

Imran Khan's speech at the General Assembly's Seventy-fourth session (9th plenary meeting)

I stand here at this forum of world leaders where we have a chance to discuss the problems the world is facing.

I especially came to this forum despite a difficult time in my country; facing challenges... I would not have come had there not been a very urgent problem that the world must address.

First let me talk about climate change; I have seen a lot of leaders talk about this. But I don't see world leaders really realizing the urgency of the situation. We have a lot of ideas; but as they say, ideas without funding is mere hallucination.

Pakistan is among the top 10 nations in the world affected by climate change. We depend on our rivers, we are mainly an agricultural country. 80 percent of our water comes from the glaciers and these are melting at an alarming pace.

We detected 5000 glacier lakes in our mountains. If nothing is done, we fear humans are facing a huge catastrophe.

In KP, a province of Pakistan, we planted a billion trees in 5 years. Now we are targeting 10 billion trees. But one country can not do anything. This has to be a combined effort of the world.

My optimism comes from the fact that the Almighty has given humans great powers. We can do great things. And this is where I want the United Nations to take the lead in invoking this will.

Rich countries who contribute the most to green house gas emissions must be held accountable.

Mr. President; every year billions of dollars leave poor countries & go to rich countries. Billions of dollars siphoned by corrupt politicians to tax havens, expensive properties bought in western capitals. It is devastating to the developing world.

Corruption is impoverishing the developing world. Difference b/w rich & poor countries is growing due to this. Money laundering is not treated the same as drug money or terror financing. Today poor countries are being plundered by their elites.

In my country, when I took charge of our government a year back, in the 10 years preceding that our total debt went up 4 times. As a result; the total revenue we collect in one year, half of it went into debt servicing.

How will we spend on our 220 million population when our money was plundered by the ruling elite? And when we located properties of these corrupt leaders in western capitals, we find it so difficult to retrieve it.

If we retrieve the plundered money, we could spend it on human development. But there are laws protecting these criminals. We don't have the money to hire lawyers worth millions of dollars.

The rich countries must show political will; they can not allow this flight of capital from poor countries through corruption. How can poor countries meet the United Nations SDG's when money for human development can easily leave our countries?

There must be a deterrent; the corrupt ruling elite must not be allowed to take money out and park it in tax havens. Why is it legal to have tax havens where you have these secret accounts?

The world is changing; if the poor get poorer and the rich get richer, there will be a crisis soon. It will lead to a major crisis. The world bank, the IMF, the Asian developing bank must find a way to stop this plunder.

My third point is Islamophobia; there are 1.3 billion Muslims in the world. Muslims living across all continents. Islamophobia has grown since 9/11 and it is alarming. It is creating divisions.

Muslim women wearing Hijab has become a problem. It is seen as a weapon. A woman can take off her clothes in some countries but she can not put more on? And why has this happened? Because certain western leaders equated Islam with terrorism.

What is radical Islam? There is only ONE Islam and that is the Islam of Prophet (PBUH).

Why is there Islamophobia? How will an average American differentiate between a moderate Muslim and a radical Muslim? This has nothing to do with our religion.

We have faced Islamophobia while travelling abroad; and in European countries it is marginalising Muslim communities. And marginalisation creates room for and leads to radicalisation.

My point here is that we must address this. Post 9/11, war against “radical Islam” started, rather than Muslim leaders trying to explain to the West that there is no such thing as radical Islam.

There are radical fringes in every society, but the basis of ALL religion is compassion and justice.

Unfortunately the Muslim leaders were unable explain. We failed as the Muslim world to explain that there is no such thing as radical Islam. In Pakistan; we were the eye of the storm & our govt coined a term “enlightened moderation.”

About Suicide attacks; because the 9/11 bombers did suicide attacks, all sorts of theories came out like those about virgins in heaven. This bizzare thing happened where suicide attacks were equated with Islam.

No one bothered researching the Tamil Tigers and the Japanese Kamikaze bombers. No one blamed religion when they carried out suicide attacks and rightly so because no religion teaches violence.

Most important thing I want to say, to explain this Islamophobia, I've played cricket in the West & I know how the western mind works. One of the reasons for Islamophobia; in 1989 this book was published maligning, ridiculing our Prophet (PBUH).

The west could not understand what was the problem. They don't look at religion the way that we do. And so; in their eyes Islam was an intolerant religion. It became a watershed.

And every 2-3 years someone would malign our Prophet (PBUH), Muslims would react, and the west would term them intolerant.

I blame some people in the West who provoked Muslims. But this is where majority of the Muslim leaders let the Muslim community down. Our Prophet (PBUH) was the witness to our Divine book, the Holy Quran.

The Prophet (PBUH) is the ideal we want to live up to. He created the state of Medina which was a welfare state.

I hear such strange things about Islam that it is against women and minorities. The state of Medina was the first that took responsibility of women; the

widows, the poor. State announced all humans were equal; whatever the colour of their skin.

The Prophet (PBUH) announced that one of the greatest deeds is to free a slave. But if you have to; treat them as an equal member of the family. And as a result, the unprecedented happened, slaves became kings, and slave dynasties were formed.

Again; with minorities. In Islam, it was a sacred duty to protect places of worship of all religions. It was announced that all human beings were equal. The 4th caliph of Medina lost a court case against a Jewish citizen. No 1 was above the law.

When a Muslim community is unjust to a Minority, it is going against the teachings of our religion. Our Prophet (PBUH) lives in our heart, and when he is maligned, it hurts us.

I always imagined what I would say and educate the world about Islam if I ever stood on this forum.

In western society, the holocaust is treated with sensitivity because it hurts the Jewish community. So that's the same respect we ask for; do not hurt our sentiments by maligning our Holy Prophet (PBUH). That is all we ask.

Now I want to move on to talk about Kashmir. When we came into power; my first priority was that Pakistan would be that country that would try its best to bring peace.

Joining the war on terror, Pakistan went through one of its worst periods. We lost 70,000 people to the war, 150 billion dollar to our economy.

We joined the war against the Soviets in the 1980's. Pakistan trained the then "Mujahedeen" at the behest of the Americans. The Soviets called them terrorists, the Americans called them freedom fighters, then.

Soviets left, US packed up. Come 9/11, now that we had to join the US & tell the same indoctrinated people this is now not a "freedom struggle" but "terrorism". They suddenly saw us as collaborators; it became a nightmare & they turned against us

70,000 Pakistanis lost their lives, due to a war Pakistan had nothing to do with. No Pakistani was involved in 9/11. So when we came into power; we decided to disband all militant groups. And this was a decision taken by all political parties.

I know that India keeps saying we have militant organisations but I invite UN observers to come and see for themselves. Secondly we started mending fences. We engaged with Afghanistan, Iran.

And then India; let me tell you my relationship with India. Because of cricket, which is followed with great passion in the subcontinent, I have great friends in India. I've always loved going to India.

So my first move was to reach out to Modi & I said let's work our differences, leave our past behind & our main priority should be our people as we have similar problems; poverty & climate change. Highest number of people reside in subcontinent.

On zero response from India; we thought we should wait till the Indian elections since BJP is a nationalist party. Meanwhile, a Kashmiri boy radicalized by Indian forces blew himself up on an Indian convoy. Immediately India blamed Pakistan.

I told India to give us any proof and we'd act. We had actual proofs of Indian intervention in some terrorist attacks in our Balochistan province. We even caught their spy Kulbhushan Yadav who admitted to crimes.

Instead of sharing proofs of any Pakistani's alleged involvement in Pulwama attack, they tried to bomb us. We retaliated. We captured their pilot; but returned him the next day because we did not want the situation to escalate.

In the election campaign, Mr.Modi used terms like "This was just a trailer. The movie is yet to come." We thought post the elections we would go back to a normal relationship. But that was not the case.

Post the elections, we realised Indians were trying to push us on the FATF blacklist to economically isolate us. That's when we realised there was an agenda.

And then the revocation of the article 370 happened which used to give Kashmir special status. They escalated the number of troops in Kashmir and put 8 million people under curfew.

Mr. President; I have to explain what the RSS is. Mr Modi is a "life member" of RSS. An organisation inspired by Hitler and Mussolini. They believed in racial superiority the same way that the Nazi's believed in the supremacy of the Aryan race.

This is open knowledge. RSS believes in the racial superiority of Hindus. It was hatred for the Muslims & Christians. They believe that the golden age of Hinduism halted b/c of Muslim rule. They openly stated hatred for Muslims and Christians.

This is all open knowledge. You can all just google the founding fathers of the RSS like Golwalkar. This ideology of hate murdered Mahatma Gandhi.

The hate ideology allowed RSS goons under Modi's CM ship in Gujarat to butcher 2000 Muslims. The Congress party gave a statement that terrorists were being trained in RSS Camps. Modi was not allowed to travel to the US.

What kind of a mindset locks up 8 million people? Women, children, sick people. What I know of the west, they wouldn't stand for 8 million animals to be locked up. These are humans.

Arrogance has blinded PM Modi and BJP. This racial superiority; what does he think is going to happen when he lifts the curfew?

You think Kashmiris will accept a new status quo under revocation of Article 370. 100,000 Kashmiris killed, thousands of women raped. UN reported on this. But the world did nothing & sees India as a huge market. Materialism has trumped humanity.

What will happen when the curfew is lifted? Modi says this is done for the prosperity of Kashmir. But what will happen when 8 million Kashmiris come out of a lockdown and face 900,000 troops? I fear there will be a bloodbath.

The way Kashmiris are caged like animals in homes. Their political leadership arrested, even pro India ones. 13,000 boys picked up & taken to unknown locations. Youngsters blinded with pellets. This will only lead to further radicalisation.

We fear another Pulwama incident. And for that, India will again blame Pakistan.

Indian FM says Pakistan has 500 terrorists waiting on the border. What will 500 terrorists do against 0.9 million troops? They just want an excuse, the catchword & mantra of Islamic terrorism.

The phrase Islamic terrorism allows India to dismiss human rights and further increase cruelty on the people of Kashmir.

Why would we ever want to disrupt peace? But it's because there is no other narrative left for India. There will be another Pulwama incident because of their own cruelty in Kashmir, they will blame us and try to bomb us again.

Don't you think that 180 Million Muslims will be radicalised in India as they see 8 million Kashmiris locked up? And what about 1.3 billion Muslims who are watching this knowing that this is only happening to Kashmiri Muslims.

How would the Jewish community react if even 8000 Jews were under lockdown? How would the Europeans react? How would any human community react? Are we children of a lesser God? Don't u know this causes us pain.

We've been brought up watching films; a good guy doesn't get justice.... he picks up a weapon, and a whole cinema cheers him on. What has been the response of the world community on any atrocities in the Muslim world?

I picture myself in Kashmir, locked up for 50 days. Hearing about rapes, the Indian army going around. Would I live with this humiliation? You are forcing people towards radicalisation.

When people lose the will to live, they pick up guns. A movie "Death Wish" depicts how a boy picks up guns and starts killing all muggers. If you are doing this to human beings, pushing them, you are leading to radicalisation.

This is one of the most critical times. Pakistan will be blamed should something happen. Two nuclear armed nations almost went head to head in February. And this is why the UN has a responsibility. This is why you came into being in 1945!

I feel we are back in 1939; Munich. Czechoslovakia has been taken. Will the world community appease a market of 1.2bn or will it stand up for justice and humanity? If a conventional war starts between 2 countries, nuclear countries anything could happen.

Supposing a country 7 times smaller than its neighbour; faced with a question. Either you surrender, or you fight till the end. I ask myself this question. And my belief is 'La ilaha illAllah', there is no God but one. We will FIGHT!

I am not threatening here about a nuclear war; it is a worry. It is a test for the United Nations. You are the one who said Kashmir right to self determination. This is not the time for appeasement like that in 1939 in Munich.

This is the time when you, the United Nations, must urge India to lift the curfew; to free the 13,000 Kashmiris who have disappeared meanwhile and this is the time when the UN must insist on Kashmir's right to self determination!