

## **Carr Center Hosts Discussion on 62 Years of Unrest in Kashmir**

16 November, 2009 (Cambridge, MA): On 12 November 2009, Harvard Kennedy School Carr Center for Human Rights Policy inaugurated the Kashmir Initiative with the first panel of its Speaker Series: Human Rights Policy for "The World's Most Militarized Dispute." The event was attended by close to a hundred people including students and faculty from Harvard, Tufts, Boston University, MIT, as well as Kashmiri and other South Asian community members from across the Boston area.

Carr Center Director Rory Stewart welcomed the guests to the panel entitled "62 Years of Unrest: Regional & International Ramifications of the Kashmir conflict." Dr. Sugata Bose, the Gardiner Professor of History and Director of the South Asia Initiative at Harvard University, moderated the two-hour panel discussion. The three panelists were Dr. Angana Chatterji, Professor of Social and Cultural Anthropology at California Institute of Integral Studies and co-convenor of the International People's Tribunal for Human Rights and Justice in Indian-Administered Kashmir; Mr. Alexander Evans, currently Yale World Fellow and on sabbatical from the British Foreign Office; and Dr. Ayesha Jalal, the Mary Richardson Professor of History and the Director of Center for South Asian and Indian Ocean Studies at Tufts University. Attendees included Carr Center senior fellow Rose Styron, a poet, journalist, and long-term human rights activist, as well as Nigel Pont, Program Director for the Center's State Building and Human Rights in Afghanistan and Pakistan Program.

The panelists weaved together many nuances of the past, present, and future of the Kashmir conflict. By broaching less often heard dimensions of the conflict, such as the water resource competition or the current civil disobedience in Kashmir, the panelists raised several challenging questions about civil-political as well as social-economic-cultural rights in Kashmir. The issue of the extensive militarization and its ramifications was brought home through footage of mass graves in Kashmiris towns and villages.

Carr Center's Kashmiri Initiative is an effort to encourage discussion about a region which is seeing increased geopolitical importance with the continuing war along Pakistan's untamed western border and Afghanistan. The new U.S. administration's renewed attention to human rights and security concerns in the region makes the time ripe this discussion. Kashmir has been divided and disputed between India and Pakistan for the past 62 years; has been identified by the U.S. government as the world's most militarized dispute, with more than 500,000 troops in Indian-administered Kashmir alone. At the same time, the voices of Kashmiris who have suffered internal conflict and human rights abuses are often missing from current scholarship and discourse. Carr Center Director Rory Stewart has over the last year implemented his vision of combining rigorous academic thinking with practice and reality on the ground. Mallika Kaur Sarkaria, a Masters in Public Policy student at Kennedy School and a joint Law student at University of California, Berkeley, has assisted the Center in formulating this Initiative, in collaboration with the Center's Advocacy and Outreach Manager, Steven Brzozowski. The panel series will continue next year, with "The Two Kashmirs: Present Realities in Indian & Pakistani Administered Kashmirs" on February 23, 2010 at Harvard Kennedy School.

Video footage from the first panel (forthcoming) and further information about the Initiative is available on the Carr Center's ["Kashmir Initiative" webpage](#).