

Panel-Statement

UN Human Rights Council Session 27 - Panel INDIA WOMEN'S CHALLENGES FOR SECURITY, RIGHTS, EQUALITY KASHMIR WOMEN'S SUFFERING IN PROTRACTED CONFLICT September 17, 2014 Palais des Nations - Room XXVII Geneva, Switzerland

Conflict anywhere in the world for whatever reason is an unfortunate and abhorable dimension of human civilization. Having said that it is also the harsh reality that ethnic, religious, cultural, communal, economic, and social differences almost always lead to conflict.

The princely state of Jammu & Kashmir acceded to the Indian federation within a constitutional framework in 1947, just as many other princely states did regardless of their communal and religious demography. An elected Government of Jammu & Kashmir duly ratified this accession. Other princely states with a Muslim majority did accede and were mainstreamed into the Indian nation. Then why is it that Jammu and Kashmir became the flashpoint of conflict. The geography of Jammu & Kashmir is the reason that the history of the state is etched in conflict.

The Indian Government has worked towards resolving the conflict, sometimes successfully and sometimes with abject failure. But the intention is catalyzed by every effort to ensure that Jammu & Kashmir is part of the juggernaut of the Indian progress and every Kashmiri is able to access every legal, political, human social and economic right as a citizen of the country.

The Guild of Service, a political national level NGO has been working in the state of Jammu & Kashmir, helping in the onerous task of reconstruction and resolution after the conflict. Our 14 year old grass root experience has given us a small window into the way ahead in the state.

- 1. Governments of both India and Pakistan need to give up posturing to bring to the table a genuine endeavor to reconciliation.**
- 2. Kashmiri civil society (not just the separatists) should be able to voice their aspirations at any negotiating table.**
- 3. There can be no talks till there is the climate of peace. All militant infiltration, violation on the line of control, wanton disturbances due to strikes and curfew must be immediately halted**
- 4. All human right violations whether by security forces or by militants must be taken cognizance and the guilty need to be punished.**
- 5. Review of all laws that may be a road block in conflict reconciliation.**

6. Women's voices are vital to conflict reconciliation. Mechanisms to be institutionalized to incorporate women's perspectives in peace reconstruction.

7. All National-International Peace Dialogues held should be unconditional.

8. A special bench in the Jammu and Kashmir High Court must be constituted to hear cases filed by half widows on an expedited basis. The Government must put appropriate mechanisms in place to prevent, resolve, and process information on disappearances.

At the end while dealing with Human Rights issue in each society, love, compassion, commitment and dedication has a key role to play.