



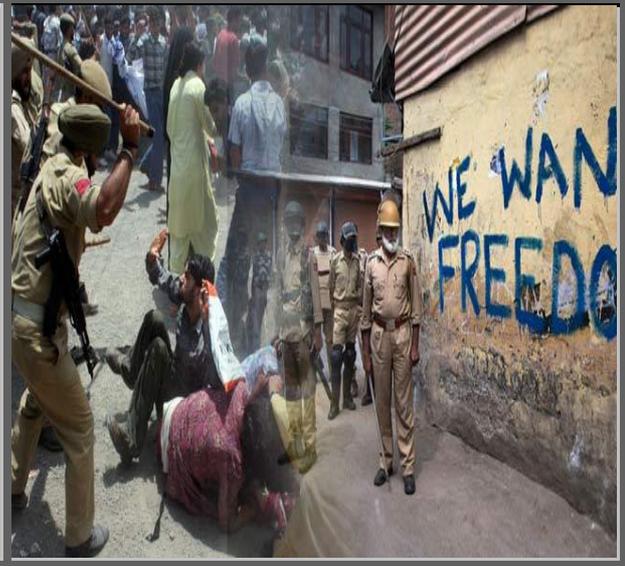
INDIAN ATROCITIES IN IOK: IS INDIA FOLLOWING ISRAELI SCRIPT?

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(Views expressed in the brief are those of the author, and do not represent those of ISSI)



On August 05, 2019, in what Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi called “a historic decision”¹, the Government of India unilaterally abolished Article 370² and 35A³ from its Constitution. These Articles had previously given Kashmir semi-autonomous status by allowing it to make its own laws and precluded non-Kashmiris from possessing land in the disputed territory. For years, Kashmiris in Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK) have been demanding the right to self-determination as pledged by the 1948 United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 47. Ever since military action began in the 1980s, more than 70,000⁴ people have been killed, while thousands are missing as a result of forcible disappearances. At this point in time, Kashmir is one of the most militarized places on earth.

Both the ethnic, as well as religious undercurrents of India’s actions have reinforced comparisons to the West Bank, the Palestinian region Israel has occupied since the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. The Israeli government has constructed settlements in the area, forced resident Palestinians to evict and encourages Jewish Israelis to move into them. This settlement expansion has been denounced as

¹ Nirmala Ganapathy, “Modi Hails ‘Historic Decision’ over Kashmir,” *The Straits Times*, August 8, 2019.

² “Jammu Kashmir Article 370: Govt Revokes Article 370 from Jammu and Kashmir,” *The Times of India*, August 5, 2019.

³ “Article 35A: Why a Special Law on Kashmir Is Controversial,” *BBC News*, August 5, 2019.

⁴ “India Set to Withdraw Kashmir’s Special Status and Split It in Two,” *The Guardian*, August 5, 2019.

illegal by the UNSC.⁵ The occupations of Palestine and Kashmir are not completely identical. There are certain legal differences between the two states. However, Israeli and Indian ambitions are not unlike. It can be said that in some ways, they feed off each other. India and Israel bonhomie has swiftly cultivated into an effective partnership primarily based on strategic interests. The relationship also now encompasses economic dimensions such as agriculture. India's oppression of Kashmiris, cannot be seen in a vacuum. Tel Aviv continues to play a crucial role by collaborating with Delhi to ensure that Kashmiris remain a subordinated people.⁶

Outlining the Similarities

- Indian atrocities in IOK and its policies⁷ to facilitate a demographic shift in Kashmir itself by bringing in more Hindus from India to settle into Kashmir are mirrored in how Israel consistently ethnically cleanses Palestinians, taking over their homes and quelling dissent as part of a larger bid to remove the Palestinian footprint. Moreover, India's recent action is clearly reflected in Israel's unilateral annexation of the Golan Heights,⁸ as well as Prime Minister Netanyahu's recent announcement of the annexation of the Jordan Valley.⁹
- Both India and Israel claim to be democracies but leave no stone unturned to deny rights to Kashmiris and Palestinians. While, India rigged the elections in 1987¹⁰ and paved the way for a long term insurgency, Israel refused to respect the people's mandate when Hamas won the elections in 2006¹¹, triggering a civil war between Fatah (which controls parts of West Bank) and Hamas (which controls the Gaza Strip). The imbue of "democracy" has given both India and Israel special validity, and their purported advantages in terms of economic power and technological prowess has also granted them a certain impunity in the international arena.
- The oppressors of both the Palestinians lands and Kashmiris rely on brute force, since they do not enjoy moral legitimacy among the people, in order to sustain their forceful control over the land. These tactics involve use of lethal force against non-combatants, humiliation, and violation of fundamental human rights. The present situation in Kashmir is not dissimilar

⁵ "Israel's Settlements Have No Legal Validity, Constitute Flagrant Violation of International Law, Security Council Reaffirms," *United Nations*, December 23, 2016.

⁶ "India-Israel Joint Plan to Target Pakistani Nuclear Facilities on Pretext of 'Anti Terror War' Exposed," *Daily Pakistan Global*, March 4, 2019.

⁷ "New Delhi's Demographic Designs in Kashmir," *Foreign Policy*, August 16, 2019.

⁸ "Netanyahu Says Golan Heights Move 'Proves You Can' Keep Occupied Territory," *The New York Times*, March 26, 2019.

⁹ "Arab Nations Condemn Netanyahu's Jordan Valley Annexation Plan," *BBC News*, September 11, 2019.

¹⁰ "South Asia | Kashmir's Flawed Elections," *BBC News*, September 14, 2002.

¹¹ "Palestinians: Fighting and Governing," *Wilson Center*, August 27, 2015.

to the Israeli policy of "administrative detention"¹² that has seen thousands of Palestinians held indefinitely. Moreover, for years, Indian forces have used lead-plated pellets as a method of "crowd control"¹³ - something which the Israelis have been employing for years. These have blinded and wounded countless people.

- Both India and Israel employ diversion tactics, whereby they try to shift the focus away from their heinous crimes. Israel stresses on suicide bombings by Palestinians and blames the disunity between Hamas and Fatah for the existing economic deprivation of the Palestinians. Similarly, Prime Minister Modi, focuses on Islamist groups such as Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) in order to deflect attention from the human rights violations in IOK. The quick use of Islamophobia is an easy way to vindicate themselves. Moreover, this terror frame supports the economy of arms trade between India and Israel.
- Both India and Israel claim that their annexation policies are aimed at economic development. While making his case, Prime Minister Modi argued that Article 370 was denying people living in Kashmir, their rights.¹⁴ He stated that his actions would help bolster the minority groups living there. Likewise, with aid of United States, Israel has been furthering the narrative that the only way to resolve the Palestinian issue is through economic growth. In this regard in May 2019, the United States held a "Peace to Prosperity"¹⁵ workshop in Bahrain to discuss economic policies which would help support the Palestinian economy.

As a consequence of continued military lockdown imposed in IOK, frustration, anger and fear is increasing among the Kashmiris. In this environment, the international community and the UN, in particular, need to acknowledge the impending dangers of genocide and ethnic cleansing together with the danger of another Pakistan-India conflict — this time under a cloud of nuclear weapons.

In his speech at the UN General Assembly, Prime Minister Imran Khan made the danger of not taking immediate action to quell the situation in Kashmir very clear when he said, "when a nuclear armed country fights to the end, it will have consequences far beyond the borders. It will have consequences for the world."¹⁶

¹² "UN Denounces Israel's Administrative Detention Policy," *IMEMC News*, April 14, 2015.

¹³ "Plastic Bullets to Be Used for Crowd Control in Kashmir," *The Economic Times*, July 13, 2018.

¹⁴ "India Revokes Kashmir's Special Status," *Al Jazeera*, September 4, 2019.

¹⁵ "US-Led Bahrain Meeting on Palestine: All the Latest Updates," *Al Jazeera*, June 26, 2019.

¹⁶ "Full Transcript of Prime Minister Imran Khan's Speech at the UNGA," *Business Recorder*, September 28, 2019.