

Profile

Mohammad Yasin Malik

Chairman, Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF).

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Mohammad Yasin Malik was born on 3rd April, 1966 in a modest Kashmiri household of Maisuma Bazar near Budshah Chowk in the center of Srinagar, the summer capital city of Jammu Kashmir. For being the lone brother of his three sisters, today, after fifty seven years of his birth, he lives in the same house with his mother and elder sister as his father, Ghulam Qadir Malik, died in 2011. His other two younger sisters live their married lives. His introduction to political activism occurred while he was still in school at the age of 14. It was the dreadful day of July 26, 1980 when Indian army men in civvies carrying hockey sticks and iron rods in their hands appeared in Lal Chowk, the commercial hub of the city. While thrashing civilians they started damaging taxis, private cars and government property. These army men had actually came out of their barracks from a nearby army headquarter Badami Bagh and went berserk just to free an army driver from the police custody who had actually hit a rickshaw on Moulana Azad road near Polo ground Srinagar. They resorted to loot and arson from all along their base Sonawar, Badami Bagh to Batamaloo. This army mayhem evoked severe reaction from the local population that resulted in killing of 6 civilians including a visiting Rawalpindi based Kashmiri origin Pakistani. Teen aged Yasin Malik, and everybody of his generation, had a great influence of this incident that haunted him as he himself very closely survived this attack when he hid under the main reception counter of a nearby KMD bus stand. Just after four years, on 11th February 1984 when the great son of soil "Baba-e-Qoam" (father of nation) Muhammad Maqbool Butt was hanged by India in Delhi Tihar Jail, Yasin Malik with his new friends agitated against Maqbool Butt's execution. He was caught and beaten by the police for showing boyish awareness of his rights as a citizen of a State that holds a unique historical, legal and political position in South Asia. He was not the only one of his age, and time, to be treated in this manner. What set him apart from his peers, however, was that he understood the intent and attitude behind the treatment he had received and resisted. By the time he allowed himself to be politicized.

By 1986, two years later, he was engaged in full time political activity. He became a founding member and General Secretary of a student organization that was devoted to publicizing and debating the true status of the State within the student community in particular and among the masses in general. He began to organize protest marches and distributed literature that advocated a comprehensive solution to Jammu Kashmir problem. This time he was caught, beaten and imprisoned for twenty days under the charges of possessing and handling pro-freedom literature. In 1987, after the so called State elections, during which he along with his student cadres played very active role in support of Muslim United Front (MUF), a pro-freedom united forum established against pro-Indian parties, he was again arrested, taken to an interrogation center (a euphemism for torture centers) for twenty days and then imprisoned for a year under the draconian law called the Public Safety Act (PSA). Soon thereafter his release, he joined the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), of which he is currently the Chairman, an executive head. JKLF questions any presumption of the finality of the division of the State between India, Pakistan and China, and advocates the restoration of the sovereignty and independent status of State of Jammu Kashmir.

It was during this period that the four core activist members of JKLF, Hameed Sheikh, Ashfaq Majeed Wani, Javid Ahmed Mir and Yasin Malik met to form the famous **HAIY** Group, an acronym formed of the first letters of their first names. Frustrated by the intransigence of the Indian government to consider a debate on the status of the State, they resort to an armed insurgency led by the then chairman of JKLF, Late Amanullah Khan. One of its primary objectives was to bring the international recognition of Jammu Kashmir issue after a hiatus of almost forty years. Two

members of the HAJY Group Hameed and Ashfaq got martyrdom during the struggle. Yasin Malik was caught, tortured and imprisoned until 1994. In that year, Mr. Malik was released on medical grounds as he had undergone open heart surgery during the incarceration.

Already impressed with the truthfulness and peaceful struggles carried out by the world renowned great leaders and humanists like Martin Luther King (Jr), Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi and Quad-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, and admired by the great revolutionary poets, philosophers, thinkers and preachers like Moulana Rumi, Allama Iqbal and the great Imam Ghazali followed by the continued persuasions of Indian civil society and the active diplomatic missions of USA, UK and EU in Delhi, on the excuse to give peace process a chance, Yasin Malik soon after his release went ahead and announced unilateral cease-fire. The announcement of unilateral ceasefire was the most unpopular decision of the time. However, this peaceful gesture by JKLF went unacknowledged by the government of India but Yasin Malik and party cadre has stuck to this day to their commitment of reverting to a non-violent struggle. Meanwhile, since 1994, no less than 600 of his party members were killed by Indian forces even after the announcement of unilateral ceasefire by JKLF.

The last half of Mr. Malik's life has been a series of visits to Indian prisons where he was alternately beaten, put in solitary confinement (at one stage for two years) and even subjected to mental torture by being placed amongst the inmates of an insane asylum in Agra (UP). The years of beatings, imprisonment and deprivation have left him frail. Even since his release in 1994 he was arrested numerous times and has miraculously survived 6 attempts made on his life. Three ruthless murder attempts were made by the trigger happy Indian forces for not complying with their dictates and three were made by militants itself for they did not like his ceasefire announcement. Yet, despite this, he has sought to modernize the attitudes of fellow fighters.

Yasin Malik has made two lengthy visits to the United States of America (USA) for health reasons. During his stay in the United States besides undergoing a major surgery, Yasin Malik spent most of his time on diplomatic mission and public awareness campaign to educate the US public and policy makers on Kashmir and garner support for the cause of Kashmir liberation struggle. He spoke and briefed US officials at White House, State Department (Capital Hill) including some important US policy making institutes and think tanks, and put light at length on the current situation and discussed new ideas with them to follow for the resolution of long standing vexed issue of Kashmir. Yasin Malik addressed more than a dozen international conferences on Kashmir and has delivered lectures in the major universities of India, Pakistan and USA as well. He served as a guest lecturer at Harvard University and Yale University USA, Oxford University UK, and Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) and Saint Stefan College Delhi India. He debated Kashmir in a famous "Hard Talk" TV talk show on BBC with Tim Sebastian during his UK visit and defended well his struggle for national liberation and highlighted Indian atrocities.

In October 1999 Mr. Yasin Milk along with other pro-freedom leaders was again arrested by Indian authorities and put behind the bars under PSA. This time he was lodged in the most infamous Jail of India, The Jodhpur Jail. This was done because Yasin had successfully led an election boycott campaign in the State. He was released but later re-arrested on March 26, 2002 under another draconian law namely; POTA (Prevention of Terrorism Act). He was released after torture and illegal detention of almost one year.

Yasin Malik and his JKLF members in Indian Held Jammu Kashmir (IHJK) launched an 18 month long most famous signature campaign in mid June 2003 followed by another 116 days long extensive day-night mayhem namely; "Safr-e-Azadi" (journey to freedom) in June 2006. During both these campaigns he visited more than 6000 hamlets, villages, towns and cities in Jammu Kashmir and addressed at least similar number of public gatherings. For being the principle party to the issue and in view of bilateral dialogue between India and Pakistan, 1.5 million Kashmiris through their signatures in the campaign demanded their active involvement in the dialogue (peace) process for

the resolution of Kashmir conflict. In the backdrop of post 9/11 world resolve, these extensive peaceful mayhems actually led to the famous peaceful people's revolution of 2008, and resultantly has proved very fruitful in the transformation of Kashmiri youth from violent to non-violent peaceful means. Unfortunately, neither did India respect this transformation nor could international community made their valuable intervention in resolving the issue.

JKLF under the dynamic leadership of Yasin Malik led many other peaceful political campaigns in State that stressed the need for the early resolution of issue. These include hunger strike camps, volunteer court arrests, long marches and spontaneous protests mostly against the gross human rights violations in IHJK perpetuated by Indian forces. JKLF later held photo and video exhibition of its Signature Campaign and Safre-e-Azadi (Journey to Freedom) respectively at New Delhi, Islamabad and New York, and presented its soft copies to the then Prime Minister of India Dr. Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of Pakistan Showkat Aziz and President of Pakistan Gen. Parvez Musharaf during his official meetings with them.

Yasin Malik is a great social worker as well. Snow storm that struck and destroyed many villages in Kashmir in 2005, Yasin and his party was the first to rush with relief. He collected and sent more than 100 points of blood to victims of Latur Maharashtra (India) flood victims in 1990's. Again when Tsunami and Gujrat earthquack devastated humanity, Yasin and his party provided relief to the victims. Yasin Malik through a blood donation camp in New York voluntarily collected blood for 9/11 victims as he was in USA on that fateful day.

During 2005 earthquake Yasin and his men were on the front line in Uri, Tangdar, Kupwara and other adjacent affected places in Kashmir. Yasin himself went to Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK) and provided relief to the victims where his party cadre led by the then party Chief Patron Amanullah Khan (late) were already on the drive. Furthermore, Yasin Malik has been regularly participating in World Social Forum programs world over and has been delivering lectures regarding social justice, gender equality, freedom of nations and concept of right of self-determination.

During these years, especially after 2004 when dialogue process between India and Pakistan took off, besides the heads of all major political parties of both India and Pakistan, Yasin has had official meetings with President and Prime Ministers of Pakistan namely; Gen. Parvez Musharaf, Showkat Aziz, Choudhary Shujaat Hussain, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani and Prime Ministers of India namely; Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Dr. Manmohan Singh. He also held meetings with the former Prime Ministers of both the countries namely; Mrs. Benazir Bhutto, Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharief, Imran Khan, I K Gujral, Deve Gowda, Chander Shekhar, V P Sing and other high ranking political dignitaries like Ms. Sonia Ghandi.

In January 2009, Yasin got married to a Pakistani painter Mushaal Mullick who is famous for her woman based paintings. Duo is blessed with a daughter Raziya Sulatana, now twelve year old. It is pertinent to mention that Yasin Malik's passport was confiscated by Indian authorities in 2013 and from that time he has neither been able to see his wife and daughter nor he is able to meet his party cadre in AJK.

In May 2015, JKLF chairman Yasin Malik with his efforts brought pro-freedom Kashmiri leadership under the banner of Joint Resistance Leadership (JRL). This unity was deeply sought by the pro-freedom people of the State after the breakaway of All Parties Hurriyet Conference (APHC), a conglomerate of all pro-freedom political, social, religious and business organizations, in 2003. JRL led by Chairman APHC-G Syed Ali Shah Geelani, Chairman APHC-M Mirwaiz Muhammad Umar Farooq and Chairman JKLF Yasin Malik spearheaded the gallant resistance movement during which Yasin Malik was put behind bars for near about 6 months.

During the first term of PM Modi led Bharti Janata Party (BJP) government in India, from 2014 to 2019, Yasin Malik remained in custody for near about four years. He has been in and out of jails, local police stations and detained at his house during all these years. According to an estimated

report, he has been arrested for more than 800 times and remained in custody for most of the period since 1994.

JKLF chairman was last time arbitrarily arrested on 22nd February 2019, slapped with PSA on March 7 and shifted to Jammu Kotbalwal Jail wherefrom in the intervening night of 8 and 9 May, 2019 he was illegally flown to New Delhi and handed over into the custody of infamous National Investigation Agency (NIA) on 14 days judicial remand. Yasin Malik while in custody on 10th May started indefinite hunger strike against the callous and inhuman approach of NIA officials at their headquarter. He broke the hunger strike on 22nd May only after the intervention of a judicial magistrate who on witnessing his deteriorating health in a hospital order his immediate shifting to Delhi's Tihar Jail under judicial lock-up. Since then the most popular leader from across the both parts of the State of Jammu Kashmir, JKLF chairman Yasin Malik is there in solitary confinement and is being deprived of basic human rights that includes the intensive medical care for he being a patient of multiple ailments especially of heart, kidneys and back bone disc.

He was formally charged with new concocted terrorism related cases by NIA in a special court, and on witnessing the one sided court proceedings in a hostile atmosphere against him, he in protest withdrew his defense lawyer after more than a year's period. On the dictates of Mr. Modi led government of India, Yasin Malik on 25 May 2022 was unfairly convicted for life imprisonment in the same politically motivated cases filed against him by NIA.

This inhuman Indian approach towards him continued by re-opening and speedy trial of over three decades old murder cases against him and his colleagues backed up with the continued malicious media trial is enough to indicate that present extremist regime in India has some sinister design in store against him. NIA has now appealed high court for his death penalty to accomplish the sinister design.

JKLF appeals the saner elements in India and the international community especially the world leaders and the human rights organizations to save Yasin Malik who has served a lot for peace in the region then, and who, for his political belief, is becoming the worst victim of injustice and political vendetta now.

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