**OIC and the Contemporary World**

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Pakistan has been playing a responsible role in helping solve problems like extremism, terrorism and Islamophobia. Yet, it seems that Pakistan alone cannot play any extensive role unless it is rendered the support of the whole Muslim ummah. Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan holds the foreign policy in high regard and always talks about the Kashmir matter at every international forum. Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood is just as upright on this very matter and never allows an opportunity to go by. It is not just about Kashmir but other Islamic countries and minorities as well. Extending their designs for the whole Islamic community, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Foreign Ministers Conference is to be held in Pakistan from March 22 to 24.

Member countries of the OIC and Muslims around the world aim to preserve and promote the lofty Islamic values of peace, compassion, tolerance, justice and human dignity to revitalise Islam’s pioneering role in the world and ensure sustainable development, progress and prosperity for them as well as their states. The rise of terrorism, extremism, violent extremism, radicalisation, sectarianism and Islamophobia figure high among the factors threatening international and regional peace, security and stability. Islamophobia has subjected Muslims across the world to abject racial profiling and discrimination, negative stereotyping and stigmatisation. As a result, Muslims–both indigenous and immigrants–have developed feelings of insecurity in their daily lives; facing a denial of their basic human rights.

If we look towards Kashmir, the Indian brutalities appear to have no end. Kashmiri leaders like Aasiya Andrabi, Muhammad Yasin Malik, Shabir Ahmed Shah, Ashraf Sehrai, Advocate Shahid-ul-Islam, Altaf Ahmed Shah, Nayeem Ahmed Khan, Ayaz Akbar, Peer Saifullah, Raja MerajuddinKalwal, Syed Shahid Yousuf, Shakeel Ahmed, Farooq Ahmed Dar, Fehmeeda Sofi, Nahida Nasreen, Zahoor Ahmed continue to serve in different jails around India whereas the locals continue to be thrashed, bashed and deprived of their basic rights.

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The United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres noted, “11 years of horrific war has devastated Syria and its people, exacting an unconscionable human cost. The conflict must cease. There must be no impunity. We cannot fail the Syrian people.” According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), a UK-based monitoring group with a network of sources on the ground had documented the deaths of 387,118 people by December 2020, among them 116,911 civilians.

The Israeli occupation of Palestinian and Arab territories is a core issue. Ending this occupation and securing a comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine in accordance with the relevant UN resolutions and other international and regional instruments and initiatives, therefore, remains high. Last month, Amnesty International said in a new report that Israel was carrying out “the crime of apartheid against Palestinians” and must be held accountable for treating them as “an inferior racial group”.The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has been tracking deaths in the conflict since 2008 and its data shows that 5,600 Palestinians died up to 2020 while 115,000 were injured. 250 Israelis died during the same period while 5,600 were injured. Violence was especially high in 2014 when Israel conducted Operation Protective Edge in Gaza in response to the kidnapping and murder of three teenagers. The campaign lasted seven weeks and resulted in more than 2,000 deaths, the majority of which were Gazans. Major protests also erupted in 2018 along the Israel Gaza border, which saw more than 28,000 Palestinians injured.

There is a dire need to combat Islamophobia, intolerance and discrimination against Muslims. Among the gravest threats to international and regional peace, security and stability are the long-standing unresolved conflicts in the Muslim world. As an intergovernmental organisation that acts as the collective voice of the Muslim world, the OIC has a major role to play in facilitating the peaceful and just resolution of international disputes involving Muslims, including the Palestinians and the Kashmiris, in a manner that ensures peacebuilding and peacekeeping. The Organisation’s stature and influence rest heavily on the fundamental principle of Islamic solidarity and fraternity, which brings together the Ummah to strive for the common good.

The OIC is the second-largest organisation after the United Nations, with a membership of 57 states spread over four continents. It is regarded as the collective voice of the Muslim world, working for the promotion of international peace and harmony. We are living in a challenging world where unity among our ranks, support for justice, and development together can make a lot of difference in the lives of people in the Muslim World and across the globe. We are looking forward to a productive session, and the hope is that all member countries will participate since the meeting is taking place at a challenging time. coming up with possible strength to bring all member states on one page is the requirement of time for a peaceful, productive and progressive world.

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