

## DEBATE PACK

CDP 2020-063 (2020) | 15 April 2020

# Human rights in Kashmir

**Main Chamber**

**Thursday 23 April 2020**

**Backbench Business Debate**

**Debbie Abrahams MP and Yasmin Qureshi MP**

Compiled by:  
Tim Robinson

Subject specialists:  
Jon Lunn  
Louisa Brooke-Holland

### Contents

<b>1.</b>	<b>Background</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Press Articles</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>PQs</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Other Parliamentary material</b>	<b>18</b>
4.1	Petitions	18
4.2	Early Day Motions	18
<b>5.</b>	<b>Further reading</b>	<b>21</b>

The proceedings of this debate can be viewed on [Parliamentlive.tv](https://www.parliamentlive.tv)

The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

# 1. Background

In mid-January 2020, the US-based human rights group Human Rights Watch made this [assessment of the situation](#) in Indian-administered Kashmir, five months after the Indian government's August 2019 revocation of the region's autonomy:

Kashmir has been under a lockdown for five months. Fearing that Kashmiris might protest the revocation of autonomy provided to Jammu and Kashmir state under India's constitution, the government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi clamped down.

Since the restrictions in August, the government has taken slow, reluctant steps to ease some of them, but is still falling far short in upholding Kashmiri rights.

Many of the [thousands arbitrarily arrested](#) – lawyers, shop owners, traders, students, rights activists – have now been released, but reportedly only after [promising not to criticize the government](#). Some senior Kashmiri political leaders, including former chief ministers, remain in custody.

Police admitted at least 144 [children had been detained](#), and now the chief of defense staff has spoken of [putting children in "deradicalization camps."](#)

The government had also blocked phone lines and [access to the internet](#). The government was so fearful of criticism and dissent that it curtailed Kashmiris' ability to share news of births or deaths, call their doctors, order supplies, research term papers, file taxes, and trade apples and walnuts.

While authorities started gradually restoring landlines and some mobile phone services, it denied internet services. After the Supreme Court said on January 10 that [access to the internet was a fundamental right](#), the authorities relented – only to set up [government-controlled internet kiosks](#), with firewalls permitting only some websites and [forbidding social media](#). This violates free expression rights and hardly complies with the [principle laid down by the court](#) that "the freedom of speech and expression and the freedom to practice any profession or carry on any trade, business or occupation over the medium of internet enjoys constitutional protection."

The human rights situation in Indian-administered Kashmir has long been a cause for international concern. In June 2018 the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) published a [report](#)

[on the human rights situation in Indian-administered Kashmir and Pakistan-administered Kashmir](#) since 2016. The report

focused on allegations of serious human rights violations, notably excessive use of force by Indian security forces that led to numerous civilian casualties, arbitrary detention, impunity for human rights violations and human rights abuses committed by armed groups allegedly supported by Pakistan. The report also examined the human rights situation in Pakistan-Administered Kashmir and found that human rights violations there were more structural in nature; these included restrictions on the freedom of expression and freedom of association, institutional discrimination of minority groups and misuse of anti-terror laws to target political opponents and activists. The report made a wide range of recommendations to the Governments of India and of Pakistan and also urged the Human Rights Council to consider the findings of the report, including the possible establishment of an international commission of inquiry to conduct a comprehensive independent investigation into allegations of human rights violations in Kashmir.

A [2019 follow-up report](#) by the OHCHR found that the 2018 report's findings and recommendations had "not been followed up with meaningful improvements, or even open and serious discussions on how the grave issues raised could be addressed." The report made clear the impact of restrictions in the gathering of information, stating "the quantity and quality of information available on Indian-Administered Kashmir contrasts significantly to Pakistan-Administered Kashmir."

Amongst its conclusions and recommendations, the 2019 report:

highlights serious human rights violations and patterns of impunity in Indian-Administered Kashmir and significant human rights concerns witnessed in Pakistan-Administered Kashmir. As stated in OHCHR's June 2018 report, there remains an urgent need to address past and ongoing human rights violations and to deliver justice for all people in Kashmir

The report suggested that the Human Rights Council, in considering the findings of this report, consider "the possible establishment of a commission of inquiry to conduct a comprehensive independent international investigation into allegations of human rights violations in Kashmir." A commission of inquiry has not yet been established.

In January 2020 the Indian authorities [invited](#) some New Delhi-based Ambassadors and High Commissioners to make a visit, under strict supervision, to Jammu and Kashmir. The following 17 did so: US, Vietnam, South Korea, Brazil, Uzbekistan, Niger, Nigeria, Morocco, Guyana, Argentina, Philippines, Norway, Maldives, Fiji, Togo, Bangladesh and Peru. The EU envoy declined to accept the offer after being denied permission to visit local leaders, including some of those still detained.

On 10 February 2020 FCO Minister Heather Wheeler said:

Kashmir was discussed in closed sessions of the UN Security Council in August 2019 and January 2020. We are monitoring the situation in Kashmir closely and the Foreign Secretary has discussed the situation there with his Indian and Pakistani counterparts. British High Commission officials visit the region periodically and meet with local authorities and others to discuss a range of issues.

## 2. Press Articles

The following is a selection of press and media articles relevant to this debate.

Please note: the Library is not responsible for either the views or accuracy of external content.

**[‘World Knows its Dismal Human Rights Records’ India’s Reply Against Pakistan’s Kashmir Rant at UNHRC](#)**

India.com  
Sharmita Kar  
28 February 2020

**[A constant fear of death in Pakistan-administered Kashmir](#)**

Al Jazeera  
26 February 2020

**[Anti-Muslim violence in Delhi serves Modi well](#)**

The Guardian  
Mukul Kesavan  
26 February 2020

**[India denies entry to UK Labour MP who chairs group on Kashmir](#)**

Al Jazeera  
17 February 2020

**[UN chief urges India to respect human rights in Kashmir](#)**

Anadolu Agency  
Islamuddin Sajid  
16 February 2020

**[Kashmir human rights film divides UK’s Indian and Pakistani communities](#)**

The Guardian  
Vivek Chaudhary  
18 January 2020

**[Beaten, stripped, lips sewn up: a bleak year for human rights in Kashmir](#)**

This Week in Asia  
Fahad Shah  
7 January 2020

**[‘Where were human rights when Hindus fled Kashmir?’](#)**

India New England News  
15 November 2019

**[Wounds that never heal: what torture in Kashmir says about India](#)**

TRT World  
Mohamad Junaid  
23 May 2019

### 3. PQs

#### Mehbooba Mufti and Omar Abdullah

28 Feb 2020 | 14748

**Asked by: Paul Bristow**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations his Department has made to the Indian Government and the Indian High Commission on the arrest of (a) Mehbooba Mufti and (b) Omar Abdullah under the Public Safety Act that allows for detention for two years without trial; and if he will make a statement.

**Answering member: Nigel Adams | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

It would not be appropriate to comment on these specific cases. We are monitoring the situation in Kashmir closely. We are concerned by reports of ongoing detentions and call for these to be lifted as soon as possible. We have raised our concerns with the Government of India. Most recently, the Minister of State for South Asia and the Commonwealth (Lord Ahmad), discussed the situation in Kashmir and our concerns, including political detentions, with a senior representative from the Ministry of External Affairs on 25 February.

#### Kashmir: Politics and Government

25 Feb 2020 | 14830

**Asked by: Naz Shah**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the accuracy of reports of (a) arrests of political leaders, (b) arrests of residents and (c) internet restrictions in Indian administered Kashmir; and what representations he has made to his Indian counterpart on those reports.

**Answering member: Nigel Adams | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

We are monitoring the situation in Kashmir closely. We welcome reports that some restrictions have been relaxed and some of the detained have been released. However, we remain concerned at the ongoing detentions and continued restrictions in some areas. We call for these to be lifted as soon as possible and we have raised our concerns with the Indian Government. Most recently, Lord Ahmad, the Minister for South Asia, discussed the situation in Kashmir and our concerns with Indian Minister of State for External and Parliamentary Affairs Mr Muraleedharan and, separately, the Indian High Commissioner. The British High Commission in New Delhi also regularly raise our concerns with the Indian Government at senior levels.

**Kashmir: Politics and Government****10 Feb 2020 | 12426****Asked by: Lloyd Russell-Moyle**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to the UN on sending UN delegates to Kashmir to assess the humanitarian and political situation in that region.

**Answered by: Heather Wheeler | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

Kashmir was discussed in closed sessions of the UN Security Council in August 2019 and January 2020. We are monitoring the situation in Kashmir closely and the Foreign Secretary has discussed the situation there with his Indian and Pakistani counterparts. British High Commission officials visit the region periodically and meet with local authorities and others to discuss a range of issues.

**Kashmir: Politics and Government****29 Jan 2020 | HL725****Asked by: Baroness Thornhill**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the statement by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 20 January (HL Deb, col 916) that the situation in Kashmir "needs to be resolved bilaterally", what assessment they have made of the possibility of mediating between the governments of India and Kashmir in order to implement the recommendations made in the report by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Update of the Situation of Human Rights in Indian-Administered Kashmir and Pakistan-Administered Kashmir from May 2018 to April 2019.

**Answered by: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon**

Our longstanding position is that it is for India and Pakistan to find a lasting political resolution on Kashmir, taking into account the wishes of the Kashmiri people. It is not for the UK to prescribe a solution or act as a mediator. Any external mediation on Kashmir would need to be jointly agreed by India and Pakistan. We recognise that there are human rights concerns in India-administered Kashmir and Pakistan-administered Kashmir and have noted the recommendations in the OHCHR report for the authorities in India, the Government of Pakistan, and the Human Rights Council. Any allegation of human rights violations or abuses are deeply concerning and must be investigated thoroughly, promptly and transparently.

**Kashmir****20 Jan 2020 | 801 cc915-917****Asked by: Lord Hussein**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the human rights situation in Indian-administered Kashmir following the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35(A) of the Indian constitution.

**Answering Member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

My Lords, we recognise that there are human rights concerns in Indian-administered Kashmir. We encourage all states to ensure that domestic laws are in line with international standards. Any allegation of human rights violations or abuse is deeply concerning and must be investigated thoroughly, promptly and transparently. The continued use of detentions and restrictions in Indian-administered Kashmir is worrying. We are clear on the importance of rights being fully respected, and we raise our concerns directly with the Indian Government.

**Asked by: Lord Hussein**

I thank the Minister for that Answer. On 5 August 2019, the Indian Government revoked Articles 370 and 35A of the Indian constitution, which gave Jammu and Kashmir a special status in the Union of India, removed the state Government and arrested and detained thousands of Kashmiris, including three former Chief Ministers. According to Human Rights Watch:

“Prior to its actions in Jammu and Kashmir, the government deployed additional troops to the province, shut down the internet and phones, and arbitrarily detained thousands of Kashmiris, including political leaders, activists, journalists, lawyers, and potential protesters, including children. Hundreds remain in detention without charge or under house arrest to prevent protests.”

On 17 September, Amnesty International said:

“The continued use of draconian laws against political dissidents, despite promises of change, signals the dishonest intent of the Indian government. Thousands of political leaders, activists and journalists continue to be silenced through ... detention laws.”

In the light of this information, does the Minister not agree with me that India is violating the principles and values of the Commonwealth? What representation have the British Government made to the Indian Government in this respect?

**Answering Member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

My Lords, there was a lot in that question, but on a serious issue. As the noble Lord has heard, I have already made our position very clear. Indeed, as Minister for South Asia, I have been dealing directly with this issue, but not just me: my right honourable friends the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary have also raised the very concern the noble Lord raises.

As far as India’s membership of the Commonwealth is concerned, India is the largest democracy. It is an important and valued member of the Commonwealth and will continue to be so. As the largest democracy, India knows—we have these exchanges with India—that the importance of respecting human rights is one of the fundamental tenets of the charter, and we encourage all member states, India included, to uphold those shared commitments.

**Asked by: Baroness Verma**

My Lords, surely a constitutional matter that is internal to a country is the issue of that country. As close friends of India, we must respect that India has a right to amend its constitution when it chooses to do so. Does my noble friend agree that this change gives equal rights to women, the LGBT community, those in minority communities and the disadvantaged?

**Answering Member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

My Lords, my noble friend refers to Article 370. In the UK, we have consistently retained our position across successive Governments, and it is important to re-emphasise that. As for the situation in Kashmir, or indeed any issue between India and Pakistan, we retain and will continue to retain the view that it needs to be resolved bilaterally by both countries, while respecting the views of those in Kashmir.

**Asked by: Lord Hussein**

My Lords, the Minister referred just now to India as a democracy. Does he agree that the Indian action in Kashmir questions its right to be called a secular democracy? As we have heard, hundreds of Muslims are routinely rounded up, and many disappear. According to the medical journal the *Lancet*, hospital staff are being told to understate the number of fatalities occurring to minimise scrutiny. It is a state which even MPs cannot visit, as internet and phone connections have been cut off. This is all happening in a state that, in more peaceful conditions, could live on tourism alone.

**Answering Member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

My Lords, on the noble Lord's final point, as anyone who has visited Kashmir will know, it is a beautiful part of the world. On his wider point on human rights in Kashmir and detentions after India revoked Article 370, as I said in my original Answer we have raised these issues; I have consistently raised the specific issue of the detention of various representatives. The noble Lord also talked about internet access. The contractual-based internet has been reintroduced across all of Kashmir and Ladakh. Currently, there is no open mobile service, but we continue to raise these issues with the Indian Government directly. It is important that the UK lend its voice to the incredible confidence-building initiatives between India and Pakistan. In that respect, I pay tribute to both countries on the recent opening of the Kartarpur corridor, which allows Sikh pilgrims to travel without visas across to Pakistan to pay respects at a very sacred temple.

**Asked by: Baroness Kennedy of The Shaws**

My Lords, I want to ask the Minister about the important lead this Government are taking on media freedom. It is important to note that India leads the world in the maximum number of internet shutdowns conducted, particularly in Jammu and Kashmir, which have had indefinite communication blackouts. The media is one of the ways people know about their freedoms and what is happening to members of their community. We have had disappearances and the alleged use of torture. The human rights abuses have been considerable, including the shooting of people with metal pellets, which have blinded 1,500

people. Given the importance of media freedom to this Government, what are we saying to India about these media shutdowns?

**Answering Member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

My Lords, I pay tribute to the noble Baroness's work. We will continue to work together on the important issue of the media freedom campaign. I assure noble Lords that that remains a key priority for Her Majesty's Government. We will continue to call out media suppression around the world. On India specifically, the noble Baroness raised the internet shutdown. There are areas, such as Jammu, where the internet has been restored, but concerns remain within the Kashmir valley which we consistently raise. On our exchanges with India, the Indian Foreign Minister, Mr Jaishankar, actually attended the media freedom conference. We continue to raise these issues. India is a democracy, media freedom is a fundamental tenet of democracy, and there are many in India who support that very value.

**UK Soft Power**

**05 Nov 2019 | 667 c630**

**Asked by: Ivan Lewis**

[...]

Turning to soft power, what are the Government doing to make it clear to the Indian Government that we have extremely serious concerns about human rights abuses in Kashmir? What will the Government do to promote the concept of self-determination for the Kashmiri people? Time and again before elections, people on the Front Benches make commitments to promote self-determination, yet Governments have repeatedly failed to do anything about the issue when it comes to using soft power in international institutions.

**Answered by: Heather Wheeler | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

That was a serious question, and it behoves me to give a serious answer. The Foreign Secretary has spoken to the Indian Foreign Secretary about the matter, raising our concerns about humanitarian issues, particularly in Kashmir. As for the election and commitments regarding an independent Kashmir, the matter should be sorted out on a bilateral basis between the two countries.

**Topical Questions**

**05 Nov 2019 | 667 cc640-1**

**Asked by: Gavin Shuker**

with the Foreign Secretary and his predecessors the appalling human rights abuses in Kashmir. Further to our recent

**Answered by: Dominic Raab | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The hon. Gentleman has been a stalwart champion of human rights and has indeed taken a very close interest in foreign policy in relation to this region. He asks what we have done. As the Under-Secretary of State, my hon. Friend the Member for South Derbyshire (Mrs Wheeler), said

earlier, fundamentally the issue of Kashmir needs to be resolved between the two parties, but we never duck the issue of human rights in any country. I have raised the issue of human rights in Saudi Arabia with the Saudi Foreign Minister and, particularly in relation to detentions, blackouts and internet blockages, with the Indian Foreign Minister. We will continue to do that because it is absolutely important. Even with some of our closest partners, we need to be able to have those candid conversations.

### **Kashmir: Human Rights**

**04 Nov 2019 | 7222**

#### **Asked by: Afzal Khan**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the implementation of UN resolutions to uphold the human rights of the Kashmiri people.

#### **Answered by: Heather Wheeler | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

We recognise that there are human rights concerns in both India-administered Kashmir and Pakistan-administered Kashmir. Any allegation of human rights abuse is deeply concerning and must be investigated thoroughly, promptly, transparently and independently. We encourage all states to uphold their international human rights obligations and to ensure domestic laws are in line with international standards.

### **Engagements**

**30 Oct 2019 | 667 c365**

#### **Asked by: Steve Baker**

Thousands of British people in Wycombe have family and friends on one or both sides of the line of control in Kashmir. With so many serious allegations of human rights abuses being made, do the Government accept that this is not merely some foreign policy issue to be dealt with by others, but that it is an issue of the most immediate and profound concern in Wycombe and in towns across the UK?

#### **Answered by: Boris Johnson | Prime Minister**

I thank my hon. Friend, and he is absolutely right not just that this matters very much to him and to his constituents, but that the welfare of communities in Kashmir is of profound concern to the UK Government. He also knows, of course, that it is the long-standing position of the UK Government that the crisis in Kashmir is fundamentally a matter for India and Pakistan to resolve and, alas, since we were there at the very beginning of this crisis, he will understand that, for long-standing reasons, it is not for us as the UK to prescribe a solution in that dispute.

[Kashmir: Cluster Munitions](#)

29 Oct 2019 | 5006

**Asked by: Steve Baker**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the accuracy of claims made by the Pakistani Minister for Human Rights Dr Shireen Mazari in a letter to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights that India has used cluster munitions in Kashmir.

**Answered by: Heather Wheeler | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

We are aware of reports of the use of cluster munitions by Indian security forces. We discourage states from using cluster munitions, and urge non-States Parties such as India to accede to the Cluster Munitions Convention without delay.

[Kashmir: Human Rights](#)

29 Oct 2019 | 3664

**Asked by: Rushanara Ali**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what diplomatic steps he is taking to support the maintenance of human rights in Kashmir.

**Answering member: Heather Wheeler | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

We recognise that there are human rights concerns in both India-administered Kashmir and Pakistan-administered Kashmir. The continued use of detentions and restrictions are worrying. It is important that individual rights are fully respected and that there is constructive dialogue with affected communities. We have raised our concerns with the Government of India. We encourage all states to ensure domestic laws are in line with international standards. Any allegation of human rights violations or abuses is deeply concerning and must be investigated thoroughly, promptly, transparently and independently.

[Kashmir: Human Rights](#)

28 Oct 2019 | 3537

**Asked by: John Spellar**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, when he last made representations to his Indian counterpart on the human rights of the people of (a) Jammu and (b) Kashmir.

**Answering member: Heather Wheeler | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

We recognise that there are human rights concerns in both India-administered Kashmir and Pakistan-administered Kashmir. We encourage all states to ensure domestic laws are in line with international standards. Any allegation of human rights abuse is deeply concerning and must be investigated thoroughly, promptly, transparently and independently.

We are monitoring the situation in Kashmir closely and in regular contact with the Governments of India and of Pakistan. The Prime Minister has spoken to Prime Minister Modi about the situation. The Foreign Secretary raised his concerns about the situation with the Indian Minister for External Affairs, Dr Jaishankar. The Minister for the Commonwealth, UN and South Asia discussed the situation in Kashmir with the Indian Minister of Minority Affairs during his visit to New Delhi this month; and engages regularly with the Indian High Commissioner. Senior officials remain in frequent contact with the Indian Government and regularly raise our concerns.

### **Kashmir: Politics and Government**

**23 Oct 2019 | 1065**

#### **Asked by: Stewart Malcolm McDonald**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to his Indian counterpart on the restoration of the autonomy of Kashmir and Jammu; and what pressure the Government will apply to encourage an end to the violation of human rights in that region.

#### **Answering member: Heather Wheeler | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

We are monitoring the situation in Kashmir closely and are in regular contact with the Governments of both India and Pakistan. Regarding representations to India specifically, the Prime Minister has spoken to Prime Minister Modi about the situation, underlining the importance of maintaining dialogue. The Foreign Secretary has raised his concerns about the situation with the Indian Minister for External Affairs Dr Jaishankar. The Minister for the Commonwealth, UN and South Asia has also had regular engagement with the Indian High Commissioner, and discussed Kashmir with the Indian Minister of Minority Affairs during his visit to New Delhi this month.

We recognise that there are human rights concerns in both India-administered Kashmir and Pakistan-administered Kashmir. We encourage all states to ensure domestic laws are in line with international standards. Any allegation of human rights abuse is deeply concerning and must be investigated thoroughly, promptly, transparently and independently.

The Government's longstanding position is that it is for India and Pakistan to find a lasting political resolution to the situation in Kashmir, taking into account the wishes of Kashmiri people. It is not for the UK to prescribe a solution or act as mediator. We encourage India and Pakistan to engage in dialogue and find lasting, diplomatic solutions to maintain regional stability.

**Kashmir: Human Rights**

**07 Oct 2019 | 293427**

**Asked by: Mike Gapes**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the human rights situation in Jammu and Kashmir; and if he will make a statement.

**Answering member:** Heather Wheeler | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

We recognise that there are human rights concerns in both India-administered-Kashmir and Pakistan-administered-Kashmir. We encourage all states to ensure domestic laws are in line with international standards. Any allegation of human rights abuse is deeply concerning and must be investigated thoroughly, promptly and transparently. The continued use of detentions and the continued restrictions on communications are worrying. It is important that individual rights are fully respected and that there is constructive dialogue with affected communities. We have raised our concerns with the Governments of India and Pakistan.

**Kashmir: Armed Forces**

**04 Oct 2019 | 291317**

**Asked by: Emily Thornberry**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent discussions he has had with his Indian counterpart on the actions of Indian security forces in Kashmir.

**Answering member: Dominic Raab | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

We are following the situation in Kashmir closely and are in regular contact with the governments of India and of Pakistan. The Prime Minister and I have discussed the situation in Kashmir with our Indian counterparts and raised UK concerns. Lord Ahmad has also spoken on a number of occasions with both the Indian High Commissioner and Pakistan High Commission about the situation. Events in Kashmir can have regional and international implications and we urge calm and caution from all.

We are aware of media reports of torture by Security Forces in India-administered Kashmir. Any allegation of torture is deeply concerning, and we urge all countries to guarantee the fundamental rights of their citizens. We have raised this issue with the Indian Government. It is important that individual rights are fully respected, and that any allegations of human rights violations or abuses are investigated thoroughly, promptly and transparently.

**Kashmir: Human Rights****04 Oct 2019 | 291316****Asked by: Emily Thornberry**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the feasibility of (a) the United Nations and (b) another independent observer to report on alleged human rights abuses in Kashmir.

**Answering member: Dominic Raab | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

We recognise that there are human rights concerns in both India-administered Kashmir and Pakistan-administered Kashmir. We encourage all states to ensure domestic laws are in line with international standards. Any allegation of human rights abuse is deeply concerning and must be investigated thoroughly, promptly and transparently.

We are in regular contact with both the Indian and Pakistani Governments and have discussed the situation in Kashmir, the issue of human rights, and our concerns, with both governments.

**Kashmir: Human Rights****02 Oct 2019 | 291095****Asked by: Dr Rosena Allin-Khan**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what (a) assessment he has made of the effect of reports of arbitrary indefinite detention in Kashmir and (b) representations the Government has made to the Government of (a) India and (b) Pakistan on the human rights of Kashmir residents.

**Answering member: Heather Wheeler | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

We are following the serious situation in Kashmir closely. The continued use of detentions and the continued restrictions on communications is worrying. It is important that individual rights are fully respected and that there is constructive dialogue with affected communities. We have raised our concerns with the Governments of India and Pakistan. The Prime Minister raised his concerns about the situation with PM Modi and PM Khan. The Foreign Secretary has also discussed Kashmir with his Indian counterpart Dr Jaishankar. Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon has also spoken on a number of occasions with both the Indian High Commissioner and Pakistan High Commission about the situation.

**Topical Questions****02 Oct 2019 | 664 cc1213-5****Asked by: Kate Green**

Further to the question by my right hon. Friend the Member for Warley (John Spellar), will the Government press for the United Nations group on India and Pakistan to make a fact-finding visit to Kashmir to assess the humanitarian and human rights situation there?

**Answered by: Alok Sharma | International Development**

We have a long-standing position on Kashmir, which has been reiterated and followed by successive Governments, but where there are matters related to humanitarian issues we of course always look at those.

**Kashmir: Politics and Government**

**05 Sep 2019 | 285304**

**Asked by: Naz Shah**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what the UK's position is at the UN in relation to the current situation in Jammu and Kashmir; and whether the Government opposes the removal of article 370 and 35A by the Indian Government within that region.

**Answering member: Heather Wheeler | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

As the Foreign Secretary said in his Statement to the House on 3 September, we are deeply concerned about the situation in Kashmir. We want to see a reduction in tensions in Kashmir, respect for internationally recognised human rights and steps taken on all sides to rebuild confidence. The situation in Kashmir was discussed in the UN Security Council on 16 August and the UK continues to call for restraint and action to address current concerns, and welcome efforts to do so as soon as possible. The UK's longstanding position on Kashmir is that it is a bilateral issue for India and Pakistan to resolve, taking into account the wishes of the Kashmiri people.

**Kashmir**

**03 Sep 2019 | 664 c4**

**Asked by: Bob Blackman**

It has been a long-standing policy of the Government that the situation in Jammu and Kashmir is a bilateral issue. It has also been this House that stands up for human rights and the protection of minorities. Therefore, does my right hon. Friend agree that the abolition of article 370, which discriminates against women and minority religions, is to be welcomed?

**Answered by: Dominic Raab | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

My hon. Friend makes the point that there are different sides to this. But the reality is that there have been widespread reports and concerns about detentions, mistreatments and the communications blackout. There was a UN Security Council discussion on Kashmir on 16 August. As well as wanting to respect the constitutional arrangements within India and in relation to Kashmir, there are implications internationally, particularly as they touch on internationally respected and recognised human rights.

**[Kashmir](#)****03 Sep 2019 | 664 c3****Asked by: Steve Baker**

Events in Kashmir are of the most profound and immediate importance to thousands of my constituents, because British Kashmiris often have family and friends on not one but both sides of the line of control, and they are in frequent FaceTime, email and Skype contact, just like anybody else, even to the second and third generations of migrant. Does my right hon. Friend agree that in such circumstances they must have active representation not just from their MPs but from the Government? Will he therefore join me in saying that the time has come to reassure them on the human rights of their families and friends and to ask for independent observers in Kashmir?

**Answered by: Dominic Raab | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

I know the scale of the community that my hon. Friend has in Wycombe—I believe it is over 10,000. I understand how keenly this is felt among Kashmiris in Wycombe but also right across the country. The issue of human rights is not just a bilateral, or domestic issue for India or Pakistan—it is an international issue. He is absolutely right to say that we should, with all our partners, expect internationally recognised standards of human rights to be complied with and respected.

**[Kashmir](#)****03 Sep 2019 | 664 c1****Asked by: Dr Paul Williams | Party: Labour Party**

The Kashmiri community in Stockton South are understandably concerned about the safety and human rights of the people of Kashmir. Does the Secretary of State believe that there is a role for the United Nations or other independent parties to monitor and report on the alleged human rights abuses to ensure that the Kashmiri people are protected?

**Answered by: Dominic Raab | Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The hon. Gentleman will know that there have been UN Security Council resolutions on the situation in Kashmir in the past, and that this is something that the General Assembly has looked at. Fundamentally, though, the UN also recognises that the dispute over Kashmir between Pakistan and India is for them to resolve. The hon. Gentleman makes the point—as others will and have—that there are internationally recognised human rights at stake. They are duties owed to the international community at large, and we will certainly be scrutinising the situation carefully to see that those rights are respected.

## 4. Other Parliamentary material

### 4.1 Petitions

#### [India in the Jammu and Kashmir Region](#)

20 Jan 2020 | 670 cc2-3P

Lead member: Julie Cooper

#### [Human Rights in Kashmir](#)

20 Jan 2020 | 670 c3P

Lead member: Holly Lynch

#### [Dispute in Kashmir](#)

20 Jan 2020 | 670 c3P

Lead member: Stella Creasy

#### [Human Rights in Kashmir](#)

05 Nov 2019 | 667 cc747-9

Lead member: Holly Lynch

#### [India in the Jammu and Kashmir Region](#)

04 Nov 2019 | 667 cc11-4P

Lead member: Julie Cooper

#### [Dispute in Kashmir](#)

04 Sep 2019 | 664 cc317-9

Lead members: Neil Gray and Alison Thewliss

### 4.2 Early Day Motions

#### [Kashmiri people](#)

**EDM 90 (session 2019-21)**

**Debbie Abrahams**

**21 January 2020**

That this House calls on the Government to use all diplomatic and economic measures at its disposal to influence the Indian and Pakistan Governments to ensure that democracy is respected and that the Kashmiri people are at the heart of any constitutional reform of the region, including respecting both the UN Security Council resolutions on Kashmir, particularly UNSCR 47 which refers to the people of Jammu and Kashmir having the right to self-determination and the 1972 Simla Agreement which refers to the future of Jammu and Kashmir being determined by peaceful means; and urges the Government to use all international fora to press for the rule of law in Kashmir to be upheld and human rights protected by lifting the telecommunications black out and allowing independent, international observers to the region as well as supporting the assistance of a UN Special Envoy for Kashmir in facilitating a peaceful and sustainable future for Kashmir.

**Kashmiri people****EDM 42 (session 2019-19)****Debbie Abrahams****17 October 2019**

That this House calls on the Government to use all diplomatic and economic measures at its disposal to influence the Indian and Pakistan Governments to ensure that democracy is respected and that the Kashmiri people are at the heart of any constitutional reform of the region, including respecting both the UN Security Council resolutions on Kashmir, particularly UNSCR 47 which refers to the people of Jammu and Kashmir having the right to self-determination and the 1972 Simla Agreement which refers to the future of Jammu and Kashmir being determined by peaceful means; and urges the Government to use all international fora to press for the rule of law in Kashmir to be upheld and human rights protected by lifting the telecommunications black out and allowing independent, international observers to the region as well as supporting the assistance of a UN Special Envoy for Kashmir in facilitating a peaceful and sustainable future for Kashmir.

**JAMMU and KASHMIR (No. 2)****EDM 2744 (session 2017-19)****Anne Main****30 September 2019**

That this House expresses its condemnation of the Indian government's revocation of Article 370 and 35A of the Indian constitution; has been alarmed by the reports of assaults on civil liberties, freedom of movement and freedom of expression in Jammu and Kashmir by Indian authorities; calls on the Indian government to comply with international human rights law in relation to the people of Jammu and Kashmir; and urges the UK government to coordinate an international effort to ensure that the Indian Government lifts the lock-down on Jammu and Kashmir and to seek the process of demilitarisation and initiation of the plebiscite mutually agreed with the UN to achieve a peaceful solution to that crisis.

**KASHMIRI PEOPLE****EDM 2709 (session 2017-19)****Debbie Abrahams****5 September 2019**

That this House calls on the UK Government to use all diplomatic and economic measures at its disposal to influence the Indian and Pakistan governments to ensure that democracy is respected and that the Kashmiri people are at the heart of any constitutional reform of the region, including respecting both the UN Security Council resolutions on Kashmir, particularly UNSCR 47 which refers to the people of Jammu and Kashmir having the right to self-determination and the 1972 Simla Agreement which refers to the future of Jammu and Kashmir being determined by peaceful means; and urges the UK Government to use all international fora to press for the rule of law in Kashmir to be upheld and human rights protected by lifting the telecommunications black out

and allowing independent, international observers to the region as well as supporting the assistance of a UN Special Envoy for Kashmir in facilitating a peaceful and sustainable future for Kashmir.

### **CONFLICT IN KASHMIR**

**EDM 2707 (session 2017-19)**

**Naz Shah**

**4 September 2019**

That this House expresses huge concern about the revocation of Articles 370 and 35A in Kashmir by the Indian Government, stripping away the right to special status for the people of Kashmir; is extremely alarmed by the road to ethnic cleansing opened up by the ongoing communications blackout and the hundreds of thousands of military personnel placed within the region and especially the reports of grave human rights violations against men, women and children; recognises that these steps ignore UN resolutions on a plebiscite for the Kashmiri people on their right to self-determination and raises tensions with neighbouring Pakistan; and calls upon the UN, its member states and International governments to call upon the Indian government to lift the siege on the Kashmiri people.

### **SITUATION IN KASHMIR**

**EDM 2684 (session 2017-19)**

**Khalid Mahmood**

**3 September 2019**

That this House calls on the Government to condemn Indian aggression in Kashmir; further calls on the Indian Government to reinstate the UN Security Council 1948 resolution 47 and Article 35a; calls on the Government in collaboration with the UN Security Council to provide the necessary resolution to stop the human rights breaches in Kashmir; recognises that the interests of the Kashmiri people must be paramount; calls on the Indian Government to ensure an immediate restoration of power and telecommunications in Kashmir, lift the draconian curfew conditions allowing the Kashmiris to have immediate access to food and medicine, allow access of international human rights observer groups in Kashmir including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and United Nation Human Rights Commission; and calls on the Indian armed forces to immediately cease any unlawful operations in Kashmir.

## 5. Further reading

[Kashmir: January 2019 update](#), Commons Briefing papers CBP-7356, 2 January 2019

[Update of the Situation of Human Rights in Indian-Administered Kashmir and](#)

[Pakistan-Administered Kashmir from May 2018 to April 2019](#),

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 8 July 2019

[Report on the Situation of Human Rights in Kashmir:](#)

[Developments in the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir from](#)

[June 2016 to April 2018, and General Human Rights Concerns in](#)

[Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan](#), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 14 June 2018

[Jammu Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society](#) (JKCCS) [Website]

[Kashmir](#) [Human Rights Watch website]

[All-Party Parliamentary Kashmir Group](#)

[British Kashmiri Charitable Foundation](#) [Website]

### About the Library

The House of Commons Library research service provides MPs and their staff with the impartial briefing and evidence base they need to do their work in scrutinising Government, proposing legislation, and supporting constituents.

As well as providing MPs with a confidential service we publish open briefing papers, which are available on the Parliament website.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in these publicly available research briefings is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware however that briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

If you have any comments on our briefings please email [papers@parliament.uk](mailto:papers@parliament.uk). Authors are available to discuss the content of this briefing only with Members and their staff.

If you have any general questions about the work of the House of Commons you can email [hcinfo@parliament.uk](mailto:hcinfo@parliament.uk).

### Disclaimer

This information is provided to Members of Parliament in support of their parliamentary duties. It is a general briefing only and should not be relied on as a substitute for specific advice. The House of Commons or the author(s) shall not be liable for any errors or omissions, or for any loss or damage of any kind arising from its use, and may remove, vary or amend any information at any time without prior notice.

The House of Commons accepts no responsibility for any references or links to, or the content of, information maintained by third parties. This information is provided subject to the [conditions of the Open Parliament Licence](#).