



**The undercurrents of human rights,
terrorists and extremist tendencies
prevalent in Pakistan controlled Azad
Jammu & Kashmir**

By Zafar Iqbal
zafar@pressforpeace.org.uk

PRESS FOR PEACE

Giving Voice to the Voiceless

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<http://pressforpeace.blogspot.com/>

<http://www.pressforpeace.org.uk/>

Press For Peace (PFP) is a voluntary, non-partisan, non-profitable and charitable organization registered in Azad Jammu and Kashmir under Pakistan Societies Act, 1860/21 Applicable to Azad Government of State of Jammu and Kashmir, and having Registration # 820. It is working for furtherance and protecting the noble cause of human rights and campaigns for giving the voice to the voiceless

*Images displayed on page 5&6: Ammir udDin
19 July 2009, Muzaffarabad, Jammu and Kashmir*

Acronyms:

AJ& K:	Azad Jammu and Kashmir
BBC:	British Broad Casting Corporation
HR:	Human rights
JuD:	Jumaat- Ud -Daawa
LoC:	Line of Control
LeT	Lashker-e- Taiiba
PFP	Press For Peace
PM	Prime Minister

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Raja Wasim,
Yousaf Kashmiri,
Jalal –ud-Din,
Rafiq Mughal,
Dr. Nighat Younas
Aurangzeb Saifullah

Background:

Press for Peace (PFP) is a non-governmental organization working on the noble cause of promoting and protecting human rights and media awareness among the people in Pakistan, specifically in its controlled part of Kashmir. The PFP, being a pro people liberal entity, has always been highlighting the suffering of the downtrodden and giving voice to the voiceless sections of the society. Most of the PFP interventions revolve around the advocacy for support promotion of peaceful modes for conflict reduction and conflict resolution in order to bring about the positive among to people in order to ward them off against the fast spreading extremist tendencies in Pakistan and Kashmir. At regional level PFP has also been advocating for dialogue and negotiations between India and Pakistan to resolve all issues, including the lingering Kashmir dispute which is one of the cardinal factors for hampering human development and progress in South Asian region. In similar, it raises voice against human rights violations of whatsoever forms arising as a result of genders disparities, bonded labour, tyrannical policies of the government to suppress media and policies intervention etc. PFP believes that only an enlightened approach can resolve the issues the people are faced with, that is why its aim is to ensure adoption of human rights model in policy-making process.

PFP and the propagation of moderation

The PFP always promotes the significance of peace, tolerance and harmony in the region through various gross root interventions. The PFP has organized numerous different activities in Neelum Valley of Pakistani Kashmir to highlight the need of peace along the Line of Control (LoC) because a decade- long cross border shelling badly affected the civilian populations from both sides. Its human rights activists are quite vigilant and responsive to the incidents of human rights violations and condemnation is made at all forums. It is hallmark of the organization that all its workers and the pattern on which it works lay emphasis upon adopting enlightenment, tolerance, liberality as well as promoting interfaith harmony in a multicultural society of Pakistan and Kashmir.

The PFP peace doctrine:

The PFP candidly believes that prevalence of peace, harmony and tolerance in our society is the essential requirement for a better and safer existence of our citizens and this process can not be imposed or dictate upon any community or nation from outside to fulfill the designs and plans of the external players and sponsors. Rationally, we have come out victorious in the application of our approach; therefore, it is hard to imagine that women would protest against the movements of extremists in border areas of AJ &K without any external support.



نیلم۔ عالمی یوم امن کے موقع پر ایس فار پیس کے زیر اہتمام سماجی کارکنان خواتین پیس واک کر رہی ہیں



نیلم۔ عالمی یوم امن کے موقع پر پریس فار پیس کے زیر اہتمام پیس واک کی قیادت چیئرمین معائنہ کمیشن سردار گل خندراں اور دیگر کر رہے



نیلم۔ عالمی یوم امن کے موقع پر پریس فار پیس کے زیر اہتمام پیس واک میں شریک بچیاں سفید جھنڈیاں اٹھائے ہمیں امن چاہئے کے نعرے لگا رہی ہیں

PFP: victim of its anti extremism efforts

After the announcement of cease fire on LoC by India and Pakistan in November 2003, PFP vigorously supported this positive step in view of the huge human loss and damage of infrastructure on the border areas during the previous unprovoked shelling of both armies. In 2008, suspecting the movements of extremists elements and militants, PFP launched a peace campaign in bordering Neelem valley to refute their operations and supporting the permanence of ceasefire along the LoC.

Following this peace campaign our activists working in AJ&K have been subjected to harsh treatment from different circles (intelligence agencies). These elements also tried to influence the managements of some of the institutions where PFP members were working. Eventually because of such pressures our activist's job contracts were terminated. Two of our key bearers have to undergo bitter monetary crisis because of sudden and unjustified termination from their jobs. From the perspective of human rights conventions like Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), and even under constitution of Pakistan, no person can be deprived of his economic rights.

Here, it is worth mentioning that the organization- PFP operates on voluntary basis and its trustees, members and activists are primarily rendering their services in other organizations for earning their livelihood. From PFP, nature of their services is entirely voluntary devoid of gaining any financial benefits.

Reorganization of Banned militants groups and the PFP Response

In the last week of June 2009 some of local residents from Muzaffarabad and Neeelum districts of AJK approached PFP Team to express their concerns over latest activities of some of the banned militants groups. The PFP fact finding team confirmed the concerns raised by the local peoples regarding the movements of militants in Neelum and Muzaffarabad. They also requested that the PFP should help them to protect them against the prospective repercussions of operations of militants in the area and must ask the government to stop the activities of those militants groups already

banned by the government considering them threat and risks to national security and solidarity.

The citizens also referred the previous incidents of killing of local young student in Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistani Kashmir, who was killed by an extremist's group- Jumaat Ud-Dawaa (JuD) member when Jud allegedly occupied the land of a local citizen under the cover of the construction of a welfare project. Consequently, on June 30, 2009 an appeal was dispatched to government of Pakistan from the PFP about the recent reorganization and emergence of the activities of Jud and some other banned outfits in Pakistani part of Kashmir and a request for urgent measures was made to curtail the growing activities of these militant groups. Some of the media (including BBC) also covered the contents of the PFP appeal.

Though, the PFP have already been facing pressures from extremists in Kashmir, our recent appeal/ letter to Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Yousaf Raza Gillani (written on June 30, 2009) escalated their rage and made them furious enormously as they were never refuted or resisted by local people.

Officially Pakistan government claims that it has curtailed some banned Militant groups, specifically Jamaat ud Dawa (former Lashkar Tayyiba). It has been observed and reported that because of Pakistan's former relationships with Kashmiri militants, Pakistan's intelligence agencies have still a soft corner for them. So when the activists of JuD tried to reorganize their operations in Pakistan controlled Kashmir the law enforcing agencies remained impervious to their militant proceedings in spite of the fact that local population is not happy with militant's recent movements in border areas because of prospective response tension and restarting of shelling between Indian and Pakistani troops.

India alleges that Pakistan has been infiltrating in Indian Kashmir from LoC, whereas the border areas of AJ&K Neelum valley have been used as launching pad for militant groups .Pakistan has always denied arming the 15-year-old uprising against Indian rule in Kashmir, saying it only lends diplomatic backing to an indigenous insurgency. Kashmiri militants and Separatist groups claimed they were not bound by the ceasefire and would continue their guerrilla war.

The repercussion of the PFP Appeal

The Prime Minister office did not bother to reply the PFP appeal, nonetheless, after the publication of the demands PFP activists working in Muzaffarabad, Bagh and Neelum started receiving series of threats and intimidations from different corners. No need to mention that such threats are coming both from state and non-state circles which apparently are furious that 'our efforts for the nourishment of harmony in Kashmir, are damaging 'national interests' of and our platform and the activists should be ready for consequences'.

More details of action against the PFP

The threats against PFP Team have been made from security agencies (probably the ISI and Military Intelligence and special wing of Police which is similar to an intelligence agency). Our team is also facing warnings from members, former members and well wishers of Lashkar e Tyyiba (LeT), especially in a wake of our recent letter to the PM Pakistan.

Some of our activists were harassed by LuD/LeT guys on 3 July, 2009 in Muzaffarabd; A J& K. Mr. Yousaf Kashmir faced similar dealing in Bagh, AJ&K when some of agency personal questioned and threatened him during the same period.

The writer of this report also received a harsh telephone call from a concealed number. (Mostly I don't receive calls from unknown number but the repeated calling compelled me to receive it that day). Similarly, I have been informed that authorities especially police is furious that I am highlighting the issues of human rights violations happening in Pakistan and its controlled part of Kashmir which is damaging the portrayal of country internationally. Here, it should be noted that due to some reasons local media in many cases try to hide gross human rights violations happening in Pakistan and AJ&K.

Another important factor of intelligence agencies' infuriation is the presentation of the factual HR situation before the world. From day to day, the writings and articles of its workers prevail upon enlightened moderation, understanding of Islam in modern perspectives shunning obscurantist and extremist thoughts. As a result, the vested interests of the hawkish elements in society start faltering so left with nothing, they have recourse to intimidations, life threats and other heinous acts to put spanners down the work of PFP.

PFP Commitment:

The PFP has condemned such wicked terrorization and coercion against its trustees and activists, ostensibly, applied by extremist's elements. We believe it is our basic human right to express and disseminate our ideas in favor of peace, tolerance and the nourishment of democratic norms in our society. We pledge that such pressures and harassment can not thwart our struggle for the achievement of a tolerant, progressive and welfare society in our homeland, which have suffered extremely from jingoistic designs and adventurism of war loving elements.

PFP demand

It is our humanitarian appeal to all peace loving friends, organizations and nations to support our resistance to foil the aims of pro –war and extremist elements in our homeland which endanger not only the regional peace and security but international as well.

Suggested actions:

1) Protection of HR defenders:

The safety and protection of peace activists and HR defenders in our society is the urgent need of the time. The selfless and dedicated activists are the real asset of our organization; if they are in trouble or under continued threats from state and non state actors then the PFP survival is in danger, flagging local pro peace and progressive voice which means that there would be no indigenous resistance against the supporters of war, radicalization and extremism in Pakistan and Kashmir. It is necessary to be noted that because of the existence of the Kashmir conflict, it is easy for local extremist groups to exploit the sentiments of common people to pursue them to engage and participate in violent and activities and operations.

As we have said earlier, PFP believes in enlightened moderation which is actually the base of Islam, its aim is also to perceive Islam within modern prevalent trends. For this we aim to spread civic education along with Islamic education. But it amounts to walking on thorns in a society in which even the educated peoples are unaware of facts because of stereotypical

presentation of Islam in mosques and *madrassas* (Religious Schools). Therefore it is dire responsibility of international community and other development organizations to come forward and stand by PFP in furthering and promoting the noble cause it is striving for.

2) Capacity building of peace activists:

The PFP is the only vibrant indigenous liberal and progressive advocacy based none governmental organization at the social landscape in Kashmir which have strong network of gross root mobilizers and campaigners working in the field of peace, gender development, environment and human rights. Their constant capacity building would defiantly enhance their capabilities in the better understanding of theory and practice of human rights activism. Ends

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