**Bloodshed in Kashmir**

[Daily Times](https://dailytimes.com.pk/writer/dailytimes/)

DECEMBER 18, 2018

The international community can no longer afford to remain silent in the face of New Delhi’s ongoing human rights atrocities in — held Kashmir. Over the weekend alone, Indian forces killed at least 14 civilians and injured some 200; bringing the total number of [casualties](https://dailytimes.com.pk/325263/i-will-never-rejoin-record-casualties-take-toll-on-afghan-forces-2/) so far this year to almost 500.

These were targeted attacks. For as every professional army knows: aerial warning shots are all that are required to disperse crowds. As a last resort, if, say, protestors become unruly and engage in actual violence — then a reluctant shot to the leg or foot to temporarily immobilise may be considered permissible. What is not is the shooing of civilians in the neck, head and abdomen. Or, indeed, inflicting permanent blindness them by use of pellet guns. No nation can continue down this path and lay claim to being the world’s largest democracy.

Kashmir, much like the Palestine issue, is one of unlawful military occupation. But whereas the latter is victim to the world’s largest land grab — the former has persistently been denied the right of self-determination in accordance with UN resolutions. And in both cases, Britain’s sense of unfair play and fighting against the underdog are to blame. Regrettably, in the case of Kashmir the global powers have chosen inaction as a matter of policy towards India and its lucrative market; proving once more that size really does matter.

Pakistan has been the lone voice speaking up for the right of Kashmiri self-determination throughout. Thereby unwittingly allowing [New Delhi](https://dailytimes.com.pk/327058/pakistan-to-extend-another-olive-branch-to-new-delhi/) to actively dismiss this as the opportunism displayed by a weaker and incredibly insecure neighbour that is intent upon fragmenting the Indian state. Of course, had this been true, Islamabad would not have from the very beginning supported the Kashmiris’ right to independence.

This time around, Pakistan is not standing alone. The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has issued a stern statement denouncing the violence in the disputed territory.  Not only that, Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi has called on the OIC to immediately convene an inter-ministerial meeting of its Contact Group on Kashmir; offering to host the event. The OIC has reportedly responded favourably and asked that a formal request be submitted towards this end.

All of which is well and good. Except that with just support from the Muslim world — it becomes all too easy to for the prevailing narrative to take on a purely religious hue. And the current levels of Islamophobia in the West make it easier to ignore Pakistan’s urgent calls for support. Thus it is imperative that major powers from the non-Muslim world throw their collective weight behind the Kashmiris and condemn India for gross human rights abuses. This must also include the demand to allow a UN fact-finding mission access to both sides of the Line of Control (LoC). If nothing else, failure on this front will only reinforce notions western hypocrisy when it comes to upholding the alienable rights of Muslims. From Afghanistan to Iraq to Libya to Syria to Yemen. While both Israel and India are free from censure.

Moving forward, therefore, it is difficult to imagine what additional parliamentary resolutions denouncing anti-Kashmiri violence can achieve.  The time for this has passed and what is now needed is for the world community to designate New Delhi a state sponsor of terrorism; with international sanctions swiftly following. This must be brought up in no uncertain terms during the international conference on Kashmir in London scheduled for the beginning of February. Ditto when it comes to the EU Parliament hearing bookmarked for later the same month.

Bluntly put, Pakistan must encourage the internationalisation of the Kashmir conflict in terms of resolution. For just as the Middle East will continue to burn until the Palestinian question is settled — South Asia will never know peace while Kashmiri blood is spilled. Day after day. Year after year. Decade after decade.  \*

Published in Daily Times, December 18th2018.