**October 27: The Darkest Day**

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Kashmiris in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan and around the world observed October 27 as the darkest day of their history as a continued protest against the occupation of their territory, which India had forcibly taken over it on this day way back in 1947.

The long unresolved Kashmir dispute remains a source of lingering tension and conflict between neighbouring nuclear powers India and Pakistan, which originated when the people of Jammu were denied their fundamental right of self-determination after the partition of the Indian sub-continent and the emergence of two separate independent states of Pakistan and India on August 14, 1947.

At that time, it was generally presumed that Kashmir, as a contiguous state with a predominantly Muslim population, would accede to Pakistan. However, its ruler Maharaja Hari Singh fled to New Delhi in the face of residents’ protests. Through an improper and illegal Instrument of Accession, he acceded the territory to India on October 27, 1947. The same day, India airlifted its forces to Srinagar and forcibly occupied the valley against the aspirations of the Kashmiris.

In brief, this is the background as to why the Kashmiris everywhere, including Pakistan, observe October 27 every year as the black day to mark the darkest day in their history.

This year also, the Kashmiris are observing October 27 in changed circumstances, following the revocation of the special status of Jammu and Kashmir on August 5, 2019, through illegal amendments to the Indian Constitution by the fascist regime of Prime Minister Narendra Modi; merging the territory into the Indian Union as its integral part.

India can overwhelm Kashmiris but not their aspirations for freedom.

For the last 75 years, India has illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir against the wishes of the Kashmiri people and in blatant violations of the UN Security Council resolutions and its own commitments to the people of Kashmir.

Through the determined efforts of Pakistan leadership, the Kashmir issue was activated in the UN Security Council after more than five decades.

The Kashmir issue is now being discussed at all international forums; Indian security forces’ brutalities and atrocities in the occupied territory are being condemned, and the Indian government is being asked to take measures for restoring normalcy there and implement UN Security Council resolutions and accordingly hold free, a fair plebiscite to let the Kashmiris exercise their birth right of self-determination and decide their future themselves in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions.

But it is rather deplorable that the international community, topped by the world body, do not pressurise India in any manner more than its condemnation as everyone has their own vested financial and economic relations with a big country like India.

Not only did the longest military siege of the entire valley close educational institutions and health facilities but even render the territory a No-Go Area for all foreigners, including diplomats and media people. The longest lockdown in mankind’s history continues unabatedly in IIOJK.

Furthermore, besides the Indian security forces’ brutalities and atrocities, the persistent military siege is being followed by intentional moves to change the demographic structure of the occupied territory as a brute attempt to obliterate the distinct Kashmiri identity to affect the outcome of a plebiscite envisaged in the UN Security Council resolutions.

This action by Narendra Modi-led Indian government is in violation of the UN Charter; Security Council resolutions and international laws, particularly the 4th Geneva Convention; changing the demographic structure of a territory.

The Indian government is settling Indian Hindus in the territory in the garb of immigrant Kashmiri Pundits.

Changing IIOJK’s Muslim majority into a minority has long been part of the Hindutva agenda of RSS ad BJP and they are practically implementing it now. Modi government was constructing transit accommodation camps to settle Hindus in IIOJK. Construction of transit camps for Hindus is under progress in all districts of the Kashmir valley.

As the Indian occupation of its occupied Kashmir continues without the UN Security Council resolutions being implemented. The indigenous, unarmed struggle for freedom by the Kashmiris would go on till they achieve their cherished objective of freedom from Indian shackles.

Through its civil and military leadership, Pakistan has been extending full political, diplomatic and moral support all along to the Kashmiri people, and will continue to support their indigenous, just and legitimate struggle for securing their right of self-determination, as enshrined in the relevant UN resolutions.

A peaceful, negotiated settlement of the lingering Kashmir in accordance with UN resolutions has been and remains on top of Pakistan’s foreign policy. Without resolving the Kashmir issue, the agenda of the partition of the Indian sub-continent remains incomplete, as Kashmir is regarded as the lifeline of Pakistan.

It is an internationally accepted and acknowledged fact that Kashmir entails global danger in the case of spiralling nuclear and missile proliferation in both India and Pakistan coupled with their respective domestic instabilities and historical animosities.

India can overwhelm Kashmiris but not their aspirations for freedom which they will never surrender. India should honour its promises of giving the right of self-determination to the people of Jammu and Kashmir who have already rendered endless sacrifices for freedom from illegal Indian occupation. The international community must take concrete steps to end the Indian occupation of the held Kashmir and intervene to resolve the lingering Kashmir dispute peacefully to ensure durable peace, progress and prosperity for the people of the region.

India is bound under international law not to change the demography of IIOJK and the international community must forestall this move and try to exert all possible pressure on India’s fascist regime to honour its decades-old commitment, implement UN Security Council resolutions and let the Kashmiris exercise their birth right of self-determination. The UN, as well as the international community, should also exert more pressure and influence on India to implement UN Security Council resolutions and let the Kashmiris exercise their birthright of self-determination.

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