

Consulate General of Pakistan
Toronto

PRESS RELEASE

The Friends of Kashmir Committee, Toronto and the Consulate General organized “Kashmir Solidarity Conference” in Toronto on 15 July 2017. The conference was attended by 250 delegates belonging to various professional fields. High Commissioner Mr. Tariq Azim also attended the conference. Lord Nazir Ahmed travelled from UK to attend the event.

Mr. Zafar Bangash, Coordinator of the Friends of Kashmir Committee inaugurated the conference by his remarks on legal and political context of the Kashmir dispute. His main focus was on continued human rights violations in Jammu and Kashmir. He urged India to stop state terrorism and act as a partner in efforts to promote peace and security in the region.

Mr. Sid Lacombe, Member of the Steering Committee of the Canadian Peace, underscored the need for the Canadian right activists to fully engage in monitoring of human rights violations in Jammu and Kashmir and in raising awareness about its importance for international peace and security.

In his address, Mr. Ken Stone of Canadian Peace recalled his participation in a seminar organized by young Parliamentarians in Islamabad in January 2017. After detailing human rights violations in Jammu and Kashmir, Mr. Stone remarked that free and impartial plebiscite was the only solution to the Kashmir dispute. He said that western media had failed miserably to report on Kashmir. He called upon the participants to persuade the Canadian government to raise the issue with the Indian government and seek a just solution of the problem in line with the UNSC resolutions.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Philip Taylor, a Canadian journalist said that the only solution of Kashmir issue was free and impartial plebiscite but not in the presence of 700,000 soldiers. He called upon Canada to stand against oppression.

In his remarks, the High Commissioner expressed his dismay over the deafening silence while human rights violations continued in Jammu & Kashmir. The High Commissioner reviewed various actions the Indian government has taken to suppress the voice of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and urged the United Nations to make arrangements for holding of plebiscite as per UNSC resolutions.

The final speaker and the Chief Guest, Lord Nazir Ahmed of United Kingdom, thanked the Friends of Kashmir Committee for supporting the Kashmir cause. While emphasizing the legal character of the Kashmir struggle, he informed participants that since the martyrdom of Burhan Wani, 154 people had been murdered in IHK, over 2000 young women and men were seriously injured and around 3000 lost their eye-sight due to pellet gun attacks.

At the end, Mr. Zafar Bangash tabled a resolution on behalf of the committee, which was adopted by acclamation. The resolution:

- Called on India to cease all human rights violations, allow United Nation's independent investigation of human rights violation and withdraw all its troops from Jammu & Kashmir
- Called on the UN to assume its responsibility for organizing plebiscite in Jammu and Kashmir
- Called on OIC to compile a report on human rights violations in Indian-occupied Kashmir
- Urged UN and other relevant forums to investigate massacres, incidents of gang-rape, fake encounters, forced disappearance etc. in Jammu and Kashmir
- Requested all national governments, particularly Canada, to exert pressure on India to ensure its compliance with international obligations
- Resolved to remain engaged with the situation

Dr. Bangash announced two PhD scholarships from the Friends of Kashmir Committee for Azad Kashmir students who intended to research on the Kashmir issue.

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