



# Peace Now and Forever Campaign Between Pakistan and India 1st July 2017 to 15 August 2017



In the 70 years since independence and Partition, the people of India and Pakistan have seen too many conflicts and the loss of many valuable lives. Unfortunately this situation continues as the ruling classes in India and Pakistan are keen on keeping this tension alive to justify spending more and more on defence at the cost of the poor and poverty reduction programmes.

## **Current Situation of Hostilities:**

It is deeply concerning that the current rise in animosity and antagonism between India and Pakistan - fanned by popular media and magnified by social media - is shrinking the space for sanity on both sides of the border like never before. Common people who are mostly focused on dealing with perennial challenges of their everyday life and against conflicts and violence are becoming increasingly confused if expressions against this war hysteria would be perceived as antinational. Soon no space may be left to talk of peace and questioning war hysteria could be branded downright antinational and blasphemy in our countries.

## **The Need**

In such a situation it becomes an urgent requirement that people from all walks of life, civil society organisations and concerned citizens come out in large numbers to demand peace and condemn attempts at war mongering and thereby save the people of both countries - especially the poor - from paying a heavy price in terms of lives lost, negative impact on our economies - forcing millions to live below poverty line.

## **Is Opposing War and Demanding Peace and Development Anti-National?**

It is acknowledged worldwide that the cost of heavy military spending in India and Pakistan has been borne by the poor people of both countries. Today Pakistan has a population of 200 million and India 1.2 billion. The United Nations Development Programme's human development indicators show that 21 per cent of Pakistan's population and 22.6 per cent of India's people live on under \$1.25 (or Rs.80) per day. Yet both countries' defence spending continued to rise especially in the period 1998-2010, with India's defence expenditures growing from some \$20 billion to over \$45 billion and Pakistan's from slightly below \$5 billion to slightly more than \$5 billion over this period.

As a result India had spent 2.5 % and Pakistan had spent 3.4 % of its GDP on defence in 2012. On the other hand, spending on health in 2014 in India was just 1.4% and in Pakistan it was even lower at 0.9%.

We note that whenever it seems that relations might improve, some form of disruption takes place ranging from jingoistic statements to militant attacks. The traditional response to such disruptions only strengthens those who want continued tensions between our two countries.

The issue is not only just financial, but also moral and political as it is seen that while the spending on defence is constantly increasing, the budgetary allocations for health, education and poverty reduction programs are being reduced in both countries.

Hence, we the people of Pakistan and India should together endorse the resolution towards a peaceful subcontinent and make the following demands to the governments of our countries and also undertake programs and activities to enable people of both countries to assert themselves for peace.

1. Develop an institutionalised framework to ensure that continuous and uninterrupted talks between India and Pakistan take place regularly no matter what.

Make dialogue uninterrupted and uninterruptible.

2. Ensure that political leaders, diplomats and civil servants from both countries conduct talks on the sidelines of all international and multilateral forums.
3. Recognise that the Kashmir dispute above all concerns the lives and aspirations of the Kashmiri people, and work to resolve it through uninterrupted dialogue between all parties concerned.
4. Immediately implement the 2003 ceasefire agreement between India and Pakistan.
5. Renounce all forms of proxy wars, state-sponsored terrorism, human rights violations, cross-border terrorism, and subversive activities against each other, including through non-state actors or support of separatist movements in each other's state.
6. Remove restrictions on all forms of people-to-people contact, and remove visa restrictions and discrimination faced by citizens of both countries. This must be further taken forward to allow visa-free travel between India and Pakistan.
7. Increase trade and economic linkages and cultural and sports exchanges between India and Pakistan.

Further, we pledge to uphold the principles of impartial reporting and urge media houses on either side to prevent the growing militarisation of debate. We must act responsibly and stop broadcasting hate speech and creating public hysteria aimed at the other country and/or vulnerable communities.

This Resolution of Demands by peoples of Pakistan and India was prepared by Peacemongers Group that has already Received Endorsements from over Nine Hundred very prominent personalities of India and Pakistan from different fields like Retired Indian and Pakistani armed forces personnel including Generals and Former Chief of Naval Staff, Political Leaders, Film Personalities, Historians: Rights Activists: Musicians, Singers, Poets and Writers.

Scores of Networks and Organisations in India, Pakistan and other countries where Indians and Pakistanis live in amity are partnering in this Peace Now and Forever Campaign to organise it in as many cities, towns and villages of the sub- Continent as possible.

A Joint Signature Campaign will be undertaken in all cities, towns and villages where the Campaign is being organised. We urge all citizens of Pakistan and India to organise this Peace Now and Forever Campaign in their areas and to collect signatures in large numbers.

Apart from the Signature Campaign, some of the programs and activities proposed to be undertaken by different Partner organisations are: Lectures on Pakistan India Relations in Schools and colleges, Mushaira / KaviSammelan, Film Festivals, Interfaith Prayer Meets, Rallies and Marathons, Outreach to Political Parties and Elected Representatives etc.

Please organise / collaborate in organising such programs to reclaim the space for peace and save our nations and humanity.

**Contacts for: Peace Now and Forever Campaign Between India and Pakistan**

**India:** Please Post all Signature Campaign Forms to : Aaghaz e Dosti, G-201, Kaveri Apartments, Plot 4, Sector-6, Dwarka New Delhi 110075

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**Pakistan:** Please Post all Signature Campaign Forms to :

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