

Report By:

The Green Kashmir Permaculture Trust

The Current Crisis in Kashmir

1) Introduction:

On the 5th August 2019 the Indian Government revoked the special status of Kashmir by removing Article 370 from the Indian Constitution, and Article 35A which removes the Statehood of Kashmir. The people of Kashmir see this as a serious deprivation of their democratic rights. The Indian constitution was amended in the late 1940's to offer these special freedoms as a means of taking administrative control of Kashmir at that time. In order to enforce control of the population after this unconstitutional breach of their democratic rights a complete shutdown of all communications has taken place and which has now been in place since the 5th of August. This shutdown has been accompanied by a radical curfew with the deployment of an extra thousands of troops being sent into the region, where people are now held in their homes: all schools, colleges, universities, banks, shops, etc, etc are shut down including the vast majority of public transport. Now this has led to a humanitarian crisis, with shortages of food, and severely reduced access to medical treatment and medical supplies. Since the complete shutdown of communications and we have been unable to speak to our family and friends.

2) The work of the Green Kashmir Permaculture Trust since 2015

- GK promotes food growing and food sovereignty in IOK
- Organic chemical-free food
- Safeguarding of valuable traditional ways
- Empowerment of women and girls
- Capacity building in potential community leaders
- Youth engagement in therapeutic horticulture
- Resilience Planning
- Climate change adaptations in the IHR
- Peace-building through NVC

3). The current crisis:

- Loss of income due to the on-going curfew and call for civil disobedience.
- Kashmir has lost its statehood and citizenship rights
- Food shortages
- All educational institutions are shut
- Banks are closed and hospitals are running a reduced service
- 95% of public transport is closed and civilian vehicles are mostly restricted
- Petrol and diesel are on ration with vastly reduced access
- Food shops are closed with only clandestine opening for essentials
- People are stuck in their homes
- Communications have been shut down since the 5th August
- No mobiles, no internet, no WhatsApp, etc
- Travel in and out of the region reduced
- Streets are patrolled by soldiers in increase numbers
- Barbed wire and barriers block free movement around the towns and city
- Weddings have been cancelled
- Women have difficulty getting to hospital for the delivery of their babies
- It is very difficult to carry out the ritual of funerals after a loved one had died
- Press and journalists have been restricted

4). The impact on Indian Kashmiris living outside of the region:

- Intense anxiety caused by not being able to contact and speak to loved ones
- Worrying about food supplies and access to food
- Concern for the safety of loved ones, family and friends, colleagues, neighbours, etc
- Concern for the financial well-being of those who live hand to mouth, who earn their money on a day to day basis
- Concern about the implications for Kashmir of such draconian measures resulting in a breach of democracy, and leading to a humanitarian crisis: 8 million people have been under curfew since the 5th August and there is still not sign in sight of this abating
- Concern about the mental and physical well-being of those who are being kept in their homes against their free will
- Concern for the impact on the fragile environment of extended conflict and neglect
- Inability of large organisations to get into Kashmir to deliver aid
- Anxiety about the silence of the world

5). Actions we took and are working on:

- We did some fundraising and arranged emergency food relief for KMR
- Shah's trip to KMR to see his family and to distribute food supplies to those families he could reach who were facing destitution
- Awareness raising campaigns around the UK
- Approaching the Kashmiri Diaspora and other members of civil society in the UK.
- Further fundraising for emergency food relief as the crisis continues

7). Outcomes:

- 32 families were given food packages for 2-3 months' supply of food
- Shah spent time with his family
- Active hope was given to some people who then went on to help others in their immediate communities
- We built relations with the local mosques in SGR
- We have decided to add emergency food relief and emergency resilience planning to the official work that we do as a Permaculture Trust in KMR.
- Etc

8). The Way Forward:

- Give talks and do fundraising at UK Mosques, Churches, Sikh Gurdwaras for emergency food relief.
- Promote peace building dialogue across UK and International communities
- Promote Active Hope
- To visit KMR in November this year
- To meet with the Kashmiri Diaspora
- To approach MP's and Councillors
- Etc