

An open letter addressed to the G7 leaders on their 47th summit held at the Cornish resort of Carbis Bay UK from 11 to 13 June 2021.

Date: 11 June 2021

Re: The G7 leaders and their nations' obligation to the oppressed people of Kashmir.

Dear Excellencies,

We take this opportunity to remind you as leaders of G7 nations during 47th summit of your powerful group being held at Carbis Bay in Cornwall, United Kingdom, on the most pressing and untenably distressing political, and human rights situation that exists in the Indian occupied part of Jammu and Kashmir- generally referred to as Kashmir- in particular since 5 August 2019.

Excellencies there are around two dozen UN resolutions on the Kashmir issue that require India and Pakistan to hold a UN supervised plebiscite on the political status of the territory in accordance with Kashmiris' basic right to self-determination. Your Excellencies' governments are fully aware of the history of the issue/dispute as it is the oldest dispute which was brought before the UN by India on 31 December 1947. **Your Excellencies are equally aware that since January 1948 India and Pakistan have lamentably failed as UN Proxies in Kashmir, to resolve the issue bilaterally as both nuclear powered adversaries, are in de-facto control of Kashmir across the ceasefire line- CfL.**

Quite erroneously Kashmir issue is seen by some as a territorial dispute between India and Pakistan. For 22 million Kashmiris across both sides of the CfL however, it is an issue inherently linked with their unfettered sovereign right to be the final 'arbiters' of Kashmir's political destiny as Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru once declared.

Despite India's obligations on Kashmir India's Modi led BJP/RSS government abolished articles 370 and 35A of its Constitution, and annexed and created two union territories of Ladakh, and that of Jammu and Kashmir on 5 August 2019, to be ruled directly from Delhi in blatant contravention of UN resolutions 38 of 17 January 1948, 91 of 30 March 1951 and 122 of 24 January 1957, as well as mutual agreements with Kashmir including the provisional, and conditional 'accession' of 26 October 1947, and the bilateral accords with India's adversary and the other claimant on Kashmir- Pakistan.

Excellencies, the aggression committed against Kashmir by the Modi government was carried out under a veil of secrecy, with unprecedented number of military reinforcements, the curfews, an atmosphere of dis-information, dissolution of the assembly, total black-out of the media, and arrests of political opponents in particular that of the Chairman of the pro independent Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front- JKLF- Mr Yasin Malik under the Public Safety Act PSA, and banning the JKLF under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, UAPA.

These repressive laws used by the Indian state against political dissent in Kashmir for decades, came under scrutiny of the UNOHCHR in its reports on Kashmir in June 2018 and July 2019 which called the PSA, UAPA and AFSPA repressive and recommended repeal of all or part of these laws as the UN body considered them inconsistent with international law; and therefore as a consequence of these laws, in its reports, OHCHR "**highlights serious human rights violations and patterns of impunity in Indian-Administered Kashmir.**"

Excellencies, since 5 August 2019 Kashmir remains under siege, enforced by a staggering number of 900,000 Indian military and para military troops! Clearly with these actions, Modi government considers itself above international law, while the UNSC and the P5 in particular, continue to look the other way on the denial by India of basic, civil, political and human rights of the Kashmiris who remain forcibly divided, and captive in their own homeland between India and Pakistan since 1947.

Excellencies, the United Kingdom, host of the 2021 G7 summit has extended special invitation to the leading democracies that includes India, Australia and South Korea as guest participants to the summit. India's democratic credibility under Mr Modi and his RSS supported BJP government however, should seriously be called into question because of his policies on the basic rights of religious minorities, mainly the Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, and the Dalits in India itself, and his government's reprehensible policies and illegal actions in Kashmir against the fundamental political, civil and human rights of the entire population.

While it is perfectly in order for the G7 nations to focus on the **Covid-19** pandemic, and to address the issues related with equitable allocations of vaccine to poorer countries, and challenges resulting from climate change; it is nevertheless important that this apex group of leading economic and political powers in the world including three members of the P5 with India in attendance as a non-permanent UNSC member since January 2021, to discuss the plight of the oppressed people of Kashmir.

It is not a coincidence therefore, that the UNGA President Mr Volkan Bozkir during his visit to Pakistan at the end of May 2021 called on "all parties to refrain from changing the status of Jammu and Kashmir and said a solution was to be found through peaceful means in accordance with the UN charter and UN Security Council resolutions."

Excellencies, in 1994 prompted and encouraged, with promises to resolve the Kashmir issue by the US, the UK, the EU, and prominent members of the civil and political fraternity in India itself, Mr Yasin Malik, declared unilateral ceasefire to transition the freedom movement to a peaceful, political and diplomatic mode of struggle to seek a just and permanent solution of the Kashmir issue.

Despite unilaterally giving up militancy in 1994, the Indian military killed over 600 members of Mr Yasin Malik party while, miraculously he survived six attempts on his life. Nevertheless he remained committed to his peaceful journey of finding a solution on the undecided status of his motherland. He undertook various political initiatives like the 2003 signature campaign, and the 2007 journey for freedom throughout Kashmir to promote non-violence, and engage in peaceful and political democratic resistance. The international community and the previous Indian government acknowledged efforts of the JKLF, and invited Mr Yasin Malik for talks with the then Indian Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh in 2006.

In 2014, the BJP led by Mr Modi gained power in India. The ultra-right-wing chauvinist rule of the BJP from the outset began to nullify previous mutual undertakings that were painstakingly evolved for a conducive atmosphere toward an ultimately equitable resolution of the Kashmir issue.

Excellencies, this policy change was not surprising since the Modi led BJP supported by the RSS came in with a Hindu supremacist agenda based on the Hindutva ideology, which rejects Mahatma Gandhi as the founding father of modern India, and glorifies his assassin and RSS activist Natho Ram Ghodse,

as an Indian hero. Since Hindutva ideology sees India as a Hindu rather than a secular nation, the BJP secured electoral victories both in the election of 2014 and in 2019 on a communal majoritarian agenda.

On Kashmir, and in direct contravention of the UN Charter, and its resolutions, Mr Modi's government began to fulfil its agenda in earnest with annexing Kashmir, taking away its special status, and depriving the people of their fundamental rights as citizens of Jammu Kashmir. Primarily Mr Modi's government has embarked on a policy of demographic change to turn the majority Muslim population of Kashmir through settler colonialism, into an inconsequential minority. This is being achieved with new domicile rules resulting from the illegal abrogation of article 35A of the Indian constitution that guaranteed continuation of the pre 1947 definition of citizenship rights in Kashmir. With these illegal rules, Modi government has literally opened up Kashmir to the entire 1.3 billion people of India.

By December 2020 sixteen months after the annexation and direct rule of Kashmir by New Delhi, promulgation of the new rules and settler colonial policy, resulted in more than 1.2 million domicile certificates having been issued with one or the other pretext, to non-Kashmiris. At this rate, when Mr Modi's ultra-nationalist BJP goes to the polls in the 2024 Indian general election, a declaration of victory over Kashmir, will inevitably be made by Mr Modi- a proud political progeny of the RSS himself- to heighten majoritarian extremist sentiments in his bid to be re-elected, for the likely third term.

To throttle the opposition in Kashmir prior to Mr Modi's anti-Kashmir onslaught, with a brazenly pernicious attack on the history of Kashmir, social, cultural and political identity of its people, his government arrested Mr Yasin Malik on 22 February 2019, and a month later on 23 March banned his party under politically motivated and fabricated charges. Mr Yasin Malik was taken to India from Kashmir, and put in solitary confinement at India's infamous Tihar Jail where the ailing Kashmiri leader is being held for the last almost 28 months without appropriate medical care and other facilities.

Excellencies, bail which is a fundamental right of every detainee according to Indian constitution, has been denied to Mr Yasin Malik, and other political leaders in custody. **Covid-19** prompted the Indian Supreme Court to issue orders for the release of those in custody on bail or parole, to save their lives. The BJP government however, has not released either Mr Yasin Malik or any of the other hundreds of prisoners. Kashmiri political leaders detained under draconian laws are treated badly by the Indian authorities.

For example 75 year old Mohammad Ashraf Khan Sehraie, a respected prominent political leader held under the PSA died- nay- killed, due to deliberate denial of medical attention. Appropriate burial rites were also denied, and on calls for a probe by his family about his death in custody, his two sons were arrested by the Indian authorities. Unfortunately even the judiciary is coerced and used against Kashmiris, in Mr Modi's 'democratic India.'

Since 5 August 2019 there is a total ban on political activities in Indian occupied Kashmir and stringent controls on all forms of press and media. Journalists are coerced and arrested under notorious PSA. International media is denied entry into Kashmir. Political dissent, right to free speech, and freedom of assembly, taken for granted in a democracy, are denied with threats of prolong incarceration under the notorious 'security' laws which lengthen detention of thousands of innocent Kashmiris indefinitely. The only free media in 'democratic' India of today, is that which acts as the mouthpiece for Mr Modi's ultra-chauvinist BJP government.

Excellencies, silence by the G7 nations over the Kashmir issue, and their indifference to the immense suffering in Kashmir due to the ongoing siege of Kashmir by India, is seen by Kashmiris as complicity in their plight and support for Modi government's oppressive and illegal policies against their UN recognised right to self-determination. The powerful G7 nations therefore, have an obligation to ensure that Mr Modi's 'democratic' India stops 'legal repression' and militarised violence against the population, and honours its commitments based within the legitimate and recognised historic context of the longstanding Kashmir issue.

The release of political prisoners, not only on health grounds, is important in this context as it would be a step in the right direction on the road to an equitable settlement of the issue. Incarcerated Kashmiri leaders are part of the solution in Kashmir, and their continued illegal detention will not serve the cause of peace with justice, and democracy, either in Kashmir or in the wider South Asian region.

We urge G7 leaders to impress upon Mr Modi that the following incarcerated leaders Mr Yasin Malik the Chairman of the JKLF, Syed Shabir Ahmed Shah, Mr Altaf Ahmed, Syed Aftab Hilali, Syeda Aasiya Andrabi, and her female colleagues, Mr Masarat Alam, Mr Ayaz Akbar and others are immediately and unconditionally released as they are all part and parcel of a lasting, and peaceful solution of the Kashmir issue, and see Jammu Kashmir as a bridge of peace in South Asia, and a cross roads of regional development and prosperity.

Sincerely,



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