**Voice for Kashmir (Part II)**

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November 4, 2021

October 27 has been observed as Kashmir’s “Black Day” to let the valley’s voice reach the world. Maybe then, it will pay heed to India’s brutality in occupied Jammu and Kashmir ever since 1947. Pakistan has always been a strong fighter for the provision of fundamental human rights and self-determination of Kashmiris. Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan has also conveyed his stance by standing in support of Kashmiris’ inalienable right to self-determination. He urged the global community to raise their voice and play their role by exerting pressure on India to end the violation in occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

The dispute had started after the departure of the British from India in 1947. Five hundred princely states were left to be decided by Royal Princes by the British as to whether to merge with India or Pakistan (on their wills based on the population majority, religion, geographic location, and cultural values). The over 70 per cent Muslim majority in the state of Jammu and Kashmir was ignored by the then Prince Hari Singh. It was included in the territory of India against Muslims’ will. Pakistan and India are separated by 870-miles of “Line of Control.” Ever since independence, both countries are on fighting terms. From time to time, Pakistan continues to raise its voice for Kashmiris, who are being the victims of Indian forces’ brutal attitude. We stand listening as thousands and thousands of Kashmiris are reported to be tortured and killed by Indian security forces. Many have been reported enforced disappeared in the security forces’ extrajudicial execution. A recent surge of violence in heavily-militarised Indian occupied Kashmir, including freedom fighter attacks and security forces’ widespread crackdown, has left 33 people dead. In August 2019, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi revoked the Indian Constitution’s Article 370 pertaining to the Kashmir region’s autonomy. In this way, it removed the statehood of Jammu and Kashmir. Previously, the Article had granted special status to Indian occupied Kashmir since 1947. By abolishing special status by presidential order, the entire Indian constitution is now applicable to the Indian-occupied Kashmir region.

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The heaven-like valley is being turned into a living hell by Indian security forces who unleash all brutalities beyond record on Kashmiris. From time to time, it is seen that people are locked in their homes under strict military curfews. Prominent Kashmiris leaders are arrested from time to time and put into preventive detention. Basic facilities of life have been taken back such as internet, phones, etc., and making normal lives miserable. Kashmiri known leader, Syed Ali Geelani, died peacefully at his residence at the age of 92 after a prolonged 11-years house arrest but his funeral was not allowed to be taken out and forcefully instructed to bury the body at midnight within an hour of death. Freedom fighter struggled all long his life for his people and their right to self-determination. His name will always be remembered for his untiring lengthy struggles.

Kashmir is the heaviest-militarised zone. Over 700,000 Indian soldiers are reported to be stationed in the valley. According to the Australian journalist C J Werleman, Kashmir is giving shocking figures of Indian brutality, where a large number of military troops is seen occupying the state with one soldier on each Kashmiri. There are more than 6,000 unknown graves of the people who have been killed in the custody of Indian interrogation security forces. Ali Raza, Chairman of Kashmir Council Europe (KCEU), has called the European leaders for their support in the favour of Kashmiris. He was of the view that the brutal attitude of Indian forces had made more than 107,842 Kashmiri children orphans, widowed 22,934, and molested 11,246 women from 1989 to 2021. The trauma being faced by the Kashmiri people is not bearable that consists of 49 per cent of people suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, a study suggested. After the killing of well-known Kashmiri young leader Burhan Wani, a new wave of unrest eruption was seen in 2016, and crackdowns by Indian forces enforced the UN in decades to act. This was the first significant action of the United Nations reported in their UNHCR published report and identified the brutality of Indian forces. UNHCR also stated disappointment on India’s reaction without their any comments and action on the raised issue to the General Assembly and Security Council.

In the 74th UN session, Prime Minister Imran Khan also strongly raised his view on the status of Kashmiris self-determination. He urged the international community to solve this conflict for peace and prosperity in the region. Recently, President Arif Alvi also joined a walk started from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to D-Chowk in Islamabad to pay solidarity on the Kashmir ‘Black Day’. He paid tribute to the courageous freedom fighters of occupied Jammu and Kashmir for their strength, courage, and determination in facing horrendous Indian atrocities.

The voice for our Kashmiris will always be raised on national as well as on international platforms. No doubt, various organizations are involved in this mission. It is the need to bring key stakeholders from time to time to share ideas in creating the environment for meaningful negotiations. Pakistan, India, the UN Security Council, and the people of Kashmir remain the main actors. Being Muslims, we will always be on the side of our Kashmir brothers and keep fighting for their right to self-determination.

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