



*March / April 2021*

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# KASHMIRIS' RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION

**T**he top military brass has reaffirmed complete solidarity with the people of Jammu and Kashmir for their just right of self-determination. The 240th Corps Commanders Conference held on April 8, 2021 under Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa at GHQ has assured resolute support of Kashmir's right of self-determination.

As per statement from ISPR; "Forum reaffirmed complete solidarity with Kashmiri brethren in their struggle for [the] right to self-determination."

This steadfast and unwavering support for the Kashmir's right of self-determination has dismissed three speculations, existed ever since July 2019. One, there is no acceptability for the Indian unilateral act of August 5, 2019 where this occupying state had relegated the statehood of Jammu and Kashmir into union territory.

Two, the Pakistani military stand behind Kashmiris until they are given their UN mandated right of self-determination. Three, Pakistani military is not part of any back channel diplomacy which suggests division of Jammu and Kashmir along existing ceasefire line; Line of Control (LoC).

Indeed, from the military and economic perspectives, the security of Pakistan lies in Jammu and Kashmir which was named as juggler vein of Pakistan by father of nation, Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

The military top brass is cognizant of the fact that in the realm of power politics, there cannot be any compromise over the geographical territories; even an inch of the state's land with rival state(s).

As per Kashmiris the entire state Jammu and Kashmir belongs to Pakistan as decided by them on July 19, 1947.

In 1947, the people of Jammu Kashmir fought against Dogra and Indian forces to join Pakistan and Kashmiris of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) are still fighting against 900,000 Indian occupation forces to join Pakistan.

While accounting for the unlimited sacrifices of the people of Jammu and Kashmir for the cause of Pakistan, the great Pakistani nation and its highly professional military cannot leave them in lurch.

Through this bold and clear statement from this highest military forum the explicit message is, Kashmiris must be given their right of self-determination if India is really desirous for peace in Subcontinent. In fact, wars have not resolved the Kashmir dispute, otherwise three Indo-Pak wars and Kargil conflict could have settled the Kashmir once for all. In the same context, General Bajwa stressed for a peace in the region while addressing at Islamabad Security Dialogue in March 2021. He said at this occasion, "We feel it is time to bury the past and move forward" but without any compromise on national interest of Pakistan. A constructive dialogue and progressive negotiations between India and Pakistan for the resolution of all outstanding issues will be welcoming initiatives.

However, the existence of Kashmir as the core outstanding dispute has to be addressed as a first priority if remaining issues are addressed between India and Pakistan.

While finding the durable solution of Kashmir, the only way forward is giving Kashmiris their right of self-determination, as reiterated in corps commander conference.

The basis of this UN mandated formula states; neither the territory of Jammu and Kashmir nor the inhabitants (people) of the state are divisible in any way. The surprise ceasefire arrangement, indeed is resumption of 2003 Ceasefire Agreement, a positive move forward, since the intense cross LoC firing has caused innumerable human casualties, damages to properties and inconveniences to the people living all along the ceasefire line.

The ceasefire agreement as agreed between both militaries through hotline contacts between the DGMOs of both countries has to be respected by militaries on both sides by all means.

This confidence building measure (CBM) will pave way for the initiations of many more CBMs between both nuclear rival states. Indeed, the nuclear dimension of South Asian security has put a full stop for any major military conflict between India and Pakistan. In the limited military conflicts too, the South Asian giant met humiliations in Kargil conflict and the February 2019 misadventure. Indeed, the multiple Indian



Dr. Muhammad Khan

military doctrines, evolved over the years against Pakistan met failure in one way or the other. Therefore, Indian military commanders too need face savings to cover up their boastings like; fighting “two-front war” and fighting “two and half front war”.

While the military top brass reiterated its firm stance of standing behind the Kashmiris struggle for their right of self-determination, the political and diplomatic circles have been found wanting in the practical manifestation of pursuing the Kashmir dispute at international level.

After all, Kashmir is an international dispute and United Nations is the principal stakeholder which must be approached for the implementation of its resolutions to grant Kashmiris

their inalienable right of self-determination.

The decision of Prime Minister Imran Khan for not going ahead with any trade with India until restoration of special status (Article 370 and 35A) in IIOJK is a very welcoming step.

Nevertheless, there is a need to trace-out those elements who wanted to bypass all the laid-down official channels to import Indian sugar and cotton at the cost of a key component of national interests.

The 240th Corps Commanders Conference has given a clear road-map to political elites for a realistic and tangible pursuance of Kashmiri's right of self-determination.

The writer is Professor of Politics and IR at International Islamic University, Islamabad.

## WILL A RAPPROCHEMENT RESOLVE KASHMIR?

Cameron Munter, the United States' former ambassador to Pakistan and now a keen Pakistan follower, made an uncharacteristic remark at the recently concluded Islamabad Security Dialogue (ISD). He opined: “India supersedes any other nation as a prime US interest in South Asia; that Pakistan did not exist on the American radar for now unless something else of urgency came up; and that the US will not engage itself in resolving Kashmir between India and Pakistan.” It was as directly stated as that; perhaps more so than this paraphrasing suggests. Quite unusual for a diplomat. The moderator, an above par and consummate former diplomat himself, had simply asked, “What would the Biden administration's policy be towards South Asia (always India and Pakistan)?”

Munter having served here long enough knew exactly what the question implied. When Pakistanis inquire on US policy on India and Pakistan it is usually in zero-sum terms. He could have been his usual savvy self and a little diplomatic but he let this one fly. Perhaps it is time to fall back to the old times and learn better how the US dealt with this binary in the past by varying shades only in association and affiliation than throwing its lot wholly in one or the other lap.

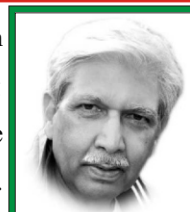
That's the price of rhetoric and its uninhibited peddling of the last seven decades. More so in the last few despite better scholarship through exposure to international settings on the back of easier travel and pervasive communications. Those that

could have qualified better the formulation of the issue over time under a changing global dynamic failed to stand up to the emotion that drove both policy and rhetoric.

Some were swept with the flow for jobbery while others feared being characterised heretical to frame issues like Kashmir in other than popular terms. As a consequence South Asia finds itself stuck in a groove with absolutely no movement forward towards resolution of even what were termed low-hanging fruits. It is possible that we may have missed the bus on most of those already having stood-off under an assumption that engagement meant weakness.

Pakistan has successfully taken on the Indian might in nearly four wars and stood its place. It can do so for another 75 years and fight four more wars, if needed. Yet the revocation of Article 370 and modifications in Article 35(A) may never be rescinded with attendant policy consequences and massive demographic changes in the period which becomes available to India unchecked. A possible engagement may just bring forth the possibility to modify India's state behaviour towards Kashmir and its excesses. Pakistan is committed to help Kashmir find its freedom and alleviate their perpetual suffering. If it can be negotiated without resorting to war so much the better.

Pakistan also has the unqualified support of the UNSC resolutions suggesting the need and mechanisms to solve the



Shahzad Chaudhry

Kashmir dispute. Those have some qualifying parameters before a plebiscite can be held and which will of themselves necessitate a review of the enabling parameters to reach a just solution. But a lot of water has flowed under the bridge since and we haven't gone beyond rhetoric in keeping our people informed of the newer contours of the dispute. It thus always leaves a yawning gap between realpolitik that bases on flexibility and nimbleness and the aspirations and dreams that have been fed through unqualified rhetoric over decades. Sticking to the rhetoric only offers antiquated approach to legacy issues which in a changed world is a non-starter. It shall need far greater enterprise than what is on offer.

There are two grounded realities of the Kashmir dispute. One, the recognition of the fact that a dispute exists per UNSC resolutions which outline certain preparatory and implementable mechanisms of dispute resolution charting the way out of this morass both countries are in violation of the enabling conditions meant to take us to a resolution. Two, that India and Pakistan are recognised as the two sides to the conflict. Both India and Pakistan are signatories to those resolutions and have accepted their validity and applicability.

Over the years though two other elements have crept in. One is how the Kashmiri people and their fundamental rights of life, property and statehood have been violated by India and how their struggle has found intensity and relevance over the last quarter of a century against such oppression. Thousands have gone down fighting against Indian occupation even as they face brutality and denial of their fundamental right to life and freedom. Unfortunately, they have also not found recourse to an arbiter who could intervene in their support. Only lately some voices have begun to be heard but none is taking the bull by the horn. This has given enough eminence to make the Kashmiris near-formal and rightful claimants to Kashmiri statehood with autonomy over territories so defined as Jammu and Kashmir. Hence there are now three parties to the conflict. It varies from the definition as claimed in the UNSC

resolutions which drove most of the rhetoric. We got to factor this in and understand that variations in the nature of dispute have crept in. This may also change the result to other than the expected when negotiations take place. Should it then force India and Pakistan to look differently at the dispute making possible more innovative options?

Next India has attempted a unilateral alteration of the status of Kashmir within its constitution by revoking some of the articles which retained the uniqueness of Kashmir even when forcibly held. Such assimilation in effect attempts to dilute its status down to a regular Indian state attempting at a stealthy merger of a people and of a territory declared disputed by collective global wisdom. This is a tricky zone to navigate. Pakistan has never accepted any formulation within the Indian constitution on Kashmir so even though there was a terse reaction to Indian legal and legislative excess she claimed to be continually guided by the UNSC resolutions. Yet this factor now rides the process of dealing with the issue. The Kashmiris have reacted violently to being forcibly subsumed and have stood up to contrived legal annexation. For them and for Pakistan the issue may not have changed yet India has gone ahead and forced a legal fait accompli. The world, Pakistan and the Kashmiris will need to deal with this.

A people cannot be denied their freedom and if a nation yearns for it, she will realise its aspiration. How long it might take is the concern. Till then though Pakistan has a decision to make: move ahead with India on other issues such as trade, connectivity and normalisation on most spheres even as Kashmir awaits resolution, or to hold back all else till Kashmir stands resolved. The contours of how matters have moved between India and Pakistan in the last few weeks indicate a strategic shift if not a full-blown choice. A structured engagement with India may just move South Asia finally to peaceful coexistence. It might help unshackle the gridlock moving the region to its full potential. This calls for statesmanship on both sides.

*Published in The Express Tribune, March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021.*

# UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE 2020 COUNTRY REPORTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES

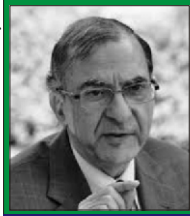
Once again, the United States Department of State, 2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, issued on March 30, 2021 has reproached India on her human rights record.

The country report contains graphic documentation of human rights violations being committed by the Indian military and paramilitary forces in Jammu & Kashmir. This is a significant step towards greater international recognition of the serious abuses committed against Kashmiris at the hands of Indian army. This report may take the veil of secrecy off of India's crimes against humanity.

The country report cites various examples where the authorities intimidate and threaten the media. The report says, "Journalists working in Jammu and Kashmir continued to face barriers to free reporting through communications and movement restrictions. Criminal prosecutions were often used to gag journalists critical of the authorities, including the use of a section of the penal code that includes sedition punishable by life imprisonment. In February the Kashmir Press Club stated security agencies had routinely deployed intimidation tactics such as threats, summonses, and physical attacks on journalists in Jammu and Kashmir."

The country report in particular describes an incident when "On April 18, police in Kashmir booked photojournalist Masrat Zahra under the UAPA for indulging in "antinational activities" on social media. In a statement police accused Zahra of "uploading antinational posts with criminal intention, uploading posts that glorify antinational activities and dent the image of law enforcing agencies besides causing disaffection against the country." Zahra maintained she was sharing archival images that had already been published in different local and international social media platforms. The investigation continued at year's end."

Kashmir journalist charged for 'anti-national' social media posts Bilal Kuchay Outrage in Kashmir as photojournalist Masrat Zahra, 26, is booked under stringent Unlawful Activities (Preventio...



Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai

"On April 10, authorities arrested pregnant student leader Safoora Zargar under the UAPA for allegedly conspiring to incite the Delhi riots. The Delhi High Court released her on June 23 after the central government did not object to her release."

The country report details many instances where the use of draconian laws has given sense of total impunity to the Indian army in Kashmir. It states "Under the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), the central government may designate a state or union territory as a "disturbed area," authorizing security forces in the state to use deadly force to "maintain law and order" and to arrest any person "against whom reasonable suspicion exists" without informing the detainee of the grounds for arrest. The law also provides security forces immunity from civilian prosecution for acts committed in regions under the AFSPA."

"The Public Safety Act (PSA), which applies only in Jammu and Kashmir, permits authorities to detain persons without charge or judicial review for up to two years without visitation from family members."

The country report underscored that "There were allegations of enforced disappearance by the Jammu and Kashmir police. Although authorities denied these charges and claimed no enforced disappearances had occurred since 2015, the International Federation for Human Rights reported that cases of enforced disappearances continued through 2019." "In February the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances identified seven cases under its standard procedures concerning individuals who were arrested, detained, or otherwise deprived of rights. The Working Group had not received permission to visit the country since it first submitted a request to the government in 2010."

The country report cites specific incidents where the Indian Government violated the very principles of human decency and democratic freedom against the people of Kashmir. The report states that, "In responding to demonstrations that started in July 2016, Indian security forces used excessive force that led to

unlawful killings and a very high number of injuries. ... One of the most dangerous weapons used against protesters during the unrest in 2016 was the pellet-firing shotgun.”

The country report was very concerned about arbitrary arrests and detention. It says, “Following the central government's August 2019 abrogation of a special constitutional provision that provided autonomous status for Jammu and Kashmir, authorities used a public safety law to detain local politicians without trial. Most detainees were released during the year. Media reports indicated those released were required to sign bonds agreeing not to engage in political activity.”

The country report talks about the denial of fair public trial. It says, “In April, Mohammed Yasin Malik, leader of the pro-independence Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), was arrested and charged with murder in the death of four Air Force officials in 1990. Malik was denied the right to be physically present in court. Human rights groups in Kashmir, including the JKCCS, expressed concern regarding whether Malik was receiving a fair trial.”

Political prisoners are facing many hardships. Their relatives do not have free access to meet with them even on special occasions. The report says, “NGOs reported the central government held political prisoners and temporarily detained individuals in Jammu and Kashmir under the PSA. On September 15, the Ministry of Home Affairs informed parliament that 223 political leaders from Jammu and Kashmir, who had been detained after August 2019, remained in detention but added “no person is under house arrest.”

The country report quoted international experts and NGOs who have not been able to visit Jammu & Kashmir. The report says, “Various domestic and international human rights organizations continued to express serious concern at the use of pellet guns by security forces for crowd-control purposes in Jammu and Kashmir. In March the Jammu and Kashmir High Court dismissed the public interest litigation petition seeking a ban on the use of pellet guns on protesters, asserting that police have the right to administer force in self-defense when facing violent protests.”

The country report cites many examples of torture which has been used against civilians in Jammu & Kashmir. The report

says, “A May 2019 report by the JKCCS and the Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons alleged that police, military, and paramilitary forces in Jammu and Kashmir used torture against civilians and opposition over the past four decades. The report documented 432 testimonies from individuals who claimed to have been tortured. There were continued allegations of physical abuse and torture following the government's enhanced security measures in Jammu and Kashmir after the August 2019 move to abrogate Article 370 of the constitution.”

As we all know that Internet ban has been a serious problem. The report says, “The center reported the longest shutdown occurred between August 4, 2019, and March 4 in Jammu and Kashmir.”

The right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly are basic human rights. The report says, “Jammu and Kashmir was an exception, where the state government sometimes denied permits to separatist political parties for public gatherings, and security forces reportedly occasionally detained and assaulted members of political groups engaged in peaceful protest (see section 1.g.). During periods of civil unrest in Jammu and Kashmir, authorities used the law to ban public assemblies and impose curfews.”

International NGO's including the United Nations Special Rapporteurs have been denied entry into Kashmir. The report says, “The government continued to decline access by the United Nations to Jammu and Kashmir and limit access to the northeastern states and Maoist-controlled areas. In an August statement, UN human rights experts called on the government “to take urgent action to address the alarming human rights situation in the territory.” The UN special rapporteurs noted that since August 2019, “the human rights situation in Jammu and Kashmir has been in free fall,” and they were “particularly concerned that during the COVID-19 pandemic, many protesters are still in detention and Internet restrictions remain in place.” The group appealed to the government “to schedule pending visits as a matter of urgency, particularly of the experts dealing with torture and disappearances.”

It is well documented that the bloody occupation has resulted in massive human rights violations, particularly targeting women

and children. The sanctity of women has been violated, in a gruesome and unforgiving fashion.

It is our hope that the State Department Country Report will mobilize the policy makers and the members of Congress to do everything in their constitutional power to stop the killings in Kashmir. It is further our hope that the Biden Administration will look to solving the root cause of the problem the unfulfilled promise of self-determination as guaranteed by

successive United Nations Security Council resolutions.

We believe that history is not predestined, and it is up to us to make peace its destiny in Kashmir through all of our energies, goodwill, wisdom, and compassion for the tragic afflictions of that once glorious land.

*Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai is the Secretary General, World Kashmir Awareness Forum, Washington, D.C. He can be reached at: 1-202-607-6435 or [gnfai2003@yahoo.com](mailto:gnfai2003@yahoo.com)*

## 'DAYLIGHT LOOT': KASHMIR FARMERS SUFFER AS RIVERS ILLEGALLY MINED

Jehangir Ali



Illegal mining is threatening the livelihood of thousands of poor families in Indian-administered Kashmir [Jehangir Ali/Al Jazeera]

Shopian, Indian-administered Kashmir Ghulam Mohammad Mir, 62, looks grudgingly at the canal that usually brings water year-round to his and many other fruit orchards in Indian-administered Kashmir's Shopian district, home to some of the finest apples grown in the lap of the Himalayas.

Mir's anger has a reason. The canal is dry these days, hampering the start of the apple season when farmers prepare the trees with minerals and fertilisers.

"It is time to give trees their first shower (of minerals and pesticides) but there's no water," laments Mir, pointing to the parched canal. "It will prove costly, because missing even one spray (out of approximately a dozen recommended) can ruin the whole crop."

Agriculture is the backbone of the region's economy, contributing 8 percent towards its GDP. According to one survey, at least 700,000 Kashmiri families are directly or indirectly connected to the agricultural sector.

Last year, about two million tonnes of apples were harvested in Indian-administered Kashmir, two-thirds of which was exported to the Indian markets.

Shopian is the region's second-smallest district, with a cultivable area of just 312sq km (194sq miles). Yet, it reported the third-highest yield of apples and second-highest yield of cherries in 2018-2019, according to the government's agriculture department, making it the "apple capital" of Indian-administered Kashmir.

### Illegal mining of rivers

In 2019, India scrapped the region's semi-autonomy, bringing in developments that spelled disaster for the farmers as rules changed and outside players flooded the area.

Many irrigation canals and water channels crisscrossing the apple-rich belts of Shopian are running dry due to illegal and unabated mining of rivers.

In nearly three dozen villages of Shopian, there are complaints of water shortage, said Mohammad Yusuf Wagay, another farmer from Odura village.

"The Salar water stream feeds 12 villages and dozens of orchards but it is running dry. When we raised the issue with the administration, we were asked to shut our mouths and threatened with police cases," he said.

The spring melt in the snowcapped Pir Panjal Mountains in the Himalayas washes the tributaries of Rambi Ara, Romshi and Vishow in southern Kashmir before flowing into the Jhelum River, which is part of South Asia's grand Indus river system.

Rich with exotic snow trout and mineral wealth, the "three sisters" irrigate thousands of lush apple and cherry orchards scattered on their flood-prone banks, providing a livelihood to thousands.



Rambi Ara, one of the major tributaries of Jhelum River in India-administered Kashmir, irrigates thousands of orchards and farms and provides drinking water to many villages

[Jehangir Ali/Al Jazeera]

A government of India study carried out by the Central Power and Research Station, Pune, has warned against mining the Jhelum river or its tributaries. However, in February last year, when the local government opened auctions for mining, the “three sisters” were identified by the government as part of the reserves, despite environmental concerns. For 222 “blocks” areas demarcated for mining activities the government received 199 Letters of Interest, the first step in the auction process. Accordingly, mining plans for 180 areas were approved. But the environmental clearance to mine was only given for 13 “blocks” in Kulgam and Kupwara districts, according to official documents. However, locals in Shopian, home to Rambi Ara tributary, allege that contractors whose plans were approved but pending environment clearance already started mining operations.

In a year of unabated excavation, they said, the tributary's ecosystem has been vandalised and its watercourse tampered with.

### **'River resembles a war zone at night'**

Sources in the government said roads were identified as a “priority sector” by the administration to “showcase the turnaround” in the infrastructural landscape after the region's special status was scrapped and it was turned into a federal territory under New Delhi's direct control.

“Roads are being constructed at three times the earlier speed. Efforts are being made to complete the power and water projects pending for years,” the disputed region's Lieutenant Governor

Manoj Sinha said earlier this month.

A source in the government told Al Jazeera much of the stone and sand used for the construction and repairs of roads across south and central Kashmir is extracted from Rambi Ara, Romshi and Vishow, while the government “turns a blind eye to this wilful vandalism of environment”.

“I can understand what is happening. We also feel we cannot become an obstacle for any project put forth by the government,” said an official in the region's geology and mining department, requesting anonymity.

In the daytime, locals are seen in the Rambi Ara tributary with their shovels and tractors. When darkness falls, non-local contractors plough out sand and other minerals using heavy machines, leaving deep craters in the river.

“The river resembles a war zone at night,” said Ghulam Qadir Bhat, resident of Odura village and head of a local village council in Shopian. “Throughout the night, the sound of heavy earthmovers rob us of our sleep.”

The mining contracts in about 40 blocks of Rambi Ara were bagged mostly by non-locals.

Kashmiri contractors, who use local labour and carry out excavation manually, could not participate in the bidding process due to the internet shutdown part of India's security and communications clampdown following the scrapping of the region's special status.

“The bidding process was illegal. Almost 85 percent of contracts were bagged by non-locals who have snatched the livelihood of thousands of workers in this belt,” said Tariq Ahmad, who heads a local union of workers in Shopian.

### **'Our families will starve'**

Bhat said the mining has tampered with the river's natural course, leaving irrigation canals dry.

“Odura is a poor village of farmers,” Mir said. “Our survival depends on our orchards. If our trees are starved of water, our families will starve as well.”

The water scarcity has triggered a wave of anxiety among ordinary residents as well as farmers, forcing them to delay spraying their crops, which can prove detrimental.

“This river is a source of livelihood for hundreds of families. Where will we go? How will we sustain our families?” said Abdul Rahim Mir, a resident of Mispura village in Shopian.

The Rambh Ara river is a source of livelihood not just for the fruit cultivators but also for young, jobless men who used to extract stones and sand from the river manually for daily wages. Many bought tractors on bank loans to help with transportation.

Showkat Qazi, a tractor owner and resident of Shopian's Shadab Karewa area, said some 200 drivers are jobless after the mining contracts were handed to non-locals.

“Many tractor owners have graduate and postgraduate degrees. Some availed bank loans for buying tractors but the mining by non-locals has destroyed their livelihood,” he said.

### **'Broad daylight loot of resources'**

According to Section 4.3 of the Jammu and Kashmir Minor Mineral Concession, Storage, Transportation of Minerals and Prevention of Illegal Mining Rules 2016, mining is forbidden in riverbeds “below the depth of 3 metres or water level, whichever is lesser”.

However, mining by heavy machines has left deep and wide craters in Rambh Ara which threaten a major power transmission tower built on the river.



Miners have plundered the Rambh Ara river, threatening crucial public infrastructure [Jehangir Ali/Al Jazeera]

“The water which fed our orchards now flows beneath large boulders dislodged by the machines. Due to unplanned mining, it is now difficult to reach the main river,” said Abdul Rashid, a farmer in Odura village.

According to India's National Water Policy 2012, “skewed availability of water between different regions and different people in the same region” and “unreliable water supply system” has the “potential of causing social unrest”.

“It is a broad daylight loot of our resources,” said Bhat, the

village council head.

“After the Article 370 abrogation, (Prime Minister Narendra Modi had promised 'sabka saath, sabka vikas' (unity and progress for all). But instead of offering jobs, unemployment has only increased. Now our basic livelihood is being snatched from us,” he added.

### **'Forcing us to sell our land'**

After New Delhi relaxed the rules, allowing non-Kashmiris to own land in the disputed region, many farmers in Shopian, a hotbed of rebel activities, say they see a disturbing pattern in the manner in which mining has been going on.

“It is a deliberate attack on our livelihood,” said a farmer who didn't want to be named, “The government wants to destroy our orchards and force us to sell our land. They want us to beg for alms.”

Jammu and Kashmir territory's mining law states the licensee must work “effectively in a proper, skilful and workmanlike manner with regard to conservation of mineral and safety of labourers and surroundings”.

But the villagers allege the contractors are not concerned with the “safety of surroundings”.

Shopian's Deputy Commissioner Sachin Kumar Vaishya told Al Jazeera there is “no clarity” about the people involved in mining the Rambh Ara.

“The situation is not good. We have seized several vehicles. I am seeking a report from the irrigation and other concerned departments on this,” he said.

“We have to strike a balance between development and environment protection.”

The statistics are alarming. In 2018, the government's geology department filed three cases involving illegal mining in Shopian. Last year, 83 such cases were filed.

In the adjoining Pulwama district, the figures stand at 46 and 317 respectively. In 2019, 476 cases were registered in 10 Kashmir districts which jumped to 2067 cases last year.

“If there is a jump of 400 percent in illegal mining cases, you can imagine the actual situation on the ground,” the geology and mining department official, who had requested anonymity, told Al Jazeera.

Vaishya said the mining contracts have not yet been awarded. “We are finding a way out to provide them (locals) livelihood and at the same time ensure that the ecology of the river is



Residents of Odura village in Shopian have been approaching the government to curb illegal mining but they allege they were threatened to keep quiet [Jehangir Ali/Al Jazeera]

Preserved. I have met locals. We will come out with a roadmap.”

But the villagers say that, given the manner in which the excavation has been carried out, it is unlikely the government

does not know what is going on.

“I have four to six men at my disposal. Whenever I get information on illegal mining, we try to stop it. Due to militant activities, we can't come out during the night,” Majid Qazi, district mining officer in Shopian, told Al Jazeera.

“We have filed many cases against illegal miners. I was the first officer to recommend the use of Public Safety Act against them,” he said.

For the fruit growers, however, these are desperate times.

Earlier this month, Ghulam Mohammad Shah, a resident of Odura village, found heavy machines at work in Rambi Ara, perilously close to the river banks.

“When I objected, they complained to the district administration and I was summoned by the officers. It was only after the intervention of some locals that I was set free.”

SOURCE: AL JAZEERA

## WHY WERE REFORMS FOR AZAD JAMMU AND KASHMIR NECESSARY?



Usman Khan Yousafzai

Many bureaucrats were against the ask, claiming that implementing reforms will be like separating AJK from Pakistan

Pakistan has not been able to highlight how the introduction of the 13<sup>th</sup> amendment to the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK)

Constitution brought autonomy to the region. Today, there are talks for bringing reforms to Gilgit Baltistan but to understand the need and nature of these; we must understand the autonomy brought to AJK through the amendment.

Since 1950, the region of AJK had been a playground for the Pakistani administration, with the promulgation of the 'Azad

Jammu and Kashmir Interim Act 1974' bringing a new wave of exploitation that almost brought the region to the brink of collapse. The heavy hands of the new Kashmir Council (KC) saw the region ruled directly by Islamabad and the promise of freedom, for which the 1947 war was fought, was not fulfilled. During the 2010s, the Pakistani government, finally noticing the growing discontentment, began immediate negotiations with the AJK government to ensure more autonomy for the region. The chances for this increased when Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) formed governments both in Pakistan and AJK. Leaders including AJK President Sardar Masood, Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider and Farhat Ali led the call for reforms.

Many bureaucrats were against the ask, claiming that their introduction would be like the separation of AJK from Pakistan. The only thing all of them had in common was that they benefited from the predatory policies. The Ministry of Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan were severely against this amendment and repeatedly declared that this change was not in the interest of Pakistan or the Kashmir issue. The KC, which was to be a bridge between the two nations, had become a supra-constitutional authority that was trying to make sure that bridge between the two regions would be burned to rubble.

Despite the opposition the bill was placed in a joint session of the legislative assembly and not only did it pass the very same day but also gained the AJK president's approval on June 1, 2018, making it one of the only amendments that was not directly approved by Islamabad or the KC.

The 41 page amendment brought changes to over 44 sections, removing the KC's legislative control over administrative and financial matters. Considering the size of the Interim Constitution of 1974 Act, this ended up amending nearly two thirds of the AJK Constitution. The 13<sup>th</sup> amendment bought respect and sanctity to a constitution that was merely treated as an act before to ensure that those in Kashmir have a right to self-determination. The preamble to the act was also amended and it states that autonomy is the right of the people of the region and such through a democratic method is for better governance and the uplifting of the socio-economic conditions of Azad Kashmir.

This justification was based on the concept of 'Local Authority' that the United Nations had advised both nations to protect. To

convert this act into proper constitutional framework, the amendment also substituted the words act, section and sub-section' with constitution, article and sub-article respectively, while also changing its name from 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir Interim Constitution Act 1974' to the 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir Interim Constitution 1974'.

The amendment omitted words like joint sitting to empower the assembly and also removed the definitions for advisor and service of AJK, which were positions meant to empower the control of KC and Islamabad. The objective of this amendment was to secure the autonomy of Muzaffarabad, which could only happen if the government was empowered. To accomplish this 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment also added principles of policy, which gave the responsibility of the state to the government of Muzaffarabad. The principles were placed by adding Article 3A to 3J. The policy worked towards empowering women and increasing representation of the people especially those that did not have proper representation.

The amendment ensured that the rights to fair trial, education and information were granted to the people and that it was the state's responsibility to ensure their provision. The amendment also included the protection of local culture and language in the list of fundamental rights.

The amendment also changed the way the president was elected through Article 5, while Article 6 changed the way the president was removed. The term joint session was removed and power was brought back to the AJK Assembly.

To control the powers of the executive and to combat instances of gifting ministries, the amendment maintained that the AJK Cabinet will not consist of more than 30% of the total membership of the assembly. It also limited the appointment of secretaries and advisors to a maximum of two for any function but now they could only be appointed by the AJK prime minister. The major change here was the removal of the option that allowed for ministers to be made from the KC that led to their members dominating the executive structure of the region.

Article 31 brought increased legislative power to the AJK Assembly, through the Third Schedule being divided into two parts. Part A pertaining to defence, security and trade was given wholly to the Government of Pakistan while Part B, which included natural gas, electricity, terminal taxes, railways,

boilers, census, medical and legal laws, was handed to the AJK. This division ensured that the AJK Assembly will be able to pass laws without consent from Pakistan's government. Additionally the AJK Assembly could now also pass laws on any matters that were not mentioned in the Third Schedule.

The control of taxes was also given to the AJK Assembly through Article 31, Sub Article 5, where previously all taxes were kept by the Kashmir Council and funnelled to Pakistan. The right of amending the AJK Constitution was also taken away from the KC. Article 35 was omitted that let the KC pass bills without the approval of AJK's president.

Previously emergencies were also declared in AJK the way they were in Pakistan and with the consent of council's

chairperson, however the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment, taking inspiration from the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment, ensured that the AJK Assembly could not be dissolved prematurely.

On July 2, 2018, the region of Azad Kashmir truly became an autonomous state that could boast independence on many matters. While the people of AJK and its government celebrated, some were angered enough to file cases in Pakistan's courts. Since 2018 there has been a movement to reintroduce the powers of the Kashmir Council, a cause that should be opposed at all costs since it will be a return to the dark ages for AJK, the kind that Gilgit Baltistan are still in today. This is precisely why it is of extreme importance to protect the rights given to AJK while also ensuring that Gilgit Baltistan is offered the same level of autonomy if not more.

## TOURISM IN AN OCCUPIED LAND: OF 'TULIP FESTIVALS' IN AN AGE OF SETTLER-COLONIALISM IN KASHMIR



Photo by: Adil Abass

India is currently planning a 6-day "Tulip Festival" for Indian tourists to visit Kashmir, "familiarize themselves with its rich culture and traditions," while Kashmiris remain silenced, caged, and repressed. As thousands and thousands of Indian tourists arrive in Kashmir, in the midst of a pandemic, the cases locally are increasing at a staggering rate. Students, who haven't attended schools for two years, had just a few weeks ago started school once more, only to have the schools be shut down once more because of the rise in cases.

Here's what you need to know about Indian Tourism in Kashmir:

### Paradise?

Throughout centuries, Kashmir has been lauded as a paradise, a

place of bliss for the foreigner to enjoy the tranquility of its beautiful landscape while the native Kashmiris serve their every whim. The Indian state is no different. The occupation is a capitalist endeavor meant to exploit Kashmir and drain it of its resources, endanger its ecology, and erase the native population, bit by bit.



### Kashmir is NOT normal.

Indian tourist propaganda claims that Kashmir is "normal" and "safe". This serves to create a desire for Indians to visit Kashmir, as many of them associate Kashmir with violence

and insecurity otherwise. With more Indians visiting Kashmir, the state's plan of creating more 'desire' for Kashmir and Kashmiris in the minds of the average Indian — and thus the need to violently hold on to Kashmir — is accomplished.

These headlines obscure the militarized conditions that Kashmiris are forced to live with on an everyday basis.

### Tourism and Orientalism

Indian tourism is based on an orientalist view of Kashmiris that positions them as backwards and in need of sophistication that only encounters with India can provide. "Good" Kashmiris are those that happily buy into the Indian project, while "bad" Kashmiris are those that reject it. The Muslim identity of the Kashmiri is portrayed as savage and aggressive and must be contained by the Indian state. As long as the Muslim is contained, the Indian state reassures prospective tourists, then everything will be alright.



Bollywood actors and the "good", simple Kashmiris that buy into the Indian project.

### Why Tourism?

Through tourism, Indians are reassured of the sovereignty of the Indian state in the land they have conquered. Tourism asserts the rule of the occupier and the superiority of the colonizer. The Kashmiri has no agency, no voice, and serves to live for the needs of the Indian master.

### What "Development" Really Does:

Indians argue that state-funded tourism will enable the development of Kashmir and benefit people economically. While locals receive some financial benefits from tourism, it is primarily the Indian state and businesses that benefit from portraying normalcy under occupation. Kashmiris are pushed into tourism out of financial necessity. Meanwhile, "development" is a keyword for exploitation of natural



resources and destruction of the environment. Recently, the Indian state has indulged in massive deforestation near ecologically fragile tourist hotspots to build more infrastructure. Indigenous communities have been forced out of their homes that they have lived in for decades as a result.

### Commodification and Exotification

Pherans, jewelry, and handicrafts are all parroted around like



some "exclusive" deal to experience being Kashmiri, without the harm of being an actual Kashmiri. Indian tourists are often seen in Kashmir trying on Kashmiri clothes. This is a blatant cultural appropriation and reduction of Kashmiri culture as nothing but a fun little costume for tourists to try on. The exotification of the "fair" Kashmiri woman is especially commodified.

### War Criminals Promoting Tourism?

Oftentimes, the Indian Army organizes festivals or other events

in key tourist areas to “promote & showcase tourism, winter sports and Kashmiri culture.” Recently, they brought in Bollywood “stars” to perform in Kashmir. This is of course the same army that kills, rapes, and blinds Kashmiris. These events — increasing day by day — are merely an attempt to whitewash the crimes of the occupation for international and domestic consumption.



‘Actress’ Amisha Patel at an event organized by the Indian army that aims to “promote” local talent (Dec 2020)

## Tourism Under Settler-Colonization

In the settler-colonial context, Indian tourism will thrive off of the exploitation of Kashmir, razing the forests and eventually turning it into a capitalist landscape, littered with hotels, fast food chains, and whatever the Indian colonizers choose will satisfy them next. This tourism that the state pushes as some harmless enterprise that benefits the people of Kashmir is a lie: it is, in the end, a way to ensure profit for the Indian state and assert dominance over the land and its people.

“The whole place might be oozing blood, under siege, the streets deserted, people cooped up inside their homes, weighed down by worries of dwindling food and medicine, but at least we have a successful tulip festival.

*In its belligerent quest for a narrative shift on Kashmir, the Indian state deploys everything in its arsenal to declare peace has arrived.” Mirza Waheed, Jacobin*

Kashmir is not an exotic paradise of docile servants. Kashmir is not a playground for the oppressor. It is a place of resilient people who have their own aspirations for freedom and dreams for their future. Now put that in your tourist guide.

## CONCERNS AS KASHMIR POLICE BAN LIVE MEDIA COVERAGE OF GUN BATTLES

New directive prohibits reporters from approaching gun-battle sites and covering ‘law and order’ situations as it puts ‘national security in jeopardy’.



Kashmiri journalists wearing face masks run for cover as clashes erupt during a protest after an encounter in Srinagar [File: Saqib Majeed/SOPA Images/LightRocket via Getty Images]

Srinagar, Indian-administered Kashmir — Journalists and media organisations in Indian-administered Kashmir say they are concerned over a new directive issued by the police

prohibiting reporters from approaching the sites of gun-battles and covering “law and order” situations, saying it puts the “national security in jeopardy”.

In the directive issued late on Tuesday, the disputed region’s police chief, Inspector General Vijay Kumar, asked media personnel “not to come closer to encounter sites” and “not carry live coverage of any encounter” with armed rebels, who for decades have been fighting for either an independent Kashmir state or its merger with neighbouring Muslim-majority Pakistan.

The region’s police said “freedom of speech and expression is subject to reasonable restrictions” and asked the media not to “interfere in professional and bonafide duty” of police and security forces at the sites of “encounter”, as gunfights with rebels are called.

“No operational content should be carried which is likely to incite violence or contains anything against maintenance of [law and order] or which promotes anti-national sentiment,” said the directive.



An Indian soldier gestures towards media personnel to move back as police and army soldiers launch an operation in Awantipora area, south of Srinagar [File: DarYasin/AP]

The order has been criticised by a dozen Kashmiri journalist groups. “If this is a part of the official policy of police then it appears to be a tactic to coerce journalists into not reporting “facts on the ground,” the groups said in a joint statement.

It also seems to be a part of the string of measures taken by the authorities to suppress freedom of press in the region. Summoning journalists to police stations, filing FIRs and seeking informal explanations for their work has intensified in the past two years,” it added.

The statement said Kashmiri journalists “have worked under tremendous pressure for the past several decades and despite facing threats to life, liberty and property, they upheld the principles of journalism and reporting”, adding that “such attacks on press freedom and journalism is highly distressful”.

Last week, a photojournalist was kicked by a policeman during the coverage of a gun battle in southern Kashmir; a video of the incident was widely shared on social media, triggering criticism over the treatment of journalists by the Indian authorities.

### **‘State of repression’**



An Indian police officer aims his gun towards demonstrators during the funeral of a civilian, who according to local media

was hit by a paramilitary vehicle during a protest in Srinagar [File: Danish Ismail/Reuters]

Farooq Javed Khan, president of Kashmir Press Photographers Association, a local union of photojournalists in the region, told Al Jazeera the new directives will impact their work.

“We do not go close to the gunfights, we always cooperate with the authorities. Our cameras show the reality, they capture what they see, we don’t create anything of our own,” he said. “We shoot and leave the spot, that’s all we do.”

After India stripped its only Muslim-majority region of its special constitutional status in August 2019, a crippling security lockdown and communications blackout was imposed for months, preventing local journalists from doing their jobs.

To further muzzle the press, which already operates in one of the world’s most militarised regions, the Indian government last year introduced a new media policy that allows it to determine what is “fake news” and “anti-national” content.

In the last two years, many Kashmiri journalists have been summoned and booked by the police. At least 19 journalists have been killed in the Kashmir conflict since an armed rebellion against Indian rule began in the 1990s.

In March 2020, the International Press Institute said journalism in Indian-administered Kashmir is under “a dramatic state of repression”.

“The state is using a mix of harassment, intimidation, surveillance and online information control to silence critical voices and force journalists to resort to self-censorship,” said the media watchdog.

Laxmi Murthy, co-founder of Free Speech Collective, an organisation that advocates freedom of expression, told Al Jazeera the “recent strictures, coming as they do in the backdrop of a lack of transparency and lack of access to official sources for verification will further impede accurate reporting”.

“Reporters in Kashmir do the important job of verifying events on the ground and informing the public. Free flow of verified news is crucial to a functioning democracy and the latest advisory does not bode well for genuine journalism in the public interest.”

SOURCE: AL JAZEERA

# News Section

## Stability in S. Asia linked to Kashmir, says Pakistan

Karachi: Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan has said that



peace and stability in South Asia is linked to the resolution of all outstanding issues, mainly the long-smoldering Kashmir dispute, which has been a bone of contention between the two nuclear-armed rivals. Responding to a congratulatory message from his Indian counterpart, Narendra Modi on the occasion of Pakistan Day, which was celebrated on March 23, Khan said on Tuesday his people also desire “peaceful, cooperative relations with all neighbors, including India.” In his message, Modi had said his country desires “cordial relations with the people of Pakistan.” “We are convinced that durable peace and stability in South Asia is contingent upon resolving all outstanding issues between India and Pakistan, in particular the Jammu and Kashmir dispute,” Khan went on to say. Creation of an “enabling environment”, he further said, is imperative for a constructive and result-oriented dialogue. He was referring to Modi's call for an “environment of trust, and devoid of terror and hostility” between the two countries. “I also take this opportunity to convey our best wishes for the people of India in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic,” Khan added. Relations between the two sides plummeted to a new low following India's scrapping of the longstanding special status of Jammu and Kashmir in August 2019. The two neighbors, however, last month agreed to honor the 2003 cease-fire along the Line of Control -- a de facto border that divides the picturesque Himalayan region between the two countries. Kashmir is held by India and Pakistan in parts and claimed both in full. A small sliver of Kashmir is also held by China. Since they were partitioned in 1947, the two countries have fought three wars -- in 1948, 1965, and 1971 -- two of them over Kashmir. Some Kashmiri groups in Jammu and Kashmir have been fighting against Indian rule for independence, or unification with neighboring Pakistan. According to several

human rights organizations, thousands of people have reportedly been killed in the conflict in the region since 1989.

## Masood hails UN report on human rights abuses in IIOJK

Welcoming a letter written by the UN human rights experts to the Indian government regarding the human rights situation in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), AJK President Sardar Masood Khan Sunday said that the situation is far worse than mentioned in the letter. He said that the UN rapporteurs have confined their report to mentioning only the violation of some of the rights of Muslims and other minorities, while we believe that the Modi government of India is engaged in hatching conspiracies against the very existence



of Muslims in Jammu and Kashmir. They want to turn the Muslim majority into a minority and make the territory of Kashmir a complete Hindu state. “India is trying to reduce the occupied state of Jammu and Kashmir to a political nonentity, reinforce religious and colonial othering of its people and finally strip off their defences. Well, Kashmiris will never cease defending themselves,” the president said.

Five United Nations human rights experts, through a letter to the Indian government, have voiced their concern over India's decision to revoke Kashmir's special status and enact laws that could curtail the political participation of Muslims and other minorities.

The special rapporteurs were for minority issues, promotion, and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression; the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and association; contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance; and the special rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief.

President Khan strongly condemned the latest restrictions

imposed by the Indian government on Kashmir based journalists for reporting facts about the incidents of violence in IOJK, he appealed to the global journalist's bodies to raise their voice against the unjustified restrictions on journalists and media outlets in IOJK.

### **AJK govt launches assistance programme for affectees of Indian firing at LoC**

Muzaffarabad: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir government has launched an assistance programme for the affectees of Indian



firing at the Line of Control (LoC). AJK Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider Khan formally launched the programme by giving away cheques to the victims at a function held in PM House Muzaffarabad. Under the package, the heirs of the civilian martyrs will be paid 3000 rupees each per month. The widow will be paid Rs3000 per month till death or 2nd marriage. Each underage child will be given Rs3000 per month as a scholarship till reaching 21 years of age or getting married. Raja Farooq Haider Khan directed the authorities concerned to collect data of the families as early as possible.

### **AJK premier asks Kashmiris to reject Pak-India bilateral talks**

Muzaffarabad: Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider on Thursday asked the Kashmiris to “categorically and unanimously” reject bilateral talks between Pakistan and India on the Kashmir issue “because any exercise sans their involvement, as primary party to the dispute, will as usual end up in futility”.

Speaking at the 33rd death anniversary function of Kashmiri leader K.H. Khurshid, Mr Haider claimed that he had dedicated his life to the freedom of India-held Kashmir as well as the “identity, integrity, honour and authority” of the liberated territory of the disputed Himalayan region.

Mr Khurshid, a former AJK president, had founded Jammu

Kashmir Liberation League party in 1962, which called for recognition of AJK government as a 'revolutionary provisional successor government' of the deposed Dogra ruler of Jammu and Kashmir with a free hand to take the freedom movement to its logical end.

“What was his fault?” Mr Haider questioned, and, after reading out a quote of Mr Khurshid from a banner that was displayed at the venue, said: “How could a person who was private secretary to the founder of Pakistan and [later] chief polling agent of his sister for West Pakistan be against Pakistan? But ironically he faced such allegations.”

### **DFP seeks HR bodies' role in release of Shabbir Shah, others**

Islamabad: Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party has sought the role of world human rights organizations in the release of party Chairman Shabbir Ahmad Shah languishing in Tihar Jail for over the past three years.

DFP acting Chairman Mehmood Ahmad Saghar in a statement while terming the illegal imprisonment of Shabbir Ahmad Shah and others as a deep-rooted conspiracy to suppress voice of dissent in Kashmir said that the ailing APHC leader was being punished for his unprecedented and indomitable role in the Kashmiris' ongoing freedom struggle against the Indian illegal occupation.

Urging world human rights organizations to take effective notice of the fast deteriorating health condition of the party chairman and other Hurriyat leaders, Saghar said that Shabbir Ahmad Shah who has been suffering from multiple ailments is not receiving proper medical treatment in the highly congested jail, which has been declared as a hotbed of the coronavirus.

Meanwhile, the DFP in a statement condemned in strong terms the arrest and torture of Kashmir youth saying it was shocking to see that innocent youth were being detained under notorious laws and subjected to third degree torture in jails and interrogation centers. Terming it as flagrant violations of the Geneva Convention and other world covenants the spokesman said that children in Kashmir have been worst victims of the Indian state terrorism.

“Children and youth have always been at the receiving end; they are being arrested, tortured, humiliated and harassed by the Indian forces deployed in length and breadth of the valley”,

he said adding that the Indian army had a history of killing Kashmiri youth in fake-encounters.

### **APHC-AJK holds demo against Indian atrocities in IIOJK**

Islamabad: The All Parties Hurriyat Conference Azad Jammu and Kashmir chapter held a demonstration outside the National



Press Club in Islamabad, today, against the Indian brutalities in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

Various Kashmiri organizations and civil society groups participated in the protest demonstration to unmask the fascist and brutal face of the Indian government. The demonstration was held to highlight the rising incidents of human rights violations in the occupied territory even in the holy month of Ramadan.

Addressing the protesters, Mushaal Hussein Malik, the wife of illegally detained Chairman of Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front, Muhammad Yasin Malik, voiced grave concern over the unabated incidents of Indian state terrorism in IIOJK. She sought the world community's help to put an end on the systematic genocide of Kashmiris in the occupied territory. She said that the brutal forces' personnel had further intensified the wave of terrorism and oppressions to silence the just voices of freedom loving Kashmiris.

Mushaal Malik, the Chairperson of the Peace and Culture Organisation, said that the Indian forces deployed in the length and breadth of IIOJK had broken all records of cruelty and barbarism by unleashing the reign of terror in the territory. She said that cordon and search operations and night raids were being carried out by the Indian forces in the region during which women are being harassed and youth were being taken and tortured to suppress their voices.

The Kashmiri leader condemned the continuing reign of state terrorism against the hapless people of the territory whose only crime is to demand their inalienable right to self-determination. She warned that the deteriorating human rights situation in IIOJK would have serious implications for the regional as well as world peace and security. "We want peace in the region but peace could not be established on the dead bodies of Kashmiris. Therefore, if India desires peace, it will have to resolve the Kashmir dispute in accordance with the aspirations of the Kashmiris and internationally agreed formula," she emphasized.

Mushaal Malik made it clear that the India should bear in mind that it would never succeed to silence the voices of consciousness through barbarism as such brutal tactics have already proved useless during the last seventy years and won't work in future as well. Therefore, she suggested that it would be better to realize the sensitivity of the issue and let the Kashmiris decide their fate by themselves as they can't be forced to live a life of slavery anymore. Mushaal Malik appealed to the international human rights organizations and world powers to take notice of the unending Indian brutalities and grave human rights crisis and should play their proactive role to stop this vicious cycle of violence in the region.

## **HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN IOK**

(From Jan 1989 till 31 Mar 2021)	
Total Killings*	95,758
Custodial killings*	7,169
Civilian arrested	161,580
Structures Arsoned/Destroyed	110,400
Women Widowed	22,925
Children Orphaned	107,814
Women gang-raped / Molested	11,236

