**Kashmir Conference at NUML and OIC Session on Kashmir**

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The International Relations Department at National University of Modern Languages (NUML) and Sophy’s Forum, organised a 2-day International [Conference](https://dailytimes.com.pk/525403/governor-to-open-global-health-conference-in-karachi-on-dec-24/) titled “From Gardens To Graves: Kashmir In Resolutions And Solutions” on 23-24 December 2019 at the University. Prof. Dr. Shahid Siddiqui, Prof. Dr. Adnan Sarwar, Dr. Sarwat and Ms. Rabia Aamir, a team of student volunteers, Director General, NUML, Brigadier Muhammad Ibrahim, Rector NUML, Major General Muhammad Jaffar HI (M), and others at the two institutions, had made best efforts to attract speakers from all disciplines of life from Pakistan and from outside.

President of Azad Kashmir Sardar Masood Khan and Syed Fakhar Imam, Chairman, Special Parliamentary Committee on Kashmir were chief guests in two different sessions. Such a big effort could not have been possible without the hard work of organising committee and many more behind the scene. President of Azad Kashmir, very rightly said, that “it is always today, to act. Rather it should have been yesterday.” Chairman Kashmir Committee encouraged to keep faith.

Presentations and the debates in various sessions, were great independent inputs. They need further examination by experts and later made part of the future policy, in seeking the vacation of Indian military occupation of Kashmir and taking the people through a UN supervised vote. The differing schools of opinion and differing approaches, could be reconciled, for a credible action template. Conferences on Kashmir have remained a routine and a kind of competitive reflexes between groups and individuals. We find a complete disjoint and an amoebic crawl between these exercises on Kashmir and have failed to structure a common point where all these efforts could be parked for a further comparative and competitive examination.

One finds a commons sin being committed by many of us who appear for Kashmir at these Conferences. India has succeeded over the years to mount a psychological pressure in her favour and make us walk in her footprints on the UN position on Kashmir.India wants us to step down from the UN mechanism on Kashmir and seek any other way forward.Why? India should have a subterranean and concealed motive. Some of us may be making this error of being tagged along under Indian influence in good faith or this school wants to appear liberal and forward looking at the cost of the principle of “equality of Peoples” and right of “Self-Determination”.

United Nations has defined the people of Jammu and Kashmir and the territories of Jammu and Kashmir. Until early 1990, no Kashmiri Muslim, Pandit, Sikh, Christian, Jew, Budh or a non-faith Kashmiri, has challenged the Kashmiris right to self-determination. All found themselves represented in the UN definition of the people. Kashmir has been at the UN for the last 71 years and the present Government is on record to have said that “we did not raise it at the UN for the last 54 years”. We tend to blame the UN and international community, without any merit. In fact we are still dithering under Indian influence and do not want to seek compliance from India, as required under UN Security Council Resolutions.

UN has been jointly approached by India and Pakistan, to assist them in arranging a free, secure and fair Plebiscite in Kashmir. As a consequence United Nations gave a plan to conduct a UN supervised vote in Kashmir. It appointed the UN Representative for India and Pakistan to carry out a demilitarization and appointed Plebiscite Administrator to conduct the UN supervised Plebiscite. We have an inclusive definition of People, identification of territories and a mechanism to carry out a Plebiscite. It is based on solemn agreements between India and Pakistan and endorsed by the UN Security Council. It has been a life time consensus and turning our backs on it, would leave us vulnerable and impotent against the broad spread of Indian influence around the world.

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As long as we continue to hold on to the UN jurisprudence on the Kashmir case, India continues to remain helpless and weak. India will use her friends to infiltrate in the school of opinion that supports the UN jurisprudence on Kashmir case and encourage another school who would offer weak arguments that it is a 70 year old story and we should move on. It would be like encouraging us to walk over a cliff in the darkness and leaving the lantern at home. India has succeeded to influence many in Pakistan to admit this argument and volunteer to walk into a wilderness, in pitch dark, to find a lamp, instead of walking towards the definitive position of a UN lamp.

Finding a new consensus as opposed to UN mechanism on Kashmir, would take centuries and at the end we shall have to settle down with the status quo. In that case we shall have to account for the death of a generation and the loss of honour by every man, woman, child and elderly in Kashmir. India had offered “sky is the limit” to the people of Kashmir in 1994. If 194 countries of the UN could not pin down India to comply with UN package on Kashmir, Pakistan on its own has no chance to help the people of Kashmir, sans the UN template. We need to be careful.

The news that Saudi Arabia is planning to convene a meeting of the foreign ministers of member states of OIC for a discussion on the situation in Indian-occupied Kashmir would have warmed the hearts and hopes of Kashmiris living all around the world. Kashmiri Diaspora is an enormous constituency, sitting in various Parliaments and in all disciplines, in these countries.

Saudi spiritual leadership would prevail through all times if it has a credible political component as well. The litmus test is how it responds to rights regimes in their respective member countries and in particular “Rights and Dignity” and “Security and Self Determination” of (all people) Muslims in Kashmir, who have been aggressed , occupied and imprisoned by Indian army from August 5. India has violated the obligations accepted under UN Resolutions and UNCIP Resolutions on Kashmir. OIC rather than repeating or causing a new resolution, should make a formal reference to the UN. It should encourage and support the NGOs working on Kashmir.

OIC has to measure itself against the example of Catholic Church and find out the manner in which Catholic Church has backed Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR) in the independence struggle of East Timor. They looked for support beyond the contours of Catholic Church. IPJET reached out to Muslim Experts as well. As a British Kashmiri Muslim, I served on the IPJET (International Platform of Jurists for East Timor) from 1985 until East Timor achieved its independence

The hosting of OIC Foreign Ministers meeting on Kashmir would help to heal the wrong done to Kashmir by the absence of Pakistan at Kuala Lumpur Summit. Kashmiris are known for their sense of gratitude. Saudi leadership needs to assume the twin roles of leading the Muslim world on spiritual front and bonding it with the political interests of Muslims around the world. An error of judgement or an imbalance in either case would be disastrous, for Saudi prestige on world forums and badly sag the love that sits in the hearts of every Muslim around the globe for Saudia.

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