

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEPAL SECTION

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Ref. No. 07/2019

13th September, 2019

His Excellency
Manjeev Singh Puri
Embassy of India, Kathmandu
Nepal

Subject: Put Humanity First: Lift the communications lockdown in Kashmir now!

Dear Ambassador,
Greetings from Amnesty International Nepal Section.

I write to express Amnesty Nepal's deep concern over the indefinite draconian communications blackout faced by the people of Kashmir in India.

In a media interview on 14 August 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, "The people of India, irrespective of what their political preference is, have supported the steps taken in Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh. This is about the nation, not politics". If the Indian administration believes that the decisions regarding Jammu and Kashmir have the support of the people of India, then they must immediately lift the one-month old communications blackout in Jammu and Kashmir.

The people of Jammu and Kashmir are unable to contact their loved ones and express their views freely since the last one month. Any restrictions must always be limited in duration and scope, demonstrably necessary and proportionate for a legitimate purpose defined under international law. The UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of expression and other global human rights experts have stated that shutting down entire parts of communications systems can never be justified under international human rights law. They have termed this blackout a 'collective punishment' for the people of Kashmir.

Yet the right to freedom of movement and right to freedom of expression and opinion of the people continues to be paralyzed in Kashmir. The blackout has ensured the Indian Government's near-total control over information coming out of the region. Political opposition leaders and activists in the region continue to be silenced by the government. Access to education and healthcare remain hindered. The Government of India must realise that the

ongoing clampdown on civil liberties in Kashmir is only likely to increase tensions, alienate the people and increase the risk of further human rights violations.

We hope that in this time of indefinite clampdown on the people of Kashmir in India, your esteemed office will consider our request as an urgent appeal and impress on the Government of India to immediately stop the repressive clampdown on all communication channels – telephone, internet, cellular and cable networks – and lift the blanket restrictions in Kashmir.

We will be happy to provide you more information on the issue, should you require it.

Please accept our gratitude for your time and consideration.

Yours Sincerely,



Nirajan Thapaliya

Director

Amnesty International Nepal

