**[IOK: A tale of torture and struggle](https://nation.com.pk/14-Jan-2020/iok-a-tale-of-torture-and-struggle%22%20%5Ct%20%22_new)**

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The beginning of 2020 has arrived and yet 5 months later, the people of Kashmir are shadowed under deep anguish while the world remains immune to their sufferings. The Kashmiri population has been drowning under a wave of systematic torture incurred upon them since the very inception of this conflict in 1947, and even before that during the Dogra dynasty. Torture has been used by India as an instrument of State policy to subdue and control the population, much like the colonial and imperialistic era. According to a report by Jammu and Kashmir Civil Coalition Society, persecution has been the most under-reported Human Rights Violation carried out by the State for the past four decades. Torture techniques, some of which have been termed illegal by the International Humanitarian Law, have chiefly been used by the Indian Forces against the innocent population. As Illegal cluster bombs, pellet guns, rape, electrocution, and many other forms of torment, along with massive amounts of unidentified graves and unjustified detention of innocent civilians haunts the blood-drenched valley, we could say that India is conducting genocide in the valley.

While the Nuremberg trials led Raphael Lemkin to coin the term ‘genocide’ and the subsequent adoption of the term by the United Nations as a crime against humanity, Indian government continues persecution directed towards the religious and ethnic minority. The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide clearly defines genocide as any number of acts ‘committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group’, and yet India continues to maintain terror. A total lock down and communications blockade is imposed with Section 144 implemented that prohibits the assembly of four or more people at one place. According to Mehbooba Mufti, the former Chief Minister of the IOK, the Indian Government is lying about lifting of curfew and the local journalists have been barred from reporting on-ground realities, denying which, they face jail.

An Indian All Women fact-finding team stated in a report that there was a curfew for men to remain indoors after 6pm, and if they do not comply, they would be detained with no one ever knowing what happened to them or where they went. The lights should remain switched off after 8pm, the ignorance of which would result in detention of the male family members by the Indian Forces. In an incident narrated by the mission, a girl lit a lamp past 8pm to study for an exam, in a hope that her school would somehow open the next day. She along with her family heard the barking of dogs and soon enough the Indian Army broke in and seized their male family members for questioning, while the horrified females dared not utter a word. People in the Valley die without mourning or warning, and they have been dying like this for decades. Yet India maintains the narrative in the international arena that the people of Kashmir are ‘free’.

In many ways the atrocities against the Kashmiri population mimic the Rwandan genocide against the Tutsis and moderate Hutus in 1994, especially the narrative control by the Hutu extremists. The Radio Station RTML, and newspapers circulated hate propaganda, competing to monopolize the historical narrative. The Tutsis had no access to counter the narrative as they were fleeing the Hutu-majority country of eighty five percent. This is similar to how India is trying to monopolize the historical narrative by shattering any bridge that could allow Kashmiri’s to express their side of the story. Internet and prepaid mobile facilities are blocked, no journalists or diplomatic mission is allowed in the territory, so much so, tourists and Hindu pilgrimages to Amaranth cave are also banned. It is imperative to note that the Indian government continues torturing Kashmiri’s in order to repress the idea of separation from the State; in a similar way the Hutus used propaganda against Tutsis to ‘weed out the cockroaches.’ The BJP government has falsely presented Kashmiri people as a treacherous faction that conducts terrorism against the mainland Indian population. Analogous to this, Hutus repeatedly used the word ‘slavery’ to describe their past experiences under the Tutsi monarchy, and recounted their exaggerated struggles during the era. Through their radio broadcasts, the Hutus tried to mold the truth by instilling the idea that they had a right to retaliate, just as the Indian Army beefed up its numerical value and strengthened torture with an excuse that Kashmiri populace had been conducting armed struggle against them. This on the contrary is untrue. In 1980’s the Kashmiri freedom struggle evolved from an armed struggle to a political struggle for most part. The armed struggle reduced to a large extent and yet, the xenophobia in BJP forced them to mold the truth by selling bogus narrative that Kashmir harbors terrorism, and disallows counter-narratives to reach the ears of international community.

The intensification and new methods of torture that were inflicted upon the Kashmiri populace by the Indian Forces also paved way towards the inflation of illegal methods of torture. One such incident was that of Kunan Poshpora where according to Human Rights Watch, about 100 women were allegedly raped by the Indian Forces within a single day in 1991. Systematic torture intensified in 2010 and onwards when mass protests erupted all over Kashmir, demanding freedom. According to Jammu and Kashmir Civil Coalition Society, about four thousand three hundred and thirty people have been martyred in the Indian Occupied Kashmir between 2008 to June 2019 alone. Subsequently, India has been using Brute force ‘to kill as many as you can’ to quell protests in the region, according to a statement by India’s former Finance Minister and the member of BJP, Yashwant Singh.

The Indian Army has continuously violated numerous United Nations Resolutions along with the Charter of Human Rights as well as the UN Istanbul Protocol 2004 - which is an International protocol for the Documentation of Torture, by carrying out military strategies against Kashmiri people that were ‘enemy and population-centric’. India blatantly violates the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which is an International Treaty that prohibits the use, transfer, and stockpiling of cluster bombs. The current disproportionate presence of about nine hundred thousand Indian troops in the region shows the intention to control the population. This is further reflected in the Indian Army’s Doctrine of Sub-Conventional Operations 2006 which states: ‘The endeavor should be to bring about a realization that fighting a government is a ‘no win’ situation and that their anti-government stance will only delay the process of restoration of peace and normalcy.’

The International community continues to turn a blind eye towards the severity of these atrocities. The only option for Pakistan to drum realities into world consciousness is to exert the issue diplomatically to her full capacity. We need to convey that any more relaxation or ignorance of this issue could lead India into carrying out a full-fledged massacre and genocide that would imitate the likes of the Rwandan genocide, Bosnian crisis or the Rohingya persecution. This Indian systematic torture is not far from turning into a chapter from blood-spattered history where State-backed forces persecute a minority section of the society. It’s not very long that the Modi-led government could resort to carrying out a massacre that resembles Jalianwala Bagh incident, only that this time, the entire region of Kashmir would be the Bagh, and the Indian Forces would be the one’s blocking every exit for the innocent population to escape from. Yet, despite the stark contrast of Indian brutalities in the occupied territory with major genocides in the world, we enter the New Year with the blood still dripping from Indian Occupied Kashmir.s