



CENTRE for AEROSPACE & SECURITY STUDIES

The Kashmir Dispute in the Aftermath of 2025 Conflict

Analysis Report



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PRESIDENT

Air Marshal Javaid Ahmed (Retd)

EVENT COORDINATOR

Air Marshal Zahid Mehmood (Retd)

EDITED BY

Mashal Shahid

WRITTEN BY

Research Assistant Shafaq Zernab

LAYOUT

Hira Mumtaz

All correspondence pertaining to this document should be addressed to CASS, Islamabad through post or email on the following address:

Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies

☎ +92 51 5405011

📧 cassthinkers

📌 cass.thinkers

✂ @CassThinkers

✉ cass.thinkers@casstt.com

🏢 Centre for Aerospace
& Security Studies

Old Airport Road, Islamabad, Pakistan
www.casstt.com

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INTRODUCTION

The Kashmir dispute remains the central fault line of South Asian security, with periodic crises underscoring its unresolved political, humanitarian, and strategic dimensions. The May 2025 Pakistan-India hostilities once again demonstrated that Kashmir is not a frozen conflict, but a deeply destabilising issue with direct consequences for regional peace, strategic stability, and human security. Developments since India's unilateral actions of August 2019, coupled with intensified militarisation and securitisation, have further altered the ground realities in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

The Zoom webinar on '*Kashmir Dispute in the Aftermath of the 2025 Conflict*,' held by the Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS) on 4 February 2025, brought together senior practitioners, researchers, and scholars to examine the post-conflict landscape. Moderated by Air Marshal Zahid Mehmood (Retd), Senior Director at CASS, the session explored the human impact of the May 2025 hostilities, evolving Indian strategies in Kashmir, public sentiment within IIOJK, and potential diplomatic and political pathways for Pakistan in the aftermath of the conflict.

The discussion featured research presentations by CASS researchers and a keynote address by Dr Asma Shakir Khawaja, Founding Executive Director of the Centre for International Strategic Studies (CISS), Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Collectively, the conversation highlighted how sustained militarisation, political marginalisation, and governance measures in Kashmir are deepening grievances, while the absence of meaningful conflict resolution mechanisms continues to pose serious risks for South Asian stability. For Pakistan, the deliberations underscored the need to align principled advocacy for Kashmiri self-determination with adaptive diplomatic engagement, sustained international outreach, and greater emphasis on the lived realities of the Kashmiri people.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In his welcome remarks, **Air Marshal Javaid Ahmed (Retd)**, President CASS, noted that Kashmir remains a critical national security issue, as reflected in the recurrence of conflict over recent years. He emphasised that Kashmir Day provides an opportunity to reflect on the way forward and stressed the need to explore alternative approaches beyond those previously pursued. He expressed gratitude to Dr Asma Shakir Khawaja for joining the webinar as a speaker.

In his opening remarks, **Air Marshal Zahid Mehmood (Retd)**, Senior Director at CASS, observed that the May 2025 Pakistan-India hostilities reaffirmed the centrality of the Kashmir dispute to South Asia's security environment. He described Kashmir as a political and humanitarian issue rooted in the unfinished agenda of partition and the unfulfilled right to self-determination of the Kashmiri people, as recognised by the United Nations (UN). AM Mehmood highlighted that India's unilateral actions since August 2019, combined with shrinking political space, intensified securitisation, and persistent human rights concerns, have compounded vulnerabilities in IIOJK. He further stressed that the post-conflict environment exposed the limitations of crisis-driven diplomacy and underscored the need for a recalibrated, people-centric approach.

In her presentation, **Ms Sajal Shahid**, Research Assistant at CASS, examined public sentiment in Kashmir following the May 2025 conflict. She highlighted widespread fatigue, fear, and resentment among Kashmiris, manifested in protests, economic distress, and deep psychological impacts. She noted that intensified security measures, economic disruption, particularly in tourism, and persistent insecurity have reinforced long-standing grievances, while the core demand for dignity, justice, and a lasting political resolution remains unchanged.

Mr Shaheer Ahmad, Research Assistant at CASS, analysed India's post-2025 strategies in IIOJK, outlining patterns of intensified coercion, political subjugation, censorship, economic disempowerment, and demographic engineering. He highlighted mass detentions, the continued delay in restoring statehood, restrictions on



expression, land and employment-related measures, and sustained human rights concerns, arguing that these developments reflect a structural pattern of marginalisation rather than conflict stabilisation.

Focusing on the May 2025 conflict and the way forward, **Mr Mustafa Bilal**, Research Assistant at CASS, argued that while the status quo remains intact, the conflict has exposed the high human and economic costs borne by Kashmiris. He emphasised Pakistan's diplomatic outreach since the conflict and proposed the need for an integrated dialogue framework that aligns Pakistan's principled position on self-determination with Kashmiri aspirations for security, rights, and prosperity, supported by international engagement and confidence-building measures.

In her keynote address, **Dr Asma Shakir Khawaja** stressed Kashmir's strategic, historical, climatic, and human significance, describing it as a nuclear as well as a climate conflict line in South Asia. She contrasted India's territorial lens with Pakistan's human-centric approach, arguing that prolonged militarisation, demographic interventions, and ideological policies have deepened the cycle of violence. She stressed that conflict management is no longer viable in a nuclearised and technologically compressed environment, asserting that durable peace requires conflict resolution anchored in the right to self-determination and genuine political engagement.

In his vote of thanks, **Air Marshal Javid Ahmed (Retd)**, President CASS, reiterated that repeated cycles of conflict demonstrate the unsustainability of the status quo and the limitations of approaches that prioritise short-term crisis management over durable solutions. Emphasising the need for innovative thinking, he highlighted that future policy discourse must move beyond entrenched positions and focus on pathways that address the political aspirations, human security, and dignity of the Kashmiri people. He concluded that informed research, sustained international engagement, and principled advocacy will remain essential for advancing peace and stability in the region.



KEY TAKEAWAYS.

- The May 2025 Pakistan-India hostilities reaffirmed that Kashmir remains the core driver of instability in South Asia with direct humanitarian and strategic consequences.
- Public sentiment in IIOJK after the conflict reflects deep fatigue, economic distress, psychological trauma, and sustained political alienation.
- India's post-2025 approach in Kashmir has relied on intensified securitisation, political subjugation, censorship, and preventive detention mechanisms.
- Economic disruption, particularly in tourism and livelihoods, has compounded the humanitarian impact of prolonged conflict and militarisation.
- The absence of sustainable conflict resolution mechanisms has exposed the limits of episodic, crisis-driven diplomacy.
- Kashmir continues to function as both a nuclear flashpoint and a climate security determinant for South Asia.
- Pakistan's diplomatic engagement since May 2025 has helped sustain international attention on Kashmir but requires continuity and strategic coherence.
- A people-centric approach that foregrounds Kashmiri aspirations is essential for meaningful international engagement.
- Conflict management is increasingly untenable in a nuclearised and technologically compressed regional environment.
- Durable peace in South Asia depends on moving toward conflict resolution grounded in self-determination, dialogue, and international responsibility.



CONCLUSION

The webinar emphasised that Kashmir remains a multidimensional conflict encompassing political, humanitarian, strategic, and climatic dimensions. Discussions highlighted that intensified militarisation, governance measures, and unresolved political grievances have deepened instability rather than mitigated it. The May 2025 conflict reinforced the risks inherent in maintaining the status quo and the inadequacy of crisis-driven responses. For Pakistan, the post-conflict environment demands sustained diplomatic engagement, alignment of principled advocacy with Kashmiri lived realities, and active participation in international forums to advance a just and durable resolution. The discussion reaffirmed that long-term peace in South Asia will remain elusive without addressing Kashmir through meaningful conflict resolution that centres on human dignity, political rights, and regional stability.

ABOUT CASS

Established in 2018, the Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS) in Islamabad is a non-partisan think tank offering future-centric analysis on aerospace and security issues. CASS engages with thought leaders and informs the public through evidence-based research, aiming to influence discussions and policies at the national, regional, and global level, especially concerning airpower, emerging technologies, traditional and non-traditional security.

VISION

To serve as a thought leader in the aerospace and security domains globally, providing thinkers and policymakers with independent, comprehensive and multifaceted insight on aerospace and security issues.

MISSION

To provide independent insight and analysis on aerospace and international security issues, of both an immediate and long-term concern; and to inform the discourse of policymakers, academics, and practitioners through a diverse range of detailed research outputs disseminated through both direct and indirect engagement on a regular basis.

CORE AREAS OF RESEARCH

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in Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies

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