**Stand for Kashmir**

[**Mehr Isfahani**](https://www.nation.com.pk/columnist/mehr-isfahani)

October 27, 2022

The Kashmiri people have struggled for seven decades since the day the British decided to end their 200-year rule on the Indian subcontinent and divide it into two separate nations: Muslim-majority Pakistan and Hindu-majority India. October 26 is observed as Jammu and Kashmir Accession Day as a regional public holiday in the Indian Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir to commemorate the date in 1947 when purportedly Maharaja Hari Singh signed the Instrument of Accession which was duly accepted and signed a day later by Lord Mountbatten, the then Governor-General of India. The process of partition in question was not simply because, in addition to the British-controlled territories, the subcontinent also consisted of about 550 sovereign princely states ruled by local monarchs and other territories under French, Portuguese, or Omani rule. Today, Kashmir is the sole unfinished agenda of partition and the only region of British India that has not become a part of one of the two countries or gained independence.

[SHC moves against deployment of Sindh police in Islamabad](https://www.nation.com.pk/28-Oct-2022/shc-moves-against-deployment-of-sindh-police-in-islamabad)

Kashmiris, who have resisted Indian occupation and brutality for years, have poured into the streets many times for mass protests and lost many lives. Indian forces have targeted young Kashmiris between the ages of 12 to 30. On August 5, 2019, India revoked the special status granted to Jammu and Kashmir under Article 370 of the Indian Constitution—an illegal, immoral, and unilateral undertaking. This article, along with Article 35A, established special status for the disputed territory and defined a separate set of laws for the Kashmiri people in the IOJK, including those related to limited citizenship, ownership of property, and fundamental rights of the current residents of Jammu and Kashmir, which are critical for a plebiscite under UN auspices.

Today, there is no access to the region for any observer or third party, despite the situation being repeatedly highlighted by international media. Communication channels for the residents of Jammu and Kashmir are blocked—there is no internet, phone, or mobile connectivity. A presidential decree issued on August 5 revoked Article 370 of India’s constitution that guaranteed special rights to the Muslim-majority state, including the right to its constitution and autonomy to make laws on all matters except defence, communications, and foreign affairs. In the lead-up to the move, India sent thousands of additional troops to the disputed region, imposed a crippling curfew, shut down telecommunications and the internet, and arrested political leaders. In a letter dated September 11 and tagged in a tweet, Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal in the House of Representatives and Congressman James P McGovern has asked US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to press the Indian government to immediately end the communications blackout in Kashmir. The BJP government carried out its long-standing pledge, which it had reiterated in its campaign for the April-May 2019 General Elections. It was because of this promise that the Modi Government dealt with the opposition, which could be seen from the simple majority it got this time as compared to its previous coalition government. The BJP government wanted a strong united India according to its “racist ideology.” BJP’s extremist ideology was explained by the US Commission for International Religious Freedom’s (USCIRF) report which highlighted that the members of the BJP have affiliations with extremist groups. The report also stated that they instigated violence in Indian Held Kashmir.

[Voting underway in Supreme Court Bar elections](https://www.nation.com.pk/28-Oct-2022/voting-underway-in-supreme-court-bar-elections)

The letter says international media and independent human rights observers must be allowed into Jammu and Kashmir “to investigate reports of abuse”. The legislators also expressed concern over the surge in “attacks against religious minorities throughout India” in the letter. Since August 05, 2019, IOJK has been under a complete lockdown. It has been almost a year that the people of IOJK have had no communication with the outside world whatsoever. There is a complete media blackout and no internet in the state. The local economy has been reduced to nothing, leaving the people of IOJK with no means to earn a living.

Atrocities of the Indian state in IOJK have been reported by local and international journalists and observers alike. Organisations like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have called out India over its human rights violations repeatedly. International organisations such as the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the UN have also raised their concerns about Indian brutalities in IOJK. To make matters worse, the international community is also maintaining a deafening silence over the situation in IOJK where recently an innocent bystander, the late Bashir Ahmad Khan of Sopore was shot dead in front of his three-year-old grandson in cold blood. The incident was reported extensively in media outlets around the world but no substantive action was taken to hold India accountable. The world needs to realise that the Kashmir dispute is no longer a political and legal matter rather it is a humanitarian crisis now. The IOF is committing war crimes in IOJK. The revocation has achieved the erasure of the extraordinary choice that the then-only Muslim-majority state had made while acceding to the Indian dominion when the terms of the partition may, more naturally, have induced them to a contrary resolve. The silence of the international community in the face of Indian atrocities in IOJK is criminal. The struggle of the people of IOJK against the illegal occupation and oppression by the Indian state will continue until the dispute is resolved according to the wishes of the people of Kashmir.