**India violating rights**

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The recent announcement by the Indian authorities also to permit temporary residents in IIOJ&K to register as voters is yet another attempt to change the demographic features of the state. This move follows the promulgation of a new domicile law after the repeal of Article 370 of the Indian constitution revoking the special status of the state and its bifurcation into two territories. The announced measure is likely to add 2.5 million more voters, which the local population fears would allow the BJP government to alter the demographics of the region. It is a sinister move to convert the Muslim majority into a minority in due course of time and has rightly been rejected and condemned by Pakistan. The action constitutes a blatant violation of the Geneva Convention and the UN resolutions on the Kashmir dispute.
After the end of World War II, as a consequence of the initiative taken by the International Committee of Red Cross, the Diplomatic Conference for the Establishment of International Convention for Protection of Victims of War was held in Geneva which adopted the 4th Geneva Convention on 12 August 1949. It is one of the four treaties of the Geneva Conventions. While the first three conventions dealt with combatants, the Fourth Geneva Convention was the first to deal with humanitarian protections for civilians in a war zone. There are currently 196 countries party to the 1949 Geneva Conventions, including this and the other three treaties.
Article 27 of the Geneva IV states “Protected persons are entitled, in all circumstances, to respect for their persons, their honour, their family rights, their religious convictions and practices, and their manners and customs. They shall at all times be humanely treated, and shall be protected especially against all acts of violence or threats thereof and insults and public curiosity.” Article 49 of Geneva IV says “The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its civilian population into the territory it occupies.” Article 32 of the Convention Stipulates “The High Contracting Parties specifically agree that each of them is prohibited from taking any measure of such a character as to cause the physical suffering or extermination of protected persons in their hands. This prohibition applies not only to murder, torture, corporal punishments … but also to any other measures of brutality by civilian or military agents.” Giving voting rights to non-residents and allowing people from the Indian mainland to buy property in IIOJ&K constitutes a breach of Article 49 of the 4th Geneva Convention.
After revoking article 370 of the Indian constitution which accorded special status to IOJ&K, the entire population of the state is under siege and they have been denied contact with the outside world, there is a complete lockdown in the valley and people are not even given access to mosques. International media, human rights organisations like Amnesty International and even the UN Human Rights Commission in its reports has corroborated blatant violation of human rights in IOJ&K. The discovery of mass graves at 38 sites in IIOJ&K also lends currency to the inhuman treatment of the local population by the Indian security forces. Through the foregoing actions, India has not only torn asunder the 4th Geneva Convention but has also pummelled the UN resolutions regarding the plebiscite and breached international law with impunity.
It is indeed regrettable that neither the UN nor the big powers have shown real interest in stopping India in her tracks and resolving the Kashmir conflict as per the UN resolutions. Their indifference to the developments taking place in IIOJ&K and the fall-out of those provocative measures, is encouraging Indian hegemonic designs in the region. Is it not a pity that a state which has shown no respect for UN resolutions, International Law and the 4th Geneva Convention is being supported for a permanent seat in the Security Council besides propping it up as a regional superpower through the transfer of nuclear technology and NSG waiver in complete violation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty? They fail to realise that any such eventuality would lead to perennial instability in the region and foreclose any chance of resolution of the Kashmir dispute.
The Modi government is rightly perceived as a threat to peace and security in the region. Pakistan has been persistently warning the world and the UN about Indian designs and urging them to intervene before it is too late. Pakistan and India are both nuclear powers and any military confrontation between them can have disastrous consequences not only for them but for the entire region and beyond. Those who cry hoarse from every convenient roof-top to pronounce their humanitarian credentials and adherence to international law, UN Charter and Conventions, need to rattle their conscience.