

**Press Release - 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2018**

**PIFFPD welcomes Imran Khan's invitation to dialogue  
And urges the Indian government to respond positively**

New Delhi, 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2018 – We, the members of Pakistan-India Peoples' Forum for Peace and Democracy (India Chapter), welcome the statement of Pakistan's newly elected Prime Minister, Mr. Imran Khan that his government would "want to improve our relations with India". He rightly points out the pointlessness of the "blame game that whatever goes wrong in Pakistan's Baluchistan is because of India and vice versa", in his statement. Mr. Khan has added that this attitude has stood in the way of meaningful dialogue. He has made it clear that he would like the leaders of India and Pakistan to resolve all disputes, including the "core issue" of Kashmir, through talks, that the blame game between the two neighbours, detrimental to the subcontinent, should stop.

This statement is significant particularly in the context that India and Pakistan relationship has reached its all-time low in recent years with no bilateral talks taking place. Violations of the ceasefire agreement of 2003 between the two countries in the Jammu and Kashmir region, has caused immense sufferings to the residents of the border region in both the countries.

The failure of both countries to systematically assess the causes of cease fire violations has resulted in both governments adopting policies that have been unsuccessful in curtailing recurrent violations. Ceasefire violations have the potential to not only spark bilateral crises but also escalate any ongoing crisis, especially in the aftermath of terror incidents.

We have also seen that the 2003 Ceasefire Agreement tends to hold when a dialogue process is under way between India and Pakistan on key disputes, and all local factors seeming to have little or no influence under such a positive environment. Indian Government must engage with the newly elected Government of Pakistan to assure return to normalcy and positive engagement.

The importance of resumption of dialogue between India and Pakistan cannot be overemphasized. It is an absolute necessity for the normalization of relationship between India and Pakistan. We urge the Government of India to respond positively to Pakistan's Prime Minister designate, Mr. Imran Khan's invitation to dialogue for resolving all disputes.

We believe a positive response will ease out the current negative visa and trade regime, and will also save the miserable lives of hundreds of fishworkers and other prisoners, in

each other's prisons. An unconditional and open dialogue, is the way forward.

**Tapan. K Bose & Syeda Hameed**

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