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Published by:

Chief Editor Kashmir Today K-Block, New District
Complex, Muzaffarabad.

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Ph: 05822-920072, 05822-920074

Month: August 2021

Volume: 07

Issue: 06

Quantity: 1000

Price Rs. 150/-

Yearly Subscription: Rs. 1000/-

Registration No.MZD-31

5 AUGUST A TURNING POINT IN IIOJK'S HISTORY



(Muhammad Raza Malik)

Background

The Hindu communal forces including Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) had a long desire of total merger of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir with the Indian Union and establish the Hindu civilisation in the territory. Kashmir remained their one of the main focuses following the formation of Narendra Modi-led fascist government in New Delhi in 2014. However, they found a golden opportunity to give practical shape to their nefarious designs after the BJP won a landslide victory in 2019 Indian general elections. They intensified their efforts to implement their Hindutva agenda in the territory and as a first step made the announcement of repealing the special status of occupied Kashmir on August 05, 2019. As such, this date became a turning point in the history of IIOJK.

Abrogation of IIOJK's Special Status

The move came via presidential orders, which revoked Article 370 and Article 35A of the Indian constitution. Article 370 had accorded special autonomous status to Jammu and Kashmir and all the provisions of the Indian Constitution, which were applicable to the Indian states did not apply to the territory. Due to this Article, Jammu and Kashmir was a region, which (despite being a part of Indian Union under the so-called Instrument of Accession) enjoyed separate constitution, flag

and official language. It was only because of this Article that except for defence, foreign affairs, finance and communications, Indian Parliament needed the concurrence of the so-called government of Jammu and Kashmir. Though most of the special privileges that Jammu and Kashmir was entitled under the Article 370 had long been eroded with the passage of time yet Article 35A debarred non-Kashmiris from acquiring property and jobs in government institutions in the territory. The Indian government also divided the occupied territory into two Union Territories Jammu and Kashmir with a legislature and Ladakh without a legislature.

Lockdown and Other Actions

Following the sensitive announcements made on August 5 and the subsequent days, the Indian government suspended mobile, television, landline and internet services and imposed curfew in the main cities and towns of IIOJK. Indian paramilitary personnel were deployed in every nook and corner of the occupied territory while the army and air force were also put on high alert. Fear and anxiety had already gripped occupied Kashmir as India had deployed 38,000 additional troops during the past few days. It had also cancelled a major Hindu pilgrimage, Amarnath Yatra, ordered closure of schools and colleges and asked tourists to leave the territory. The authorities also imposed strict restrictions on the media. Local newspapers even failed to update their online editions. Majority of the

newspapers also could not be printed for months due to curfew and other restrictions. No reports of the territory could reach to the news outlets in India and the world. The IIOJK virtually remained cut off from the rest of the world.

The abrogation of the special status of Kashmir was accompanied by arrest of around 15,000 innocent Kashmiris including Hurriyat leaders, political activists, lawyers, human rights defenders and leaders of religious, trade and social organizations. All resistance leaders, including Syed Ali Gilani and Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, were placed under house arrest or detained in jails. Even former chief ministers, Farooq Abdullah, Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti, were placed under house detention.

During this military crackdown, over 8 million Kashmiris were locked down in their homes incommunicado. The continued military siege for months created a humanitarian crisis as people faced acute shortage of essential commodities, life-saving drugs and baby food.

At the same time, Indian troops intensified violent operations and since 5th August 2019 till June 30, this year, *Indian troops have martyred 384 Kashmiris and injured at least 3,903 others by using brute force on peaceful demonstrators. The troops have damaged over 1,022 houses and structures and molested 118 women.*

Following its August 5 illegal actions, the Modi government extended several federal laws and introduced new domicile rules to occupied Kashmir. In gross violation of the UN resolutions and the international law, it has reportedly granted domicile status to over 38 lac people, majority of them are believed to be non-Kashmiri Hindus including some IAS officers. Apprehensions are ripe that more than 800,000 Indian soldiers and over 600,000 migrant labourers present in the territory might also be granted the domicile status in the coming days and months.

Also as part of anti-Muslim policies, BJP regime is replacing the Muslim names of important places and departments with Hindu names in Kashmir. The birth anniversary of former Chief Minister, Sheikh Abdullah, and Kashmir Martyrs' Day on July 13 have been dropped from the list of public holidays. It has started to arbitrarily sack Muslim employees from government departments for being sympathetic to the resistance movement. Since April, 2021, nearly a dozen such

employees have been fired in the name of being 'threat to the security of India' without explaining them on what basis they were sacked and without giving them a chance of fair representation. The Modi regime has initiated the process of delimitation of Lok Sabha and assembly constituencies in J&K with an aim to give more seats to Hindu-dominated areas of Jammu division.

Motives

The basic objective behind the abrogation of Article 370 and 35A is to convert IIOJK's Muslim majority into a minority by settling Indian Hindus in large numbers. This indeed can affect the results in India's favour if New Delhi is compelled to hold a plebiscite in Jammu and Kashmir at any point of time in the future. It is also aimed at damaging the essence of the UN resolutions under which Jammu and Kashmir is a disputed territory and its fate will be decided by the Kashmiri people through the exercise of their right to self-determination. The aim is also to finish the Muslim character of IIOJK.

Pakistan's Response

The 5th August move of the Modi government caused strong resentment across Pakistan. The people and government of Pakistan expressed solidarity with the people of IIOJK and reaffirmed their continued support to the Kashmir cause. Pakistani leadership effectively highlighted at the global forums the sufferings of the people of the occupied territory. Prime Minister, Imran Khan, in his addresses to the UN General Assembly in 2019 and 2020 drew world's attention to the worst Indian atrocities on the people of IIOJK. He repeatedly warned the world that Modi government's belligerent posture posed serious threat to the regional and global peace. The Pakistan's Foreign Ministry is continuously updating the world leaders on the Indian atrocities on the people of occupied the occupied territory. Since August 05, 2019 the Pakistan Parliament has passed several resolutions expressing solidarity with the oppressed people of IIOJK and condemning India's illegal actions in the territory. The Army Chief, General Qamar Javed Bajwa, has repeatedly expressed Pak Army's support to the Kashmir cause. He has declared that Pakistan is ready to fight till last bullet, last soldier for Kashmir. As part of its programs, the Government of Pakistan announced to observe 'Youm-e-Istehsal' (Day of Exploitation) on August 5 to mark the anniversary of India's illegal revocation of IIOJK's



special status. The main intent behind observing the occasion is to show solidarity with the people of IIOJK, expose Indian atrocities as well as its evil designs against them.

Last year, on 'Youm-e-Istehsal', the Pakistan's government arranged a host of events in order to denounce the Indian actions against the Kashmiri people as well as the atrocities being carried out by Indian forces in the occupied territory. The events included PM Imran Khan's address in AJK Assembly, President Arif Alvi's address in Islamabad, anti-India protests and solidarity marches in Islamabad and in all main cities of Pakistan, one minute silence across the country including halting of traffic and playing of sirens. Besides, a special session of the Senate was summoned to condemn Indian oppressive measures and also pay homage to the sacrifices offered by the Kashmiri people for their inalienable right to self-determination. The government also renamed Islamabad-Kashmir Highway as Srinagar Highway.

World Reaction

The illegal actions taken by the Modi government on and post August 05, 2019 in occupied Kashmir centre staged the Kashmir dispute across the globe. The Pakistan's strenuous efforts and the grim human rights situation caused by the continued military siege in the occupied territory convinced the UN Security Council to hold its session on Kashmir thrice first time after the period of over 50 years. Following the heightened tension between Pakistan and India, the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres and the former US President Donald Trump repeatedly offered mediation to resolve the Kashmir dispute. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle

Bachelet, several members of UK parliament and US lawmakers as well as world bodies including the OIC, the Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have expressed serious concern over the rights situation in IIOJK. International watchdog, the Genocide Watch in a statement expressed fears of genocide against the Muslims living in occupied Kashmir and the Indian state of Assam.

Kashmiris' Resistance

Right from 1947, the Indian invasion faced stiff resistance from the people of Jammu and Kashmir. The people of the occupied territory

gave impetus to their struggle to secure their inalienable right in 1989. For three consecutive years from 2008 to 2010, thousands of people hit the streets of Srinagar and other major towns on a daily basis, demanding freedom from the Indian yoke. Occupied Kashmir witnessed another mass uprising following the extrajudicial killing of a popular youth leader, Burhan Wani, on July 08, 2016.

Instead of honouring the sentiments of the Kashmiri people, New Delhi responded with brute force, resulting in the killing of hundreds of protesters and injuring of thousands. Indian troops have martyred 95,806 Kashmiris and arrested 161,878 others since January 1989 till June 30, 2021. The troops have also molested 11,244 women and destroyed 110,413 structures during the period.

It is a fact that despite facing the worst kinds of Indian brutalities, the brave Kashmiris have always resisted all anti-Kashmiri moves initiated by New Delhi in the past and are determined to foil the latest machinations of Modi regime as well. Actually India's illegal action of August 5 has further solidified the Kashmiris' resolve and made them more steadfast against its illegal occupation. As unresolved Kashmir dispute is a potential powder keg in the region, it is high time for the global community, particularly the UN to come forward in a big way to stop New Delhi's onslaught on the Kashmiris' identity and Muslim majority status and initiate measures for settling the Kashmir dispute in accordance with the aspirations of the Kashmiri people without any further delay.

(This article has been compiled by Muhammad Raza Malik who is the Senior Editor of the Kashmir Media Service.)

INDIAN OCCUPIED JAMMU AND KASHMIR

IMPORTANT EVENTS/ ACTIONS POST 5TH AUGUST 2019

Since Aug. 5, 2019, when India moved to strip special constitutional status of Jammu and Kashmir, it has incorporated several legal changes in the statute book of the region. Some administrative measures were also taken in IOJK. Here is a timeline of various decisions / actions taken by the Indian government as well as the response of international community, Pakistan and people of Jammu and Kashmir

2019

August 2 Indian authorities ask tourists to leave disputed Kashmir citing "terror threats," while reportedly dispatching some 25,000 military reinforcements to the troubled Himalayan region.

August 3 Pakistan says India fired illegal cluster bombs which emit deadly exploding shrapnel and are prohibited under the Geneva Convention killing two civilians and wounding 11 others in its portion of disputed Kashmir, a claim India denies.

August 5- India revokes provisions of Article 370 of its constitution and other laws related to separate citizenship provision of its only Muslim-majority state, which was also split into two centrally administered territories.

Since then 143 Indian laws extend to the state, 7 local laws remain but with changes, 164 state laws annulled.

August 13 Indian apex court backs "security" crackdown and communications blackout in Kashmir. Some 69 Indian activists write a letter to Indian PM Modi calling for an end to Kashmir lockdown. Protests in IOJK on the first day of Eid al Adha amid tighter curbs.

August 15 Fact-finding report by Indian activists say the situation in Kashmir "absolutely not normal" despite Indian claims of normalcy in the region.

August 16- UNSC Kashmir moot gives lie to Indian claim For the first time since 1965, the UN Security Council (UNSC) held a meeting exclusively on occupied Jammu and Kashmir, nullifying India's claim that this was an internal matter.

Although the council did not agree on a statement, China's UN Ambassador Zhang Jun summed up the discussions, expressing serious concern over the situation.

"The UNSC members are concerned about the human rights

situation there and they (want) the parties concerned to refrain from taking any unilateral action that might further aggravate the tension there since the situation is already very tense and very dangerous," he said.

August 19 US President Trump discusses Kashmir dispute with India, Pakistan premiers.

August 20 Pakistan says it has decided to take Kashmir dispute to the International Court of Justice at The Hague.

Sep 5- Amnesty International launches 'urgent campaign' to end blackout

Amnesty International India launched a global campaign in a bid to highlight the human cost of the month-long lockdown in occupied Kashmir.

"The draconian communication blackout in [occupied] Kashmir is an outrageous protracted assault on the civil liberties of the people of Kashmir," read a press release by the human rights watchdog.

"In response to this indefinite communication blackout, Amnesty International India has launched the campaign #LetKashmirSpeak on 5 September, 2019 which marks a month of the communications blackout, to ask for immediate lifting of the lockdown," stated Amnesty International India.

Sep 13 Pakistan PM Imran Khan holds Kashmir rally in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, says India's crackdown in Kashmir could drive more of the world's Muslims into "extremism."

Sep 28- Pakistan, Turkey and Malaysia speak up for Kashmiris at UNGA

Prime Minister Imran arrived in the United States for a week of global diplomacy, with his trip dubbed 'Mission Kashmir'. The highlight of his more than 45-minute-long speech at the 74th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York was intense criticism of India for its annexation of occupied Kashmir and the continued restrictions imposed in the region.

"(Nearly) 100,000 Kashmiris have died in the past 30 years because they were denied their right of self-determination. Eleven thousand women were raped. The world hasn't done anything," he said. "What is going to happen will be a blood bath. The people will come out."

Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad at the forum said said despite UN resolutions, the territory had been invaded and occupied. In his address, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan criticised the international community for failing to pay attention to the Kashmir conflict, which, he said, awaits solution for 72 years.

Oct 1- 9-year-old among 144 minors detained

A police list seen by AFP showed that Indian authorities in occupied Kashmir had detained 144 minors, including a nine-year-old, since the government removed the region's special status in August.

Sixty of the minors were under 15, according to the document submitted to a committee appointed by India's Supreme Court to look into allegations of illegal detentions. Reasons given by the police for detaining the minors included stone pelting, rioting and causing damage to public and private property, the committee said in its report.

October 9 Chinese President Xi Jinping says he was watching the situation in disputed Kashmir and would support Pakistan in issues related to its core interests.

Oct. 22- Power shift

The government of IOJK changes law related to transactions of immovable property. The powers to register such transaction shifts to the revenue department from Judiciary.

Impact: Less scrutiny and lack of judicial oversight in these transactions.

Oct. 22 Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad says he would not retract his criticism of New Delhi's actions in disputed Kashmir despite Indian traders calling for an unprecedented boycott of Malaysian palm oil.

Oct. 23- Abolishing of rights commissions

The government orders closure of seven commissions like Jammu and Kashmir State Human Rights Commission (SHRC), State Information Commission, State Accountability Commission, State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission.

The SHRC was enquiring into various cases of human rights abuses.

Oct 24 Pakistan welcomes the US Congressional hearing in the Asia-Pacific sub-committee on the situation in Indian-

administered Kashmir.

Oct 27 Pakistan denies India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi permission to fly through its airspace due to "ongoing grave human rights violations" in Indian-administered Kashmir.

Oct 31- Occupied Kashmir officially loses special status and is divided

Shops and offices were shut in occupied Kashmir and the streets largely deserted as federal authorities formally revoked the restive area's constitutional autonomy and split it into two federal territories.

Just after midnight on Oct 30, the federal government's orders went into effect, dividing up occupied Jammu and Kashmir into two union territories; one Jammu and Kashmir, and the other the Buddhist-dominated high altitude region of Ladakh. "Everything changes on Thursday," said a retired Kashmiri judge, Hasnain Masoodi, a member of India's Parliament. "The entire exercise is unconstitutional. The mode and methodology have been undemocratic. People were humiliated and never consulted."

Dec 7- Resolution in US Congress seeks end to repression

A bipartisan resolution moved in the US Congress urged India to end the restrictions on communications and mass detentions in occupied Kashmir as swiftly as possible and preserve religious freedom for all residents. Resolution 745 was jointly moved by Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal, a Democrat, and Congressman Steve Watkins, a Republican. Born in Madras (Chennai), Jayapal is the first Indian-American woman to serve in the US House of Representatives. The movers rejected arbitrary detention, use of excessive force against civilians, and suppression of peaceful expression of dissent as proportional responses to security challenges.

Dec. 27- Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir government abandons observing birth anniversary (Dec, 5) of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, founder of the region's oldest political party National Conference (NC). The government also drops Kashmir's national day July 13 (Martyrs' Day) from its annual calendar of events. Pro India parties like Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and NC said that the government is out to delete the Kashmir's political history.

Jan 16- UN Security Council reviews situation in occupied Kashmir

The United Nations Security Council held a meeting on Jammu and Kashmir and reviewed the situation in the occupied valley. Although the meeting took place behind closed doors, Chinese Ambassador Zhang Jun spoke to journalists outside the chamber, confirming that the council had reviewed the situation in the occupied valley.

“We had a meeting on Jammu and Kashmir,” he said. “The Security Council heard a briefing from the secretariat on the situation.”

Asked what China's position on the situation in Kashmir was, he said: “Our position is very clear.” China recognises Kashmir as a territory disputed between India and Pakistan and openly supports Islamabad's demand for a plebiscite to enable the Kashmiri people to decide their own future.

Jan. 25- The government omits the prefix of Sher-i-Kashmir from police medals. Sher-e-Kashmir is a reference to the former chief minister and NC founder Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, who was the pioneer of Kashmir's accession with India.

Feb. 6- Authorities rename Public Health Engineering/Irrigation and Flood Control Department to Jal Shakti Department.

Impact: The renaming is seen as imposing Hindu names in a Muslim majority region.

Feb. 26- Indian approves adaptation and modifications of 37 laws to be made applicable to Jammu and Kashmir

March 6 - The government of India set up the Delimitation Commission, headed by retired Supreme Court judge Ranjana Prakash Desai, which was tasked with winding up delimitation in J&K in a year. As per the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Bill, the number of Assembly seats in J&K would increase from 107 to 114, which is expected to benefit the Jammu region.

March, 31- The government of IOJK notifies new citizenship laws by issuing domicile notification. A person residing in Jammu and Kashmir for 15 years now eligible to be a citizen of the region.

Before the Aug. 5, 2019 job, land and citizenship rights were reserved for the local population. The government orders repealing or amending 138 local laws, adopted by the region's assembly over the years.

June 2- IOJK government approves a new media policy for the region. The policy gives limitless powers to the administration to decide fake and anti-national news and to take legal action against journalists or media organizations.

In the recent past, several journalists in Kashmir have received police summons for their news stories.

June 20- The excise commissioner of IOJK submits a proposal to open 67 liquor shops in Kashmir Valley and 116 such outlets in the Jammu division. The local religious leaders describe it as an attempt to interfere in the culture and beliefs of the Muslim majority region

July 9- UN officials seek probe into torture, custodial deaths of Muslims in occupied Kashmir

Four UN special rapporteurs have asked the Indian government to investigate the alleged torture and custodial killings of several Muslim men since January 2019, it emerged in July.

A report was sent to the Indian government over “the continued deterioration of human rights conditions” in occupied Kashmir, documenting several cases of “arbitrary detentions, violations to the prohibition of torture and ill-treatment and rights of persons belonging to minorities”.

“We remain deeply concerned about the ongoing human rights violations,” said the report shared on the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OCHCR) website.

They called on New Delhi “to conduct an impartial investigation into all the allegations of arbitrary killings, torture and ill-treatment and to prosecute suspected perpetrators.”

July 17- The IOJK government amends the Jammu and Kashmir Development Act. The move allows notifying “strategic areas” for the armed forces in the region. It will allow the Indian Army to construct infrastructure.

July 24- The IOJK government orders that army or paramilitary forces need not seek any special permission for acquiring land.

July 31- A committee set up to act against government employees involved in anti-national activities. The measure is seen to curb opposition from the local employees.

August 2- One year on, India's lockdowns ruin occupied Kashmir's economy

“We've not earned a single penny for a year now,” said Ghulam Qadir Ota, a houseboat owner. “All we have are these boats. We don't have any other means to earn.”

When India suddenly scrapped disputed Kashmir's semi-autonomous status in August 2019, followed by an unprecedented security clampdown, economic ruin ensued.

“It was not just a political change. It destroyed our livelihood,” said Abdul Rashid, 60, who has now turned to growing vegetables to feed his family.

The Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industries has pegged the economic losses in the region at \$5.3 billion and about half a million jobs lost since August last year.

Oct 15 -After an all-party meet of all pro India political parties of IOJK, that includes National Conference (NC), PDP, CPI(M), PC, JKPM & ANC, is to work towards restoring the special status of J&K after it was revoked in 2019 signed Gupkar Declaration.

Nov 28- In a Resolution adopted unanimously by the 47th Session of the OIC in Niamey the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) reaffirmed its strong support for the Kashmir cause. The OIC categorically rejected illegal and unilateral actions taken by India since 5 August 2019. The Resolution demands that India “cancel the issuance of domicile certificates to non-Kashmiris” as well as other unilateral and illegal actions, including “Jammu & Kashmir Reorganization Order 2020”, “Jammu & Kashmir Grant of Domicile Certificate Rules 2020”, “Jammu and Kashmir Language Bill 2020” and amendments to the landownership laws.

2021

February 25- India and Pakistan announced their recommitment to a ceasefire along the Line of Control and other disputed sections of the border between the archrivals.

March 2021- the Govt. of India informed that as per Jammu & Kashmir government's information, a total of 35,44,938 applications for issue of Domicile Certificate was received till

December 31, 2020, out of which 32,31,353 applicants have been issued Domicile Certificates.

May 05- A prominent pro-freedom leader in Indian Occupied Kashmir, Muhammad Ashraf Sehrai, has died inside a hospital in southern Jammu city, where he was in detention for the last year. He was 77.

May 28 - India and Pakistan should “refrain” from taking steps that would alter the status of the disputed territory of Kashmir, the president of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Volkan Bozkir.

June 10 - India handed more than 3.4 million fake domicile certificates to non-Kashmiris in order to change the demography of IOJK. India continues with its design to change the demographic structure of the occupied territory in clear violation of international law, including the 4th Geneva Convention. Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri, spokesperson for Pakistan's Foreign Ministry.

June 24- Indian PM Modi met 14 so pro-Indian politicians from IOJK in Delhi for the first time after the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35 A. It was not a surprise move as behind the doors, RAW was making preparations with these so called leaders while the actual leaders remain behind bars. Holding a conference with some so called politicians is not acceptable to Kashmiris as it gives a false impression to the international community that India is serious in bringing normalcy to IOJK.

July 21- Officials in IOJK barred Muslims from offering prayers in the historic Jamia Masjid, Dargah Hazratbal, Eidgahs and other big mosques by erecting barricades. Kashmir's largest mosque, Jamia Masjid Srinagar, were closed, while Eid prayers were allowed only in a few small mosques located in peripheral areas of the Kashmir valley.

July 21- In a significant move, the Jammu and Kashmir administration has announced to issue a domicile certificate to the husband of a native woman. Earlier, the J&K women who were married outside the Union Territory, made their spouse ineligible for domicile certificate.

July 30- The vice president of European Parliament and its 15 members include; Fabio Massimo Castaldo (ni); Dino Giarrusso (ni); Javier Nart (renew Europe); Chiara Maria Gemma (ni); Salima Yenbou (greens/efa); Carles Puigdemont I

Casamajo (ni); Antoni Comin I Oliveres (ni); Clara Ponsati Obiols (nd); Brando Benifei (s&d); Massimiliano Smeriglio (s&d); Manuela Ripa (greens/efa)); Idoia Villanueva Ruiz (gue/ngl); Rosa D'amato (greens/efa); Andrea Cozzolino (s&d); Doménec Ruiz Devesa (s&d); And Helmut Scholz (gue/ngl) sent a letter to the EU Commission president and the bloc's foreign policy chief regarding the “warning humanitarian and human rights situation in Kashmir.”

“As a champion of universal human rights, fundamental freedoms and the ruled-based international order, the EU must raise its voice against the violations of human rights affecting the people of Jammu and Kashmir. EU should use all its leverage and tools” to cooperate with India and Pakistan “to honour the pledge made to the Kashmiris by the international community” and to implement UN resolutions. The restraint of the rights to movement, access to information, health care, education as well as free speech has been intensified by the

Covid-19 pandemic.”

Arbitrary detention and prohibition on public assembly continues, journalists and human rights defenders have been increasingly targeted.”

“In addition to being a humanitarian crisis, the long-standing dispute over Jammu and Kashmir in south Asia also poses a major threat to peace, stability, and security in the region, It is extremely important that the voices of Kashmiri people are heard, their aspirations are responded to and they are granted the opportunity to decide their own future

July 31- The government of IOJK issued a circular that any person involved in stone pelting, law and order etc. must be denied the security clearance for passport, job, contract etc.

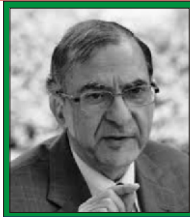
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THE SACRIFICES OF KASHMIR

In the annals of history, nations and peoples are often blessed with leaders, guides and activists who play singular roles providing leadership that transcends inspiration and casts a lasting impact on these societies. May 21, 1990 was the day when the Indian occupation forces assassinated an illustrious Kashmiri freedom fighter, Mirwaiz Mohammad Farooq along with 70 mourners when the army resorted to firing on his funeral procession while it was on its way to Martyrs Cemetery. Twenty-two years later, on May 21, 2002, Indian forces also killed Khawaja Abdul Gani Lone, leader of All Parties Hurriyat Conference who had come to Martyr's cemetery to pay homage to the Kashmiri martyrs, including Mirwaiz Sahib who gave their last full measure of devotion in unflagging pursuit of a just and noble cause. May 21 will remain embedded in the history of Kashmir and in the hearts and minds of millions of Kashmiris as the day of supreme sacrifice. While our martyrs earned a choice place in the Hereafter, the Indian occupation forces earned the dubious honour of creating more martyrs over 100,000 to date and the count goes on. These martyrs include infants, women, and the old; they are common Kashmiris as



Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai

well as outstanding scholars and leaders. In many ways, Mirwaiz Sahib and Lone Sahib were yet other martyrs to the cause, another addition to the list of martyrs of Kashmir being compiled since 1931 when our people first raised their voice against tyranny and alien occupation. When in 1990 the winds of change blew across the world, destroying dictatorships and occupations, the people of Kashmir also renewed their struggle. During our period of quiet the world had forgotten us. Now, they were filled with hope and longing of a new dawn. It was at this crucial juncture that the Mirwaiz Sahib and Lone Sahib emerged to present a much larger aspect of their leadership. They not only rekindled the issue afresh but also gave it a new vigour and meaning. Mirwaiz Sahib and Lone Sahib were brilliant and articulate statesmen who were gunned down for their leadership role in educating their people in their struggle for self-determination. They were gunned down because they reminded the world about the pledge that was agreed upon by India and Pakistan, and championed by the democratic powers, including the United States and endorsed by the UN Security Council. I had the good fortune of having a detailed meeting with the late

Mirwaiz in 1980 just two weeks before I was forced to leave Kashmir. This meeting took place during the visit of the Imam Kaaba to Kashmir when Mirwaiz had been kind enough to invite me along with the Imam to the Mirwaiz Manzil. We discussed the issues of mutual concern and more importantly the ways for the resolution of the Kashmir issue. I could discern within him a selfless desire to serve and emancipate his people from under the Indian occupation. Lone Sahib was a great personality blessed with great talents, not only as a politician but also as a deep thinker. By far the most vivid recollection I have of Lone Sahib was his speech at the United Nations headquarters in New York during an OIC Foreign Minister Annual Meeting on September 27, 1999. The participants were fascinated by his presentation. Lone Sahib said, "I am grateful for the opportunity to address the Organization of the Islamic Conference as the voice of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference, the genuine embodiment of the aspirations of the Kashmiri people." He added, "Indeed, to speak of humanitarian tragedies and injustice without mentioning Kashmir is like reciting the Holocaust without

mentioning Auschwitz or the Palestinian Israeli cruelties without mentioning Shaba and Shatila refugee camp slaughters."

Lone Sahib shocked the conscience of the OIC leadership by asking: "Is the lesson of Kashmir to be that a nuclear power with an attractive economic market can defy international law, human rights, and morality with impunity? What would that do to the cause of non proliferation? What would that do for the cause of humanity? What would that do for securing adherence to the international norms, universal values and above all to the United Nations Security Council resolutions?"

The people of Kashmir will never forget the selfless contribution and the tireless efforts of the Mirwaiz Sahib and Lone Sahib. Their efforts will remain forever a milestone in the history of the freedom struggle of Kashmir.

The vision of Mirwaiz Sahib, Lone Sahib and the unity and sacrifices of the people of Kashmir will undoubtedly lead the Kashmiri freedom struggle to its logical conclusion, that is freedom from the occupation and alien subjugation.

May Allah accept the sacrifice of the fellow Kashmiri martyrs.

INDIA'S DIPLOMATIC TERRORISM

The alleged kidnapping of Afghanistan's ambassador's daughter in Islamabad made headlines in international media. India took full advantage of the situation and distorted facts about the abduction. Indian history is full of assassinations, kidnappings and sabotage, particularly in other countries, and using such incidents to malign Pakistan is not fair. A Romanian diplomat in India, Iviu Radu, was kidnapped in Delhi in 1991 and the responsibility of the kidnapping was claimed by an organization called the Khalistan Liberation Force (KLF). This was linked with the death of a Sikh and arrests of two others in an attempted assassination of Julio Riberio, the Indian ambassador to Romania. He was the Director General (DG) of the Punjab police during the Sikh insurgency. Their demand was the release of three Sikhs who were facing a death sentence for the 1986 assassination of the former Indian Chief of Army Staff. Later it was revealed that it was a plot made and carried out by RAW to malign the Sikhs' freedom struggle. In



Masud Ahmad Khan

February 1984, Ravindra Mhatre was kidnapped from Birmingham by group known as the Kashmir Liberation Army (KLA). They messaged the Reuters office that they will kill the diplomat unless their demands are met.

Their demand was the release of the JKLF leader, Maqbool Butt, who was facing a death sentence. JKLF and the Pakistani intelligence agency were accused of plotting the kidnapping of the RAW official. However, it was once again a RAW plot to malign Pakistan and JKLF and it ultimately led to Maqbool Butt being hanged.

Ajit Doval, the Indian National Security Advisor, lived in Lahore disguised as a Muslim for seven years. He has notoriously been famous for his covert operations against Pakistan. The 'Doval Doctrine' is based on fomenting insurgency in Balochistan as payment for the secession of former East Pakistan. Amar Sinha, a former ambassador of India to Afghanistan, was notoriously famous as Daesh handler in Afghanistan. His assignment was to manage the funding and

supply line of anti-Pakistan terrorist groups. In the past, Pakistan expelled dozens of Indian diplomats and officials of RAW and IB under the garb of diplomatic assignment for their involvement in fueling violence in Balochistan, Karachi and targeting CPEC projects. They were also involved in running spy rackets and contacts with banned TTP.

As far as the alleged kidnapping of the Afghan ambassador's daughter is concerned, the police has found that the daughter had not been abducted. The PM has taken a serious notice of this case and is personally supervising the investigations personally. Islamabad's police had reviewed over 700 hours of footage from 300 cameras installed on the travelling route and interviewed over 200 citizens.

According to Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid, "she was never kidnapped and it was conspiracy hatched by Kabul and New Delhi to defame the country." Resultantly, Afghanistan called back its ambassador and senior diplomats from Pakistan. The Pakistan's foreign office termed the step as 'unfortunate and regrettable'. Indian media propagated a picture of a TikTok star with blood marks on her face as the disappeared daughter of the Afghan ambassador.

Efforts are being made by India to give an impression to the

international community that Pakistan is not safe even for diplomats. The timing of the incident is important as the alleged abduction occurred ahead of the Afghan peace conference, which Pakistan was scheduled to host. The riddle will be solved and all aspects of the case will be unearthed soon.

Pakistan is facing hybrid warfare, as proved by the timings of some other recent incidents. After a thorough investigation of the Lahore blast, it has been confirmed that the incident was linked to RAW. The blast took place closer to the residence of Hafiz Saeed before the crucial meeting of FATF. The aim was to highlight the name of Hafiz Saeed. The Dassu blast targeting Chinese workers occurred days before a meeting of the Joint Coordination Committee of CPEC. India concocts fake news to malign Pakistan and perpetuates terrorism in and subversion against Pakistan. The EU Disinfo Lab has already uncovered a network of NGOs and fake media organisations linked to India that, for 15 years, have engaged in anti-Pakistan propaganda. India is desperately maligning Pakistan to divert attention from its domestic affairs and state-sponsored terrorism in IIOJK. India will never succeed in its nefarious designs. The whole nation is standing behind the armed forces to protect country's sovereignty and dignity.

REVISITING KASHMIR'S LEGAL MATRIX

On August 5th, this past week, two full years lapsed since the illegal abrogation of Kashmir's autonomous status by the fascist Modi government, in complete contravention of the Indian Constitution, applicable UNSC resolutions, and international law. Sadly, this date passed without much pomp or protest in Pakistan. Pakistan's politics stuck in the humdrum of menial quibbling remained consumed by petty agendas, and paid no real attention to this date.

While petty haggling has become the norm of political discourse in Pakistan, it needs to be asked why our political leaders, from all sides of the aisle, have made no constructive suggestion about 'solving' the Kashmir issue. In part, this is because most (if not all) political leaders in Pakistan have still not been able to understand the constitutional underpinnings of what happened on August 5th, 2019.

To remedy the problem, let us try to review the precise

framework concerning Kashmir's annexation by India.

The illegal annexation of Kashmir, into India's Union territory, was done through a Presidential Order (CC.O. 272), which abrogated the Constitution of Jammu & Kashmir, and (in essence) repealed Article 370 and 35A of the Constitution of India.

So, what was Article 370, and why did it matter so much? Article 370 of the Indian Constitution was the provision that endowed special autonomous status to the region of Jammu & Kashmir, and formed the basis of its accession to India, at a time when this erstwhile princely States had the choice to either join India or Pakistan, post-independence in 1947. Article 370 came into effect in 1949, and empowered the Constituent Assembly of Jammu & Kashmir, after its establishment, to choose which provisions of the Indian Constitution could be applied to the



Saad Rasool

Region, and also permitted the said assembly to abrogate the Constitution of India, choosing its own measures of complete self-governance instead.

Within this framework, after consultation with the Constituent Assembly of Jammu & Kashmir, a Presidential Order was issued by India, in 1954, introducing Article 35A into the Indian Constitution. This permitted Kashmir's domestic legislature to define permanent residents of the region, specify the articles of the Indian Constitution that shall apply to Kashmir, and allowed Kashmir to make its own laws in all matters except finance, defence, foreign affairs and communications. Article 35A, referred to as Permanent Residents Law, also prohibited outsiders from buying land or permanently settling in Kashmir, while also barring female residents of Kashmir from retaining property rights, in the event that they marry a person from outside the State. In light of these constitutional provisions, the region of Jammu & Kashmir had its own constitution, its own flag, citizenship, autonomy over the internal administration of the region, and also denied property rights to those who were outsiders.

In essence, this constitutional arrangement ensured that India's constitutional control over Kashmir was only to the extent, and in such matters, as the people of Kashmir (through their elected representatives) had chosen to accede. This 'choice' of Kashmiri people, exercised through the Constituent Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir, formed the only moral and constitutional basis for India's presence in the region.

Within India's constitutional framework, Article 370 and its consequent effects could (technically) be removed with the permission of the Constituent Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir. However, the Constituent Assembly of Kashmir was dissolved in 1957, thereby making Article 370 and its effects permanent in nature. This is not a sympathetic analysis or opinion; in fact, the Supreme Court of India, in 2018, ruled that Article 370 had acquired "permanent status making its abrogation impossible."

Nonetheless, through a series of presidential orders, citing lack of a state government, Modi's right-wing extremist government decided to change the language of Article 370, substituting the word "Constituent Assembly" with "Legislative Assembly" in 2018. Even if this amendment in Article 370 could be deemed valid requiring consent of the "Legislative Assembly" instead

of "Constituent Assembly" of Kashmir, for any change in the State's constitutional status the same was not adhered to by the Modi government. In June of 2018, the legislative assembly of Kashmir was ousted. And on December 18, 2018 the State of Jammu and Kashmir was placed under BJP's right-winged presidential rule, in terms of Article 356 of the Indian Constitution, thereby vesting the powers of Kashmir's legislative assembly in the union legislature.

Importantly, Article 370(3) of the Indian Constitution stipulated that "the President may, by public notification, declare that this article shall cease to be operative" or shall be operative with "exceptions and modifications". For this purpose, however, "recommendation of the Legislative Assembly of the State" was "necessary before the President issues such a notification." In the instant case, since the Legislative Assembly of Kashmir was not functional, the President merely consulted his own appointee, the Governor of Jammu & Kashmir. As such, the consultation was neither meaningful, nor was such consultation a representation of the voice of Kashmiri people. India's President consulted with himself (i.e. with a Union appointed Governor), and deemed it to be sufficient for the purposes of "recommendation" of the Kashmiri people (under Article 370(3)).

In essence, Modi's Hindutva government took the democratic rights away of at least 14 million Kashmiris, thereby making a complete mockery of the façade that was secular democratic India. Furthermore, Modi's government split the area into smaller regions, including a Buddhist-majority Ladakh region, which has a considerable population of Shia Muslims.

These draconian measures by Modi's fascist regime have clearly not been accepted by the local populi. To this end, anticipating the local blowback, in the weeks preceding this constitutional abrogation, Modi's attack-dog, Ajit Doval, mobilised the Indian military to station some 50,000 troops in the region, which later grew to over 600,000 (according to Indian media reports), and cut off most telecommunication in the region. So, does the suspension of Article 370 make Kashmir an independent State? If so, is India now an illegal occupying force in the region? Because the legitimacy of Indian presence in Kashmir predated Article 370, and the (partial) consent of the Kashmiri people, which has been abrogated.

Pakistan's interests in Kashmir are three-fold: 1) Kashmir's soil holds the blood of many of our Shuhadas, over the past 70 years; 2) Kashmir is a nation (it must be called that, after India's repeal of Article 370) that has been our brother, in arms and blood, over the past seven decades; and 3) it is a place where our rivers, the very lifeline of our nation, originate. And BJP leadership has already expressed, outright, that they will attempt to shut down Pakistan's water supply, ushering in a drought that the country cannot sustain. If this claim of BJP sounds to you like a statement of Yazid, in the battlefield of

Karbala, you are not alone. And, by virtue of the same analogy, Karbala has taught us that, in such circumstances, a fight till 'the last drop of blood', is not only necessary, but also honourable.

Our political leaders (in the government as well as the opposition) would do well to under the constitutional matrix of Kashmir. Political rhetoric aside, only through an understanding of the underlying legal issues, can Pakistan's polity hope to devise constructive (and peaceful) solutions for the plight of Kashmiri people.

KASHMIR HAS THE TIME COME?

The story of Kashmir in the last 200 years is one of subjugation and tyranny. The Dogra rulers were followed by the treaty of Amritsar when Kashmir was sold to Maharaja Gulab Singh for 75 lakh rupees. A beautiful Muslim majority region with exceptional arts and crafts, the home of the Paisley design has been struggling with its right to liberty and self-determination. The current political movement for freedom was ignited on July 13, 1931 by the martyrdom of 22 Kashmiris against the oppression of Maharaja Hari Singh's forces. The subsequent accession of Kashmir to India in 1947 was against the wishes of the people. Realising the injustice of this impending accession, Kashmiri veterans of World War II and Pashtun tribesmen took matters in their own hands and were able to liberate what we now know as Azad Jammu and Kashmir. India took the dispute to the United Nations on January 1, 1948, and three resolutions 37, 38 and 47 were passed by the UN, asking for a ceasefire in the region and a plebiscite to determine the will of the people of Kashmir. After the ceasefire, India held elections in the state and gave Kashmir a special status through Article 370 of the Indian constitution and through 35 A; permanent residence to the citizens with special privileges to own property. This was done to quell the demand for a plebiscite. Over the years Pakistan and India have fought three wars due to this dispute. The reversal of these two articles of the Indian constitution on August 5, 2019 was followed by unprecedented restrictions and a communication blackout. Internet access and freedom of speech were taken away. Pulitzer prize winner photojournalists



Dr Zarqa Suharwardy Taimur

like Masarat Zahra are facing persecution of all sorts. After October 31, 2019, India has issued over 3.4 million domicile certificates to settlers from outside IIOJK under the so-called "Jammu and Kashmir Grant of Domicile Certificate (Procedure) Rules, 2020." Kashmiri administration has been replaced by Indian citizens in universities, Hindu and Muslim shrines, banks, tourism etc. Persons charged under the severe Public Safety Act, 1978, can be sent to jail anywhere in India. New Delhi has empowered the administration to evict locals from properties they might have purchased from Hindu pandits. Golf courses, forest lands and tourist development authorities are now directly controlled by New Delhi. They can issue, allot, lease or provide prime land and facilities to anybody from India. Indian Administrative officers of Kashmir origin have been replaced by non local officers. In this military siege, which has now lasted almost 2 years, hundreds of Kashmiris have been killed, most often in staged "encounters", where innocent Kashmiri youth are summarily executed by depicting them as terrorists. Over 3,700 Kashmiris have been injured; nearly 15,000 have been arbitrarily arrested; hundreds tortured, and collective punishments imposed on Kashmiris by destruction of entire neighbourhoods and villages. Almost all of the Kashmiri leadership is detained in jails, detention centres or under house arrest, including the Hurriyat leadership, aged and ailing leaders like Syed Ali Shah Geelani, Yasin Malik and Asiya Andrabi. As a result, Mr Ashraf Sehrai, a veteran political leader and Chairman of the Tehreek-e-Hurriyat, died in Indian

detention on 5 May 2021. According to reports, in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, essential life-saving equipment such as oxygen kits and cylinders have been deliberately diverted from IIOJK to various parts of India.

The grim human rights situation in Kashmir has alarmed people around the world. Both the 2018 and 2019 reports by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on Kashmir reiterated the “urgent need to address past and ongoing human rights violations and to deliver justice for all people in Kashmir.” In the United States, the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission held a historic hearing on 14 November 2019 to shed light on human rights abuses in Kashmir. Thrice since August 5 2019, the UNSC has held discussions of IIOJK. The British parliament and the European Union have had discussions on these crimes against humanity. The Organisation of Islamic countries has passed a resolution condemning these atrocities.

All actions taken by India in IIOJK since 1951 including the measures initiated on and after 5 August 2019, and any additional unilateral changes that India may introduce in the

future, are violations of international law including the Security Council Resolutions and the 4th Geneva Convention, and ipso facto null and void. It is therefore a matter of great concern that, according to reports, India may be contemplating the imposition of further illegal and unilateral measures in IIOJK, including division, bifurcation and demographic changes in the occupied territory.

Pakistan desires peaceful relations with all its neighbours, including India. A just settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with relevant UN Security Council resolutions is essential for durable peace and stability in South Asia. The international community, especially the UN Security Council must assert its legal and political authority to ensure the full implementation of its resolutions guaranteeing the exercise of Kashmiris' right to self-determination. The Council must also call upon India to end its campaign of repression in IIOJK and reverse all its illegal actions, including those initiated on and after August 5, 2019, and to cease and desist from imposing any additional unilateral changes in the occupied regions.

THE LINGERING UNCERTAINTY IN INDIAN ILLEGALLY OCCUPIED KASHMIR

(Madiha Shakil Khan)

On August 5, 2019, India abrogated the special status of its illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir when it passed the J&K Reorganization Act 2019 in the upper house of the parliament. An already-occupied territory was annexed. Articles 370 and 35A were scrapped amid a large-scale shutdown in Kashmir. Moreover, the state of Jammu and Kashmir was downgraded into a Union Territory and bifurcated into two UT J&K and UT Ladakh. It is noteworthy that Article 370 had been systematically eroded by India over the past 70 years, including through the downgrading of the post of Prime Minister of J&K into Chief Minister. On the other hand, the provisions of Article 35A reserved exclusive rights over government jobs, and extended land ownership and other privileges only to native Kashmiris. Articles 370 and 35A, particularly the latter, were seen by the Muslims of J&K as a safeguarding tool against a possible demographic change that a Hindu-majority India

could bring about. From an Indian perspective, Article 370 was a hindrance in bringing J&K into the complete Indian fold. Hindu nationalist parties like the ruling BJP always demanded the scrapping of the special status which, they claimed, was helping Pakistan raise the Muslim majority factor of Kashmir. It was hoped that, by offering plots and jobs to non-Kashmiris, India would be able to alter the demographic balance in favor of the Hindus. The abrogation of Article 35A, coupled with the introduction of new domicile laws, opened the floodgates for the much-feared, illegal demographic changes in occupied Kashmir. Since Article 370 gave autonomy to J&K, it became a lifeline for the Unionist politicians of Kashmir, especially given that their mainstream politics was based on safeguarding the rights of indigenous Muslims. Article 370 provided a separate Constitution to J&K which determined what portions of the Indian Constitution would be applicable to J&K. It also had its own penal code called RPC (Ranbir Penal Code).

Pakistan's rejection of the scrapping of Article 370 and putting Kashmir under strict shutdown came from the highest level. It strongly condemned India's action, saying it could not take any unilateral steps on Jammu and Kashmir as long as it was an internationally-recognized dispute under the United Nations. Pakistan also said that the move violated the resolutions of United Nations regarding the disputed territory. "Pakistan will employ all available options against India's move of abolishing Kashmir's special status," said Firdous Ashiq Awan, then Pakistan's Advisor to the PM for Information and Broadcasting. There was unanimous outrage shown by the Pakistani government and the opposition with regard to scrapping of Article 370. Pakistan saw the abrogation of

the clutches of India has become stronger than ever. To project some sense of political stability to the outside world, New Delhi has been talking about the restoration of statehood and conduct of assembly elections in the state after the delimitation exercise concludes. District level elections, called DDC, held last year, failed in showcasing Kashmir's "normalcy" to a global audience. Many Kashmiri pro freedom leaders are languishing in jails across India. The pro Pakistan socio-political organization Jamaat e Islami was banned and its offices were seized by the police. Any sort of dissent is being crushed under the infamous Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) and the Public Safety Act (PSA).

Now the question arises, what are the options for Pakistan to



Kashmir's special status as an attempt by India to take it out from the Kashmir dispute, as evidenced by its insistence on calling the decision as an internal matter. Also, Pakistan deemed it as an assault on the Muslim majority portion and population of Kashmir which, by and large, has expressed its love and support for Pakistan.

With two years passed since then, Kashmir is yet to see any measure of normalcy as local resistance against security forces and others have only increased. Several pro India politicians, mostly from the ruling BJP, have been killed in various attacks. There has also been an increase in the numbers of local youth joining the militant ranks. All in all, India's August 5 gambit has further alienated the Kashmiris. The fervor to break free from

reverse the Indian move to assure the Muslim majority factor of Kashmir will not be permanently altered? While Pakistan can employ both overt and covert tactics, it does not have any real leverage over India to force it to revoke its decision. The old tactics of suspending bilateral relations and trade may prove to be self-defeating considering Pakistan's fragile economy. However, they are symbolically an important expression of Pakistan's commitment to helping the Kashmiris. Most Indian analysts have predicted that Pakistan will try to push armed insurgents into Kashmir as a destabilizing factor. However, Pakistan has been pretty clear about not resorting to any kinetic options unless India initiates armed aggression against it. Also, Pakistan is trying its best to dispel the wrong narrative

surrounding its support to armed groups, and is fully committed to fulfilling its international commitments on countering terrorism and extremism.

One remaining option for Pakistan is help from China. Both China and Pakistan have taken a unified stand against India over developments in Kashmir. Western media have been abuzz with the term of a “Sino-Pak” alliance over Kashmir since changes in the status of the territories also affected China's interests in the region. In fact, some even believe the Galwan clash between Indian and Chinese armies was a collaboration by China and Pakistan. However, there is no evidence to corroborate this assertion. Besides, Pakistan's current leadership, headed by Prime Minister Imran Khan, is looking at enhancing economic connectivity and integration. Thus, such kinds and types of actions are not in the interests of Pakistan, Kashmir, and the region.

Post the U.S. exit from Afghanistan, Pakistan could have tried to increase pressure on the Line of Control (LoC) but only if its western border can be secured after the American withdrawal, something which looks unlikely given the simmering situation

in Afghanistan. On balance, whipping up pressure on the LoC will not suit Pakistan, or the Kashmiris, for that matter. This is one of the reasons as to why Pakistan, earlier this year, agreed to adhere to the 2003 Ceasefire agreement on the LoC.

With China's PLA already having penetrated inside Indian-controlled territory in eastern Ladakh, India's fears of a possible joint Sino-Pakistan assault in Kashmir have only increased. A two-front war against two nuclear armed powers would be very difficult to handle for India and its military. Moreover, given the nature of the Indo-China clash at Galwan valley, it is highly unlikely that QUAD countries would come to India's rescue. However, it is noteworthy that Pakistan has elicited China's diplomatic support on Kashmir, instead of that in the realm of the military. Hence, it is clear that neither Beijing nor Islamabad is looking to pin down India from both sides. Thus, all this means is that the only certainty at this point is more uncertainty and tension in Kashmir and throughout the region as a result of India's brazen actions.

Madiha Shakil Khan is an independent researcher working on international affairs.

WHAT A WASTE

The engine of economic growth in South Asia has sputtered to a halt due to Indian intransigence and lack of vision. A region that was colonized by the British and bilked off a wealth exceeding \$45 trillion between 1765 and 1938, as per



Raashid Wali Janjua

economist Utsa Patnaik, is still suffering a self-imposed rigor mortis in the fields of trade and economic cooperation. The thousand pounds' guerilla in the room India is mostly to be blamed for this waste. According to a Commonwealth International Trade Working Paper, South Asia utilizes only 14 percent of its intra-regional trade potential, with India having the lowest intra-regional trade to total trade percentage of 2.2 percent.

A country that once prided itself on Nehruvian secularism and non-aligned foreign policy has mired itself in the morass of exclusivist politics driven by the RSS. Prime Minister Modi heading the political front of a fascist RSS organization espousing 'Hindutva' is the exemplar of a majoritarian polity

drawing strength from casteism and xenophobia. The economic fate of South Asia would have been different if regional organizations such as Saarc and the ECO and SCO had functioned as vehicles for economic integration for the benefit of South Asia, which has 24.89 percent of the global population. Instead, we have a regional hegemon privileging divisive geopolitics over geoeconomics. The latest manifestation of the above proclivity is the Indian attempts at annexation of its held portion of the disputed State of Jammu and Kashmir and use of laws like the Citizen Amendment Act (CAA) and National Register of Citizen (NRC) to deny citizenship rights to minorities.

A nation that has morphed into a predator bent upon destabilization of a smaller neighbour is an anachronism in this era of global interdependence and regional cooperation. The cerebral and pacific archetype of Indian identity has been overtaken by viscerally misanthropic Hindutva votaries who are slowly digging the country deeper into the pit of communal

hatred. Trade connectivity and its economic bonanza is being sacrificed at the altar of confrontational politics and territorial aggrandizement. The evidence of the above destabilizing influence is the epistemic war and a full-fledged attack on Pakistan in the information domain through a sedulously orchestrated disinformation campaign.

The recent disclosures by Brussels-based NGO EU DisinfoLab about a network of fake news sites, web domains, and websites working in concert with India's largest news agency ANI, targeting Pakistan through vicious propaganda and artifices is a shocking indictment of a country subverting EU and the UN officials' opinions against Pakistan. The DisinfoLab report is a portrayal of India sponsoring a 15-year-old media campaign against Pakistan through fake news and propaganda. The network operated from Brussels where the EU Disinformation Task Force unearthed the website of a fake magazine for European Parliament called 'EP Today'.

The magazine was publishing negative stories about Pakistan and was managed by Indian stakeholders linked with a large number of spurious companies, think tanks, and NGOs belonging to Delhi-based Srivastava Group. The group's IP address also hosted online media 'New Delhi Times' and 'International Institute of Nonaligned Studies' (IINS). The IINS also invited 27 EU members of parliament on a private visit to Kashmir to meet PM Modi which was later projected on the media as an official visit. The visit was sponsored by Modi Sharma, an Indian national heading the Women's Economic and Social Think Tank (WESTT). EP Today and the IINS network were linked with another spurious magazine, 'Times of Geneva'. Both these magazines in turn were linked to the Srivastava Group in India.

EP Today and Times of Geneva both used content syndication with Voice of America and Russia Today to enhance their reach and credibility. It was also found that both Geneva and Brussels-based disinformation networks were linked with a number of fake websites, think tanks and NGOs that were being managed by the Srivastava Group. The investigations found

additional 265 websites in 65 countries named after extinct newspapers or spoof media outlets. These fake websites covered anti Pakistan and pro-India content besides republishing similar content. The techniques used for the insidious purpose varied. There were zombie news sites resurrecting dead newspapers and new inventions. Professor of international law Louis Sohn who had died in 2006 was being projected as Louis Shon, the president of an NGO called CSOP, attending a function in 2011, five years after his death!

And then there were misleading sites that used fake domains. For example, 'The Albany Democrat' at albanydailydemocrat.com whereas the real website was 'The Albany Democrat Herald' at democratherald.com. Out of 261 media outlets, 164 were zombies, 87 new and 10 in misleading categories. Geographically, 66 were in the US, 20 in Canada, 18 in the UK, 12 in Switzerland, 9 in Australia, 8 in China, 6 in India and 5 in Russia.

From the above, it is clear that a network of disinformation was being operated from Geneva and Brussels with global links with NGOs and think tanks and centrally controlled from India. The objective of these fake media outlets was to act as a global echo chamber for anti-Pakistan and pro-Indian themes to influence UN and EU institutions like the EU Parliament and UN Human Rights Council.

That a country like India that presents to the international community an image of pacifism should indulge in such a massive calumny should be a matter of concern. Indian sponsorship of fake news websites and their dissemination network is a veritable crime against the UN Charter that prohibits subversion of peace to destabilize a UN member country. Pakistan reserves the right to use all diplomatic and legal options to counter this hybrid war. A comprehensive lawfare strategy should be employed as some of the violations would fall under humanitarian law while others might be treated as fraud and criminal law offences.

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MODI IS TRYING TO ENGINEER A HINDU MAJORITY IN KASHMIR

Under the smokescreen of electoral redistricting, New Delhi is using gerrymandering to politically neuter the region's Muslim majority.

By **Kaisar Andrabi**, an independent journalist based in Indian-administered Kashmir, and **Zubair Amin**, an independent journalist in Indian-administered Kashmir.



An Indian paramilitary soldier stands guard as voters wait to cast their ballots during the second phase of the District Development Council (DDC) and Panchayat by-elections at a polling station in Indian-administered Kashmir's Bandipora district on Dec. 1, 2020.

AUGUST 11, 2021, 5:23AM

SRINAGAR, Jammu and KashmirThe Indian government has commenced preparations to redraw the electoral boundaries in Indian-administered Kashmir two years after New Delhi rescinded the disputed region's semi-autonomous status and introduced tighter federal controls.

In 2019, New Delhi hoped that ratcheting up federal control would make it easier to subdue Kashmir's population and many groups' calls for self-determination. It has since unleashed the wrath of federal agencies on local politicians, traders, publishing houses, and even government employees who have been or potentially could become sources of dissent.

The crackdowns have also targeted protesters, members of civil society, and journalists, who are charged under draconian anti-terrorism laws that guarantee lengthy pretrial detentions and make bail an exception.

Now, the delimitation program envisions breaking up the electoral constituencies of the erstwhile semi-autonomous state into several new voter units in a manner that's likely to give numerical heft to the southern region of Jammu, where

there is a larger concentration of Hindu voters.

Altered demographics and a reconfiguration of electoral constituencies would allow Hindu-nationalist politicians to realize their long-standing goal of installing a Hindu chief minister in Kashmir.

Altered demographics, when combined with a clever reconfiguration of electoral constituencies, would allow Hindu-nationalist politicians to realize their long-standing goal of installing a Hindu chief minister in Kashmir.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu-nationalist government has also started to enforce hundreds of federal Indian laws and policies in Kashmir, echoing similar Chinese measures in Hong Kong.

New Delhi has dismantled structures of self-government in Kashmir with remarkable speed. The Indian government opened ownership of land in Indian-administered Kashmir to outsiders, made it easy to acquire domicile rights, and overturned historic land reforms.

This was followed by a move that reduced the share of Kashmiri candidates entering the Indian civil service from 50 percent to 33 percent, which in the future will increase the number of nonlocal officers in Kashmir's administration.

The federal government has also empowered the Indian armed forces to declare any area in the disputed region as "strategic" and ended the 131-year reign of Urdu as the sole official language of the region.

Unlike other Indian states, these laws and policies were not applicable in the region until August 2019 as Kashmir had its own constitution and its legislative assembly had exclusive power to make the laws.

Jammu and Kashmir is India's only Muslim-majority region. Before 2019, Hindu-nationalist groups had long campaigned for the annulment of Kashmir's special status enshrined in (now repealed) Article 370 of the Indian Constitution. Another feature of this extinguished legislation was Article 35A, which restricted the purchase of land to local residents alone.

In August 2019, Modi discarded both laws in a highly controversial move that has since soured India's relations with

Pakistan and China.

This year, New Delhi started rolling out residency permits for non-Kashmiri Indians, escalating fears that the Kashmir Valley, wedged between the snowy Himalayas, would be swamped with outsiders, turning the local Muslim-majority population into a political minority in their homeland, much as Han Chinese settlement has demographically transformed Tibet and Xinjiang. Last October, India's Ministry of Home Affairs issued new land laws for Indian-administered Kashmir, making it possible for any Indian citizen to buy land in the region.

Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party has openly pursued a policy of electoral engineering in the region, the delimitation process provides a smokescreen and gives it constitutional validity.

While the federal government, led by Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), has openly pursued a policy of electoral engineering in the region, the delimitation process provides a smokescreen and gives it constitutional validity while still achieving the goal of disempowering Kashmiri Muslims.

A delimitation commission overseeing the entire process draws on numbers supplied by the decennial national population census mandated by the Indian Constitution.

However, in 1976, when India was under a national state of emergency, its Parliament passed an amendment freezing all delimitation so that it remained based on the 1971 census. This freeze was put in place at a time when India was struggling to control its booming population. To effectively implement the state policy of population control, a freeze was put on the delimitation exercise, which would electorally penalize those states where the population grew faster, until the 2001 census.

This has divided the country on North-South lines. Most of the Southern states have achieved zero population growth, while the Northern states still have a very high fertility rate. If India carries out the delimitation exercise as per the recent census figures, the Northern states would gain many seats, while the Southern states would lose some.

Notwithstanding the Parliament-sanctioned freeze, Kashmir held the delimitation exercise in 1995, ahead of the state elections conducted in 1996, based on the 1981 census. (The

1991 census could not be held in Kashmir because of turbulence in the region at the time.) The delimitation process in Indian-administered Kashmir at that time was governed by its own state constitution, and the freeze was not applicable to the region.

In 2002, Parliament enacted yet another amendment extending the freeze until the first census after 2026. In line with the Indian Parliament, Kashmir's then-ruling party and the region's oldest, the Jammu & Kashmir National Conference (JKNC), also put a freeze on delimitation until 2026.

However, last March, the Modi-led government set up a delimitation commission under the aegis of a retired justice with an aim to redraw constituencies, based on 2011 census numbers, in Kashmir as well as in four northeastern states Assam, Manipur, Nagaland, and Arunachal Pradesh.

This year, all four northeastern states were struck off the list, while Kashmir, curiously enough, stayed. A senior political analyst, Noor Mohammad Baba, told *Foreign Policy* that resuscitating the plan exclusively for Kashmir is simply an attempt to gerrymander the voter units in the region.

Pro-India politicians in the region, representing a clique of local leaders who aspire to remain within the Indian union but with the kinds of autonomous powers that Modi scrapped two years ago, fear that the exercise will effectively disenfranchise Kashmiri Muslims.

"The whole exercise becomes illegal after the unconstitutional abrogation of Article 370," Mehbooba Mufti, who heads the Jammu & Kashmir Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), told *Foreign Policy*. "Every decision taken or order issued from the Indian government since the abrogation of the special status has been to fulfill their objective of diluting our position and identity. The hurried delimitation exercise is another step in that direction."

Mufti argues that the redrawing of boundaries and division of seats are likely to take place along communal and sectarian lines. "This can be catastrophic for a state like J&K that has multiple religions and various ethnicities that have always co-existed peacefully," she added.

After the abrogation of Article 370, the BJP-led Parliament passed the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act of 2019

(which the region's mainstream political parties call unconstitutional and have challenged its validity in India's Supreme Court), adding seven more seats for the region and making a delimitation exercise imperative.

Until August 2019, Jammu and Kashmir had 111 seats in its state legislative assembly. The Muslim-majority Kashmir Valley had a share of 46 seats, while Jammu had 37. Also, 24 seats were reserved for the people of Pakistani-administered Kashmir, which India claims.

The universally accepted rule for delimitation of electoral constituencies is population, followed by the Indian government since its inception as a parliamentary democracy. However, the BJP in Kashmir proposed to use geography as a criteria while demarcating boundaries of new assembly segments. Besides geography, the BJP and other Hindu-nationalist groups in Jammu demand other parameters like facilities of communication and topography of the constituencies to be considered while redrawing the seats, which would tilt the numerical strength of the seats in favor of Jammu.

In two years of federal rule in the region, domicile rights were given to thousands of nonlocals who had served or stayed in the region.

Constitutionally, population is meant to be the prime criterion while drawing electoral constituencies, and India has by and large followed this rule. However, there is a precedent when geography and topography of a few select districts in the mountainous state of Uttarakhand were considered over population.

The BJP and other Hindu-nationalist parties have been called out for their hypocrisy on the issue; while they demand area be considered as the main criterion for delimitation in Jammu and Kashmir, they demand that population be the primary factor elsewhere, given that the northern Indian states where the BJP has a strong political presence are more populous.

In two years of federal rule in the region, domicile rights were given to thousands of nonlocals who had served or stayed in the region. Most of these new residents have settled in Jammu, which political experts believe will alter the electoral

demography of Kashmir in the long run.

If the delimitation commission relies on the 2011 census to demarcate the new electoral boundaries, the Kashmir Valley would get more seats than Jammu, as that year's official census figures revealed that the Kashmir Valley had a population of 6.8 million to Jammu's population of 5.3 million.

However, the Hindu-dominated Jammu area is geographically larger in size (10,100 square miles) than the Muslim-majority Kashmir Valley (6,100 square miles). That is why the BJP over the years has been demanding that area be considered as the main factor for carrying out the delimitation exercise in the region.

Also, the BJP has been demanding to reserve seats for socially disadvantaged groups from the Hindu community, known as scheduled castes or Dalits. (Their numbers in the region are disputed.) The party has also proposed to reserve seats for the tribal groups and Kashmiri Pandits (Hindus) who migrated to Jammu in the 1990s, when a popular insurgency erupted in the Kashmir Valley against Indian rule. It has proposed to exclusively reserve seats for Kashmiri Pandits in Kashmir, thereby reducing the overall number of general seats for the Kashmir Valley.

Other than these groups, the BJP is also likely to reserve seats for refugees who migrated from Pakistan and settled in Jammu during the India-Pakistan wars in 1947 and 1965. These moves are seen as attempts to increase the share of seats in Jammu, where the ruling BJP has a major foothold, leading to more political gains for the party at the cost of other regional parties.

Aug. 5 marked the completion of two years since Kashmir lost its special status. Now, people in Kashmir fear more assaults on their identity as the BJP is inching closer to achieving its civilizational project of changing the Muslim-majority region into one with a Hindu majority.

In the face of this attempted gerrymandering, Kashmir Valley-based political parties continue to demand that population should be the sole parameter to delineate constituencies.

These political parties fear that Muslim-majority assembly constituencies in Jammu would be declared as "reserved constituencies" for Dalits and Pandits, thereby denying Muslims political participation. There are also fears that

Jammu's Muslim-majority areas could be dispersed across seats due to politically motivated redistricting so that their numerical strength is diluted.

Before 2019, the regional political parties had vowed to resist any move from the union government that would revoke regional autonomy in what became known as the Gupkar Declaration.

Later, after Modi revoked autonomy, the political parties formed a coalition called the People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration, which they argue is a "movement for the restoration of the rights and dignity of the people of J&K." However, soon after its formation, the coalition fell apart as political differences crept in and many political parties left the group.

This month, the coalition disregarded its pledge to provide a formidable opposition to the BJP in the region as most coalition partners apart from Mufti's PDP participated in the inaugural meeting of the delimitation commission, a widely criticized move that was deemed to provide legitimacy to the Modi

government's policies in the region.

Ruhullah Mehdi, a senior political leader affiliated with JKNC, views the participation of local political parties in the delimitation meeting as futile. He believes that the maps for the new electoral constituencies have been already drawn in the BJP's headquarters in New Delhi.

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the ideological forerunner of the BJP, "has an ideological objective which they want to achieve in Kashmir. They are anti-Muslim and anti-secularism. And empowered Muslims do not fit in their ideology," Mehdi told *Foreign Policy*.

"Kashmiri Muslims have a double crime in their understanding that they are Muslims and Muslims with a state."

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PAKISTAN HOSTS OIC DELEGATION FOR VISIT TO KASHMIR BORDER

Pakistan hosts OIC delegation for visit to Kashmir border

Representatives from Turkey, Malaysia, Morocco, Azerbaijan, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) were briefed by Islamabad on the prevalent security environment along the de-facto border that divides disputed Kashmir region between Pakistan and India. A delegation from the Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC) of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has visited the border of disputed Kashmir region and met victims of the cross border cease-fire violations. Representatives from Turkey, Malaysia, Morocco, Azerbaijan, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on Saturday were briefed by the Pakistan army on the prevalent security environment along the Line of Control (LOC), a de-facto border that divides Jammu and Kashmir between nuclear neighbors Pakistan and India. The group was also apprised of arrangements made for the protection of civilians from hostile fire in any eventuality through the construction of community bunkers, according to a statement

from the Pakistani army. They interacted with victims, members of village defence committees and civil administration.

India's 'dangerous decision'

IPHRC's Chairman Dr. Saeed Mohamed Abdullah from the UAE termed the scrapping of Jammu and Kashmir's long-standing semi-autonomous status by New Delhi a "dangerous decision," that would change the region's demography.

The controversial move in August 2019, he said, violates the human rights of "our brothers and sisters in Jammu and Kashmir." Vice-Chairman of IPHRC Dr. Haci Ali Acikgul from Turkey demanded the implementation of UN Security Council resolutions to resolve the long-smoldering dispute. He expressed dismay that India has been ignoring UNSC resolutions, which call for a plebiscite in Jammu and Kashmir, for more than 70 years. Hafid El Hachmi from Morocco said the delegation expresses solidarity with the Kashmiri people. "Justice will happen, and they will exercise their right to self-determination; to live with dignity and freedom," he said. Dr.

Aydin Safikhanli from Azerbaijan termed the cease-fire violations as "gross" human rights abuses

"It falls under the [category of] war crime[s], which should be punished," he said.

Pakistan welcomes UN efforts

Meanwhile, Pakistan has welcomed the "reaffirmation" of the UN position on the long-running Kashmir dispute. "Pakistan welcomes the reiteration of the position of (the) United Nations on the Jammu and Kashmir dispute by the Spokesperson for the United Nations Secretary-General. The statement reaffirms that UN position on the Jammu and Kashmir dispute is well-established and has not changed," Foreign Ministry spokesman Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri said on Saturday in a statement. Responding to media queries at a press briefing in New York on Thursday, Stephane Dujarric, spokesman for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, said: "Our position on Kashmir is well established and has not changed. I will leave it at that." His statement coincided with the second anniversary of India's scrapping of the Himalayan valley's long-standing semi-autonomous status on August 5, 2019. The statement, according to Chaudri, denies the "self-serving" remarks by India's Permanent Representative to the UN claiming that Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India.

Disputed region

Kashmir has been the main ingredient in the long-simmering rivalry between Pakistan and India since the two nuclear-armed neighbors gained independence from the British Empire in 1947. The picturesque Himalayan valley is held by the two countries in parts but claimed by both in full. A small sliver of the region is controlled by China. Since 1947, the two neighbors have fought three wars, two of them regarding Kashmir. Some Kashmiri groups have been fighting Indian rule for independence or unification with neighboring Pakistan. According to several human rights organizations, thousands have been killed and tortured in the conflict since 1989.

MAPIM chalks out comprehensive plan for Kashmir solution

Kuala Lumpur, August 09 (KMS): In connection with the second anniversary of the repeal of Articles 370 and 35A of the Indian Constitution which granted the special status of Jammu

and Kashmir by the Modi government in August 2019, Malaysia-based Consultative Council of Islamic Organization (MAPIM) has condemned the move, and called on the international community to pressure New Delhi to grant the Kashmiris their right to freedom and self-determination.

This organization while denouncing the unilateral abolition of Kashmir's special status by India in a statement in Kuala Lumpur said that the repressive measures taken by the Indian authorities following the repeal of Articles 370 and 35A have greatly damaged the life and livelihood of the Kashmiri people.

"We are deeply concerned by the tragic situation experienced by a large segment of the Kashmiri people, and the most affected children, women, young people and the elderly, who are subjected to inhuman treatment by the Indian occupation forces, including extrajudicial killings, executions in fake encounters, rape, shooting bullets in eyes to cause blindness, arbitrary arrests, torture, destruction of homes and imprisonment of youth."

The statement said, the suffering of the Kashmiris under the yoke of the Indian occupation, and the invalidation of the effectiveness of local laws aim to bring about a demographic change in Jammu and Kashmir, which will result in societal tension, and deprive the Kashmiris of their right to citizenship. The agenda of Hindutva adopted by the BJP government aims to transform the territory of Kashmir into a state with a Hindu majority. The statement deplored the silence maintained by the international community over the persecution of the Kashmiri people by the brutal Indian forces. "What is more disgusting is the statement of a high-ranking Indian diplomat that India wants to implement the 'Israel model' in Jammu and Kashmir." The statement while demanding the reversal of unilateral repeal of Articles 370 and 35A called for giving the people of Jammu and Kashmir the right to self-determination as per the UN Security Council Resolution No. 47 issued on April 21, 1948 regarding the dispute over Jammu and Kashmir. "Failure to resolve the Kashmir issue portends a humanitarian catastrophe, and threatens regional security and stability," the statement warned. The statement urged India to withdraw its forces from Kashmir, bring those accused of human rights violations and crimes against humanity to the courts, allow a

full investigation into the crimes committed by the Indian occupation forces and bring the perpetrators to justice.

The organization also called upon New Delhi to immediately and unconditionally release all political detainees, allow the accused to communicate with their lawyers, and protect them from the abuse of law by the authorities.

It demanded a comprehensive investigation by independent international organizations into the atrocities committed by the Indian occupation forces since the repeal of Constitutional Articles 370 and 35A. The statement was signed by MAPIM Chairman Mohamed Azmy Abdel Hamid and many other leaders and heads of religious, political parties civil society organizations including Dr. S. Sheikh Ahmed Awang, Dr. W. Sheikh Abdul Ghani Shams Al-Din, Hassan El Din Mohamed Younes, Dr. Rosneh Alvi, Noor Amin bin Mohammed, Asmaa Hussein, Ahmed Fahmy bin Shams Al-Din, Faisal Abdul Aziz, Mohamed Fawzy Zakaria, Muhyiddin Abdel Qader, Dr. Raslan Muhammad Nour, Jaafar Arif Ismail, Nasser Zakaria, Mrs. Rossi Saleh, Mohamed Fadel Yousni, Zulkifli Ibrahim and Dr. Khair Al-Anwar Mustafa. KMS

The OIC-IPHRC delegation concludes its visit to Pakistan and AJK

Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Spokesperson's Office)

PRESS RELEASE Islamabad, 9 August 2021 The Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC) of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) concluded its 5-day visit to Pakistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) today. The 12-member IPHRC delegation was led by its Chairperson, Dr. Saeed Al Ghufli. The visit was undertaken in compliance with the mandate provided by the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) to assess the deteriorating human rights situation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). The IPHRC an independent expert body of the OIC has established a Standing Mechanism for that purpose which regularly monitors and reports on the dismal state of human rights in IIOJK. During its stay in Pakistan, the IPHRC delegation was received by Prime Minister Imran Khan, Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi, and the Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Ali Amin Khan Gandapur. The delegation also met the

Parliamentary Committee on Kashmir Affairs headed by Mr. Shehryar Afridi as well as Foreign Secretary Sohail Mahmood. In AJK, the IPHRC delegation called on President Masood Khan and widely interacted with Kashmiri refugees from IIOJK, leadership of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC), Kashmiri civil society and media representatives. The IPHRC delegation also visited the Line of Control (LoC) and met with the victims of ceasefire violations carried out by Indian security forces. The aim of these extensive and wide-ranging interactions was to assess the human rights and humanitarian situation in IIOJK, and to investigate and report on the human rights abuses by the Indian security forces in the occupied territory with a view to making recommendations for the promotion and protection of Kashmiris' basic civil, political, social, economic, religious and cultural rights including their inalienable right to self-determination, guaranteed by numerous resolutions of the UN Security Council. The IPHRC delegation also witnessed the human impact of the indiscriminate shelling carried out by Indian security forces across the LoC which results in the precious loss of lives, injuries to civilians including women and children, and damage to civilian property and infrastructure in AJK. The visiting delegation was provided unfettered access by the Government of Pakistan to undertake its mandated task with objectivity. In due course, a detailed report of the findings of IPHRC will be presented, with concrete recommendations, for the consideration of the next (48th) session of the OIC-CFM. Several requests have been made by the IPHRC to India over the years for allowing a fact-finding mission to IIOJK. However, despite its false claims of "normalcy" in the occupied territory, India continues to deny access to the IPHRC as well as other human rights organizations to visit IIOJK. An IPHRC delegation had earlier visited Pakistan and AJK in March 2017, and issued a detailed report which documented the gross and systematic violations of human rights by Indian security forces in IIOJK. The second visit of the IPHRC to Pakistan and AJK, from 4-9 August 2021, coincided with the completion of two years of illegal and unilateral steps imposed by India in IIOJK which were accompanied by draconian measures to enforce an inhuman military siege of the occupied territory, followed by

unlawful changes to its demographic structure aimed at robbing Kashmiri Muslims of their majority and distinct identity. Pakistan welcomes the IPHRC's efforts for bringing to

the attention of the international community the plight of Kashmiris enduring gross, systematic and widespread human rights abuses in IIOJK.

OIC - IPHRC VISIT TO THOTHA CAMP



Kashmir, we are with you: President Alvi at rally in Islamabad

President Dr Arif Ali, Federal Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry, Science and Technology Minister Shibli Faraz and Railways Minister Azam Swati all leaders of the ruling PTI took out a rally outside the Parliament House in Islamabad to condemn India's "barbarism and violence" in occupied Kashmir, a tweet said on the party's official account. "Today marks the day when the people of occupied Kashmir announced a strike" over New Delhi's move to revoke the valley's special autonomy," the president said, as he condemned pellet gun attacks and Indian atrocities on "our Kashmiri brethren". "I want to tell my Kashmiri brothers that we are with you," he said, adding that PM Imran had fought the case of occupied Kashmir in a way that "compelled the world to acknowledge". He condemned India for trying to bring demographic changes in the valley, and warned that a "new, stronger" Pakistan was emerging that would make sure that Kashmiris were given their rights.

Yom-e-Istehsal Kashmir: PM Imran, COAS Bajwa call out India for '2 years of oppression' in IOJK

Prime Minister Imran Khan and Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa on Thursday called out India over its continuous "inhuman military siege" and "unprecedented oppression" in occupied Kashmir. Their rebuke came as the country observed Yom-e-Istehsal Kashmir (the day of exploitation) to mark two years since New Delhi stripped the valley of its special autonomy. The prime minister, in a series of tweets, said: "Today marks two years since India's unilateral and illegal actions of 5 Aug 2019 in IOJK. In these two years, the world has witnessed unprecedented oppression in IOJK (Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir) by Indian Occupation forces. It is also witnessing Indian efforts to force demographic change and destroy Kashmiri identity." He praised the people of occupied Kashmir for remaining "undaunted in their struggle for self-determination" and vowed to continue to raise his voice for their rights "till Kashmiris are allowed to decide their future according to UNSC resolutions". The Inter-Services Public Relation (ISPR), the military's media wing, quoted COAS Bajwa as saying that the "continuation of inhuman military siege, machinations to bring demographic changes and gross violations of human rights and international laws are perpetuating humanitarian and security crises in IOJK" that imperil regional security.

In another tweet, the ISPR added that the "resolution of Kashmir dispute as per UN Resolutions and aspirations of Kashmiri people is imperative for enduring peace and stability in the region."

OIC urged to establish humanitarian corridor for besieged Kashmiris

Muzaffarabad: Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) President Sardar Masood Khan has called upon the member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to establish a humanitarian corridor to aid people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK) who were under a military siege amid relentless Indian state sponsored terrorism. He made this appeal while talking to a 12-member delegation of the OIC-Independent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC) here at the Aiwan-i-Sadr on Friday. The OIC-IPHRC delegation included diplomats and representatives from the United Arab Emirates, Uganda, Nigeria, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Azerbaijan, Gabon, Tunisia, Turkey and Morocco. The IPHRC Executive Director Marghoob Saleem Butt and prominent Pakistani diplomat Tasneem Aslam were also present on the occasion. The AJK President thanked the OIC for its courageous and steadfast support for the right to self-determination of the Kashmiri people. He also expressed his deep gratitude to the commission for publishing a comprehensive and seminal report in March 2017 on the human rights situation in IOJK. Terming the IPHRC's previous report as a precursor to the reports on the human rights situation in IOJK published by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr Khan said since the last report of the OIC Human Rights Commission the situation in IOJK had undergone significant changes that demanded commission's immediate attention. He maintained that in the light of the recommendations made in the IPHRC's previous report, the Muslim world, particularly the member states of the OIC should raise their voice against the worst ever human rights violations in IOJK and consider sanctions against India. He also demanded immediate steps by the OIC to provide emergency assistance to the besieged Kashmiris by establishing humanitarian corridors and provide scholarships to Kashmiri students studying either in any part of their state or elsewhere in the world so that they could continue their education. The president informed the delegation that at present there were around 42,000 refugees from across the divide in AJK, with their majority residing in or on the outskirts of Muzaffarabad. The AJK government provides assistance to

these refugees in collaboration with the Pakistani institutions, he said. Urging the delegation members to expose India's false propaganda that its troops were fighting terrorism in occupied Kashmir, Mr Khan pointed out that Dil Bagh Singh, Indian police chief in occupied Kashmir, had himself admitted that there were a total of 200 militants in the occupied territory against whom India had deployed 900,000 troops. India had deployed such a large army not to fight the militants but to kill the unarmed and defenseless people of the occupied territory, Mr Khan said. Informing the OIC delegation of the illegal and unilateral steps taken by the Indian government on and after August 2019, he said that after snatching symbolic special status of IOJK, bifurcating and annexing the occupied state with the Indian union, settling non-Kashmiri Hindu citizens in it to convert the Muslim majority into a minority, New Delhi was now actively engaged in gerrymandering to reduce Muslim representation in the state legislature of IOJK.

AJK will be made base camp of Kashmir freedom movement: Niazi

Islamabad: Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Sardar

Abdul Qayyum Niazi has said that AJK will be made the base camp of the Kashmir freedom movement in true sense. He expressed these views during a meeting with a delegation led by Hurriyat AJK leader Abdul Hameed Lone that called on him in Islamabad. The AJK Prime Minister said, "The development of the region will send a positive message in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). Prosperous Azad Kashmir will be an example to the whole world. Imran Khan has declared himself the ambassador of Kashmiris. Under the leadership of Imran Khan, Indian atrocities will be exposed all over the world." Sardar Abdul Qayyum Niazi said serious human rights violations continue in IIOJK and the Modi government has endangered the credibility of the United Nations by inflicting atrocities on Kashmiris. "If the United Nations does not play its role to end Indian atrocities, its importance in the world will be lost," he warned. On this occasion, Abdul Hameed Lone also conveyed a message of good wishes from the leadership and people of IIOJK to the newly-elected AJK prime minister. Lone said the people of the occupied territory were overjoyed when the news of the nomination of the prime minister was aired on TV.INP



President of AJ&K Sardar Masood Khan and Prime Minister of GoAJ&K Abdul Qayyum Khan Niazi leading the Solidarity Rally on 5 August (YOUM-E-ISTEHSAL) in Muzaffarabad



Briefing to participants of Punjab Local Government Officer Academy by director JKLC Raja Muhammad Sajjad Khan

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN IOK

(From Jan 1989 till July 30, 2021)

Total Killings *	95,843
Custodial Killings	7,186
Arrested	161,935
Arson (Houses, Shops, etc.)	110,423
Women widowed	22,930
Children orphaned	107,831
Women gang-raped / Molested	11,245
*Including killings in fake encounters, extra-judicial operations and custody	

