



ORGANISATION OF KASHMIR COALITION (OKC)

URGENT PRESS RELEASE

“LET’S TALK ABOUT KASHMIR! LET’S GET PAKISTAN AND INDIA TO TALK, LET’S FIND A SOLUTION! WE MUST START THE DIALOGUE WHICH SHOULD BRING PEACE TO THE REGION!” - “OUTSTANDING EXHIBITION” – KASHMIR: CHAMPIONS OF PEACE AT THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Brussels; 12 July 2019: An outstanding Exhibition entitled “*Kashmir: Champions of Peace*” was organised at the European Parliament (EP) hosted by MEP Klaus Buchner, MEP Julie Ward and MEP Phil Bennion in association with **Organisation of Kashmir Coalition (OKC)**. The guest of Honour, at the Exhibition, was Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed, Chairman Pakistan Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

MEP Klaus Buchner, in his opening speech, at the inauguration of the Exhibition, highlighted the peaceful struggle by the Kashmiris and their leaders (including the diaspora leadership) who have given everything in their cause to see the people of Kashmir are given their right to self-determination. He emphasised that it is high time for the international community to take the Kashmir issue seriously and help resolve it peacefully. He assured the people of Kashmir that he, together with his MEP colleagues, would raise the profile of Kashmir within the EP to achieve the resolution of the Kashmir conflict leading to peace and security in the region.



Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed, in his inaugural speech at the Exhibition, provided concise analysis of the contemporary regional and international politics making it all the more crucial to have the long pending Kashmir issue resolved in accordance with the aspirations of the Kashmiri people. He lamented on the Indian government’s acrimonious and stubborn position to refrain from engaging with Kashmiris and Pakistan to help seek peaceful resolution. Senator Syed contrasted the changing international attitudes towards North Korea and Afghanistan Taliban while seeking world peace and hoped that the same ethos is applied to Kashmir. Referring to Pakistan’s resolve and resilience to combat terrorism, he expressed hope that people of Kashmir would achieve their right to self-determination.

MEP Julie Ward, underscored the importance of holding such Exhibition at the crucial juncture of the induction of newly elected members of the European Parliament to help raise awareness of the Kashmiris struggle for right to self-determination. She described the Exhibition as ‘**outstanding**’, that would not only help create awareness but would also call for the active engagement at policy making



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levels within the EP and other organs of the European Union. MEP Ward recalled her visits to Kashmir where she met with victims of brutalities, rape and gang-rape victims, and youth shot with pellet guns. She reiterated on the need for meaningful dialogue for peaceful settlement of the conflict.

MEP Phil Bennion, in his passionate speech, recalled his continuous support for the Kashmir cause. He expressed anguish at the Indian government's oppressive stance and continuing violation of fundamental freedoms and human rights. MEP Bennion declared – **“Let’s talk about Kashmir! Let’s get Pakistan and India to talk, let’s find a solution! We must start the dialogue which should bring peace to the region.”**

MEP Bernhard Zimnick, in his address expressed his grief and sorrow for the people of Kashmir who have so far been denied their right to self-determination. He shared his experience of seeing and knowing the people of Kashmir from so closely hence direct knowledge of the Kashmir cause during his engagement in the foreign service in Pakistan and India. He expressed his belief that in the changing regional, politico-economic environment, Kashmiris would see the resolution in their favour very soon.



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MEP Majid Majid, applauded the Kashmiris struggle for right to self-determination in the most adverse situation. He assured his active support to help resolve the dispute peacefully. MEP Majid saw the Exhibition as a serious effort to impress upon the EP to do something substantial to resolve the conflict.

Prof Nazir A Shawl (Chairman South Asia Centre for Peace and Human Rights and constituent member of OKC), expressed the hope that the Exhibition will rejuvenate the newly elected members of the EP to take the Kashmir case in the similar spirit and the direction as happened during the years 2003 to 2013. *“Kashmiris have seen unprecedented surge in their human rights abuses including the introduction of pellet shot gun that has blinded, maimed and killed Kashmiri youth during 2014 and 2019 but regrettably during this period no strong voice emerged from the EP.”* He hoped that the newly elected MEPs shall take the Kashmir situation, bearing in mind that it is a nuclear flash point, much more seriously.



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Sadar Mehmood Khan (Jammu Kashmir Peoples Party and a Human Rights Activist), in his brief contribution insisted on the newly elected legislature to ensure that the current onslaught of the Indian

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armed forces on Kashmiris is stopped and that the Indian government is held accountable for all the gross human rights violations there.

Mrs Shazia Aslam, a Brussels based ethnic leader and human rights activist in her passionate and emotional intervention appealed to the world community to listen to the Kashmiris call for right to self-determination and to end their sufferings.

Mrs Shamim Shawl (Chairperson Kashmir Women's Movement and constituent member of OKC), in her address sought continuing support of the institutions such as the EP and public to help to resolve the Kashmir issues peacefully.

Zubair Awan (Chairman Kashmir Youth Assembly and constituent member of OKC), stressed on the need to carry forward the peaceful struggle of the Champions of Peace and senior Kashmiri leadership until Kashmir sees its exercise of right to self-determination.

Frank Schwalba-Hoth (Co-founder of the German Greens and former MEP), moderated the inaugural session of the Exhibition "**KASHMIR: CHAMPIONS OF PEACE**", applauded the efforts by the Kashmiri leadership in the diaspora led by Barrister A Majid Tramboo thereby raising awareness and lobby for the crucial policy makers in favour of the Kashmiris cause for right to self-determination. He recalled the excellent contribution of the European Parliament between 2003 and 2013 that had fantastic results in terms to have started the negotiations between India and Pakistan and reduction in the human rights violation in Indian Administered Kashmir. Mr Schwalba-Hoth referred to the European Parliament in holding its traditions of supporting the just and fair causes in the promotion and protection of fundamental freedoms and human rights. He expressed his high expectation that the EP would continue its support to the Kashmir just cause until the Kashmiris are given their rightful justice.



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Barrister A Majid Tramboo (Permanent Representative to the United Nations of International Association of American Minorities, Chairman of International Council for Human Rights and constituent member of OKC and the pioneer of the Exhibition), focussed his discussion on the significance of the Exhibition declaring that Kashmiris within Indian Held Kashmir (IHK), Azad Jammu Kashmir and in the diaspora are **Champions of Peace**. *“Nevertheless the **Champions of Peace** is dedicated to the Kashmiris struggling and suffering within IHK and all of us salute them for their resilience towards their just cause in peaceful engagement”, he added.* Barrister Tramboo described the each exhibited panel in the following terms:

- The panel on **“SELF-DETERMINATION”** is dedicated to the people of Kashmir for their promised plebiscite under the UN Resolutions!
- The panel on **“Incredible Tragedy of Konan Poshpora”** is dedicated to peaceful women who were brutally ravaged by the Indian para-military forces!
- The panel on **“Asifa Innocence Ravaged”** dedicated to little angle of peace, who was ganged raped and murdered by Hindu fundamentalists including a Hindu police officer!
- The panel on **“Disappeared & Unnamed Mass Graves”** dedicated to disappeared and buried Champions of Peace!
- The panel on **“Use of Pellet Firing Shot Guns”** is dedicated to losing sight victims – Champions of Peace!
- The panel on **“Brutality Against Journalists”** is dedicated to those journalists who were killed while reporting on freedom struggle of Kashmiris – Reporters of Peace!
- The panel on **“Repulsive Demographic Change”** is dedicated to all those Champions of Peace resisting the population change in Kashmir!
- The panel on **“Fallen Legends of Peace”** is dedicated to those Legends of Peace who have given their lives for Kashmiris peace and security – Mirwaiz Maulvi Farooq, Dr Ayub Thakur, Abul Ghani Lone, Sheikh Abdul Aziz, Aasia Jeelani, Jalil Andrabi, Prof Farooq Ashai, Prof Abdul Ahad Wani and many more!
- The panel on **“Indian Legal Framework-Black Laws”** is dedicated to all Kashmiris who are nailed under these black laws, indeed all of them are Champions of Peace!
- The panel on **“The United Nations Report Calls for International Inquiry into Multiple Gross Human Rights Violations in Indian Held Kashmir”** is dedicated to millions of Kashmiri Champions of Peace who have been robbed of their very basic human rights!

Barrister Tramboo, looking at the MEPs, confidently remarked that the present legislature, with the support and co-operation of all the interested MEPs, shall engage in meaningful work with all the relevant committees (including Foreign Affairs Committee and the Sub-committee on Human Rights) on Kashmir. He expressed, for and on behalf of all Kashmiris, his sincere gratitude to all the interested MEPs for their continued support in particular in the upcoming days.



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At Barrister Tramboo's request, all the MEPs, the guest of honour and all other dignitaries viewed the Exhibition and took keen interest in exploring the **"CHAMPIONS OF PEACE"**.



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A large crowd including journalists, jurists, human rights activists, analysts, staffers, political advisers, MEPs assistants, other MEPs (including MEP Monica Silvana Gonzalez and MEP Morten Petersen) and the Kashmiri diaspora visited the **"CHAMPIONS OF PEACE"**.



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