



Muslim, Sikh, Christian Groups Applaud USCIRF for Its Religious Freedom Report on India

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US Commission for International Religious Freedom (USCIRF)

- The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), an independent bi-partisan commission, has recommended for the second year in the row that the State Department put India on a list ('Countries of Particular Concern' or CPCs) for the worst violations of religious freedoms in 2020.
- SCIRF's principal responsibilities are to review the facts and circumstances of violations of religious freedom internationally and to make policy recommendations to the President, the Secretary of State, and the Congress.



- U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) is an independent bi-partisan commission.
- USCIRF recommendations are non-binding.
- The Trump administration had rejected the USCIRF recommendation to designate India a CPC last year.
- Last year **India had denied visas to members of USCIRF** who wanted to visit India for their assessment.

- Several Indian-American Muslim, Sikh and Christian groups have applauded the US Commission for International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) for its latest report wherein it has recommended India be designated as a “country of particular concern (CPC)” for the alleged deterioration of religious freedom in the country. In separate statements, these groups urged the US State Department to accept the recommendations of the USCIRF



The USCIRF, in its report, has said, Designate India as a 'country of particular concern,' or CPC, for engaging in and tolerating systematic, ongoing, and egregious religious freedom violations, as defined by the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA). India has in the past said the US body on international religious freedom has chosen to be guided only by its biases on a matter on which it has no locus standi.

What are the key concerns of the report

- The key concerns of the 2021 report include the Citizenship Amendment Act.
- On the National Register of Citizens (NRC), the report says, “The consequences of exclusion – as exemplified by a large detention camp being built in Assam – are potentially devastating...”
- **Efforts to prohibit interfaith marriage** – such as those in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh – are also highlighted as a concern.
- In an apparent reference to the Tablighi Jamaat Markaz in March 2020, the USCIRF says that at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, disinformation and

- Recommendations of the report to the US Congress
- The USCISRF recommended that the administration impose targeted sanctions on Indian individuals and entities for ‘severe violations of religious freedom’.
- A second recommendation was for the administration to promote inter-faith dialogue and the rights of all communities at bilateral and multilateral forums “such as the ministerial of the Quad].
- Another recommendation – to the U.S. Congress – was to raise issues in the U.S. – India bilateral space, such as by hosting hearings, writing letters and constituting Congressional delegations.

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