

# LAL CHOWK ARSON

April 10, 1993



Originally Compiled by Institute of Kashmir  
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# **Lal Chowk Arson 1993**

## About the Report:

This fact-finding probe was originally compiled by - Institute of Kashmir Studies.

LFK has been archiving various investigative reports that have donned invisibility. Our aim is to bring such work into the public domain.

This report on the Lal Chowk Arson is an attempt to disseminate the defiant work carried out by IKS.

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## Table of Content

- Lal chowk has a history
- Lal Chowk Arson: Brief facts
- Critical Study on Lal Chowk Arson:
- Statement of Occupying authorities on Lal Chowk incident
- Who put residential and commercial establishments on fire?
- Public reaction and protest
- Public reaction and protest
- International organisation on Lal chowk Arson
- Lal Chowk Arson in Local Press
- Table I: Details of Human Loss
- Table II: Details of Residential Houses Burnt
- Lal Chowk Arson Testimonies

## **Lal Chowk has a History**

LAL CHOWK is the nerve center of Srinagar, one of the most beautiful cities in the world. However, the city is more known for a massacre perpetrated by the Indian paramilitary troops. Lal Chowk massacre of 1993 is still considered as one of the grisliest incidents of brutality and gross human rights violations committed by the Indian occupying forces in the Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. On 10th April 1993, a large section of downtown Srinagar known as Lal Chowk was burned to the ground by Indian paramilitary troops. More than 60 houses, five commercial buildings, 150 shops, two official buildings, shrines, and schools were burnt to ashes. A total of 47 innocent civilians were burnt alive and over 125 were killed by Indian Border Security Forces (BSF). This massacre was perpetrated as part of a systematic policy of repression by the government of India. India has purposefully adopted laws and policies that systematically marginalize Muslims in Kashmir and India.

Lal Chowk is a historic landmark in the city of Srinagar that has played an important role in the political and cultural identity of the people of Kashmir. It remains a symbol of the struggle for the right to self-determination and an important platform for discussions on the Kashmir issue. The area around Lal Chowk has witnessed several historic events over the years, including the Quit Kashmir movement in 1946 and the frequent anti-India protests since the 1990s.

## **Lal Chowk Arson: Brief facts**

**Date: 10.04.1993**

**Place: Lal Chowk, Budshah Chowk**

**Time: 08:30 am to 11:00 am**

During the intervening nights between 9-10 April, when the (114 Battalion of Indian Border Security Force) housed in the Sanatan Dharam building at Lal Chowk, vacated the building. The process of vacation started around 11:00 pm on the 9th April and was completed at 5 a.m. of 10th April, while the whole area around remained sealed.

According to the eyewitness Mr. Mushtaq Ahmad, SHO Maisuma Police Station, the bunker inside the building on the ground floor was completely taken off by the BSF (Indian Border Security Force) at the time of vacation, whereas the bunker inside the main gate of the S.D building.

The 9th and 10th April were the days of protest in the valley. The protest call had been given by Indigenous resistance group Hizbul Mujahedeen to mourn the death of its divisional Commander Maqbool Illahi. The valley was quite tense, protest demonstrations were being held from very early morning. As reported by many daily newspapers, protest rallies were organized by the public on the 10th of April in localities like Batamaloo and adjoining areas of Srinagar. A similar event happened in Lal chowk somewhere between 7:00 to 7:30 a.m. The residents of the area knew that the B.S.F posted in the area had vacated during the night. Some of them in curiosity entered the S.D building, about a hundred or so had gathered in Lal Chowk. They were jubilant and raised slogans against Indian

occupation and in favour of Freedom. As reported by Senior Journalist Mr. Masood Hussain, most of the demonstrators were young boys between the age group of 15 to 20 years.

According to an eyewitness Mr. Khalil Hussain Khan S/o Mohd. Sidique Khan age 30, R/o Hawal, owner of the hotel situated opposite the SD Building, some men entered the building at about 8:30 a.m and fired a few shots in the ground floor of the building which caught fire in no time. When at 08:10 am Mr. Mushtaq Ahmad, the SHO, Maisuma police station arrived on the scene, he was surprised to see the bunkers and the S.D building empty. He had heard a few gunshots while in his official residence. The abandonment of the S.D building had been kept secret from the Local Police officer by the BSF authorities.

He asked about the gunshots from some persons at Lal Chowk who told him that the gunshots had been fired by the escort vehicle of the SP Srinagar who was passing by and on seeing the demonstrators, fired some shots in the air and went away from the scene. Mr. Mushtaq entered the S.D Building and was surprised to see it empty. The bunkers inside, according to him, were found demolished and the roadside bunkers were without any guard. Mr. Mushtaq sensed something fishy in the whole situation. He decided to go near the BSF camp in Akhada Building at Budshah Chowk to see the BSF Commandant Mr. B.R. Sharma to ask for the deployment of the BSF for the protection of the SD Building. Mr. B.R. Sharma did not listen to his request and told that his men were not ready. Mr. Mushtaq returned to S.D building side and saw the demonstrators. The people informed him that an explosive had been planted in the S.D building.

He informed the Police Control Room about it. Now it was 8:25 am. He again rushed to the Akhada building to make a repeated request to Mr. Sharma for providing BSF personnel. According to Mr. Mushtaq, no help was provided to him. This time on roadside, he sees smoke coming out of S.D building. It was by now around 8:35 am. At 8:50 am, the fire raged in full swing in S.D building. Mr. Mushtaq immediately called the Police Control Room and requested the officers to come to the site and try to tackle the situation. By this time, Deputy superintendent police Mr. Jagjeet Kumar of Kothi Bagh and SHO Maisuma Police Station jointly went inside the Akhada Building to request Mr. Sharma, the Commandant of BSF to provide aid but he did not oblige. According to Mr. Mushtaq, Mr. Sharma was sitting at ease in his office, taking sips of tea.

According to Mr. Mushtaq the SHO police station Maisuma, Mr. K. Rajandran, SSP, Mr. Sharma Commandant, Mr. Jagjeet Kumar D.S.P, Kothi Bagh, and he himself came out of the Akhada building along with the BSF Personnel. When they reached the main gate of Akhade, the BSF Personnel started firing in all directions in front of them. Meanwhile, fire tenders had just reached Budshah Chowk, and had started to try to reach the S.D building. The Fire Services Director Mr. M.S. Dar and the deputy Commissioner Srinagar Mr. Ab. Salam Bhat also reached the site. By then it was 9.15 am. According to Mr. M.S. Dar, it was difficult for fire tenders to take up firefighting operation as the firing was going on all around Budshah Chowk.

From 9:30 to 10:15 am according to eyewitnesses, the BSF using gun powder and petrol, torched the residential/commercial buildings at various places right from Lal Chowk side to the Red Cross road side of the Budshah Chowk. While at some places it caught fire, the J&K Police personnel ventured to put out the initial ignition. The process of putting out the initial ignition could be taken up only at

places where the BSF, after ignition, had left and people could come out from hiding. At one place the initial flames were doused by the residents of the Maisuma locality by throwing over the milk that had just arrived for sale.

From 9:05am to 11:00am, people didn't come out of their houses in fear of getting killed, but the persons whose houses burned into flames had no other chance except to come out of their houses instead of being roasted alive in the fire. Mr. Mushtaq and his colleague Mr. Nasir Khan opened the door of the hotel to rescue the persons from the burning hotel and other residents who were also locked up in the building. However, some residents while running for safety were shot dead by BSF personnel. At 10:30am, on the back side of the Palladium Cinema, in a bid to save their lives, the Chursia family (A non-Muslim businessman) came down from their burning house. Mr. Vishad Kumar Churasia said when the fire started, we were sitting at home. We tried to escape with my family. My mother and brother were in front of me. We went out on the street, a bullet came and hit my brother's head and another hit my mother's face. This unfortunate family suffered at the hands of BSF.

Most of the buildings which caught fire were reduced to ashes by the time the clock struck 11:00 am. Meanwhile, the Governor the Chief Secretary and Senior Officials reached the site and the Army was called out to control the BSF. After this, the fire tenders took up their firefighting business. In the devastating fire, 15 residential houses, 34 commercial establishments including 6 hotels, 167 shops and 22 godowns were destroyed. Property worth more than 15 crores is estimated to have destroyed in the incident.

The beautiful face of the historical Lal Chowk (Red Square) was burned by flames, organized by the uniformed and plain-clothed BSF personnel on the 10th of April 1993. Property worth 15 crores including 15 residential houses, 167 shops, 34 commercial establishments, 21 godown destroyed, along with the household items and stocks. Two persons were roasted alive in the burning hotel rooms/houses which had been destroyed from the outside by the BSF personnel, who in a planned manner torched the buildings in Kokar Bazaar and Maisuma.

Many of our historical and political memories are associated with this "Red Square". It has witnessed many political and historical events and upheavals of great importance to the Kashmiris. It has been a witness to many turning points in the way of the struggle for freedom. It heard the roaring of Kashmiri leaders against the autocratic rulers of Dogra dynasty. It witnessed the burial of the Muslim Conference and the establishment of the National Conference in 1939. It witnessed the garlanding of the leader of the Indian Muslims League founder Qaid-e-Azam M.A.Jinnah who became the founder of the newborn dominion of Pakistan. The garland of flowers was put around his neck by Sheikh Mohd Abdullah who commanded a considerable following among the people of Kashmir. It is the irony of history that Lal Chowk was a witness to his betrayal of his own people and to his even changing political stand. No wonder the memory of this man who fell from the sublime heights of his career at the far end of his life is held in disrespect. It was in this very square that Sheikh Mohd Abdullah eulogized the first Prime Minister of free India and expressed high sentiments regarding the person of Nehru on a grand erected platform in this very square in 1947. The Sheikh embraced Nehru on this Podium and uttered the famous verses of Amir Khusroo. Sheikh in this historical event had declared the promise to annex Kashmir with India. The same Lal Chowk was later witness to the revolution in the relations of the

Sheikh with his Indian friends. From the stage of Lal Chowk, Shiekh described the leaders of India as cheats, and breakers of agreements. He, in this very Chowk, several times, thundered that India vacate Kashmir and allow Kashmiris to have the freedom to settle their own future. For 22 years he waged a relentless crusade against India. At this same Lal Chowk, on 12th of July 1974, passed a historic protest rally participated by over one lac enthusiastic people led by the late Shaheed-Millet, Mirwaiz Farooq, to express disapproval of the Indira-Sheikh accord which was in the making those days but at last Sheikh got tired. He was the product of circumstances. He was not the man capable of changing the circumstances. The result, he settles for a cheap and ignorable bargain with the daughter of Nehru who had betrayed him. By virtue of this bargain, he got back the power, albeit curtailed to rule the state as its Chief Minister.

Ironically few months before this, The Lal Chowk is also witness to the many speeches of the most wavering of the Kashmiri politicians viz. Sheikh Abdullah in which he described the state as being an Integral part of India. The Lal Chowk, witnessed the "Indian Flag hoisting" ceremony by BJP (Bhartia Janta Party) President Murli Manohar Joshi on January 26th, 1991 which was made possible only by the heaviest deployment of the Army and Paramilitary personnel. Mr. Joshi had plans to hoist the Indian flag at Lal Chowk by marching from Delhi, heading a procession of his party men. The march was abandoned at Jammu, fearing attack from the armed resistance fighters.

The same Lal Chowk area, which has been a part and parcel of the freedom movement of Kashmiris – first against Dogra Rulers and now against Indian Occupation has been reduced to ashes. It seems as if it has been punished for being the center of many political activities.

### **Critical Study on Lal Chowk Arson:**

A detailed study was conducted by a team of the Institute of Kashmir Studies on the Lal chowk massacre. The team consisting of two members of the Institute visited and interviewed eyewitnesses and local people. In total, 15 people were interviewed and their interviews were recorded. The eyewitnesses included those who reside in the affected localities and those who have jobs in hotels. For what reason BSF battalion vacated the S.D building. In answer to the question, the Lal Chowk tragedy was pre-planned. 70% of the witnesses said that it was a pre-planned conspiracy of the state-controlled B.S.F to set fire in the area. Rest of the witnesses didn't pass comments and said they do not know anything about it. The B.S.F commandant Mr. Sharma refused to oblige on the request from SHO Maisuma.

According to Masood Hussain who reported in the weekly Chattan Srinagar, the director general of JK police Mr. B.S Bedi, when asked for the reason for the BSF vacating in S.D building, replied

“neither the orders to vacate the S.D building were given nor did we know anything about it.”

One of the important eyewitnesses Mr. Surinder S Oberoi, a journalist residing close to the S.D building stated that, “It is the differences between the two home ministers Mr.Chawan and Mr. Rajesh Pilot” which is the cause of vacating BSF in S.D building.



### **Statement of Occupying authorities on Lal Chowk incident:**

Govt. controlled electronic media in the evening of 10th April reported that the militants fired at the BSF locations in S.D building and because of retaliation, some militants got killed and that the S.D. building and its adjacent buildings were burnt by angry militants.

According to Press reports, an official spokesman of the J&K Govt. said in New Delhi that the B.S.F Personnel were adjusting their deployment and were moving from top floor to the ground floor of the building S.D in Lal Chowk Srinagar when militants entered and set the building on fire. The fire spread to adjoining buildings and five blocks housing commercial and residential houses were damaged, he said. Compare the statements of various agencies of the Govt. and find the variance.

K.Rajendran, Senior Superintendent of Kashmir Police, said that the S.D. building was set on fire by unidentified youth but he acted that the eruption of fire from three other places in the neighborhood was inexplicable.

### **Who put residential and commercial establishments on fire?**

According to the government's views, it was the militants who put the residential and commercial establishment on fire, and a number of militants were killed in the cross-firing between the B.S.F and the militants. According to one of the witnesses Mr. Abdul Aziz Dar, s/o Amir Dar, r/o Badshah Chowk, even the State Governor told the local residents that they had burnt their houses themselves. But, according to the witnesses, it was the B.S.F alone that torched these residential houses and shops along with commercial establishments. 98% of witnesses confirmed the involvement of the BSF in the torching of these buildings. The statements of the government and the state-controlled media are shameful. These statements can in no way help the Indian State in facing the realities of the situation. According to eyewitnesses at seven places, the Gun-power and the pieces of cloth soaked in petrol were thrown to start the fire.

At two to three places, the initial ignition was controlled as per the statements of the witnesses. Mr. Mohd. Amin Sofi, an eye witness, said that he saw at least two shops that did not catch fire in spite of the sprinkling of gunpowder. Another witness Mr. Hilal Ahmad Kuchay of Koker Bazar Locality said that his house (a commercial building) did not catch fire in spite of the initial ignition. In fact, all the witnesses confirmed that there were two to three places that did not catch fire after the ignition. The statements of the on-the-spot witnesses are quite opposite to the initial versions of the Government as published in Indian and local press dated 11th April and as aired on the government-controlled electronic media.

In fact, the BSF intentionally torched the area to convert the historical and business center into a slum. This has been confirmed by the SHO Maisuma and the Director of fire and emergency services. It is noted that no militant firing has been confirmed by eyewitnesses but it was only the BSF that were firing in all directions.

### **Public reaction and protest**

The first protest was held at 9:45 am on Amira kaddal Bridge by a number of men and women who came from the areas like Saraibala, Shaheed Ganj, Maisuma and Koker Bazar, and other localities. They were demanding that state terrorism be stopped and permission to be given to fire tenders to

perform the fire fighting operations. As reported by the local Daily “Wadi Ki Awaz” on 13.04.1993 after the said protest demonstration, the fire tenders were finally allowed to take up the fire fighting operations at 9.50 a.m.

The second protest was held when the governor, the chief Secretary, the Home Commissioner, the Police Chief, and other officers of the state administration arrived at Lal Chowk to have a look at what happened at Lal Chowk. Many state officers arrived on the scene of destruction in the afternoon at 4:00 pm.

According to the report published in the Jammu region in “Kashmir Times” dated 11.04.1993, they were greeted by the angry crowd shouting anti-India and pro-Independence slogans. According to another report published in “Weekly Chatan” Srinagar, the angry people said to the Governor “Whatever you may do with us, we are going to get our freedom. You go and make a declaration over the Radio, that Lal Chowk has been burnt by terrorists”. However, the Governor said in reply, “Today we shall not say this”. The political leaders of various organizations, and social and religious leaders were protesting against the state terrorism let loose by India in the region.

### **International organisation on Lal chowk Arson:**

#### **(An American based Human Rights Organization)**

We condemn the Lal Chowk killings very strongly. India should allow us to visit Kashmir to take stock of the situation there.

#### **Amnesty International: (An U.K. based Human Rights Organization)**

Amnesty is concerned about the reported killings and arson at Lal Chowk by the Paramilitary forces.

### **Public Leaders:**

#### **Mr. Syed Ali Shah Geelani:**

The Kashmir Movement cannot be crushed by such oppressive measures. After Sopore, Lal Chowk is one more act of state terrorism.

#### **Mir Waiz Umer Farooq (Mir Waiz of Kashmir):**

Those who unleashed “State Terrorism” will not be allowed to succeed in their designs.

#### **Maulvi Abbas Ansari:**

Lal chowk was an organized attack on the economy of Kashmir.

### **Lal Chowk Arson in Local Press**

There are six major Urdu newspapers and one English daily published from Srinagar and two English dailies from Jammu. All of them have in detail covered the occurrences of 10th April at Lal Chowk. In its editorial on April 12, captioned “Valley on Fire” it has blamed the state and the central Govts. for burning down the Lal Chowk locality. It says, “even if the administration is to be believed that the

militants had set the S.D building on fire, there can be no valid explanation of large-scale acts of arson resulting in the destruction of about 260 houses and shops.

In its editorial on 15th April, it has said: "How would the Govt. explain the sudden vacation of the Sanatan Dharam Complex used as barracks by the B.S.F. and abandonment of bunkers in Lal Chowk area? The denial by D.G. Police will not convince anyone."

## **Valley on Fire**

Ironically while the men in authority boast of normalcy around the corner with the Governor promising elections within six months, Kashmir is on fire. Once happy Valley, the abode of peace with its rich traditions of tolerance and compassion is bleeding. Louder the noise about the initiation of the political process, deadlier the sound of gun battles, worse the situation and higher the toll of human lives. One has lost the count of the persons killed, houses and shops burnt, and people rendered homeless or forced to leave their hearts and homes. During the past few days, the situation in Kashmir has further worsened. While the militants have stepped up their activities, as a sign of their desperation, the security forces too have intensified their operation, resorting to crackdowns and killings. The administration is boasting of significant successes so far as the number of militants, including some top leaders, killed or arrested is concerned. But obviously, the successes in the Valley cannot be measured in terms of the number of casualties and arrests. There are unmistakable signs of further isolation of the administration and alienation of the people due to avoidable excesses committed by the security forces during the fight against militants. A number of innocent persons have been killed either by the militants or by the security forces. Several others have lost their lives in the cross-firing. The unabated alienation of the people clearly shows that state terrorism is no answer to individual or group terrorism. It only contributes to compounding the situation. The wounds of Sopore carnage when the security forces allegedly went on a rampage in the apple town, setting buildings on fire and killing about 50 persons are yet to be healed.

What happened in Srinagar on Saturday, with the people seething with anger, shows how tactless and reckless handling of the situation can cause further damage to national interests in the troubled Valley. Over 260 houses and shops were set ablaze in Lal Chowk area and several people were killed. While the eyewitnesses including some presspersons and photographers who were roughed up by the security forces, allege that the B.S.F men ran amok and resorted to acts of arson and killings with vengeance. The official spokesman has asserted that the buildings were set ablaze by the militants. In view of the low credibility of the administration, and emotionally charged atmosphere, the people in Srinagar are apt to believe the version of the militants or the residents. In a situation where the fear of gun, wielded both by the militants and the security forces, still persists and where free flow of information including on-the-spot reporting by the media persons is not possible, the truth may never be revealed.

Both sides are trying to blame each other and resorting to exaggerated accounts of the happenings. The reports of the incidents show that the security forces acted in panic and with a vengeance that has become a hallmark of their functioning in Kashmir. The trouble started when the protesting mob turned violent and stormed the Sanatan Dharam Sabha building being used by the security forces. Even if the administration is to be believed that the militants had set the building on fire there can be no valid explanation of large-scale acts of arson resulting in the destruction of about 260 houses and shops. The allegations by the people that aching with vengeance the security forces first set afire the New Standard Hotel at Maisuma, quite a distance from the Sanatan Dharam Sabha building and then torched other

buildings in the area by Sprinkling patrol cannot be easily dismissed. The forces also resorted to killings of innocent persons including a child.

***Kashmir Times***

***Monday, April 12, 1993***

### **Indian Press on Lal Chowk Incident**

The Indian Press usually blackouts the killings of innocent civilians, the Indian Army, and Paramilitary forces or carries the version of the Govt. about various acts of arson by the BSF or army personnel. The Lal Chowk tragedy was reported on 10<sup>th</sup> April, in the same manner. Reporting of Hindustan Times on 11.04.1993 was the same but after the various reporters and correspondents visited the scene of destruction in Lal Chowk and met various eyewitnesses to the incident, the earlier reports were modified accordingly. We have incorporated various editions and reporting about the episode for the purpose of record and reference of the individuals and institutions who are interested in the deeper study of the problem of Kashmir and in seeing the face of the secular democracy of India. The press reports and additional have at least finally rejected the govt. version that there was an exchange of fire between the militants and the B.S.F and that the SD buildings and its adjoining buildings were set on fire by the militants themselves.

### **Removal of B.S.F to figure in the probe**

Srinagar, April 14. The removal of para-military forces from the Sanatan Dharam Subha building immediately before it went up in flames on Saturday morning will be the focal point of the inquiry into the Lal Chowk incident in which at least 11 lives were lost and about 260 houses and shops gutted. Tracing the sequence of events, official sources said that on the fateful day, the B.S.F men withdrew from the Sanatan Dharam Sabha building which they had occupied for three years. The jawans also demolished the roadside bunkers, thus leaving the building unprotected. Moments later, several thousand people gathered at Lal Chowk, raising pro-freedom slogans and set fire to the building. The BSF arrived on the scene and opened fire to disperse the mob and later allegedly set fire to residential and commercial buildings in neighboring Khoker Bazar and Maisuma localities.

B.S.F spokesman admitted that it was not desirable to station para-military forces in a building owned by a religious body but having done that, it was not advisable to withdraw the force without adequate arrangements for the building's protection. In the past, not only militants but common people have set fire to hundreds of school and college buildings immediately after they were vacated by the paramilitary forces. Even the Islamia College of Science and Commerce was not spared.

The BSF spokesman explained that the para-military forces were withdrawn from the Sanatan Dharam Sabha building, which has shops in the ground floor, because of recent incident at Qamarwari where the militants planted an explosive device inside a ground floor shop.

***The Times of India 15.04.1993***

### **People die in Srinagar violence, Army out**

SRINAGAR, April 10. The Jammu and Kashmir government today ordered an inquiry into the firing and arson in which 260 shops and houses were gutted in the commercial center of Srinagar, while the toll in militancy-related violence mounted to over 50 during the past 24 hours in the Kashmir valley. The army was called out following the violence.

A police spokesman confirmed the death of 36 persons, 21 of them militants and a security person, while unofficial sources put the death toll at above 50. Curfew which was promulgated within the municipal limits of Srinagar in the morning in the wake of sudden escalation of violence in the city was lifted in the evening as the situation was brought under control, an official spokesman told reporters here today.

While a total general strike was being observed in the Valley to mourn the death of Maqbool Illahi, second-in-command of the Hizbul Mujahedeen, in an encounter with the Army yesterday, thousands of people gathered at the historic Lal Chowk here this morning shouting pro-freedom slogans. About the same time, fire appeared from a four-story building owned by the Sanatan Dharam Sabha which was being used as a temporary barrack by the paramilitary forces for the last three years but had been vacated by them late last night.

*Sunday Times 11.04.1993*

### **Conclusion**

In their efforts to crush the freedom movement in Kashmir, Indian government forces have systematically violated international human rights and humanitarian law. Indian army soldiers and the Border Security Force (BSF) have also engaged in frequent reprisal attacks against civilians, opening fire in crowded markets and residential areas and burning down entire neighborhoods. During search operations, the Indian forces have routinely assaulted civilians. The Indian forces have also used lethal force against peaceful demonstrators, shooting unarmed civilians. Security legislation has increased the likelihood of such abuses by authorizing Indian forces to shoot to kill and destroy civilian property. Under these laws, the Indian military and paramilitary forces are protected from prosecution for human rights violations.

Lal Chowk incident is not the first of its kind. There have been many episodes in which the Indian forces have taken the lives of a number of innocent persons, molested a number of women through gang rapes, burnt homes, and business centers, and made people suffer. Scores of militants and civilians have been killed on daily basis and scores, soon after catching them, are jailed. The Indian government has been winking at this terrorism. One such incident has been recorded four months ago in Sopore on 6<sup>th</sup> Jan. 1993. Such incidents have been occurring in a routine manner. There are reasons to believe that they shall continue to occur. It is very difficult, rather practically impossible to investigate all such happenings or prepare a record of such human sufferings. Kashmiris are not treated as human beings but are treated just like animals. Daily crackdowns, daily custodial killings, and daily indiscriminate arrests validate these fears.

Indian forces have also repeatedly raided hospitals and other medical facilities. During these raids, the Indian personnel have forced doctors at gunpoint to identify recent trauma patients. Because of their injuries, the Indian forces have suspected these patients of militant activity. Injured patients have been arrested from hospitals. These Indian military and paramilitary forces have also discharged their weapons within hospital grounds and inside hospitals, and have entered operation theaters. The situation continues to remain critical. The international community should intervene and force India to listen to the demands of Kashmiris and withdraw its forces from the region.

**Table I: Details of Human Loss**

<b>S.No</b>	<b>Name &amp; Address</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>No. of Orphans/ Dependents</b>	<b>Profession</b>	<b>Circumstances under which killed</b>
1)	<b>Mr. Mudasir Rashid S/o Abdul Rashid Tantray R/o Maisuma Srinagar</b>	9	Nil	Vendor	Killed by BSF firing
2)	<b>Mr. Abdul Habib Guroo S/o Mohd. Subhan Guroo R/o Gawkadal Srinagar</b>	45	2 children and a widow	Boatman	Killed by BSF firing while fleeing
3)	<b>Mr. Bashir Ahmed Tantray R/o Tral District Pulwama</b>	24	Details Not Available	Waiter	Killed by BSF firing
4)	<b>Mr. Rahul Chourasia S/o Mani Lal Chourasia R/o Koker Bazar Srinagar</b>	12	Nil	Student	Killed by BSF firing
5)	<b>Smt. Maya Devi W/o Mani Lal Chourasia</b>	35	Nil	Homemaker	Killed by BSF firing
6)	<b>Farooq Ahmed Gunchoo S/o Gh. Nabi Gunchoo R/o Abi Guzar Srinagar</b>	31	Three (mother, sister, and brother)	Government employee	Shot dead while he was on the way to his residence

7)	<b>Imtiyaz Ahmed Shah S/o Gh. Nabi Shah R/o Abi Guzar Srinagar</b>	22	Total dependents 5 including minor sister and old father	Salesman	Shot dead while crossing the river in a ferry boat
8)	<b>Bilal Ahmed Shah S/o Gh. Nabi Shah R/o Abi Guzar Srinagar</b>	17	Total dependents 5 including minor sister and old father	Student	Shot dead while crossing the river in a ferry boat
9)	<b>Manzoor Ahmed Koka S/o Ab. Salam Koka R/o Abi Guzar Srinagar</b>	18	6 dependents	Auto driver	Shot dead while crossing the river in a ferry boat
10)	<b>Gh. Hassan S/o Gh. Mohd Malik R/o Abi Guzar Srinagar</b>	31	Nil	Salesman	Shot dead while crossing the river in a ferry boat
11)	<b>Mst. Raja Begum W/o Gh. Mohiuddin Wani R/o Koker Bazar Srinagar</b>	45	Nil	Homemaker	Was hit by BSF bullet in her right arm and chest while she was in her house



Details of Residential Houses Burnt during Lal-Chowk Arson by BSF					
Name and Address	Description of property	Number of families rendered homeless	Estimated Cost of structure (lacs)	Estimated household goods (lacs)	Total amount of loss (lacs)
Late Ali Mohd Matto S/O A R Matto R/o Maisuma, Red Cross Road, Srinagar	4 story well built	1	0.4 partial damage	Details unavailable	0.4
Abdul Ahad Mattoo & others S/o Mohd Sultan R/o Lal Mandi, Srinagar	4 story well built	1	0.3 water damage	Details unavailable	0.3
Mohd Abdullah Ganai & others S/o Haji Kabir Ganai R/o Maisuma, Red Cross Road, Srinagar	4 story well built	3	4.0	0.3	4.3
Ghulam Mohiuddin Ganai & others S/o Nabir Ganai R/o Maisuma, Red Cross Road, Srinagar	4 storey normal built	2	4.5	1.2	5.7
Hilal Ahmad Dar S/o Ghulam Rasool Dar R/o Maisuma, Red Cross Road, Srinagar	3 storey Decorated (2 houses)	2	6.80	1.2	8.0




<b>Haji Abdul Samad Sofi &amp; others S/o Late Abdul Aziz R/o Maisuma, Red Cross Road, Srinagar</b>	3 storey well built	2	4.5	5.7	10.2
<b>Noor Mohammad Dar &amp; others S/o Ghulam Mohammad Dar R/o Maisuma, Red Cross Road, Srinagar</b>	3 storey normal built	2	1.6	0.15	1.75
<b>Ghulam Mohammad Khan S/o Noor Khan R/o Malikangan, Fatheh Kadal, Srinagar</b>	3 storey well built	2	2.75	1.8	4.55
<b>Mohammad Latif Qureshi S/o Mohammad Amin R/o Kokar Bazar, Budshah Chowk, Srinagar</b>	4 storey decorated	2	9.75	3.1	12.85
<b>Wali Mohammad Khan &amp; others S/o Ghulam Quadir R/o Kokar Bazar, Budshah Chowk, Srinagar</b>	4 storey decorated	1	3.75	0.60	4.35
<b>Ghulam Mohiuddin Wani S/o Habibullah Wani R/o Kokar Bazar, Budshah Chowk, Srinagar</b>	4 storey well built	1	3.5	0.75	4.25

<b>Ghulam Abbass Bhat S/o Abdul Salam Bhat R/o Kokar Bazar, Budshah Chowk, Srinagar</b>	5 storey decorated	2	3.0	5.8	8.8
<b>Abdul Rehman Kastkari S/o Ghulam Mohammad R/o Kokar Bazar, Budshah Chowk, Srinagar</b>	5 storey normal built	2	2.5	1.5	4
<b>Ghulam Mohiuddin S/o Ghulam Quadir R/o Kokar Bazar, Budshah Chowk, Srinagar</b>	5 storey normal built	1	2.5	0.8	3.3
<b>Ghulam Mohammad &amp; others S/o Gul Khan R/o Kokar Bazar, Budshah Chowk, Srinagar</b>	5 storey well built	3	5.0	3.9	8.9
<b>Total Cost</b>			<b>54.15</b>	<b>26.8</b>	<b>81.65</b>

**Lal Chowk incident eye witness statements**

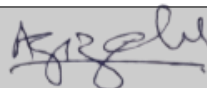
<b>Testimony I</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Mohammad Amin Sofi S/o Late Haji Abdul Samad Age 40 R/o Madina Chowk, Gaw Kadal, Srinagar
<b>Qualification</b>	B.Sc. Profession Business
<b>Where were you at the time of the incident</b>	At Residence
<b>Did BSF vacate bunkers and Sanatan Dharam Building before this incident?</b>	I Heard about it, No personal knowledge
<b>In your opinion what could be the cause of their vacating the building?</b>	Conspiracy
<b>Was there any attack from militants on BSF in Sanatan Dharam Building or anywhere in Lal Chowk/Budshah Chowk before the incident?</b>	No
<b>Who in your opinion, put Sanatan Dharam Building on fire, &amp; at what time?</b>	It could be "Indian paid agents" The time was 9.15 a.m
<b>What time is BSF stationed in Akhada Building (Budshah Chowk) cordoned off the area?</b>	Immediately a fire broke out in Sanatan Dharam
<b>On whom did the BSF shoot at?</b>	All over the area, viz Lal Chowk, Budshah Chowk, Kokar Bazar, Maisuma Bazar: no one could come out to see the situation
<b>Who put the residential buildings, and commercial establishments in the area on fire, and at what time? What methods did they use?</b>	BSF (Indian Border Security Force): the time was 9.15 a.m. As heard: they used gun-powder& Kerosene-Oil

	Yes, I saw that two shops could not catch fire, and were being sprayed with gun-powder
<b>Did BSF before putting the residential building on fire, order the residents to vacate their homes?</b>	No
<b>How did the residents save their lives?</b>	The local police saved the lives of residents after a while of the arson
<b>Did any fire extinguisher reach the site just at the time of the fire in the Sanatan Dharam Building appear?</b>	No, after lapse of 2 hours: with the help of locals they came out from their offices
<b>What could be the cause, of delay in fire extinguisher reaching the site?</b>	The continued firing by the BSF (Indian Border Security Force), the firing for the period could be around 12000 rounds.
<b>What time finally, did fire extinguishers reach the site?</b>	At about 11 a.m.
<b>Did the New Standard Hotel and its adjoining residential &amp; commercial buildings (500 Meters away from 1<sup>st</sup> site of fire) catch fire from the Sanatan Dharam Building?</b>	No
<b>How many persons got charred in the fire?</b>	Two persons in Hotel Standard
<b>Could not they save themselves?</b>	No, as the BSF (Indian Border security force) forces did not allow them to escape
<b>What could be the purpose of putting the area on fire</b>	Indian policy so that Kashmiri people would not demand freedom and the right to self-determination.
<b>Was the information about the incident given by Govt. Controlled media based on facts?</b>	No
<b>How was the incident covered by:- a) Local Press</b>	It was highly highlighted, as Sopore massacre was highlighted
<b>Place: Lal Chowk Date: 17/4/1993</b>	Signature: 


## Testimony II

<b>Name</b>	Abdul Aziz Dar S/o Amir Dar Age 58 R/o Budshah Chowk, Srinagar,
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<b>Qualification</b>	Middle Pass; Profession Retired Govt. Official
<b>Where were you at the time of the incident</b>	On the Roadside
<b>Did BSF vacate bunkers and Sanatan Dharam Building before this incident?</b>	I exactly do not know
<b>In your opinion what could be the cause of their vacating the building?</b>	Not known
<b>Was there any attack from militants on BSF in Sanatan Dharam Building or anywhere in Lal Chowk/Budshah Chowk before the incident?</b>	No
<b>Who in your opinion, put Sanatan Dharam Building on fire, &amp; at what time?</b>	I suppose at 09:15 am
<b>What time BSF stationed in Akhada Building (Budshah Chowk) cordoned off the area?</b>	Almost an hour later
<b>On whom did they shoot at?</b>	At random; indiscriminately
<b>Who put the residential buildings, commercial establishments in the area on fire and at what time? What methods they used?</b>	BSF (Indian Border security force) around 10.15 a.m. Some inflammable materials were used; Yes after locals & firemen intervened but did not catch fire finally
<b>Did BSF before putting the residential building on fire, order the residents to vacate their homes?</b>	No In fact they ordered residents not to venture out,
<b>How the residents save their lives?</b>	Due to the efforts of locals
<b>Did any fire extinguisher reach the site just at the time of the fire in Sanatan Dharam Building appeared?</b>	No
<b>What could be the cause, of delay in fire extinguishers reaching the site?</b>	BSF (Indian Border security force) people did not allow them to reach the site
<b>What time finally, fire extinguishers reach the site?</b>	Almost an hour
<b>Did the New Standard Hotel and its adjoining residential &amp; commercial</b>	No

buildings (500 Meters away from 1 <sup>st</sup> site of fire) catch fire from the Sanatan Dharam Building??	
How many persons got burnt in fire?	Two
Could not they save themselves?	No
What could be the purpose of putting the area on fire	It can be pressure tactics on general masses to harass them
Was the information about the incident given by Govt. Controlled media based on facts?	No, it was all false
How was the incident covered by :- a) Local Press b) Indian press	Nicely; I do not know
Place: Bushah Chowk, Srinagar Date: 17/4/1993	Signature: 

Testimony III	
Name	Nazir Ahmed Bakal s/o Abdul Ahad Bakal Age 50 R/o Kokar Bazar, Lal Chowk, Srinagar
Qualification	Under Matric; Transporter by Profession
Where were you at the time of the incident	At home (200 metres from incident)
Did BSF vacate bunkers and Sanatan Dharam Building before this incident?	Yes
In your opinion what could be the cause of their vacating the building?	Preplanned conspiracy
Was there any attack from militants on BSF in Sanatan Dharam Building or anywhere in Lal Chowk/Budshah Chowk before the incident?	No
Who in your opinion, put Sanatan Dharam Building on fire, & at what time?	10yrs, 12 years old children burnt some debris inside the building, at about 8:45 a.m.
What time BSF stationed in Akhada Building (Budshah Chowk) cordoned off the area?	I saw them at 9.30 a.m. burning property.
On whom did they shoot at?	At random; indiscriminately


<b>Who put the residential buildings, commercial establishments in the area on fire and at what time? What methods they used?</b>	BSF(Indian Border security force)
<b>How many persons got burnt in fire?</b>	Two
<b>Could not they save themselves?</b>	No
<b>What could be the purpose of putting the area on fire</b>	Harassment of the local residents of Maisuma and Kokar Bazar
<b>Was the information about the incident given by Govt. Controlled media based on facts?</b>	No
<b>How was the incident covered by:- a) Local Press b) Indian press</b>	Nicely I do not know
<b>Did any fire extinguisher reach the site just at the time of fire in Sanatan Dharam Building appear?</b>	No
<b>What could be the cause, of delay in fire extinguisher reaching the site?</b>	BSF(Indian Border security force) did not allow
<b>What time finally, fire extinguishers reach the site?</b>	Sometime at noon
<b>What was the first-hand reaction of; - a) Governor b) D.G police c) Commissioner Srinagar d) local police</b>	a) No response b) He was surprised to see the building vacated c) I do not know d) They did a nice job, especially SHO Maisuma
<b>What is the reaction of the;- a) Public b) Political leaders</b>	a) More alienated from India b) I do not know
<b>Place: Srinagar Date: 17/4/1993</b>	Signature: 

**Testimony IV**

<b>Name</b>	Hilal Ahmad Kuchay s/o Gh. Mohammad Kuchay age 32 R/o Kokar Bazar Lal Chowk, Srinagar
<b>Qualification</b>	Matric; Profession Business
<b>Where were you at the time of incident</b>	At home (75 meters from the place of incident)


<b>Did BSF vacate bunkers and Sanatan Dharam Building before this incident?</b>	They had vacated during the night
<b>In your opinion what could be the cause of their vacating the building?</b>	They had conspired to burn the Lal Chowk
<b>Was there any attack from militants on BSF in Sanatan Dharam Building or anywhere in Lal Chowk/Budshah Chowk before the incident?</b>	No, there wasn't
<b>Who in your opinion, put Sanatan Dharam Building on fire, &amp; at what time?</b>	I suppose the BSF(Indian Border security force) itself at 8:45 am approximately
<b>What time BSF stationed in Akhada Building (Budshah Chowk) cordoned off the area?</b>	Half hour later
<b>On whom did they shot at?</b>	Everybody at random
<b>Who put the residential buildings, commercial establishments in the area on fire and at what time? What methods they used?</b>	BSF(Indian Border security force) at about 9:30 am
<b>Did BSF before putting residential building on fire, order the residents to vacate their homes?</b>	No, not at all
<b>How did the residents save their lives?</b>	They jumped from the rear side of the houses
<b>Did any fire extinguisher reach the site just at the time of fire in Sanatan Dharam Building appear?</b>	No
<b>What could be the cause, of delay in fire extinguisher reaching the site?</b>	BSF(Indian Border security force) were firing continuously for two hours
<b>What time finally, fire extinguishers reach the site?</b>	After 3 hours
<b>Did the New Standard Hotel and its adjoining residential &amp; commercial buildings (500 Meters away from 1<sup>st</sup> site of fire) catch fire due to the Sanatan Dharam building?</b>	No
<b>How many persons got charred in the fire?</b>	I have seen two charred bodies




<b>Could not they save themselves?</b>	How could they, the door was locked from the outside
<b>What could be the purpose of putting the area on fire?</b>	They had planned to burn us
<b>Was the information about the incident given by Govt. Controlled media based on facts?</b>	This is rubbish
<b>How was the incident covered by :- a)Local Press b)Indian press</b>	It was normal They had biased reporting
<b>What was the first hand reaction of;- a)Governor b)D.G police c)Commissioner Srinagar d)Local police</b>	He had hardly done anything. He is responsible for all this. He has not come to us They helped us.
<b>What is the reaction of the;- a)Public b)Political leaders</b>	Government had planned all this They say it is genocide.
<b>Place: Srinagar Date: 17/4/1993</b>	Signature: 

<b>Testimony V</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Habib Ullah Khan s/o Late Ali Mohd Khan Age 45 R/o Arts Bazar, Kokar Bazar, Srinagar
<b>Qualification</b>	Graduate; Profession business
<b>Where were you at the time of the incident?</b>	At my residence
<b>Did BSF vacate bunkers and Sanatan Dharam Building before this incident?</b>	Yes
<b>In your opinion what could be the cause of their vacating the building?</b>	Not known
<b>Was there any attack from militants on BSF in Sanatan Dharam Building or anywhere in Lal Chowk/Budshah Chowk before the incident?</b>	Not known

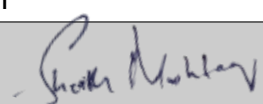
<b>Who in your opinion, put Sanatan Dharam Building on fire, &amp; at what time?</b>	Not known
<b>What time BSF stationed in Akhada Building (Budshah Chowk) cordoned off the area?</b>	Between 8 to 9 am
<b>On whom did they shoot at?</b>	On the residential houses
<b>Who put the residential buildings, commercial establishments in the area on fire and at what time? What methods they used?</b>	BSF (Indian Border security force) Gunpowder
<b>Did BSF before putting residential building on fire, order the residents to vacate their homes?</b>	No
<b>How the residents save their lives?</b>	When their houses were burning they came out
<b>Did any fire extinguisher reach the site just at the time of fire in Sanatan Dharam Building appear?</b>	No
<b>What could be the cause, of delay in fire extinguisher reaching the site?</b>	They were stopped by BSF(Indian Border security force)
<b>What time finally, fire extinguishers reach the site?</b>	Around about 10 am
<b>Did the New Standard Hotel and its adjoining residential &amp; commercial buildings (500 Meters away from 1<sup>st</sup> site of fire) catch fire from the Sanatan Dharam Building??</b>	No
<b>How many persons got charred in fire?</b>	I saw two persons
<b>Could not they save themselves?</b>	No, they were shot at by BSF (Indian Border security force)
<b>What could be the purpose of putting the area on fire?</b>	Revenge
<b>Was the information about the incident given by Govt. Controlled media based on facts?</b>	No
<b>How was the incident covered by :- a)Local Press b)Indian press</b>	Not known

<b>What was the first hand reaction of;-</b> <b>a)Governor</b> <b>b)D.G police</b> <b>c)Commissioner Srinagar</b> <b>d)Local police</b>	All officials came to the site and knew nothing, BSF(Indian Border security force) vacated the Sanatan Dharam building
<b>What is the reaction of the;-</b> <b>a) Public</b> <b>b) Political leaders</b>	Against government
<b>Place: Srinagar</b> <b>Date: 17/4/1993</b>	Signature: 

<b>Testimony VI</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Haji Noor Mohammad s/o Haji Gh. Nabi Age 47 R/o Kokar Bazar, Srinagar
<b>Qualification</b>	M.Sc; profession Business
<b>Where were you at the time of incident</b>	At my residence
<b>Did BSF vacate bunkers and Sanatan Dharam Building before this incident?</b>	Yes
<b>In your opinion what could be the cause of their vacating the building?</b>	Not known
<b>Was there any attack from militants on BSF in Sanatan Dharam Building or anywhere in Lal Chowk/Budshah Chowk before the incident?</b>	Not known
<b>Who in your opinion, put Sanatan Dharam Building on fire, &amp; at what time?</b>	Not known
<b>What time BSF stationed in Akhada Building (Budshah Chowk) cordoned off the area?</b>	Approximately at 8:00am
<b>On whom did they shoot at?</b>	On every one who came in their sight
<b>Who put the residential buildings, commercial establishments in the area on fire and at what time? What methods they used?</b>	BSF (Indian Border security force) Gunpowder

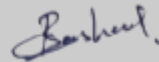
<b>Did BSF before putting residential building on fire, order the residents to vacate their homes?</b>	Not at all
<b>How did the residents save their lives?</b>	Came out from houses and escaped towards the river side
<b>Did any fire extinguisher reach the site just at the time of fire in Sanatan Dharam Building appeared?</b>	No
<b>What could be the cause, of delay in fire extinguisher reaching the site?</b>	They were not permitted to extinguish the fire
<b>What time finally, fire extinguishers reach the site?</b>	Between 10 and 11am
<b>Did the New Standard Hotel and its adjoining residential &amp; commercial buildings (500 Meters away from 1<sup>st</sup> site of fire) catch fire from the Sanatan Dharam Building??</b>	Not at all
<b>How many persons got charred in fire?</b>	One
<b>What could be the purpose of putting the area on fire</b>	Revenge
<b>Was the information about the incident given by Govt. Controlled media based on facts?</b>	No
<b>How was the incident covered by :- a)Local Press b)Indian press</b>	-- --
<b>What was the first hand reaction of;- a)Governor b)D.G police c)Commissioner Srinagar d)Local police</b>	All the officials including DG police etc. visited site and ordered to extinguish the fire immediately as per witnesses
<b>What is the reaction of the;- a)Public b)Political leaders</b>	They were all against Government
<b>Place: Srinagar Date: 17/4/1993</b>	Signature: 

<b>Testimony VII</b>	
<b>Name</b>	Sheikh Mushtaq Ahmad S/o Sheikh Abdul Aziz Age 29 R/o Maisuma, Gow Kadal Srinagar
<b>Qualification</b>	B.Sc; profession journalism
<b>Where were you at the time of incident</b>	At home
<b>Did BSF vacate bunkers and Sanatan Dharam Building before this incident?</b>	Yes
<b>In your opinion what could be the cause of their vacating the building?</b>	To provoke the people
<b>Was there any attack from militants on BSF in Sanatan Dharam Building or anywhere in Lal Chowk/Budshah Chowk before the incident?</b>	No
<b>Who in your opinion, put Sanatan Dharam Building on fire, &amp; at what time?</b>	Not known
<b>What time BSF stationed in Akhada Building (Budshah Chowk) cordoned off the area?</b>	Shortly after 9 am
<b>On whom did they shoot at?</b>	They shot indiscriminately in all directions
<b>Who put the residential buildings, commercial establishments in the area on fire and at what time? What methods they used?</b>	BSF personnel at about 9:30am Gunpowder
<b>Did BSF before putting residential building on fire, order the residents to vacate their homes?</b>	No
<b>How did the residents save their lives?</b>	Some of them jumped out from windows
<b>Did any fire extinguisher reach the site just at the time of fire in Sanatan Dharam Building appear?</b>	I did not see
<b>What could be the cause, of delay in fire extinguisher reaching the site?</b>	The BSF(Indian Border security force) cordon

What time finally, fire extinguishers reach the site?	About 10:20 am
Did the New Standard Hotel and its adjoining residential & commercial buildings (500 Meters away from 1 <sup>st</sup> site of fire) catch fire from the Sanatan Dharam Building?	No
How many persons got charred in fire?	One
What could be the purpose of putting the area on fire	Not known
Was the information about the incident given by Govt. Controlled media based on facts?	No
How was the incident covered by :- a)Local Press b)Indian press	Not known
What was the first hand reaction of;- a)Governor b)D.G police c)Commissioner Srinagar d)Local police	I did not see him -- He looked helpless Helpful
What is the reaction of the;- a)Public b)Political leaders	There is strong resentment They visited the spot and condemned the brutal action
Place: Srinagar Date: 17/4/1993	Signature: 

Testimony VIII	
Name	Basher Ahmad Laway s/o Gh. Nabi Laway Age 36 R/o Budshah Chowk, Maisuma, Srinagar
Qualification	Matric; profession business
Where were you at the time of incident	I was little far away
Did BSF vacate bunkers and Sanatan Dharam	Everybody does say so

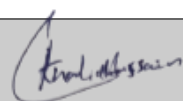
<b>Building before this incident?</b>	
<b>In your opinion what could be the cause of their vacating the building?</b>	I do not know
<b>Was there any attack from militants on BSF in Sanatan Dharam Building or anywhere in Lal Chowk/Budshah Chowk before the incident?</b>	I do not know
<b>Who in your opinion, put Sanatan Dharam Building on fire, &amp; at what time?</b>	I do not know, when I reached the spot it was burning
<b>What time BSF stationed in Akhada Building (Budshah Chowk) cordoned off the area?</b>	Same time when I reached the spot
<b>On whom did they shot at?</b>	Indiscriminately
<b>Who put the residential buildings, commercial establishments in the area on fire and at what time? What methods they used?</b>	BSF(Indian Border security force) Petrol and Gunpowder
<b>Did BSF before putting residential building on fire, order the residents to vacate their homes?</b>	No
<b>How did the residents save their lives?</b>	Some jumped the from rear side of their houses
<b>Did any fire extinguisher reach the site just at the time of fire in Sanatan Dharam Building appear?</b>	I do not know
<b>What could be the cause, of delay in fire extinguisher reaching the site?</b>	I do not know
<b>What time finally, fire extinguishers reach the site?</b>	After I reached there
<b>Did the New Standard Hotel and its adjoining residential &amp; commercial buildings (500 Meters away from 1<sup>st</sup> site of</b>	No how can it be

fire) catch fire from Sanatan Dharam building?	
How many persons got charred in fire?	One
What could be the purpose of putting the area on fire	Harassment to people
Was the information about the incident given by Govt. Controlled media based on facts?	Absolutely false
How was the incident covered by :- a)Local Press b)Indian press	Nicely Bad
What was the first hand reaction of;- a)Governor b)D.G police c)Commissioner Srinagar d)Local police	Nothing Nothing They are useless They helped in evacuation
What is the reaction of the;- a)Public b)Political leaders	Alienation from Indian Government Annoyed with India's military forces
Place: Srinagar Date: 17/4/1993	Signature: 


Testimony IX	
Name	Khalid Hussain Khan s/o Mohd Sidiq Khan Age 30 R/o Hawal, Srinagar
Qualification	Matric; profession hotel owner
Where were you at the time of incident	Inside my hotel ( opposite side of the incident)
Did BSF vacate bunkers and Sanatan Dharam Building before this incident?	Yes
In your opinion what could be the cause of their vacating the building?	It could be preplanned
Was there any attack from militants on BSF in Sanatan Dharam Building or anywhere in Lal Chowk/Budshah Chowk before the incident?	No, they were neither inside nor anywhere around



<b>Who in your opinion, put Sanatan Dharam Building on fire, &amp; at what time?</b>	Just some time before 9:00am
<b>What time BSF stationed in Akhada Building (Budshah Chowk) cordoned off the area?</b>	Half an hour before the incident
<b>On whom did they shoot at?</b>	At random
<b>Who put the residential buildings, commercial establishments in the area on fire and at what time? What methods they used?</b>	Sometime after 9:30am. It could be only BSF(Indian Border security force)
<b>Did BSF before putting residential building on fire, order the residents to vacate their homes?</b>	No
<b>How the residents save their lives?</b>	They adopted all possible means
<b>Did any fire extinguisher reach the site just at the time of fire in Sanatan Dharam Building appear?</b>	No
<b>What could be the cause, of delay in fire extinguisher reaching the site?</b>	They were prevented by BSF(Indian Border security force)
<b>What time finally, fire extinguishers reach the site?</b>	10:30am
<b>Did the New Standard Hotel and its adjoining residential &amp; commercial buildings (500 Meters away from 1<sup>st</sup> site of fire) catch fire from the Sanatan Dharam Building?</b>	It is not possible
<b>How many persons got roasted in fire?</b>	One
<b>What could be the purpose of putting the area on fire</b>	I fail to understand
<b>Was the information about the incident given by Govt. Controlled media based on facts?</b>	It was false
<b>How was the incident covered by:- a) Local Press b) Indian press</b>	They did not cover it fully Same as above
<b>What was the first-hand reaction of; - a) Governor b) D.G police</b>	Just causal Same

c) Commissioner Srinagar d) Local police	Just causal Local police helped a lot
What is the reaction of the; - a) Public b) Political leaders	They have become totally anti-India after the incident No comments
Place: Srinagar Date: 17/4/1993	Signature: 

Testimony X	
Name	Gh. Nabi Dar s/o Kh. Mohd Jamal Dar Age 49 R/o Maisuma Bazar, Srinagar
Qualification	B.A LLB profession Advocate
Where were you at the time of incident	At my home
Did BSF vacate bunkers and Sanatan Dharam Building before this incident?	Heard, no personal knowledge
In your opinion what could be the cause of their vacating the building?	Conspiracy
Was there any attack from militants on BSF in Sanatan Dharam Building or anywhere in Lal Chowk/Budshah Chowk before the incident?	So far as Lal Chowk in concerned I am, not aware, but in Budshah Chowk nowhere did the militants attack BSF (Indian Border security force)
Who in your opinion, put Sanatan Dharam Building on fire, & at what time?	In my opinion, it could be the Indian agents, who have caused the damage (9:00 to 9:15am)
What time BSF stationed in Akhada Building (Budshah Chowk) cordoned off the area?	Immediately the fire broke out from Sanatan Dharam building, the entire area was cordoned off
On whom did they shoot at?	At random all over the area, firing on the houses, with the result, no person could come out from their houses
Who put the residential buildings, commercial establishments in the area on fire and at what time? What methods they used?	As I have seen with my own eyes, BSF (Indian Border security force) put the buildings commencing from New Standard hotel on fire
Did BSF before putting residential building on fire, order the residents to vacate their homes?	Not at all

<b>How the residents save their lives?</b>	From the side of red cross road, the local police saved the lives by opening the doors, the BSF(Indian Border security force) had put locks on the doors from outside
<b>Did any fire extinguisher reach the site just at the time of fire in Sanatan Dharam Building appear?</b>	No after 2 hours
<b>What could be the cause, of delay in fire extinguisher reaching the site?</b>	The indiscriminate firing by BSF(Indian Border security force)
<b>What time finally, fire extinguishers reach the site?</b>	It was at 11:30 am
<b>Did the New Standard Hotel and its adjoining residential &amp; commercial buildings (500 Meters away from 1<sup>st</sup> site of fire) catch fire from Sanatan Dharam building?</b>	No
<b>How many persons got charred in fire?</b>	One
<b>What could be the purpose of putting the area on fire</b>	To harass the people
<b>Was the information about the incident given by Govt. Controlled media based on facts?</b>	No
<b>How was the incident covered by :- a)Local Press b)Indian press</b>	It was highlighted as much as Sopore massacre was highlighted
<b>What was the first hand reaction of;- a)Governor b)D.G police c)Commissioner Srinagar d)Local police</b>	Silence Silence Silence Helpless
<b>What is the reaction of the;- a)Public b)Political leaders</b>	-- --
<b>Place: Srinagar Date: 17/4/1993</b>	Signature: 

**Personal Statement of Mushtaq Ahmad  
S.H.O Police Station Maisuma**

Since the city was tense due to death of Maqbool Illahi the preceding day, I was at toes, Law and order was top priority. It was approximately 8.00 a.m. I was around my office. I heard a few gun shots. I went out to see what is wrong; I went in the direction of gunfire and reached Budshah Chowk. It was exactly 8.10 a.m. I saw people had gathered at the Lal Chowk side near Palladium Cinema. On my enquiry they revealed that the Sanatan Dharam (SD) Building was vacant (until previous day, it was a security camp). So they were taken by surprise and were just trying to guess the reason. I enquired about gunfire and was told that it was an escort vehicle of S.S.P. which was passing by and on seeing the people, fired a few shots in air and sped away. I went near the Sanatan Dharam building and was surprised to see that actually the building was vacated by BSF (Indian Border security force), without informing local police.

I went inside the building it was empty. Inner bunkers were dismantled. I came out and had a look around the area. The road side bunkers were also unguarded. I sensed some trouble. "The ball was definitely in my court ". I immediately decided to ask the B.S.F. personnel present on other side of Chowk in the Akhada Building, for assistance. Accordingly I went inside the Akhada building and saw the BSF (Indian Border security force) personnel on duty in alert position.

I knocked at the door of the office of Mr. B.R. Sharma (Commandant 114 B.N. B.S.F.). I saw him coming out of bed room in response to my knocking and possibly had just woke up. I requested him for help to save the S.D. Building, he refused on the pretext that he had no personnel there. I had seen them in readiness and enquired about the reason for vacating the S.D. building. He said he got message very late and was ordered to vacate the S. D. building. He had to obey instantly and he did. That is why the police (local) did not know. I returned to the site (S.D, Building) and was told by the people that a mine had been planted. I had to save the building. I informed the Control Room. It was 8.30 a.m. I once again went to Akhada Building and requested Mr. Sharma to help in saving a building which was being used till other day by them as their camp. By now he was in his office. At this time instead of providing me personnel he offered me to have tea with him, I refused saying I do not have time. I want to save Lal Chowk. I had some deliberations with him and when I returned empty handed and came out on road where I saw smoke coming out of S.D, Building. It was 8.50 a.m. The S.D, Building was burning I immediately flashed message to Control Room and requested for higher officers to be present at the site. By this time S.S.P. Kothi Bagh also arrived at the scene. On his insistence he and I both again went to the Akhada Building, repeated our request for help. Mr. Sharma who was taking tea this time and did not respond but instead offered us tea which we refused.

At this time the S.P K. Rajindaran arrived and enquired about the reason for vacating the Building. He was also told by Mr. Sharma that they had got the message at 11.30 P.M. on 9/4/1993 and started vacating at that very time.

We came out followed by the BSF (Indian Border security force) personnel. On coming out they fired indiscriminately in all directions. Outside I saw fire tenders had reached the site and now were trying to reach the building on fire. In this chaos, I saw the Director Fire Service and the Div. Com. Kashmir also running for safety. At this time the BSF (Indian Border security force) Commanded us all to leave the site, which we refused. Everybody pleaded, "Stop firing" but they did not. Now, I along with my men ran towards UCO Bank Building. I saw BSF (Indian Border security force) personnel aiming at people with an intention to kill. They once again asked us all to go back and trained their guns on us. I moved back to Budshah Chowk and saw fire erupting simultaneously at 3 places. While moving towards my police station I saw Gh. Nabi the Manager of New Standard Hotel pleading for help. The hotel was on fire and the front door was locked from outside. I took the position on the other side of the road and Nasir Khan SI (Probation) opened the door. We rescued the 5 persons from hotel who were in shocked state. After this we rescued many people on the road (Red Cross Road) from their houses. Later, after considerable time, when senior officers of the Army arrived, we could finally venture out on roads to reach the Kokar Bazar Area.

Personal Statement of M.S Dar  
Director Fire Service, Govt. of J&K

Everything was apparently alright at 9.00 a.m. It was at 9.05 a.m. our HQ, (Batamaloo) received a call that Lal Chowk (S.D. Building) was burning, we responded instantly. Since Lal Chowk is the nerve centre and a thickly populated area with congested build up, as per our laid down norms, it was a brigade call for us. 5 Fire Tenders rushed to the spot and they were instructed on wireless about their route, they were instructed to proceed to the site from Budshah Bridge, Budshah Chowk to UCO. Bank then to turn to Ghanta Ghar, then to turn towards Sanatan Dharam Building and take up fire-fighting operation. I also rushed to the spot and my vehicle was the only vehicle to follow fire tenders at that time. When I reached the spot I saw it was difficult to undertake the fire-fighting operation as firing was going on indiscriminately all around Budshah Chowk and its adjacent area. Two fire tenders were hit by bullets. One of the bullets pierced through the cabin of one of the tenders. It was mere good luck for the staff that they were not hit by this bullet. At this moment fire tenders were directed to retreat from the scene/affected area but were halted some distance away. With Kashmir Police officials I was there at the scene,

**assessing the situation simultaneously trying to save myself from the bullets. At 9.50 a.m. we finally succeeded in taking up the fire-fighting operations from the Budshah Building side after installing a ladder and going over the top of this one storey building. The reinforcement arrived and took up other sites. At about 12.50 p.m. the fire was brought under control.**

**Fire tenders were finally withdrawn on 16.04.1993.**

**Tentative loss Rs. 63.00 crore.**



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