

## INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY CONFERENCE PROMISES TO PLACE KASHMIR HIGH ON THE EUROPEAN UNION AGENDA

European Parliament, Brussels - December 06, 2018

All Parliamentarians Group on Kashmir – European Parliament (APGK – EP) hosted a conference on “Kashmir – Human Rights, Conflict Resolution”. The organisers included MEP Julie Ward (Chair – APGK – EP) and MEP Klaus Buchner in association with International Human Rights Association of American Minorities (IHRAAM), International Commission for Human Rights (ICHR), South Asian Centre for Peace and Human Rights (SACFPHR) and Kashmir Youth Assembly, UK Europe (KYA).

The event was held in preparation to the celebration of International Human Rights Day on 10 December 2018 (the adoption day for the United Nations Universal Declaration for Human Rights (UDHR)).



The conference opened with a screening of a film titled “*Bruised Paradise*” highlighting gross human rights abuses taking place in Indian Held Kashmir, where Kashmiris are seeking their inalienable right to self-determination as promised by the International Community through the United Nations Security Council Resolutions. The documentary depicts the sufferings of Kashmiri men and women alike including children (as young as 9 months) targeted by the Indian military and paramilitary forces with absolute impunity shielded by the draconian laws including the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA).

Mr Frank Schawalba-Hoth, former MEP and founder of German Greens, chaired and moderated the conference. He impressed upon the collective declaration to resolve any international dispute and conflict including the conflict of Kashmir in compliance with the UDHR as a convenient and useful tool which provides for hope, respect and courage for common good, collective peace and international security.

Opening the proceedings, MEP Buchner, recalled the importance placed by the civilised world in respecting the human rights, not only notionally but in state practices at domestic levels and in the context of disputes and conflicts. He reverberated the importance of fundamental freedoms of religion, speech and association as starting

points for building trust amongst the parties in conflict situations and help it affords to finding resolution in the quest for peace and common security.

MEP Wajid Khan emphasised that the people of Kashmir must be given their unconditional and promised right of self-determination for which they have endured so much of repression and been deprived till date. He lamented that the world has been slow in ensuring the implementation of the UN resolutions resulting in gross human rights abuses in Kashmir.

Barrister A. Majid Tramboo (Chairman ICHR and Director IHRAAM), stressed that the crucial advocacy and diplomatic work on Kashmir is of utter significance. He reflected upon the strategy that is required to place, once again, the Kashmir conflict high on agenda of the European Union including the European Parliament. Barrister Tramboo declared that he, together with his colleagues, is there to render all possible assistance to APGK and the interested MEPs in the advocacy of Kashmir within the European Union in particularly to achieve a fresh report on the current situation of Jammu and Kashmir.

Professor Nazir A. Shawl, (Chairman SACFPHR) presented a historic analysis and evolution of the UDHR and the guarantees it offers to the people of the world. Prof Shawl reiterated the need for continuous efforts to ensure that the Kashmiris fundamental human rights and freedoms are respected and they be given their inherent right to self-determination without any further delay, for it may be too late and the loss of humanity too great and irreparable. Prof Shawl referred to the European Parliament's resolution on mass graves asking the APGK and all other MEPs to get the recommendations of the report implemented in terms that the disappeared people are rightly traced and the half widows situation is resolved and that they are relieved of their continued waiting agony.

Barrister Stuart Stevens, a leading criminal and human right counsel in the City of London, in his speech touched on the need to condition the world trade and economic cooperation with the observance of human rights. He deplored the world current and subtle trends of separating the human rights compliance record of a country from its desirability to become an international market and influential economic power. He insisted that such double standards must be recalibrated to achieve unified and human rights declaration compliant economic standards.

Mr Zubair Awan, Chairman KYA and human rights lawyer in London, recalled the importance of youth engagement for the promotion and protection of human rights. He alluded to the statement of the pioneers of the UDHR quoting that these are our homes, our schools, colleges and universities, these are our kitchens and work places and our places of social engagements where we yearn to practice and respect our fundamental rights to collectively create a world where everyone's' rights are paramount and important for doing so makes the world beautiful, safe and secure not only for us but for the generations to come. Mr Awan pleaded for youth engagement and emergence of young leadership and appealed to youngsters to come forward and stand shoulder to shoulder with the Kashmiri children and youth in solidarity with their struggle to protect their human rights and achieve their right to self-determination.

The deliberation of the conference followed interactive question and answer session whereby the delegates expressed their sentiments and support for the people of Kashmir and asked questions to the panel. In an answer to a question, Barrister Tramboo emphasised the need for continuing a raising voice at the international fora including the United Nations and its various Mandates, the European Union including the European Parliament and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the like until the victim, in this context Kashmir, is guaranteed the human rights (including the right to self-determination) and the aggressor shuns its practices of depriving that right.



MEP Buchner in his closing endorsed Barrister Tramboo's statement and reminded that the mechanisms are reactive in nature responding only to the continuous door knocking.