

Message from Dr. Arif Alvi, President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on the occasion of Right to Self-Determination Day - 5th January 2022

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On 5 January 1949, United Nations Commission on India and Pakistan (UNCIP) adopted a resolution, guaranteeing a free and impartial plebiscite in Jammu and Kashmir. Today marks 73rd anniversary of the United Nations' commitment that the Jammu and Kashmir dispute would be decided through the democratic method of a free and impartial plebiscite under the UN auspices.

Kashmiris around the world are observing this Right to Self-Determination Day to make the international community realize that their promise to the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) remains unfulfilled. In these difficult seven decades, three generations of Kashmiris have suffered at the hands of Indian occupation forces, waiting for the actualization of UN's promise to them.

Despite lapse of seven decades, Jammu and Kashmir dispute remains unresolved due to India's obstinate refusal to honour its commitments and its disrespect for the fundamental human rights and international law. Since August 5, 2019, through a number of illegal and unilateral steps, India has created an environment of fear and chaos in IIOJK. India has promulgated new domicile rules and introduced amendments in landownership laws to alter the demographic structure of the occupied territory in clear violation of the international law including the UN Charter, relevant UN Security Council resolutions, and the 4th Geneva Convention.

With the pandemic situation, the Kashmiris are faced with 'double lockdown' in IIOJK. The lockdown and the COVID-19 pandemic are estimated to have cost around US\$ 9.5 billion to the economy of the IIOJK.

Indian occupation forces have intensified repression of the Kashmiris through surge in extra-judicial killings, fake encounters, arbitrary detention of Kashmiri journalists and human rights defenders, communications blackouts, incarceration of Kashmiri political leaders, violent suppression of peaceful Kashmiri protests, use of pellet guns and demolition of entire neighborhoods and villages as collective punishment.

No amount of Indian attempts will succeed in misleading the international community and glossing over India's state-terrorism being perpetrated with shameless impunity in IIOJK. Nor could use of brutal force ever succeed in breaking the will of the Kashmiri people in their just and legitimate struggle.

Pakistan calls upon the international community to hold India accountable for the egregious human rights violations in IIOJK and to play its role for peaceful and durable resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute.

Pakistan, on its part, will continue to extend all possible support to the Kashmiri people until they realize their legitimate and inalienable right to self-determination, in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions.

