

Human Rights Situation

PAKISTAN

In April 2006, the UN General Assembly, while establishing the Human Rights Council, recognized "the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples". It is, therefore, obligatory for the Council to promote and protect this right which is the ~~grand~~ norm for all other human rights.

~~Human Rights Council~~

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The human rights situation in Indian Occupied Kashmir is serious. Last year, the Indian Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, called for the need to improve the human rights situation in IOK. Recently, Kashmiri leaders and human rights activists have demanded an end to human rights violations through gradual troops withdrawal, revocation of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), and release of political prisoners. Extrajudicial killings, torture, and arbitrary detentions are common. International human rights organizations have independently verified gross and consistent violations of human rights, including rape and disappearances, in IOK.

~~The Convention~~ ^{The Council} should call for an immediate end to the human rights abuses in IOK.

Dialogue

Dialogue is the crucible for solutions. So far, Pakistan and India have held ~~three~~ ^{three} rounds of composite dialogue and they are into the fourth round. The result is mixed. The dialogue process has brought about appreciable rapprochement, stimulated exchanges and launched several Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) successfully. The CBMs were extended to the people of Jammu and Kashmir. After the successful experimentation with the transportation links across the Line of Control, the two sides are exploring ways to widen communication links and foster people-to-people contacts. The dialogue, however, has not moved forward on the resolution of Jammu and Kashmir dispute, though a willingness to address this issue has been expressed.

A lasting solution

We need to step up efforts to find a solution of the dispute that is acceptable to Pakistan, India and the people of Jammu and Kashmir. We must seize the opportunity provided by the dialogue and a salutary international environment to continue the search for a negotiated settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir issue, with the involvement of the Kashmiris. The President of Pakistan has presented several creative ideas for a solution of the issue which include demilitarization, self-governance and joint management. For durable solutions, we need statesmanship, courage and flexibility.

Conclusion

A word of caution. Nothing would succeed, and I mean 'nothing' including dialogue, CBMs, and innovative solutions, if the violations of human rights continue unchecked and unabated. Human rights abuses will hamper any meaningful endeavor to resolve differences and come to a negotiated settlement.

~~I wish you all productive discussions on all dimensions of the Jammu and Kashmir issue~~

I thank you.