**Resolving the Kashmir conflict**

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Jammu and Kashmir is situated in the heart of Asia, connecting South and Central Asia. It is the only state in the world that shares its border with three nuclear states; Pakistan, India, and China. Kashmir, termed a nuclear flash point, has endangered regional as well as international peace and security. The resolution of this dispute can unlock the true potential of regional development and cooperation, as well as address the looming challenges faced by the South Asian masses. For more than seven decades, the Kashmiri people have struggled to achieve their absolute right of self-determination assured to them by the UN Security Council, the international community, and both India and Pakistan, the parties to the Jammu and Kashmir dispute. Unfortunately, India defies its commitment to hold a free and fair plebiscite under the auspices of the United Nations to let the Kashmiris decide their future. The main objective of UN formation was to ensure world peace, if the Kashmir issue is not resolved it can have a grave threat to world peace especially because of non-action by the United Nations.
Moreover, India has been changing its policy objectives and tactics over time according to periodic developments. Undoubtedly, the Kashmir dispute has become a complicated issue due to India, which has exercised overwhelming influence over its policies since the partition. The world has witnessed India’s unilateral and illegal action to revoke articles 370 and 35A of the Indian constitution, which not only violates the UN Security Council resolutions on Kashmir but also the bilateral Shimla agreement and the Lahore Declaration between Pakistan-India. Furthermore, India has deployed nearly one million troops to impose a military siege on eight million Kashmiris, imprisoned the Kashmiri political leadership, and detained thousands of Kashmiri youth. India has banned international media and observers on IIOJK reporting which has created an environment of fear and chaos. The right to self-determination is a fundamental human right, from which all other rights flow and it is sad to say that this right is denied to Kashmiris for too many generations.
However, despite the restriction, communications blackout, and denial of access, much has been written and reported regarding the human rights conditions in IIOJK. World leaders have spoken out on human rights violations in IIOJK. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has extensively documented this in its 2018 and 2019 reports. The violations have been taken up by various Special Rapporteurs of the Human Rights Council, besides civil society and leading human rights organisations including the Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International. Besides this, Pakistan unveiled a comprehensive “Dossier on Indian Human Rights Violations in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK)” on 12 September 2021. Therefore, the world is observing India’s descent into hate. This is the second time in less than two months that the US has directly expressed uneasiness about a rising trend in human rights violations in India. The US Secretary of State, at the release of the state department’s annual report on international religious freedom on 2 Jun 2021, highlighted the inhuman and dark face of the Indian track record. Thus, the only solution for regional peace is the settlement of the Kashmir issue according to the wishes of the Kashmiri people.
Likewise, various methods of negotiations including bilateral, trilateral, and multilateral exist, but it is unlikely to work if any party refuses to cooperate and the Kashmir issue is a political dispute that requires a political approach based on continuous negotiations. Hence, both states India and Pakistan need to come to the negotiation table for a comprehensive discussion with the view to resolving the Kashmir dispute once and for all. The international community, particularly the United Nations should come forward and pursue India and Pakistan for a permanent settlement of the Kashmir issue, as it is an essential time when the war is ended in Afghanistan and non-states actors can spoil the existing environment and further widen mistrust between India and Pakistan. So, keeping the Kashmir issue lingering cannot be fruitful for these two nations in any case. A dedicated voice is the need of the hour which may lead this problematic issue to its logical end. The suffering of innocent Kashmiris must be kept in view for a permanent and humanitarian resolution of the Kashmir dispute so that the whole population of the sub-continent may breathe in peace and no threat to humanity may find a way to proceed. India, as well as Pakistan, has to estimate the importance of a peaceful negotiation on Kashmir, then this battlefield may act as a bridge of friendship between them, which is a hindrance to smooth relations between both states.