

# OIC, Challenges, Problems, and Pakistan, Islamophobia

## Establishment

The Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) is an inter-governmental organization grouping fifty-six States. The Organization was established in Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco, on 12 Rajab 1389H (25 September 1969) when the First meeting of the leaders of the Islamic world was held in this city in the wake of the criminal arson perpetrated on 21 August 1969 by Zionist elements against Al-Aqsa Mosque, in occupied Jerusalem. It was indeed in order to defend the honour, dignity and faith of the Muslims, to face this bitter challenge launched in the holy city of Al-Quds so dear to them and against the Mosque of Al-Aqsa, the first Qibla and third holiest Shrine of Islam. Six months after that historical meeting, i.e. in Muharram 1390H (March 1970), the First Islamic Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs held in Jeddah set up a permanent General Secretariat, to ensure a liaison among Member States and charged it to coordinate their action. The Conference appointed its Secretary General and chose Jeddah as the Headquarters of the Organization, pending the liberation of Jerusalem, which would be the permanent Headquarters. Two and a half years after Rabat, in Muharram 1392H (February 1972), the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, meeting in its Third Session, adopted the Charter of the Organization.

- Charter and Aims

- Islamic solidarity among Member States.
- Cooperation in the political, economic, social, cultural and scientific fields.
- The struggle of all Muslim people to safeguard their dignity, independence and national rights.
- Safeguard the Holy Places;
- Support the struggle of the Palestinian people and assist them in recovering their rights and liberating their occupied territories.
- Eliminate racial discrimination and all forms of colonialism;
- Create a favorable atmosphere for the promotion of cooperation and understanding between Member States and other countries.
- Full equality among Member States
- Observation of the right to self determination and non-interference in the internal affairs of Member States
- Observation of the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of each State
- The settlement of any dispute that might arise among Member States by peaceful means such as negotiations, mediation, conciliation and arbitration
- A pledge to refrain, in relations among Member States, from resorting to force or threatening to resort to the use of force against the unity and territorial integrity or the political independence of any one of them

# Structure

- The Conference of Kings and Heads of State and Government, is the supreme authority of the Organization which meets once every three years to lay down the Organization's policy.
- The Conference of Foreign Ministers, which meets once a year to examine a progress report on the implementation of its decisions taken within the framework of the policy defined by the Islamic Summit.
- The General Secretariat, which is the executive organ of the Organization, entrusted with the implementation of the decisions of the two preceding bodies.
- the Organization has created different committees, nearly all, at ministerial level, a number of which are chaired by Heads of State. The Al-Quds Committee, the Standing Committee for Information and Cultural Affairs (COMIAC), the Standing Committee for Economic and Trade Cooperation (COMCEC), the Standing Committee for Scientific and Technical Cooperation (COMSTECH) and the Islamic Peace Committee are the ones Chaired by Heads of State. Fourteen Committees which have been thus established, deal with other important issues such as Palestine, the Sahel, Afghanistan, Kashmir etc.

- The performance of OIC countries in terms of trade and economy has also been extremely disappointing. They control 70 per cent of oil resources and as a whole comprise one-fifth of the world's population, one-sixth of the total land area and are rich in minerals as well. Unfortunately, 22 of the 49 countries are classified as least developing countries. Twenty-three are categorised as being in severe debt while 15 are moderately indebted.

# A Historic View of the failures of the OIC

- OIC has not played its proper role to resolve the Kashmir issue between Pakistan and India.
- The Palestine issue between Israel and the Arabs.
- the Chechnya issue between Russia and the Chechens.
- the Shattul Arab dispute between Iran and Iraq.
- 1980 to 1988 Iran and Iraq fighting an aimless war.
- in 1991, OIC failed to convince Saddam Hussain to evacuate Kuwait before the US-led coalition forces expelled Iraqi forces from Kuwait and UN imposed economic sanctions on Baghdad.
- Invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq
- OIC and the Arab Spring; The conflicts between Muslim states.

# Reforming the OIC

- The OIC spent its first 30 years both working on projects and struggling with structural problems. With the induction of Turkish Professor Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu to the secretary-generalship in 2004, reforms were initiated concerning the organization's structure and overall efficacy.
- In the 2005 Mecca Summit, the “Ten-Year Programme of Action” (TYPOA) was adopted to strengthen the OIC. This program's highest priority was to revamp the OIC's charter.
- The new charter was admitted after negotiations between member states at the 2008 Dakar Summit.
- In the new charter the requirements of membership are clearly determined: Any UN member state with a Muslim majority population that pledges to comply with the charter can be a member of the OIC, pending the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers' approval. Also, the new charter eases the conditions for observers: members of the UN and other organizations can become observers through a consensus decision by the Council of Foreign Ministers.

- The new charter's agenda prioritizes issues like human rights, women's rights, and the rule of law, good governance, and combating Islamophobia. For that purpose, the OIC's Independent Permanent Commission of Human Rights was founded to ensure human rights protections in international rules and standards. Moreover, the OIC's Executive Committee was established to consolidate authority within the organization.
- But the most radical change happened at the 2011 Astana Summit, when the organization's name was changed from the Organization of Islamic Conference to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.
- The OIC has begun attracting the attention of nonmember international organizations and states. Russia, for instance, became an observer in 2005 and the United States appointed a special envoy to the OIC in 2010.

# Challenges

- This limited budget is the reason that the organization is understaffed. OIC's number of employees and budget is not enough for a globally-active organization. Because of most of its members states are poor, only a few provide the majority of the OIC's budget.
- Another problem of the OIC is its failures in dispute-resolution among member states. In the Syria crisis, disagreements among its members have brought the OIC to an impasse.
- The Islamic world is divided on political and religious fault lines.
- Politically, it has been divided into two camps: there are countries belonging to Western camp and the others that represent the conservative camp. A continuous tussle is being witnessed between these two divisions.
- Additionally, different forms of government, e.g. democracy, kingship, dictatorship, military rule, and others, are in practice in the Muslim world. Therefore, there is no coherence and harmony in the thinking of the rulers.
- Economically, most of the Muslim countries belong to the Third World and are engaged in developing their respective economies. For this reason, they have to bank on the foreign powers for financial aid. This, in turn, gives an opportunity to those powers to exploit the situation to their own advantage and compel the Third World countries to capitulate to their diktat.

- It is also perplexing that most Muslim countries are utterly backward in the field of science and technology. When a country is technologically zero and cannot make even a minor part of its machines, how can it challenge a technologically advanced country and face its might?
- The absence of strong military power is yet another problem that contributes to the impotence of the organization. Ever since its establishment, it has paid no heed to strengthen itself militarily and emerge as a formidable force at par with, for example, NATO.
- Pakistan gets verbal support from all the OIC members on Kashmir issue but at the same time same members assure India of continued support for obvious economic reasons. Each country plays upon its own interests disregarding the interests of Ummah.
- Lack of political will.
- The Muslim world has failed to cope with the challenge of 'the battle of ideas' by not presenting an alternative which would cover political, economic, social and cultural assets of life in the modern world.
- Security
- Global Media And Islamphobia

# Pakistan and OIC

- was a founding member of the OIC in 1969.
- Pakistan is the Chairman of the OIC Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH) which has its Headquarters in Islamabad.
- Pakistan also host the Secretariat of the Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry( ICCI).
- The Office of the OIC's Secretary General's Special Representative on Afghanistan is based in Islamabad.
- The Headquarters of the Islamic Telecommunication Union would also be established in Islamabad.
- Pakistan is the Chairman of the Council and the Executive Committee of the Parliamentary Union of the OIC Member States (PUOICM).
- Pakistan hosted the second Islamic Summit Conference in Lahore on 22nd to 24th February 1974. Pakistan also hosted the Second Conference of the OIC Foreign Ministers (ICFM) held in Karachi from 26th to 28 December 1970, Eleventh ICFM in Islamabad from 17th to 22nd May 1980 and the Twenty-first ICFM held in Karachi on 25th to 29th April 1993. The Special Sessions of the OIC Foreign Ministers Conference in 1980 and in 1994 were also held in Pakistan.
- Makah Summit and the President Musharraf 2005.
- OIC Summit in 2019 and Pakistan efforts to highlight recent Kashmir issue, The foreign lobbying and generating international support for the cause.
- G. Raheel Sharif as the head of OIC forces and pledge never to attack Muslims.