

Message by Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on the Occasion of Kashmir Solidarity Day (5 February 2023)

As we observe the Kashmir Solidarity Day, the people of Pakistan salute the sacrifices of our Kashmiri brothers and sisters who have suffered for more than seventy-five years under brutal Indian oppression.

For over seven decades, Indian Occupation Forces have brutalized the Kashmiris and denied them their rights. Today, Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) is one of the most-militarized zones of the world, with the presence of over 900,000 occupation forces.

With its illegal and unilateral actions of 5 August 2019, India has opened a new chapter in suppressing the people of IIOJK. With fresh delimitation of electoral constituencies, issuance of millions of domicile certificates to non-Kashmiris, and addition of hundreds of thousands of non-Kashmiris in the voters lists, India's ruling dispensation aims to transform Kashmiris into a disempowered minority in their own land.

Kashmiris are living in a constant state of fear as Indian forces engage in indiscriminate use of force and extra-judicial killings in staged "cordon-and-search" operations. Political activists and human rights defenders face arbitrary detention, torture and confiscation of properties.

India must end its gross human rights violations in IIOJK; reverse its unilateral and illegal actions of 5 August 2019 including demographic changes; repeal draconian laws; allow UN-mandated investigations into cases of extrajudicial killings and; implement relevant UN Security Council resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir.

I want to remind our Kashmiri brothers and sisters that Pakistan will never sit back and watch silently while Kashmiris continue to suffer Indian atrocities. Jammu and Kashmir dispute will remain a key pillar of Pakistan's foreign policy. We will continue to lend unstinted moral, diplomatic and political support to the Kashmiri people until the realization of their right to self-determination in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions.
