

## COUNCIL MEMBER'S MOTION

### 3. **Affirming Support for Residents of Indian Origin Regardless of Religion and Caste**

Submitted by: Councillor Swanson

#### WHEREAS

1. The Indian government has embarked on a set of legislative measures, such as the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) that facilitates citizenship for Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi, and Christian refugees from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan while excluding Muslims from these as well as other neighboring countries, like Myanmar where Muslims face extreme persecution, as well as amendments to the National Register of Citizens (NRC) that will require anyone excluded from the list to prove their citizenship. The August 2019 update to the NRC list rendered nearly two million residents stateless in the northeastern state of Assam alone;
2. Most Indians, specifically people who are poor and underprivileged, lack documentation such as birth certificates to prove citizenship, and a nationwide expansion of the NRC could strip hundreds of millions of people (disproportionately those who are Muslim, poor, members of oppressed castes, women, Indigenous, and LGBTQ2S) of their citizenship and basic human rights;
3. These laws discriminate against Muslims in violation of India's secular constitution and the UN Convention on the Status of Refugees and contravene India's status as a signatory to the UN Human Rights Declaration;
4. These laws have already started to impact residents. The nearly two million residents affected in Assam face detention in mass prisons and detention camps that are already being filled or constructed. Several residents have committed suicide as a result;
5. The New York Times reported on December 22, 2019, that "The Indian home minister, Amit Shah, has vowed in speeches to expand the checks used in Assam to other states and then use the citizenship law to purge India of 'infiltrators' and 'termites'";
6. These measures have been met with widespread and sustained protests by communities, particularly by women and students across India and by people of Indian origin living in many cities around the world, including Vancouver;
7. Protesters in India, especially students, have been subject to extreme police violence and brutality;

8. These measures have been justly condemned around the world. On February 3, 2020, Seattle City Council unanimously passed a resolution opposing the CAA and NRC and urging the Parliament of India to repeal them;
9. Vancouver residents including members of the South Asian Network for Secularism and Democracy (SANSAD), the Vancouver Democracy Alliance (VDA), Indians Abroad for a Pluralist India (IAPI), and the Coalition Against Bigotry–Pacific (CAB-P) are calling Vancouver City Council to pass a similar resolution; and
10. Vancouver strives to be a welcoming city for Vancouver’s South Asian community regardless of religion and caste;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT Council declare its opposition to the Citizenship Amendment Act and the National Register of Citizens in India on the basis of discrimination against Muslims, women, and Indigenous, poor, and LGBTQ2S people.
- B. THAT Council direct the Mayor to write to the Indian Consul General in Vancouver to:
  - i. Share this motion;
  - ii. Condemn the use of police violence against the citizens of India exercising their democratic right to protest peacefully;
  - iii. Urge the Parliament of India to withdraw the Citizenship Amendment Act and the National Register of Citizens; and
  - iv. Call for the Parliament of India to support refugees by ratifying UN treaties on refugees.
- C. THAT Council direct the Mayor to write to the federal Ministers of Intergovernmental Affairs, Foreign Affairs, and Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship to:
  - i. Condemn the Citizenship Amendment Act and the National Register of Citizens;
  - ii. Call for the Parliament of India to withdraw the Citizenship Amendment Act and the National Register of Citizens; and
  - iii. Call for the Parliament of India to support refugees by ratifying UN treaties on refugees.

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