

PRESS RELEASE—LOCAL KASHMIRI PANDITS REJOICE OVER A HISTORIC EVENT FOR THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT.

On August 5, 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a special meeting of his cabinet and announced that Article 370 of the Indian Constitution would be inoperative immediately. Article 370 was a temporary provision of the Indian constitution that became effective in 1949 and guaranteed special status to the state of Jammu & Kashmir, allowing its state assembly and Chief Minister to hold control over all affairs except defense, communication, and foreign affairs.

Article 370 allowed for the implementation of article 35A to the Indian Constitution in 1954 via a presidential order, which allowed for the state of Jammu and Kashmir to establish permanent resident criteria and benefits, including special privileges such as limiting ownership of land to Kashmiri-only permanent residents. With abrogation of these articles, the state of Jammu and Kashmir is fully integrated into India over 70 years after gaining its independence from the British, as with every other former princely state in 1947.

Home Minister Amit Shah clarified that Article 370 can be amended by a Presidential order without a constitutional amendment, as has been done previously in India's past.

“Imagine if the constitution of Texas did not allow residents of any other state in the U.S. to move into Texas and buy a home, and the federal government allowed this?” explained one local Kashmiri activist. “This was the ludicrous situation in the state of Jammu and Kashmir until now.”

The Indo-American Kashmir Forum, working with Hindu American Foundation to advocate for the rights of the minority population of Kashmiri Hindus (Pandits) who have been under forced exile from their homeland, expressed hope that the human rights situation that has prevented normalcy from returning to the state of Jammu & Kashmir can finally start improving. “By creating a special situation for Kashmiris such that they were never fully integrated into India, corruption and special interests of leaders of Kashmir has been the result, leading to the poor economic conditions existing in the state.” The only people to lose from this decision are those special interests and corrupt political, community, and religious leaders whose only aim has been to hold onto power over their constituencies.

IAKF was established in 1991 to inform the world community of the oppression against Kashmiri Pandits that led to their forced exile from Kashmir due to the influx of fundamentalist Islamic terrorism. IAKF wishes to raise awareness of the human rights violations suffered by the Pandit community, many of whom are still living in makeshift 'refugee' camps in Jammu, India. The organization seeks the return of



Indo American Kashmir Forum

Kashmiri Pandits to the Kashmir valley with guaranteed security and freedom to exercise their religious faith and cultural way of life without fear or intrusion. IAKF provides reports to the U.S. Administration, U.S. Congress, and several of Washington D.C.'s policy think tanks. For more information, please visit www.iakf.org.