

Statement from elected representatives on Kashmir:

- a. We are urging everyone to get in touch with their local elected representatives by sending the below draft email requesting them to do the below:
 - i. Issue a press release or make a statement about their concerns over the continued communications lockdown and the impact of the lockdown on the COVID-19 response.
 - ii. Record a 30-second video stating why they supported HR745 **or** just sharing why they stand in solidarity with the people of Kashmir. Use the hashtag #StandwithKashmir. Request that they email the video and any press statements to advocacy@standwithkashmir.org

Find your elected congressional representative - <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members>

Dear [Elected Official],

I wanted to reach out to your office as a concerned constituent as we near the one year anniversary of the August 5, 2019 revocation of autonomy of the disputed region of Jammu and Kashmir ("Kashmir") by Prime Minister Modi's nationalist and xenophobic government under the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). As always, I appreciate your engagement on issues surrounding human rights violations and your willingness to understand the numerous enduring problems that have been made worse in Kashmir under the intensified lockdown pursued under COVID-19. These problems include but are not limited to:

- Lack of access to high speed internet cutting Kashmiri Americans from family members and preventing adequate medical treatment from doctors in Kashmir (access has been cut off or throttled for over a year, the longest ever internet outage in a democracy);
- The continued detention of political prisoners and civilians including children and the ailing despite the threat of COVID-19;
- A campaign of detention, harassment and intimidation of Kashmiri journalists including Ms. Masrat Zahra, International Women's Media Foundation's 2020 'Courage in Photojournalism' award winner, and for its new 'Media Policy' that mandates review and censorship by the government prior to publication.
- Forced demographic change undertaken by the Indian government through forcible population transfer of non-indigenous Indian nationals with the April 1, 2020 introduction of domicile laws stripping Kashmiris of their permanent residency and leading to voter disenfranchisement.

All of these continuing violations have been highlighted in the various congressional resolutions on Kashmir including House Resolution 745, which urged the Indian government to end the restrictions on communications and mass detentions in Kashmir as swiftly as possible. Today

we would like to request your office to speak out meaningfully in the following ways during the commemoration between August 5-19, 2020:

1. Help elevate the voices and aspirations of Kashmiri Americans with a statement (in whatever medium is most suitable - twitter, press release etc) in support of the rights of Kashmiris to basic democratic rights and civil liberties.
Sample tweet: "I remain concerned by the actions of our democratic ally India in Kashmir—including the ongoing internet lockdown, harassment of journalists, detention of civilians & enforcement of laws aimed at disenfranchising indigenous populations."
2. Consider recording a brief 20-30 second video sending a message to Kashmiri American constituents and the people of Kashmir giving them hope during the time of COVID-19 in line with American values of fairness and justice.
3. Attending a joint virtual congressional briefing organized by Kashmiri Americans on the actions undertaken by the Indian government in the one- year anniversary of the revocation.

Most importantly, the Indian government's unilateral revocation of Article 370 of the Indian Constitution was intended to allow it to alter the demographics of Kashmir through forcible population transfer and rendering indigenous Kashmiris stateless, acts that are deemed illegal under international law, exemplified by the multiple UN Resolutions on Kashmir, especially as related to disputed or occupied territories.

Some of the most deleterious effects of these domicile laws on indigenous Kashmiris are:

- Indigenous Kashmiris no longer automatically qualify for educational opportunities or public employment; at the same time military/government officials can be fast-tracked
- Category of "Permanent Resident" which protected indigenous Kashmiris' rights has been undermined and replaced with "domicile";
- Lack of clarity with regards to the process under which indigenous Kashmiris without their Permanent Resident Certificates (PRC) will be able to obtain the domicile certificate;
- Kashmiri Americans and their offspring who do not have PRC will be ineligible for domicile, as will refugees or exiles from Indian-administered Kashmir;

These acts combined with continuing human rights violations continue to make the region a tinderbox for conflict between the three nuclear powers in the region with Kashmiris having little or no say in the process as their democratic rights and right to self-determination are stifled.

Thank you for your engagement and work on behalf of all Americans.

Warm Regards,
[Constituent]