

Nawaz Sharif glorifies Hizbul militant Burhan Wani at UN, calls him a 'young leader'

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New York: Glorifying slain Hizbul commander Burhan Wani as a "young leader", Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on Wednesday demanded an independent inquiry into the "extra-judicial killings by Indian forces" in the Valley.

Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif

Burhan Wani, the young leader murdered by Indian forces has emerged as a symbol of latest Kashmiri 'Intifada', Sharif said at the 71st session of United Nations General Assembly in New York.

Ministry of External Affairs promptly responded to Sharif and said, "Pak PM Sharif at UNGA glorifies Hizbul terrorist Burhan Wani in UN's highest forum. Shows continued Pak attachment to terrorism."

Sharif said that the peace between India and Pakistan can not be achieved without resolution of Kashmir issue but failed to mention the recent terror attack at Indian army base in Uri by the Pak-based terrorist.

Sharif's denial of Uri terror attack also found a strong response from India. "Pak PM Sharif at #UNGA in complete denial of Uri terror attack. 19 infiltration attempts stopped at LoC this year. Indigenous?!!," MEA spokesperson Vikas Swarup asked.

Continuing Islamabad's Kashmir rhetoric, Sharif said that Pakistan will share a dossier on Indian brutalities in Kashmir with UN Secretary General.

Sharif devoted much of his 20-minute speech at the UN General Assembly session to Kashmir and the current situation in the valley and said Pakistan "fully supports the demand of the Kashmiri people for self-determination".

He demanded an "independent inquiry into the extra-judicial killings" and a UN fact-finding mission to Kashmir "so that those guilty of these atrocities are punished."

While Sharif cited presence of armed forces in Jammu and Kashmir, he conveniently ignored heavy presence of Pakistani army and its human rights violations in Baluchistan and Pak Occupied Kashmir (PoK).

He said that Pakistan wants peace with India but New Delhi India posed unacceptable pre-conditions to engage in dialogue.

India had earlier rejected a United Nations Human Rights Council's move to send a team to Jammu and Kashmir, pointing out that the domestic human rights panel was already at work while other institutions like Parliament and the Supreme Court had also discussed the situation in the state.

Insisting that peace and normalisation between Pakistan and India cannot be achieved without a resolution of the Kashmir dispute, Sharif made a number of allegations with regard to the current unrest in the valley.

India has blamed Pakistan for engineering and fuelling the unrest.

While talking about the situation in Kashmir, the Pakistan Prime Minister referred to Wani, who was killed in an encounter with security forces on July 8, as a "young leader" and said he has "emerged as the symbol of the latest Kashmiri Intifada, a popular and peaceful freedom movement..."

Sharif said the "Indian brutalities are well documented" and that "Pakistan will share with the Secretary General a dossier containing detailed information and evidence of the gross and systematic violations of human rights committed" in Jammu and Kashmir.

"The Security Council has called for the exercise of the right to self-determination by the people of Jammu and Kashmir through a free and fair plebiscite held under UN auspices. The people of Kashmir have waited 70 years for implementation of this promise," he said, adding the Security Council must honour its commitments by implementing its own decisions.

Sharif, who spoke amid heightening tensions between India and Pakistan, insisted that his country wants peace with the neighbour as "confrontation should not be our destiny in South Asia."

The Pakistan Prime Minister claimed that he had "gone the extra mile to achieve this, repeatedly offering a dialogue to address all outstanding issues but India has posed unacceptable preconditions to engage in a dialogue.

"Let us be clear: talks are no favor to Pakistan. Talks are in the interest of both countries. They are essential to resolve our differences, especially the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, and to avert the danger of any escalation."

While insisting that peace and normalization between Pakistan and India cannot be achieved without a resolution of the Kashmir dispute, he said, "This is an objective evaluation, not a partisan position."

"Today, from this rostrum, I would also like to reiterate our offer to India to enter into a serious and sustained dialogue for the peaceful resolution of all outstanding disputes, especially Jammu and Kashmir," Sharif said.

He also said that Pakistan was "open to discussing all measures of restraint and responsibility with India, in any forum or format and without any conditions."

Pakistan is "ready for talks to agree on a bilateral nuclear test ban treaty," he added.

Claiming that Pakistan "neither wants, nor is engaged in an arms race with India", Sharif said, "We have consistently urged the conclusion of bilateral arms control and disarmament measures between Pakistan and India to prevent conflict and avoid wasteful military expenditures."

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