

19 November 2019

Mr. Joseph Borell Fontelles
Vice President Designate of
The European Commission

Dear Mr. Joseph Borell Fontelles,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Kashmir Council - EU.

We are a Brussels-based NGO dedicated to resolving the 70 year dispute between India and Pakistan over the status of Kashmir and to establishing a climate of peace and harmony between the different stakeholders within which everyone will have voice and in which the foundations for the long term prosperity of the region can be laid.

The Kashmir Council-U is an independent organisation aligned to no political party and has no financial connection with any of the stakeholders in the current dispute.

We are, however, deeply disturbed by the impending humanitarian crisis which seems to be the unavoidable outcome of the current policies of the Indian Government. This crisis will be the direct result of the militarisation of Indian administered Kashmir (IAK) and in particular the direct result of the curfew imposed by the Indian security personnel on the civilian population of IAK.

The curfew was imposed on 5 August 2019 and has now been in force for 106 days! Under the curfew the right of assembly is severely restricted, the channels of communication between IAK and the rest of the world have been cut or can be used only under the close supervision of the Indian authorities. Local political leaders have been interned without trial and normal economic life has been completely disrupted. Shortages of food and medicines are now widespread with the civilian population being too afraid of arbitrary arrest and torture to venture onto the streets to search for basic supplies.

To date, the government of India has shown little interest in seeking understanding for its aggressive policies towards Kashmir on the part of the International Community. Its position rather has been that of the Simla Agreement of 1972 that the dispute over Kashmir is an internal matter for the government's of India; and Pakistan to resolve by mutual negotiation. Since then, however, not only have the military aspects of the situation changed - for example - both sides in the dispute now have an arsenal of nuclear weapons to call upon, but the concern with regional stability make it inevitable that the evolution of the dispute should become a matter of keen interest to the International Community.

Given the importance of the Kashmir dispute to the political agendas of all south Asian countries we find it inexplicable that the imposition of a curfew and its consequences should not call forth the strongest possible condemnation from organisations such as European Union. Not only does the absence of a strong positive response undermine the legitimacy of the European Union as the protector and guardian of human rights, it calls into question the entire framework of international humanitarian law.

The Kashmir Council-EU urges the European Union to demonstrate in practical terms that it is keenly concerned about the humanitarian outcome of present Indian policies in Kashmir and that, in an age of globalisation, decisions taken by individual nation states have an international relevance which cannot be ignored.

Yours faithfully,



Ali Raza Syed
Chairman of
Kashmir Council EU
