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NEWSLETTER

The Official Newsletter of The Kashmir Council-EU

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

"I am happy to present you the latest issue of our quarterly newsletter. Our aim is to keep you updated on the latest news and current developments. Kashmir Council-EU continues to seek effective ways of supporting the Kashmiri peoples' struggle for self-determination, to draw attention to the abuses of human rights that have become a feature of everyday life in Kashmir and persuade the International Community that it is only through their active involvement that this 70-year old conflict will be resolved. We intend for this newsletter to be of service to the community and will be happy to publish any short articles, comments or announcements of future events that you care to send us."

- Mr Ali Raza Syed

RECENT EVENTS

The Kashmir Council-EU is one of a number of organisations launching fresh initiatives aimed at mobilizing additional resources to raise awareness of the human rights violations. Since the 2017 annual Kashmir-EU Week, the Kashmir Council-EU's main objective is to secure an agenda slot with the standing Human Rights Subcommittee (DROIT) of the European Parliament.

To mark the International Women's Day on the 8th of March the Kashmir Council-EU organised a conference in the European Parliament on the theme of mental health counselling and therapy for Kashmiri women suffering from PTSD. The conference underlined the importance of addressing mental health issues as experienced by Kashmiri women, the psycho-social problems as part of any post conflict reconstruction, and stressed the positive role of the European Parliament and other European institutions.

FUTURE EVENTS

2018 Kashmir-EU Week

The Kashmir-EU Week has established itself as an indispensable annual feature of the programme of conferences hosted by the European Parliament. This year's Kashmir-EU Week will be organised by the Kashmir Council-EU in collaboration with Mr. Wajid Khan MEP during the week of 12-16 November 2018.

The 2018 Kashmir-EU Week aims to bring together representatives of different interest groups, European policy makers, and intellectuals, in an environment where participants feel free to discuss the important issues raised by the current situation in Kashmir. This year's discussions will provide the basis for a more coordinated approach to the issue of Kashmiri self-determination and involvement of the International Community.

The 2018 Kashmir-EU Week will kick off with the opening of an exhibition of photographs, artifacts, and books in the premises of the European Parliament in Strasbourg. We are grateful to the noted Belgian photographer Cédric Gerbehaye, whose work will be on display in the exhibition.



NEWS

An independent report commissioned by the office of OHCHR was published on 14 June, 2018.

The report describes the situation of human rights in the Indian-administrated Kashmir over the period July 2016 to April 2018. This period saw a dramatic increase in human rights violations, particularly the use of excessive force by the Indian security forces that resulted in heavy civilian casualties.

Starting from July 2016 the United Nations has made frequent requests to both governments of India and Pakistan to be allowed unconditional access to Kashmir to enable first-hand information on the human rights situation to be obtained. To date, the Pakistan government has agreed to the UN request while the Indian government has so far refused to grant access to the territory of Indian administrated Kashmir. The Pakistan offer has been conditional on the Indian-administration granting unconditional access to the territory on its side of the Line of Control. In the absence of unconditional access, the authors of the UN report have been obliged to use remote monitoring methods to acquire information.

A particular concern is a legal framework underpinning a system which provides minimum recourse to Kashmir in the face of major human rights challenges. Special laws enforced in the territory have created structures that obstruct the normal processes of law and justice and robs the civilian population of their right to legal remedy in case of alleged violations of human rights. Thus, there has been little movement towards the establishment of a credible investigative machinery into the contents of mass graves in the Kashmir Valley.

'Any resolution to the political situation in Kashmir should entail a commitment to ending the cycles of violence and accountability for past and current human rights violations and abuses committed by all parties and redress for victims. Such a resolution can only be brought about by meaningful dialogue that includes the people of Kashmir.'

- OHCHR



NEWS

Kashmir's Struggle for Freedom

A demonstration was organised in the vicinity of the Indian embassy in Islamabad on 21th of June, 2018 to protest against the brutal killing of a prominent Kashmiri journalist Shujaat Bukhari and his two bodyguards six days previously. Amongst the organisers were several major journalist associations including the Central Union Of Journalists (CUJ AJK), the Central Press Club, and the Kashmir Press Club Mirpur. Mashaal Malik (the spouse of Yasim Malik), and several other important political figures of AJK, such as Mr. Latif Akbar and Mr. Ch Yasin also took part in the demonstration.

The Chairman of Kashmir Council-EU, Mr. Ali Raza Syed addressed the demonstration. He pointed out that for decades all sorts of methods have been employed to silence and suppress the Kashmiri movement to self-determination. Mr. Syed expressed his deep sympathy for the family of the late Shujaat Bukhari. He described the assassination as yet another attempt to deprive the press of its freedom to report and the Kashmiri community to speak. Freedom of speech and freedom for the media are essential elements in a well-functioning democracy.

The killing of Shujaat Bukhari happened at a time when the first ever UN report on Kashmir was published. This landmark document calls for international investigation into human rights violations and abuses. He urged the International Community to become engaged in seeking a resolution to the Indian/Pakistan conflict and pointed out the reasons why this conflict was no longer an internal matter for the two concerning governments. But has become with the years a conflict with global implications.

"Strengthening the involvement of the international community is the only way we can be sure that the Kashmir dispute does not escalate into something out of control. In addition, the involvement of the International Community is the only means whereby Kashmiris themselves can be empowered to play a meaningful role in a future peace process and the negotiations that must accompany such an exercise."

-MR ALI RAZA SYED



ONE MILLION SIGNATURES CAMPAIGN

The rules of the Parliamentary procedure state that with a petition with One Million Signatures which clearly has the backing of a one million European citizens must be discussed within a reasonable time-frame. Kashmir Council-EU has launched ONE MILLION SIGNATURES CAMPAIGN which enables European citizens to express solidarity with the peoples of Kashmir and to assert their right to self-determination that is called for by the UN resolution of 1948. Give your support by signing our online petition.

HANDICRAFTS

We have a limited number of top quality Kashmiri handicrafts for sale. You are invited to support our work to achieve self-determination for Kashmir by buying these exceptional items. On our website, you can find pictures and full information.

For more information, please contact us or visit our website and social media pages.

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**Support our work to
achieve self-
determination for
Kashmir.**

