

*(Embargoed until 5<sup>th</sup> August, 2020)*

**Message by the Prime Minister of Pakistan on Youm-e-Istehsal**  
**(August 5, 2020)**

Today marks 365 days of the unprecedented, inhuman military siege and communication blockade since India's illegal and unilateral actions of 5 August 2019. It is a crime against humanity that has destroyed lives, crippled livelihoods, and imperiled the very identity of the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK).

Eight million Kashmiris have been made prisoners in their own homes. Their communication with the outside world has been deliberately revoked to hide the scale of human rights violations being perpetrated against them by the Indian occupation forces. Young men are being extrajudicially martyred in "fake encounters" and so-called "cordon and search" operations, almost on a daily basis, while the real Kashmiri political leadership remains incarcerated.

The extremist and expansionist BJP-RSS combine, represented by the current Indian Government, is unabashedly pushing the 'Hindutva' agenda. It is seeking to change the demographic structure of the region and turn its Muslim majority into a minority in blatant violation of relevant UN Security Council Resolutions and international laws, particularly the 4<sup>th</sup> Geneva Convention.

As expected, the Kashmiris have rejected these illegal 'engagements in deception', and so has Pakistan. Parliamentarians, journalists, humanitarian workers, international human rights organizations and members of the international community have also raised their voices on the continuing gross human rights violations in IIOJK. India stands exposed before the world, yet again, as an oppressor and aggressor. Its so-called secular and democratic credentials stand fully discredited.

For the sake of the besieged people of IIOJK, and for the sake of fairness, justice and human dignity, it is imperative that the international community steps in immediately and backs its words of condemnation with practical steps that will force India to reverse its present course against the Kashmiri people.

Let me be absolutely clear: Pakistan will always be with its brothers and sisters in IIOJK. We will never accept, and neither will the Kashmiris, the illegal Indian actions and oppression of the Kashmiri people. India has already failed in keeping the voices of the Kashmiri people from reaching the international community. Now India will fail in forcing its majoritarian, 'Hindutva' mindset on a people unwilling to compromise on their just rights and fundamental freedoms.

India must realize that martyrdom of each Kashmiri and the burning and destruction of each Kashmiri house will only further strengthen the Kashmiris' resolve for freedom from Indian occupation. Throughout the Kashmiris' struggle, Pakistan will stand shoulder-to-shoulder with its Kashmiri brethren until they realize their inalienable right to self-determination through free and impartial plebiscite under the auspices of the United Nations as per the relevant UNSC Resolutions.

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