



TV

# UNITED NATIONS NATIONS UNIES

## UN IN ACTION

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### THE SIDDIS: A FORGOTTEN PEOPLE

#### VIDEO

#### AUDIO

	MUSIC
	<u>NARRATION</u>
MONTAGE OF FACES	Gujarat in western India is home to more than 20,000 Siddis, an ethnic group of African descent. (8)
CULTURAL DANCE	Though far removed from their ancestors' homeland, the Siddis have cherished their culture. (6)
	<u>NATSOT</u>
FIRE/COCONUT RITUALS	Now, it's a source of income for them. (3)
IMRAN ON-CAMERA ARTIST & GUIDE	<u>IMRAN:</u> (In Gujarati) M <i>"We play in hotels for about 1,500 rupees or 25 US dollars. // We go to the hotel to dance for the tourists during the prime season."</i> (13)
IMRAN	<u>NARRATION</u> Imran is a Siddi, a descendant of the Bantu people from southeast Africa. (6)

VILLAGE

FACE-PAINTING CUSTOM

FOREST

LIONS

He believes his ancestors originally came from Uganda. Now he lives in a small village called Jambur with his mother and grandmother. The village is surrounded by the forest of Gir, the last bastion of the world's 500 remaining Asiatic lions. (18)

SLAVE TRADE – INDIA

Centuries ago, Africans from Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia sailed to the Indian subcontinent as merchants while others were brought as slaves. The Siddis say they were elite slaves serving the ruling class only. (16)

NAWABS/PALACES

They appealed to India's Nawabs or Muslim rulers and the Mughals, a Muslim imperial power in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century because of their loyalty and military skills. (12)

UN EXHIBIT NEW YORK

The United Nations recently launched an exhibit to raise awareness of the Siddis rise to positions of power through their military status. They created princely Siddi States and served as kings themselves, a fact little known around the world. (18)

AMBASSADOR AKBARUDDIN  
ON-CAMERA  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF  
INDIA TO THE UN

AMB. SYED AKBARUDDIN: (In English) M  
*"Look at what they have accomplished for themselves and for Indian society. They rose to be noblemen, they rose to be commanders, soldiers, admirals."* (11)

SYLVIANE ON-CAMERA  
CURATOR, SCHOMBURG CENTRE

SYLVIANE DIOUF: (In English) F  
*"The Siddis today are the descendants of the*

*1800s people as well as some Africans who arrived actually later.” (9)*

#### NARRATION

ARCHIVAL PAINTINGS

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Africans from further South were brought to India. Among them, were Imran’s ancestors. (9)

IMRAN ON-CAMERA

IMRAN: (In Gujarati) M

*“The Nawab of Junagarh brought us here to lay the train tracks and to serve as their bodyguards because people from Africa were stronger.” (25)*

#### NARRATION

WIDE SHOTS GUJARAT

With the passage of time, some escaped slavery, establishing communities in forested areas. (6)

SIDDI PEOPLE

Today, life for thousands of Siddis, such as Imran, is far from glamorous. // Most live on the fringes of society, in abject poverty. (13)

IMRAN IN FOREST

Fortunately, Imran is able to provide for himself through dance and when he’s not dancing, he works in the Gir forest as a guide. (9)

IMRAN ON-CAMERA

IMRAN: (In Gujarati) M

*“Some of us who find jobs in the forest or the army, we earn extra money and then we manage with that money.” (9)*

#### NARRATION

IMRAN WITH VILLAGERS

Besides their strength, the Siddis say that the

LIONS	Nawabs also believed that they held a special relationship with the Asiatic lions and to nature itself. (10)
IMRAN ON-CAMERA	<u>IMRAN:</u> (In Gujarati) M <i>“We know the nature of the lions, when they are angry, when they can attack, their moods. // Wherever we go and there are lions, we do not disturb them or their pride. It’s almost like a family.”</i> (18)
LIONS	
LION CUBS	<u>NARRATION</u> Imran is concerned about the surviving Asiatic lions who may become extinct if steps aren’t taken to conserve them. (8)
IMRAN ON-CAM	<u>IMRAN:</u> (In Gujarati) M <i>“The entire village is surviving because of the lions so if the lions don’t live the entire village would be displaced. It would be finished.”</i> (14)
DANCE	<u>NARRATION</u> When asked about their country of origin, the Siddis said they consider themselves Indian. (6)
IMRAN ON-CAM	<u>IMRAN:</u> (In Gujarati) M <i>“My country is India and I want to live and die here.”</i> (4)
DANCE	NATSOT - MUSIC AND DANCE
UN LOGO	This report was produced by Mary Ferreira for the United Nations. (4.5)