

## Kashmir, one of urgent challenges facing regional security, stability of South Asia” : Rana Qasim Noon



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MIRPUR (AJK): Jan 8: Rana Qasim Noon, Chairman, Parliamentary Committee on Kashmir has said “Jammu & Kashmir issue is one of the oldest international conflicts and it constitutes one of

the urgent challenges facing the security and stability of the region of South Asia”.

He was addressing an international seminar, entitled, ‘Commemorating the Right of Self-Determination’ hosted in the federal metropolis yesterday by JKLC in collaboration with “Voices of Justice for Kashmir”.

The seminar was presided over by Barrister Sultan Mehmood Choudhary President of Azad Jammu Kashmir state.

The event was attended among others by academics, researchers, college students, media fraternity, human rights activists and prominent political leadership of Azad Kashmir began with the key-note speech delivered by

Rana Qasim Noon warned that leaving the Kashmir issue unresolved will lead to regional instability, uncertainty, and insecurity.

Addressing the seminar, Barrister Sultan Mehmood Choudhary S President of Azad Jammu Kashmir said that the deadly silence of the world powers over gruesome human rights abuses by the occupation forces in Kashmir has given India a virtual license to kill innocent Kashmiris.

Barrister Sultan warned that the division of Jammu & Kashmir was a non-solution and will never be acceptable to the people.

Speaking on this occasion Lord Qurban Hussain, member of British House of Lords, said that the seminar will provide some guidance for mobilizing the global public square regarding one of the most dangerous issues in the world, that is Kashmir.

Lord Qurban Hussain, speakers observed, has truly become the ambassador not only of the oppressed people of Kashmir but also of Palestine, Rohingya Muslims, Indian minorities and else. He has raised all these issues and others during various debates at the House of Lords, they added Lord Qurban Hussain while continuing his address to the seminar, quoted the 47-pages report issued by the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights & the report issued by Dr. Gregory Stanton, Chairman, Genocide Watch. These reports should shake the conscience of the leadership of the civilized nations, but they seem to be giving preferential treatment to the commercial market over moral values and universal principles, he suggested.

Lord Hussain emphasized that the world powers must endorse the recommendation of the United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights that an impartial investigation needs to be made about the latest situation in Occupied Kashmir. The United Nations must send a fact-finding mission to assess the situation there. He urged the leadership of Pakistan and Azad Kashmir to make the best use these impartial and neutral reports at all corridors of power including the members of OIC.

Focusing his remarks on the topic, ‘Commemorating the right of self-determination’, Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai, Chairman, World Forum for Peace & Justice emphasized that the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) which was set by the Security Council worked out the concrete terms of settlement in close and continuous consultations with both India and Pakistan. These were crystallized in two resolutions adopted on 13 August 1948 and 5 January 1949. These are not resolutions in the routine sense of the term. Their provisions were negotiated in detail by the UNCIP with India and Pakistan, and it was only after the consent of both Governments was explicitly obtained that they were endorsed by the Security Council. They thus constitute a binding and solemn international agreement about the settlement of the Kashmir dispute.

Dr. Fai added “the question arises: what should be the point of departure for determining a just and lasting basis? The answer obviously is (a) the Charter of the United Nations which, in its very first article, speaks of “respect for the principles of equal rights and self-determination of peoples” and (b) the international agreements between India and Pakistan”.

Sardar Mohammad Yaqoob Khan, former President of Azad Jammu Kashmir said that the United Nations despite being aware about the disappointing track record of human rights violations in Indian occupied Kashmir has failed to impress upon India to stop killings of civilian population.

Sardar Yaqoob Khan added that it was high time that the government of India realizes that such a huge movement that has been there since 1947 and especially after 1990 is a peoples struggle. Pointing out that hundreds of thousands of people have been killed, tortured, jailed, and are missing, Sardar Yaqoob said that no struggle of such magnitude could be crushed by military might.

Dr. Imtiaz Khan, Kashmiri American scholar said that non-fulfillment of UN resolutions on Kashmir has had significant and far-reaching consequences, contributing to ongoing tensions, instability, and the continuation of conflict in the region. The failure to implement UN resolutions, particularly those addressing a plebiscite to determine the future status of Jammu and Kashmir, has perpetuated a state of military conflict between India and Pakistan.

Dr. Imtiaz Khan added that it is a high time that the dust on these UN resolutions is removed, and process of implementation is initiated. In this regard Pakistan has a special responsibility as an important stakeholder to play vitally important role in drawing world attention towards this exigent problem. With increasing obstinance and totally disregard of international commitments by India, Pakistan has to rejuvenate, re-invent and re-invigorate her policy as regards to advocacy of Kashmir cause. lackadaisical and lethargic approach devoid of concrete policy will contribute to the failure of the cause and India will continue to exploit the situation.

Dr. Khan emphasized that it is fundamentally important to conduct international conferences and seminars that will discuss the issue threadbare and evolve a policy that can lead to active and fruitful negotiations between the three parties: India, Pakistan and genuine leadership of Kashmir. Anything less than that will lead to the failure of resolution that has a potential to engulf the region into a nuclear war, leading to devastating outcome.

Dr. Mohammad Mushtaq Khan, Amir, Jamaat-e-Islami, Azad Kashmir said that the people of Indian occupied Kashmir are being haunted, wounded, and humiliated for recalling India and the international community to fulfill their pledges made to the people of Jammu Kashmir. The human rights of Kashmiris are being trampled; their democratic rights are being disregarded. They are even being denied a chance to mourn on their dead ones. The prime example was the funeral of one of the leading political leaders of Kashmir, Syed Ali Geelani. Irony is that all this is being done in the name of democracy.

Sheikh Abdul Mateen, leader of All Parties Hurriyat Conference said that the world powers must remind both India and Pakistan that the final status of Jammu & Kashmir is yet to be determined and it has to be decided by the people of Jammu & Kashmir. Sheikh Mateen added that the world powers must stress to the Government of India to allow UN Special Rapporteurs as well as humanitarian organizations to Kashmir. The United Nations has an obligation and a responsibility

to facilitate a dialogue amongst all parties to the conflict to secure peace and stability on the South Asian continent.

Sardar Zulfiqar Roshan Kahn, representative of 'Voice of Justice for Kashmir' said that the principle of self-determination and the maintenance of international peace and security are inseparable. For example, the denial of this right to self-determination to the people of Kashmir has brought two neighboring countries in South Asia – India and Pakistan – to the brink of nuclear catastrophe. The applicability of the principle of the self-determination to the specific case of Jammu and Kashmir has been explicitly recognized by the United Nations. It was upheld equally by India and Pakistan when the Kashmir dispute was brought before the Security Council in 1948.

Sardar Usama Zahid, young Kashmiri politician said that that global experts of the international relations have correctly characterized the unflagging freedom struggle in Kashmir from foreign occupying powers as harrowing because of the nuclear capabilities of India and Pakistan. Sardar Zahid added that the nuclear danger in South Asia will never recede until Kashmiris receive the justice and political liberty promised by the series of United Nations Security Council resolutions providing for a free and fair self-determination vote.

Mohammad Nadim Khokhar, a prominent social worker said that grave breaches of humanitarian law, Geneva Convention and other international covenants continue unabated in

Kashmir. Mr. Khokhar underscored the importance of drawing international attention to the ongoing human rights violations in Indian-occupied Kashmir, particularly in light of the region's ongoing struggle for freedom.

Sardar Zarif Khan, Advisor to the President of Azad Kashmir said, that the United Nations has unfinished business in Kashmir. There exist several United Nations resolutions that clearly state the people of Jammu & Kashmir have the right to determine their own future through a free, fair and impartial vote. We are asking the United Nations to follow on its commitment to the people of Kashmir.

Sardar Shoaib Irshad, General Secretary, Kashmir American Welfare Association (KAWA) said that the Government of India must accept that the United Nations resolutions are binding on both India and Pakistan. It must also accept the fact that Kashmir is a disputed territory and not the internal matter of India.

Sardar Zubair Khan, founding member of KAWA said that each day that India kills countless civilians, it strengthens the sentiments of Aazadi amongst the general populace and weakens those who still believe that a peaceful settlement should be and can be achieved. Sardar Zubair added that the right of self-determination is the birth right of every single individual as enshrined in the UN Charter.

A young, energetic and scholarly personality, Dr. Waris Ali Khan of National University of Modern Languages (NUML) and the Chairman of International Advisory Board of 'Voices of Justice for Kashmir' was the emcee of the seminar. He was accompanied by Najib Khan Sahib of Jammu & Kashmir Liberation Cell who welcomed the attendees and thanked them for their participation.