**Adieu secularism**

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It is an undeniable reality that relations between states are determined by the geopolitical and strategic interests of the concerned nations. The principles enshrined in the UN Charter, International Conventions, Protocols and human rights enumerated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights have no bearing on them. The big powers in particular defy them with impunity. They are used selectively by these powers to serve their own interests and to denigrate their opponents. That is the reason why global peace remains an elusive dream and some states violating human rights get away with their inhuman actions. The apathy shown by the US and its western allies regarding the blatant violation of human rights by the Modi government in India and the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJ&K) is a classic example of this hypocrisy. An opinion column published in New York Times contributed by its Delhi-based correspondent Lydia Polgreen recently unveils the human rights situation in India and why the big powers take no notice of it. It says “Under the Modi government, violence against Muslims in India has risen and is often unpunished. His government has enacted laws and policies that target Muslims, including changes to citizenship rules that disadvantage Muslims and revocation of the special status of Kashmir, a Muslim-majority region contested by India and Pakistan.”

[PM calls for OIC emergency meeting for Turkish earthquake-affectees](https://www.nation.com.pk/18-Feb-2023/pm-calls-for-oic-emergency-meeting-for-turkish-earthquake-affectees)

“But it would be a mistake to think that only Muslims are under threat in India. The government has systematically cracked down on all manner of free speech and dissent, increasing its emergency powers to block information it wants to keep from the Indian people and making it easier to hold dissidents under murky anti-terrorism laws.” The opinion piece also hints at the possibility of India saying adieu to secularism which was the bedrock of the Indian constitution even though the Indian apex court had declared unequivocally that while the constitution can be amended, its fundamental character cannot be altered. The ruling party BJP is the proponent of the RSS ideology of ‘Hindutva’ which means India for Hindus – to the exclusion of minorities. French political scientist Christophe Jaffrelot, specialising in South Asian affairs, points out that the ideology of the RSS along with other Hindu nationalist movements such as the Arya Samaj and the Hindu Mahasabha thought of Muslims, Christians and the British as “foreign bodies” implanted in the Hindu nation, who were able to exploit the disunity and absence of valour among the Hindus to subdue them. However, the majority of scholars believe that the RSS was formed to fight Indian Muslims. That assertion has been proven right by the actions of the Modi government. The implementation of the National Register of Citizenship in Assam which rendered 1.9 Muslims stateless and the promulgation of the Citizenship Amendment Act speaks volumes about the hatred against Muslims. They prove beyond an iota of doubt that India under Modi is engaged in systematic efforts to discriminate against, marginalize and disenfranchise minorities, particularly Muslims.

[Nawaz seeks exemplary punishment for “cabal of five”](https://www.nation.com.pk/18-Feb-2023/nawaz-seeks-exemplary-punishment-for-cabal-of-five)

The report ends with these remarks “It is difficult to believe that when I arrived in India more than a decade ago, Nehru’s dream seemed alive—more than a billion people living in relative harmony, cheek by jowl atop a palimpsest of fallen empires. It is a tragedy that India’s rise comes as that dream fades and is replaced by a new India that is less free, less tolerant, and more willing to jettison the furniture of democracy to build a temple of national greatness around a single faith. The whole of humanity will be poorer for it”.

Like Hitler, Modi did not stop targeting Muslims within India. He extended the tentacles of its hatred against Muslims to IIOJ&K. The BJP in its election manifesto had pledged to undo articles 370 and 35-A of the Indian constitution. On August 5, 2019, Modi finally managed to fulfil his pledge by ending the special status of Kashmir. In his address to the nation on India’s Independence Day, he boasted that he had done within seventy days which could not be done in seventy years and that he had fulfilled the dream of Vallabhai Patel—of a United India.

[Miftah Ismail criticises govt for massive drop of foreign reserves](https://www.nation.com.pk/18-Feb-2023/miftah-ismail-criticises-govt-for-massive-drop-of-foreign-reserves)

The unilateral ending of the special status of IIOJ&K, its bifurcation into two territories, their inclusion in the Indian Union, turning the state into an open prison for its population and continued killing spree by Indian security forces, are ranting testimonies of the nefarious designs of the Modi government. To change the demographic features of the occupied state, the Indian government has also promulgated a domicile law that allows Indian citizens to become permanent residents of IIOJ&K, and also eligible for buying property and seeking jobs. Powers like the US need to realise that by encouraging the Modi government to continue with its communal policies and not helping in the implementation of the UN resolution on Kashmir they are consigning the region to perennial instability which ultimately might also harm their strategic and commercial interests in the region. It is time that the UN took the initiative to implement its resolutions on Kashmir and fulfil its peace-making obligations.