**Dwindled CII**

[Shahrukh Mehboob](https://dailytimes.com.pk/writer/shahrukh-mehboob/)

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Present social instability and political unrest in the Muslim world reminds us of the 17th and 18th century [Europe](https://dailytimes.com.pk/557193/new-delhi-takes-european-envoys-on-trip-to-ihk-daily-times/) when there was a long-standing battle between Catholics and Protestants which destroyed their socio-political fabric. Moreover, to get out of that socio-political chaos they separated religion from the state affairs. However, there is, theoretically speaking, a visible difference between Christianity and Islam. The later provides comprehensive social and political ideals, on the other hand, the former lacks it.

Despite the clear message of Islam of brotherhood, unity, and discipline, Muslims have been factionalized and fragmented into different sects. They do have their own identities and rigid set of beliefs which is damaging the roots of Muslim identity and brotherhood altogether. To cater to this complex and horrific dilemma, there is a dire need for constitutional reforms within the Muslim states.

To carry out such principle reforms, there has always been a need for an acclaimed constitutional body/institution/council but none of the Muslim thinkers draw the comprehensive structure of that body concerning power politics of the present era. In the case of Pakistan, we, however, find one such council with the name of the Council of Islamic Ideology that was created for the above-outlined purposes.

Religion has been playing a conspicuous role in Pakistan’s current affairs. According to of Constitution of Pakistan 1973, Islam was declared the state religion of Pakistan. The Islamic way of life was to be promoted including steps like the organization of zakat, awqaf, and mosques. For the past 73 years, Pakistan is facing religious discrimination and fanaticism in the form of Blasphemy laws, child abuse, women protection issues. To iron out such complication an important Islamic provision declared that the President would appoint within ninety days of the commencement of the Constitution a Council of Islamic Ideology to make recommendation to Parliament and the Provincial Assemblies for bringing the existing laws into conformity with the injunctions of Islam and as to the stages by which such measures should be brought into effect. The Council was also to compile in a suitable form for the guidance of Parliament and the Provincial Assemblies such as injunction of Islam as could be given legislative effect. Article 230 of the Constitution reads: “The Council of Islamic Ideology shall submit its final report within seven years of its appointment and shall submit an annual interim report and Parliament, after considering the report, shall enact laws in respect thereof within two years of the final report.”

Considering that the Constitution came into force in 1973, the CII managed to come up with a ‘final report’ by 1996, a casual 16 years too late. Be that as it may, that means the CII has fulfilled its mandate and should go home now. The fact that it has managed an ugly afterlife from decades which shows both the weakness of the state and the lack of attention this republic lends to its Constitution. The law demands the CII be disbanded. Not that previous government hasn’t tried. Men as liberal and illiberal as Former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, General (retd) Pervez Musharraf and former President Asif Ali Zardari have toyed with the idea of slapping the CII down but no one succeeded. The law ministry made a convincing case as late as 2010 that, post-final report, the CII was over the hill.

But the council wailed back like a stepchild cut out of the will, screaming that the same Article 230 implied permanent status for it. It was needed ever more important, quivered the CII, in deciding what was right for Pakistanis. As a hideous child marriage bill makes it through Iraq’s parliament, days from being drafted into law, it doesn’t take much to guess what the CII may one day be capable of if left to its own devices. Mohammad Ali Jinnah said “Pakistan is not going to be a theocratic state, to be ruled by priests with a divine mission,”

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There is merit in this recommendation because the CII was never supposed to be a permanent body. It was supposed to give its final report within seven years of its appointment. That final report was represented in December 1996 and as such, there is no constitutional imperative to continue with the body anymore. The makers of the constitution, to their credit, did not envisage the CII to be a council of ulema or religious priests. Article 228 of the constitution speaks of the appointment of persons as members who are either well versed in the “Knowledge of the principles and philosophy of Islam as enunciated in the Holy Quran and Sunnah,” Or “Understanding of the economic, political, legal or administrative problems of Pakistan.”

Significantly the use of the word “person” denotes that such persons need not be Muslims nor even citizens of Pakistan. Article 260(1) of the Constitution defines a person as “anybody politic or corporals”. The president of Pakistan has the power to appoint a CII comprising eight to 20 members. These members would necessarily have to have one woman amongst them. The requirement of individuals engaged in Islamic research or instruction is 1/3rd of the total body. This means that 2/3rd of the body could be derived from men and women who were experts in law, economics, science, business, etc.

Recent verdict on Junaid Hafeez in Blasphemy case, Child abuse, and non-implementation of Islamic injunctions are the aftermath of CII failures. The constitution thus sought to balance the requirements of modernity with religion and create a truly ijtihad body that would help modernize the law of Islam according to the times we live in, but unfortunately, we are failed to enhance and adapt the Islamic injunction in the light of Quran and Sunnah. This was keeping in with Allama Iqbal’s lectures on Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam. The CII was not supposed to be a body of religious priests with a divine mission. Perhaps most importantly Article 227(3) bars the CII from recommending anything that affects the status of non-Muslims as equal citizens of Pakistan. Keeping in view the present national and international socio-cultural and religiopolitical trends government of Pakistan should review the purposes, scope, and powers of the CII including the qualification for its members.

*The writer is legal practitioner based in Lahore*