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India

# Radical Socialist Statement on Civilian Killings in Pahalgam

- News from around the world -

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**At least 26 civilians, mostly tourists, have been brutally and callously killed by militants in Pahalgam on April 22, 2025. Radical Socialist mourns the death of every single civilian, and condemns this terrorist act perpetrated by The Resistance Front that has claimed responsibility for it. It is a senseless attack which is morally unjustifiable and is completely counterproductive politically because it can further stoke and strengthen existing currents of Islamophobia in Indian society and in state apparatuses.**

The hypocrisies of known violators of democratic and human rights like Donald Trump, Vladimir Putin and many other leaders, who are expressing grave concerns and offering condolences, needs to be exposed. Closer to home the Pakistan government, while expressing sympathy for the victims, has not forthrightly condemned this terrorist attack. This silence is not just morally reprehensible but politically debilitating since it promotes anti-India jingoism within Pakistan and here in India helps Hindutva efforts to make Pakistan the permanent enemy and to portray Indian Muslims as the 'enemy within'.

Condemnable and utterly unjustifiable as this terrorist act in Pahalgam is, there is a broader context in which this must be situated. This is the decades long history of repression in J&K, especially in the Valley, by successive Indian governments with the Modi regime finally and unconstitutionally annulling Article 370 as well as reaching new depths in this process of militarising and brutalising the occupation. This has only laid the ground for unrest and future militancy.

Most opposition parties have rightly demanded punishment of the perpetrators and accountability from all those who are responsible for the security failure. But we need to keep in mind that terrorism is not simply, or even primarily, a security problem; it is most importantly a political one. The Pahalgam horror must not be responded to by state terrorism, i.e., actions that would involve injuries and deaths of innocent civilians in Kashmir or elsewhere. Nor should such actions be legitimised/denied/obscured in the name of those favourite cover-up phrases like "counter-terrorism" or "collateral damage".

The Indian government, in response to this attack, has, among other diplomatic policy measures, declared that it is has "held in abeyance" the Indus Valley Waters Treaty 1960, which constitutes a deliberate and very dangerous escalation of an inter-state conflict which is unwarranted even as it is meant to highlight Hindutva bravado regardless of its possible practical and military impact on relations between two nuclear armed neighbours. This Pahalgam attack is by a non-state group and must be dealt with as such. It is not to be made into an excuse for illegal acts of war or sabotage between states.

While the attack has been carried out by non-state actors, the stigmatisation and victimisation of Indian Muslims in general, and Kashmiris in particular, is underway in full swing. Kashmiri students across northern Indian states have reportedly received threats of violence. Right-wing groups in Himachal Pradesh and Punjab have issued an open call for violence on Kashmiri students. The Hindu Raksha Dal, a right-wing organization of Uttarakhand, has issued an ultimatum to all Kashmiri students to leave Dehradun by 10 am on Thursday April 24. While mainstream journalists are whipping Islamophobia and baying for Muslim blood, those who are asking questions of the state are already being intimidated, like the J&K journalist Rakesh Sharma who has been assaulted in Kathua for asking about security related failures. It is precisely this vitriolic Islamophobia that breeds militancy.

We are unsure whether the Indian security apparatus will be able to identify the exact nature of security failure, and all those who are responsible for these acts. We hope it does but we are sadly quite sure that this will be used as an

opportunity to target innocent Muslims, and Kashmiris in particular.

We would like to reiterate that there can be no military solution to political problems. If the Indian state is serious about the return of peace to the Valley they must pay heed to the rights of all citizens of J&K, and to their political aspirations and demands. A ham-handed and hubristic approach will pave the way for the loss of more innocent lives in the future.

*April 24, 2025*

*PS:*

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