

## PLANS BEING DRAWN BY INDIA TO CHANGE DEMOGRAPHY IN IOK; MASOOD KHAN



Sardar Masood Khan, President Azad Jammu and Kashmir, has said that a sinister plan has been drawn up by India to reduce the numbers of Muslim electorate through new delimitation of the constituencies, land grab by non-Kashmiris through the use of banking laws and long-

term leases to industrialists from India to “promote investment”. The purpose of these moves, he said while addressing a press conference, was to flood Jammu and Kashmir with Indian nationals to change the demographic composition of the territory, marginalize Muslim population and crush the freedom movement.

The President said that additional 35,000 (fresh 100 companies) troops have been rushed to the IOK by special flights and convoys for preparing the ground for crushing protests against Indian moves to alter the special status of the IOK. He said that the number of troops now deployed in Kashmir has risen to more than 800,000 making it the largest concentration of armed troops in any occupied territory or any conflict zone, now or in the past.

India partially recognized the disputed status of the State by the insertion of Articles 370 and 35-A in its constitution. The latter recognizes the core identity of the State preserving the original Kashmiris’ inherent rights to permanent residence, employment, acquisition of immovable property and educational scholarships.

In 1947, after massacres in Jammu and Kashmir, India deported hundreds of thousands of people to Pakistan and Azad Kashmir and, in the 1990s, it forcibly evicted and deported Pundits from the Valley of Kashmir and now it is trying to change the demography of the occupied territory. India is planning to establish settlements for Pundits, whom they had forcibly deported themselves in 1990, and colonies for former army personnel (called Sainak colonies).

In 1947, he said, the population of Muslims in Jammu was 61% and through planned pogroms and massacres the number of Muslims has been reduced to 33%.

Now India wants to do the same in the Valley of Kashmir. Village Defence Committees have been provided licensed arms to terrorize and persecute the local population in Jammu and Kashmir”, he said.

The President condemned moves by extremist forces in the Indian government and a minority in the Indian Occupied Kashmir, who in collusion with Delhi, are trying to repeal Article 35-A of the Indian Constitution to prepare the ground for influx of settlers from Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Bihar, Bengal, Rajasthan and other parts of India. They, he said, are also trying to give permanent status to the so-called West Pakistan refugees who were pushed from other provinces of India to Kashmir in the late 1940s and early 1950s as temporary settlers.

President Masood said that the transfers of civilian population in the occupied territory by the Occupier are a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, a breach of Additional Protocol I and the Statutes of the International Criminal Court. This constitutes a war crime in international armed conflicts. The International Conferences of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent have declared that settlements in occupied territories are incompatible with Articles 27 and 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Attempts to alter the demographic composition in an occupied territory were condemned by the UN Security Council in its resolution 752 and it had asked the occupier for cessation of attempts to change the ethnic composition in the occupied territory. The UN General Assembly and the UN Human Rights Commission have also condemned the practice of settlements in the occupied territories and the “implantation of settlers”.

The President warned India not to take steps to alter the demographic composition of the IOK and fully endorsed the stance taken by the

Joint Resistance Leadership headed by Syed Ali Gillani, Mirwaiz Omar Farooq and Yasin Malik, adding that even pro-India parties like the National Conference and the People's Democratic Party as well as the BJP and the Congress in the occupied territory, reportedly, are also opposed to this move.

He went on to say that the Occupier's brutal repression against unarmed non-combatant civilians in IOK has already claimed 500,000 lives. By attempting to change the demography of the occupied part of the State, India would be setting Kashmir on fire and triggering yet another intense phase of freedom movement for self-determination.

"Over the past 70 years, the Kashmiris have been brutalized but they are not fatigued or tired. Reaction to the changes in demographic composition in Kashmir could set ablaze the IOK, India and South Asia. Such attempts add fuel to the fire", he told the press.

The President denounced unprovoked ceasefire violations across the Line of Control. He said that recent shelling has left behind a trail of death and destruction, adding that in addition to its scorched-earth policy inside IOK, India has targeted civilians across the LoC in Danna, Dudnial, Jura, Leepa, Shardha, Shahkot and other sectors killing 04 and injuring 40 including women and children. "They haven't spared houses, crops and livestock", he said and paid tribute to the Armed Forces of Pakistan for valiantly defending the State.

India, said the President, continues to raise tensions along the LoC so as to divert international attention from the crimes being committed by it in IOK and hide its moves aimed at demographic transformation in IOK.

This year, he said, has been deadly for IOK where more than 300 people have been gunned down while across the LOC India has committed 1824 ceasefire violations resulting in a heavy toll of 17 martyrs and 105 injured. Last year, we lost 58 civilians and 319 were

injured as a direct result of 3038 ceasefire violations.