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Solidarity with the Indian people protests against discriminatory citizenship act

Thursday 26 December 2019, by [Movements \(Asian\)](#) (Date first published: 24 December 2019).

The people of India have taken to the streets to protest against an act which indirectly discriminates Muslims in India. A wave of protests are underway in India due to the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), also known as CAB previously.

While the CAA provides a path to Indian citizenship for refugees from certain religious groups from the neighbouring countries, but explicitly exclude Muslims, as well as other refugees like Sri Lankan Tamils, Tibetan Buddhists and Bhutanese refugees. The right-wing Hindu extremist nationalist government led by Narendra Modi is using religion as a as a criterion for citizenship under Indian law for the first time in the country.

Critical voices of the left and progressives in India take the stand that the act's discriminatory nature could break apart the Indian people down racial and ethnic lines. Despite the Modi regime's so-called humanitarian justification for the CAA, it still remains that India is most active in chasing away Rohingya refugees.

Progressives in India are of the opinion that this endeavour is to make the Muslim community second-class citizens and it has to be opposed. The CAA is closely related to the government's plan to undertake the National Register of Citizens (NRC) which is a mechanism to verify the citizenship of Indian residents and evict those that have not been able to prove their legitimate status of citizenship. Recently, the NRC has been undertaken in Assam and around 1.9 million residents were removed from the citizenship list. Amongst these were Muslim residents and even Hindus.

Central to the conflict has also been the notion that the CAA undercuts key constitutional values. Firstly, non-Muslims who are left out of a hypothetical nation-wide NRC are not immediately eligible for legal immunity and have to go through more legal complications to preserve the course of justice.

Secondly, dividing migrants into Muslims and non-Muslims, the Citizenship Amendment Bill blatantly seeks to enshrine religious discrimination into law. This directly violates the secular constitutional ethos of the Indian constitution. Migrants who are Muslim but form part of persecuted minorities from certain countries are not afforded protection as well, hence it is evident that the protection of minorities is not the genuine objective of the CAB.

Mass Protests

The passing of this act in BJP-dominated Indian Parliament has initiated huge protests across various parts of India. One of the strongest protests came from the Jamia Milia Islamia University in Delhi on the 15th of December. Police and paramilitary forces stormed the campus, firing tear gas inside classrooms and the library. As the anti-CAA protests in Jamia turned into a battleground, students from the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) and Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) were one of the

first ones to come out in solidarity with Jamia University students and mobilised against Delhi police to stop violence in Jamia Milia University.

The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) has urged the Indian Police Service and the paramilitary Central Reserve Police Force to desist from the use of unlawful force and ill-treatment against demonstrators protesting the Citizenship (Amendment) Act. The Indian authorities must hold police and other public officials accountable for the human rights violations arising from these police actions, the ICJ added.

Three state governments in India, that of West Bengal, Punjab and Kerala, have also rejected the CAA on the grounds of it being against the Indian Constitution and have declared that their respective states will not implement the CAA or NRC.

We, the undersigned organisations, stand in solidarity with the struggles of the people of India against the discriminatory CAA. We urge the Indian government to:

A) Immediately stop all violent repressions against students and protesters who are protesting against the CAA.

B) Scrap the discriminatory CAA and discontinue all forms of determining citizenship based on religious affiliation.

C) Recognise refugees irregardless of religion and place of origin and provide them access to education, work and healthcare.

24th December 2019

Signed by

1. Parti Sosialis Malaysia (PSM)
2. Pemuda Parti Sosialis Malaysia (PSM Youth)
3. Socialist Alliance, Australia
4. Partai Pembebasan Rakyat, Indonesia
5. PEMBEBASAN, Indonesia
6. Sedane Labour Resource Centre (LIPS), Indonesia
7. Party Lakas ng Masa (PLM), Philippines
8. Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, Philippines
9. Mazdoor Kisan Party, Pakistan
10. Potere al Popolo!, Italy
11. Liberasi, Malaysia
12. Gerakan Pembebasan Akademik, Malaysia
13. Harmoni

14. UMANY
 15. Nepal-Venezuela Solidarity Network
 16. Borderless Movement, Hong Kong
 17. Europe solidaire sans frontières (ESSF), France
 18. Dharmasiri Lankapeli "Left Voice", Sri Lanka
 19. Federation of Media Employees Trade Unions, Sri Lanka
 20. Socialist Alternative, Australia
 21. Japan Revolutionary Communist League (JRCL), Japan
 22. Pakistan Kissan Rabita Committee, Pakistan
 23. Jammu Kashmir Awami Workers Party (JKAWP)
 24. Socialist Action, USA
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