

Institute of Strategic Studies Seminar

***“Human Rights, Youth
and the issue of Jammu and Kashmir,”***

May11,201

Draft Speech

of

**Honourable Raja Zafarul Haq,
Leader of the House in Senate**



- **Sardar Masood Khan**, Director-General, Institute of Strategic Studies.
- **Distinguished Guests.**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen.**

Assala m-o- Alaikum!

It is indeed a great pleasure for me to attend this seminar and share my views with the worthy participants, experts and speakers on the all important issue of "**Human Rights, Youth and the Issue of Jammu and Kashmir**".

An unfinished business of subcontinent's partition in 1947, Kashmir is the bleeding wound of South Asia, and a major source of unrest and instability in the region.

Too long the world has stood silently and indifferently to the plight of innocent Kashmiris in the Occupied Valley, who have been subjected to worst state-sponsored and systemic genocide, torture, forced disappearances, rape and humiliation.

The continuing use of persecution and ethnic cleansing in a bid to muffle the calls of freedom and self determination places a huge burden on the collective world conscience.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before I go on any further, it is imperative to establish that the very human rights abuses that India has so flagrantly used as a persecution tool in the Occupied Valley, have now come back to haunt itself.

The present day Indian society has been swept atop a tidal wave of intolerance and extremism. There is genuine reason for alarm.

- When Hindu vigilante mobs kill four Muslim men over suspicions that they had killed or stolen cows for beef.
- When a renowned former Delhi University Professor (S.A.R Geelani) is arrested on charges of sedition for reportedly organising an event marking the death anniversary of Parliament attack convict Afzal Guru.
- When Kashmiri students and academicians are persecuted on racial and ethnic basis.
- When a gang of thugs ambush a Mumbai book launch featuring a publication by a former foreign minister of Pakistan by dousing the organiser in ink.
- When scholars are murdered for campaigning against religious superstitions.
- When novelists, playwrights and poets return national awards in protest against communal violence --- then it clearly denotes death of democracy and the rise of mobocracy that defines today's India.

The state patronage of hatred and violence proved a recipe for disaster, unleashing a reign of terror - a fact also recognized internationally.

In its 26th Edition World Report 2016, **Human Rights Watch** clearly states that "The Indian government failed to address increasing attacks on free expression and against religious minorities".

However, despite committing grave human rights violations, India continues to hoodwink the world by presenting itself as a "secular and the largest" democracy - a policy that is both undemocratic and disastrous.

Gross human rights violations in the Indian Occupied Kashmir have become a permanent feature of the Indian security forces. The patronage of Indian State is obvious from the fact that India has never prosecuted any of its military or paramilitary personnel for human rights abuses in Kashmir.

In its report on July 2, 2015, the **Amnesty International** has highlighted extrajudicial killings at the hands of security forces in the Held Kashmir, where over 100,000 people have been martyred, while more than 8,000 have disappeared while in the custody of army and state police.

All this is being perpetuated under the draconian and black laws, such as the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act - 1958, Public Safety Act (PSA) - 1978, and the Jammu And Kashmir Disturbed Areas Act - 1992.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Pakistan's centuries-old cultural, religious and geographical affiliations, kinship and brotherhood with our Kashmiri brethren apart, our political and national stand on the issue is principled, humanitarian and democratic.

While addressing the 69th Session of the UN General Assembly on September 26, 2014, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said: **"Pakistan's support and advocacy of the right to self-determination of the people of Jammu and Kashmir is a historic commitment and duty, as a party in the Kashmir dispute."**

There is unprecedented consensus and unanimity in Pakistan across the national, political and parliamentary spectrum on Kashmir issue.

Members from both Houses of Pakistan Parliament have always remained steadfast in expressing solidarity with Kashmiris living in the held valley by raising voice for their rights and condemning atrocities being perpetuated against them at both, national and international forums.

I deem it pertinent to reiterate here that we parliamentarians are committed to supporting and upholding Kashmiri people's right to self-determination and plebiscite in accordance with the UN Resolutions and their own aspirations. As Kashmiris are party to the dispute, they must be part of the dialogue process.

We are also deeply disturbed by human rights violations in Kashmir and demand India to repeal all draconian laws.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Pakistan seeks to promote regional and international peace and security, friendship and cooperation on the basis of sovereign equality, mutual respect, non-interference and peaceful settlement of disputes.

This national resolve traces its genesis in the Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah' s vision, who, in a message to the nation on 15 August 1947, observed that:

"Our object should be peace within and peace without. We want to live peacefully and maintain cordial and friendly relations with our immediate neighbours and with the world at large. We have no aggressive designs against anyone. We stand by the United Nations Charter and will gladly make our full contribution to the peace and prosperity of the world."

The Constitution of Pakistan also has provisions relating to the conduct of foreign policy. For instance, article 40 of the Constitution provides:

"The State shall endeavour to preserve and strengthen fraternal relations among Muslim countries based on Islamic unity, support the common interests of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America, promote international peace and security, foster goodwill

and friendly relations among all nations and encourage the settlement of international disputes by peaceful means."

Guided by such strong ideals, Pakistan wishes to strengthen good relations with all its neighbours.

We will continue to seek peaceful settlement of all outstanding disputes with India, including Jammu and Kashmir, through constructive, meaningful, and result-oriented engagement including dialogue.

The legitimate aspirations of Kashmiri people cannot be ignored and must be accommodated if we are to have durable peace in South Asia and help usher in an era of socio-economic progress, which the teeming millions of South Asia so direly crave for.

On our part, we are committed to pursuing the path of peace, stability and prosperity, and expect the same from our neighbours. Cooperation rather than confrontation is the key.

With these words, I once again thank the organizers for giving me an opportunity to share my thoughts in this seminar. I hope that the outcomes of our deliberations will contribute positively towards highlighting Kashmir issue before the world in its true humanistic perspective.

May Allah Almighty help us in our endeavours.

Thank You!