

Final Solution

India 2004

Dir : Rakesh Sharma

149 minutes

Awards :

Wolfgang Staudte award & Special Jury Award (Netpac), Berlin International film festival

Humanitarian Award for Outstanding Documentary, HongKong International film festival

Silver Dhow (Best Doc category), Zanzibar International film festival

Best feature-length documentary, Big MiniDV (USA)

Special Jury Mention, Munich Dokfest

Nominated for the prestigious **Grierson Awards (UK)**

Special Award by NRIs for a Secular and Harmonious India (**NRI-SAHI**), NY-NJ, USA

Festivals : **Berlinale** (International premiere; Feb 2004), **HongKong, Fribourg, Sao Paulo, 3 continents filmfest (South Africa), Hot Docs (Canada), Vancouver, Zanzibar, Durban, Vermont International film festival (USA), Asiatica filmmediale (Rome), Leeds (UK), Cork (Ireland), Bogota (Colombia), Commonwealth film festival (UK), One world filmfest (Prague), Academia Olomouc (Czech), Voces Contra el Silencio (Mexico), Istanbul 1001fest, Singapore, Flanders (Belgium), International film festival of Human rights (Spain), South Asian film festivals (New York, Seattle, Dallas),World Social Forum (Mumbai), Vikalp** (organised by Campaign against Censorship) and several other filmfests.

Final Solution is a study of the politics of hate. Set in Gujarat during the period Feb/March 2002 - July 2003, the film graphically documents the changing face of right-wing politics in India through a study of the 2002 genocide of Moslems in Gujarat. It specifically examines political tendencies reminiscent of the Nazi Germany of early/mid-1930s. Final Solution is **anti-hate/ violence as “those who forget history are condemned to relive it”.**

Part 1: **Pride and Genocide** deals with the carnage and its immediate aftermath. It examines the patterns of pre-planned genocidal violence (by right-wing Hindutva cadres), which many claim was state-supported, if not state-sponsored. The film reconstructs through eyewitness accounts the attack on *Gulbarg* and *Patiya* (Ahmedabad) and acts of barbaric violence against Moslem women at *Eral* and *Delol/Kalol* (Panchmahals) even as Chief Minister Modi traverses the state on his *Gaurav Yatra*.

Part 2 : **The Hate Mandate** documents the poll campaign during the Assembly elections in Gujarat in late 2002. It records in detail the exploitation of the Godhra incident by the right-wing propaganda machinery for electoral gains. The film studies and documents the situation months after the elections to find shocking faultlines – voluntary ghettoisation, segregation in schools, formal calls for economic boycott of Moslems and continuing acts of violence.

Final Solution was banned in India by the censor board for several months. The ban was recently lifted after a sustained campaign (an online petition, hundreds of protest screenings countrywide, multi-city signature campaigns and dozens of letters to the Government sent by audiences directly). **Final Solution was rejected by the government-run Mumbai International film festival** and was screened at **Vikalp** : Films for Freedom (<http://www.freedomfilmsindia.org>), organised by the **Campaign Against Censorship**. Rakesh Sharma has been an active member of the Campaign since its inception. **Email :** carnagefilm@yahoo.com / actindia@vsnl.com **Address :** PO Box 12023, Azad Nagar post office, Mumbai – 400053, India

Rakesh Sharma began his film/TV career in 1986 as an assistant director on *Shyam Benegal's Discovery of India*. His broadcast industry experience includes the set up/ launch of 3 broadcast channels in India: *Channel [V], Star Plus and Vijay TV* and several production consultancy assignments. He has now gone back to independent documentary film-making. His last film **Aftershocks: The Rough Guide to Democracy** won the **Best documentary film** award at Fribourg, Big MiniDV and Big Muddy and 7 other awards (incl. the **Robert Flaherty prize**) at various festivals in USA/ Europe in 2002-03. It has been screened at over 90 international filmfests. **Aftershocks was also rejected by the government-run Mumbai International film festival in 2002.**

Note : The 209 minute version, structured in 4 parts, is available as a 4-VCD set and on VHS.