

**Message from Dr Arif Alvi, President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on the occasion of Kashmir Solidarity Day i.e., 5<sup>th</sup> February 2023**

Today, we observe Kashmir Solidarity Day to express Pakistan's unflinching support for the legitimate and just struggle of the Kashmiri people for the realization of their inalienable right to self-determination. On this occasion, we pay rich tribute to the selfless sacrifices made by our Kashmiri brothers and sisters during their decades-old resistance to the Indian occupation.

We observe this day to draw the attention of the international community towards the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions which provide that the final disposition of the Jammu and Kashmir Dispute would be made in accordance with the will of the people, expressed through the democratic method of a free and impartial plebiscite conducted under the auspices of the United Nations.

Over the last 75 years, the Indian occupation forces have unleashed a reign of terror and carried out a relentless campaign to intimidate and suppress the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). The presence of more than 900,000 Indian armed personnel has turned the region into an open prison. India's illegal and unilateral actions of 5 August 2019 in IIOJK were a blatant violation of international law, including the UN Charter, the 4th Geneva Convention, and the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. India has been consistently engaged in efforts to further entrench these illegal measures through artificial demographic changes, political engineering, economic marginalization of the local people and an assault on Kashmiri identity and culture.

It is alarming that India is undertaking demographic changes in IIOJK by bringing non-Kashmiris to settle in the valley. India's heavy-handed approach frequently manifests itself in extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detentions, custodial torture, enforced disappearances and the use of pellet guns in IIOJK. India has muzzled the media and incarcerated the Kashmiri leadership and defenders of human rights. These excesses and brutalities have been well-documented by several human rights organizations and international media outlets.

Today, Pakistan calls upon India to allow unfettered access to the UN and OIC observers, international media and human rights organizations to IIOJK to obtain first-hand information about the situation there, and investigate and report the human rights violations. Pakistan also urges the international community and organizations to take practical steps to hold India accountable for its gross and widespread human rights violations in IIOJK.

Pakistan has consistently maintained that a lasting solution to the Jammu and Kashmir Dispute is possible only in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions and wishes of the Kashmiri people. Pakistan will continue to extend its unstinted moral, diplomatic and political support for this just cause.