**COMMONWEALTH AND ROLL OF PAKISTAN**

The **Commonwealth of Nations**, or simply the **Commonwealth**, is a political association of [54 member states](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Member_states_of_the_Commonwealth_of_Nations).

It was originally created as the *British Commonwealth of Nations* through the [Balfour Declaration](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balfour_Declaration_of_1926) at the [1926 Imperial Conference](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1926_Imperial_Conference), and formalized by the [United Kingdom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom) through the [Statute of Westminster](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Statute_of_Westminster_1931) in 1931. The Commonwealth developed from the imperial conferences. A specific proposal was presented by [Jan Smuts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jan_Smuts) in 1917 when he coined the term "the British Commonwealth of Nations" and envisioned the "future constitutional relations and readjustments in essence" at the [Paris Peace Conference of 1919](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paris_Peace_Conference,_1919). The current Commonwealth of Nations was formally constituted by the [London Declaration](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London_Declaration) in 1949, which modernized the community and established the member states as "free and equal".

The [Head of the Commonwealth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Head_of_the_Commonwealth) is currently [Queen Elizabeth II](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Queen_Elizabeth_II). Member states have no legal obligations to one another, but are connected through their use of the English language and historical ties. Their stated shared values of [democracy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democracy), [human rights](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_rights) and the [rule of law](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rule_of_law) are set down in the [Commonwealth Charter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charter_of_the_Commonwealth) and promoted by the quadrennial [Commonwealth Games](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commonwealth_Games).

The countries of the Commonwealth cover more than 29,958,050 km2 almost 20%(1/5 th) of the world's land area. The total population is estimated to be 2,418,964,000 as of 2016, which is nearly one third of the [global population](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global_population). Thus it is the second largest [intergovernmental organization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intergovernmental_organisation) by population behind the [United Nations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations).

**Role of Pakistan in Commonwealth**

1. Preoccupation with India and its own internal problems have generally made Pakistan’s government rather grudging and unenthusiastic participant in Commonwealth proceedings, even formally a member (i.e. from 1947 to 1972 and since 1989) –
2. A few, rather very few, Pakistanis have served with distinction in the upper echelons of Commonwealth organizations since 1989 and still do today, and despite Pakistan’s “suspension of membership since last October.
3. In 1949 many Pakistanis considered that too much attention had been given to India to keep her in the commonwealth, and so the principal rationale for Pakistan’s continue membership was to keep an eye on India and not to concede Commonwealth platforms to her whilst denying them to themselves.
4. Even so, Pakistan’s efforts to get Britain and the commonwealth generally to discuss Kashmir at commonwealth Prime Ministerial meetings failed in the face of Nehru’s obdurate determination to prevent this.
5. President of Pakistan Field Marshal Muhammad Ayyub Khan attended all four Commonwealth Prime Ministers’ (sic) Meeting held in London between 1960 and 1965. But not thereafter through he was represented at Heads of Government meetings only by their foreign Minister or, as in 1971, by the Minister of Commerce. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was on record from 1969 as being critical of the Commonwealth and, by inference, of Pakistan’s continuance as a member in it.
6. Bhutto characterized the commonwealth then as an anachronistic old boys club much too dominated by the British—which was itself an anachronistic judgement which took an account at all of the launching of the commonwealth Secretariat in 1965. Bhutto, newly installed as head of government, took Pakistan out of the commonwealth in early 1972 despite advice from the then Commonwealth Secretary-General, Arnold Smith, to the contrary. Bhutto did this ostensibly and avowedly because he objected Britain, Australia and New Zealand’s impending and in his view premature recognition of Bangladesh. Arnold Smith’s view was that if Bhutto wished to show his displeasure with the three above mention countries the most logical thing to do was to act bilaterally with each of them, perhaps by recalling Pakistan’s High Commissioner from their capitals and/or breaking off diplomatic relations. He strongly advised against breaking away from the whole Commonwealth nexus by withdrawing Pakistan from the Commonwealth.
7. Much of the story of the Commonwealth since 1991 has centered on the implementation of the principles set out in the Harare Declaration of fundamental political values.
8. The response to countries that have lost their democratic credentials has changed and the swift reaction to the coup in Pakistan on the eve of the Durban Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting demonstrates that military regimes are no longer tolerated.
9. Through the use of observer teams, special emphasis has been placed on seeking to ensure that elections within Commonwealth member states are conducted freely and fairly. The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association has organized and conducted seminars on Parliamentary practice and procedure and the role of Members of Parliament, as part of its remit under the Declaration to promote the objectives set out in 1991.

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