

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Andrew Gwynne MP
Chair of Labour Friends of Kashmir
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

8th May 2020

Dear Andrew,

Thank you for your letter of the 4th May and thank you for joining yesterday's call with Labour MP's to discuss this matter. I am pleased you have reached out to me in this manner and appreciate you have highlighted some of the concerns amongst the Kashmiri community.

Let me start by saying that like you and all of our great colleagues at Labour Friends of Kashmir, I am determined to not let this issue divide our communities or our party.

I would welcome a meeting with a delegation from Labour Friends of Kashmir in the near future to hear your views on how we as a party can continue to promote peace in the region and peace within our communities.

I will also ensure that Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Lisa Nandy, follows up on this correspondence and reaches out to you to discuss how we can ensure the voices of our Kashmiri communities contribute to Labour's policy making processes.

Labour represents diverse communities across the country, and we do so with great pride in our achievements of bringing people together. I want to also assure you this was the same message that I gave to our colleagues from Labour Friends of India at my recent meeting with them. In everything we do, we should always seek to ease tensions and not increase them.

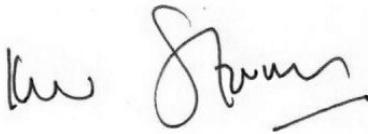
On some of the specific issues that you raise in your letter, I want to be clear that Labour's policy towards Kashmir remains consistent in the belief, that India and Pakistan must work together, with the people of Kashmir, to find a long-term peaceful solution to this ongoing conflict. Without this approach the hardship and violence that we have seen escalate over the past year will sadly only get worse.

Labour will always speak out against human rights abuse and attacks on democracy, whenever and wherever they occur.

I look forward to building a relationship with you. I hope you will take up my offer to meet with you and liaise with my team to find a suitable date.

In the meantime, thank you once again for contacting me and raising the concerns of the communities that you represent, we will continue to work hard to reaffirm our commitment to stand up for the rights of the Kashmiri people in the most constructive and effective manner.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keir Starmer', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Keir Starmer MP