

UNSC - United Nations Security Council

Kashmir

Overview

Kashmir is a region that borders India, Pakistan, China, and Afghanistan. After the end of the British Raj, the British rule of the Indian subcontinent, in 1947, two independent states were formed: India and Pakistan. Because borders were drawn by a British lawyer who had never visited the region, inaccurate borders were established. This oversight led to the disputed region of Kashmir. Today, both India and Pakistan claim the region, ignoring the others' presence. Kashmir has been a source and breeding ground of many conflicts, both local and international. Each governing country has involved international superpowers into the conflict, such as the United States, China, and the former USSR. The involvement of these countries, in addition to India and Pakistan both being nuclear powers, has made Kashmir a highly sensitive region where the risk of war remains ever present.

The UNSC

The United Nations Security Council is responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security. With the 15 member-countries, the Security Council determines threats of peace and international aggression. The council's job is to recommend methods of compromise and settlement to encourage peaceful solutions to an international conflict. If a solution is not agreed upon or if parties fail to maintain the peace, the UNSC may impose sanctions or, in some cases, use force to keep the international peace (United Nations). The UNSC has attempted to create peace in the region but has not been fully successful. After the India-Pakistan war of 1948, multiple ceasefires and resolutions have been attempted but have not been well received by India or Pakistan. The UNSC created the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan, UNCIP,

to resolve the conflict, but that too ended in failure. The UNSC is yet to find a solution welcomed by both India and Pakistan (Eurasia Review).

Kashmir's Beginning

In 1947, after the British withdrawal from the Indian subcontinent, Pakistan and India became independent states. Hari Singh, the Maharaja, or prince of Kashmir, had the choice to join India or Pakistan, but remained independent. Because of a revolution by his Muslim subjects, he was unable to maintain his independence so in October of 1947 he signed an acquisition treaty to India (Britannica, The Kashmir problem). This was the beginning of the Pakistan-India war, as Pakistan had viewed Kashmir as an extension of itself and did not agree with Kashmir's absorption into India. There was continuous fighting in the region between India and Pakistan until 1948 when India raised the issue of Kashmir to the UN Security Council. On April 21, 1948, Resolution 47 was passed by the Security Council. It called for a referendum on the status of Kashmir, required Pakistani militants to withdraw from the region, and stated that once they had left, the Indian army would progressively reduce its military presence to the minimum strength required to support civil administration and maintain order (Refworld, United Nations Security Council. Resolution 47 (1948)). Resolution 47 was passed under Chapter VI of the UN charter meaning it was not binding or enforceable. In August of that year the UNCIP, the UN Commission for India and Pakistan, laid out terms for a ceasefire, which was implemented in July of 1949. The ceasefire line remained the boundary line between India and Pakistan until 1972 when a similar border was drawn called the "Line of Control", which remains as a temporary border until today (Refworld).

Governing Kashmir

In the years following the ceasefire of 1949, each independent state governed Kashmir, ignoring the other one's presence. In 1951, elections in India-administered Kashmir backed accession to India, but the UN and Pakistan argued that India had to consider the votes of the Kashmiri people throughout the state, and therefore did not accept Kashmir's accession to India. From this point forward each country governed Kashmir as they saw fit.

Meanwhile, China slowly occupied eastern Kashmir, Aksai Chin, which led to fighting between India and China. China defeated India and gained official control over the region in 1962. Although the 1957 constitution of India-administered Kashmir defined Kashmir as part of India, in 1963 Pakistan gave Trans-Karakoram- part of Jammu and Kashmir- to China, solidifying political ties between the two countries (Defenceupdate).

From 1965 to 1972, brief wars broke out between India and Pakistan over the region, ultimately resulting in the Simla agreement between India and Pakistan. The agreement outlined the border for the Line of Control and called for the agreement for a final settlement of the Kashmir dispute; this never happened (BBC, "Kashmir Profile – Timeline.").

Chaos

In 1987, after a disputed election in India-administered Kashmir, there was a wave of insurgency in the Jammu and Kashmir region. India accused Pakistan of instigating this insurgency by dispatching troops across the Line of Control. The sentiment of change amongst the Kashmiri citizens only intensified after the Indian army killed about 100 people protesting the new governor of Jammu and Kashmir (World Kashmir Awareness Forum). Throughout the 1990s and early to mid 2000s, intense violence deeply affected the citizens of the region; targeted attacks lead to the fleeing of most Hindus formerly living in Kashmir; Kashmiri

militants trained in Pakistan and India deployed tens of thousands of troops into Kashmir, this led to many deaths with over 2000 unidentified bodies (BBC, “Why India and Pakistan Fight over Kashmir | Explained.”); in this time period activists and protesters were often caught in the line of fire. In 2013 Pakistan and India agreed to meet to reduce violence in Kashmir but India later canceled these talks after accusing Pakistan of interfering with India's internal affairs (BBC, “Kashmir Profile – Timeline.”). The clashes between Pakistani and Indian forces continue until 2016 when India imposes a curfew, internet service is cut and banks, shops, and schools also close down, thus further increasing the violence. In the same year the Human Rights watch calls for the end to the burning of schools happening in the region. Conflicts continue between the opposing forces and armed personnel as well as civilians were killed on both sides. In October of 2019, India removed Kashmir's status as an independent state into an Indian territory, which centralized the government and allowed India to deploy its military into the region that was currently on lockdown (Britannica Editors, “Jammu and Kashmir.”).

Recent Years

Kashmir is still in a state of high tension and insecurity. In this past year alone, there have been examples of significant security breaches that have resulted in the death of 39 people. In April of 2025, 26 tourists were killed in a targeted attack in the town of Pahalgam, Kashmir. Indian investigators say the murderers were Pakistani nationals from the UN-recognised Pakistani militant Lashkar-e-Taiba. This attack provoked attacks from both India and Pakistan for about a month, until US President Donald Trump announced a ceasefire (BBC News, “What you need to know about Kashmir’s Calcutta-style massacre — timeline and context.”). Even more recently, a car exploded in Delhi, India, killing 13 people. Indian police carried out raids across Kashmir due to the suspicion of the attacks being linked to Pakistani militant groups.

During one raid, Indian police found about 2900 kilograms of explosive material (The Guardian). These incidents highlight the continuous instability in Kashmir as well as the inability to control and keep the region safe.

Tried Solutions

Since its inception, Kashmir has been in a state of conflict. Many attempts have been made to resolve the conflict, but none have worked. Starting with the 1948 ceasefire attempt, then the 1972 Simla agreement that resulted in the Line of Control. The region has gone through times of high tension as well as periods when peace has been attempted (BBC. “Kashmir Profile – Timeline.”). International actors such as the USA and China have attempted to mediate, but no solution has been agreed upon (BBC. “Why India and Pakistan Fight over Kashmir | Explained.”). Meanwhile the Kashmiri public opinion is diverse; the majority of Hindu residents wanting to absorb into India, the Muslim residents wanting to gain independence and some wanting to absorb into Pakistan (“First” Kashmir Survey Produces “Startling” Results - BBC News.”). No matter the income, there is a need for long-term safety and security in the region. The Security Council seeks to find a feasible solution that will satisfy both India and Pakistan while prioritizing the safety and security of the Kashmiri people.

Questions

1. How does your country navigate the identity of a multicultural population?
2. What is your country’s belief on the use and possession of nuclear weapons?
3. What forces should intervene to prevent more killings across borders, and specifically how involved should the UN be? (Relates to peacekeeping ethics :))

4. Should countries be held accountable for failing to provide their citizens with basic human rights?
5. Has your country dealt with similar conflicts and what have they done/ are doing?

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