

Special Political and Decolonization Committee (SPECPOL)



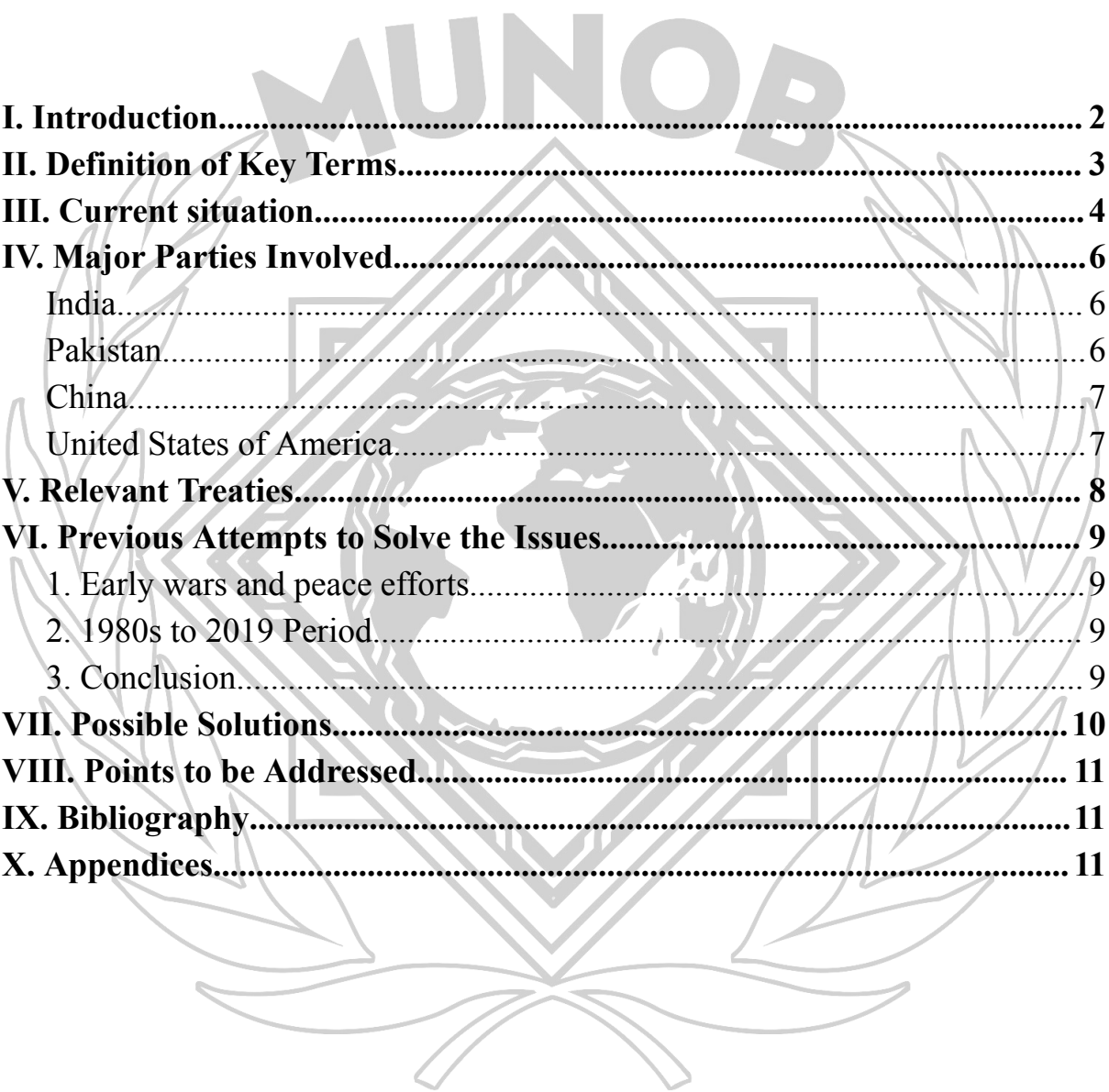
Fourth Committee of the General Assembly

Topic

***Addressing the Tensions in the
Kashmir Region***

-Research Report-

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I. Introduction

Since British India was divided in 1947, the Kashmir region has been a major source of conflict between India and Pakistan. This longstanding dispute is not just about territorial claims but also involves deep-rooted political, social, and economic issues that were never resolved. Millions of lives have been impacted by decades of bloodshed and instability in the area, which also strained ties between the two countries.

Historically, the conflict originated from the partition of British India, which left both India and Pakistan claiming the former princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. Wars and continuous military confrontations resulted from this. Armed rebellion against Indian sovereignty broke out in 1989, with factions sponsored by Pakistan, advocating either complete independence or unification with Pakistan. This escalated the conflict even more with an increased military presence.

The U.N. intervened to terminate the fighting between India and Pakistan, and the U.N. Military Observer Group on India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) has been keeping an eye on the cease-fire line since 1948. While India controls the Kashmir valley, Jammu, and Ladakh, Pakistan controls the state's far northern and western regions. India has rejected U.N. resolutions that demand a plebiscite to decide the territory's final status, arguing that since Kashmiris have cast ballots in India's national elections, a referendum is unnecessary. Pakistan insists that a plebiscite ought to take place. Although they contend that an independent Kashmir should be an option, a number of the terrorist organizations in Kashmir have also advocated for a plebiscite. The Simla Accord, which India and Pakistan signed on July 2, 1972, committed both nations to respecting the Line of Control, a cease-fire line, and to resolving their differences over Kashmir "by peaceful means" through talks. The "final settlement" of the Kashmir issue was left up to an undefined future date by the Simla Accord. Despite the fact that the Simla Accord itself did not address the Kashmir question, it has since served as the cornerstone of all bilateral conversations on the subject.

Today, Kashmir is still separated into areas managed by Pakistan (Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan) and Indian-administered territories (Jammu and Kashmir). Political tensions and violent altercations are still fueled by the geographical separation. Human rights issues have also received a lot of media attention, especially when it comes to security personnel abusing civilians. The local population's complaints have been exacerbated by accusations of infractions against both parties. In addition to its humanitarian effects, the conflict has impeded economic growth as a result of persistent tensions that impede commerce and collaboration between both countries.

II. Definition of Key Terms

- **Instrument of Accession (1947)** – A legal document signed by Maharaja Hari Singh, agreeing to join India under certain conditions, which Pakistan never recognized as legitimate.
- **Line of Control (LoC)** – The de facto border dividing Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir from Pakistani-administered Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, established after the 1971 war.
- **Plebiscite / Referendum Debate** – A proposed vote in Jammu and Kashmir that would allow its residents to determine their political future, as suggested by the UN, but opposed by India on the grounds that Pakistan must first withdraw its forces.
- **Insurgency in Kashmir (1989-Present)** – An armed rebellion against Indian rule, with militant groups (some backed by Pakistan) seeking either independence or merger with Pakistan.
- **Cross-border Terrorism** – Armed groups operating from Pakistan conducting attacks in Indian-administered Kashmir, a major point of contention between the two nations.
- **Ceasefire Violations** – Frequent exchanges of fire along the LoC between Indian and Pakistani military forces, undermining peace efforts.
- **Counter-Insurgency (COIN) Operations** – Military strategies and actions taken by Indian forces to suppress militant activities and restore control in Kashmir.
- **Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) & Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)** – Pakistan-based militant groups accused of carrying out deadly attacks in Kashmir and other parts of India.
- **Pulwama Attack (2019)** – A suicide bombing by JeM that killed 40 Indian paramilitary personnel, escalating tensions between India and Pakistan.
- **Balakot Airstrike (2019)** – India's retaliatory airstrike targeting alleged JeM training camps in Pakistan, following the Pulwama attack.
- **Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA)** – A controversial Indian law granting security forces immunity and sweeping powers in conflict zones like Kashmir, often criticized for enabling human rights violations.

- **Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs)** – Small-scale agreements between India and Pakistan (trade routes, cross-border travel) to reduce hostilities and enter dialogue.
- **AFSPA (Armed Forces Special Powers Act)** – A controversial Indian law giving security forces broad powers in conflict zones, including Kashmir.
- **Ceasefire Violation** – Frequent cross-border skirmishes between Indian and Pakistani forces along the LoC.

III. Current situation

Even now, Kashmir remains among the world's most militarized zones and is a contested territory, with India and Pakistan enmeshed in a political and territorial dispute. Over decades the issue has transformed from a simple territorial contest into a conflict developed through manipulations in politics, military escalations, and humanitarian crises.

This area is subdivided into two main regions of direct administration: Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh under the direction of India, while the Pakistan-controlled regions are Azad Jammu & Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan. However, both countries lay claim to the larger territory. Given that both nations are nuclear powers, their relationship is fragile. There is a ceasefire along the Line of Control (LoC), but violations of the ceasefire happen often and have put a restriction on the peace process. Nevertheless, tensions simmer along the Indo-Pak border, as there remains a heavy presence of troops, though the ceasefire brokers have not been unbroken since the clarification endorsed in 2021.

In August 2019, India revoked Article 370 of its Constitution, thereby stripping Jammu and Kashmir of its special autonomy and thereby launching incredibly fierce unrest, with protests, crackdowns, and escalated military presence but also increasing diplomatic tensions by Pakistan return, emphasizing it as constitutional and calling for Kashmir in international settings such as the United Nations Security Council. There had been chronic restrictions, lockdowns, and internet blackouts, thus further isolating people and limiting their provisions for free communication.

Alongside these political and military tensions, Kashmir has continued to be a humanitarian crisis in its own right: civilians have suffered from crossfire between insurgency and counterinsurgency in violence, displacement, and economic adversities. Among the more well-reported violations include suppression of press freedom, imposition of curfew, and disproportionate use of force by security personnel. Terrorist organizations, such as Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed, operate freely in the region and hinder peace negotiations even more. India remains engaged in counterterrorism. However, the instability persists.

Life is characterized by socio-economic problems, lack of opportunity for education, and priority given to mental health among those living in the valley. Especially, youth have problems finding stable options in a region where instability often interrupts regular life. Long-term recovery and reintegration missions are shrouded in suspicion as no course toward sustainable stability is in view.

The Kashmir problem has continued to draw the world's attention-the United Nations and major world powers, including the United States, China, and the European Union, are aware of these tinderbox-like conditions. While some seek to solve the problem bilaterally between India and Pakistan, others argue for international involvement in light of the continued violation of human rights. Under the rising border tension with India, China is also claiming a part of Ladakh, thus further complicating the issue. The region's strategic significance is intensified by changing alliances in international society.

Despite diplomacy aimed at thawing relations, Kashmir remains a flashpoint. Continued intervention from the international body remains necessary because such intervention is necessary in order to stem any outbreaks and respond to humanitarian concerns and, above all, start a dialogue which must be long-term in nature. The issue now is to ensure that efforts toward peace have meaning and that hope for an impending crisis does not diminish.



IV. Major Parties Involved

India

Since gaining independence in 1947, India has fought multiple wars with Pakistan over the region, controlling the majority of Jammu and Kashmir and viewing them as an inseparable part of the country. Insurgency escalated in 1989, fueled by separatist movements and armed militant groups. The country accuses Pakistan of supporting terrorism and has taken military action to counterinsurgency.

The revocation of Article 370 in 2019 removed Jammu and Kashmir's special status, allowing greater central control. This move was framed as a step toward development and national integration but triggered widespread unrest and a harsh security response. Curfews, internet blackouts, and mass detentions followed, while Pakistan and China condemned the decision; India believes that Kashmir's future is a domestic issue for them and rejects any external mediation.

Cross-border tensions with Pakistan remain high, with frequent ceasefire violations along the Line of Control (LoC). The Indian military conducts counterterrorism operations, targeting groups such as Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed. Diplomatic efforts focus on countering Pakistan's claims in international forums while strengthening ties with global allies, particularly the U.S.

Pakistan

Pakistan claims Kashmir based on religious demographics and its interpretation of the 1947 partition. It has fought three wars with India over the region and has supported armed insurgents and separatist groups, arguing that it provides moral and political support to Kashmiri self-determination. India, however, accuses Pakistan of harboring and funding terrorist organizations that operate in Kashmir.

The country's military maintains a strong presence along the LoC, engaging in regular skirmishes with Indian forces. Ceasefire agreements have been short-lived, with each side blaming the other for violations. Pakistan's diplomatic approach involves raising the Kashmir issue at international platforms such as the United Nations, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and bilateral meetings with China and the U.S.

Domestically, Pakistan faces economic struggles and political instability, limiting its ability to escalate the conflict. The military continues to wield significant influence over Kashmir policy, often overriding civilian leadership. The China-Pakistan alliance strengthens Pakistan's position, with China backing its claims diplomatically and investing in infrastructure projects in Gilgit-Baltistan.

China

China controls Aksai Chin, a disputed region it seized during the 1962 Sino-Indian War. It considers the area strategically important for its road networks and border security. China also claims Arunachal Pradesh, referred to as "South Tibet" in its official statements, further complicating its border disputes with India.

China aligns with Pakistan to counterbalance India, both militarily and diplomatically. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), part of the Belt and Road Initiative, runs through disputed territories in Gilgit-Baltistan, reinforcing China's strategic interest in the region. India opposes this project, seeing it as a violation of sovereignty.

The 2020 Galwan Valley clashes escalated tensions between China and India, leading to troop buildups and infrastructure expansions on both sides. While China officially calls for peaceful resolution, it continues to fortify its positions in Ladakh and Aksai Chin, signaling long-term strategic interests in the region.

United States of America

The U.S. maintains strategic partnerships with both India and Pakistan but avoids direct involvement in the Kashmir dispute. Washington views India as a counterweight to China and has strengthened defense and economic ties through initiatives like the Quad alliance and arms agreements. At the same time, Pakistan remains an important player in regional security, particularly concerning Afghanistan and counterterrorism efforts.

Historically, the U.S. played a mediating role in Indo-Pakistani conflicts, but its stance has shifted toward supporting India's position. Washington recognizes Kashmir as an internal issue for India while encouraging diplomatic dialogue between the two countries. The U.S. has also pressured Pakistan to curb militant groups operating within its borders, leading to periodic crackdowns on organizations like Lashkar-e-Taiba.

The broader U.S. strategy in South Asia focuses on countering Chinese influence, securing stability in Afghanistan, and preventing nuclear escalation between India and Pakistan. While the Kashmir issue remains a point of tension, U.S. involvement is largely limited to diplomatic statements and behind-the-scenes engagements with both governments.

V. Relevant Treaties

- *Instrument of Accession (1947)* - Signed by Maharaja Hari Singh of Jammu and Kashmir, this treaty allowed India to take control of the region in exchange for military protection against possible invasions by Pakistani forces; Pakistan never recognised this agreement, arguing that this region should have joined them due to its Muslim-majority population.
- *Karachi Agreement (1949)* - It was the first ceasefire established between India and Pakistan under UN supervision. This later became the Line of Control (LoC) and a UN observer mission (UNMOGIP) to monitor ceasefire violations was set up.
- *Tashkent Agreement (1966)* - Ratified after the Indo-Pakistani War in 1965, mediated by the Soviet Union; both countries agreed to withdraw forces to pre-war positions and resume diplomatic relations to temporarily ease tensions.
- *Simla Agreement (1972)* - Signed after another war earlier in 1971, which also led to the creation of Bangladesh. Established that Kashmir must be addressed through bilateral negotiations; this agreement is still cited by both countries in arguments to this day.
- *Lahore Declaration (1999)* - A peace agreement between the Prime-Ministers of both countries in conflict but it collapsed after the Kargil conflict, when Pakistani soldiers and militants crossed the LoC into Indian territory.
- *Ceasefire Agreements in 2003 and 2021*

VI. Previous Attempts to Solve the Issues

1. Early wars and peace efforts

The first military confrontation over Kashmir started in 1947 and 1948, leading to a United Nations (UN) enforced truce which established the boundaries of the region. The fighting did not fully cease, and another war erupted in 1965. Following weeks of violence from both sides, the Tashkent agreement was signed in 1966 bringing with it the promise of peaceful resolution towards conflict, although nothing of concern was achieved.

The 1971 India-Pakistan war, which led to the independence and formation of Bangladesh, had immediate effects on Kashmir too. The following year, the 1972 Shimla agreement turned the boundaries into a line of control. Although the agreement was intended to strengthen interactions, the conditions remained volatile. There was rumor that the Prime Minister of Pakistan Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had accepted the line of control as a border, however, he later denied doing this.

2. 1980s to 2019 Period

In Kashmir under Indian control, the late 1980s witnessed the rise of a vigorous militant pro-independence armed struggle alongside pro-Pakistani factions. India's response entailed the rationing of troops to the region on a systematic basis as the military kept integrating and rationing to the regions in response to Kashmir's unrest. The ongoing cycle of insurgency, militant assaults, and continuous crackdowns turned into a regular aspect of daily existence. The diplomatic relations and initiatives taken between India and Pakistan during this time have proven ineffective, as both parties blame each other for the violence and hostile situation they are experiencing.

For decades, India's military alerted and integrated Jammu and Kashmir's internal affairs, especially in Ladakh. The choice taken in August 2019, when India independently nullified Article 370 of the constitution that provided special autonomy to Jammu and Kashmir, was executed in a more assertive manner than other policies.

Although this decision is seen to potentially mitigate India and Pakistan's conflict, it is predicted that it will inflame the already existing volatile tension in the region and lead to multi level positional disputes India and Pakistan have had over the region and simultaneously furthering their politics.

3. Conclusion

Unilateral repeal of Article 370 has eased and obviated the Indian parliament's interference and military agglomeration in the region, but it is feared it has the potential to worsen the already prolonged Kashmir problem. Efforts by the international community for resolution have increased, but the end outcomes have been disheartening. There seems to be no possible

violence in the form of militarized conflict, but turmoil and political dissatisfaction along with constant border tensions persist. There is no end of the spectrum to which we can say the matter of Kashmir is resolved.

VII. Possible Solutions

Another report of violations surrounding suppression of press liberty, curfews being imposed, and ought to respect and follow themselves by the use of disproportionate powers or force by security personnel organizations such as Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed operate freely in the region and further hinder peace talks. A pillar for solution of the Kashmir conflict is towards a bilateral dialogue between India and Pakistan. Continuous diplomatic talks, trust-building measures, easing of trade and travel restrictions can reduce the tension buildups. US mediation could prove a way out.

A further possibility is to provide autonomy and self-governance for the region. Kashmiris would have the opportunity to exercise a benign measure of self-determination in terms of local governance without inequality in national sovereignty. Phased demilitarization can act towards reducing hostilities and augmenting the life conditions of the civilians.

Peace may also come through economic cooperation and cross-border movement. Joint trade ventures, mega infrastructure projects, and cultural exchanges are good ways to create interdependence in times of an uneasy political climate, while easing up on travel restrictions will help strengthen people-to-people ties.

The protection of human rights is paramount. Justice, monitoring system with no government intervention, and the mitigation of civilian-oriented hardship should start a trust-building process, while responsible reporting from both sides should counter misinformation and propaganda.

A public referendum could finally be considered if mutually agreed on, allowing Kashmiris to express their democratic will. Initiatives for long-term peace should further develop social programs focusing educational and social stability and harmony.

VIII. Points to be Addressed

- Does my delegation's country have a direct stance on the matter of Kashmir?
- Has my delegation's country been involved in any past diplomatic efforts related to Kashmir?
- What diplomatic and political solutions can SPECPOL recommend to ease tensions and promote stability?
- What role do international laws and past agreements play in resolving the discussed issue?
- How does my delegation view the role of the UN?

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