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August 5, 2021

**Kashmir solidarity**

Exactly two years ago, the Modi government abolished Articles 370 and 35A of the Indian constitution to remove the special status of Indian Occupied Kashmir.

The government of Pakistan not only immediately rejected this illegal move but also mobilized the international community to draw attention against this. Calling himself the ambassador of Kashmir, Prime Minister Imran Khan exposed the true face of the Indian government during UN meetings and on other world forums. He appealed to the international community to urge India to protect human rights in the occupied valley.

In my view, the present Indian leadership has also violated the agreement between Maharaja of Kashmir Hari Singh and Jawaharlal Nehru. India is an occupying power controlling a territory against the will of the people living there.

The Kashmir issue is a long-standing dispute in the United Nations. Unfortunately, the UN has not been able to stop the Indian government from oppressing the Kashmiris for the last seven decades. The Modi government has been pursuing extremist policies day by day in Occupied Kashmir. The hidden motive to move people there from all over India is to change the proportion of the local population.

No doubt, the Kashmir issue has once again succeeded in gaining international attention and questions are being raised on various forums regarding the ongoing human rights violations in Occupied Kashmir. However, we need to convince the international community that the Kashmir situation must be considered a matter of humanity which needs immediate attention.

Interestingly, the presidency of the UN Security Council has been transferred to India at a time when the people of Indian Occupied Kashmir are marking two years of exploitation under the Modi regime. The presidency changes every month, and Ireland will have the next turn to take the presidency.

The Indian foreign ministry, in this regard, has outlined three key priorities for India during its UNSC presidency: (i) Voice of moderation; (ii) Advocate of dialogue; and (iii) Proponent of international law. If the Indian leadership is committed to achieve the above-mentioned targets then there should be serious efforts to resolve the Kashmir conflict peacefully. The doors of dialogue with Pakistan should be opened and arrangements for a referendum according to the UN resolutions should be ensured. The leadership of both countries must learn from the mistakes of the past.

Today, we need to convince the international community that according to the Indian Independence Act 1947 passed by the UK parliament, every princely state was allowed to either join India / Pakistan or stay independent. If the people of East Timor and South Sudan can get independence through referendum then depriving Kashmiris of the right to self-determination is in fact a grave violation of UN resolutions and international laws.

Today, we also need to analyze why the international community is not supporting our just stance. This is also a question for international human rights activists; the UN is still unable to implement its resolution despite more than seven decades having gone by. In order to counter the Indian narrative on the diplomatic front, we also need to redesign our foreign policy on a priority basis.

Our embassies must play a proactive role to promote the Kashmir cause, rather than enjoying foreign trips along with families. The prime minister and president of Pakistan should immediately call an international conference on the Kashmir issue to seek the support of friendly countries.

The writer is a member of the National Assembly and patron-in-chief of the Pakistan Hindu Council.

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