**“Kashmir save your youth” advice by Yasser Arafat**

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In early 1990s former [High Commissioner](https://dailytimes.com.pk/310458/nafees-zakaria-likely-to-be-made-new-high-commissioner-to-uk/) in London Syed Wajid Shams ul Hassan, invited me and Dr. Ayub Thakur to meet Yasser Arafat Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization in London. It was an exclusive and a private meeting. Towards the end I asked Yasser Arafat, “Chairman, when we leave this room, what advice do you have for us to give to our people”?

Yasser Arafat was swift and said, “My advice to you is make all efforts to save your youth” I interjected and sought to dilate upon his statement. He added, “I have just come from Delhi.” He did not add any more and we left the room, disturbed and distraught.

It was a caution from a man who had wrestled with death all his life and never given up. Before the death of Burhan Wani on 8 July 2016 in Kokernag, we had perfected a quote that Indian security forces have killed a generation in Indian occupied Kashmir. But the killing of Burhan Wani on 8 July 2016 in Kokernag and target killing of 9 people in Kulgam and Anantnag on 21 October 2018, 11 civilians on 15 December 2018 in Sirnoo village of Pulwama and the killing 6 Kashmiri youth – Salih Mohammad Akhoon, Rasikh Mir, Rauf Mir, Umar Ramzan, Nadeem Sofi and Faisal Javid Khandayon 22 December 2018 by Indian security forces in Tral Indian occupied Kashmir, has changed the moral of Kashmiri story. Yasser Arafat’s caution was not without a reason.

*We need a full overhauling of the manner in which we declare moral, diplomatic and political support to the people of Kashmir. There is an urgent need to revisit the advice given by Yasser Arafat – Chairman PLO. Indian atrocities and presence in Kashmir have no merit*

The world may not be interested in Human Rights situation in Kashmir, but there has always been a limit to such neglect. World turned its face away from Serb atrocities perpetrated on Bosnian Muslims, until NATO and US decided to intervene militarily. Serb military Generals involved in Muslim genocide landed in International Criminal Court in Hague and paid with imprisonment and life for their sins. There are people of good conscience out there to listen and help us.

Atrocities against and targeted killings of Muslims in the [Kashmir Valley,](https://dailytimes.com.pk/69630/bilawal-vows-to-make-kashmir-the-valley-of-benazir/) by Indian security forces have graduated into war crimes. First and foremost argument to seek world attention, has to be to explain the status of Indian soldier in the majority Muslim Valley. It is not an overwhelming force but is a supplement and sub-ordinate force. It is sub-ordinate to State administration and has been temporarily admitted in a part of the State to carry out four duties. Therefore, if the State Government does not take action or terminate their presence in the Valley, it becomes an accomplice and a partner in these killings. State Government cannot endure any part in this criminal liability.

National Conference carries a higher burden of responsibility and blame because it has acted as a Character Witness for these Indian security forces at the UN Security Council on 5 February 1948. Common man and woman need to be educated to challenge National Conference leadership for failing to look after the guarantee given by Sheikh Abdullah at the UN. In addition to this UN Security Council Resolution of 21 April 1948, has defined the behaviour, number and location of these Indian security forces during their stay in the Kashmir.

When I was studying at the University of Kashmir in 1973/74, Indian soldier would require an ‘out pass’ and a ‘companion’ to appear in the City of Srinagar. Local shop keepers before making any transaction with an Indian soldier would ask for whether they had an ‘out pass’ to be in the City. Circumstances have altered to the point that an Indian soldier can wade into any household’s privacy, torture, rape, kill and carry away a male youth. Is there no stopping? Yes, there is and we need to invoke the jurisprudence of Indian soldier’s presence in Kashmir.

People in Pakistan, Azad Kashmir and the diaspora remain distraught at the images of torture, scenes of death and mass protests coming out from the Valley. It is an Indian Hindu soldier who is pitched against a Muslim Kashmiri. It is not an army which has a military code of conduct but a radical Hindu army, out to kill a Muslim. It could disturb the good community relations between Kashmiri diaspora and Indians living in any part of the world.

Prime Minister of Pakistan has spoken to the Secretary General of UN about the situation in Kashmir. Foreign Minister has taken up the matter with OIC. Action at this senior level is highly commendable. However, it is not enough and would not dissuade India. We need to target the 193 capitals in the world and knock at the door of NGOs, institutions, Synagogues, Churches, Gurdawara, Temples, Mosques and at any door that has a merit.

Government of Pakistan, Government of Azad Kashmir and OIC in accordance with its Casablanca Summit Resolution of December 1994 on Kashmir, need to facilitate Kashmiris through their missions abroad to highlight the new wave of targeted killings by Indian security forces. It is high time that credible NGOs working on Kashmir are supported by the intra-disciplinary mechanism on Kashmir to advocate the case. Parachuting new groups or individuals would be counterproductive at this point. Many NGOs have earned a credibility over the years and are well placed to flag the misery of the people of Kashmir.

There is an urgent need for course correction. We need to re-connect with all those countries who have served on UNCIP, visited the theatre of conflict, investigated the matter and filed reports at the UN Security Council.  We need to connect with countries that have taken part in the discussion on Kashmir at the UN Security Council and have finalised a mechanism for a UN supervised vote in Kashmir. We need a full overhauling of the manner in which we declare moral, diplomatic and political support to the people of Kashmir. There is an urgent need to revisit the advice given by Yasser Arafat – Chairman PLO. Indian atrocities and presence in Kashmir have no merit.

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