



# Institute of Regional Studies

## Revocation of Article 370 amounts to reinvasion of IIOJK, says FM

ISLAMABAD, February 3, 2021: Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mehmood Qureshi termed the revocation of Articles 370 and 35-A of the Indian Constitution on the part of the Indian government as reinvasion of the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). He was speaking at a seminar titled 'Standing with the Unheard Voices of Kashmir' organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) here on Wednesday. He condemned the Indian action of issuance of over 1.8 million domicile certificates to non-residents of IIOJK under the watch of around one million-strong Indian forces stationed in the territory. He was of the view that the move was aimed at changing the demography of Kashmir. He added that India faced international censure for its August 2019 actions and called for greater focus on exposing Indian atrocities in Kashmir by engaging not only foreign governments but also foreign parliaments and think-tanks.



Speaking on the occasion, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on National Security Dr Moeed Yusuf stated that the most fundamental aspect of the Kashmir dispute was the loss of human lives and the gross violation of human rights. He added that while the Prime Minister of Pakistan envisioned economic prosperity and trade connectivity in the region, Indian actions with regard to IIOJK and its aggressive foreign policy approach towards Pakistan were holding the progress of the region hostage. "Pakistan envisions peace but India will also have to take a step in the right direction," he said. He added that the international community had censured the Indian government on its August 2019 actions like never before and that it was time for the Indian government to realize its mistake.

Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Kashmir Mr Shahryar Khan Afridi, in his concluding remarks at the seminar, urged a unified approach towards the resolution of the Kashmir dispute. He urged greater research on Kashmir from various perspectives and particularly emphasized connecting the youth to the Kashmir cause. He also urged Pakistanis to use information and communication technologies, especially social media for projecting the Kashmir cause on various national and international forums.

Member of the National Assembly (MNA) and Parliamentary Secretary for Kashmir Affairs Ms Sobia Kamal Khan, who was chairing the first session, stated that while the vision of Prime Minister Imran Khan for the region was that of peace, Pakistan reserved the right to use the military option in self-defence. She urged the Pakistanis not to openly talk about the rights of Kashmiris on all available forums. MNA and member of the Parliamentary Committee on Kashmir Dr Nisar Cheema, who was chairing the second session of the parliament, shared that there was complete unanimity among Pakistanis from all walks of life when it came to Kashmir. Such unanimity, he maintained, was exhibited from the floor of the parliament on numerous occasions.

Various eminent speakers spoke in the two different plenary sessions of the seminar. Speaking in one of the panels, former minister for social welfare and women's development in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Ms Farzana Yaqoob stated that while a lot was being said about no military solution to the Kashmir conflict, the Kashmiris were in a state of war for decades. She maintained that with one million military personnel stationed in the troubled territory, the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) were suffering gross human rights violations at their hands on a daily basis. She defended the right of the Kashmiris to defend their lives and properties against Indian occupation forces. She further added that August 2019 actions of the Indian government had drawn international attention towards Kashmir and that time was ripe to use international legal forums to bring the Government of India to account.

Professors at Quaid-i-Azam University (QAU) Islamabad, Dr Salma Malik and Dr Raja Qaiser Ahmed also highlighted the illegality of the August 2019 actions of the Indian government and warned against the demographic changes brought about by the Indian government under the recently introduced Domicile Act.

Barristers Ahmed Sikander Shah and Jamal Aziz talked about the legal aspects of the occupation of the IIOJK. Mr Aziz shared that India had used lawfare against Pakistan from the perspective of terrorism, human rights, nuclear non-proliferation, etc. for a long time. He added that India might try to further push Pakistan from other international legal angles, such as environment and intellectual property rights. He called on the government of Pakistan to pay greater attention to using international law against India at a time when support for the Indian unilateral actions of August 2019 was running low.

President IRS Amb Nadeem Riyaz said that the August 2019 actions of the Indian government were against the international obligations of India as well as its own Constitution.