

Witness Biography: *International Court of Justice*

Mirwaiz Umar Farooq

Former Chair: All Parties Hurriyat Conference



Background:

Mirwaiz Omar Farooq was the chair of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) and the top Muslim Leader in Kashmir. He became involved in the Muslim movement against India in 1990 when his father, Mohammed, the fourteenth mirwaiz (Muslim figurehead in Kashmir), was assassinated. In 1993, Farooq began the Hurriyat Conference by uniting twenty-three different separatist and militant groups. He is one of the most trusted and respected Kashmiri leaders because of his non-violent and open-minded approach to peace.

What he adds to the case:

Farooq was the leader of the APHC, the Kashmiri group that encompasses the greatest number of viewpoints on the dispute between India and Pakistan. He is clearly knowledgeable, well respected, trusted, and flexible. Additionally, he is considered the hope of the Kashmiri people, and therefore his presence at this trial would placate Kashmiris who would otherwise feel underrepresented. His leadership has decreased the violent resistance of the Muslim rebellion and has led to a more unified Kashmir.

View on the Issue:

Farooq is an advocate of moderation. He is responsible for preventing the Kashmiri rebellion—one of the world's bloodiest—from becoming far more dangerous and violent by supporting non-violent means of achieving a peaceful resolution. In spite of continued violence against his people, Farooq strongly opposed creating a Kashmiri army, which many believe is the reason Kashmir has not been completely destroyed. His position is the broadest of any of those involved in settling the conflict; he has united countless separatist, militant, and ideological groups that had been butting heads before. He does not believe in a Pakistani-Kashmir, and Indian-Kashmir, or an independent Kashmir, but instead approaches the issue in order to end the violence and peacefully discuss a resolution and come to an agreement.

Quote(s):

On the topic of creating a united coalition on Kashmir's problems, Mr. Farooq said, "We have small differences, which are not grave in nature, and we will try our level best to work out the differences."

-11/24/2004 interview with BBC Hindi

On the issue of unity, Farooq had this to say: “the togetherness of the people of Jammu and Kashmir is going to be critical for our existence a hundred years down the line as a nation and as a community.”

-03/10/2005 roundtable discussion

Internet Sources:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice/pressreleases/stories/2004/11_november/24/geelani.shtml

<http://www.stimson.org/southasia/pdf/Mirwaiz.pdf>

<http://www.time.com/time/asia/features/heroes/farooq.html>

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