

The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) called for the **46th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers** meet in Abu Dhabi for a two-day plenary starting from 1st March 2019. The OIC which is the second largest international organisation after the United Nations spans its exercise over 57 member states, comprising of a population of 1.8 billion. But this year the turn of events was very surprising, as India which is neither a member nor an observer state of the OIC, was invited as the '*guest of honour*'. The invitation clearly implies a diplomatic victory for India. The proposal of India as an observer state in the OIC was first made by Qatar in 2002 followed by Thailand and Bangladesh last year. But the proposal was declined despite India being the third largest Muslim populated country. *Sushma Swaraj, Minister of External Affairs* landed in Abu Dhabi on Thursday night and was welcomed by *UAE Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan*.

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EAM [@SushmaSwaraj](#) with the Foreign Ministers of [#Bahrain](#), [#SaudiArabia](#), [#Afghanistan](#) and [#Jordan](#) immediately after delivering her speech at the [#OIC](#). pic.twitter.com/Sb9CICbJ43

— Raveesh Kumar (@MEAIndia) [March 1, 2019](#)

The invitation clearly underpins the diplomatic game pulled by India and how the relations with West Asia have strengthened altogether. The meeting has been organised at a time when India and Pakistan are sharing tensions since the Pulwama attack. *Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi* had earlier threatened the OIC with its intention of 'boycotting' the session if India was being invited. He said "*There was no consultation over OIC invitation to Indian Foreign Minister. India is neither a member nor an observer of the OIC. I have spoken to the UAE minister and apprised him of Pakistan's reservations and told him that he should have spoken to us before inviting Swaraj.*" However, when India accepted the invitation which Swaraj remarked as a 'recognition' of India's contribution to the Islamic world, the Pakistani Foreign Minister agreed not to attend this year's meet in Abu Dhabi.

The OIC's 46th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers meet was put up under the title of '**50 Years of Islamic Cooperation: Roadmap for Prosperity and Development**'. Swaraj made a very impressive statement starting off with India's connection with West Asia since

the time of ancient civilization and then moving on to the pressing challenges the community faces. The biggest highlight however was, Swaraj's assertiveness in combating terrorism globally. She addressed mentioning *"Muslims in India have fallen prey to the poisonous propaganda of radical and extremist ideologies."* She even quoted the holy Quran and directed that India's fight against terrorism is not to target any religion. Sushma Swaraj was very clear on what she meant by the fight against terrorism as she said, *"Terrorism and extremism bear different names and labels. It uses diverse causes. But in each case, it is driven by distortion of religion, and a misguided belief in its power to succeed. The fight against terrorism is not a confrontation against any religion. It cannot be."* She tactfully used diplomatic measures to isolate Pakistan and urged the members of the OIC to join hands in eliminating state sponsored terrorism.

The post Pulwama attack has again led to India's awakening in the fight against terrorism. India has decisively used this year's OIC meet as a platform to present the country's stance against terrorism as well as its potential in combating the same.

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