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LETTER DATED 17 NOVEMBER 1965 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
PAKISTAN ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have been instructed by my Government to inform you that the Government of India, in flagrant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention 1949, subjected Pakistan nationals interned in India, following India's attack on Pakistan, to the most inhuman and brutal treatment. The internees, including women and children, were humiliated, robbed, treated like criminals and made to suffer untold hardships and deprivations against all canons of civilized conduct.

I enclose a copy of the protest note on the subject given to the Indian Ministry of External Affairs by the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi.

I shall be grateful if this letter and its enclosure are circulated as Security Council documents.

Please accept, etc.

(Signed) Syed Amjad ALI
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the
United Nations

TEXT OF PAKISTAN HIGH COMMISSION'S NOTE TO THE INDIAN
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, NEW DELHI

The High Commission of India to Pakistan visited the internment camp in Landhi on 24 October 1965, while the Acting High Commissioner of Pakistan was allowed corresponding facilities nine days after the High Commission of India had actually visited the internment camp in Pakistan.

At the time of the Acting High Commissioner's visit to Deoli, there were sixty-eight Pakistani women and 107 children interned in the camp. Out of a total of 454 Pakistanis in the camp, 175 were women and children. This is in sharp contrast with the practice followed in Pakistan where no women and children are interned. The Government of India have, in total disregard of the principle of reciprocity, chosen to intern Pakistani women and children.

The internment camp at Deoli comprises numerous barbed cages in which the Pakistani internees are accommodated in barracks. The average size of the room in the barracks is about 20' x 40'. In each room thirty-five internees are cooped up.

The Pakistani internees were apparently not informed of the impending visit by the Acting High Commissioner of Pakistan. They took him as a visiting Indian dignitary who was greeted by Pakistani Muslim internees in the characteristic Hindu style by folding their hands. This provides some indication of the extent to which their individual character and culture had been stamped out in conditions of complete isolation and demoralization. It was only after the Acting High Commissioner announced that he was a representative of Pakistan and had greeted them with the traditional Muslim salutation that the internees came out with their tales of woe. The touching scenes that followed would have rent anyone's heart.

A batch of about 232 persons - men, women and children - was detained at Barner on 6 September 1965, while on their way back to Pakistan by train. All of them were herded together in the Customs shed at the railway station, where they stayed for a whole week before being brought to Udaipur Jail. Their passports were taken away, their cash and jewellery snatched and they were kept in a room for six days without any food. Not even drinking water was provided to them. All that they were given was undrinkable brackish water. They were lodged in Udaipur Jail along with other criminals and were treated as such. In this group there were thirty-two Pakistani

Hindus and two Pakistani Christians. On arrival in Udaipur Jail, the Hindus and Christians were separated and released from detention while the Muslims stayed in the gaol for about a month and a half when they were removed to Deoli camp.

The Acting High Commissioner met a group of twenty-one women and children who had been brought from the Sialkot sector under occupation of the Indian Armed Forces. All these people belong to village Mastpura in Sialkot District and were taken into custody on 10 September 1965. After suffering innumerable hardships in a camp at Samba (Jammu) they were brought to Ambala and thence to Meerut Cantonment where the women were separated from their menfolk on the pretext that they were being taken for medical inspection. They never met their men again. This is a flagrant violation of article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention 1949, which forbids transfers, as well as deportations from occupied territory to the territory of the occupying Power regardless of any motive and yet the Government of India thought fit to intern this group which, among others, has an old blind woman named Begum Bibi who is over eighty years of age, and two orphan children of one year and three years respectively. The women who were brought from their village in Sialkot sector to India and who were separated from their menfolk on false pretences bore eloquent testimony to the illegal and inhuman approach followed in interning helpless women and children and adding to their misery by deliberately separating them from the men. The names of some of the men who belong to this group and whose whereabouts were not known to the women are Fazal Husain Bhatti, Bashir Ahmed Bhatti and Nazir Ahmed Bhatti of village Mastpura, District Sialkot. The total number of men is about fifteen. All their names were not taken down, but the Government of Pakistan expects that at the time of exchange of internees all divided families would be reunited before the exchange takes place and the missing men or women are produced.

Article 99 of the Fourth Geneva Convention 1949, to which India is a signatory, lays down that inmates of internment camps should be clearly informed of their rights and obligations under the Convention which should be prominently displayed for the benefit of the internees. No such arrangement existed in the internment camp at Deoli where the Pakistani internees were completely ignorant of their rights and obligations.

They were not aware of their entitlement in respect of food. Although a certain scale was laid down on paper in an order maintained in the office of the

Commandant, the actual rations provided to the internees fell lamentably short of the scale. On a visit to a kitchen, the Acting High Commissioner noticed that five kilogrammes of cauliflower and five kilogrammes of eggplant had been provided for the preparation of curry to meet the requirements of about 175 persons.

On paper each person was entitled to 50 ounces of vegetables and 1/4-ounce of cooking oil. At this rate they should have been provided with twenty-five kilogrammes of vegetables instead of ten kilogrammes. The food which the Acting High Commissioner saw being cooked in the kitchen was unfit for human consumption.

The internees who have never cooked in their life were made to cook and fend for themselves with the result that the food they produced was barely adequate to keep their body and soul together. This is a complete violation of article 89 of the Fourth Geneva Convention 1949 which lays down that expectant and nursing mothers and children under fifteen years of age shall be given food in proportion to their physical needs; no such provision existed in the internment camp where everybody was being ill-treated alike.

Article 94 of the Fourth Geneva Convention 1949, inter alia, makes it mandatory that the education of children and young people shall be ensured; they shall be allowed to attend schools either within the place of internment or outside. There were 107 children in the camp; a number of students of primary, secondary and high secondary classes, but there were no arrangements whatever for schooling or games and recreation appropriate to children of varying ages.

Some old Hindi magazines were noticed in a reading room. The Commandant informed that English and Urdu magazines were not available for the use of the internees. There were no arrangements for any indoor games either. The only arrangement for games was a volleyball net in each wing for adults.

Article 91 of the Fourth Geneva Convention 1949 lays down certain mandatory provisions for the care of internees suffering from serious diseases. In complete disregard of such provisions a TB patient was noticed living in a barrack along with others. He was spitting blood and was apparently in an advanced stage of the disease.

This should not have been difficult to detect. It was only after some persuasion by the Acting High Commissioner that the camp authorities agreed to send him to the hospital. On paying a visit to the hospital, the Acting High Commissioner

noticed that the two TB patients in the ward were being given ordinary diet which in any case was not suitable even for healthy men.

In complete disregard of article 107 of the Fourth Geneva Convention 1949, internees were not allowed to send and receive letters and cards. Although the Commandant informed the Acting High Commissioner that the internees were permitted to write a postcard per week to their relatives, individual inquiries from a large number of persons revealed that a vast majority of them had not in fact received this facility.

Even if the statement of the Commandant is accepted, the facility provided falls far short of the provisions in article 107, which lays down that internees should be provided with facilities to write two letters and four postcards per month. Not a single internee made a statement that he had received news from relatives.

Almost every internee bitterly complained of the humiliating treatment meted out before reaching the internment camp. The majority of them had been arbitrarily arrested at their places of residence and brutally treated by the police in flagrant violation of articles 31 and 32 of the Geneva Convention. In some cases torturous methods were employed by interrogation and eliciting information.

During their confinement in various gaols they were treated like criminals. In a few cases men were arrested while their families were left behind. The internees were not aware of the whereabouts of their families. There were a large number of cases in the camp where family members, in complete disregard of article of the Geneva Convention 1949, which forbids separation of families, were separated from each other and were completely ignorant of their whereabouts. Such withholding of information had added greatly to their misery and had aggravated their state of depression.

In gross violation of article 93 of the Fourth Geneva Convention 1949, "Aza'an" (call to prayers) had been forbidden in the camp and internees were not permitted to congregate for prayers. The inmates of one cage are not even allowed to visit the other cage.

In flagrant violation of article 27 of the Fourth Geneva Convention 1949, the internees, both men and women, on arrival at the camp were completely stripped and searched by the camp staff. Each one of them was subjected to a most humiliating

search. The only small mercy shown in this woeful episode was the fact that female internees were humiliated by the female staff.

The Acting High Commissioner witnessed heart-rending scenes and was deeply distressed at the appalling evidence of inhuman treatment meted out to innocent men, women and children, who for no fault of theirs, happened to be in India at the time the Government of India decided to launch a treacherous attack on Pakistan on 6 September 1965.

The internees disclosed that they had been warned before the visit to refrain from ventilating their grievances to an inspecting officer against the inhuman treatment being meted out to them at pain of being confined to "black cells". Their pain was, however, so poignant and their sorrow so deep that they could not help bursting into tears as soon as they came to know that they were confronted with a representative of Pakistan.

The High Commission of Pakistan in bringing some of the instances to the notice of the Government of India lodges a strong protest against large-scale serious violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention 1949, and demands that in conformity with the principle of reciprocity so overwhelmingly emphasized by the Government of India, all Pakistani women and children in all internment camps in India should be immediately set at liberty and arrangements should be made to ensure that in the case of male internees due regard is paid to the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention 1949, of which India is a signatory, and that necessary instructions are issued that they should not be treated like criminals and exposed to avoidable sufferings, privation and humiliation.

After having had an opportunity of visiting only one internment camp in India, the High Commission of Pakistan is now better able to understand why the Government of India has all along hesitated in providing information regarding the location of camps and the total number of Pakistani nationals interned in them.

The High Commission was surprised to find from newspapers that the Ministry of External Affairs had rushed to the Press on 4 November 1965, with a statement about conditions in the Deoli camp, attributed to the Acting High Commissioner, which he did not make to anyone at any stage. This was obviously a clumsy attempt to cover up the grievous excesses committed.

