

# 'KASHMIR HEARING USED TO UNDERMINE INDIA'S STEPS'

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: India - USA

Raveesh Kumar

The U.S. congressional hearing on the human rights situation in Kashmir reflected a lack of understanding of Indian democracy and institutional safeguards, said an official of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Thursday. The Indian response came days after a hearing at a house foreign affairs subcommittee on Asia and Pacific described the situation in Kashmir as a "disaster" and "crisis."

"These comments display a very limited understanding of India's history, her pluralistic society, constitutionally guaranteed freedom, her fundamental rights for all citizens, and the robust institutions operating in the world's largest democracy," said Raveesh Kumar, MEA spokesperson, explaining that the hearing was "used" to undermine India's recent steps in Kashmir.

## **Cross-border terrorism**

The spokesperson highlighted India's concerns on cross-border terrorism, saying that the hearing should have highlighted cross-border terrorism from Pakistan that constitutes a serious threat to human rights, especially the right to life.

"The government is responsible and responsive to the safety and welfare of Indian citizens," he said.

The congressional hearing on human rights had submissions from different stakeholders on Kashmir and expressed serious concern about not letting accredited journalists belonging to American news outlets to travel to Kashmir.

However, Mr. Kumar took note of the fact that the Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Alice Wells had indicated support for India's concerns regarding cross-border terrorism.

The official said India was regularly informing the U.S. interlocutors regarding the situation in Kashmir.

He further stated that the treatment of minorities in Pakistan was indeed a matter of concern.

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