



Press Release

At UN, speakers term right to self-determination vital for international peace & stability

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The Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the United Nations, Tuesday, hosted an event on the "Challenges to the realization of the Right to Self-Determination in the Contemporary Global Context that was part of the Kashmir Solidarity Day activities.

Presided over by Ambassador Munir Akram, Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the UN, the event at the UN headquarters was attended by a large number of diplomats, representatives, academics and human rights activists. The panelists who addressed the event included Ms. Fionnuala NiAolain, a professor at the University of Minnesota and former UN rights expert; Ambassador Maged Abdelaziz, permanent observer of the Arab League at the UN; Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai, Chairman of the World Forum for Peace and Justice, and Hameed Ajibaiye, permanent observer for OIC at the UN.

Senior diplomats and experts representing their respective countries called for promoting the principle of the right to self-determination to resolve key global issues, including Kashmir and Palestine.

After the presentations from the panelists, ambassadors and representatives of Algeria, Turkey, Morocco, Syria, Iran, Venezuela and Eritrea took part in the general discussion in which they also raised issues of concern to them and supported the principle of self-determination as the core of the UN Charter.

In his opening remarks, Ambassador Akram highlighted the long-running Kashmir and Palestine conflicts, warning that these unresolved issues posed a threat to international peace and security.

He said the right of self-determination was the "bedrock" of the modern international system, and the fundamental principle of the UN Charter.

But, Ambassador Akram said there were still examples of where peoples continue to be denied the right of self-determination, a situation which posed a significant threat to world peace and stability.

"I would focus on the fact that we face two situations at least, where the right of self-determination is being flagrantly denied:

"One is Palestine and the second is Jammu and Kashmir in the past four months have illustrated the consequences of the suppression of the right of self-determination to the Palestinian people 27,000 And counting have been killed mostly women and children."

Despite ICJ ruling and the decisions of the General Assembly, the near unanimity in the Security Council and the support of the international community in public opinion the acceptance of a ceasefire still eludes the international community.

The Pakistani envoy denounced Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for summarily rejecting the two state solution to resolve the Middle East crisis, and even agreeing to a halt what has been called the plausible genocide campaign in Gaza.

"We admire South Africa's reference to the ICJ and we commend Algeria's initiative in the Security Council to get a ceasefire."

Regardless of whether or not these were endorsed by the Security Council, he said, under the Charter, they are binding to secure a two-state solution.

Likewise, Ambassador Akram said the denial of self-determination to the people of Jammu and Kashmir also deserves the full attention of the international community, pointing out that massive violations of human rights were taking place there in IIOJK.

"And the dispute over Jammu and Kashmir between India and Pakistan is an ever-present threat to international peace and security," he added.

The Pakistani envoy warned that the threat of a conflict which has happened in the past, could happen again.

"A conflict between two nuclear-armed states is a sobering thought or should be a sobering thought for the international community."

Ambassador Akram said, the people of Jammu and Kashmir and the people of Pakistan observed the Kashmir Solidarity Day, pointing out that on 5 Feb, 1989, 100 peaceful Kashmiri demonstrators were killed by Indian occupation forces.

"This is recorded in two reports of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights issued in 2017 and 2018.

The Kashmir tragedy, he said, has intensified after the unilateral measures taken on August 5, 2019 that ended the statehood of Kashmir with India using brutal measures to clamp down on the unrest in besieged Kashmir.

"With regard to both the situations in Palestine and Kashmir, and I suspect elsewhere, where peoples are oppressed and occupied, a lesson of history has been that colonial power has never succeeded in suppressing the right of self-determination of a people who are determined to sacrifice all for their freedom and liberation from foreign occupation."

Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador Hameed Ajibaiye, permanent observer for OIC at the UN, said that the OIC always firmly supported the legitimate struggle of the Kashmir people for the realization of their inalienable right to self-determination.

"The question of right to self-determination of the people in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir has always been on the agenda of Jammu and Kashmir since its inception," he said."

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai referred to the remarks of the UN Secretary General uttered by him on August 8, 2019 wherein the latter had said, "The position of the United Nations on this region (Jammu and Kashmir) is governed by the Charter of the United Nations and applicable Security Council resolutions."

He said that the framework provided by the UNSC resolutions was the only criterion to resolve the longstanding Jammu and Kashmir dispute.

Ambassador Maged Abdelaziz, permanent observer of the Arab League at the UN, said on the occasion that the Palestinian question was central to the group of Arab and OIC countries. He said that the attacks on October 7 were not the beginning of the conflict but rather the result of the criminal neglect.

The Ambassador said that despite Gaza proving to be the bloodiest conflict in recent history, there was no ceasefire, adding that no peace process could succeed without ceasefire being put in place.

The Turkish representative extended her country's support to Kashmiris in their struggle for self-determination.

She said, "According to the international convention and the UN Security Council resolutions, no unilateral steps should be taken to alter the situation. Yet the issue became all the more complicated after India's unilateral decision to revoke Article 370."

The Turkish diplomat also highlighted the need for the "preservation of ethnic and demographic structure of the region" as "a key element of the resolution of this (IIJK) long-standing issue."

Ms. Fionnuala NiAolain, a former UN rights expert, termed the self-determination as a gateway for the fulfillment of all other rights.

"Self-determination is bed-rock of international system and essential for human development," she said.