

## Joint Press Release - 18th April 2020

Stop LoC war, Save Lives; Release prisoners – PIPFPD urges Governments of India & Pakistan

Simultaneously Issued from Islamabad, Mumbai, Karachi, Kolkata, Lahore, and New Delhi

“Both Indian and Pakistani Governments must initiate dialogue at the highest levels to resolve the violent misadventures on the Kashmir LoC, which has led to the heavy militarisation of border villages, violations of the ceasefire, and death of civilians and armed forces personnel. We demand both governments withdraw immediately from such border skirmishes. We also demand that arrests and violence against fishermen at sea is put on hold with immediate effect.”

PIPFPD Chapters of India and Pakistan said this in a joint letter sent to the Governments and foreign ministries of both countries. Addressed to the Indian minister for external affairs Mr. S Jaishankar and Pakistan’s minister for foreign affairs Mr. Shah Mahmood Qureshi, the letter welcomed the affirmative efforts of both governments in fighting the COVID-19 infection.

The letter was primarily aimed at requesting both governments to release and repatriate prisoners not charged under serious (heinous) crime cases from each other country’s prisons keeping in mind the deadly COVID-19 infection.

Releasing the letter to the media, PIPFPD’s Convener for Committee on Prisoners Concerns, Mr. Jatin Desai stated quoting the letter: “We all are going through a very difficult time. The challenge before us is to save our citizens. Our governments are taking significant steps to save the people. Our prisons are overcrowded and hence the possibility of infection is always there. In such a scenario; it is necessary that both the government release and repatriate, all the arrested fishermen who crossed the territorial water ‘inadvertently’, women prisoners and civilian prisoners not charged under serious cases, from their prisons”.

The letter specifically demanded Governments of India and Pakistan:

1. Release and repatriate all fishermen languishing in each other country’s prisons as they entered each other’s water ‘inadvertently’ (Charges against them are non-serious in nature)
2. Release and repatriate all women prisoners from the custody of each other
3. Release and repatriate all other prisoners who are not charged in serious cases.

The letter was signed by Dr. I.A. Rehman and Mr. Mohd Tahseen of the Pakistan Chapter and Dr. Syeda Hameed, Mr. Tapan K Bose, and Mr. Jatin Desai of the India Chapter of the Forum.

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