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## Kashmiris Mark August 5 as Black Day Against Indian Occupation



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MIRPUR (AJK), August 5 – Kashmiris across both sides of the Line of Control (LoC) and around the world observed August 5 as Kashmir's Exploitation Day and Black Day, marking the sixth anniversary of India's revocation of Article 370 and 35-A, which had granted special constitutional status to Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

The day was observed on the joint call of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC), the

Government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), and various freedom-loving political and civil society groups. People took to the streets in large numbers, holding rallies, demonstrations, and shutter-down strikes to protest India's unilateral action of August 5, 2019, which Kashmiris across the board have rejected.

On that day six years ago, the Modi-led Indian government unilaterally abrogated the special status of Jammu and Kashmir under Article 370, defying international laws and UN Security Council resolutions. Since then, the territory has remained under a severe military and communication siege, with increased human rights violations and demographic changes imposed under military cover.

In Azad Jammu and Kashmir, rallies were held in all ten districts, including Muzaffarabad, Mirpur, Kotli, Bhimber, Rawalakot, Bagh, Neelum Valley, Hattian, Haveili, and Palandri, where thousands of people marched in solidarity with their brothers and sisters in IIOJK.

In Mirpur, a massive protest rally was led by Deputy Commissioner Yasir Riaz Chaudhry, SSP Khurram Iqbal, President Kashmir Press Club Syed Abid Hussain Shah, Bar Association President Chaudhry Mahmood Palakvi, business leaders Suhail Shujah Mujahid and Raja Khalid Mahmood, APHC leader Bashir Shagoo, and others. Protesters carried placards and shouted slogans against India's oppressive policies.

In Muzaffarabad, a central rally brought together thousands of people, including leaders from across the political and religious spectrum. Speakers emphasized that August 5, 2019, represents a dark chapter in Kashmir's history, calling it a direct assault on Kashmiris' identity and rights. They urged the United Nations, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and international human rights bodies to take serious notice of India's ongoing repression in IIOJK, warning that silence encourages further brutality.

"The Indian government has turned IIOJK into the world's largest open-air prison," said speakers, citing mass arrests, curfews, and extrajudicial killings. They called on the international community to uphold the UN Security Council resolutions that guarantee the Kashmiris' right to self-determination.

Addressing the protesters, Shahid Majeed Advocate, Dr. Ejaz Raja, and other leaders reaffirmed that Kashmiris will continue their peaceful struggle and will never accept the forced occupation.

They thanked the Government of Pakistan and the global diaspora for continued support.

The day concluded with loud chants of "Kashmir Banega Pakistan" and tributes to the martyrs of the freedom movement and Pakistan's armed forces.