



To,
H.E. Emmanuel Macron
President of the French Republic
Palais de l'Élysée,
55 rue du Faubourg-Saint-Honoré
75008 Paris, France

The Hague, 22nd August 2019

Subject: Voiceless Women in Kashmir – G7 Summit as a Milestone in Feminist Foreign Policy

H.E. President Macron,

Herewith, on behalf of Gender Concerns International and its international women`s network, with great admiration for the French government's leading role in promoting gender equality around the world through its Feminist Foreign Policy, and on the occasion of 45th G7 summit under your esteemed Presidency, to be held from 24-26 August in Biarritz, that focuses on inequalities, I wish to draw your attention to the voiceless plight of women in Indian Administered Kashmir.

Your personal commitment to gender equality is a great source of inspiration and encouragement to the work of the global international community in furthering its determination to promote gender justice and human rights worldwide and has raised genuine hopes among international women and human rights organisations that the G7 summit will pay special attention to the recent escalation of tensions between India and Pakistan and its impact on women and girls.

- Under the heavy deployment of military forces, recent house raids and detention of thousands of Kashmiri men have left many Kashmiri women particularly defenseless and vulnerable to abuses associated with armed conflict in fragile democracies and conflict zones.
- In addition, women in Kashmir are widely humiliated as physical commodities based on their beauty and trafficked to men in India. This degradation of women in one of the largest democracies in the world is particularly concerning as a backlash to the global gender equality achievement benchmarks.

Therefore, I kindly urge the President to ensure that all countries participating in this weekend's G7 summit reaffirm their commitment to endorsing gender equality around the world with a particular reference to the deteriorating security situation in Kashmir.

Under UNSCR 1325, the international community is obliged to protect women in conflict zones and regions and prevent them against violence, intimidation and various forms of abuse.

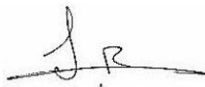
Importantly, the G7 meeting is an opportune moment for the French government to highlight the escalating conflict in the Kashmir region and the continued suffering faced by Kashmiri women. This longstanding crisis requires the international community to come together and actively work to support de-escalation of the situation and promote a peaceful solution, with a specific focus on improving the safety and security of the region`s most vulnerable groups, including women and girls.

Gender Concerns International is a signatory of the Dutch National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 and is committed to supporting women in conflict zones working in countries like Afghanistan, Myanmar, Libya, Sierra Leon, Tunisia and Morocco.

The organization has been working with women activists from both sides of Kashmir but most importantly feminist groups in India and Pakistan since 2005 on a low profile. The emergence of current crisis that has opened a new chapter of suffering for women in Kashmir - silence is no longer an option.

I hope you appreciate our efforts in highlighting the helpless position of women in Kashmir, given the complex nature of this conflict. We trust and contribute to your equality commitment at the auspicious occasion of G7 Summit. Thank you,

With kind regards,



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