

## [JKLF leader heckled at peace conference](#)

New Delhi, 11 Jan: JKLF leader Mr Yasin Malik was today heckled by a group at an Indo-Pak peace meet objecting to his presence and remarks relating to Kashmiri Pandits.

As soon as Mr Malik rose to address the conference here on 'A Road Map Towards Peace', some Kashmiri pandits stood up, saying he should not be allowed to speak and hurled abuses at him.

Mr Malik said that from 1947 when the country got Independence, the people of Kashmir got only conflict.

“Three generations of Kashmiris have been consumed by the conflict,” he said, pointing out that the people of Kashmir do not have a history of violence in their 5,000-year-old history.

There were repeated disruptions when Mr Malik spoke, with a vocal group of Kashmiri Pandits belonging to organisations like Pannun Kashmir and Roots in Kashmir objecting to his presence.

Mr Malik's statement that they (Kashmiri Pandits) were used as the “whipping boys” of the (intelligence) agencies and target him evoked a strong reaction.

Mr Malik referred to his political past and how he was in and out of jail for prolonged periods and said he had started the armed struggle only after his “non-violent movement was scuttled”. Asserting that Kashmiri people have a right to be in the decision-making process between India and Pakistan, Malik said, “Whoever comes brings a roadmap for Kashmir. It has become a laboratory but no decision is being taken”.

Mr Sajjad Lone, President of People's Conference, said “extreme positions” on the Kashmir issue will never be acceptable by India, Pakistan or the people of the state. Favouring “economic sovereignty” for Jammu and Kashmir, he said development could usher in change in the state and suggested dismantling of trade barriers between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad (PoK). Mr Ashok Bhan of Pannun Kashmir recalled how Kashmiri Pandits were forced to leave the state since December 1989. “Today we are refugees in our own country,” he rued. PTI

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