

Office of the Spokesperson
Press Release

Statement of Mr. Sartaj Aziz, Adviser to Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs on the occasion of
Kashmir Solidarity Day

"The Kashmir Solidarity Day, observed every year on 5 February, has special significance this year because the recent uprising in Indian occupied Kashmir, following the 8 July extra judicial killing of popular youth leader, Burhan Muzaffar Wani, has shaken the conscious of the international community", Mr. Sartaj Aziz said in a statement today.

Kashmiris were subjected to a holocaust in November 1947, Mr. Sartaj Aziz recalled, when Indian forces killed more than 500,000 defenceless Kashmiri men, women and children. But Kashmiris continued their struggle for their right of self- determination promised to them in 5 different UN Security Council Resolutions between 1948 and 1954. Since 1990, when this movement again gathered pace, over 100,000 Kashmiris have been martyred, and tens of thousands arrested or maimed.

Throughout this period, Indian authorities armed with inhuman laws, such as Public Safety Act and AFSPA have tried to muzzle the Kashmiri voice for freedom and refused to allow the UN Human Rights Commission, other human rights groups or the international media free access to Indian occupied Kashmir to verify these massive human rights violation or to report on them.

"But the day of 8 July 2016, marks a turning point in this historic struggle of the Kashmiri people", Mr. Sartaj Aziz said. The brute force unleashed in the next few days led to the merciless killing of 150 youth, 20,000 were seriously injured and many hundreds were blinded either completely or partially.

This brutality, which has continued unabated in the past 7 months, has not however dampened the resolve of Kashmiri youth to secure their right of self-determination. Even prominent Indian leaders and a section of the Indian media are now raising their voice against this brutality. They have testified that Kashmiri youth are in open revolt against the Indian Government and are no longer afraid of losing their lives in this struggle for their fundamental rights.

Another important factor, Mr. Sartaj Aziz emphasized, in this "8 July turning point" is the total rejection of Indian narrative by the international community that Kashmir is an integral part of India, people of Kashmir are satisfied with the present arrangement but some disturbances take place because of cross border terrorism. The whole world now acknowledges that this is an indigenous youth led movement which has become stronger because of the Indian government's misguided efforts to change the demographic composition of the state and its insensitivity to the rights of minority communities in India. There have been debates in the Parliaments of many countries and civil society and human rights organizations in Europe and North America and specially in UK and Nordic countries, have been mobilizing public support for their campaigns to force India to halt the bloodshed in Kashmir and resume the dialogue process with Pakistan and the Kashmiri leadership to find an acceptable solution to the longstanding dispute, still on the UN agenda.

India has been desperately trying to divert the attention of the global community from this blood stained reality of Kashmir, by intensifying cross border firing along the line of control and pretending to be a major "victim" of cross border terrorism from Pakistan. In this game of brinkmanship, Mr. Sartaj Aziz

pointed out, the Indian narrative has been totally rejected. It is now widely acknowledged that Pakistan itself is a much bigger victim of terrorism including that sponsored by India and that in the past three years, Pakistan has achieved commendable success in tackling the menace of terrorism and extremism. He expressed his deep concern over Indian government's drive to change the demography in occupied J&K, which is a blatant violation of UN Resolutions on Kashmir.

The UN Secretary General, Mr. Sartaj Aziz said in conclusion, has declared 2017 as the year of peace. One major hotspot of violence is the Line of Control between Indian occupied Kashmir and Azad Jammu and Kashmir. There is an urgent need for the international community to take effective steps to stop the Kashmiri bloodshed by India and resolve the Kashmir dispute by organizing a referendum in accordance with UN resolutions, to make a final determination if the Kashmiri people really want to live perpetually under Indian occupation?

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