a package for victims of the communal violence on the first of May, Jamnagar saw its first serious incident of communal violence and sporadic incidents of stabbing, arson and rioting by mobs continued to be reported from places like Ankleshwar, Viramgam and Ahmedabad through May and June.

In the violence of 2002, it emerges that while 16 districts in Gujarat had been affected the violence was most intense in six districts of North and Central Gujarat. It is important to note that in places like Surat and even Kutch which saw incidents of arson in initially, there were no further reports of violence, neither was any displacement reported from there. However it was in the worst affected districts of North and Central Gujarat (highlighted in the map) that all classes, sects and elements of social organization among Muslims were affected.

Estimates of the death toll in the violence that has become a much debated and controversial issue have varied by the official versions of the government of Gujarat as well as central governments. By conservatives estimates of the government of

Gujarat 1,169 killed and more than 2500 injured in the violence.¹³³ According to another estimate 790 Muslims and 254 Hindus killed to which were added the figure of 223 missing persons who were not found for 7 years and therefore declared dead. The violence had left an estimated 2,548 injured, 919 women widowed and 606 children orphaned.¹³⁴ Unofficial figures however place the death toll as much higher and not less than 2000.¹³⁵ According to one estimate, at the very least, 300-400 women were victims of sexual violence during the 2002 violence.¹³⁶

The circumstances that followed the events rendered one and a half lakh people homeless many of whom took shelter for up to 6 months and some even a year in around 121 camps across the state.¹³⁷ According to one estimate that uses the state’s report to the NHRC about its relief efforts for 1.6 lakh persons in camps and cash doles to 41,844 persons who were not in camps the number of displaced to be 2 lakh during the peak of the violence.¹³⁸ After six months in overcrowded and poorly resourced relief camps run entirely by the Muslim community itself, it is estimated that around half the displaced Muslims returned to their original looted and burned or broken homes amid continuing hostilities.¹³⁹

Following an NHRC order that took suo moto cognisance of the inadequate rehabilitation of the displaced, the Study by the Centre for Social Justice, Ahmedabad in collaboration with the Monitoring Committee constituted by NHRC 2004 which surveyed a sample of 4382 families living in relief colonies estimated that the number of internally displaced families at that time would not be less than

¹³³ Figure reported figures were reported to the Rajya Sabha by the Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Sriprakash Jaiswal in May, 2005 in reponse to a question by an unnamed MP. The Indian Express, 3/9/2007 and http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4536199.stm, (accessed on 11th May 2005).
¹³⁴ Ibid.
¹³⁷ These are numbers at the peak of the violence around the end of March and the beginning of April.
¹³⁹ Ibid. p 25.
suggesting a population of up to 50,000. In an update, the same survey in
October 2005 recorded the existence 47 colonies that housed 5170 families. In 2007
the Antarik Vishapith Hak Rakshak Samiti (AVHRS) i.e. Committee for the Rights
of Internally Displaced Persons held that five years after the violence 25,000 Gujarati
Muslims lived scattered across seven districts in Gujarat in approximately 69 colonies
entirely constructed by NGOs.\textsuperscript{141} In a study on the state of Internally Displaced
Persons in 2007, their number was estimated at 5000.\textsuperscript{142} The Government of Gujarat
that finally undertook a survey of these relief colonies in response to the queries of the
NCM held that 86 “resettlement” colonies existed across 10 districts of Gujarat that
housed 3990 families with a population of 20,940.\textsuperscript{143} This does not include displaced
Muslims who do not live in relief colonies that the AVHRS called shootachavay or
scattered around areas of Muslim concentration and in the upcoming ghettos of
Ahmedabad, Vadodara, Anand and Sabarkantha.

As this account of the events of 2002 culled from newspaper reports,
interviews with affected people and analysis of affected sites indicates, demographic
and topographical aspects of a site were the main factors that affected displacement.
As most Muslims in Gujarat already seem to have concluded, during the violence of
2002 in the onslaught of mobs and the lack of state protection, the only place of
security was among greater numbers of their own community. Even in this,
topographical aspects come in to play as there were instances of smaller
concentrations of Muslim residences surrounded by Hindu neighborhoods that found
it harder to hold up against the mobs and had to be rescued by the army. It was only
places of large Muslim concentration such as Juhapora in Ahmedabad, or Tandalja in
Vadodara where mobs could not penetrate, that were successful in withstanding
violence. In Ahmedabad, for instance, the areas worst affected by the violence were
the working class areas where Muslims and Dalits lived side by side. In such

\textsuperscript{140} Status Report on Rehabilitation of Victims of Communal Violence in Gujarat in Year 2002: A Study
based on the UN Guiding Principles of Internally Displaced, Centre for Social Justice, Ahmedbaad
with the Guidance of Monitoring Committee constituted by NHRC, 2004.
\textsuperscript{141} AVHRS Press notes, Response to the Gujarat Relief Package Announced by Central Government,
\textsuperscript{142} The Uprooted: A Document of the state of Internally Displaced Persons in Gujarat, Centre for
\textsuperscript{143} Government of Gujarat, Second Report on the Status of the Identified Resettlement Colonies of the
2002 Riots Affected in Gujarat, Presented to the National Commission for Minorities, New Delhi, 9th
August 2002, No. RTI-102008-Information-18-A1, Social Justice and Empowerment Division,
Sachivalaya, Gandhinagar, August 2008.
neighborhoods Muslim residents had no way of ensuring their security from the mobs, since the police in most cases was ineffective and even unwilling to guarantee their security. In pockets of Muslim concentration that were already divided by ‘borders’ in previous riots, Muslim could hold off attackers in pitched battles while only the houses on the ‘border’ of both sides were damaged.

Muslim organizations along with NGOs in a few instances constructed relief colonies for those displaced who could not return to their original homes and continued to remain in camps well after they were declared closed by the government. While some Muslims returned to their original homes, the number of Muslims in villages and places of Muslim concentration in towns and cities has shot up since 2002, an indication that they have moved in here due to the violence. The element of coercion in the movement of Muslims since the 28th of February is clear in this presentation of events of the violence of 2002. The journey of Muslims from being vatanis to being identified as visthapit is therefore a clear case of displacement as described by the UN Guiding Principles on Internally Displaced Persons. The government of Gujarat denying displacement calls all this movement of people voluntary. However, as one Muslim journalist illustrating the predicament of those who moved without any organizational aid put it, “just because we have the means does not mean we have the choice.”