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September 26, 2008

Honorable Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon
United Nations
New York, NY

MEMORANDUM
On
Human Rights Violations Against Kashmiri Hindus

Your Excellency,

We are not professional lobbyists or media consultants. We have no fancy brochures or pamphlets, only the facts that cannot be suppressed any longer. We have no sponsors other than our conscience and our pain for our loved ones, who are suffering a thousand deaths as we speak today.

We are Kashmiri Hindus, the original inhabitants of Kashmir who created the civilization in that beautiful land around 3000 B.C., who contributed to the glory of Hinduism and Buddhism, and when the era came to accept Islam in the 1300's, did it with passive acceptance and open tolerance. Kashmiri Hindus paid a dear price for their humanism then, resulting in the survival of only eleven Hindu families in the entire valley by early 1400's, but kept the hope and faith that things can only get better, not worse. The concept of "Kashmiriyat" was born, which simply stated means that Kashmiri Hindus and Muslims have a rich tradition of religious tolerance and common cultural values that allows them to co-exist peacefully.

This in effect became the crux of that idea behind "Naya Kashmir" (new Kashmir) that Kashmiris of all denominations supported at the time when political choices had to be made in the Indian sub-continent in 1947. The essence of Kashmiriyat is what made Kashmiri Hindus feel secure in the valley in spite of the early signs of terrorism which began to raise its ugly head in February 1986 when scores of Hindu temples and homes were destroyed in South Kashmir. Unfortunately, the tolerance and moderation shown by Hindus became their curse. Drawing inspiration and support from their role models in Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan and Iran, a new breed of Kashmiri militants and terrorists took hold of the valley and brought death and destruction to Kashmiri Hindus.

Since the partition of India in August 1947, Pakistan has all the while kept the pressure of aggression on, in one way or the other, starting with tribal raids in October 1947, the 1965 war against India, or the 1971 Bangladesh war for freedom from Pakistan when the latter extended the conflict from the eastern front to the western front 1500 Kms away along Kashmir & Punjab. In 1972, Pakistan signed the Simla agreement with India.



Under this agreement Pakistan had undertaken to settle all disputes only through bilateral discussions.

Flouting all of this, Pakistan continued to sharpen its fangs and turn to many activities of subversion and promotion of internal disorder within the Kashmir valley.

All this finally culminated in the two decades old Islamic fundamentalist terrorism in the valley of Kashmir. As is well known the world over, the Kashmiri Hindus were singled out as targets for the orgy of killings, rape, loot, arson, vandalism, and untold terror and torture.

The small, innocuous, unarmed, traditionally peace loving, and highly educated and cultured society has been subject to such acute abuse and inhuman violence as to push it to the edge of extinction. They were terrorized and tortured and filled with paralyzing fright, their properties seized and destroyed, their jobs snatched, their avocations devastated, and their places of worship desecrated. This was on the scale of genocide, as has been reported by scholars and human rights commentators.

The Kashmiri Hindus fled their millennia-old homes and hearths in utter disarray with hands empty but hearts and minds filled with numbing horror. Many are still living miserable lives in sub-human conditions in hurriedly constructed refugee camps in Jammu city in the state of Jammu & Kashmir and elsewhere in India.

The Kashmiri Hindus have enriched their birth land as well as many other countries with their hard, honest, efficient and very special skills and services. Yet back home, this very community has been reduced to destitution, sickness and starvation. They are living out their days in utter lack of dignity, privacy, gainful employment and the minimum needs for bare survival.

The survivors of the holocaust still speak in terror of the night of January 19, 1990 when all the mosques simultaneously broadcast an audio tape asking people fight Jihad against India and threatened "Kashmiri Hindu Infidels" to leave the valley or face dire consequences. Subsequently, on April 14, 1990 the "Alsafa" news daily published a statement stating, "Hindus, responsible for harassment of Muslims, must leave within two days". Imagine the 95% Muslim majority feeling threatened by the 5% Hindu minority!

Even today, the abuse of the human rights of Kashmiri Hindus by the Islamic terrorists in the valley continues unabated. We are talking of killings, abductions, brutality, people driven from their homes and lands, vacant homes fire bombed and the degeneration of an entire ethnic community to a second class citizenship in their own home land. We are talking of destruction of a 5,000 year old culture that contributed to Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Kashmiriyat. We are talking of an endangered human species,



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already decimated to a small size (about 700,000 brave souls), which is on its way to complete extinction.

You would thus observe, Sir, that all the human rights enshrined in the UN Charter and in the Universal Declaration have been violated and snatched from this Kashmiri Hindu minority and are being trampled upon all day, every day by Pakistan armed, trained, aided and abetted terrorists and fundamentalist zealots.

It is a travesty of justice, fair play and truth that no world body claiming to secure the rights of human beings has ever taken note of this enormous human tragedy that has turned this community into a homeless community.

The paradigm will not be interrupted unless the World understands what is really happening in Kashmir today. It will not change unless World bodies like the UN step forward and confront the menace of Global Islamic terrorism head on.

Indo-American Kashmir Forum (IAKF) solicits your personal and humanitarian interest and sympathy to save the stricken community and help create conditions conducive for their return to their secured homeland with complete freedom to practice their political, economic, religious, and human rights.

We also request your good offices to:

- Declare Kashmiri Hindu community as Internally Displaced People (IDP). The Human Rights Working Group on Minorities in Geneva has since recognized Kashmiri Hindus, formally, as a Reverse Minority. The use of the insulting term 'Migrants' for this forcibly exiled community may be removed from all records and communications relating to us hence forth.
- Direct the Government of India to set up a 'Commission of Enquiry' to establish the causes that led to the selective and targeted killings of Kashmiri Hindus and their subsequent forced exile, and appropriate the responsibility and punish the guilty.
- Direct the Government of India to ensure adequate protection to the residual Kashmiri Hindu population currently living in the Kashmir valley.
- Direct the Government of India to restore Kashmiri Hindus' political and economic rights that would give them equal status rather than a second class citizenship in their native land of Kashmir. Share of Kashmiri Hindu jobs in government bureaucracy, placement in state supported professional educational institutes and the representation in the state assembly has steadily diminished to virtually nothing in the last two decades.
- Grant funds to Kashmiri Hindus for the preservation and documentation of relics of Kashmiri Hindu heritage and culture.



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- Direct the Government of India to hand over the management of Kashmiri Hindu religious shrines, icons and cultural centers to Kashmiri Hindu leadership.

It is further requested that the United Nations Human Rights Commission may put on record these Human Rights Violations by Pakistan and its agents, and Pakistan be declared a terrorist state.

Assuring you of our profound regards and awaiting your kind acknowledgement,

We remain,

Yours respectfully,

Lalit Koul

President, Indo-American Kashmir Forum (IAKF)

On behalf of Kashmiri Hindu Community

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[IAKF was established in 1991 to inform the world community of the oppression against Kashmiri Pandits that led to their forced exile from Kashmir due to the influx of fundamentalist Islamic terrorism. IAKF wishes to raise awareness of the human rights violations suffered by the Pandit community, many of whom are still living in makeshift 'refugee' camps in Jammu, India. The organization seeks the return of Kashmiri Pandits to the Kashmir valley with guaranteed security and freedom to exercise their religious faith and cultural way of life without fear or intrusion. IAKF provides reports to the U.S. Administration, U.S. Congress, and several of Washington D.C.'s policy think tanks. For more information, please visit www.iakf.org.]