



## **ISLAMABAD POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE**

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### **PRESS RELEASE**

#### **Fallout of Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) 2019 & National Population Register (NPR)**

*India is a fascist regime and flagrant violator of International law and human rights. Under the guise of the CAA and NPR, the history of the Holocaust could repeat itself to justify religious discrimination against Muslims in India.*



- By not extending equal protection to all persons including Muslim migrants from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh, India is in violation of its International law and human rights obligations.
- Modi wants to rule with an iron fist by establishing a totalitarian regime. NPR has raised serious concerns from not only civil rights activists but also ordinary Indians who see this as a grave infringement of their constitution.
- This is a historic opportunity for Pakistan to reset the dynamic in its relationship with India. Pakistan should effectively use International Law as a foreign policy

tool, and understand its central role in national security strategy and internal policy for shaping narratives.

- For BJP this serves as an opportunity to institutionalize the gains of soft Hindutva towards creating a hierarchical Hindu state tantamount to a second partition – social partition perpetuating greater conflict in the region.

In a Symposium on *Fallout of Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) 2019 & National Population Register (NPR)*, organized by the Islamabad Policy Research Institute, here in the capital today, speakers discussed how the CAA is the latest move in a series of steps taken by Indian Prime Minister Modi as part of his agenda to promote Hindu nationalism in a constitutionally secular India. Speakers pointed out that the CAA and NPR not only threatens India's secular foundations, it will also marginalize its 200 million Muslim minority population.

The Symposium was moderated by ***President PRI Ambassador Vice Admiral (R) Khan Hasham bin Saddique*** who stressed that the international community cannot turn a blind eye until another full-blown pogrom unfolds, with millions forced out of their homes, ravished and butchered. India must be held accountable for its deplorable acts against humanity. 'Institutionalized anti-Muslim atrocities have now systematically made their way from Indian Occupied Kashmir to mainland India,' he warned.



***Dr Mujeeb Afzal from the Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad,*** pointed out that ever since the Hindutva-inspired Narendra Modi took office, the quandary of the Muslim minority in India has only compounded. He stressed that the sham secular mask of the so-called largest democracy in the world has slipped obtrusively as the deep-seated prejudice and antipathy against Muslims and other minority groups have now been given legal umbrella. The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA)

2019 has introduced a two-tiered system which pigeonholes already persecuted Muslims.

Dr Afzal discussed how the protests that have erupted in various states, especially Uttar Pradesh where the state apparatus have been fanning flames of communal tension, are a serious threat to Prime Minister Modi wants to create an ethnostate inspired by Israel. He warned that such a fascist



model could very well be implemented in the entire country, especially states where there is opposition or insurgency against the Indian government. In addition, in a bid to establish an absolute Hindu fanatic state, the Indian government has initiated the National Population Register (NPR) which not only happens to coincide with the CAA but also the National

Register of Citizens (NRC). Purportedly, it attempts to separate what it defines as “usual residents” from “unusual” ones. Dr Afzal pointed out that minority groups fear that this could be used to challenge their citizenship in court and confiscate property under the pretext of alleged sedition.



**Mr Jamal Aziz, Executive Director, Research Society of International Law (RSIL)** giving the legal perspective about the CAA and NPR highlighted that Pakistan should build on the responses to CAA by various international entities. The Office of the UN High Commissioner of Human Rights has termed the Act “fundamentally discriminatory” in nature, and stated that amendment will have a discriminatory effect on people’s access to nationality. Mr Aziz informed that the

United States Commission on International Religious Freedom has called on the US government to “consider sanctions against the home minister and other principal leadership.” He pointed out that Hindutva ideology of the BJP Government and brazen policy moves has put India in the global spotlight and damaged its reputation as the world’s biggest democracy. According to Mr Aziz, International Law can play an important role in guiding Pakistan’s foreign policy and domestic policy responses to exert increasing pressure on India. Amongst several practical policy recommendations, Mr Aziz strongly urged that an Inter-State Communication should be filed by Pakistan under Article 11 of Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination due to the CAA’s impact on Bengali Muslims; a Special Sessions of the Human Rights Council should be called; the Human Rights Council engaged to constitute an Independent Commission of Inquiry to investigate India’s systematic violations against minorities; and the UN Special Rapporteurs and Working Groups requested to report on the law and observe the situation in detention camps.



In the interactive Q/A attended by media personnel, students and senior academics, it was also pointed out that the NPR is part of the BJP-led Indian government's obsession with identity of its citizens, in order to invigorate the Aadhaar databases to carry out mass surveillance of its population. Participants unanimously agreed that Pakistan should develop strategic narratives based on strong legal foundations to show the world that India is a fascist regime and flagrant violator of human rights etc. The cause of Kashmir should be advocated under International Humanitarian Law. They called for building specialist capacity in state institutions like MOFA, MOL, MOHR, AG Office, JAGs, and to invest in scholarship & research in international law.

