



INDIA  
JUSTICE  
PROJECT



Chair for Public and  
Comparative Law  
(Prof. Dr. Philipp Dann)



# Kashmiri Women's Resistance Day

A conversation with **Kashmiri scholars**

**23 February 2022**

**14:30 - 16:00 CET**

[https://hu-berlin.zoom.us/j/65082385336?](https://hu-berlin.zoom.us/j/65082385336?pwd=ZS9RdGFBVjIhWVFsYWlDdXJKTVQzQT09)

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## Panel

**Prof. Ather Zia**

poet and political anthropologist at the University of Northern Colorado, author of *Resisting Disappearance: Military Occupation and Women's Activism in Kashmir*

**Prof. Mona Bhan**

cultural anthropologist at Syracuse University, author of *Counterinsurgency, Development, and the Politics of Identity: From Warfare to Welfare?*

**Dr. Hafsa Kanjwal**

scholar in the field of history and women's studies at Lafayette college

## Moderation

**Tanja Marielle Herklotz**

post-doc researcher at the Chair for Public and Comparative Law, Humboldt University Berlin

***“Legal impunity in Kashmir is underwritten and overlaid by other multiple and disempowering forms of institutionalized and socially entrenched denials of autonomy and co-option of gendered bodies—for instance, the overwhelming militarized and nationalistic nature of Indian coverage of the conflict, in which women are predominantly represented as passive victims of Islamic societal patriarchy, and violence”***

– ‘Support Group for Justice for Kunan Poshpora’

The 23rd February is commemorated as Kashmiri Women's Resistance Day, paying tribute to the struggles of the survivors of **mass rape and torture in the twin villages of Kunan and Poshpora** on the night of 23rd February 1990. However, this is only one instance of the systematic and deliberate use of gendered violence on the part of Indian military forces in the ongoing struggle of the people of Kashmir for self-determination and autonomy. As Kashmir is one of the most militarized areas in the world, violence against bodies, spaces, psyches and expressions is pervasive. **Military forces use gendered violence as a weapon in the attempt to silence Kashmiri resistance.** It is, thus, not only targeted against Kashmiri women but also countless Kashmiri men who have been subjected to sexual violence, which is often subsumed under torture and thereby invisibilised. Perpetrators are protected and encouraged by the Indian state, giving them **absolute impunity** despite their commitment of widespread and systemic human rights violations in Kashmir.

To protect its army, the Indian state uses a network of individuals in the judiciary, the media and the bureaucracy to **mask the crimes** committed by its forces.

In 2019, the **Indian state unilaterally stripped Kashmir of its semi-autonomous status** and divided it into two parts to be ruled directly by the central government. This was followed by a stringent security and communication blockade which lasted for over a year, leading to the **silencing of Kashmiri voices.**

In the light of these **systematic and ongoing human rights violations**, we bring together this panel to speak about the issue of gender-based violence in Kashmir, the absolute silencing of Kashmiri voices, as well as subversions and resistances that challenge the conduct of the Indian state.