

'UN REPORT BACKS INDIA'S STAND ON PAK.-BASED MILITANT GROUPS'

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: UNO and its various Agencies

While India has rejected the 'Update' of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) report on Jammu and Kashmir, human rights activists have pointed out that it includes several unprecedented references to rights violations and constitutional changes undertaken by Pakistani authorities and militant groups, that actually support India's narrative.

Urging India not to reject the 'Update' in its entirety, the activists have urged it to "engage" with the OHCHR's findings released on Monday.

'Take first step'

"The govt should engage with this process to acknowledge the violations, take steps towards accountability, and call for Pakistan to ensure an end to militant abuses [as well]. Often upholding rights is the first step towards ending the cycle of violence," said Human Rights Watch South Asia Director Meenakshi Ganguly.

She added that the government's "knee jerk denial" of all the UN findings ran counter to the fact that official Indian inquiries "have flagged violations and made recommendations similar to those by OHCHR."

The MEA maintains that its objections to the OHCHR report are based on human rights violations the report has accused India of. "We are only concerned with those baseless allegations that pertain to us," an official said, declining to comment on the other references to Pakistan.

Other activists point out that the OHCHR report includes certain new references to human rights violations by militant groups that should be welcomed by New Delhi.

"It is important to note, that for the first time, the UN is taking note of child soldiers being used by militant groups, for example. The report also remarks that Kashmiri groups have been charged with sedition and arrested in both Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) and Islamabad," pointed out peace activist Sushobha Barve, who works in Jammu and Kashmir as a part of the Centre for Dialogue and Reconciliation.

The OHCHR report released on July 8, that catalogued alleged violations on both sides of the Line of Control and International boundary in Jammu and Kashmir from 2018-2019, said that Jaish-e-Mohammad, Hizbul Mujahideen and Lashkar-e-Taiba had all been "accused of recruiting and deploying child soldiers in Indian-Administered Kashmir". It also mentioned strictures passed by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) against Pakistan for not curbing terror financing by these groups.

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