

Humanitarian Committee: Kashmir Conflict

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I. Historical Context

The Kashmir region is a mountainous territory of the Indian subcontinent. It is said that the region used to be a vast lake that had an almost endless supply of water for neighboring villages before the land came to be. Dating back to the 3rd century, the region was predominantly a Buddhist territory. Hindu culture sprouted mainly during the 9th century, and it remained as such until 1348, when the territory was claimed by Muslims, who ruled for almost five centuries. In 1819, Kashmir was annexed to the Sikh kingdom, a secular empire based in Punjab. Kashmir remained under the Sikh rule for nearly three decades. During those decades, the Sikh empire flourished, and thus started a process of expansion in the Middle Eastern region. The East India Company of the British was undergoing a parallel process of expansion in the region as well, which resulted in turmoil, territorial disputes, and the invasion of the British in Punjab. A staggering war quickly unfolded throughout the region, and lasted a whole year. The war resulted in the surrendering of the many territories previously claimed by the Sikh region, which then passed to British rule. Furthermore, as a fine for the British, the Sikh surrendered Kashmir as well.



A. British Rule

The East India Company took control of most of the northern part of the Indian subcontinent, and ruled indirectly until 1858, when the British crown officially took control of the territories. During British rule, turmoil arose quickly as different ethnicities started to clash in the Indian subcontinent, among those being Muslims. A small portion of Muslims created a separatist movement, led by politician Mohammad Ali Jinnah, and demanded a separate nation for the Muslims. Thus, on August 14, 1947 both British and Indian political leaders established a new independent Muslim nation: Pakistan. Meanwhile, Britain's power and control over the area weakened, and a nationalist movement developed throughout the Indian subcontinent. In 1948, years after the culmination of World War II, the British Parliament granted independence for the region.

B. Indo-Pakistani War of 1947

British policy stated that princely states, Kashmir being among them, should decide whether to become part of either India or Pakistan. During that time, Kashmir was ruled by the Hindu, Hari Singh, but the majority of the civilization in Kashmir was Muslim. Pakistan was a Muslim independent state, but both the people and government of Kashmir liked otherwise. The Kashmir government was uncertain of the nation's future, and said uncertainty arose tension between Pakistan and Kashmir. Pakistani tribesmen invaded the Kashmir region in September of 1947, with intentions of overpowering the nation's capital, Srinagar. In state of peril, Kashmir asked the Indian government for aid, and was accepted. However, in order for India to provide aid, Kashmir had to accede to India and become part of the country. In October 1947, a document, the Instrument of Accession was signed by both India and Kashmir, and aligned

Kashmir to the Indian nation. The Kashmir region was then given a few liberties, and became an autonomous state. The war ended in 1948, with United Nations Mediation.

C. Indo-Pakistani War of 1965

Turmoil arose again, as Indian and Pakistani forces clashed for the disputed territory in 1965. The Pakistani government attempted once more to take over Kashmir in one hostile invasion, and the second Indo-Pakistani war had begun. The war was heavily influenced by the current global situation, the Cold War, and relationships between some countries strengthened. Both the United States and the United Kingdom had an uneasy relationship with India, due to its strong Chinese influence. Therefore, countries assisted the Pakistan government, and provided aid and military troops during the war. Meanwhile, India requested troops and aid to the Soviet Union, which they granted. The war got worse quickly, and death numbers surpassed the first war. India took drastic measures to internationalize the conflict, and called the United Nations for intervention. The UN passed a resolution, and a ceasefire halted the war on September 22, 1965. The ceasefire did stop the war, however it did not resolve the tensions between India and Pakistan nor the status regarding the Kashmir region.

II. Current Conflict

A. Special Status Revoked

On August 3rd, 2019, the Indian government revoked the special status previously stated in the Instrument of Accession, specifically Article 370. The government also stated that nonresidents are prohibited of buying property in the Kashmir region. Kashmir's

BEFORE	NOW
• Special powers exercised by J&K	• No special powers now
• Dual citizenship	• Single citizenship
• Separate flag for J&K	• Tricolour will be the only flag
• State in-charge of policing	• Centre supervises policing
• Article 360 (Financial Emergency) not applicable	• Article 360 (Financial Emergency) applicable
• No reservation for minorities	• Minorities will be eligible for reservation
• Indian citizens from other states cannot buy land or property in J&K	• People from other states will now be able to purchase land or property in J&K
• RTI not applicable	• RTI will be applicable
• Duration of Legislative Assembly for 6 years	• Assembly duration in Union Territory of J&K will be 5 years

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autonomy was threatened by such decision, and tensions between the three nations (India, Pakistan, and Kashmir) escalated quickly, and armed conflict seems a very likely possibility. Internet access for Kashmir was shut down by the Indian government, leading to very little whereabouts of the conflicts within, and communication was cut off largely from the rest of the world. India's rash actions have provoked Pakistan, reaching out to international alliances in case an armed conflict unfolds. Furthermore, Pakistan downgraded diplomatic relationships with the Indian nation.

B. Protests

Due to the sudden decision of revoking Article 370, civilians started protests in the Kashmir region against the current status issue. The amount of such protests has been increasing exponentially, and severe repercussions have taken place. Many protestors have been detained, including political figures, roads have been blocked, and a strict curfew has been implemented due to apparent religious clashes. Most of the protest groups follow along both the Pakistan and India border, which have outraged the Indian government, but has refused to give a tally. Cases of police brutality happen on a frequent level, gun fights have been common in most of the protests, and the majority of civilians have been exposed to violent, war-like atmospheres. Recently, there have been reported cases of harm and death by custody. Moreover, officials have been reported to use tear gas against protestors and night raids on private properties. The death toll has risen by an alarming rate; an approximate of 40,000 innocent individuals have died. Some of the protestors are beginning to support an independence movement rooted from Kashmir's supposed past lack of autonomy. These individuals have marched towards Kashmir's

borders that adjoin India and Pakistan as they chant “We want freedom on this side and we want freedom on the other side. Foreign oppressors, leave us alone”.

C. Blackout

There has been a near total communication blackout in Kashmir since the evening of August 4th, 2019. Internet access, mobile phone networks, and television channels have been cut off by the Indian government. Kashmir is in a state of peril, mainly because how dangerous living there has become. Due to the limited communication, the outside world has very little awareness of what is happening in the nation internally. Very few have been able to escape to New Delhi, India’s capital, and the rest of the people are living in a black hole. The Human Rights Watch has called upon the Indian government to restore phone lines and Internet, arguing that the blackout “infringes basic freedoms”. A significant number of Indian troops have been brought in to Kashmir’s militarized zone, the most militarized zone in the world, to enforce movement and peaceful assembly restrictions in the Kashmir Valley. There has been a significant increase in the arrest of political figures, journalists, and human rights defenders. Both the blackout and the violent riots have skewed from the original focus and purpose of the protests.

III. General timeline

1947 - End of British rule and partition of sub-continent into mainly Hindu India and Muslim-majority state of Pakistan.

1947 - The Maharaja of Kashmir signs a treaty of accession with India after a Pakistani tribal army attacks. War breaks out between India and Pakistan over the region.

1948 - India raises Kashmir in the UN Security Council. A ceasefire comes into force, but Pakistan refuses to evacuate its troops. Kashmir is for practical purposes partitioned.

1957 - The constitution of Indian-administrated Jammu and Kashmir defines it as part of India.

1950s - China gradually occupies eastern Kashmir (Aksai Chin).

1962 - China defeats India in a short war for control of Aksai Chin.

1965 - A brief war between Indian and Pakistan over Kashmir ends in a ceasefire and a return to the previous positions.

1971-72 - Another Indo-Pakistani war ends in defeat for Pakistan and leads to the 1972 Simla Agreement. The Agreement forms the basis of Pakistani-Indian relations thereafter.

1984 - The Indian Army seizes control of the Siachen Glacier, an area not demarcated by the Line of Control.

1999 - India and Pakistan go to war again after militants cross from Pakistani-administered Kashmir into the Indian-administered Kargil district.

2010 - Protests erupt in the Kashmir Valley of Indian-administered Jammu. The protests abate in September after the government announced measures to ease tension.

2013 - Prime ministers of India and Pakistan meet and agree to try to reduce the number of violent incidents at their disputed border in Kashmir.

2016 - Authorities impose an indefinite curfew in most parts of Indian-administered Kashmir, sparks violent protests. Thousands of villagers in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir are evacuated after violence escalates

2019 - Indian government strips Jammu and Kashmir state of the special status that gave it significant autonomy.

IV. Guide Questions

1. Does your delegation support Kashmir's protests against the revocation of Article 370? Why or why not?
2. What measures does your delegation plan to take to efficiently appease the discord in Kashmir? (These including both the violent protests and the current blackout).
3. Does your delegation believe that the independence of the Kashmir region is a good solution? Why or why not?
4. What measures does your delegation plan to take in order to prevent a potential war to unfold, and for long-term purposes, prevent a territorial outbreak from happening again?

V. Message from the Dias

The Kashmir Conflict is currently one of the most pressing issues worldwide. With so many lives at risk, living in detrimental living conditions, and most importantly, violating fundamental human rights, the conflict has become a global issue. This background guide is just a mere look of a very complex territorial dispute, with more than thirty countries involved. Due to the complexity of the topic, we encourage delegates to search beyond the parameters established by the background guide for a more enriching and fruitful debate. The committee will be set on **present day**. Position papers will be due on **Tuesday, October 22**, and must be sent to the committee email: kashmirconflict.asjmun@gmail.com. Position papers that are not received during that day **will have points deducted**. These should be written in **Times New Roman font, size 12, double spaced**. The document must be **at least two pages long**, but **no longer than three pages**. It would be preferable if the position papers would be sent in a PDF or Word Document.

We are very excited to see all of you in committee! We look forward to seeing a variety of interesting and “out of the box” solutions for a very concerning global conflict. If you have any doubts or concerns about position papers or the committee in general, we are more than happy and willing to help! See you on Friday!

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VI. Work Cited Page

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