

## UN credibility at great risk in Indian-held Kashmir

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By **Muhammad Zahid Rifat**

The United Nations was established following World War II in 1945 to provide international cooperation and resolve world conflicts. But it has miserably failed to settle the lingering, burning, bleeding unresolved Kashmir dispute between neighbouring nuclear powers of India and Pakistan and its credibility as a world body has remained at great risk for more than seven decades.

The UN has failed miserably to ensure implementation of resolutions of its Security Council calling for a free, fair and transparent plebiscite in Indian-held Jammu and Kashmir to let the Kashmiris exercise their fundamental right of self-determination for which they are struggling against, and suffering at the hands of, occupying Indian security forces while the Indian government, headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, continues to belittle and flout all international laws.

*Besides the international community, the world body is also time and again being reminded at the appropriate highest level of Pakistan that the Kashmir issue is a nuclear flashpoint, so that without its resolution durable peace and stability in the region remains in danger and if the UN fails to act at the earliest possible in resolving the Kashmir issue peacefully, its own credibility will continue to be at great risk*

Unmindful of its obligations to international laws and regulations, India continues to pursue its own evil and devilish agenda, and had revoked special status of its occupied Jammu and Kashmir on 5 August 2019, merging it illegally still with the Indian Union, enhanced the strength of its occupying security forces giving them free hand to crush and kill Kashmiris at will, and placed the entire population of the occupied territory under complete lockdown also from the same date, which continues unabated after even more than 20 months.

Furthermore, to continue pursuing Hindutva policy of the RSS, the Modi government is also taking measures to turn the Muslim majority into a minority by resorting to genocide and settling down Hindus there by issuing down fake and unlawful migration certificates. India is bound under the international laws not to change the demography of Indian-Held Kashmir in an unchecked and unceasing manner. The UN as well as the international community at large is looking the other way and not going beyond condemnation of

gross human rights violations and continues to refrain from pressuring Indian government in any manner to stop changing the demography of the occupied territory .

There are many important dates in the history of Kashmir on which the Kashmiris in Indian-Held Kashmir, as well as in Pakistan and the world over, observe Martyrs Days and Black Days to pay tributes to their freedom fighters who had lost their lives over the last seven decades-plus in indigenous, unarmed struggle for securing their fundamental right of self-determination, free themselves from Indian occupation and decide their future themselves, which has persistently been denied to them by India belittling the international laws and bluntly refusing implementation of UN Security Council resolutions.

May 21 was another such Martyrdom Day which the Kashmiris everywhere observed to commemorate the martyrdom of Mir Waiz Farooq Shaheed and Abdul Ghani Lone Shaheed on this date by the Indian security forces in 1990 and 2002 respectively.

Observance of the Kashmiris Martyrs Day on May 21 will be yet another occasion to remind the UN and international community of their obligations to ensure implementation of Security Council resolutions, pressurizing India to its longest complete lockdown in occupied Jammu and Kashmir and ending flagrant violations of human rights. Pakistan has all along been extending political, diplomatic and moral support to the Kashmiris in their just ,indigenous and unarmed struggle for freedom from Indian occupation and exercising their birthright of self-determination.

On all martyrs days and black days which the Kashmiris observe, the civil and military leadership of Pakistan as well as the people all over the country reiterate their continued support to the Kashmiris and exerting upon the United Nations and its Security Council to honour its own resolutions and get these implemented by India at the earliest possible. At the initiatives of Prime Minister Imran Khan , who had been raising the Kashmir issue not only at the UN General Assembly but also all other international forums, the Kashmir issue has been activated during the last couple of years pulling it out of the cold storage of the world body where it was lying for more than past five decades.

The civil and military leadership of Pakistan has been urging the international community every now and then to honour their obligations towards the Kashmiris, force the Indian government to reverse its 5 August 2019 revocation decision and restore the special status of occupied Jammu and Kashmir and play its active role in ending the ongoing bloodshed, violence and killings of innocent Kashmiris at the hands of Indian security forces and let the Kashmiris exercise their self-determination right in a UN-supervised plebiscite in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions.

Besides the international community, the world body is also time and again being reminded at the appropriate highest level of Pakistan that the Kashmir issue is a nuclear flashpoint, so that without its resolution durable peace and stability in the region remains

in danger and if the UN fails to act at the earliest possible in resolving the Kashmir issue peacefully, its own credibility will continue to be at great risk.

No words are strong enough to condemn ongoing lingering brutalities and oppression of Indian occupying security forces in Indian-Held Kashmir, to deplore the lingering indifferent attitude of the international community towards bleeding Kashmir, being more interested in its trade and economic relations with the big country of India and also to continue availing every opportunity to remind the world body to wake up out of its deep slumber, realize its hitherto persistently ignored obligations towards oppressed and suppressed Kashmiris and force India to stop the ongoing killings of occupied territory and implement Security Council resolutions to which both India and Pakistan are signatories, and save its credibility which otherwise will continue to be at risk in the face of denial of all international laws by India.

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## A Modern Story of Colonization

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By **Javaria Nisar**

It has been more than a week since tensions arose in Palestine over Israel's forced occupation in East Jerusalem and the demolition of Palestinian homes. The latest clashes began when the Israeli riot police tried to stop Muslims from gathering and praying in Al Aqsa Mosque during the holy month of Ramadan. The forced evictions of Palestinians from the neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah also fueled the confrontations. Airstrikes and stun grenades echoed on Monday and till now more than 1500 Palestinians are wounded, and over 200 are reported dead including innocent women and children, until a truce has reportedly been agreed.

The foundation of this dispute lies in the 73-year-old colonial attempt by Israel that continues to subject the Palestinians to military occupation, land dispossession, forced evictions, and human rights violations. After the titular victory of the UK in World War I and the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, the French and the British decided to carve up the Middle East in such a way to ensure their power and hold over the already divided Arab world, forever.

To gain the support of Jews, in 1917, a statement known as the Balfour Declaration was issued by the British which was basically a public pledge to create 'a national home for Jewish people' in Palestine. And thus, from here onwards began the game of land between Israel and Palestine.

Palestine came under the so-called mandate system after the fall of Ottoman Empire created by the British and its allies which paved the way for colonization and occupation. The victors of World War I casually drew the borderlines in the Middle East with a ruler and established such fault lines that still create havoc in the Middle East and sharpen many ethnic and religious conflicts.

The basic purpose of this mandate system was to transfer the power of defeated territories to the victors of the war to certify smooth administration, and governance until these states could become autonomous. However, in the case of Palestine, this was designed in a way to ensure Jewish rule and domination at the expense of Palestinians' lives and homes. To fulfill its intended goal, the British started to expedite the Jewish immigration programmes to Palestine and in 1935 the Jewish population gradually rose to nearly 27 percent.

After World War II, the United Nations came up with a Partition Plan in 1947 where it proposed to divide Palestine into two halves, comprising of independent Arab and Jewish states with Jerusalem being an independent international entity under UN rule. The Arabs vehemently protested against it and the approval of this plan sparked violence and

carnage in Palestine that became more prevalent with time. As the British mandate came to an end in May 1948, the State of Israel was officially established and with that, the long struggle to free Palestine from Israeli rule began.

Israeli Independence and termination of British mandate led to a full-fledged war in 1948. The war resulted in the defeat of Palestinians and Arabs that caused the 1948 Palestinian exodus where nearly 700,000 Palestinian were forcefully evicted from their homes. Their lands were taken, more than 500 villages were destroyed, and Palestinian history was erased with the Hebraization of Palestinian place names. This exodus was the major component in the systematic destruction and ethnic cleansing of Palestinian society which is known as Nakba meaning disaster or catastrophe.

Since then, many attempts have been made, such as in 1967 and 1973, to free Palestine from the rule of the tyrant Israelis, but unfortunately, the Arab support varies when it comes to the cause of Palestine. To this date, millions of Palestinians are robbed of their homes, their lands, their independence, and even their right to self-determination. Palestine is still not fully recognized as an independent state by many countries even though Israel is a settler colony which is forcefully occupying Palestinian lands and domains.

It is time for the international community to recognize Israel as what it is— An Apartheid Colonial State. According to the Human Rights Watch, Israel's domination, its systematic oppression, and human rights violation against Palestinians point to the crimes of apartheid. The International Justice Court is also investigating Israel for its possible war crimes and illegal activities in Palestine.

Nevertheless, the people in Gaza are still waking up with the sounds of bombs, crashing buildings, and cries of mothers.

It is the responsibility of the international organizations, especially the UN, to ensure security, stability and peace in every region of the world. Unfortunately, the UN with its dilly dally attitude has failed in finding a solution to end the soaring violence in Palestine. So, while we sit safely with a hot cup of tea in our homes built on the lands that we proudly call our own without any fear of dispossession, think about the innocent Palestinians, especially little children who have nothing but rocks to defend themselves. The truce may give temporary relief, but where is the permanent solution?

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## Palestine: call it by its name

By **Salaar Khan**

'Fire and thunder fill the night sky as Israel's Iron Dome is tested', proclaims the New York Times. The accompanying image is one that many Israelis have claimed tells you "all you need to know" about what is going on right now.

Faithful to the Rule of Thirds, the image purports to tell three stories. In one third, strands of amber streak out of the right edge. Suspended in the night, they seem the delicate bristles of a fibre-optic glow toy. The text explains that they are, in fact, rockets fired by 'militants in Gaza' – straight, steadfast lines, captured just before they enter the middle-third.

On the other end of the image are the trailing tentacles of Israel's 'Iron Dome' Defence system. The heads of each limb are little orbs of light – celestial full stops, marking the end of a rocket destined for Israel. Between the two thirds is the clear night sky – the space occupied by the rest of the world – waiting, wondering why the two sides just can't get along.

At this point, to call out most of Western media for biased journalism on Israel's war-crimes is to defrost a cliché that is already overcooked. First, the casting: ' Hamas' the rabid aggressor, Israel the cautious defender. That Palestine, or the Palestinian people do not figure into the equation is not incidental: Americans ask fewer questions when the bombs they pay for are dropped on a herd of Lady-Liberty-loathing terrorists.

The present violence has seen the loss of five Israeli homes, and twelve Israeli lives, two of whom were children. In Gaza, the death count is close to twenty times that. Sixty-two were children. Eleven of those children were already in therapy for the trauma of past bombings. Over seven thousand homes have been destroyed. Since the year 2000, sixteen Palestinian children have been killed for every Israeli child. As sordid a task as trading coffin-counts is, there's just no comparison.

And how could there be? Israel receives more US aid than all of sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean combined – which is just a fraction of its total military budget. It then unleashes incredibly sophisticated weaponry on a caged, refugee population that has no army, no navy, and no air force. Meanwhile, the 'rockets' from across the fence are quite often, to quote Norman Finkelstein, 'enhanced fireworks': projectiles salvaged using repurposed lead pipes – not infrequently without even a warhead.

But the present is just the beginning; this narrative also gets everything wrong about the past.

That is so by design. Here's Ruth Wisse, professor of Yiddish literature at Harvard, admonishing American Jews at a 2019 conference: "Your job is to make us look good..."

you have got to serve two or three years in the army of words...to fight the political battle which is even more important, at this point, than the military battle."

Ten years earlier, US pollster Frank Luntz prepared a 112-page 'Global Language Dictionary' for "those on the front lines of fighting the media war for Israel". Even today, the content is rather familiar. Chapter 4: "To [Americans] Hamas is evil and hostile...For now, your rhetorical quarrel needs to be with Hamas, not the people of Palestine." Compare that to CNN's recently leaked 'Guidance on Gaza Facilities', asking reporters to "be transparent about the fact that the Ministry of Health in Gaza is run by Hamas." (This, right after Israel bombed Gaza's only Covid testing lab.)

It is telling that Luntz's 'Dictionary' was prepared right after Operation Cast Lead, in which close to 1400 Palestinian lives were lost to Israel's nine. Words build the conduits that allow blood to flow freely.

And so, the murderous toddler-targeting Israeli army becomes the Israel 'Defence' Forces. The Iron-Dome's mid-range missile interception system cousin becomes 'David's Sling' (which would make Goliath an entrapped population without bunkers to seek shelter in or clean water to drink). Ethnic cleansing, apartheid and shooting at unarmed worshippers become Israel's right of 'self-defence'. And when all else fails, the evergreen charge of anti-Semitism is just as effective a shield as the Iron Dome.

Writing 'Permission to Narrate' some years ago, perched on the other side of history, Edward Said suggested a linguistic challenge to Israel's narrative monopoly. From Twitter to Tiktok, the idea seems to have caught on. Infographics urge ordinary people to call Israel's crimes by their true names, and to return the odious 'both-sideism' back to the bin where it belongs.

Part of the desire is easy enough to understand: to refer to your killer by name is a dignity so basic that even the Palestinian people may hope to be allowed it. But, as the Israeli historian Ilan Pappé has written, it's deeper than that.

It affects time: to call Zionism 'settler-colonialism' allows the Palestinians to choose their rightful beginning. It refuses to gloss over the ethnic cleansing in the late 1940s, when half of the region's population was displaced, and over five hundred villages were destroyed. It affects space: that ethnic cleansing took place not in the West Bank or the Gaza Strip, but where Israel now stands.

And while language tethers the present to the past, it is also a crucible for the future. To refuse to acknowledge the 'peace process' is to disavow a servile, status-quo serving screensaver that allows Israel to steal more land, yet, as the world wags its tail. To reject the neutrality of a 'ceasefire' is to avert Israel's consolidation of the spoils of its latest rampage. To call out Israel's 'ethnic cleansing' is to demand reparations and rightful return.

All of this may seem a neat little academic theory, but it is hugely important. Change is not about to come from within Israel. Despite its differences, the South African apartheid tells us that pressure will have to come from the outside.

As long as it lives in the warm bosom of the United States, Israel can continue to act without fear of consequence. Since its first veto in 1970 (defending Israel), the US has exercised its power more liberally than any other permanent member of the Security Council. And more than half of all its vetoes have been used to bail out naughty little Israel.

History warns us against underestimating the cruelty that can be inflicted in the name of the American people when they don't appreciate what their taxes are really paying for. But history also tells us that when enough of them begin to realise the truth, things begin to change.

Consider Vietnam. From plastering the execution of a Viet Cong fighter on its front page to leaking the Pentagon Papers, the archives of none other than the NYT attest to how important real reporting can be. But, today, even as the relationship of the American people with its government has gone from nascent naivete to hardened scepticism, when it comes to Palestine, campuses have yet to erupt in the Gen-Z equivalent of "Hey, hey, LBJ! How many kids did you kill today?" This while the kinds of horrors that finally stirred the languid American conscience in the 60s are just a few taps of the thumb away, today. America may watch as hundreds of flats fall to rubble, but it doesn't see homes with pictures on the walls or last night's leftovers in the fridge: it sees a potential Hamas base. It may see seemingly endless Palestinian suffering, but believes a solution to be beyond the understanding of the ordinary person. It may see the limp body of a child in the arms of a father whose voice is hoarse with grief, but it sees, at best, a child that was deliberately put in harm's way. At worst, it sees what Netanyahu has called 'telegenic' deaths – the loss of a child reduced to a camera trick. Without the right words, the images just don't translate into grief.

But there is hope, yet. Biden may have once called US aid to Israel "the best 3 billion dollars that we spend", but in a Congress that has its first Palestinian American Representative, AOC and Bernie speak of blocking further aid to Israel. Polls of American voters (particularly younger ones) continue to show declining support for supporting Israel, and growing sympathy for Palestine. These are things that, not too long ago, would have been unconscionable.

We must sustain this. In the way we remember what was done to the Palestinian people. In the way we speak of what is done to them today. In the ways in which we describe their tomorrow. How are we to resist oppression if we cannot even look it in the eye, and call it by its name?

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## The Indian shame

By **Malik Muhammad Ashraf**

The history of Kashmir is replete with myriad massacres of Kashmiris at the hands of the Indian security forces, including the killing of some prominent leaders of the freedom movement after it was launched in 1989. Among them were Mirwaiz Farooq and Abdul Ghani Lone, who were martyred by the Indian security forces on May 21, 1990 and 2002 respectively. The day remains one of Indian shame since then, as the movement not only gained further momentum after their assassination, but the people of Kashmir also started observing May 21 as their martyrdom day to make an unequivocal declaration that no amount of oppression could dent their resolve to win their right to self-determination.

The persecution of the people of Kashmir and their struggle against oppression has roots in history. The first chapter of blood-letting was written on July 13, 1931 when the forces of the Maharaja martyred 22 Kashmiris when they were agitating against the injustices perpetrated and the arrest of a young man—Abdul Qadeer—who dared to speak against the oppressive regime. The state of Kashmir, with a majority Muslim population, was ruled by the Dogra Dynasty of Hindu Rajputs from 1846 to 1947. The Dogras treated the Muslim subjects badly and even interfered in their religious affairs. There was widespread discontent and resentment against the oppressive governance which kept simmering underneath.

According to the recorded evidence, the police fired 160 rounds of bullets into the crowd, killing seventeen people on the spot while another five died later in the hospital. A Hindu writer, Prem Nath Bazz in his work 'Inside Kashmir' published in 1941 wrote, "The driving force behind the mass agitation till July 13 was the discontent among the rank and file of the Muslims. The attack on the jail was in no way directed against the Hindus, and those who laid down their lives at the jail gate did so fighting against an unsympathetic government...It was a fight of the tyrannised against their tyrants, of the oppressed against the oppressors." The incident marked the beginning of the modern era Kashmir freedom struggle which has traversed through different phases including civilian protests, political and armed struggle.

Unfortunately, the plight of the people of Kashmir did not end with partition of the sub-continent. The 52 princely states under the Independence Act were allowed to accede to any of the two newly created states of India and Pakistan keeping in view the geographical proximity and demographic realities or remain independent. Kashmir was a fit case for accession to Pakistan due to geographical proximity, majority Muslim population and cultural, religious and trade links with the areas that formed parts of the latter.

But the ruler of the state Maharaja Hari Singh announced the accession of the state to India. His action could be better understood in the backdrop of the Dogra rule in Kashmir before partition rather than the ground realities. The people of Kashmir revolted against

this decision. Lord Mountbatten, while accepting the accession temporarily, unequivocally said that the issue would be decided through a reference to the people. The situation however became very precarious leading to the first war between Pakistan and India which took the matter to the United Nations. After thorough deliberations on the issue, the UNSC passed a number of resolutions calling for holding the plebiscite under the auspices of the UN to settle the question of accession of the state to either of the two countries.

Both the countries accepted those resolutions and the then Indian Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru, in a number of communications with his Pakistani counterpart reiterated his commitment to holding of the plebiscite. He—also in his speeches—in the Indian parliament unequivocally stated that India would stick to its obligation under the UN resolutions. But India reneged on its commitment and tried to have the question of accession resolved through the constituent assembly of Kashmir in 1957. That move was repudiated by the UN through its resolutions 91 and 122, maintaining the issue could not be settled through any arrangement other than a UN sponsored plebiscite. As is evident, the Indian position on Kashmir has no legal and moral basis.

The plebiscite unfortunately remains an elusive dream so far due to Indian intransigence to grant the right of self-determination to the people of Kashmir. The partition of the sub-continent pushed the people of Kashmir into an un-ending ordeal. India's denial to give them the right to self-determination forced them to pick up arms in 1989 to win their freedom. India on her part has used ruthless military might to quell the uprising. Its security forces have since then killed more than one hundred thousand Kashmiris besides raping thousands of women. Kashmir remains a venue of oppression and persecution.

The Modi government has further aggravated the situation by ending special status of IIOJK, its annexation to the Indian Union in sheer violation of the UNSC resolutions, followed by the promulgation of a new domicile law to change the demographic features of the state which constitutes wilful breach of international law and the fourth Geneva Convention. Kashmir was put under a complete lockdown. Since August 5, 2019 the people of Indian Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir are leading a miserable life and Indian forces continue the killing spree during the cordon and search operations. Hardly a day passes without the murder of the Kashmiris by the Indian security forces.

The world media has continuously been reporting about the blatant violation of human rights in the state. Pakistan has been raising this issue at all international forums and warning the world about the possible consequences. India has also adopted a belligerent posture towards Pakistan and the latter rightly feels that Indian disposition towards her and what it has done in IIOJK—inebriated by RSS the philosophy of Hindutva—constitutes a grave threat to the security of the region.

Regrettably, the world and the UN remain oblivious to the sufferings of the people of Kashmir. One really wonders for how long will the people of Kashmir have to suffer and endure the ongoing ordeal? Indian oppression in IIOJK and its defiance of the UNSC

resolutions is indeed an affront to the conscience of the global community. How long can it afford to be indifferent remains to be seen. However it is clear that the people of Kashmir are determined to win their right to self-determination no matter how many more sacrifices they might have to render. History is a witness to the fact that freedom movements cannot be suppressed with the barrel of the gun.

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## Social cohesion to counter terrorism, violent extremism

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By **Sana Malik**

In today's world, terrorism and violent extremism are complex multi-faceted issues that transcend national borders. Unlike terrorism, there is no universally accepted definition of violent extremism. International organisations such as the UN, the EU and NATO do not follow a single definition. The USAID qualifies violent extremism as "advocating, engaging in, preparing or otherwise supporting ideologically motivated or justified violence to further social, economic or political objectives", whereas violent extremism is considered to be a broader term even if the two may be used interchangeably. Simply put, terrorism is the "use of violence to create fear for political, religious or ideological reasons". Terror is intentionally aimed at civilians to achieve the greatest attainable publicity for a group, cause or individual.

The phenomena of violent extremism and terrorism have been permeating the world over. The use of violence has a very profound and direct impact on humanity, which means it knows no border, nationality, or religion. It has devastating consequences for its victims whose right to life, liberty, security, and personal integrity has been compromised. This makes it a human rights issue which not only has individual cost, but can also jeopardise international community, peace, and security and threaten socio-economic development. The work to counter and combat the threat of violent extremism and terrorism, therefore, should be based on how to integrate all segments of society.

In order to devise counterterrorism strategies, it is important to consider the push and pull factors of violent extremism and terrorism to administer more focused and meaningful preventive efforts. Push factors are structural within the society whilst pull factors are psychological that may render individuals to become more vulnerable to adopting violent extremist behaviour. Push factors are conditions conducive to violent extremism and terrorism and the structural context from which it emerges such as socio-economic disparities, marginalisation and discrimination, poor governance, violations of human rights and delays in conflict resolution, and radicalisation in prisons. Whereas, pull factors are individual motivations and processes, which transform ideas and grievances into violent extremist action such as individual backgrounds, collective grievances and victimisation stemming from domination, oppression, subjugation or foreign intervention, distortion and misuse of beliefs, political ideologies, ethnic and cultural differences, and leadership and social networks. It is important to note that none of these drivers can be considered in isolation since multiple factors are involved. Understanding the root causes of terrorism can lead to better prevention policies.

The most important aspect of preventing extremism is integration and inclusivity of all segments. In the US, for instance, many social rituals like Halloween are celebrated throughout the year. Owing to prevailing cultural norms, economic opportunities and equality under law, the US seems to achieve integration of people belonging to different ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds. It doesn't mean that there is complete harmony because social disparities do exist. As far as immigrants are concerned, within a generation or two, Mexican Americans, Italian Americans, and Iranian Americans are just Americans with a single national identity card and the same rights and obligations. This is in stark contrast to immigrants in Europe who may feel like second-class citizens, which may inflame feelings of hatred and are misguided in their search for a sense of belonging, triggering religious, ethnic, and ideological differences.

In Pakistan's context, issues of ethnic diversity unfortunately caused division instead of creating harmony. Pakistan is a country with a unique ethnic and religious diversity. Though all citizens are equal under the law, not all ethnic and religious identities are given adequate representation according to the Constitution which means that they come into conflict and feel an imbalance in the society. Ethnicity has emerged as the most significant issue in Pakistan and in creating a national identity out of diverse regional, religious, and linguistic loyalties. Pakistan's security landscape thus remains volatile and complex due to ethnic tensions coupled with the web of terrorist and militant groups present in the country. These have repercussions not only for internal linkages but also give rise to external conflict with powerful forces in the region.

Pakistan needs programmes to address the underlying violence in communities by moving beyond the labeling of youths as victims or perpetrators of violence to engage them in peace-building efforts, giving them ownership of their efforts, and providing them opportunities to encourage the use of music, sport, media and IT for peace projects that promote tolerance, conflict resolution, reconciliation and interfaith harmony.

Social integration through targeted educational programmes is key in the fight against terrorism. In Pakistan, the education system is not on a par with the international system – a matter of grave concern. There is a lack of access to quality education making young Pakistanis targets of extremist groups. Net primary enrollment rates remain low; there are three parallel educational systems (private, public, and madrassas), resulting in a lack of equal opportunities for all students. The education system suffers due to inadequate investment from government, corruption, lack of institutional capacity, inadequate number of trained teachers and poor curriculum. To counter violent extremism and terrorism, the government needs to allocate sufficient budgets for education, increase private-public partnerships, introduce modern subjects in madrassas, build capacity of teachers, reform curriculum, improve teaching aid materials and give incentives to improve enrollment and retention.

Another group to consider for integration is perhaps the disenfranchised, poor and unemployed. This is because those out of jobs and in need of financial assistance may get recruited and form potential militias of political violence. Poverty can cause resentment and force many to turn to violence to express their outrage towards social inequality. In the Middle East, many citizens do not have jobs, which causes a lower standard of living. This forces people to become angry as they lose the ability to achieve what others may, creating internal conflict within certain areas or groups, making it more likely for terrorism to occur. When people are dissatisfied with the state of their lives and living standards, they are more likely to turn to extreme measures or become ideal candidates for terrorist organisations to recruit.

Other factors, which may marginalise or cause lack of integration and assimilation in society can be political factors such as government repression. Undemocratic societies cause people to suffer repression. Studies show that terrorism has a strong link with social injustice propagated at the hands of governments and people may resort to violence to fight against political wrongdoings. It appears that terrorism is a global phenomenon, which transcends national boundaries and does not occur in a social vacuum, that it is caused by interaction between an individual, society and the state. Social disintegration can alienate individuals and groups so they may resort to terrorism to satisfy their grievances. Social cohesion is required to combat violent extremism and terrorism to perpetuate a sense of ownership in deterring people from exploring options and resorting to violent extremism and terrorism. This, however, needs to be practised globally where international cooperation is sustained and a universal rights-based approach is incorporated in building capacities to leave no one behind in efforts to counter terrorism and to promote peaceful and inclusive societies.

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## Growth for Balochistan

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By **Amir Hussain**

In my last article 'Development for Balochistan' (May 2), I tried to outline an alternative development paradigm for Balochistan as a process of engagement, local planning, resource ownership and inclusive governance. In this article I will focus on strategies and policy actions to translate the alternative development paradigm into practice.

Empirical evidence from the Global South suggests that only those economic growth strategies work well in which the local and central governments work together to foster long-term partnerships for sustainable development. Vertical growth models may represent expansion of GDP but that does not necessarily mean economic inclusion, equality and prosperity for the majority. Most of our conventional policy experts and economists tend to suggest economic growth rate as a measure of prosperity without considering equity, inclusivity and protection of traditional livelihoods. Economic growth without horizontal benefits is a flawed concept which gives birth to income disparity, political instability and exclusion of a vast majority from the streams of economic trickle-down.

In the context of Balochistan, this becomes even more relevant if we recognize the fact that for many decades the people of Balochistan remained excluded from the planning and policy of the provincial development agenda. This continued negligence of development priorities of local people has at times given birth to the dwindling of the writ of the state in Balochistan. As a consequence of the increasing sense of marginalization, provincial governments in Balochistan became overstretched in tackling the larger security issues rather than focusing on the local development priorities.

The question one may ask here is: what should be the alternative ways to facilitate local development planning and who should be doing that? Local development planning requires a thorough stakeholder consultation process at the district level to determine the contextual factors of poverty and formulate a workable strategy of development and poverty reduction. This requires a long-term engagement programme with financial and technical support to help local people articulate their transformational priorities for sustainable development.

There is a general perception that the provincial government of Balochistan neither has the institutional capacity nor political will to strengthen local development initiatives. In practice, however, the provincial government has the institutional mechanism, but it needs drastic reforms to make it responsive to local development needs.

While institutional reforms can be undertaken in an incremental manner as a long-term policy, the provincial government can set some medium and short-term objectives to

address poverty and exclusion. These policy objectives can be materialized by engaging the specialized agencies of poverty alleviation through strategic partnership which must be governed by a robust mechanism of monitoring and mutual accountability. For instance, the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) can be a potential strategic partner and can provide technical supervision on behalf of the provincial government in the local planning and implementation of poverty alleviation programmes. This process of indigenous development planning can be strengthened by making it even an open-source programme with the government, private sector and development agencies co-investing in the key areas of socioeconomic development and growth.

The PPAF can be engaged to prepare district development strategies in that all concerned stakeholders are involved to contribute to the identification of local development needs. These stakeholders can then come together to co-invest in the identified priority areas of poverty alleviation at the district level. In the years to come, the district development strategies can be organized around three subjects: annual assessment of the economic outcomes of district development strategies, the outcomes of inclusive economic development of generating growth, delivering services, and experiences of co-investments; macroeconomic factors and political economy issues which shape our contemporary economic policies; and consistent engagement with all stakeholders who can play a critical role in affecting socioeconomic change in Balochistan.

The first premise upon which these district development strategies will be built is the belief to be optimistic about Balochistan's development because of its potential. The success of such assumptions hinges upon the fact that the provincial and federal governments will benefit from these inclusive district development strategies which will be reflected in the annual development plans. There must be some synergies between Balochistan's development needs and the national development agenda in the areas of potential growth and comparative advantages -- energy, trade, mining, food production and dairy business etc. Furthermore, the expression of political will for inclusive growth and transition to geo-economic presents a unique opportunity to move Balochistan from the periphery to the core of economic development, helping overcome our perennial problem of peripheralization of the nation-building project. .

Second, in order to overcome the challenges that held back provincial development for many decades, Balochistan should pursue a development agenda with the objective of generating horizontal growth, delivering services, and financing development. This approach can make sure that Balochistan's development path is inclusive. Third, generating growth requires leveraging Balochistan's resource and geographical advantages, deepening its capacity for value-addition, and strengthening the foundations for productive economic activity.

Fourth, delivering services depends on improving the public administration, making devolution more effective and scaling-up basic services with innovative approaches



involving the private sector and communities. Finally, financing development relies on prudent management of provincial expenditures, strengthening the capacity for revenue collection, and advancing fiscal devolution.

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## Sakharov & the Soviet state

By **Syed Sikander Mehdi**

ANDREI Dmitrievich Sakharov, whose 100th birth anniversary was celebrated yesterday, had struggled especially during the last 20 years of his life to save the Soviet state from itself. However, the state never paid any attention to his concerns for the future of the Soviet Union. Instead, it questioned his patriotism, and went ahead to harass him and persecute him. The state had no idea of the price it would pay by not listening to him. The Soviet state collapsed like a house of cards on Dec 31, 1991. In its place, 15 independent, sovereign states emerged.

The Soviet state is no more, and it can't be reassembled. Had it listened to Sakharov, it might have avoided the calamity it had to suffer later. Russian President Vladimir Putin regards the dissolution of the Soviet state as the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th century, and the realisation is now widespread that the disaster was invited by the Soviet state itself, and not by Sakharov.

Disaster might have been averted had the USSR listened to Sakharov.

Sakharov was one of the greatest champions of peace, freedom and human rights in the last century. He wanted to sign up for service in the Soviet armed forces, when the Germans invaded his country on June 22, 1941. He was 20 and had just completed his third year in physics at Moscow University. However, he was already the most brilliant student in the memory of his faculty and treated as a national asset. He was exempted from military duty. He therefore continued his studies, graduated in 1942, served as an engineer in a military factory during the remaining war years, and obtained the equivalent of a PhD degree in 1947. The next year, he joined the top secret nuclear weapon programme of the Soviet Union.

The next two decades or so were, indeed, a period of content for the young nuclear physicist. When the Soviet Union tested its first fusion-based device on Aug 12, 1953, Sakharov was widely acknowledged as the father of the Soviet hydrogen bomb. The same year, he received his DSc degree; he became the youngest person to be elected to the Soviet Academy of Sciences; and received the first of his three Hero of Socialist Labour titles — the Soviet Union's highest civilian award for heroic and distinguished achievements.

Sakharov could have devoted the rest of his life serving his country as a highly valued military scientist or as a theoretical physicist of international eminence or as a powerful pillar in the Soviet corridors of power. However, increasingly aware of the consequences of a nuclear war between the Soviet Union and the United States, and the irrelevance of expensive nuclear tests by the Soviet Union, he became uncomfortable. From the late

1960s on, he expressed his reservations regarding the expansion of the Soviet nuclear programme and the focus and direction of Soviet sciences. In due course, he became more fierce and aggressive in criticising the Soviet state. He demanded fundamental reforms, including general liberalisation, an end to political victimisation, full-fledged rights for all Soviet citizens, freedom of information and press, basic economic reforms and democratic elections

While Sakharov's popularity soared, the state wasn't amused. It sprang into action, removed Sakharov unceremoniously from his prestigious position and job. It stripped him of the awards and titles given to him by the state. It didn't permit him to travel to Oslo to personally receive the Nobel Peace Prize in 1975. A media campaign was unleashed, and Sakharov was accused of being unpatriotic and an agent of the West. His family members were also victimised.

The state became more vindictive, when Sakharov condemned the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan and participated in a demonstration against Soviet Afghan policy. On Jan 22, 1980, he was arrested. Later, he was taken to the Volga city of Gorky in the Siberian region, where he spent almost seven years in internal exile.

It was after his death on Dec 14, 1989, that Sakharov was accorded full honours. He was buried in Vostryakovskoye Cemetery, Moscow's largest. His funeral was attended by the Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev, top party brass, academicians, scientists, and thousands of common people. Later, in the afternoon, tens of thousands of mourners gathered at the Luzhniki Stadium to join on the memorial service.

While history gratefully acknowledges the contribution of Sakharov to the movement for peace, justice, democracy and human rights, his mission is not over. His life and struggle will remain relevant for any struggle anywhere against unfreedoms and state tyrannies.

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