



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Our Ref: DM/AR

Carolyn Wilkins, Chief Executive  
Oldham MBC  
Level 3, Civic Centre  
West Street  
Oldham  
OL1 1UG

18/09/2019

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for contacting me about the Oldham Council motion on the situation in Kashmir.

I am concerned that the recent unilateral decision taken by the Indian Government to revoke Article 370 will take us ever further away from the peaceful, political settlement needed by the people of Kashmir.

I am also troubled to see reports of a lockdown in the region – including Kashmiri leaders being placed under house arrest, the banning of public gatherings and phone and internet coverage being cut.

I would like to see India and Pakistan work together, with the support of the international community, to determine a lasting and peaceful political solution which protects the human rights of the Kashmiri people and respects their democratic rights to have a say in their future.

I do not believe it is for the UK to prescribe a solution on Kashmir. Rather, it is for India and Pakistan to seek a lasting resolution that takes account of the wishes of the people of Kashmir – whose human rights and wellbeing are my overriding concern.

The human rights of the people of Kashmir include the right to freedom of speech and freedom of expression. I hope the UK Government will therefore ensure that freedom of speech and expression is something that it raises in its representations on Kashmir with India and Pakistan.

I also hope the UK Government will continue to encourage and support India and Pakistan to engage in constructive talks on a peaceful resolution on Kashmir – it is important that this tense and threatening situation is de-escalated.

Thank you once again for writing to me and for sharing your views. It is clear to me that international action is much needed, to end the cycle of violence and instability which generation after generation of Kashmiri children have grown up within over the last seven decades.

Yours sincerely,

Angela Rayner MP