



**INSTITUTE OF
STRATEGIC STUDIES**

web: www.issi.org.pk
phone: +92-920-4423, 24
fax: +92-920-4658

Issue Brief

Mixed Successes: UNHRC 34 & International Inclination Towards Kashmir

Tooba Khurshid, Research Fellow, ISSI

April 20, 2017

During his first ever visit to Pakistan, OIC Secretary-General Dr Yousef bin Ahmad Al-Othaimeen while addressing a press conference on April 10 backed Pakistan's position on Kashmir and said that OIC has the same position as that of Pakistan and wants peaceful resolution of Kashmir.¹

This was yet another defeat to Indian endeavors of diverting world attention from its atrocities in Indian Occupied Kashmir(IOK). Earlier, Kjell Magne Bondevik, former prime minister of Norway and a high-ranking delegation of the Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC) of OIC also visited Pakistan and Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK). Both delegations visited refugees camps and took note of serious complaints of gross human rights violations by Indian Occupational Forces (IOF) against innocent Kashmiris.

Over the past months, delegations from European and Canadian Parliament have also visited AJK and supported Kashmiris right to self-determination..

India has always made desperate efforts to divert the international attention from the worsening situation. India has also denied access to various fact finding missions to IOK to independently and impartially investigate the grave human rights violations being perpetrated by Indian occupational forces. Indian state terrorism and grave human rights violations have been condemned by the international community.

Also, at the 34th session of Human Rights Council (HRC), India continued its desperate attempts to divert global attention from IOK and claimed that the situation in IOK is about terrorism. However, Pakistan gave a befitting reply to India and raised Indian human rights violations forcefully and exposed Indian habit of maligning Pakistan for everything. The 34th session of Human Right Council held from February 27, 2017 to March 24, 2017 marked the end of four weeks of intense negotiations on a wide variety of human rights issues including Indian Occupied Kashmir. India and Pakistan remained engaged on Kashmir during the session.

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al-Hussein in an address to the HRC on March 8, had highlighted the major human rights violations in more than 40 countries in the world and said

¹ OIC wants peaceful resolution of the Kashmir dispute: secretary general, *DAWN*, April 10, 2017.

that his office has faced difficulties in accessing some regions like both sides of the Line of Control among others. However, he added that areas where UNHRC received indications of severe violations, and where access continues to be denied, UNHRC has begun remote monitoring, and fact-finding missions to neighbouring countries – reports which the UNHRC intends to make public, and will report on this further in June.²

Pakistan has always continued its unflinching political, moral and diplomatic support to the Kashmiri people. As a result of vigorous efforts by Pakistanis and Kashmiris, two agenda items have been released as UN General Assembly Documents during the HRC session 34.³ These agenda items required the Council's attention for promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development and current human rights situations in IOK.

Furthermore, various countries supported Pakistan's stance over Kashmir and encouraged the resolution of the dispute. Iran on April 1, offered to mediate between India and Pakistan on Kashmir.⁴ China has also openly supported Pakistan on Kashmir and asked that the aspirations of the Kashmiris should be taken into account in resolving the Kashmir dispute.⁵

Moreover, US Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley on April 4 said that the Trump administration is concerned about the relationship between India and Pakistan and very much wants to see how US de-escalate any sort of conflict going forward.⁶

With such high level visits, it is fair to say that Indian attempts to divert the world attention from Kashmir issue and isolate Pakistan at international level have been foiled effectively.

Within IOK, recent Indian barbarism during the by elections held from April 9-13, 2017, exposed the true undemocratic face of India to the world. In its attempt to muzzle the voice of Kashmiris, Indian forces killed 13 people and injured many. Only five per cent turnout in the elections has conveyed a clear message to Indian mainstream political parties that the Indian narrative on Kashmir is dead.

² High Commissioner for Human Rights on the activities of his Office and recent human rights developments , Item 2: Annual Report and Oral Update to the 34th session of the Human Rights Council, March 8, 2017 <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21316#sthash.feQa0oJb.dpuf>

³ A/HRC/34/NGO/67, A/HRC/34/NGO/68, http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/alldocs.aspx?doc_id=27640

⁴ Iran ready for mediation to resolve Kashmir issue, says envoy, DAWN, April 1, 2017

⁵ China's stance on Kashmir, Pakistan Observer, March 17, 2017.

⁶ US to mediate between Pakistan and India over Kashmir issue, The Express Tribune, April 4, 2017.

With these realities, India has entered a critical stage where New Delhi has lost the battle, and false propaganda of blaming Pakistan for every act of violence and protests is no more acceptable to the people of IOK. Indian Home Minister Rajnath Singh announced a new model of change for IOK and said that one will see a "transformed" Kashmir in a year "no matter how the change takes place."⁷ There are two dimensions in this word of warning. One is a sound alert to stone pelters that more force will be used to forewarn and stop them; and the second dimension is directed at the populations to put them on alert and expect a transformation in the environment they live in, which is quite impossible.

The changes that the Home Minister will bring about warns of use of more intensified methods so that the stone-pelters take cognizance and stay at home.

Nevertheless, the Kashmir dispute has been internationalized, while India has failed in diverting world's attention from the present situation of Kashmir. But there is still need for the International community to press upon India that fact finding missions should be given a free and complete access to establish an objective assessment of the claims made by the two sides. Along with strong commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights of people of IOK, there is also need to publicize the proceedings of forums such as the HRC sessions through print and electronic media at all levels..

⁷ Kashmir Will Be Transformed In A Year No Matter How The Change Takes Place, Says Rajnath Singh, *The Huffington Post*, April 12, 2017.