

Kashmir Initiative Group – January 2013

STATEMENT on Line of Control Escalation

The Kashmir Initiative Group (KIG) views with deep concern the recent breach of peaceful ceasefire along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir leading to noticeable diplomatic tension between India and Pakistan.

This unpleasant escalation taking place at a time when India and Pakistan look deeply invested in normalisation of bilateral relations is a cause of concern to every peace loving person in both countries. The situation is of far more serious concern in Jammu and Kashmir for people on both sides of LoC who believe they have highest stakes in peace along Line of Control as well as in the normal relations between India and Pakistan.

The ceasefire that came into effect in November 2003 means a lot for the people of Jammu and Kashmir as it led to the opening of LoC for travel and trade, later on. Though still a restricted and non-formal affair, the Cross-LoC travel and trade has been a significant Confidence Building Measure for the people of Jammu and Kashmir on both sides of Line of Control.

The recent developments have, sadly, come in the way of one of the very significant Jammu-Kashmir specific CBMs as they have led to suspension of the Cross-LoC trade and travel. The KIG believes that continuation of Cross-LoC trade and travel has not only been of a constant contribution to peace-building and profitable trade in the divided State but also symbolic of India-Pakistan commitment to peace process.

The KIG appreciates national anxieties in both countries escalating after the LoC incidents, but the group is of the view that any further escalation could potentially derail the atmosphere of goodwill and cooperation built up by the political leadership over past few years.

In this backdrop, the KIG appeals to the governments and the political leadership in India and Pakistan to review the circumstances leading to recent developments and take appropriate measures for restoration of normalcy and strict adherence to the mutually agreed ceasefire.

The KIG also makes very fervent appeal to the governments and local authorities for resumption of Cross-LoC trade and travel. The group felt that the resumption of Cross-LoC trade and travel could be first sign of restoration of normalcy.

About the Kashmir Initiative Group

The Kashmir Initiative Group is a ten-member group of residents of Jammu and Kashmir as also other parts of India and Pakistan with deep commitment to peace and stability in the region. The members coming from diverse backgrounds and regions engage through informed discussions, research, analysis and articulation.

*The members of the group who are also signatory to the statement are:
Amjad Yusuf Khan, Mubashir Akram, Ershad Mehmud, Asma Lone, Shaheen Akhter (Pakistani side), Shujat Bukhari, Parikshat Singh Manhas, Shafat Naseem and Zafar Choudhary*

The Statement is signed by the KIG members

Issued in India by Zafar Choudhary

Issued in Pakistan by Ershad Mehmud