



## Organisation of Islamic Cooperation

**For Prelims:** [Organisation of Islamic Cooperation \(OIC\)](#), [Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem](#), [United Nations Charter](#), [Human Rights Violations](#), [Islamic Development Bank \(IDB\)](#), [Observer Status](#), [Kashmir Dispute](#), India-OIC collaboration, [Council of Foreign Ministers](#), The Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, The International Islamic News Agency, [UAE](#), [Saudi-Arabia](#), [Middle East](#),

**For Mains:** Significance of India's relationship with OIC in the contemporary times and the future prospects of India in the Middle East Region.

### What is the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation?

#### ▪ About:

- The [Organisation of Islamic Cooperation \(OIC\)](#) is the second largest organization after the United Nations with a membership of 57 states spread over four continents.
- The Organization is the **collective voice of the Muslim world**. It endeavors to safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim world in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony among various people of the world.

#### ▪ Background:

- The Organization was established upon a decision of the historical summit which took place in Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco on 25<sup>th</sup> September, 1969 following the criminal arson of [Al-Aqsa Mosque](#) in [Jerusalem](#).
- In 1970, the inaugural Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM) resulted in establishment of a permanent secretariat in Jeddah, headed by organization's secretary general.

#### ▪ Major Objectives:

- The OIC endeavours to establish solidarity among member states.
- To support restoration of complete sovereignty and territorial integrity of any member state under occupation.
- To protect, defend and combat defamation of [Islam](#).
- To prevent growing dissension in Muslim societies and work to ensure that member states take a united stand at the [U. N. General Assembly](#), [Human Rights Council](#) and other international fora.

#### ▪ Charter:

- The organisation adheres to a charter that lays out its objectives, principles and operating mechanism.
- First adopted in 1972, the charter has been revised multiple times in line with emerging conditions in the developing world.
- The present charter was adopted in March 2008 at Dakar in Senegal.
- It enshrines that all members be guided and inspired by the noble Islamic teachings and values alongside committing themselves to the purposes and principles of the [U. N. charter](#).

#### ▪ Membership:

- **Permanent members:**
  - The member states include Afghanistan, Algeria, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam,

Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Egypt, Gabon, Gambia, Guinea, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tajikistan, Turkey, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Yemen, and others.

◦ **Observer Members**

• **States:**

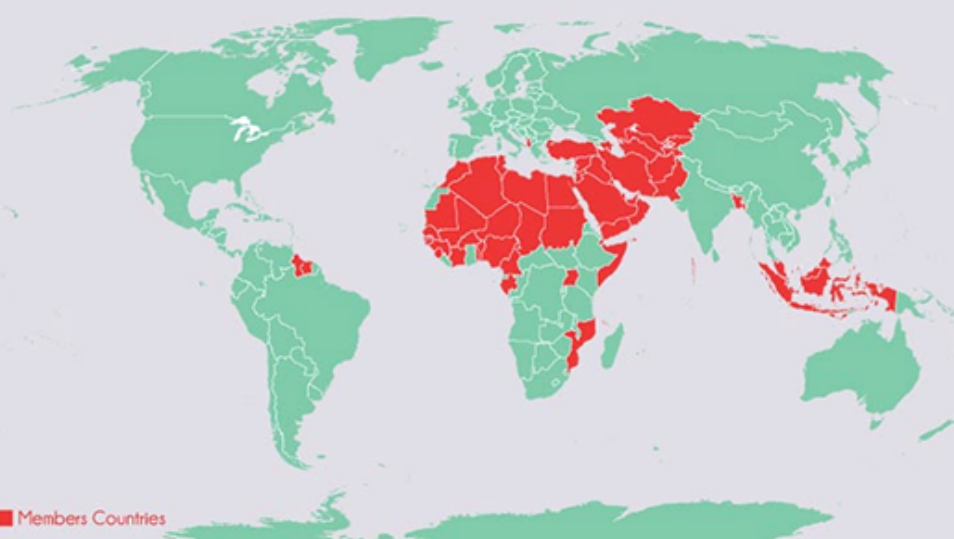
- Bosnia and Herzegovina, Central African Republic, Kingdom of Thailand, The Russian Federation, Turkish Cypriot State.

• **International Organisations:**

- [United Nations \(UN\)](#), [Non-Aligned Movement \(NAM\)](#), [League of Arab States \(LAS\)](#), [African Union \(AU\)](#), [Economic Cooperation Organization \(ECO\)](#).

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## What is OIC?




■ Members Countries

OIC- Organization of the Islamic Cooperation

It was founded in **1969**

First OIC Charter Adopted in **1972**



Key Bodies of OIC:

- ▶ Council of Foreign Ministers
- ▶ General Secretariat
- ▶ Islamic Summit
- ▶ Al-Quds Committee

Number of Member Countries **57**

Founding Members **30**

### What is the Institutional Mechanism of OIC?

▪ **Decision Making:**

- All decision-making in the forum requires a **quorum** defined by the presence of **two-**

**thirds** of the member states and complete consensus.

- In case a consensus cannot be reached, decisions shall be made by a **two-thirds majority of members present and voting**.
- They take decisions and resolutions on matters of **common interest, review their progress, consider and approve programmes and their budgets**, consider specific issues bothering member states and recommend establishing a new organ or committee.
- **Finance:**
  - The OIC is **financed by the member states** proportionate to their national incomes.
  - A member's voting rights are **suspended when their arrears equal or exceed the amount of contributions** due from them for the preceding two years.
  - The member is only allowed to vote if the Council of Foreign Ministers is satisfied that the failure is due to conditions beyond the member's control.
- **Islamic Summit:**
  - It is **composed of Kings and heads of state**, is the supreme authority of the organisation.
  - Convening every three years, it deliberates, takes policy decisions, provides guidance on issues relevant to the organisation and considers issues of concern to the member states.
- **Council of Foreign Ministers:**
  - The **Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM)** is the **chief decision-making body and meets annually** to decide on how to implement the OIC's general policies.
  - They take **decisions and resolutions on matters of common interest**, review their progress, consider and approve programmes and their budgets, consider specific issues bothering member states and recommend establishing a new organ or committee.
- **Standing Committees:**
  - The OIC also has standing committees for **cooperation on information and cultural affairs, economic and commercial matters, scientific and technological initiatives** and for Jerusalem.
- **General Secretariat:**
  - The General Secretariat is the **administrative arm of the OIC**, responsible for implementing the decisions of the Islamic Summit and the CFM. It also serves as a hub for information exchange and coordination.
  - The **Secretary-General**, appointed by the CFM, heads the General Secretariat.

## What are the Focus Areas of Cooperation of OIC ?

The **Implementation Plan 2016-2025** elaborates **107 goals** identified under **18 priority areas** into programmes and activities. Some of the Important goals are:-

- **Palestine and A-Quds Al Sharif:**
  - It aims to make all efforts to end the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including **East Jerusalem**, and the other occupied **Arab Territories**; and the **Syrian Golan Heights** etc.
  - Support and empower the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights, including the right to return and establishment of independent State of **Palestine**, on the pre 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital.
- **Counter-Terrorism, Extremism and Islamophobia:**
  - Establish **counter-terrorism partnerships with a view to strengthening international efforts to combat all aspects of terrorism**, and strengthen cooperation with States and international and regional organizations.
  - Revisit the **Convention on Combating Terrorism adopted in 1999** to lay down proper mechanisms to counter the new trends of terrorism.
  - Highlighting the principles stipulated in the **UN Resolution 16/18** as universal campaign against **religiophobia** while emphasizing that intolerance, negative **stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination**, and violence based on religion or belief are the enemy of all human beings.
- **Moderation, Inter-Cultural and Inter-faith Dialogue and Harmony:**
  - Initiating training of Muslim community leaders in the West on tolerance, openness and peaceful co-existence with the non-Muslims.
  - Developing and supporting projects for inter-cultural and inter-civilizational dialogue within

the context of the **UN Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC)**.

- Developing framework for promoting meaningful partnership between OIC, civil society institutions and think tanks to strategize the ways and means for their contribution towards enhancing social harmony and progress.
- **Peace and Security:**
  - Abiding by the principles of **Islamic solidarity** to support Member States, Observer States and Muslim communities and minorities.
  - Supporting the efforts of the government of Pakistan to seek a peaceful **resolution of the [Jammu and Kashmir dispute](#)** through all possible means, including result oriented talks with India in accordance with the will of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.
  - Urge **Armenia to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan** within its internationally recognized borders and to withdraw its armed forces immediately, completely and unconditionally from all occupied territories of Azerbaijan.
- **Environment, Climate Change and Sustainability:**
  - Convening the **Islamic Conference of Ministers for Environment (ICEM)** meetings every two years as a forum for overseeing the progress in implementation of the programmes and activities to mitigate climate change and disaster risk reduction in the Member States.
  - The **OIC Water Vision adopted in 2012** identifies the opportunities for promoting collaboration, and knowledge sharing, among Member States in all aspects of water.
- **Poverty Alleviation:**
  - Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all and by **2025 achieve substantial coverage of the poor** and the vulnerable.
- **Trade, Investment and Finance:**
  - Promote and establish free trade and export processing zones in OIC Member States, and facilitate intra-OIC investments, including inward FDI flows by the public and private sectors.
- **Agriculture and Food Security:**
  - Increase agricultural productivity and profitability of farming systems to achieve sustainable food and nutrition security in the OIC Member States.
- **Labour, Employment and Social Protection:**
  - Implementing the Executive Programme for OIC Framework of Cooperation on Labour, Employment and Social Protection, especially cooperation projects related to OSH development.
  - Finalization of study on expansion of **Youth Employment Scheme (YES)** Programme to OIC Asian and African regions.

## What are the Flagship Projects of OIC ?

- **Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation (COMCEC):**
  - Enhances economic cooperation among member states.
  - COMCEC undertakes projects and initiatives to promote trade, investment, and economic development, with a focus on poverty reduction and sustainable development.
- **Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development (ISFD):**
  - Addresses economic and social development challenges in member states.
  - ISFD provides financial and technical assistance to support projects in sectors such as health, education, and infrastructure, with the aim of reducing poverty and improving living standards.
- **Islamic Development Bank (IDB) Projects:**
  - **IDB**, an affiliate of the OIC, finances various development projects in member countries.
  - IDB supports projects in areas like infrastructure, energy, agriculture, education, and healthcare, contributing to the economic development of member states.
- **Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) Capacity Building Program:**
  - Promotes scientific research and technological advancement.
  - This program focuses on building capacity in science and technology, fostering innovation, and supporting research initiatives to enhance the scientific capabilities of member states.
- **Islamic Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) Initiatives:**
  - Promotes education, science, and culture within the Islamic world.
  - ISESCO undertakes projects related to education reform, scientific research, cultural

preservation, and the exchange of educational resources among member states.

- **OIC Youth Strategy:**
  - Empowers and engages the youth for socio-economic development.
  - The OIC Youth Strategy focuses on education, employment, entrepreneurship, and social inclusion to harness the potential of young people in member states.
- **OIC Humanitarian Action Plan:**
  - Addressing humanitarian crises and providing assistance to affected populations.
  - The OIC Humanitarian Action Plan involves coordinated efforts to respond to natural disasters, conflicts, and emergencies, providing relief and support to affected communities.
- **OIC Cultural Capital Program:**
  - Promoting cultural exchange and preserving Islamic heritage.
  - The program designates a city each year as the "**OIC Cultural Capital**," fostering cultural events, exhibitions, and initiatives to enhance mutual understanding and appreciation of Islamic cultures.

## What is the Status of India's relationship with OIC as an organisation?

- As a country with the world's second-largest Muslim community, India had been invited to the founding conference at Rabat in 1969, but was ejected at Pakistan's behest.
- Also, India stayed away because of a multiplicity of reasons:
  - It **did not want to join an organisation founded on religion**.
  - There was the risk that improving bilateral relations with individual member states would **come under pressure in a grouping, especially on issues such as Kashmir**.
- At the 45<sup>th</sup> session of the Foreign Ministers' Summit in 2018, [Bangladesh](#), the host, suggested that India, where more than 10% of the world's Muslims live, should be given Observer status, but Pakistan opposed the proposal.
  - India has, on various occasions, expressed the **need for a more inclusive approach within the OIC**.
- After building close ties with powerful members such as [UAE](#) and [Saudi Arabia](#), India has been confident of riding over any statement by the grouping.
  - The **OIC has, at times, expressed concerns and called for resolutions** in line with the wishes of the Kashmiri people.
  - **In 2018**, the OIC General Secretariat had "expressed **strong condemnation** of the killing of innocent Kashmiris by Indian forces in Indian-occupied Kashmir".
    - India has consistently underlined that **J&K is an "integral part of India and is a matter strictly internal to India"**, and that the OIC has no locus standi on the issue.
- **In 2019**, India made its maiden appearance at the OIC [Foreign Ministers' meeting](#), as a "guest of honour". 2019 is the 50th anniversary of OIC.
  - This **first-time invitation was seen as a diplomatic victory for India**, especially at a time of heightened tensions with Pakistan following the [Pulwama attack](#).
- In 2022, the OIC called on the [UN Human Rights Council](#) to take "necessary measures" on the issue of Muslim girl students being told not to wear the hijab in Karnataka schools.
  - The OIC also urged India to "**ensure the safety, security and well being of the Muslim community while protecting their way of life**".
- The OIC has criticised Government of India over the [Citizenship \(Amendment\) Act, 2019](#), and the [Babri Masjid verdict](#) of the Supreme Court in the recent times.

## What is the Significance of Recent 47<sup>th</sup> Session of OIC Meeting ?

- The 47<sup>th</sup> session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers held at Niamey (Niger), had **made a reference to India over its policies on Jammu and Kashmir**.
  - It said that the decision of the Indian government to [repeal special status of J&K \(in 2019\)](#) was aimed towards changing the demographic and geographic composition of the territory.
- **India's Stand:**
  - India strongly hit out at the OIC, accusing it of making "**factually incorrect and unwarranted**" references to Jammu and Kashmir in resolutions adopted by the grouping at the session.

- India believes in busting **the double standard of OIC**, where it supports the agenda of Pakistan in the name of human rights.
- India now sees the **duality of the OIC as unjustifiable**, since many of the member countries of the OIC have good bilateral ties and convey to India to ignore OIC statements but sign off on the joint statements which are **largely drafted by [Pakistan](#)**.

## What are the Criticisms Faced by OIC?

- **Incompetence in Investigating Human Rights Violations:**
  - The OIC faces criticism for lacking the power and resources necessary to effectively investigate human rights violations or enforce decisions made through treaties and declarations.
  - The organization's **inability to independently probe and take action on violations within its member states** undermines its credibility as a human rights advocate such as **[Kafala System in Saudi Arabia](#)** etc.
- **Centrality of Quranic Values:**
  - The OIC's role is largely confined to arbitrating conflicts where both parties involved are Muslim, **reflecting its focus on Quranic values** as a basis for qualification in dispute resolution.
  - The organization's narrow focus limits its involvement in conflicts that do not adhere to this criterion, potentially hindering its broader impact on global conflict resolution.
- **Failure to Establish Cooperative Ventures:**
  - The OIC has faced criticism for its inability to foster cooperative ventures among member states, particularly in the context of economic collaboration.
  - The organization's failure to effectively bring together **capital-rich and labor-scarce nations with manpower-rich and capital-scarce nations** has impeded its growth as a significant player in both international politics and economic cooperation.
- **Limited Coordination on Global Issues:**
  - The OIC faces difficulties in coordinating responses to global challenges, such as **[climate change](#), [pandemics](#), and [cybersecurity](#)**, due to diverse priorities and capacities among member states.
- **Internal Conflicts and Political Instability:**
  - Several OIC member states experience **internal conflicts and political instability**, affecting regional peace and cooperation.
  - The ongoing conflicts in countries like **[Syria](#), [Yemen](#), and [Libya](#)** have strained the OIC's efforts to address these crises collectively, given differing positions among member states.
- **Challenges in Implementing Resolutions:**
  - While the OIC can pass resolutions, the actual implementation of these decisions faces challenges, often due to the diverse interests and priorities of member states such as **lack of consensus among OIC members** in the recent bombings of **[Gaza Strip](#)** by Israel Defence Forces.
    - Resolutions related to conflict resolution or humanitarian aid may face obstacles in implementation, especially when member states have conflicting geopolitical interests. For Example, **[India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor](#)**.

## What are the Steps to be Taken to Strengthen the OIC?

- **Enhanced Focus on Human Rights:** Strengthen the OIC's mechanisms for addressing human rights violations within member states. Develop an **independent human rights commission within the OIC** to investigate and address violations, similar to the role played by regional bodies like the **European Court of Human Rights**.
- **Broadening Scope of Conflict Resolution:** Expand the OIC's mandate to engage in conflict resolution beyond disputes involving Muslim parties. Actively involve the OIC in mediating conflicts in regions where Muslim and non-Muslim communities are involved, demonstrating a commitment to a broader role in global peacebuilding such as **[Xinjiang Province in China](#)**.
- **Economic Cooperation and Development:** Strengthen economic cooperation initiatives to bridge the gap within the OIC. Develop and implement economic projects that promote collaboration, such as **joint investment funds, infrastructure development programs, and technology-sharing initiatives**.

- **Capacity Building and Resource Allocation:** Enhance the OIC's capacity to address global challenges by allocating sufficient resources and building institutional capabilities. Establish **specialized units or task** forces within the OIC to focus on issues like cybersecurity, climate change, and pandemics, reflecting a commitment to addressing contemporary challenges.
- **Promotion of Educational and Cultural Exchange:** Strengthen programs that promote educational and cultural exchange among member states to enhance mutual understanding. Expand initiatives similar to those implemented by [UNESCO](#) or regional organizations that focus on preserving cultural heritage, fostering academic collaboration, and promoting **people-to-people connections**.
- **Addressing Internal Conflicts:** Develop proactive measures to address internal conflicts and political instability within member states. Establish a **conflict prevention and resolution mechanism** that involves early intervention and diplomatic efforts to prevent escalation, drawing lessons from successful conflict resolution models in other international organizations. For Example- [Arab Spring](#) and Rise of [ISIS](#).
- **Diversification of Partnerships:** Diversify partnerships beyond OIC member states to include collaborations with international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and other regional entities. Forge partnerships with organizations like the [United Nations](#), [the World Bank](#), and **regional bodies** to leverage resources, expertise, and networks in addressing common challenges.

## Conclusion

OIC has significant potential to transform the global landscape and usher in an era of peace, prosperity and security if the internal and external issues of member countries are addressed effectively despite certain hiccups, by promoting democratic values and upholding [the rule of law](#).

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