

Brussels, 30/07/2021

Ms. Ursula Von Der Leyen

President of the European Commission

Sent via email to:

Ursula.VON-DER-LEYEN@ec.europa.eu

Mr. Josep Borrell

Vice President of the European Commission/High Representative

Sent via email to:

Josep.BORRELL-FONTELLES@ec.europa.eu

To the President of the Commission Ursula Von Der Leyen,

To the Vice President of the Commission/High Representative Josep Borrell,

We, undersigned members of the European Parliament, are writing you to bring your attention to the alarming **human rights and humanitarian situation in Jammu and Kashmir**.

The miseries of the people of Jammu and Kashmir have been amply documented in the International Human Rights Watch World Report 2021 as well as the reports of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in 2018 and 2019.

This Indian-administered region had already suffered a debilitating lockdown since the revocation of its special status in 2019, and the restraints on the rights to movement, access to information, health care, education as well as free speech have been intensified by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Journalists and human rights defenders have been increasingly targeted for raising their voice in support of the Kashmiri people and denounce their situation. Arbitrary detentions continue, public assembly is still prohibited under Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure 1973 (CrPC) and hundreds, including minors and several elected legislators of Jammu and Kashmir, remain under preventive detention.

Unfortunately, a number of legislations introduced by the Indian governments over the years to prevent terrorism and separatism, including the Special Powers Act (SPA), the Armed Forces Special Protection Act (AFSPA) and the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA), have been often misused against the Kashmiri population.

In addition to being a humanitarian crisis, the long-standing dispute over Jammu and Kashmir in South Asia, also **poses a major threat to peace, stability, and security in the region**, being a flash point between two nuclear-armed countries and we are worried that any miscalculation can lead to unwarranted consequences.

The delicate security situation has further deteriorated as the local population is continuously protesting the revocation of special status of Jammu and Kashmir, and the controvert Indian Citizenship Amendment Act, causing unrest and strife within the valley adding to the volatility and tensions between the militaries of India and Pakistan.

Dear President Von Der Leyen,

Dear High Representative Borrell,

As a champion of universal human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule-based international order, the EU must **raise its voice against the violations of human rights** affecting the people of Jammu and Kashmir. We believe that the EU should **use all its leverage and tools** to cooperate with our Indian and Pakistani partners to honour the pledge made to the Kashmiris by the international community and create an environment conducive to implementation of the United Nations (UN) resolutions.

As members of European Parliament, we vouch to continue our engagements with the Parliaments of India and Pakistan as well as the Kashmiri leaders, to impress upon them the urgent need to foster a climate of peace and dialogue in the region. It is extremely important that the voices of Kashmiri people are heard, their aspirations are responded to and they are granted the opportunity to decide their own future.

We call upon you, as Commission President and Vice President/High Representative, on behalf of the European Union:

- to convey our grave concerns at the violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir to the Indian Government;
- to take urgent action to address the alarming human rights situation in the region;
- and to contribute to the peace and stability of the region enhancing dialogues with India, Pakistan and the representatives of Kashmiri people, making use of our special relationships with both India and Pakistan to facilitate engagement and dialogue between the two neighbours and resolve the dispute through peaceful means and in accordance with the wishes and aspirations of the people of Kashmir.

We hope in your strong support for this cause, and we avail this opportunity to convey our assurances of highest consideration,

Yours Sincerely,

Fabio Massimo CASTALDO (NI)

Dino GIARRUSSO (NI)

Javier NART (Renew Europe)

Chiara Maria GEMMA (NI)

Salima YENBOU (Greens/EFA)

Carles PUIGDEMONT I CASAMAJÓ (NI)

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