**OIC: Challenges and opportunities**

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On August 21, 1969, an Australian-born Christian, Dennis Michael Rohan attempted to set fire to the Ancient Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. Fire destroyed part of the roof and 800-year-old pulpit of Salahuddin Ayubi, a general who liberated Jerusalem from crusaders in the 12th century.
After this accident, a former Mufti (chief Muslim Islamic legal religious authority) Amin al-Husseini of Jerusalem demanded to call on the summit of all Muslim heads of state. 25 Muslim countries also filed a complaint to the United Nations, and alleged Israel as complicit in the arson. Reacting to this accident, Moroccan king Hassan ll invited Muslim leaders. On September 25, 1969, representatives from 24 Muslim majority countries met in Rabat, the capital of Morocco. In the conference, they decided to establish a body. Furthermore, they also passed the resolution which stated that, a “Muslim government would consult with a view to promoting among themselves close cooperation and mutual assistance in the economic, scientific, cultural and spiritual fields, inspired by the immortal teachings of Islam.”
In March 1970, the first Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers was held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. In the meeting, they planned to set up a permanent secretariat. The headquarters of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is located in Jeddah. It is the second-largest inter-governmental organisation after the United Nations. It consists of 57 states which cover four continents (Asia, Africa, Europe and South America). The OIC is the collective voice for 1.9 billion Muslims.
The OIC has a permanent delegation to the United Nations and European Union. During the 38th meeting of foreign minister on June 28, 2011 in Astana, Kazakhstan the name was changed from the Organisation of Islamic conference to the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation. In 1970, a conflict broke out between the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Jordan. The President of Egypt Gamal Abdel Nasser and Saudi Arabia King Faisal jointly led the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation to resolve the clash. The OIC also played a vital role during the Ramzan War in 1973 against Israel. The OIC also solved the issue of oil restriction against the supporters of Israel in 1974.
Due to OIC backing, the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) got recognition from the international community to represent stateless Palestinians. One of the big achievements of the OIC was to get PLO an observer status at the UN and adopt a number of non-binding resolutions at the UN General Assembly, including one that declared Zionism a racist ideology (Resolution no# 3379).
The OIC has been also criticised by many people for not providing any solutions in the current crises in Muslim countries. Another big challenge for OIC is that there is political diversity as well as states having different political systems. The OIC doesn’t have a unified voice because most of its member countries are not democratic. Equal participation of women is another challenge for the organisation. The organisation is suffering from a structural problem, as organisation members belong to different continents. Its budget is not enough for global activities because most of the member states are poor but still, the organisation can play its part in the future. The major conflict in this contemporary world is going in the Middle East so the OIC can play its role to minimise the conflict. Sectarian conflicts among states should be solved peacefully.
Conflicts should be resolved through bilateral discussions, or the OIC can play its role by mediating. Economically, the OIC should help poorer members for financial support. The lack of enforcement gaps must be filled in the future as well.