



State of freedom, peace, human rights in India

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October 13th, 2018

India has won a seat in United Nations Human Rights Commission (UNHRC) Friday. India has been appointed for a period of three years from 2019 to 2022. India reportedly got highest number of votes among all the other candidate nations.

MEA Sushma Swaraj expressed happiness and Opposition Congress stated that India's election to the UN Human Rights Council for the fifth time shows continuing faith by the global community in our commitment to uphold human rights for not just citizens, but also human beings all over the world. Elections to UNHRC apart, take a look at how global think-tanks have observed state of freedom, peace and human rights in India.

Human Freedom Index 2018:

The Cato Institute's 2017 Human Freedoms Index, a comprehensive report on 159 countries' respect for rule of law, civil liberties, access to trade, and legal and property rights.

The Human Freedom Index (HFI) presents a broad measure of human freedom, understood as the absence of coercive constraint. Out of 159 countries, India ranked 102, in fact, freedom rank improved by three positions. On a scale of 0 to 10, where 10 represents more freedom, India scored 6.55. India fared better in the Economic Freedom index with 6.63 points and in personal freedom 6.46 scored less by 0.17 points. The overall ranking is better than China (130) and Pakistan (144).

Human Rights Watch Report 2018:

Though Human Freedom Index 2018 looked positive for India, Human Rights Watch Report made a scathing analysis of present human rights scenario in the country. On the foreign policy front, HRW report stated that India continued to abstain, and even played a negative role, in country-specific resolutions at the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) and General Assembly.

During PM Narendra Modi's visit to the United States in June 2017, there was not even a token mention of pressing human rights issues in India, including limits on free speech and attacks on religious minorities. The same year, at India's Universal Periodic Review at the UNHRC, countries raised numerous human rights issues and reminded India to fulfil its past commitments to ratify human rights conventions, including the Convention against Torture.

The report especially mentioned Vigilante violence aimed at religious minorities, marginalized communities, and critics of the government have become an increasing threat in India in 2017.

The report squarely put the blame on the government for its failure to promptly or credibly investigate the attacks, while many senior BJP leaders publicly promoted Hindu supremacy and ultra-nationalism, which encouraged further violence. Dissent was labelled anti-national, and activists, journalists, and academics were targeted for their views.

Global Peace Index 2018:

In the Global Peace Index produced by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) India gone up four places to the 137th rank among 163 countries. India has moved up four positions in the overall ranking from 141st to 137th.

"This has largely been due to a reduction in the level of violent crime, driven by increased law enforcement. Meanwhile, unrest in Kashmir raised tensions between India and Pakistan, with the number of deaths from external conflict increasing in both countries," said the report published by the Sydney-based Institute of Economics and Peace (IEP). However, in the South Asia region, India ranked 5th only above Pakistan and Afghanistan.

China has been ranked 116th out of 163 countries/territories in terms of peacefulness, moving up four spots since 2016. China fared worst in Societal Safety and Security, scoring a 2.5 out of 5 (1 being the most peaceful and 5 the least), a 2 in Militarization, and a 1.9 in Domestic and International Conflict, bringing its final score to 2.24. Of the 23 indicators, it scored a full 5 marks on nuclear and heavy weapons, a 4 on both perceptions of criminality and political terror, and a 3.6 on terrorism impact.