

~~Violations, neglect of basic human rights in Kashmir by India transformed it into a violent conflict: Seminar~~



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MIRPUR (AJK): June 30: Speakers at a seminar, while highlighting the significance of human rights in the context of armed conflicts, have emphasized that protecting human lives, upholding their fundamental rights and dignity remain paramount even amid conflict and war situations.

The seminar, held on the sidelines of the 59th session of the Human Rights Council, in Swiss city of Geneva on Monday, was jointly organized by Community Human Rights and Advocacy Center (CHRAC) and Kashmir Institute of International, says a message reaching and released to the media here on Monday.

The event was attended and addressed by rights activists, media men, academicians, law experts and prominent human rights defenders hailing from different parts of the world including Robert Fantina journalist and writer from Canada, Ghulam Muhammad Safi convener APHC-AJK chapter and representative of WMC, Syeda Tahreem Bukhari, Associate Director at CSS AJK, Syed Faiz Naqasbandi representative CHRAC, Rehana Ali lawyer and human rights activist. While the event was moderated by Naila Altaf Kiani representative CHRAC.

Addressing the event, the speakers invoked various international covenants and treaties such as International humanitarian law (IHL), international human rights law (IHRL), Geneva Convention, and said that under these laws the states were legally bound to protect, respect, and ensure all human rights—including economic, social, cultural, civil, and political rights—even in conflict and war situations.

Upholding these legal frameworks, they noted, were not only critical to reducing human suffering ensuring dignity of human beings but also for preventing violence and building sustainable peace.

Presenting the Kashmir conflict as a case study, the speakers regrettably noted that the violations and neglect of the basic human rights in Kashmir by the Indian state have transformed the region into a violent conflict where chaos and uncertainty looms large.

Underscoring the devastating impacts of the long unresolved issue, they said the violent conflict has disrupted daily life, hindering economic activity and causing widespread displacement, social instability, and psychological trauma.

They strongly criticize the Indian state for its brazen violation and undermining of the established human rights mechanisms, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, IHL and IHRL humanitarian law. “These mechanism, being systematically disregarded by the Indian state, serve as essential guiding templates for protecting civilians and limit abuses and preventing war crimes, torture, and sexual violence”, the speakers remarked.

Referring to various forms of state repression that go unchecked, they said that it was quite alarming that the Indian army has been granted a blanket impunity under various laws such as PSA, UAPA, AFSPA. These laws, the speakers said, were the main cause and consequence of rights violations in the region.

In absence of a proper accountability mechanism in Kashmir, the enforcement of these laws have opened floodgates for extra-judicial killings, summary executions, custodial deaths. Citing media reports, they said that during the past 35 years of turmoil tens of thousands of people including men women and children have been killed by the Indian army. In addition to these brutal killings, they pointed out that following the Abrogation of Article 370 Indian state has unleashed a ruthless house demolition campaign in Kashmir that has rendered thousands of Kashmiris homeless.

They observed that hundreds and thousands of Kashmiris including rights defenders, politicians, and civil rights activists have been arrested under draconian laws. “Confiscation of civilian properties on preposterous assumptions has become a new normal in Kashmir”, they said, adding that even government employees were being dismissed from jobs on flimsy grounds.

Criticizing the Indian judiciary’s failure to provide justice, they said that victims of state repression are left without any viable recourse to formal legal remedies. Emphasizing the centrality of the rule of law in safeguarding human rights during conflict, the speakers stressed the need to address the root causes of the Kashmir dispute. Only by doing so, they argued, can societies move towards justice, inclusivity, and sustainable peace.

While urging the UN human rights council to hold Indian government accountable for the war crimes it has been committing against Kashmiris, they said that following the Pahalgam incident the International Community bears increased responsibilities vis a vis supporting and actively engaging in finding an early and amicable settlement of the long-standing Kashmir issue.

The speakers also voiced their over the continued bloodshed and systematic genocide of Palestinian people in Gaza, seeking global community’s pivotal role in ending the conflict and holding perpetrators to justice.