



## AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL IMAMS COUNCIL



23 May 2023

### ANIC expresses deep reservations about the visit of Prime Minister Modi to Australia

The Australian National Imams Council (ANIC) is deeply concerned about the visit to Australia by the Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi given many of the policies and laws promoted by his government, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

The BJP has adopted laws and policies that systematically discriminate against minority Muslims, Sikhs and Christians. According to the Human Rights Watch<sup>1</sup>, prejudices embedded in the government of the ruling Hindu nationalist BJP have infiltrated independent institutions, such as the police and the courts, empowering nationalist groups to threaten, harass, and attack religious minorities with impunity.

Further, since the Modi administration first took office, BJP leaders have repeatedly made Hindu nationalist and anti-Muslim remarks in their speeches and interviews. These have, at times, encouraged and incited violent attacks by party supporters who believe they have political protection and approval.

In 2019, the BJP also secured the discriminatory Citizenship (Amendment) Act. Under the act, for the first time in India, religion is a basis for granting citizenship. The amended citizenship law, coupled with the government's push for a nationwide citizenship verification process through a National Population Register and a proposed National Register of Citizens, aimed at identifying "illegal migrants," has led to fears that millions of Indian Muslims, including many families who have lived in the country for generations, could be stripped of their citizenship rights and disenfranchised. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights called the law "fundamentally discriminatory".

Australia is a diverse and pluralistic society which is characterised by diversity and respect between people from different backgrounds and faiths. It is hoped that the Australian political leaders, including the Prime Minister The Hon. Anthony Albanese and Minister for Foreign Affairs Senator the Hon. Penny Wong, will not overlook or ignore such human rights violations and will raise these with a view to seeking a response and redress. Anything less would be disappointing and regrettable.

**For any media inquiries, please contact ANIC's Spokesperson, Bilal Rauf, on 1300 765 940 or [spokesperson@anic.org.au](mailto:spokesperson@anic.org.au).**

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/report/2020/04/10/shoot-traitors/discrimination-against-muslims-under-indias-new-citizenship-policy>