

In the name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful.
All praise and thanks belong to God, the Lord of the Worlds.
May peace and prayers be upon Prophet Muhammad and his family.



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April 10, 2025

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20451

RE: The Need to Designate India as a Country of Particular Concern for Systematic Violations of Religious Freedom

Dear Secretary Rubio:

On behalf of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), the nation's largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization, I write to respectfully repeat CAIR's call on the U.S. Department of State to designate the Republic of India as a Country of Particular Concern (CPC) under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998. This request follows India's passage and implementation of the *Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025*, which came into force on April 8 and has already triggered widespread protests. The new law represents a direct attack on the religious autonomy of India's Muslim population and reflects a broader trend of state-enabled discrimination targeting minority faith communities.

For five consecutive years, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has recommended that India be designated as a CPC for engaging in "systematic, ongoing, and egregious violations" of religious freedom. These violations have escalated under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's administration and the rise of Hindutva nationalist policies that increasingly undermine the rights and safety of India's religious minorities—particularly Muslims and Christians.

Passed by India's Parliament and signed into law earlier this month, the *The Waqf (Amendment) Act* authorizes non-Muslims to serve on waqf (Islamic endowment) boards that manage Islamic charitable and religious endowments and grants the central government broad powers to validate or nullify endowment land claims. Muslim civil society organizations across India have condemned the law as an assault on the independence of religious institutions, warning that it

could lead to mass dispossession of centuries-old Islamic endowment properties such as mosques, graveyards, and community trusts—many of which lack formal documentation due to their historical origins.

This legislation fits into a broader framework of legal discrimination. In 2020, the Indian government passed the **Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA)**, which for the first time linked citizenship eligibility to religion—explicitly excluding Muslims. Although implemented in March 2024, the law remains a lightning rod for national and international criticism. In parallel, the government has promoted a **nationwide National Register of Citizens (NRC)** modeled on Assam’s registry, which excluded nearly 2 million residents, many of them Muslims. These efforts threaten to institutionalize religious discrimination and create the conditions for mass statelessness.

In November 2024, CAIR welcomed a ruling by India’s Supreme Court rejecting the use of so-called “bulldozer justice”—the demolition of homes and businesses, disproportionately targeting Muslims, without due process. The court condemned the practice as unconstitutional and warned that such state conduct posed a grave threat to civil liberties. While India’s constitution continues to guarantee protections for religious freedom and equal treatment under the law, those safeguards are increasingly undermined by the Modi government’s embrace of Hindu nationalist extremism, which has weakened the country’s democratic institutions and rule of law.

CAIR would also like to bring to your attention the findings of the October 2024 report titled “[*The Detrimental Effects of Hindu Nationalism on Indian American Muslims*](#),” published by the Indian American Muslim Council (IAMC) in partnership with ReThink Media. The report documented the transnational influence of Hindutva ideology and its chilling effect on Indian American Muslims. It found increased fear, marginalization, and political intimidation within diaspora communities, as well as pressure to remain silent on human rights concerns in India due to fears of backlash, social isolation, or surveillance by Indian-aligned actors.

Designating India a Country of Particular Concern would not be unprecedented. The United States has previously designated several key strategic or allied countries—including Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Nigeria, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan—as CPCs while maintaining strong economic, security, and diplomatic relations. China is also currently designated a CPC despite being one of America’s largest trading partners. These examples demonstrate that accountability for human rights violations is fully compatible with maintaining constructive engagement.

For the sake of international credibility, constitutional governance, and the protection of human rights, we urge you to act on USCIRF’s long-standing recommendation and formally designate India as a Country of Particular Concern.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with your office to discuss this issue further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Robert S. McCaw". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "M" and "C".

Robert S. McCaw
Government Affairs Department Director
Council on American-Islamic Relations