



# PAKISTAN ISLAMIC MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

We seek the pleasure of Almighty ALLAH through  
character building & service to mankind

Date: 21<sup>st</sup> August 2019

To,  
**Mr Richard Horton**  
Editor-in-Chief  
The Lancet

Dear Sir,

The editorial piece in your esteemed journal, about state violence and human suffering in Kashmir, is very timely and need of the day. Medical community must be concerned about physical and mental suffering of the society regardless of cast, ethnicity, religion and geographical boundaries. Over half a century old conflict has been taking its toll on Kashmiri population constantly and relentlessly. On one side the state sanctioned military crackdowns, mass protests, curfews and gun battles are seriously affecting the mental health of community causing anxiety, depression, suicidal tendencies, state of hopelessness and a constant atmosphere of lack of protection, with the compounding effects of disappearances, extrajudicial killings and finding of mass graves. On the other side excessive force, illegal detentions with physical torture and pellet firing shotguns are inflicting crippling injuries to the children, women and youth. Over 1200 cases of direct firing by pellet guns on the faces causing partial or complete blindness have been reported in less than two years.

Amnesty International and other Human Rights Organizations have repeatedly voiced their concerns with appeals to halt violence. Recent actions of Indian government have escalated the disproportionate use of force against the civilians resulting in worsening of challenges to physical and mental health of Kashmiri population. Sane voices like that of the Lancet must be heard. The international medical community is fully supporting this call.

Kind regards

Yours truly,  
**Prof. Muhammad Afzal**  
President, Pakistan Islamic Medical Association (PIMA)