



Event on the “Challenges in the realization of the right of self-determination in the contemporary global context” organized by the Permanent Mission of Pakistan at the United Nations, New York

6th February 2024

Statement by Ambassador Munir Akram, Permanent Representative of Pakistan

Good morning,

Excellencies,

Dear Colleagues, Friends!

Thank you for being here at this event which the Pakistan Mission is hosting on “Challenges in the realization of the right of self-determination in the contemporary global context”.

Dear colleagues, as we all know, the right of determination is bedrock of the modern international system. It is a fundamental principle of the UN Charter. It is reflected in both in Article 2 of both the international covenants and is the basis for the Declaration on Decolonization, it is now a peremptory norm of international law as such, and therefore, as we all know this has been the bedrock principle on the basis of which most of our nations, especially those who were under colonial and foreign occupation and most of our nations came into existence as a result of the exercise of the right of self-determination, whether formally or informally in various modalities, we all are independent and sovereign peoples and nations because we were able to exercise the right of self-determination.

However, the right of self- will not be fully fulfilled until all peoples who are under foreign occupation or settler-colonialism are able to exercise the right of self-determination. And in our world today, there are still examples of where peoples continue to be denied the right of self-determination.

At this event, and as, of course, it is Pakistan with its own priorities and its own concerns; 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. 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.

A war, which has been called by the ICJ as plausible genocide, is continuing and despite 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.

Promises have been made as we have heard in recent days, to revive the Middle East peace process with offers to finally accept the establishment of a Palestinian state, but the path towards this goal still lacks credibility. The Israeli Prime Minister has summarily rejected the two-state solution. He will not even agree to a halt in 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.

The Court's preliminary prescriptions are important and binding regardless of whether or not these are endorsed by the Security Council. Under the Charter, they are binding. To secure a two-state solution the Arab and the Islamic countries in particular must fully mobilize their diplomatic, political, economic and other powers.

In a concerted and comprehensive way, in all relevant forums and modalities to achieve the goal of a two-state solution. And I look forward to hearing further on this in particular from Ambassador Maged, the distinguished representative of the Arab League at the United Nations.

Dear colleagues, denial of self-determination to the people of Jammu and Kashmir also deserves the full attention of the international community. There are massive violations of human rights taking place there and the dispute over Jammu and Kashmir between India and Pakistan is an ever-present threat of international peace and security.

A threat of a conflict which has happened in the past, but which can happen again. A conflict between two nuclear armed states and that is a sobering thought or should be a sobering thought for the international community.

Yesterday, the people of Jammu and Kashmir and the people of Pakistan observed what we call the Kashmir Solidarity Day, the 5th of February. On this day, in 1989, over 100 innocent Kashmiris demonstrated peacefully for their right to self-determination as recognized and promised to them by the Security Council in several resolutions. These peaceful demonstrators were shot at and hundreds of them were killed.

In the decade since the freedom struggle which this incident unleashed, over 100,000 Kashmiris were killed. We said 27,000 Palestinians killed in this war in this decade and 100,000 Kashmiris were martyred including men, women and children. This is recorded in two reports of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights issued in 2017 and 2018.

The Kashmir tragedy has intensified after the unilateral measures taken on 5th August and since then, to remove the statehood of Jammu and Kashmir, impose a siege with 90,000 troops unleashed a brutal crackdown with extra judicial killings, collective punishment, the abduction of 15,000 Kashmiri youth and simultaneously, an effort to change the demographic structure and composition of the occupied territory in direct contravention of the resolutions of the Security Council.

Dear colleagues, despite this brutal suppression and the attempts to portray a false sense of normalcy by holding G 20 meetings on tourism in the territory, the resort to what has been ominously called “a final solution” despite the guns, despite the killing, despite the coercion, the information blackout, sophisticated disinformation, despite all of this the Kashmiri people have not relented in their desire for freedom and self-determination.

With regards 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 a colonial power has never succeeded in suppressing the right of self-determination of people who are determined to sacrifice all for their freedom and liberation from foreign occupation. And this is a lesson I think, that everyone should bear in mind as they address the current situations, as in Palestine and in Jammu and Kashmir.

We are confident that the Palestinians, the Kashmiris and other oppressed people will ultimately secure their right to self-determination and freedom as most of us have done through the process of decolonization.

When seeking self-determination for the Palestinian, the Kashmiris and other occupied peoples, what has to be borne in mind is that the acceptance of this right by a former colonial power or an occupation power is not a favor to the people being liberated. It is an obligation under colonial and occupying power to give that right of self-determination and liberation to the occupied people.

Secondly, the realization of the right of self-determination has been prevented by support of occupying powers from powerful states; this is again the lesson of history. Occupying powers by themselves cannot sustain their occupation unless they have support from powerful states externally.

And thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, situations of foreign occupation and denial of self-determination are most pervasive or the most pervasive cause of conflict, whether internal conflict or international conflict. And this should be a sobering thought for the membership of the United Nations.

Dear Colleagues, Excellencies,

This event is an effort to revive the focus of the struggle of peoples against settler colonialism and for the universal application of the right to self-determination whether in Palestine in Kashmir and other places, where this right is being flagrantly denied.