

## India's Complex Position on Islamophobia

### Why in news?

India's assertion criticising the OIC Resolution on Islamophobia was valid, but could have made a reference to Indian Muslims.

### What is the issue?

- The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) has recently adopted a consensus Resolution declaring March 15 annually as the 'International Day to Combat Islamophobia'.
- The main sponsor of the resolution was Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).
- It was said that the OIC had extensively discussed the proposal with interested delegations.
- There is little doubt that India and the European Union (EU), which had major difficulties with the very basis of the proposal, would have discussed it with the OIC.

### What is Islamophobia?

- Islamophobia connotes fear of and prejudice, discrimination and hate speech against Islam.
- Muslims worldwide complain about negative stereotyping of their faith which has got increased since the al Qaeda's 9/11 terrorist attacks and other instances of terrorist violence undertaken by Islamist groups.
- They assert that these acts are not in keeping with Islam.
- Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan regretted that suicide attacks are equated with Islam and the marginalisation of Muslims in European countries.

### What concessions were made by OIC to achieve consensus?

- OIC had to place the resolution within the framework of previous resolutions of a general nature which seek to promote tolerance and religious freedoms and combat discrimination and violence.
- The OIC had to agree to a call for a dialogue for peace based on respect for human rights and diversity of religions and beliefs.
- The OIC had to withdraw its call for high-visibility events by member states, for curbing Islamophobia.
- It now only wants the observation of March 15 in an appropriate manner.

### What about the stand of India and EU with respect to the resolution?

- **India' stand-** India stated that it was time to acknowledge the prevalence of religiophobia, rather than singling out just one.
- The contention was that phobias are just not against Abrahamic faiths but also against non-Abrahamic religions.

- India's Permanent Representative T.S. Tirumurti mentioned India's historical track record of giving refuge to the prosecuted members of different faiths, specifically mentioning Zoroastrians, Jews and Buddhists.
- What was absent from Mr. Tirumurti's intervention was any reference to Indian Muslims.
- India could have specifically added that it is concerned with Islamophobia because Muslims form a substantial part of the country's plural society for two reasons
  - The word "pluralism" does not find any mention in the Resolution
  - Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of India lies in sabka saath, sabka vikas, sabka vishwas and sabka prayas
- **EU's position**- The EU's opposition to the Resolution stemmed from singling out a particular confession.
- The EU placed its focus on individual rights and freedom and not on protection of religions per se.
- The EU's views on an individual's right to change religion may also not coincide with the view of traditional Islam which does not accept renunciation of a religious belief.

## What is China's position?

- China's terrible record of treatment of its Muslims, especially the Uighurs, is well known.
- However, the Chinese mistreatment of its Muslims does not find any mention in the Islamabad declaration.
- Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi was invited as a special guest at this meeting.
- Also, China was one of the sponsors of the resolution.

## References

1. <https://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/indias-complex-position-on-islamophobia/article65260988.ece>
2. [https://www.oic-oci.org/page/?p\\_id=52&p\\_ref=26&lan=en](https://www.oic-oci.org/page/?p_id=52&p_ref=26&lan=en)

## Quick facts

### Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)

- The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is the second largest organization after the United Nations with a membership of 57 states.
- The Organization is the collective voice of the Muslim world.
- The Organization was established upon a decision of the historical summit which took place in Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco in 1969.
- OIC's key bodies
  - The Islamic Summit
  - The Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM)
  - The General Secretariat
  - The Al-Quds Committee
- Specialized organs
  - The Islamic Development Bank
  - The Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization



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