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Monthly

# KASHMIR TODAY



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*Monthly*

# KASHMIR TODAY

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# RAPE AS A WEAPON OF WAR IN IOK

Dr Muhammad Khan

The Indian Army's endless brutality drove the Kashmiri youth into militancy. Instead of surrendering, the Kashmiris are fiercely struggling for the liberation of the Indian Occupied Kashmir. The Kashmiri freedom fighters sporadic attacks on the Indian Army's fortified bases and killing of law

is commendable. On February 10, 2018, the Kashmiri fighters attacked Sunjuwan camp in Occupied Jammu & Kashmir and killed six Indian soldiers. Four attackers were also martyred. Without investigating properly, New Delhi accused Pakistan for engineering the attack. Even a few Indian officials



enforcement agencies personnel have frustrated the Indian ruling elite. Instead of tackling the violent situation in the valley prudently, New Delhi has been scapegoating Islamabad. The developments in the Indian-occupied Kashmir directly influence India and Pakistan bilateral relations. Since the martyrdom of Burhan Wani, a 22-year-old pro-freedom Kashmiri leader, the situation in the Indian Occupied Kashmir is terrible. It is because, the killing of Wani on July 8, 2016, transformed constant peaceful protests and demonstrations into a violent struggle. Instead of engaging the Kashmiris, incumbent Indian ruling elite is increasing violence in the occupied Kashmir and also accusing Pakistan.

The Kashmiris' determination and passionate struggle to liberate themselves from the Indian yoke

claimed that the attackers came from Pakistan. Nonetheless, Islamabad strongly rejected all such allegations. The continuous successful attacks on the military camps have an frustrating effect on the Indian troops. Therefore, both the Indian political and military elite intimidates Pakistan for dire consequences. On February 12, 2018, Indian Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman stated, "Pakistan is expanding the arc of terror... resorting to ceasefire violations (on the border) to assist infiltration. Pakistan will pay for this misadventure." Though India lacks military capability to defeat Pakistan in a total war, yet it is creating troubles for Pakistan through the application of a hybrid warfare strategy. In reality, it has been sponsoring terrorist activities inside Pakistan. And also has increased



fire on the Line of Control. The increasing Indian fire on the Line of Control necessitates Pakistani border forces response. Indeed, continuity of a duel between belligerent nuclear armed-states is perilous for regional strategic stability. India's continuous military threat to Pakistan is an alarming factor in the South Asian strategic environment. Admittedly, Premier Narendra Modi and his fanatic cabinet members warmongering statements satisfy militant Hindus and serve to the agenda of the radicalized Hindu militant forces in India. However, they are failing to realize that the innocent Kashmiris genocide and bullying statements would not change the ground realities in the Indian Occupied Kashmir. They are simply counterproductive. In reality, the Indian Army's brutal strategy has failed to quash the Kashmiri freedom movement. With the passage of time, Kashmiris' resistance to the Indian law enforcement agencies brutal tactics has been increasing. Today, the Kashmiri youth has become more violent in his pursuit of objective, i.e. liberating Indian Occupied Kashmir from the illegal occupation of India. At the same time, both the Indian civilian leadership and military high-ups surgical strike mantra cannot timid Pakistan. India's bellicosity only threatens prevailing strategic stability in region

instead of terrorizing Pakistan. Realizing the probability of India's military adventurism. On February 13, 2018, Pakistan's Defense Minister Khurram Dastgi reiterated, "any Indian aggression, strategic miscalculation, or misadventure regardless of its scale, mode or location will not go unpunished and shall be met with an equal and proportionate response." This statement reveals that Pakistan remains vigilant about the situation and also prepared to defend itself. The critical examination of both India and Pakistan military capabilities reveals that former lacks capacity to bully the latter and vice versa. Precisely, any side's military adventurism would be catastrophic for both the states as well as for the entire region. Therefore, it's imperative that both sides ought to act sensibly and avoid bullying each other. Moreover, New Delhi ends butchering of the innocent Kashmiris and accepts their legitimate demands. The deteriorating situation between India and Pakistan has alarmed the Kashmiri leadership. The Chief Minister of Indian Occupied Kashmir, Mehbooba Mufti recommended New Delhi to revisit its Pakistan strategy. She opined that: "Dialogue with Pakistan is necessary if we are to end bloodshed. I know I will be labelled anti-national by news anchors tonight but that doesn't matter. The people of J&K



are suffering. We have to talk because war is not an option." To conclude, the continuity of freedom movement and Islamabad's moral and political support to the Kashmiris legitimate struggle enrage New Delhi. Therefore, the latter threatens the former without realising that both are nuclear-armed states and any military misadventure against each other not only devastates them, but it is also disastrous for the entire region.

## ALARMING KASHMIR'S SITUATION Dr Zafar Nawaz Jaspal

The Indian Army's endless brutality drove the Kashmiri youth into militancy. Instead of surrendering, the Kashmiris are fiercely struggling for the liberation of the Indian Occupied Kashmir. The Kashmiri freedom fighters sporadic attacks on the Indian Army's fortified bases and killing of law enforcement agencies personnel have frustrated the Indian ruling elite. Instead of tackling the violent situation in the valley prudently, New Delhi has been scapegoating Islamabad. The developments in the

Occupied Jammu & Kashmir and killed six Indian soldiers. Four attackers were also martyred. Without investigating properly, New Delhi accused Pakistan for engineering the attack. Even a few Indian officials claimed that the attackers came from Pakistan. Nonetheless, Islamabad strongly rejected all such allegations. The continuous successful attacks on the military camps have an frustrating effect on the Indian troops. Therefore, both the Indian political and military elite intimidates Pakistan for dire



Indian-occupied Kashmir directly influence India and Pakistan bilateral relations. Since the martyrdom of Burhan Wani, a 22-year-old pro-freedom Kashmiri leader, the situation in the Indian Occupied Kashmir is terrible. It is because, the killing of Wani on July 8, 2016, transformed constant peaceful protests and demonstrations into a violent struggle. Instead of engaging the Kashmiris, incumbent Indian ruling elite is increasing violence in the occupied Kashmir and also accusing Pakistan.

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## KEEPING KASHMIR ISSUE ALIVE!

*Reema Shaukat*

Perhaps Kashmir issue is not able to attract the attention of globalists as this unfinished agenda lies at the UN table for the past 70 years. Much has been done in the past for this undeniable struggle for freedom. Unfortunately when any political or freedom struggle faces bloodshed or violence, history shows either those movements result in genocide or die down their own death with passage of time. But Kashmiris' struggle for freedom and self-determination is gaining zest with every passing day. A new wave of ferocity by Indian army was staged again in Kashmir when 22-year-old commander of Hizbul Mujahideen Burhan Wani was killed in July

2016, during a gun battle with Indian forces. A new Intifada in Kashmir began after death of Wani. Now Kashmiris look more resilient and Kashmiri youth particularly seem more active and passionate in achieving freedom from Indian forces. The spirit of Kashmiri youth by wrapping up the bodies of their martyrs in Pakistani flag shows how obsessed they are to become integral part of Pakistan. History shows that how fearful this passionate Kashmiri youth made India scared of their zeal and passion for Pakistan. Finding no way out to suppress their voices for freedom, Indian army only uses violence and torture to keep them numb. Not only Kashmiri

youth but innocent children, men, women and old aged people have suffered brutality through hands of Indian armed forces. Oppression and tyranny on Kashmiris include widespread killings, rapes, shot at sights, slaughtering and killing Kashmiri youth in detention centres while keeping them in custody and make them bear inhumane torture. The bloody tragedy of poor Kashmiris had started after 1947 when they were denied their legitimate and UN approved right of self-determination. As a natural outcome of Indian injustice, people of IoK organized themselves and launched a war of liberation which India tried to crush through coercion and brutality. Later in 1988, India positioned a very large number of armed forces to suppress Kashmir struggle on gun point. Since then, Indian-occupied Kashmir has become a region where violence and violation of human rights is at peak. With advent of Indian occupational forces the ethnic cleansing campaign against the Kashmiri people has intensified manifolds. The phenomenon of religious persecution against the Muslims of IoK is also not new like rest of India. The huge Indian occupational forces under the cover of Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) and other black laws frequently engage in religious cleansing of Muslims. Under the Jammu and the Kashmir Disturbed Areas Act, and the Armed Forces (Jammu and Kashmir) Special Powers Act and Public Safety Act, security forces personnel have the powers to shoot suspected persons. Many human rights organizations including Amnesty International in their reports have mentioned the sufferings of Kashmiris from the hands of Indian forces

The people of Jammu and Kashmir have been granted the right of self-determination under the UN Charter, and under several UN Security Council resolutions, more specifically under UN (UNCIP) resolution of August 13, 1948, and January 5, 1949. These and subsequent UN resolutions have affirmed that, the question of accession of the State of Jammu and Kashmir to India or Pakistan will be decided through the political democratic method of free and impartial plebiscite. A peaceful, negotiated settlement of the Kashmir dispute in accordance

with UN resolutions ranks top on Pakistan's foreign policy agenda. In order to find an early and just solution to the decades old Kashmir dispute, Pakistan has always urged the international community to play an active role.

Pakistan has always raised voice against Indian forced occupation and brutality in Kashmir and it will continue extending full political, diplomatic and moral support to legitimate Kashmir struggle. Recently, Maleeha Lodhi, Pakistan's permanent representative at the UN mentioned in her speech on Kashmir Solidarity Day that, "The Kashmir issue is alive at the UN and will remain alive until it is resolved". She further said that the efforts of the Pakistan government and its Mission at UN, must be complemented by the community members in spreading the word about the grave situation in Kashmir where Indian occupation forces are attempting to suppress their popular uprising for freedom. Pakistan recently (February 06), again raised the Kashmir issue in the Security Council and urged the 15-member body to implement its resolutions non-selectively in order to establish its credibility.

Many steps have been taken by Pakistan often to keep the Kashmir issue alive at UN and wake up world conscience. Pakistan has always highlighted Kashmir issue at all forums of UN and the 193-member Assembly has also adopted a Pakistan-sponsored resolution on self-determination which had 70 co-sponsors. Pakistan had also written letters to the UN Secretary General protesting Indian ceasefire violations in Kashmir and the killing of innocent Kashmiris and calling for the appointment of a special envoy to facilitate a settlement of the Kashmir dispute. It is Pakistan's just support to Kashmiris that on every forum it raises its voice against Indian atrocities in Kashmir and until Kashmir is liberated from Indian occupation, moral, political and diplomatic support to the Kashmiri people will continue. However, there is need for effective lobbying also along with political or legal approaches towards Kashmir issue in order to give Kashmir cause a legitimate solution.

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# RAPING A COLLECTIVE SHAME

Reyaz Ahmed Mir  
Courtesy: RK

Raping and killing of tender aged girls by middle or old aged males is a collective embarrassment. There is something seriously wrong with the men. The incidence of heinous crime of molestation and murder of minors is dangerously increasing. If we can't stop it, we must die somewhere in dry pond, shamelessly. Raping becomes a norm now. An order which is being assumed to be entering the cultural territory. Yes, the rape culture it will soon be addressed with. When the word rape and the news about it strikes the minds regularly, it would slowly kill its sensitivity vis-a-vis rape. So the mind would not mind about the rape as a crime. It would be a common phenomena, not a specific or disturbing one. The equation of thoughts, emotions and beliefs would change. Raping then would be accepted as habit. Which finally would lead to be the part of attitude and then behaviour. Once anything becomes the identity of behaviour or character, it is hard to retrieve it from the climax to the brain mechanism to reshape the thought process leading to the manifest results in behaviour. Or, to put it simply, the paradigm shift would be much more difficult. Because, it would make the entry in subconscious part of mind. And, we shall live up with this mind set quite easily, unless something extraordinary triggers ripples in thinking process to re-arrange it. So, the alarm must wake up us all. Today, it decomposes the individual essence, tomorrow the society would fall prey to it. Rape is an unpardonable crime. Because, this signals the hegemonic traits of men and the subjugation of women for their no sin that too so brutally. Why is man too free to release his carnal frustration anywhere, anyway or with anyone he chooses to? Why is he so wild to growl over the little angels like Ashifa here and Zainab there across the borders for his lust and killing them through spine shivering means?

Earlier, these beasts molested Nirbhaya and killed her the way even devil can't resort to do so. This is a continuous brutality, seldom being noticed or reported. More surprisingly, it is quite away from the ambit of humanity when the men in uniform would turn into wrath over all females of twin villages who

could surely fall in the age of their own daughters, sisters, mothers and grandmothers too. This too happened in the near past around us. The question is not the oppression, religion or resistance, it is the matter of humanity, rights and gender exploitation. By no way, the justification is entertained. It only exposes the perpetrators to the depth of their nature they are wrapped with.

Targeting the soft gender is not bravery. It is an embarrassment for the spirit of humanity, instead. She is mother. She is daughter. She is sister and the better half too. She is significantly an honourable part of God's broader scheme of perpetuation of universe. She has a status which the men easily ignore. Yes, the decent, reasonable and wise men never do that. They always extend fair views and care for women of all ages. Such noble men realise that they are not born out of stones. It is actually the woman by who's pains and agonies they are existing as being themselves.

Neither state nor society succeeds in curbing the incidence of rape. Who else is coming to check it, we are waiting for. Now all parents, who are bestowed with daughters, are apprehensive. The feelings of fear and anxiety grip them all. We claim to be living in enlightened age of mutual trust and respect. But, shall our daughters and sisters dare to walk alone from bus stop to home in the time ahead in near future? Who is certain to reply in affirmative? Almost none.

Verma Committee, after the much hyped gruesome incidence of Nirbhaya, had recommended certain changes to be effected in the judiciary and police. Nothing was changed. So remained the rate of incidence as it was. At times, these brutal crimes are politicised too in the midst of heart rendering cries for justice by the victim families. But it fails to strike the ear drums of those who are at the helm. The recent instance is the case of Ashifa, which is perhaps being communalised in its worst form, an unfortunate part of the painful event. We all must remember that criminals like rapists have no religion. Any one from any community could be their prey. They have nothing to do with your status, faith,

power and position. So, it is not our, your or their issue. It is a serious concern of humanity as whole. We surely need a tough legal structure to break the back of this unacceptable crime against much revered gender. Because that potentially matters. We hardly listen such a bad news from certain Arab countries.

It must be admitted beyond prejudices that their laws, at least in securing the chastity of women, are effective and functionally correlated with society, as of now. Sooner or latter, we too shall have to come up with something stronger to protect the women folk, if the prevailing dirty mind set continues to dominate. Strong system doesn't mean the society is exonerated. No way. Social institutions do have to deliver with more responsibilities and commitment to build up the crime free software of thoughts and beliefs in minds of boys well in the beginning with a proper gauge. It obviously starts from family to schools and to religious institutions. We are also

listening the weird justifications of raping women on streets. Some question their dressing styles and walking late night alone. Reasonable questioning and preaching regarding the decent dresses or so is a right to propagate by both, men and women. If done with manners, it would surely have its impact, too. But that doesn't mean any female dressed not properly deserves to be molested and then tortured to death. That is a sick-mind thought. If, for just a moment, we accept such a strange view, but, what is the crime of little girls aging just 7 or 8 years to become the victim of rape and murder? Such minds need a permanent treatment. Islam never teaches us that which is being put forth by some ill-minded to virtually support the crime. Rather, it enjoins upon both men and women to keep down (gaze-basar) their eyes. If women are accountable for their dresses or deeds, men too are equally answerable regarding the decency of their eyes and purity of heart and thoughts

## Victims of Fury. Sufferers of Neglect and Apathy

*By Tajamul Islam, Tanvir Ajsietal*

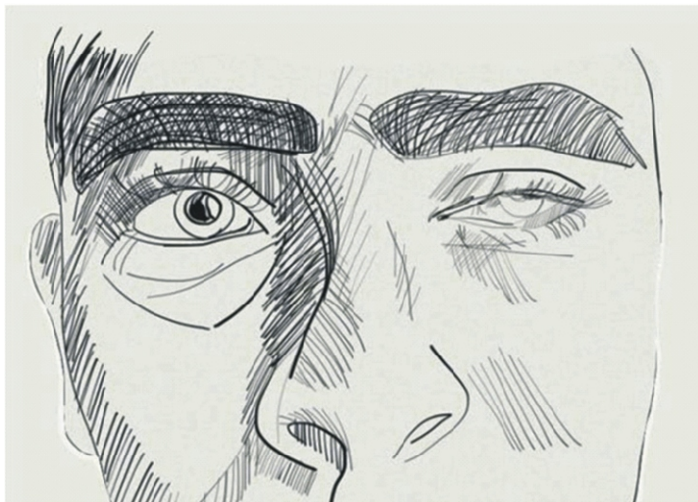
What greater tragedy can befall a person than losing his or her eyesight? The legs that intuitively take you everywhere with the support of your eyes would require a rehabilitation centre to teach you how to walk and synchronize yourself with the dark. Losing eyesight is not an individual issue in Kashmir. It is an issue that warrants a social response.

It is not so long ago that images of pellet-sieved faces and blood-rimmed eyes floated everywhere

sending shivers down our spines. Barely a year and half down the lane, we have already forgotten the people behind those images. It is important to make sure that this kind of tragedy does not happen again. But the journey towards a better tomorrow cannot be complete unless we also ensure that every single one of those who were injured like that are cared for. There is a discrepancy between the official figures and the data provided by the hospitals. Those who

have been hit by pellets range from over 1700 to around 8000 according to the available data. Some sources claim that about 700 civilians have sustained eye injuries and many have lost eyesight completely.

But, we must go beyond the numbers game and merely dwelling on these. The question that we must ask ourselves is: What have we, as a society, done for these victims? A person who has sustained injuries in eye requires several rounds of



surgeries depending upon the damage caused. It requires resources and many a family have drained their resources in the hope of restoring some amount of vision back to the eyes of their loved ones. There are families who have already given up on the treatment because of the costs involved and the victims have decided to take the support of a crutch to navigate and negotiate with this dark phase of their life.

Those who have been affected by these pellets include people from all walks of life. It is our collective responsibility to pool our resources to help those victims in need. Kashmir is a very philanthropist society, and time and again we have proved that we can do for ourselves what the government and its agencies cannot do, be it 2014 floods, the economic blockade earlier and so on. Pellet victims need

several rounds of operations to make them able to restore some light, however blurry it is, to see a skein of hope in their future.

The need of the hour is to introspect and pool our resources, intellectual, economic and financial, to come to the aid of these victims.

We request all the people of Kashmir to talk to their local representatives and community leaders for devising a plan and find about the victims in the surrounding areas and localities who need help. There needs to be a collective and sustained effort from mohalla to village and town level for helping the pellet victims and the other maimed and injured persons.

E cannot and must not push these victims to the back of our minds.

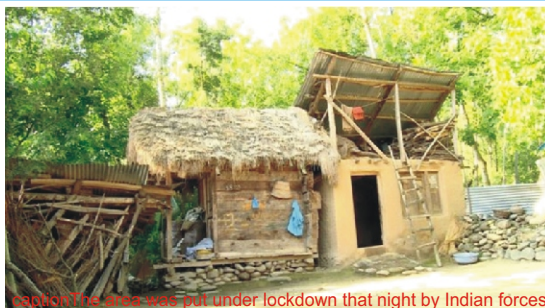
**(By: Kashmir reader, March 4, 2018)**

## Kashmir 'mass rape' survivors fight for justice

**More than 26 years ago, Indian soldiers allegedly raped more than 30 women in the Kashmiri villages of Kunan and Poshpora. Those who survived the attack are still fighting for justice, as Aliya Nazki from BBC Urdu reports.**

It was 23 February 1991. The people of Kunan, a tiny village in Indian administered Kashmir's Kupwara district, were retiring for the night after a cold winter day. Zooni and Zarina (not their real names) were also getting ready to go to bed when they heard a series of loud knocks on the door. At the time, India had started a large scale military operation in an attempt to control a popular armed insurgency against Indian rule in Kashmir. So-called "cordon and search" operations, locally called "crackdowns", were becoming routine and still persist to this day. In the 1990s, this would entail Indian security forces isolating an area, getting all the men out, and then searching the houses. The men would be paraded in front of an informer - and suspected militants or those deemed sympathisers would be picked up and taken away. When Zooni and Zareena saw soldiers on their doorstep that night, they thought it was the beginning of another of these so-called crackdowns. The men were taken away, and the soldiers came in, as was the established practice. But remembering that day makes their eyes fill with tears even now.

"We were getting ready for bed when the soldiers



came. They took the men away. Some started drinking alcohol. I was holding my two-year-old daughter in my arms when they tried to grab me. "I resisted, and in the scuffle she fell out of my arms, and out of the window. She was crippled for life. "Three soldiers grabbed me, tore my pheran, my shirt - I don't even know what all happened after that. There were five of them. I still remember their faces." Zareena was also in the same house. It had only been 11 days since her wedding. "I had returned from my parents' house that very day.

"Some soldiers asked my mother-in-law about all the new clothes hanging in the room, so she told them, 'here, she is our new daughter-in-law, our new bride'. "What happened after that, I cannot begin to

describe it. We haven't just been wronged, what we have faced is an infinite injustice. Even today when we see soldiers we start shaking with fear."

The people of Kunan and neighbouring Poshpora accuse the Indian army of carrying out a planned mass rape of the women in these two far-flung villages. They also claim that while the women were gang-raped, the men were subjected to horrific torture, and that they have been fighting for justice these last 26 years. In Srinagar when I spoke with a minister in the state government, Naeem Akhtar, about these allegations he said that in conflicts like Kashmir truth often gets obscured by the layer of dust that settles on it. And now it seems a group of young Kashmiri women are determined to wipe this dust away. In 2013 they filed a petition to reopen the case in the state High Court.



Natasha Rathar and other activists wrote a book about the case

Natasha Rathar, a young scholar, is one of those women who put their names on that petition. Natasha, along with four other young Kashmiri women, has also authored an award-winning book on this case, called *Do You Remember Kunan Poshpora?*

Natasha said that their motivation for reopening the case was quite simple. "This was such a big case of mass rape, in which those affected had actually come forward and had demonstrated so much courage. "And there was a huge body of evidence too. So we felt that this case needed to be reopened." And it was reopened. After a long and

difficult process the Jammu and Kashmir High Court directed the state government to pay compensation to those affected. The state government initially agreed, but then changed its mind, and challenged the High Court's decision in the Supreme Court of India, where the case is still being heard.

The Indian Army has always denied the allegations. When we requested an interview, they sent us a statement.

An army spokesperson told us that these allegations had been independently investigated three times, and that the case had been closed due to conflicting statements. In Kashmir most officials seem to speak in what sound like cautious parables.



Nayeema Ahmad Mahjoor says the crime should be proved in court

But not all. We spoke with Nayeema Ahmad Mahjoor, who heads the state commission for women's rights.

She told us very clearly that she believes that this crime was committed against the people of Kunan and Poshpora, and that this should be proved in court. She however stressed that the state government cannot interfere in the legal process. What really happened in Kunan and Poshpora that fateful winter night is something we might never find out. But a new generation is coming of age here now. The village and its houses are changing, and yet there are some painful memories that continue to haunt the residents.



## India's anti-terror agency says photojournalist is a stone-pelter but media watchdogs say charges are fabricated. Rifat Fareed



India's anti-terror agency says Yusuf is not a 'real journalist' [Shuaib Bashir/Al Jazeera]

Srinagar, Indian-administered Kashmir - On the morning of September 4 last year, Kamran Yusuf left his home in Kashmir's Pulwama for work, carrying his backpacks and cameras, but the photojournalist never returned, his family says.

The following day, his family came to know through news channels that Yusuf, who has been working as a photographer in the small town known for its apple orchards, was arrested by Indian security forces and sent to New Delhi, the Indian capital.

The arrest of Kamran Yusuf, a working photojournalist contributing to several media outlets, is clearly a violation of press freedom and journalists' rights.

### **LAXMI MURTHY, JOURNALIST**

The 22-year-old freelance photojournalist, who has



been documenting the conflict in Indian-administered Kashmir, has been slapped with charges of "stone throwing" and "waging war against India". He has been in jail since then.

Irshad Ahmad Ganaie, Yusuf's uncle, says the family is still in shock.

"His mother was divorced when he was two years

old. Since then, they are living with us. He was just working hard as a photographer in his hometown; he used to freelance with many organisations, and has taken all kinds of photographs," he said.

Ganaie, 38, says his nephew is being framed by the National Investigation Agency (NIA). "He is being punished for his work."

Not a 'real journalist'

In the charge sheet presented before a special NIA court in New Delhi, the anti-terror agency has said that Yusuf was not a "real journalist", as he had not covered social work done by the army and



paramilitary forces in the disputed Himalayan region.

"Kamran Yusuf had hardly taken any video of such activity and video or image of any such activity can rarely be seen in his laptop or mobile which clearly show his intention to only cover the activities which are anti-national and earn money against such footages," the charge sheet has said.

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) and Reporters without Borders have called on Indian authorities to immediately drop charges and release Yusuf.

"India's National Investigative Agency is way out of its league and has no business defining what 'a real journalist' should cover," Steven Butler, CPJ Asia programme coordinator, said in a statement.

He added that Yusuf's work taking photographs of conflict in Kashmir is a "public service in the best spirit of journalism".

Rights groups, local journalists and media watchdogs have raised their concerns at what they call "fabricated" charges against the young

journalist.

Amnesty International, in its annual human rights report released on Thursday, said that if convicted, Yusuf might face life imprisonment.

"Amnesty International believes the charges against him to be fabricated and politically motivated, and part of an attempt to stifle journalism in Kashmir," the rights body said in its report.

Threats and intimidation

Journalists in Kashmir, one of the most militarised zones of the world, with more than half a million Indian forces, say threats and intimidation are routine.

According to a report by the International Federation of Journalists, published last November, at least 21 journalists have been killed in the conflict either directly targeted or caught in the crossfire in Kashmir.

Muneeb-Ul-Islam, a freelance photographer, told Al Jazeera that journalists are caught in the line of fire.

He says that he himself has been "beaten by security forces many times" and had his cameras broken.

India's National Investigative Agency is way out of its league and has no business defining what 'a real journalist' should cover.

#### **STEVEN BUTLER, CPJ ASIA PROGRAMME COORDINATOR**

"Police think we side with stone-throwers and stone-throwers think we are covering from police's side," said the 27-year-old.

Activists say the arrest of Yusuf will have a chilling effect on media freedom in the region, that has been on the boil since Prime Minister Narend Modi, who came to power in 2014, adopted a hardliner policy to quell anti-India protests.

Yusuf Jameel has covered Kashmir for more than two decades. He says there is an indirect censorship on journalists in Kashmir.

Indian-administered Kashmir has seen a rise in violence since the killing of a rebel commander in 2016 [Danish Ismail/Reuters]

"Though there is no official censorship, they create an atmosphere where it becomes difficult and sometimes impossible for a journalist to report," he said.

His views are echoed by a prominent human rights activist in the Muslim-majority region.

"By arresting a photographer, the Indian government wants to create an example for the photo and video journalists in Kashmir who document gun battles and stone-throwing for the world to see," said Khurram Parvez.

#### **'Evidence of stone-pelting'**

Muhammad Aslam Chowdhary, a senior police officer in south Kashmir, admitted there was no direct case filed against Yusuf; however, his involvement in "stone-pelting and other cases is under investigation.

"In one case, it has been found that a video where the burning of tricolor took place in south Kashmir was uploaded from his Facebook account, but we have not been able to question him yet, the investigation is still on," Chowdhary told Al Jazeera. The NIA spokesperson, Alok Mittal, however, told Al Jazeera that "there is an evidence of stone-pelting against Yusuf. "Involvement of accused Kamran Yusuf who claims to be a photojournalist in stone-pelting incidents was conclusively established.

There is sufficient evidence on record, showing his participation in the incidents of stone-pelting, which has been submitted to the competent court. The Court has already taken cognisance of the charge sheet," he told Al Jazeera. But Laxmi Murthy, a journalist based in Bangalore and author of IFJ's report, said the laws, in particular, counter-terror laws, with sweeping and vague provisions, have long been used to stifle the media.

"The arrest of Kamran Yusuf, a working photojournalist contributing to several media outlets, is clearly a violation of press freedom and journalists' rights," she said.

## Shahid Khaqan Abbasi has strongly condemned targeting of the school van by Indian forces across the Line of Control.

In a statement, the Prime Minister said such unprovoked



and unethical acts have exposed the real face of India, which continues to violate Geneva Convention by targeting innocent school children. Taking notice of the incident, the

Director General (SA & SAARC), Dr. Mohammad Faisal, summoned the Indian Deputy High Commissioner J.P. Singh and condemned the unprovoked ceasefire violations by the Indian occupation forces. In 2018, the Indian forces have carried out more than 335 ceasefire violations along the Line of Control and the Working Boundary, resulting in the martyrdom of 14 innocent civilians and injuries to 65 others. This unprecedented escalation in ceasefire violations by India is continuing from the year 2017 when the Indian forces committed more than 1970 ceasefire violations. "The deliberate targeting of civilian populated areas is indeed deplorable and contrary to human dignity, international human rights and humanitarian laws. The ceasefire violations by India are a threat to regional peace and security and may lead to a strategic miscalculation," the Foreign Office stated. Dr. Mohammad Faisal urged the Indian side to respect the 2003 Ceasefire arrangement and investigate this and other incidents of ceasefire violations. He also instructed the Indian forces to respect the ceasefire, in letter and spirit and maintain peace on the LoC and the Working Boundary.

### Stop State Terrorism In Iok Masood Khan

Sardar Masood Khan, President Azad Jammu and Kashmir said that Modi and BJP's para-military arm RSS are committing heinous acts of terrorism in the Indian Occupied Kashmir. "This carnage of Muslims, these acts of genocide must stop", the President said while citing several instances of crimes against humanity being committed by the 700,000 occupation forces that had

cordoned off the entire territory of IOK and were brutally murdering its citizens. The President made these remarks while addressing the 2nd Inter-Universities Speech Competition on "Human Right Violations in IOK and the role of the International Community", organized by the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Cell here at Kashmir House, Islamabad. Commending the impassioned and substantive speeches of the contestants, the President said this should be an eye-opener to the Indian occupiers as the torch of freedom now is passed to the younger generation. The President said with this kind of commitment from the youth, he was sanguine that Kashmir would soon win freedom from Indian shackles.

President Masood Khan said that Kashmir is a historical issue because the entire territory of Jammu and



Kashmir, by law and on the basis of kinship, faith and commerce, belongs to Pakistan. One part of that state, he said, was forcibly occupied by India and since 1947 it has been killing, torturing and incarcerating Kashmiris. "India has colonized IOK and made Kashmiris aliens in their own land", the President said. He added that the Kashmir issue was also a geographical issue because Kashmiris, the key constituent of the Kashmir dispute, will decide who would have sovereignty over their territory. Speaking of the atrocities in IOK, the President said that Modi's government has adopted a policy of aggression and subjugation leading to the murder, maiming, illegal incarceration and forced evacuation of the Muslim population. As it commits these horrendous crimes, the President said that India paints itself as a victim and demonizes Kashmiris as terrorists backed by Pakistan. "We want peace and amity; and we want to pursue dialogue and diplomacy; and India seeks a solution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute through state-terrorism and falsifications of the situation on the ground. India's real face must be exposed to the international community", Sardar Masood Khan said. The President

said that the only terrorism in IOK is the state terrorism being sponsored and executed by Delhi through the occupation forces in IOK. He said India's appetite has not been satiated by these killings in IOK and is now targeting civilians across the LOC in Azad Kashmir. He cited a horrendous war crime in which the Indian soldiers recently blew off the hand of an infant in the lap of her mother and pierced her entire face with shrapnel. "This infant's life is ruined forever because of Indian terrorism", he said. India has also unleashed a third war a combination of proxy war and subversion against Pakistan in Balochistan, FATA, and Karachi and all major cities of Pakistan. President Masood said that the eerie silence of the international community to these crimes is deplorable. The United Nations has totally failed its mandate by not resolving this 70-year issue, he said. Castigating the international community's inattention and double standards on Kashmir, the President Masood Khan called on the UN Security Council to not hide behind expediency and urged it to take cognizance of the precarious security situation in the IOK which was described by one of the student speakers as a "smoldering volcano". Directly addressing Mr Antonio Guterres, the UN Secretary General, Sardar Masood Khan said that the Secretary General is a well-meaning person but he tends to eschew action on Kashmir on the premise of political correctness and an artificial balance between Pakistan and India. The Secretary General says, the President said, he would offer his good offices if India and Pakistan concur to such a role by him. The President asked why India would concur if it is the proven criminal, terrorist and the wrongdoer. It would do everything in its power to hide its crimes, he said. President Masood Khan said that today the cause of Kashmir has become more compelling than the Palestinian cause because the latter gets more attention in the United Nations and the European Union, and Palestine has a seat in the UN, but the people of the Indian Occupied Kashmir have no representation and voice in the international forums. "The people of Azad Kashmir and IOK are fortunate that they can use the sovereign window of Pakistan to convey their concerns to the international community.

President Masood Khan also said that the Kashmir cause should become an Islamic cause because the Kashmiris are being killed for their identity as Muslims. The

President said that the unarmed civilians of Indian occupied Kashmir are neither militants nor criminals; but the criminality of the Indians has been established beyond a shadow of doubt. "Kashmir the paradise on earth is on fire and the international community must step forward to stop this fire before it gets out of control", said Saddam Masood Khan. In a clear and open message to the PDP government in IOK led by Mehbooba Mufti, the President of Azad Kashmir said that facilitation of the Indian armed forces and the para-military forces must end. "By facilitating these acts of terror, you (Mehbooba Mufti) are an abettor to war crimes and crimes against humanity." President Azad Kashmir said that bilateral talks have been a farce leading to further delay in the resolution of the Kashmir issue. He said that from now on Pakistan should decline to talk to India on Kashmir bilaterally because India has closed all doors for dialogue and the weak process of dialogue in the past has been absolutely unproductive. "The road to Kashmir's solution must pass through New York and the United Nations; not through Delhi", he said. Addressing the students, he urged them to use modern means of communication including the social media to garner support for the freedom movement and help highlight the war crimes taking place in IOK. He said that by using the trend all students must continue to tweet and post on the Kashmir issue.

The President praised Secretary Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Cell Muhammad Idrees Abbasi and his team for successfully organizing this mega event and raising awareness on this issue among the younger generation.

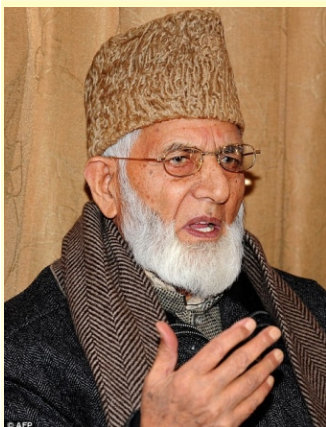
In the end of the event, the President presented the winning speakers with cash prizes and congratulated all the speakers on their outstanding performance. The event was also attended by Conveners APHC Ghulam Muhammad Safi and Faiz Naqshbandi, as well as Brig. (R) Dr. Muhammad Khan and a large number of students from the public sector universities of AJK.

### **Children worst sufferers of India's illegal occupation of J&K**

Srinagar, February 02 (KMS): In occupied Kashmir, the Chairman of All Parties Hurriyat Conference, Syed Ali Gilani, has said that Kashmiri children are the worst sufferers of India's illegal occupation of Jammu and Kashmir.

Syed Ali Gilani in a statement issued in Srinagar





expressed deep grief over the death of a 10-year-old Musharraf Fayaz of Shopian. Musharraf Fayaz was critically injured on January 25 after a shell exploded when the people were clearing the debris of a house destroyed by Indian troops with mortar shells and explosive material at Chaigund in Shopian. Musharraf Fayaz was shifted to Soura Institute of Medical Sciences in Srinagar where he succumbed to his injuries on Thursday. “We are grieved over the sad incident,” Syed Ali Gilani said, extending his condolences to the grieved family. He said that the Indian forces had virtually turned occupied Kashmir into a battlefield. He said that the Kashmiri children were the worst sufferers of India's forcible occupation of Jammu and Kashmir. Slamming New Delhi and its stooges in the occupied territory, the APHC Chairman said, killing, molestation and humiliation goes unabated and armed forces' personnel are not accountable for their heinous crimes. “Our youth and innocent kids are being killed and we are not even allowed to mourn these gruesome incidents,” he said, adding that for the past eight years, he had been virtually in jail and the authorities were neither allowing him to perform his religious duties nor allowing him to attend funerals of the martyrs. Syed Ali Gilani also expressed deep grief over the murder of a goldsmith in Sopore and extended condolence and sympathy to the bereaved family. “It is a serious matter and those involved in this heinous and coldblooded murder deserve stringent punishment,” he added.

### **India suppressing Kashmiris' struggle with might: Mirwaiz**

Srinagar, January 31 (KMS): In occupied Kashmir, the Chairman of Hurriyat forum, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, has deplored that India is suppressing the Kashmiris' freedom movement through military might. Mirwaiz Farooq, who continues to be under house arrest, in a statement issued in Srinagar said, killing Kashmiris with impunity shows cowardice of Delhi that makes great claims before the

world but does not want to resolve the Kashmir dispute. “This approach will neither alter the fact of the dispute nor will people of Kashmir give up their demand for its just resolution in accordance with their aspirations,” he said. The Mirwaiz pointed out under the black laws like Disturbed Areas Act (DAA) and Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), the troops had been given absolute powers to kill the Kashmiris at will without any fear of prosecution or accountability.

“With killings and severe subjugation becoming the norm, many among Kashmir's educated youth unfortunately feel compelled to take up arms, resist the oppression and fight for their birth right. All space for peaceful agitation for our fundamental political right stands completely choked and crushed,” he said and added that there was no way left for the young generation to express their feelings and aspirations peacefully and democratically. The Mirwaiz said, everywhere in Kashmir an atmosphere of fear and intimidation looms large. “People feel completely unsafe and vulnerable to



the forces' whims everywhere even in their homes. Pro-freedom leadership stays caged or in lock ups. We are not even allowed to visit the families of the martyrs and mourn with them such is the height of cruelty.”

“With every killing entire Kashmir has been turned into a military fortress, especially the downtown areas of Srinagar and Internet and other communication lines are snapped so that people could not even protest,” he deplored. Meanwhile, the Chief Patron of Jammu and Kashmir Mahaz-e-Azadi, Muhammad Azam Inqilabi in a statement in Srinagar condemning the firing of Indian troops on peaceful protesters in Shopian said that the Kashmiris would continue their liberation struggle till complete success. He advised India to pave the way for a peaceful, dignified and durable resolution of the Kashmir dispute.



Nasir Ahmad Khan  
5yrs old, Blinded, Kashmiri



## LOC



### Indian fire across LoC kills school van driver in Azad Kashmir

RAWALPINDI: One person was killed when Indian forces on Thursday targeted van carrying school children across the Line of Control (LoC) in Azad Kashmir's Battal sector, the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) reported. "Indian unethical and unprofessional approach across LOC continues terrorising civilians," the ISPR stated. A school girl who was

inside the targeted van described the scenes saying the children were frightened when Indian forces across the border opened fire at their van. She told that their driver was shot by a bullet and started bleeding. "We all started screaming and there was no one to help us. People gathered there after a long time," she added. The student of Government Degree College told that the incident took place in the sector, adding that they were heading from Dharamsal to Battal sector.



Jan 1989 to Feb 28, 2018	
Total Killings *	94,922
Custodial Killings	7,100
Civilians Arrested	143,364
Structures Arsoned/Destroyed	108,674
Women Widowed	22,866
Children Orphaned	107,697
Women gang-raped / Molested	11,043
Compiled by : Kashmir Media Service	





**Stockholm: Meeting of the President AJ&K Sardar Masood Khan with foreign affairs committee of Swedish Parliament**



**Briefing to standing committee of Senate on Kashmir & GB by Secretary Jammu & Kashmir Liberation Cell Muhammad Idrees Abbasi**



**Speakers are addressing on Kashmir solidarity day rally at Kohola AJ&K**



**Meeting of the focal persons of different departments on projection of real image of AJ&K**



**Briefing to delegation of Punjab Civil Academy by Secretary Jammu & Kashmir Liberation Cell Muhammad Idrees Abbasi**





Secretary J&KLC Muhammad Idrees Abbasi presenting shield to Convener APHC Ghulam Muhammad Safi



Secretary J&KLC Muhammad Idrees Abbasi presenting shield to chief guest President of AJ&K Sarar Masood Khan



Secretary J&KLC Muhammad Idrees Abbasi presenting shield to Chairman PRF Dr. Muhammad Khan



Secretary J&KLC Muhammad Idrees Abbasi presenting shield to Convener APHC Syed Faiz Naqashbandi



Secretary JKLC & other Speakers are addressing to a public gathering on death anniversary of Azal Guru Shaheed



Briefing to delegation of Baluchistan Civil Service Academy by Director (Admin) Raja Muhammad Sajjad Khan.





Islamabad ( KT): President AJ&K Sardar Masood Khan and other speakers are addressing to 2<sup>nd</sup> Inter Universities Speech Competition organized by J&KLC



Islamabad : Farukh Awais from MUST, winner of 2<sup>nd</sup> Inter Universities Speech Competition organized by J&KLC



Islamabad : Mr. Faisal Kabir from University of Kotli , 2<sup>nd</sup> position in 2<sup>nd</sup> Inter Universities Speech Competition organized by J&KLC



Islamabad : Hamza Khan from UAJ&K , 3<sup>rd</sup> position in 2<sup>nd</sup> Inter Universities Speech Competition organized by J&KLC



Islamabad ( KT): President AJ&K Sardar Masood Khan awarding shields to Judges & focal persons of 2<sup>nd</sup> Inter Universities Speech Competition organized by J&KLC



Islamabad ( KT): President AJ&K Sardar Masood Khan awarding certificates to Speakers of 2<sup>nd</sup> Inter Universities Speech Competition organized by J&KLC





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