**India needs to answer questions**

[Malik Muhammad Ashraf](https://dailytimes.com.pk/writer/malik-muhammad-ashraf/%22%20%5Co%20%22More%20Articles%20by%20Malik%20Muhammad%20Ashraf)

June 23, 2021

Prime Minister Imran Khan in an interview with Jonathan Swan of Axios on HBO, lamented what he called western hypocrisy on the Kashmir issue and rightly so. For years Kashmiris have been dying in J&K due to Indian atrocities while, the international community has turned a blind eye to it. According to All Parties Hurriyat (Freedom) Conference in 2008, more than 100,000 people have died since 1989, while India earlier claimed that 43,000 Kashmiris had died but then they revised the number to 47,000. But in 2011 the Indian Parliament was told that 40,000 Kashmiris were killed. There are no accurate figures on the number of Kashmiris killed in all these years. This is a human rights issue.

Over the years, India have disregarded the United Nation Security Council resolutions of 1948 and unilaterally rescinded special status of the state and made it part of the Indian Union. Not only that it has even promulgated new domicile law to change demographic contours of the state in contravention of international law and 4th Geneva Convention.

Pakistan has always shown unflinching solidarity with the people of Kashmir in regards to their right of self-determination as enshrined in the UNSC resolution S/726 for an impartial plebiscite. On 4th August 2020, Government of Pakistan unveiled a new political map of the country, which included Indian-occupied Kashmir within the borders. This was just a day before the first anniversary when India revoked Article 370, including 35A, which was the basis of Kashmir’s relationship with India for over 7 decades. The map clearly identified Indian occupied Kashmir and other states as a ‘disputed territory’ declaring that the final status would be decided in line with the relevant UNSC resolutions.

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Pakistan and Prime Minister Imran Khan has given a strong message to the international community who has been indifferent to the plight of the people of J&K. No other government or leader has ever taken such a strong and determined position on the issue and promoted the cause of self-determination of the people of Kashmir, as has been done by him.

This move rightly show-cased the aspirations of the nation in consonance with Article 1 of the constitution which stipulates territorial limits of Pakistan. It says “….such states and territories as are or may be included in Pakistan whether by accession or otherwise.” The architects of the constitution had kept the ultimate reality in view, while setting territorial limits of Pakistan. As per my views, they should have drawn the political map of Pakistan in line with the constitution then and there, but as they say it is never too late. The PTI government did the right thing to atone the lapse in regards to expression of national aspirations and ethos concerning its territorial limits. The step was also in conformity with the spirit and stipulation of the UNCIP resolution of 5th January 1949 allowing the option of accession of Kashmir to Pakistan or India through a plebiscite held under the auspices of UN, obviating any other option.

Kashmir is a nuclear flash point. Pakistan, as a responsible nuclear state understands its obligations and is also aware of the dangers of military confrontation between the two nuclear countries. India too needs to realise that its aggressive posture towards Pakistan and illegal and oppressive actions in J&K are not going to resolve the conflict.

According to India’s claim the people of J&K approve of the Indian actions and want to be part of the Indian union on their free will, then why did it go to the extent of imposing curfew in the valley? Why are they keeping them under siege and killing the Kashmiri youth? It also needs to ponder on the question as to why the world community did not subscribe to the Indian narrative that what it did in J&K was her internal matter. Why Congress, intellectual circles within India and the pro-Indian leadership in Kashmir have rejected the steps taken by his government in J&K? Another question that must be asked is whether what has been done in J&K has a legal legitimacy in view of the decision of the Indian Supreme Court and High Court of Indian Occupied Jummu and Kashmir declaring that article 370 had attained permanency and could not be repealed? International community also needs to ponder over these questions and its obligations toward the people of Kashmir before the BJP regime inebriated by its supremacist ideology is able to trigger a catastrophic situation in the region.