

Press Release - 5th August 2021

PIPFPD commemorates 5th August as Black band day – As Kashmir valley drowns in the continued trauma since August 2019

Pakistan India Peoples' Forum for Peace and Democracy (PIPFPD) observed the day as black band day, with a call on social media to put up photos as a message of solidarity with the people of Jammu and Kashmir who have been reeling under the authoritarian and militaristic regime set up by Union Government of India.

On 05 August 2019, the BJP government read down Article 370, abrogated the constitution of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, divided the state into two union territories, and since then has only added to the extreme misery of the people. It imposed a lockdown on the entire state and the people – closing down all means of communications, restricting the movement of people and goods, and arresting thousands of people including politicians, journalists, lawyers, teachers, social activists, youth, and even children.

The forum condemns this complete negation of democracy; the continued incarceration of leaders, activists, and journalists; the ongoing militarised occupation of the region; and the complete disregard for negotiation and a long-term peace process to resolve Kashmir's imbroglio.

According to leading journalist Anuradha Bhasin, "A situation of emergency has been created in Jammu and Kashmir over the last two years. Even the minuscule amount of civil liberties and democratic rights which existed before 2019 are no longer available. The government is creating a false narrative that it is doing all this for development and peace in the region, that it is doing all this for the 'good of the people', but it is clear to us, the people of Kashmir, that the government is creating a dangerous situation which might spiral out of control at any time and lead to our destruction as a people."

"The union government of India keeps claiming that the situation in Jammu and Kashmir has become 'normal'. However, even after two years, the claims of 'normalcy' of the BJP government remain hollow. News reports and reports by independent fact-finding teams have brought out factual accounts of the horrific violence committed by members of the state's armed forces – illegal arrests, nightly raids on homes of people, and the beating of men, women, and children. Jammu and Kashmir have been reduced to a highly militarised police state, where the armed forces and the police's rule is supreme," said Tapan Bose, chairperson of PIPFPD and former APHC appointed interlocutor and peace activist.

"PIFPD gave a call for a black band day to reject the union government of India's continued violations of the constitutionally guaranteed rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. We are grateful for the solidarity extended by people from various walks of life

from across the country in response to the call issued by PIPFPD,” said Dr. Syeda Hameed, chairperson of PIPFPD, educator, and public intellectual and former member of the planning commission of India.

Vijayan MJ

On behalf of the National Committee PIPFPD - India
