



Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

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April 8, 2019

H.E. Mr. António Guterres
Secretary-General of the United Nations
Executive Office of the Secretary-General
S-3800, United Nations Secretariat Building
New York, NY 10017

Re: Encouraging the UN to mediate a peaceful settlement of the Kashmir conflict

Your Excellency,

I write to you in the wake of the crisis created by the suicide bombing of an Indian paramilitary convoy in Pulwama District in south Kashmir on February 14, 2019, and the ensuing military hostilities between India and Pakistan, to ask you to urgently intervene in order to prevent further conflict and the endangerment and loss of life.

As the international community urges India and Pakistan to resolve all issues through negotiation, I wish to emphasize that the central cause of the conflict is the unresolved and disputed status of Kashmir. The United Nations has a responsibility to act as an impartial mediator to negotiate a peaceful and just settlement of the Kashmir conflict and to initiate such negotiations on an urgent basis.

The contributions that the United Nations can make to support moving towards peace include:

- Working to end violence against Kashmiri civilians;
- Recognizing the right of the Kashmiri people to determine their own political future, and mediating a just settlement based on the right to self-determination;
- Working urgently to demilitarize both sides of the Line of Control between India and Pakistan.
- Creating mechanisms and procedures that will allow Kashmiris on both sides of the Line of Control to meet freely and discuss their political futures.
- Investigating instances of human rights violations, which will be the first step in seeking accountability and justice for these crimes.

Through a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, I have become aware of concerns raised by the Kashmir Scholars Consultative and Action Network (KSCAN), an interdisciplinary group of scholars from various countries and regions engaged in research on the region of Kashmir. This has deepened my understanding of the urgency and the dynamics of the current situation in Kashmir, and has increased my sense of the importance of the United Nations acting as an impartial mediator.

Yours in Christ

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan C. Johnson", with a small cross symbol to its left.

The Rev. Susan C. Johnson
National Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

cc.

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada

Ms. Michelle Bachelet Jeria
UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Ms. Dubravka Šimonović
Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women

Prof. Nils Melzer
Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

Mr. Michel Forst
Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders

Mr. Fernand de Varennes
Special Rapporteur on minority issues

Mr. Fabian Salvioli
Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence

Mr. David Kaye
Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression

Clément Nyaletsossi VOULE,
Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association

Ms. Agnes Callamard
Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions
Working Group on Arbitrary Detention
Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances

ELCIC National Church Council