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ABSTRACT

Yasin Malik, born in Srinagar in 1966, is one of the most prominent leaders in Kashmir's struggle for freedom and political rights. As Chairman of the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), his journey reflects the transition from armed resistance in the late 1980s to a struggle grounded in the universal principle of the right to self-determination, as recognised by the United Nations General Assembly (1983), and international advocacy. Engaging with Indian and Pakistani leaders, mediators, and global human rights organisations, Malik gained recognition as a political actor. This report traces his evolution from youthful activism to international diplomacy and current incarceration, marked by restricted access to justice, heightened threats to his life, and the looming prospect of the death penalty, situating his journey within the wider dynamics of conflict, peacebuilding, and human rights in Kashmir.

Sardar Aftab Khan

#FreePoliticalPrisoners in Jammu
Kashmir Campaign

Yasin Malik: Biography, Political Evolution, and Civil Resistance

By Sardar Aftab Khan

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Introduction

Yasin Malik, born in Srinagar in 1966, has emerged as one of the most influential leaders in Kashmir's struggle for freedom and political rights. His journey captures the transition of Kashmiri resistance from the revolutionary phase of the late 1980s to a movement increasingly shaped by civil resistance and international advocacy. His lifelong struggle embodies Kashmir's dynamic history and the resilience of its people's aspirations for independence, territorial integrity, national unity, and liberation from colonial domination and foreign occupation by all available means, including armed struggle (United Nations General Assembly, 1983).

Malik's path spans youthful activism in the tumultuous streets of Srinagar to his engagements with Indian and Pakistani prime ministers, international mediators, and leading human-rights organisations, underscoring his recognition as a legitimate political actor. Renowned as Chairman of the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) and credited with helping to reorient aspects of the movement from armed confrontation toward dialogue and finding peaceful pathways to freedom, his career reflects both the volatility of Kashmiri politics and the endurance of its aspirations for self-determination. (Times of India, 2024; Hindustan Times, 2024; Bose, 2003; Kuszewska, 2022; Schofield, 2010).

This report provides a chronological account focused on Malik's evolution as a political strategist—from formative activism and imprisonment, through the JKLF's cessation of armed struggle and subsequent peace campaigns, to his international advocacy (including in the UK and the US) and later incarceration under Indian law. The analysis purposely excludes discussion of contested allegations. Instead, it focuses on verified aspects of Malik's public role, including his meetings with Indian and Pakistani leaders, his engagements with diplomats, interlocutors, human rights organisations, and his representation as a civil and political resistance leader. (Associated Press of Pakistan, 2023).

As the **Indian National Investigation Agency (NIA) seeks to convert his life sentence into the death penalty, with a crucial hearing due in November 2025**, Malik's fate has become a question mark for the international community's willingness to defend human rights in conflict zones. It's time to join the #FreePoliticalPrisoners in Jammu Kashmir Campaign #FreeYasinMalik.

Timeline Table: Key Events, Political Engagements, and International Visits

Year / Date	Event / Milestone	Description / Participants
3 April 1966	Birth	Yasin Malik was born in Maisuma, Srinagar, J&K
Early 1980s	Tala Party Formation	Malik forms an activist group in response to street violence
1983	Cricket Match Controversy	Tala Party attempts to halt the international match in a disputed territory, and protests Bhat's execution
1986	Formation of the Islamic Students League (ISL)	Tala Party becomes ISL, Malik as General Secretary
1987	Muslim United Front (MUF) Election Campaign	ISL joins MUF; Malik leads campaigns
1987-1988	Detention	Malik and other MUF leaders were arrested; reports of rigging

Year / Date	Event / Milestone	Description / Participants
1988	Exile and Training in Azad Jammu & Kashmir	Malik crosses the Ceasefire line for the introduction to the political/civil resistance movement
1989	Return as JKLF Commander	Forms the core “HAJY” group; Revolutionary active civil resistance struggle commences
1990-1994	Imprisonment	Detained during the intense conflict phase
1994	Declaration of Ceasefire	Halt to armed struggle, shift to a non-violent strategy and civil resistance movement
1995	Factional JKLF Split	
Late 1990s-2002	Multiple Detentions	Jailed under PSA, POTA, several times
2004-2010	Meetings with the Indian and Pakistani leadership	Engages with Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Manmohan Singh, Pervez Musharraf, and Nawaz Sharif
2005	Visit to Pakistan and AJK	Meetings in Lahore, Islamabad, Muzaffarabad
2007	Safar-e-Azadi (“Journey of Freedom”)	Key nonviolent mobilisation, visits 3,500 towns and villages
2009 - 2012	Marriage to Mushaal Husaim Mullick	2012 Birth of Daughter, Razia Sultana
2013	UK Parliament Petition and International Appeals	Advocacy for fair trial, international attention
2016	Letter to Pakistan PM Nawaz Sharif	Protests the suggestion of Gilgit-Baltistan's merger with Pakistan.
2018-2019	Ban of JKLF and Detention under UAPA/PSA	Arrested, transferred to Tihar Jail
2019-2022	International Human Rights Appeals	Multiple global appeals by family, diaspora, and human rights groups
May 2022	Life Imprisonment Verdict (Delhi NIA Court)	Convicted under UAPA, a life sentence in Tihar Jail
2024-2025	Supreme Court Appeals and Advocacy	Legal appeals, renewed calls for medical care, global focus

Early Life and Education

Yasin Malik’s formative years were closely linked with the middle-class neighbourhood of Maisuma in Srinagar, which has produced many Kashmiri political actors. Born into a working class family on 3 April 1966, he was the eldest child of Ghulam Qadir Malik. His upbringing coincided with escalating militarisation in Kashmir and frequent struggle between local residents and Indian forces (Times of India, 2024; The Wire, 2019; Khan, 2025).

Malik attended Sri Pratap (S.P.) Higher Secondary School in Srinagar, where he completed his pre-university course. However, he has often credited much of his political education to repeated jail terms and self-directed study of political theory, history, and Islamic thought, including engagement with the writings of Allama Iqbal and Imam Ghazali (Hindustan Times, 2024). Family accounts suggest that early exposure to street agitation and political turbulence shaped his understanding of justice, freedom, and civil rights (The Wire, 2019).

Formation of Tala Party and Jammu Kashmir Islamic Students League (JKISL)

In the early 1980s, Malik and his peers founded the Tala Party in response to the conditioning of occupation and altercations involving the Indian army and residents. According to reports, these events proved to be a triggering point in turning Malik towards activism (The Wire, 2019). The Tala Party's activities included distributing pamphlets, organising student walkouts, and engaging in nonviolent direct action to challenge state interference. Their first major public intervention was the disruption of the 1983 international cricket match at Sher-i-Kashmir Stadium in a disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir, widely interpreted as an assertion of Kashmiri identity against dominant political narratives (Times of India, 2024).

Following a four-month jail term and the execution of JKLF ideologue Maqbool Bhat in 1984, Malik's activism evolved. In 1986, the Tala Party was reconstituted as the Jammu Kashmir Islamic Students League (JKISL), with Malik as its founding General Secretary. The ISL quickly became the leading youth and student organisation in Kashmir, attracting emerging leaders such as Ashfaq Majeed Wani, Javed Mir, and Abdul Hameed Sheikh (UrduPoint, 2023). Influenced by ongoing political developments and sermons of revolutionary scholars, the JKISL marked a new phase in Kashmiri mobilisation, characterised by demands for representative governance, cultural integrity, and an end to perceived Indian hegemony.

By combining student mobilisation with ideological outreach, the ISL laid the groundwork for the significant political developments of 1987, including the formation of the Muslim United Front (MUF) and subsequent election campaigns (Times of India, 2024).

The Muslim United Front (MUF) and the 1987 J&K Elections

By 1987, youth activism had converged with mainstream political agitation in the creation of the Muslim United Front (MUF), a diverse coalition of Islamist, regionalist, and pro-self-determination groups protesting corruption and the erosion of Kashmiri autonomy. Through the Islamic Students League (ISL), Yasin Malik played a central role in mobilising grassroots support for the MUF's electoral campaign. While the coalition abstained from contesting certain seats on constitutional grounds, it assumed responsibility for organising, advocacy, and demonstrating popular "street power" (Times of India, 2024).

Despite substantial public support, particularly in urban Srinagar, the MUF suffered defeat in elections widely regarded as rigged, with reports of booth capturing and state interference across constituencies (Times of India, 2024; The Wire, 2019). Malik and his ISL associates, including leading MUF candidates, were detained without trial, an action that triggered disillusionment among Kashmiri youth and contributed to the radicalisation of a generation (The Wire, 2019).

Scholars, journalists, and Malik himself often cite the manipulation of the 1987 elections as a foundational crisis that undermined faith in Indian democratic processes in Kashmir. This episode is considered by many to have marked the real beginning of the modern struggle in the region (Times of India, 2024; Hindustan Times, 2024).

JKLF Armed Struggle Phase (1987–1994)

Malik's activism converged with the 1987 Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly elections, widely reported as rigged, which further shattered faith in Indian controlled democratic politics in Jammu and Kashmir. The election outcome, described by Waldman (2002) as the trigger for a new phase of Kashmir's struggle for independence, territorial integrity, national unity, and liberation from colonial

domination and foreign occupation by all available means, including armed struggle (UNGA,1983), led to Malik's detention and torture.

Following his release in 1988, Malik crossed the Ceasefire Line to receive training and guidance from the JKLF leadership in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Upon returning to Srinagar, he emerged as a key figure within the JKLF, co-founding its "HAJY" command group, which became central to the early civil resistance movement advocating independence for the entire former princely state of Jammu and Kashmir as of 1947—opposing both Indian administration and integration with Pakistan (The Wire, 2019). The armed struggle against Indian forces marked the period in early 1990.

Yasin Malik has been actively engaged with diverse religious and cultural Kashmiri communities since the early 1990s. He sought to frame the Kashmiri struggle as a civil and political issue rather than a purely religious or territorial conflict (Times of India, 2024). The noted Indian journalist, parliamentarian and diplomat Kuldip Nayyar (1999), underlined the significance of Yasin Malik's transformation as a civil and political rights campaigner similar to Mahatma Gandhi.

Ceasefire, an indefinite halt to the armed struggle and the civil resistance movement

Upon his release in May 1994, Yasin Malik undertook a major political transformation in his struggle for independence, territorial integrity, national unity, and liberation from colonial domination and foreign occupation by all available means, including armed struggle. He announced an indefinite, unilateral ceasefire and formally renounced armed struggle on behalf of the JKLF (Times of India, 2024). This decision followed outreach from Indian civil society, including a delegation led by Ambassador Kuldip Nayyar, who was sent by Prime Minister Narasimha Rao, and assured Malik that all charges would be dropped if he abandoned violence (Khan, 2025). Journalists such as Bhushan (2007) later highlighted Malik's fusion of Sufi ethics with widely known Gandhian principles, training Kashmiri youth in nonviolent politics and building a constituency for peace, mobilisation, and civil disobedience, marking a strategic shift from armed confrontation to civil-political advocacy (Hindustan Times, 2024).

This strategic shift, verified in multiple media reports and tribunal affidavits, was motivated both by the genuine desire to halt the armed struggle and use all other available means to secure the right of the Kashmiri peoples to self-determination, and to distinguish the Kashmiri cause as a legitimate political and humanitarian question (Times of India, 2024). Malik's commitment to nonviolence was demonstrated through hunger strikes, public demonstrations, cross-border "peace marches," and signature campaigns aimed at promoting demilitarisation and political resolution in Kashmir (The Wire, 2019; UrduPoint, 2023).

Public statements and meeting transcripts document Malik's insistence on "tripartite dialogue" involving India, Pakistan, and legitimate representatives of Jammu and Kashmir as the only just pathway toward resolution of the long-standing Jammu and Kashmir conflict (Associated Press, 2006).

Yasin Malik's Humanitarian and Community Resilience Efforts

Though chiefly known for his political life, Yasin Malik also maintained a steady record of humanitarian work—mobilising funds, relief supplies and volunteers for major natural disasters such as the 1992 Latur quake, the 2001 Gujarat quake and the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami (Bhushan, 2005; Al Jazeera, 2005). He travelled to quake-hit towns in Azad Jammu Kashmir and Pakistan in October 2005 to hand out aid in places like Muzaffarabad, Balakot and Mansehra (Dawn News, 2005) and was active on the ground during the September 2014 floods in Srinagar, helping to get essentials to stranded residents (Pandit, 2014). Blood drives were a particular focus: a January 2005 day-long camp in Srinagar saw him, along with JKLF volunteers, donate blood and raise over ₹100,000 for ©#FreePoliticalPrisoners in Jammu Kashmir Campaign E-mail: admin@jkcf.org Page 5 of 14

tsunami victims in India (Al Jazeera, 2005). Malik's relief work also extended to conflict zones—after violent clashes in Sopore in October 2012, he visited damaged homes and provided ₹225,000 to affected families, including widows (Observer News Service, 2012). Complementing these relief efforts, he pursued interfaith outreach—formally welcoming Amarnath pilgrims in June 2011 and joining Kashmiri Pandits at the Khirbhawani temple during Navreh in June 2014—gestures aimed at reinforcing a shared Kashmiri identity and centuries old traditions of 'Kashmiriyat' based on multifaith and multicultural harmony between diverse communities across Jammu Kashmir and beyond (Ashiq, 2011; HT Correspondent, 2014). Together, these acts present a humane, service-oriented strand in Malik's life—grounded in solidarity, compassion, practical aid and efforts to strengthen communal connections. They broadened his contributions as a pro-people, pro-freedom leader actively engaged as a humanitarian actor committed to uplifting all suffering people in all the regions of the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

Peacebuilding Proposals and Tripartite Negotiations

Following 1994, Malik directed his efforts toward peacebuilding and legitimising Kashmiri political agency beyond the binaries of Indian and Pakistani nationalism. He consistently opposed periodic legislative elections, viewing them as externally imposed, and threatened nonviolent protest, including self-immolation, to draw attention to the marginalisation of Kashmiri voices in governance, decisions and policymaking (Times of India, 2024; Coyne, 2007).

Malik elevated his engagement to an international scale, delivering open letters to the United Nations and meeting with international peace envoys. On 25 March 2004, Yasin Malik met with British High Commissioner Sir Michael Arthur in Srinagar, shortly before talks between the Hurriyat Conference and Indian Deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani. He emphasised the need to urge both the Indian and Pakistani governments to respect the will of the Kashmiri people (Getty Images, 2004; UrduPoint, 2023).

His almost eighteen months long signature campaign and 116 days "Safar-i-Azadi" (Journey of Freedom) campaign saw him and JKLF members travel to over 7500 Kashmiri towns, villages, hamlets and cities, engaging directly with local populations and collecting more than a million signatures in support of self-determination, demilitarization and Kashmiri's active participation in the dialogue process between India, Pakistan and international community. Several peace and democracy organisations recognised this initiative as a model of participatory politics in a conflict zone (The Wire, 2019; Hindustan Times, 2024).

Yasin Malik's meeting with Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh on 17 February 2006 was especially pivotal: Singh urged Malik to help bring militant and pro-freedom voices into structured dialogue, even signalling willingness to travel to Pakistan (Prime Minister's Office, 2006; Khan, 2025). Malik handed over compact discs containing the signatures of 1.5 million Kashmiris demanding inclusion in the peace process to Prime Minister Singh. Speaking after the meeting, he underscored that both India and Pakistan needed to involve Kashmiri political and militant leadership in decision-making. Singh's media adviser, Dr Sanjaya Baru, later confirmed that the government intended to broaden dialogue with groups outside the electoral system (Associated Press, 2006). This episode symbolised Malik's transformation from militant leader to advocate of participatory, nonviolent political engagement.

Meetings with Indian and Pakistani Prime Ministers

Malik's credibility as a civil and political resistance leader is reinforced by repeated engagements with Indian and Pakistani heads of government. Between the late 1990s and 2010s, he met five Indian

Prime Ministers—including P.V. Narasimha Rao, H.D. Deve Gowda, Chandar Shekhar, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and [Manmohan Singh](#)—alongside senior officials from home, foreign, and security ministries as well as mainstream political leadership (Times of India, 2024). These meetings occurred both in “track one” official initiatives and “track two” unofficial negotiations.

In Pakistan, Malik met Prime Ministers Shoukat Aziz, Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain, Nawaz Sharif, Benazir Bhutto and President Pervez Musharraf and Pakistani leaders, including Imran Khan (Hindustan Times, 2024; The Wire, 2019). In January 2016, he delivered a letter to PM Nawaz Sharif protesting any unilateral changes to Gilgit-Baltistan, stressing that such moves would undermine Kashmiri self-determination (India Today, 2016).

Throughout these engagements, Malik foregrounded civil liberties, demilitarisation, and dialogue involving genuine Kashmiri representatives, consistently documented in court affidavits and public statements (Times of India, 2024).

Engagements with Human Rights Organisations

Malik has engaged extensively with domestic and international human rights organisations to advocate for Kashmiri civil and political rights. His campaigns received attention from Amnesty International, the UN Human Rights Council, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, and Human Rights Watch, which criticised arbitrary detentions and violations of due process (Amnesty International via APP, 2023).

Verified records exist of Malik’s appeals for the release of fellow detainees, documentation of civilian violence, and calls for the implementation of UN Resolutions on Kashmir. His 1994 release followed domestic and international advocacy, including a petition by 30 UK House of Commons members citing the rights of political prisoners (UK Parliament, 1994).

Malik has also drawn cross-community support. Sampat Prakash (late), a Kashmiri Pandit trade unionist, described him as a courageous leader who “lives in the hearts of the Kashmiri people” and urged the Indian leadership to acknowledge his peaceful struggle (Khan, 2025). Such endorsements reflect Malik’s broader legitimacy as a political actor, even among ideological opponents.

Visits to the United Kingdom and the United States

Malik’s advocacy extended beyond South Asia. In the UK, he participated in international meetings, conferences, and civil society events to internationalise the Kashmiri cause.

In the United States, Malik visited in 2001 for medical treatment and met policymakers, think tanks, and academic circles to present the Kashmiri perspective (The Wire, 2019; UrduPoint, 2023). His advocacy, combined with family connections in US policy and academic spheres, amplified international attention on his incarceration and the broader Kashmir conflict (The Jaipur Dialogues, 2023).

Malik visited Washington, DC, meeting senior officials, including Richard A. Boucher (US Assistant Secretary of State) and Elizabeth Millard (National Indian Council). He also addressed forums at the Henry L. Stimson Centre, Brookings Institution, Amnesty International (DC), Asia Society (New York), and Harvard University Asia Center, cementing his international legitimacy (Khan, 2025). These engagements underscored his credibility as a political interlocutor recognised by both governments and global policy institutions.

Malik’s presence in the UK and US strengthened diaspora activism, informed petitions, and served as a focal point for civil society advocacy (Times of India, 2024).

Legal Proceedings, Ban, and Life Imprisonment

When Yasin Malik was taken from his family home in Srinagar on 22 February 2019, it read to many Kashmiris as more than the arrest of a single man — it was the opening of a new, far sterner chapter in Delhi's relationship with Kashmir (India Today, 2019). In the months that followed, measures against Malik and his organisation escalated quickly: the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) was proscribed by the Indian government on 22 March 2019 (Al Jazeera, 2019), old militancy cases that had lain dormant for decades were reopened, and Malik was moved from local detention to NIA custody in New Delhi and later to Tihar Jail — a transfer his supporters and independent observers say sharply curtailed his access to counsel and to transparent judicial processes (Dawn, 2019; India Today, 2022). What had once been a long, uneasy political negotiation over Kashmir's future increasingly took on the character of punitive criminal prosecution for a generation of Kashmiri leaders. Acclaimed Indian economist, journalist and writer Prem Shankar Jha noted that “as the Modi government intensifies its push for a death sentence for JKLF leader Yasin Malik, questions arise over the fairness of the case and its implications for Kashmir's future” (Jha, 2024).

This turn cannot be read in isolation. On 5 August 2019, the Government of India unilaterally changed the United Nations recognised status of the Indian administered State of Jammu and Kashmir by revoking special constitutional status (Articles 370 and 35-A) of the Indian Constitution through enforced annexation and reorganisation the state as a Union Territory— a move accompanied on the ground by heavy security deployments, communications blackouts and sweeping restrictions on civil liberties (Time, 2019; The Guardian, 2019). For many observers, the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A altered the terms of political engagement: what earlier might have been handled as political dissent or negotiated grievance now risked being recast as a security problem to be addressed through criminal law and administrative detention. Against that backdrop, the renewed legal onslaught on pro-people and pro-freedom leaders like Malik felt less like discrete prosecutions and more like part of a broader campaign to silence or neutralise prominent political voices in Kashmir (Al Jazeera, 2022; Dawn, 2019).

The consequences have been concrete and grave. Malik's trial ended in a conviction and two consecutive life terms in May 2022 (Al Jazeera, 2022), and the National Investigation Agency (NIA) has pressed the courts to consider the death penalty — an escalation that critics say signals an extraordinary hardening of posture by the state (Times of India, 2023). Meanwhile, human-rights groups and international observers have repeatedly flagged concerns about restricted legal access, the fairness of proceedings, and detention conditions — problems that are magnified when a defendant is moved far from home and from family or independent observers (Amnesty International / APP, 2023; Amnesty International, 2023). Taken together, the pattern is unmistakable to many: arrest, reopening of old cases, constrained access to justice, and the push for the harshest possible sentence have not occurred in a political vacuum but in the shadow of a wholesale constitutional and administrative overhaul of Kashmir carried out by New Delhi in August 2019.

Seen through this lens, Malik's personal legal journey is also a barometer of a wider change in the nature of the dispute — a shift from a contested political conversation (however difficult and fraught) to an environment where political dissidence in Kashmir is increasingly securitised and criminalised. Whether one accepts Malik's politics or not, the sequence of events—arrest, re-activated cases, constrained procedural rights, and now the pursuit of capital punishment—reads to many as an interconnected chain of decisions shaped by the post-August 2019 political reset (India Today, 2019; Al Jazeera, 2019; Time, 2019; Al Jazeera, 2022; Times of India, 2023; Amnesty International / APP, 2023).

Media Portrayal as a Civil Resistance Leader

Press coverage in India, Pakistan, and internationally portrays Malik as a symbol of nonviolent Kashmiri resistance, rooted in his 1994 renunciation of armed struggle and use of peaceful means to achieve the right to self-determination. Campaigns such as the 2005 signature campaign and the 2007 Safar-i-Azadi reinforced this narrative (The Wire, 2019; Hindustan Times, 2024).

Human rights defenders frequently cite Malik's commitment to peaceful engagement, and international media—from the BBC to The Guardian—have framed him as “Kashmir's Nelson Mandela,” a symbol invoked in diaspora advocacy from Birmingham to Muzaffarabad (Times of India, 2024; The Wire, 2019; France 24, 2019).

UK Parliamentary Debates and International Petitions

The Early Day Motion 1278 (23 May 1994) recognised Indian Supreme Court proceedings leading to Malik's release and called for humane treatment of Kashmiri detainees (UK Parliament, 1994). UK MPs, including Debbie Abrahams and Rachel Hopkins, received JKLF delegations discussing Malik's incarceration. On 5 September 2022, the petition of residents of the United Kingdom concerning the conviction of Yasin Malik, asserting that Malik's trial violated Article 10 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and India's constitutional obligations, was debated in the House of Commons (UK Parliament, 2022).

The UK government recognised Malik's legal status under Indian law but emphasised that India should uphold due process and humane treatment. MPs, including Rachel Hopkins, have convened with JKLF representatives to express concern over potential death penalty proceedings and advocate constructive international engagement on Kashmir.

Petitions supporting Malik and Kashmiri rights have been signed by thousands, including lawyers, human rights activists, and diaspora members, sustaining international attention on both Malik's case and Kashmir's unresolved status in international law (Change.org, 2023).

His family, notably his wife Mushaal Hussain Mullick and daughter Razia Sultana, continued advocacy efforts through correspondence with the UN, US Congress, and European Parliament for fair trial guarantees and improved prison conditions (UrduPoint, 2023; Times of India, 2024).

Conclusion

Yasin Malik's life journey is inseparable from the intertwined histories of political violence, resistance, and civil society in Kashmir. His life has been defined by transformation — from the founder of a youth protest group in the 1980s, to the international face of Kashmiri self-determination, to one of the world's most prominent Kashmiri political prisoners. Despite torture, chronic illness, disenfranchisement, and imminent threats to his liberty and life, Malik's renunciation of violence and his advocacy for nonviolent mass action have profoundly shaped both the discourse and practice of resistance in Kashmir.

International recognition of Malik's legitimacy is firmly established. From his **2006 dialogue with Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh** to meetings with **US officials, global think tanks, and rights organisations**, he has consistently positioned Kashmir within frameworks of peace, dignity, and democracy. His correspondence, public petitions — even from Tihar Jail — and endorsements

from unexpected quarters, including Kashmiri Pandit leader Sampat Prakash (Late), underscore his enduring role as a representative voice of his people.

Today, as the **National Investigation Agency seeks to convert his life sentence into the death penalty, with a crucial hearing due in November 2025**, Malik's fate has become a litmus test for India's democratic credibility and for the international community's willingness to defend human rights in conflict zones. His story reminds the world that the future of Kashmir — indeed, the prospects for any just and peaceful resolution — rests not only with governments and courts, but with the courage of those who pivot from violence to principled resistance, who endure imprisonment without surrender, and who embody the Gandhian ideal of nonviolent struggle in the most hostile of circumstances.

It is now upon the United Nations, human rights institutions, and world powers to uphold international standards of justice and ensure that Malik's life — and the hope for peaceful resolution in Kashmir — is not extinguished.

It's time to join the #FreePoliticalPrisoners in Jammu Kashmir Campaign **#FreeYasinMalik #notodeathpanelty**.

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About the author

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Appendix – 1 Yasin Malik's lifelong Struggle for Peace, Dialogue and Freedoms in Jammu and Kashmir.

