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November 14, 2019

The Honorable Mike Pompeo  
Secretary  
United States Department of State  
2201 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary,

I write to share my constituents' concerns regarding the ongoing restrictions on communication and freedom of movement in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Indian subcontinent shares deep cultural, economic, political, and historic ties to the United States. In my congressional district, many residents have family, loved ones, and cultural bonds to Kashmir. For these reasons many were shocked when earlier this year the Indian government revoked Jammu and Kashmir's special status, arrested many residents, and suspended telecommunications and regular Internet access in the region. Unfortunately, my constituents are increasingly alarmed by the denial of contact and timely due process for nearly 2,000 reported Kashmiri detainees.

An example is the case of Dr. Mubeen Ahmad Shah, a Malaysia-based businessman, with roots in Kashmir and family in my congressional district. In August 2019, the Indian government arrested Dr. Shah, who was on an extended visit to Kashmir. He reportedly returned to Kashmir for the funeral services of his sister-in-law, lost his father-in-law a few months later, and experienced health difficulties. According to press reports, Indian authorities imprisoned Dr. Shah and deported him to a jail in Agra, where he continues to be detained despite his poor health and lack of charges.

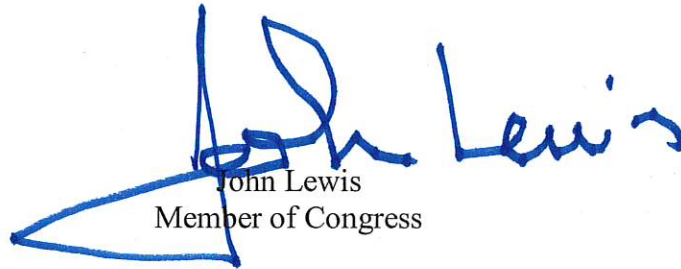
Around the world, human rights advocates note that the arrests and ongoing detentions may not be grounded in sound evidence. Global leaders and concerned activists continue to monitor and report on this grave situation, which undermines the prospect of a diplomatic, negotiated, and peaceful solution to the Kashmir question.

On the behalf of my constituents, I respectfully request that you direct U.S. authorities to use all diplomatic channels to reiterate and encourage Indian leaders to adopt and implement democratic, transparent, and just policies and laws that protect freedom of speech and the right to due process. Most importantly, I hope that you will convince Indian authorities to cease arbitrary and indefinite detention, commit to rejecting discrimination based on religious and ethnic identity, and restore regular Internet and telecommunication services to the region.

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As always, I appreciate your full and fair consideration of this request, submitted on the behalf of my constituents. I hope you will urge our strategic partner to recommit in words and action to freedom, democracy, and rule of law.

Sincerely,



John Lewis  
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Eliot Engel, Chair, House Committee on Foreign Affairs  
The Honorable Michael McCaul, Ranking Member, House Committee on Foreign Affairs  
The Honorable James P. McGovern, Co-Chair, The Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission  
The Honorable Christopher H. Smith, Co-Chair, The Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission