**The rising tide of fascism in India**

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There has never been a dearth of reports by international bodies showing how cruelly and callously the minorities in India are being persecuted by the fascist government of Premier Narendra Modi. The latest in the series are two more reports highlighting the ravages of Hindutva, a racist doctrine pursued by the right-wing ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) that is targeting vulnerable sections of an already unequal Indian society.

According to the first report titled “Human Freedom Index 2020” India has been placed at the 111th spot out of 162 countries, down by 17 spots from last year. Pertinent to note is the fact that the report, a worldwide ranking of civil, economic and personal freedoms, had ranked India 94 on the index in 2019.

On the other hand, the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (UCIRF) moved India to its category of greatest concern in its annual report. The report says, “religious freedom conditions in India are taking a drastic turn downward, with national and various state governments tolerating widespread harassment and violence against religious minorities. The BJP-led government enacted the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), which provides a fast track to Indian citizenship only for non-Muslim migrants from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan already residing in India. This potentially exposes millions of Muslims to detention, deportation and statelessness when the government completes its planned nationwide National Register of Citizens.”

[UK: Facebook sued over loss of user data](https://nation.com.pk/10-Feb-2021/uk-facebook-sued-over-loss-of-user-data)

Both the reports evidently indicate the gravity of the Indian situation in which religiously motivated killings, assaults, riots, discrimination, vandalism, rape and actions restricting the right of individuals to practice their religious beliefs are being carried out with impunity under the ultra-nationalist BJP government of Narendra Modi. Senior leaders of the ruling BJP openly preach and promote the ideology of Hindu supremacy and ultra-nationalism at the cost of fundamental rights for non-Hindu Indians.

It is a matter of record that over the last few years Muslims who make up nearly 14 percent of the total population of India have been subjected to the worst kind of victimization, persecution and discrimination across India by extremist Hindu groups. The same is the case with other minorities, including Dalits, the “untouchables”, Sikhs and Christians who are being targeted on a mass scale.

During the former US President Donald Trump’s visit to India, as many as 60 Muslims were killed in riots in New Delhi perpetrated by RSS goons. In the course of violence, extremist Hindus assailed Muslim neighbourhoods, with police standing by or even directly participating in the burning and looting of Muslim properties and desecration of mosques.

[UN Human Rights Council to hold special Myanmar session](https://nation.com.pk/10-Feb-2021/un-human-rights-council-to-hold-special-myanmar-session)

Besides the continued atrocities against Kashmiri Muslims, India has also witnessed three major spates of communal riots in recent history: first, the attacks on Sikhs community in Delhi in 1984 shortly after the assassination of then PM Indira Gandhi; second, the 1992-93 communal violence in Mumbai after the demolition of the Babri Mosque; and third, the 2002 massacre Muslims in Gujarat state. Thousands of people were slain in these riots.

The perpetrators of these gruesome incidents, the perpetrators were never called to account. Even after the reports by independent inquiries implicating officials and members of law enforcement agencies, no action was taken against the guilty. In 2008 a Hindu leader was assassinated allegedly by Maoists in Orissa. The ensuing violence, incited by an extremist Hindu group against the area’s Christian population, took the lives of around 40 Christians while thousands of homes were burned, and over 10,000 members of the Christian community were displaced.

[US Senate declares Trump's 2nd impeachment trial legal](https://nation.com.pk/10-Feb-2021/us-senate-declares-trump-s-2nd-impeachment-trial-legal)

Likewise, for many years after the brutality committed in Gujarat against the Muslims, under the supervision of the then Chief Minister Narendra Modi, the state government did not conduct any impartial investigation. In this case, the prosecution was initiated only after extensive press, human rights activists and victim families and interventions by India’s Supreme Court as well as the National Human Rights Commission. But the killers of 2000 Muslims were never brought to book.

The latest wave of violence in India in the wake of farmers’ agitation and demonization of Sikhs is an indication that India is becoming a no-go area for its minority communities. Narendra Modi has divided India ethnic and religious lines, making life a living hell for the minorities. Modi has virtually turned Nehru’s secular India into a quagmire of religious fanaticism of Hindutva.

The deteriorating situation has made sane sections of Indian society to sit up and take notice. Members of civil society in India, including artists, poets, media persons and lawyers, are urging Modi to desist from the path of divide and rule. But, regardless, Modi, toeing the line of 90-year-old RSS’s fascist philosophy of Hindu supremacy, continues with his policy of turning India into a state meant only for the Hindus, with other religious groups reduced to the status of serfs and paupers. It is time the international community took notice of the rising tide of fascism in India which poses a serious threat to peace not only within India but in the region as a whole. The example of Nazi Germany is before us.