



REPORT
JANUARY TO APRIL 2024

PERSECUTION OF RELIGIOUS MINORITIES IN INDIA





Indian American Muslim Council (IAMC) is a Washington, DC based advocacy organization established in 2002 by Muslim Americans of Indian descent, with chapters across the United States.

IAMC is the largest advocacy organization of the Indian Muslim diaspora. It is a 501(c)3 tax-exempt non-profit.

IAMC's core values are as follows:

- To defend the fundamental and civil rights of all
- To preserve the pluralistic and democratic ethos enshrined in the constitutions of the United States and the Republic of India
- To facilitate increased interfaith and inter-community understanding in the United States with the goal of safeguarding American society and institutions from infiltration by divisive and hate-filled ideologies
- To increase awareness about India in order to improve cultural and trade relations between the United States and the Republic of India

Phone: 1-800-839-7270

Email: info@iamc.com

www.iamc.com

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

India has long been lauded as the world's largest democracy, but under Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Hindu supremacist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), India has become one of the “worst autocratisers” in the world. According to the Sweden-based Varieties of Democracy Institute, the Indian government's “substantial deterioration of freedom of expression, compromising independence of the media, crackdowns on social media, harassments of journalists critical of the government, [attacks] on civil society and intimidation of the opposition,” have accelerated India's democratic backsliding.

The first quarter of 2024 saw the continuation and worsening of these and other human rights abuses in India, particularly against Muslims and Christians, who remain the country's most vulnerable minority groups.

In the leadup to Indian elections, Modi and BJP candidates regularly engaged in anti-Muslim hate speech to polarise electorate, including by fear mongering, peddling conspiracy theories, threatening violence, the demolition of historic mosques, and further Muslim disenfranchisement. Hindu militant mob violence against Muslim individuals, neighborhoods, and places of worship also surged in January around the celebration of the consecration of the Ram Temple in Uttar Pradesh's Ayodhya, which was built on the site of the demolished Babri Mosque.

The Modi government also announced rules to implement the Citizenship Amendment Act, a law that discriminates against Muslims. Experts say that the CAA is aimed at stripping Muslims of their citizenship en masse that sparked nationwide protests in 2019.

In light of these serious concerns, it is essential for the international community to pressure the Indian government to curb skyrocketing anti-Muslim violence and hate speech, ensure accountability for the perpetrators, and safety for India's minorities.

PERSECUTION & DISCRIMINATION AGAINST MUSLIMS

On January 6, a 12-year-old Muslim boy was beaten and verbally abused by police officers in Jharkhand's Ranchi.¹ The minor reported that the incident occurred when he and a few of his madrassa classmates were on their way to a Quran recitation for a funeral when a police officer, Ajay Kumar, overheard him referring to police with slang terms. Kumar then lifted the boy by his neck,



beat him, and dragged him to the police station, where the minor and his classmates were subjected to Islamophobic slurs and hate speech. When a senior classmate tried to intervene, he was struck and injured on the forehead.

“They kept saying how all skull cap wearers (Muslims) are terrorists. Then a Hindu man came from a nearby area

and instigated the officers to thrash us more, he also verbally abused us,” the minor reported.

In Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh, on January 7, a young Muslim man who was seen in the company of a Hindu woman was beaten by a Hindu supremacist mob, who accused the victim of “love jihad.”² Love jihad is a conspiracy theory alleging Muslims of trapping Hindu women in love to convert them to Islam. A video of the incident shows the victim encircled by the mob, doubled over as one man strikes him repeatedly on the back of his head.



On January 9, two Muslim teenagers, 19-year-old Mohammad Munaaz and Sameer, were beaten and almost abducted by a mob of Hindu extremists

¹ <https://theobserverpost.com/all-skull-cap-wearers-are-terrorists-12-year-old-madrassa-student-allegedly-assaulted-by-police-in-jharkhand>

² <https://iamc.com/muslim-youth-jailed-for-offering-call-to-prayer-at-250-year-old-mosque-in-up>

in Karnataka's Chikkamagaluru.³ The extremists claimed the boys had offered chocolates to a Hindu girl at a bus station. However, the victims reported that they had been at the bus station to pick up a phone from a friend when they were attacked by seven to eight people, who also attempted to force them into a car. Munaaz was severely injured on the head and back after being hit by a metal lever of the car, and Sameer was struck with shoes. Both victims had previously been intimidated by local Hindu supremacist groups.

On January 14, a Muslim truck driver, Bachal Khan, was arrested for offering prayers on the side of a road in Gujarat state.⁴ Khan was filmed as he offered prayers in front of his truck, which was parked on the side of a busy crossroad. After the video went viral, police booked a case against him.



On January 27, a Muslim youth named Umar Qureshi, was arrested and jailed for reciting the Muslim call to prayer at a historic mosque in Uttar Pradesh's Shamli, a structure that Hindu supremacist groups have claimed is associated with ancient Hindu kings.⁵ Police booked Qureshi for "promoting enmity," claiming that he had "violated a 1940 British order."

Muslim scholar Tauqeer Raza Khan was detained by police⁶ in Uttar Pradesh's Bareilly on February 9 after he called on Muslims to "fill the jails" in protest against Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's demand that Muslims should willingly give up their claim to the historic Gyanvapi and Shahi Idgah mosques.⁷



On February 10, a Muslim family—Asif, Jasmine, and their children—were

³ <https://theobserverpost.com/ktaka-muslim-teens-beaten-accused-of-giving-chocolates-to-hindu-girl-in-chikkamagaluru>

⁴ <https://muslimmirror.com/eng/truck-driver-arrested-for-offering-namaz-on-roadside-in-gujarat>

⁵ <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/muslim-youth-sent-to-jail-for-offering-azan-at-250-year-old-mosque-in-up>

⁶ <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/gyanvapi-thousands-protest-in-bareilly-after-tauqeer-raza-khan-detained-over-jail-bharo-call>

⁷ <https://businesstoday.in/india/story/hindus-asking-for-only-3-places-cm-yogis-big-statement-as-dispute-heats-up-on-gyanvapi-mathuras-shahi-idgah-416595-2024-02-07>

traveling on a train when they were ordered by a group of young Hindu extremists to chant “Jai Sri Ram,” who noticed that Jasmine was the only hijabi woman in the train car.⁸ A day later, after Asif filed a complaint with the police, a mob of about 200 Hindu extremists attacked his home and beat him in front of his family. In a video of the incident, a mob can be seen throwing Asif to the ground, while his child cries and his wife pleads with them to stop in the background.⁹



On February 11, two Muslim teens reported being assaulted by the same Hindu extremist mob on separate instances in Maharashtra’s Parbhani.¹⁰ One victim, 19-year-old Irfan, reported that a mob of 15-20 people attacked him while he was visiting a park with some friends. The other victim, 18-year-old Sayyad, reported that he was selling fruit from his vendor’s cart when the mob attacked him, overturned his cart,

and forced him to chant “Jai Shri Ram.” After assaulting the two teens, the mob filmed themselves dancing to Hindu supremacist pop music in front of the grave of a Sufi shrine.

On February 19, Hindu extremist monk Maharaj Hiranmoy Goswami led a group of followers in conducting Hindu rituals inside the Adina Mosque in Malda, West Bengal, deliberately violating a minority place of worship.¹¹ Police did not arrest Goswami despite the resulting tensions.

On February 24, in Rewa, Madhya Pradesh, police raided the home of a Muslim family over allegations that the family possessed beef.¹² Police sent samples of the meat to be tested and identified, but did not wait for confirmation that it was beef before arresting two men and one woman.



On the 3rd of March, the Uttar Pradesh government closed over a dozen

⁸ <https://theobserverpost.com/maharashtra-muslim-man-beaten-in-front-of-family-forced-into-chanting-jai-shri-ram-in-kankavli>

⁹ https://x.com/darab_farooqui/status/1756547880872206481

¹⁰ <https://www.siasat.com/bolo-jai-shri-ram-hindutva-goons-attack-muslim-teens-in-maharashtra-2977353>

¹¹ <https://theobserverpost.com/wb-hindu-monk-leads-prayers-inside-adina-mosque-in-malda-police-intervene>

¹² <https://iamc.com/police-raid-muslim-home-arrest-residents-for-allegedly-storing-beef>

meat shops after it banned the sale of meat within a 2 kilometer radius of the Kashi Vishwanath Temple in Varanasi city. The move was targeted against Muslims, who are the main demographic selling meat.¹³

On March 5, Muslim vegetable vendor Ayaan Bagwan was abducted by a group of Hindu extremists in Maharashtra, who accused him of “love jihad” after they saw him talking to a female Hindu customer.¹⁴ The mob beat him, leaving bruises on his arms and legs, and forced him to chant the Hindu supremacist warcry “Jai Shri Ram.”

On March 8, a police officer assaulted Muslims who were offering Friday prayers on the side of a road in Delhi.¹⁵ A video shows the officer kicking and slapping Muslim worshippers while they are bowed over in prostration. Though the



officer was suspended, Hindu extremists rallied in his support on March 12.¹⁶

On March 10, Muslim leader Hafiz Noor Ahmad Raza Azhari was arrested in Uttar Pradesh after he accused Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath of carrying out a statewide campaign to shut down madrasas, which would hinder Muslims’ ability to receive religious education. Azhari is the state chief of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board, a non-governmental organization that represents the interests of Muslims in matters of personal law.¹⁷



On March 18, in Karnataka’s Yadgir, Hindu militants from the Bajrang Dal assaulted and abducted a 25-year-old Muslim student after he allegedly spoke to a Hindu woman.¹⁸ The victim, Wahid Rehman, reported that he was leaving his university when nine militants kidnapped him and took him to a room, where they beat him for five hours and

¹³ <https://iamc.com/hindu-extremists-assault-muslim-men-over-alleged-cattle-transport-in-odisha>

¹⁴ <https://iamc.com/modi-govt-implements-law-aimed-at-stripping-muslim-citizenship>

¹⁵ <https://iamc.com/police-official-assaults-muslims-offering-prayers-in-delhi>

¹⁶ <https://iamc.com/officials-demolish-multiple-muslim-shrines-across-gujarat>

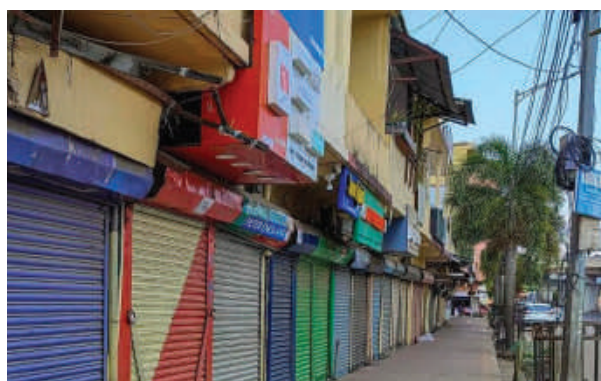
¹⁷ <https://theobserverpost.com/up-chief-of-muslim-personal-law-board-arrested-for-remarks-on-madarsa-crackdown>

¹⁸ <https://iamc.com/one-dead-12-injured-after-communal-violence-in-rajasthan>

threatened to kill him if he spoke to the woman again.

On March 19, the Bajrang Dal circulated a video of their supporters assaulting Muslim men in Maharashtra's Nanded over an alleged Instagram comment.¹⁹ The victims had reportedly posted about Mughal ruler Aurangzeb, who is demonized in the Hindu supremacist understanding of history.

On the 20th of March, a trade body in Uttarakhand's Dharchula canceled the membership of 91 traders, mostly Muslims, and forced them to shut down their shops as an act of collective punishment, following reports that two girls were abducted by local shopkeepers.²⁰ The Muslims were also threatened with expulsion from the town.



On March 27, a female Muslim guard at a fair in Uttar Pradesh's Sitapur,

Anees Begum, was beaten with shoes by two Hindu men when she refused to let them go on rides for free. A similar incident occurred in Lucknow the next day, where a Muslim ride operator, Mohammed Shakeel, was beaten by two Hindu men to the point where his face was bloodied.²¹



On March 31, a mob of Hindu extremists—largely comprised of adult men—assaulted a Muslim youth for being seen in the company of a Hindu girl. In a video of the incident, one member of the mob could be seen gripping the victim's shirt while the other perpetrators struck him several times, including on the face.²²

On April 2, members of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad harassed a Muslim doctor outside his home, alleging that he had forced a local Hindu youth to

¹⁹ <https://iamc.com/muslims-portrayed-as-criminals-in-universitys-cultural-event>

²⁰ <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/muslim-traders-forced-to-down-shutters-in-uttarakhand-town-over-abduction-of-minor-girls>

²¹ <https://iamc.com/hindu-extremists-open-fire-outside-mosque-in-bjp-ruled-uttar-pradesh>

²² <https://x.com/HindutvaWatchIn/status/1774307028309028935>

convert to Islam during Ramadan.²³ The militants were joined by the youth's family members.

On April 4, three Hindu men hacked a Muslim man to death with an axe in Uttar Pradesh's Ghaziabad.²⁴ The victim, Momeen Khan, had been involved in an altercation with one of the perpetrators earlier that evening, who later attacked Khan while he was sleeping. The victim's brother alleged that Khan was attacked over the raising of a religious slogan.



On April 5, police in Uttar Pradesh's Chitrakoot arrested five Muslim men²⁵ for hosting a party where beef was served. The men were also accused of cow slaughter.

On April 8 in Gujarat's Vadodara, Hindu residents of a housing complex held a gathering, during which they demanded the construction of a wall to

separate them from a nearby Muslim-majority neighborhood.²⁶



On April 15, a Hindu extremist mob assaulted and publicly humiliated a 27-year-old Muslim textile trader while he was traveling on a train to Uttar Pradesh's Bulandshahr.²⁷ The attackers partially stripped the victim and shaved his head and beard. He filed a police complaint after a video of the incident was shared with his family.

On April 17, a number of armed Hindu processions were held in Jharkhand and Bihar, in which Hindu extremists brandished swords while marching through the streets. Videos of such processions surfaced in Godda, Dhanbad, and Giridih in Jharkhand; and Purnia, Gaya, Rohtas, and Sherghati in Bihar.²⁸

On April 25, a Hindu mob harassed two Muslim men who had subleased

²³ <https://iamc.com/770-kilograms-of-explosives-found-in-home-of-hindu-paramilitary-group-rss-leader>

²⁴ <https://theobserverpost.com/muslim-youth-hacked-to-death-in-ups-ghaziabad-over-religious-sloganeering-video-goes-viral>

²⁵ <https://iamc.com/police-arrest-five-muslims-for-organizing-party-with-beef-dishes>

²⁶ <https://iamc.com/hindu-residents-demand-wall-separating-them-from-muslim-majority-area-in-gujarat>

²⁷ <https://theobserverpost.com/up-muslim-trader-assaulted-on-train-journey-assailants-shave-head-and-beard>

²⁸ <https://iamc.com/hindu-extremist-mob-vandalizes-school-assaults-christian-priest-in-telangana>

a shop called “Lakshmi”, named after a Hindu goddess, from a Hindu landlord in Uttarakhand’s Dehradun. The mob demanded that the men rename the shop.²⁹



On April 27, the imam of a mosque was beaten to death by three masked individuals in Rajasthan state.³⁰ The victim, Maulana Mohammad Mahir, was sleeping in a room next to the mosque when the men stormed into the room and started beating him with a stick. Six children who were in the same room were also threatened by the perpetrators.

Haldwani Violence

On the 8th of February, the Municipal Corporation of BJP-ruled Uttarakhand’s Haldwani city demolished a mosque and madrasa after labeling them illegal encroachments, despite the fact that

both structures were due for a court hearing.³¹ Local Muslims reported that a demolition notice had been provided on January 30, after which the caretakers of the buildings moved the Uttarakhand High Court seeking relief from the demolition. Instead of waiting for the case’s hearing, however, civic authorities went ahead with the demolition, sparking outrage among the Muslim community.

The state government issued “shoot at sight” orders against the Muslim protesters. As a result, six Muslims were killed by police fire, including a 16-year-old boy.³² Following the violence, police arrested at least 90 Muslims, including five Muslim politicians.³³ On February 18, government officials confiscated the house of a Muslim man over allegations that he had masterminded the Haldwani protests.³⁴



²⁹ <https://iamc.com/pm-modi-continues-anti-muslim-hate-speech-in-election-rallies>

³⁰ <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/imam-beaten-to-death-by-three-masked-assailants-inside-ajmer-mosque>

³¹ <https://scroll.in/article/1063483/uttarakhand-madrasa-at-centre-of-violence-was-demolished-without-a-court-order>

³² <https://theobserverpost.com/haldwani-six-dead-after-shoot-at-sight-orders-over-madrasa-and-mosque-demolition>

³³ <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/haldwani-violence-tensions-persist-as-local-muslims-say-police-acting-vindictively>

³⁴ <https://iamc.com/officials-confiscate-house-of-muslim-man-in-bjp-ruled-uttarakhand>

Discriminatory Citizenship Law

On March 11, the Modi government announced rules to implement the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA)³⁵, a law that discriminates against Muslims. Experts say the law aims to strip Muslims of their citizenship en masse. Amnesty International³⁶, Human Rights Watch³⁷, and other human rights groups have described the CAA as bigoted against Muslims, with Amnesty International slamming the law as “against the constitutional values of equality and international human rights law.” The announcement was made on the first day of Ramadan, the holiest month of the year for Muslims. Police cracked down on subsequent anti-CAA protests, which were largely organized by university students.



On March 12, over 60 students were detained for protesting against the CAA



in the capital city of Delhi.³⁸ In Kerala state, police baton-charged protesting members of the Fraternity Movement, a student activist group. Eight activists from the group were then sentenced to two weeks of judicial custody.³⁹ On March 14, two student activists were arrested for organizing an anti-CAA protest at Allahabad University in Uttar Pradesh.⁴⁰

Ram Temple Consecration

On January 22, the Modi government held the consecration ceremony of Ram Mandir, a Hindu temple built on the site where a Hindu militant mob violently demolished the centuries-old Babri Mosque in 1992. During the buildup to the consecration as well as the celebrations afterward, extremist groups held processions to attack Muslims and destroy Muslim-owned businesses, homes, and mosques.

³⁵ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/3/11/india-implements-anti-muslim-2019-citizenship-law-weeks-before-election>

³⁶ <https://x.com/AllIndia/status/1767190506482851945>

³⁷ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/12/11/india-citizenship-bill-discriminates-against-muslims>

³⁸ <https://iamc.com/police-violently-quell-student-protests-against-anti-muslim-citizenship-law>

³⁹ <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/kerala-eight-sent-to-jail-for-14-days-over-anti-cao-protests>

⁴⁰ <https://theobserverpost.com/up-police-arrests-allahabad-university-activists-for-organizing-anti-cao-protest>

In particular, Hindu processions wreaked havoc for days in a Mumbai suburb called Mira Road. Beginning on the night of January 21, Hindu mobs began attacking and vandalizing Muslim-owned shops and homes.⁴¹ One mob beat a Muslim man and forced him to chant “Jai Shri Ram”; another harassed a group of Muslim women by chanting Hindu supremacist slogans.⁴² Locals also reported that some Hindu mobs brandished guns as part of their processions. On January 24, Hindu extremist mobs live-streamed incidents of anti-Muslim brutality in the area on social media.⁴³



Despite extensive video evidence of Hindu extremists instigating and celebrating these attacks, police instead cracked down on young Muslim men, and officials demolished Muslim-owned businesses in areas of Mira Road that were ravaged by Hindu mobs.⁴⁴ Other



areas Mumbai also witnessed violence. While driving near Mumbai, Muslim student Tariq Chaudhary was attacked by a mob of over two hundred Hindu extremists wielding planks and wooden rods.⁴⁵ The mob dragged Chaudhary and his co-worker out of their vehicle, severely beat them, and smashed the truck’s windshield amid chants of “Jai Shri Ram.” Chaudhary’s coworker required stitches to the head, and Chaudhary also sustained serious injuries.

Hindu mobs also attacked Muslim graveyards, neighborhoods, and mosques in the name of celebrating the Ram Temple. In Telangana state, a Hindu extremist mob harassed Muslims by dancing in front of a mosque and burning down a Muslim man’s shop while chanting “Jai Sri Ram” and “Mullah (Muslim), go to Pakistan.” Hindu extremist groups in the

⁴¹ <https://theobserverpost.com/particularly-muslims-are-targeted-muslims-in-mira-road-allege-police-inaction-amidst-communal-clashes>

⁴² <https://iamc.com/muslims-assaulted-forced-to-say-jai-sri-ram-by-mobs-celebrating-ram-temple-inauguration>

⁴³ <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/mira-road-hindutva-men-livestream-attacking-muslims-no-arrests-on-firs-filed-by-muslims>

⁴⁴ <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/after-violent-ram-temple-celebrations-clashes-authorities-demolish-muslims-shops-in-mumbais-mira-road>

⁴⁵ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/01/25/india-ayodhya-hindu-nationalism-attacks>

capital city of Delhi raised anti-Muslim slogans, vandalized buildings in a Muslim-majority locality, and clashed with Muslim residents. In Bihar, a Hindu rally set a Muslim graveyard on fire.⁴⁶ In Uttar Pradesh, three Hindu men climbed onto the roof of an Uttar Pradesh mosque and replaced its green flag with a saffron one.⁴⁷



On January 21, Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) members vandalized a cafe in Hyderabad, where a film club was hosting a screening of the 1992 documentary “Ram Ke Naam,” which recounts the demolition of the Babri Mosque. Rather than arresting the militants for disrupting the event, police arrested two of the event’s organizers and the cafe owner.⁴⁸

On January 22, a Muslim teen was assaulted and sexually humiliated by a

Hindu mob celebrating the Ram Temple consecration.⁴⁹ The mob accused him of making a social media post disrespecting the saffron flag, and proceeded to film him as he was beaten, stripped, paraded naked, and had fire thrown at his genitals. The victim was arrested days later after Hindu extremists filed a case against him.

On January 23, a group of over a dozen Hindu extremist men barged onto the campus of the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) in Maharashtra state, where students had set up a banner that read “Remember Babri, death of constitution” and a display of photos of the Babri Masjid.⁵⁰ The mob attacked three students, including one woman, before setting fire to the banner while chanting “Jai Shri Ram.” One Hindu extremist reportedly said during the attack, “We would destroy not one but a thousand more Babris (mosques).”



⁴⁶ <https://iamc.com/muslims-assaulted-forced-to-say-jai-sri-ram-by-mobs-celebrating-ram-temple-inauguration>

⁴⁷ <https://www.siasat.com/3-arrested-for-replacing-mosque-flag-with-saffron-in-ups-shahjahanpur-2962326>

⁴⁸ <https://theobserverpost.com/screening-of-ram-ke-naam-documentary-disrupted-by-a-vhp-activist-in-hyderabad>

⁴⁹ <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/telangana-muslim-teen-paraded-naked-during-ram-temple-celebrations-sent-to-jail>

⁵⁰ <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/hindutva-men-charge-into-ftii-pune-burn-remember-babri-banner-attack-students>

On the same day, Hindu extremists broke into a Muslim family's home in Nagpur, Maharashtra, assaulted family members, and vandalized the house. In Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra, Hindu extremists attacked two Muslim men during a Hindu religious procession, leaving them with severe injuries.⁵¹

On the 30th of January, during a Republic Day parade in BJP-ruled Madhya Pradesh state, a week after the consecration ceremony of Ram Temple, Hindu students chanted provocative slogans outside a mosque, calling for its demolition.⁵²



Christians were also attacked by Hindu extremist processions celebrating Ram Mandir. On January 21 in Chhattisgarh state, Hindu extremists beat Christians with sticks and dragged female church members out into the street. At least five pastors in the state

were also beaten by participants in Hindu processions, with mobs abusing one, planting saffron flags in his home, and threatening him with dire consequences if he did not convert to Hinduism.⁵³ On January 22, a member of a Hindu procession in Madhya Pradesh planted a saffron flag on the roof of a church as the mob passed by.⁵⁴



BJP leaders were complicit in enabling the violence. During the temple's consecration ceremony, Prime Minister Narendra Modi provided a spotlight for Mohan Bhagwat, the leader of India's most powerful Hindu supremacist paramilitary group, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), which has an extensive history of anti-minority violence.⁵⁵ BJP lawmaker Nitesh Rane threatened to "find and kill" those who had put up defensive barricades to protect a Muslim neighborhood in Mumbai.⁵⁶ State bulldozers were later

⁵¹ <https://iamc.com/officials-demolish-muslims-owned-shops-in-maharashtra-after-anti-muslim-violence>

⁵² <https://iamc.com/bjp-leader-calls-for-arms-training-says-india-will-be-hindu-nation-by-2026>

⁵³ <https://thewire.in/communalism/chhattisgarh-communal-christian-hindutva-crime>

⁵⁴ <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/ram-temple-event-saffron-flag-put-up-on-church-by-hindutva-mob-in-madhya-pradesh>

⁵⁵ <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/modi-mohan-bhagwat-headline-consecration-of-controversial-ram-temple-in-ayodhya>

⁵⁶ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/01/25/india-ayodhya-hindu-nationalism-attacks>

dispatched into the neighborhood, destroying structures belonging to 55 Muslim merchants.⁵⁷

Individuals who protested or criticized the Babri Mosque demolition around this time were also subjected to repression by the state and its supporters. On January 19, the administration of a Mumbai university, the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, ordered students not to protest or participate in programs opposing the Ram temple consecration, under threat of being reported to law enforcement.⁵⁸



On January 25, police in Kerala state booked a 62-year-old Muslim activist, Muhammad Salim, for holding a one-man protest against the demolition of Babri Mosque under charges of “intent to cause a riot” and “intent to create enmity.”⁵⁹

On January 26, police in Jammu and Kashmir arrested two individuals for making critical comments on social media about the Babri Mosque demolition.⁶⁰



Uttarakhand Uniform Civil Code

On February 2, a committee formed by the BJP-ruled Uttarakhand state government in 2022 submitted a draft of a state Uniform Civil Code (UCC) for review.⁶¹ The UCC mandates the formulation of one common law by all communities in interpersonal matters such as marriage, divorce, and inheritance. Critics argue that forcing religious minorities to adhere to a law drafted by a Hindu supremacist government is a violation of freedom of religion, and allows the government to interfere in the private lives of citizens. Muslims and Christians are particularly at risk of losing their right to implement their religious laws in their personal lives.

⁵⁷ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/01/25/india-ayodhya-hindu-nationalism-attacks>

⁵⁸ <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/ram-temple-consecration-tiss-mumbai-warns-students-against-holding-protest-gatherings>

⁵⁹ <https://maktoobmedia.com/features/kerala-muslim-activist-booked-under-inciting-riot-charge-for-lone-protest-against-babri-demolition>

⁶⁰ <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/jammu-and-kashmir-two-arrested-for-social-media-posts-on-babri-masjid>

⁶¹ <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/uttarakhand-assembly-passed-the-uniform-civil-code-bill/article67821740.ece>

On February 7, the Uniform Civil Code Uttarakhand 2024 Bill passed the House, making Uttarakhand the first Indian state to officially enact the UCC.⁶² On March 13, Uttarakhand's Uniform Civil Code (UCC) Bill 2024 was approved by President Droupadi Murmu.⁶³

Illegal Demolitions and Evictions

On January 11th, in Madhya Pradesh's Shajapur, officials bulldozed the house of a Muslim man after alleging that he had pelted stones at a Hindu religious procession, despite the fact that Muslim residents reported that Hindu extremists had targeted their homes during the procession.⁶⁴



In Madhya Pradesh's Damoh, civic officials demolished multiple animal

slaughterhouses in a move directly targeting the livelihoods of Muslims and Dalits.⁶⁵ The demolitions followed on the heels of authorities bulldozing meat shops in Ujjain in December 2023, after Chief Minister Mohan Yadav declared restrictions on the sale of meat and eggs.⁶⁶ Following two days of violent celebrations of the Ram Temple



consecration, officials demolished at least 15 Muslim-owned buildings in the Mumbai suburb of Mira Road, a Muslim-majority area.⁶⁷ On the 24th of January, Mumbai officials bulldozed around 40 shops on Mohammed Ali Road, another Muslim-majority area. Both areas were the target of Hindu supremacist mob violence.⁶⁸

On January 29, Hindu extremists assaulted a Muslim man, Shamim Khan, over allegations of cow slaughter in Madhya Pradesh's Chhindwara.

⁶² <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/uttarakhand-becomes-first-indian-state-to-implement-uniform-civil-code>

⁶³ <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/uttarakhand-uniform-civil-code-receives-presidents-approval>

⁶⁴ <https://iamc.com/muslim-mans-home-bulldozed-in-bjp-ruled-madhya-pradesh>

⁶⁵ <https://hindutvawatch.org/local-authorities-demolish-multiple-animal-slaughterhouses-in-damoh>

⁶⁶ <https://hindutvawatch.org/loudspeakers-mounted-on-police-vehicles-announce-ban-on-sale-of-meat-and-fish-in-the-open>

⁶⁷ <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/after-violent-ram-temple-celebrations-clashes-authorities-demolish-muslims-shops-in-mumbais-mira-road>

⁶⁸ <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/mumbai-bulldozers-reach-mohammed-ali-road-too-razing-40-structures-opp-calls-bjps-message-to-muslims>

Afterwards, police filed a complaint against Khan and demolished his home as punishment.⁶⁹ In the early morning hours of January 30, civic officials in Delhi demolished a 600-year-old mosque without any prior notice. The mosque, Masjid Akhonji, included an Islamic seminary and the graves of revered Muslim figures.⁷⁰



In Kolhapur, Maharashtra, civic officials demolished an Islamic seminary over baseless allegations of “land encroachment” by Hindu militant groups. The madrasa was demolished on February 1, a day before its appeal challenging the demolition order was due to be heard in court.⁷¹

On February 8, Mumbai officials bulldozed a number of houses in a slum

predominantly occupied by Muslims, Dalits, and Buddhists, leaving 110 families homeless. Locals reported that the demolition drive took place without any prior notice or humanitarian considerations, violating laws that mandate due process and rehabilitation for slum dwellers.⁷² On February 19, Rajasthan state officials demolished 12 Muslim-owned houses and destroyed crops growing on 44 acres of land over allegations of selling beef in Alwar. The police also booked 25 Muslim individuals and arrested eight over the allegations.⁷³



On February 21, in Uttar Pradesh’s Raebareli, officials demolished the Mustafa Syed Baba Shrine and an idgah, a space used for Muslim communal

⁶⁹ <https://iamc.com/hindu-extremists-assault-muslim-man-authorities-demolish-victims-home>

⁷⁰ <https://theobserverpost.com/600-year-old-mosque-razed-without-prior-notice-in-delhi>

⁷¹ <https://www.freepressjournal.in/mumbai/maharashtra-tension-rises-in-kolhapurs-laxtirth-vasahat-colony-after-anti-encroachment-team-demolishes-local-madrasa>

⁷² <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/arbitrary-demolition-leaves-hundreds-homeless-in-mumbais-panchsheel-nagar>

⁷³ maktoobmedia.com/india/rajasthan-authorities-demolish-homes-vandalise-crops-on-44-acres-of-land-accusing-muslims-of-illegal-beef-sale

prayer, without any prior notice.⁷⁴ On February 28, Delhi authorities carrying out a demolition drive bulldozed⁷⁵ the home of a Muslim man, Vakil Hassan, who had just months prior been hailed as a hero for being part of a rescue mission to save 41 workers trapped in a collapsed tunnel.⁷⁶



From March 10th to 13th, Gujarat authorities carried out a spree of demolitions. In Junagadh, officials demolished a Muslim shrine, alleging it was built on encroached land.⁷⁷ The demolition began at 2:00 in the morning to avoid protests. In Gujarat's Kutch, officials demolished three madrassas, which they claimed had been built "illegally."⁷⁸ Multiple Muslim shrines were also demolished across several villages in the state's coastal area.⁷⁹

Weaponization of Hindu Religious Festivals

During the Hindu festival Holi on March 25, Muslims across India reported being harassed and intimidated by Hindu extremists during celebrations.

On the eve of Holi in Haryana's Gurugram, Hindu extremists fired shots outside a mosque on the eve of Holi. An eyewitness reported that the extremists attempted to break into the mosque and threatened to shoot him.⁸⁰ In Maharashtra's Thane, a Muslim autorickshaw driver reported that a Hindu mob stopped his auto, broke his windshield, forcibly applied colors on him, and doused him with water despite his pleas that he was fasting for Ramadan. The victim added that he had to break his fast in the aftermath.⁸¹



⁷⁴ <https://iamc.com/officials-demolish-muslim-shrine-idgah-in-bjp-ruled-uttar-pradesh>

⁷⁵ <https://www.deccanherald.com/india/punished-for-being-muslim-alleges-mehbooba-mufti-on-razing-of-rat-hole-miners-house-2915967>

⁷⁶ <https://www.cnn.com/2023/11/28/india/india-tunnel-rescue-vertical-drilling-intl-hnk>

⁷⁷ <https://www.indiatvnews.com/gujarat/gujarat-police-demolish-illegally-built-dargah-temples-in-junagadh-in-late-night-action-aap-bjp-congress-latest-updates-2024-03-10-920737>

⁷⁸ <https://iamc.com/police-violently-quell-student-protests-against-anti-muslim-citizenship-law>

⁷⁹ <https://iamc.com/officials-demolish-multiple-muslim-shrines-across-gujarat>

⁸⁰ <https://theobserverpost.com/gurugram-miscreants-open-fire-outside-mosque-on-holi-eve>

⁸¹ <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ahmedabad/three-men-attack-driver-torch-his-autorickshaw/articleshow/108802551.cms>

In a similar incident in Gujarat's Ahmedabad, a group of Hindu extremists assaulted a Muslim driver and set his auto-rickshaw ablaze after he tried to stop them from forcibly applying colors on a passenger.⁸²



In April, ahead of the Hindu festival Hanuman Janmotsav, Hindu militants from the Bajrang Dal forcibly closed Muslim-owned shops that were selling non-vegetarian food in Haryana.⁸³

In Delhi, BJP leader Ravinder Singh Negi visited meat shops to order their owners to close shop during the festival of Navratri.⁸⁴



Officials in Hyderabad, Telangana similarly ordered slaughterhouses and meat shops to close during the Jain festival Mahavir Jayanti.⁸⁵

Conversely, Hindu extremists also staged acts of intimidation on Muslim holidays. On Eid day, members of India's largest Hindu paramilitary group, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), held a march in the Muslim-majority city of Mau, Uttar Pradesh.⁸⁶

Mosque-Related Violence & Intimidation

Hindu supremacists targeted mosques in a variety of ways, including through demolitions, legal cases seeking control over certain historic mosques, and the parading of Hindu religious processions

⁸² <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/ahmedabad/three-men-attack-driver-torch-his-autorickshaw/articleshow/108802551.cms>

⁸³ <https://iamc.com/muslim-student-beaten-by-hindu-extremists-at-university-in-maharashtra>

⁸⁴ <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Delhi/meat-sellers-forced-to-down-shutters-in-east-delhi-ward/article66676470.ece>

⁸⁵ <https://www.siasat.com/meat-beef-shops-to-remain-closed-in-hyderabad-on-sunday-3010210>

⁸⁶ <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20240415-india-hindu-extremist-paramilitary-march-in-muslim-majority-city-during-eid>

in the vicinity of mosques. Several of these incidents were in “celebration” of the Ram Temple consecration in Ayodhya.

In January, ahead of the Ram Temple consecration ceremony, Hindu extremists began an online campaign demanding that a plot of land allocated for Muslims by the Supreme Court after the violent 1992 Babri Mosque demolition be converted to a hospital. Right-wing Hindu users on X trended the hashtags #MasjidkoHospitalBanao (“Turn the Mosque into a Hospital”) and #MasjidKoMandirBanao (“Turn the Mosque into a Temple”).⁸⁷

During a Republic Day parade in BJP-ruled Madhya Pradesh state, days after the consecration ceremony of Ram Temple, Hindu students chanted provocative slogans outside a mosque, calling for its demolition.⁸⁸



On January 31, shortly after the Ram Temple consecration, a court in Uttar Pradesh’s Varanasi announced that it would allow Hindus to pray in the basement of the historic Gyanvapi Mosque,⁸⁹ which Hindu extremists have been seeking to convert to a temple for years. Hours after the court order was announced, Hindu rituals were performed in the mosque’s basement, while Hindu extremists pasted the word “temple” over the word “mosque” on nearby directions signs.⁹⁰

On February 6, an Uttar Pradesh court ordered that a 600-year-old shrine honoring a Muslim saint be handed over to Hindus. The court also rejected a decades-old plea filed by a group of Muslims seeking the ownership of the site where the saint, Sheikh Badruddin Shah, is buried.⁹¹ On February 16, participants in a Hindu religious procession in Bihar’s Darbhanga pelted stones

⁸⁷ <https://www.siasat.com/right-wing-trolls-target-ayodhya-mosque-ahead-of-ram-temple-consecration-2949945>

⁸⁸ <https://iamc.com/bjp-leader-calls-for-arms-training-says-india-will-be-hindu-nation-by-2026>

⁸⁹ <https://scroll.in/latest/1063011/hindus-allowed-by-court-to-pray-in-sealed-basement-of-gyanvapi-mosque>

⁹⁰ <https://theobserverpost.com/puja-held-in-gyanvapi-basement-just-hours-after-varanasi-court-orders>

⁹¹ <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/district-court-asks-muslims-to-hand-over-600-years-old-badruddin-shah-dargah-in-up-baghat-to-hindus>

and other objects at a mosque as the procession passed by. In footage of the incident, Hindu extremists could be seen striking at the mosque's walls with sticks.⁹²

On March 4, a group of Hindu extremists chanted "Jai Sri Ram" slogans to intimidate a congregation of Muslims offering prayers at the historic Haji Malang Dargah shrine in Maharashtra's Thane. On March 5, a Hindu religious procession used laser lights to project the Hindu supremacist slogan "Jai Sri Ram" onto the walls of a mosque in Gujarat's Surat.⁹³

On March 19, Hindu extremists opened gunfire outside a mosque in Uttar Pradesh's Mahoba while worshippers were offering prayers inside.⁹⁴



In Rajasthan's Chittorgarh on March 21, a Hindu religious procession blasted music while passing by a mosque during prayer time, sparking a violent clash that left one dead and 12 injured.⁹⁵

On March 26, three people were severely injured after extremists threw a bomb near a mosque in Odisha state. A witness reported that the extremists attempted to target the mosque itself, but hit a nearby motorcycle instead.⁹⁶

On April 13, the day of the Muslim festival Eid, Uttar Pradesh police booked at least 200 Muslims for offering Eid prayers on the roadside outside of a mosque in Meerut. Police justified the mass arrest by claiming that the prayers led to traffic congestion.⁹⁷

⁹² maktoobmedia.com/india/hindutva-chants-vandalising-muslims-properties-police-violence-what-happened-in-darbhanga-on-basant-panchami

⁹³ <https://iamc.com/officials-demolish-muslim-shrine-idgah-in-bjp-ruled-uttar-pradesh>

⁹⁴ <https://iamc.com/hindu-extremists-open-fire-outside-mosque-in-bjp-ruled-uttar-pradesh>

⁹⁵ <https://iamc.com/one-dead-12-injured-after-communal-violence-in-rajasthan>

⁹⁶ <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/bomb-thrown-outside-mosque-in-odisha-three-injured>

⁹⁷ <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/up-200-muslims-booked-for-causing-traffic-congestion-on-eid-in-meerut>

During a Hindu religious procession in Gujarat on April 17, Hindu extremists blasted provocative anti-Muslim songs in front of two mosques in Mehsana and Bardoli cities. The lyrics included the threat, “Muslims will also bow and chant Jai Sri Ram.”⁹⁸ On April 18, in Uttar Pradesh’s Kannauj, a Hindu extremist man climbed on a Muslim shrine and attempted to hoist a saffron flag over it during a Hindu religious procession.⁹⁹



Cow Vigilantism

Cow vigilantes continued to endanger the lives of Muslim men with mob violence, car chases,¹⁰⁰ and acts of public humiliation as punishment for transporting or slaughtering cattle. IAMC documented at least 40 cases of cow vigilante violence and intimidation throughout India between January and April.

On January 2, in Gujarat’s Bharuch, cow vigilantes brutally assaulted a Muslim man, Aslam, over allegations of transporting cattle. Aslam’s unconscious body was thrown into a forest and left for dead. He was transferred to a hospital in critical condition.¹⁰¹

On January 11, cow vigilantes in Ludhiana, Punjab harassed and assaulted two Kashmiri truck drivers over allegations of transporting beef.¹⁰² Similar incidents where cow vigilantes harassed truck drivers were reported in Odisha on January 12 and in Haryana on January 13, January 25, January 27, and February 4.¹⁰³



On January 15, Hindu extremist cow vigilantes assaulted a truck driver in Rajasthan’s Alwar for allegedly transporting cattle. The victim was forced to

⁹⁸ <https://iamc.com/modi-calls-muslims-infiltrators-in-islamophobic-election-rally-speech>

⁹⁹ <https://iamc.com/muslim-teen-beaten-by-hindu-classmate-in-telangana>

¹⁰⁰ <https://iamc.com/muslim-man-assaulted-left-for-dead-by-hindu-extremist-cow-vigilantes-in-gujarat>

¹⁰¹ <https://www.instagram.com/reel/C1oy8zlvdFN>

¹⁰² <https://hindutvawatch.org/cow-vigilantes-harassed-and-assaulted-two-kashmiri-truck-drivers-over-allegations-of-transporting-beef>

¹⁰³ <https://iamc.com/hindu-extremist-cow-vigilantes-assault-truck-driver-in-rajasthan>

chant “Jai Sri Ram” and other Hindu supremacist slogans as he wept on camera.¹⁰⁴

On January 26, in Alwar, Rajasthan, Hindu extremist cow vigilantes filmed a Muslim truck driver as they stripped him half naked and beat him for transporting cattle.¹⁰⁵



On January 29, Hindu extremists assaulted a Muslim man, Shamim Khan, over allegations of cow slaughter in Chhindwara, Madhya Pradesh. In a video of the incident, the Hindu extremists called the victim slurs and threatened to kill him. Instead of taking action against the vigilantes, police filed a complaint against Khan and demolished his house.¹⁰⁶

On the 18th of February, in Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh, members of the Hindu militant group Bajrang Dal harassed nearly a dozen men, including Muslims, over allegations of “cattle smuggling.”¹⁰⁷



On March 5, in Farrukhabad, Uttar Pradesh, cow vigilantes broke into a house, accusing its residents of cooking beef while filming the interior of the house. The vigilantes then blocked the road to pressure police into taking action against the residents of the house.¹⁰⁸

On March 27, cow vigilantes assaulted four men and destroyed their truck over allegations of transporting cattle in Alwar, Rajasthan. All four victims were hospitalized with serious injuries.¹⁰⁹

On March 29, cow vigilante groups based in Haryana crossed the state border into Uttar Pradesh to seize a

¹⁰⁴ <https://iamc.com/muslim-man-beaten-in-front-of-family-forced-to-chant-jai-sri-ram>

¹⁰⁵ <https://iamc.com/hindu-extremist-cow-vigilantes-assault-truck-driver-in-rajasthan>

¹⁰⁶ <https://iamc.com/hindu-extremists-assault-muslim-man-authorities-demolish-victims-home>

¹⁰⁷ <https://hindutvawatch.org/bajrang-dal-cow-vigilantes-harassed-nearly-a-dozen-men-including-muslims-over-allegations-of-cattle-smuggling>

¹⁰⁸ <https://hindutvawatch.org/cow-vigilantes-intruded-into-a-house-over-suspicion-of-cooking-beef>

¹⁰⁹ <https://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2024/Mar/27/four-muslim-men-thrashed-in-rajasthans-alwar-on-suspicion-of-cow-smuggling>

Muslim-owned truck that was transporting cattle. A video of the incident captured the vigilantes celebrating the capture, chanting slogans calling for cattle slaughterers' hands to be chopped off.¹¹⁰



On April 7, in Cuttack, Odisha, cow vigilantes brutally assaulted two men over allegations of transporting cattle, and then proceeded to film their bloodied faces. Two Muslim men who were passing by in an autorickshaw were also attacked by the extremists, who forced them to chant “Jai Sri Ram.”¹¹¹

On April 17, cow vigilantes in Haryana's Sonipat attacked a Sikh truck driver. In an act of disrespect towards Sikh men's religious obligation

to cover their hair with turbans, the extremists pulled the victim's turban off his head and used it to bind his feet together.¹¹² On April 19, cow vigilantes in Jhajjar, Haryana forced Muslim men accused of transporting cattle to crouch down and hold their ears as an act of self-humiliation.¹¹³

On April 26, in a town near the border of Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra, cow vigilantes captured a Muslim truck driver, assaulted him over accusations of transporting cattle, and then paraded him down the street as an act of public humiliation. On the same day, a mob of cow vigilantes in Palwal, Haryana filmed themselves beating and humiliating a Muslim truck driver. The extremists threw the victim to the ground, kicked him from all sides, and then pulled his pants down before beating him with a heavy stick. The victim's feet were also bound with rope.¹¹⁴



¹¹⁰ <https://iamc.com/hindu-extremist-cow-vigilantes-assault-muslims-transporting-cattle>

¹¹¹ <https://iamc.com/hindu-residents-demand-wall-separating-them-from-muslim-majority-area-in-gujarat>

¹¹² <https://www.siasat.com/haryana-cow-vigilantes-attack-sikh-truck-driver-use-turban-to-his-tie-feet-3011903>

¹¹³ <https://hindutvawatch.org/cow-vigilantes-assaulted-two-men-for-transporting-cattle-in-a-mini-truck>

¹¹⁴ <https://iamc.com/cow-vigilantes-assault-parade-truck-drivers-over-alleged-cattle-transport>



In several instances throughout the quarter, Uttar Pradesh police also opened fire on individuals accused of trading or smuggling cattle. Incidents where police injured such individuals occurred on March 3 in Auraiya;¹¹⁵ March 10 in Kaushambi, Pratapgarh and Firozabad;¹¹⁶ March 29 in Ghaziabad;¹¹⁷ April 4 in Kanpur;¹¹⁸ and April 7 in Kushinagar,¹¹⁹ among other cases.



Violence & Discrimination In Schools

Anti-Muslim violence and discrimination have permeated India's education system at all levels, affecting students as young as elementary schoolers. This abuse is perpetrated by Hindu students, teachers, and administrators alike, sometimes spurred by outside pressure from Hindu militant groups.



On February 17, a government-run school in Rajasthan's Pipar refused to allow Muslim students wearing the hijab to enter the school grounds. Administrators also called the students by Islamophobic insults, threatening to drop their grades if they continued to wear the hijab to school.¹²⁰ A similar case of discrimination was reported on

¹¹⁵ <https://iamc.com/hindu-extremist-cow-vigilantes-assault-muslims-transporting-cattle>

¹¹⁶ <https://iamc.com/modi-govt-implements-law-aimed-at-stripping-muslim-citizenship>

¹¹⁷ <https://iamc.com/gujarat-pogrom-whistleblower-sentenced-to-20-years-in-prison-in-sham-case>

¹¹⁸ <https://iamc.com/muslim-man-hacked-to-death-by-hindus-in-uttar-pradesh>

¹¹⁹ <https://iamc.com/hindu-residents-demand-wall-separating-them-from-muslim-majority-area-in-gujarat>

¹²⁰ <https://theobserverpost.com/muslim-students-barred-from-rajasthan-school-for-hijab-taunted-as-chambal-ke-daaku>

March 15, when a school in Gujarat's Bharuch forced Muslim girls to remove their hijabs during an exam.¹²¹

On March 11, an 8-year-old Muslim student was verbally abused with slurs and death threats by his Hindu classmates at a school in BJP-ruled Gujarat's Baroda.¹²² The child reported that he had asked his classmates for a pencil, only to be taunted with comments such as "All Muslims are dirty," and "We allowed you to live in this country, otherwise you would be begging somewhere with a bowl." The students then threatened to kill him if he reported the incident, saying, "We will slit your throat and give it in your hands." Just days after reporting the incident, the Muslim student was struck on the head with a bottle by a Hindu classmate. The school administration took no effective disciplinary action against the bullies.



On March 12, a 15-year-old Muslim student committed suicide hours after he was reprimanded by his school principal in Maharashtra's Akola.¹²³ The student's family reported that leading up to his death, their son was the victim of Islamophobic bullying from his teachers.



On March 16, a cultural procession organized by the History Department of the Bodoland University in Assam included a skit that depicted Muslims as criminal caricatures, in which two men dressed as Muslims were paraded and beaten by a man dressed as a police officer. In response, five student groups condemned the incident, including the Muslim Student Union of Assam, which labeled the skit "humiliation" and threatened to file a police report against the responsible parties if the university failed to clarify its stance on the issue.¹²⁴

¹²¹ <https://www.india.com/news/class-10-girls-forced-remove-hijab-at-gujarat-school-lions-school-ankleshwar-bharuch-exam-admin-removed-after-outrage-6787976>

¹²² <https://theobserverpost.com/class-3-student-threatened-with-homicide-due-to-muslim-identity-in-gujarat-school>

¹²³ <https://iamc.com/one-dead-12-injured-after-communal-violence-in-rajasthan>

¹²⁴ <https://sabrangindia.in/bodoland-universitys-cultural-event-reportedly-displays-muslims-as-criminals-escorted-by-police-student-groups-demand-apology>

On March 30, during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, administrators at the renowned Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) denied Muslim students permission to organize an iftar party on campus, despite simultaneously allowing multiple Hindu festivals on campus.¹²⁵



On April 9, a 19-year-old Muslim freshman at Savitribai Phule Pune University in Maharashtra was walking with friends across campus when he was stopped by a group of Hindu extremist men.¹²⁶ The men demanded to see the students' ID cards, a common tactic used by Hindu extremists to find Muslim victims. One man asked the victim, "Are you a Muslim? Have you come here to do love jihad?" The victim was then beaten by the extremists, who also called the victim's father, threatening to "send [the victim's] dead body back to [his] village" if he didn't unenroll from the university. The extremists

further warned the victim's female Hindu friends not to speak with him.

On April 25 in Telangana state, Mohammed Masum, a 19-year-old Muslim college student, was beaten by his Hindu classmate and five other men when he was leaving their hostel to pray at the mosque. The group slapped Masum multiple times, pulled off his skullcap, a cap often worn by Muslim men and boys, and trampled on it. Masum was admitted to a local hospital due to his injuries.¹²⁷



This abuse is no longer limited to Indian Muslims, however. In a case that made international headlines, over 200 extremists violently attacked Muslim foreign students while they were offering taraweeh prayers at their university hostel in Gujarat's Ahmedabad on March 16.¹²⁸ The mob attacked with knives, cricket bats, stones and other weapons while chanting the Hindu "Jai

¹²⁵ makoobmedia.com/india/islamophobia-students-at-iimc-delhi-say-permission-for-iftar-denied-while-other-religious-festivals-held-on-campus

¹²⁶ newslandry.com/2024/04/09/leave-college-or-be-killed-muslim-student-beaten-on-pune-campus-for-walking-with-hindu-classmates

¹²⁷ <https://muslimmirror.com/eng/a-muslim-student-mohammed-masum-on-way-to-offer-namaz-attacked-in-telangana>

¹²⁸ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/3/17/foreign-students-attacked-in-india-over-ramadan-prayer-at-university-hostel>

Sri Ram”, a slogan commonly associated with lynchings. The extremists also ransacked the hostel rooms, destroying laptops, phones, and bikes. Victims included students from Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and several African countries. Five students sustained severe injuries.

After videos of the incident went viral, police arrested three attackers. However, the students were not compensated by the university for their damaged property, and were not transferred to a different hostel despite the students’ requests. Three weeks after the attack, seven of the victims were ordered by university authorities to immediately vacate their hostel rooms for no apparent reason.¹²⁹ As one student described the injustice, “No action has been taken against the two hundred people who attacked us while praying. The university is taking action against us only.”

This incident is indicative of a much more widespread problem: non-student Hindu extremists, from militant groups to BJP politicians, regularly conduct activities in and around schools, including by giving hate speeches to student assemblies, protesting schools they deem to be “anti-Hindu”, and threatening

harm against Muslim and Christian teachers and students.

On January 29, politician Balmukund Acharya chanted the Hindu supremacist warcry “Jai Shri Ram” and complained about students wearing the hijab while addressing an assembly at a school with an 85% Muslim student body in Jaipur, Rajasthan. Acharya was filmed saying, “Hijab has spoiled the atmosphere here,” after which he walked past a group of students and told school administrators to “get all this (hijab) changed.”¹³⁰



On February 1, in Indore, Madhya Pradesh, hundreds of members of the Hindu supremacist group Hindu Jagran Manch gathered outside of a school to protest vague allegations of “anti-Hindu” activities. The crowd, made up largely of adult men, surrounded the school while chanting “Jai Shri Ram” and waving saffron flags.¹³¹

¹²⁹ <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/three-weeks-after-hindu-mob-attack-gujarat-university-asks-7-afghan-students-to-vacate-hostel>

¹³⁰ <https://theobserverpost.com/bjp-mlas-statement-against-hijab-in-schools-draws-outrage-in-jaipur>

On February 21, three Muslim teachers at a secondary school in Rajasthan's Kota were suspended by the state's Education Department after local Hindu supremacist group waged a smear campaign against them, claiming that the teachers were forcing Hindu students to perform Muslim prayers, converting them to Islam, involved in "love jihad", and engaged in "jihadist activities." Both Hindu and Muslim teachers rejected these accusations in a letter to the Education Department, while students accused the Hindu supremacist group of coercing Hindu students into making false allegations against their teachers.¹³²

On March 3, Hindu Janajagruti Samiti organized a propaganda event at a high school Gujarat's Vadodara, where speakers promoted anti-Muslim conspiracy theories like "love jihad" as a way to radicalize young Hindus.¹³³

Election-Related Hate Speech

Campaigns for India's 2024 general elections, which are held between April 19 and June 1, were rife with anti-Muslim hate speech as Modi sought re-election as Prime Minister, and the BJP sought to maintain its majority in the government. Despite the fact that

Indian law prohibits communal speech during elections, BJP leaders - including Modi - repeatedly peddled anti-Muslim conspiracy theories, used dog whistles, and implied that any government benefits awarded to Muslims pose a threat to Hindus. BJP leaders also participated in Hindu extremist processions, threatened the destruction of historic mosques, and incited anti-Muslim violence.

On April 13, BJP leader Ashwini Upadhyay advocated for violence against Indian minorities, particularly against Christians, at an event in Batala, Punjab.¹³⁴ On April 15, at an election rally in Deesa, Gujarat, BJP leader Shashikant Pandya claimed that Muslims are a threat to Hindu women and do not belong in India, saying, "This is Hindustan and not Pakistan. Hindustan is for Hindus and Pakistan is for Muslims, there is nothing wrong with that. Hindus need to wake up, if we don't we won't have our country tomorrow. For the safety of Hindu sisters and daughters, vote for the BJP."¹³⁵

On April 17, in Assam's Ratabari, BJP lawmaker Vijay Mallakar threatened to demolish voters' homes en masse if they voted for a party other than the BJP.¹³⁶ On the same day, in Birbhum, West

¹³¹ <https://iamc.com/bjp-leader-calls-for-arms-training-says-india-will-be-hindu-nation-by-2026>

¹³² maktoobmedia.com/india/rajasthan-muslim-teachers-suspended-following-hindu-groups-campaign-students-protest-against-suspension

¹³³ <https://iamc.com/modi-govt-implements-law-aimed-at-stripping-muslim-citizenship>

¹³⁴ <https://hindutvawatch.org/bjp-leader-ashwini-upadhyay-promotes-fear-and-hatred-towards-christians>

¹³⁵ <https://iamc.com/bjp-leaders-deliver-anti-muslim-hate-speeches-at-election-rallies-in-gujarat-uttarakhand>

¹³⁶ <https://www.htsyndication.com/siasat-daily/article/vote-for-bjp-or-face-bulldozer-action%3A-assam-mla-threatens-voters/80821397>

Bengal, BJP candidate Debasish Dhar brandished a sword as part of a Hindu religious procession.¹³⁷ Meanwhile, in Telangana's Hyderabad, BJP lawmaker T. Raja Singh gave a speech in which he used anti-Muslim slurs, peddled conspiracy theories, and called for building temples over historic mosques.¹³⁸

On April 18, the BJP's Telangana candidate, Madhavi Latha, mimed shooting an arrow at a mosque while participating in a Hindu religious procession in Hyderabad. A video of the incident shows members of the procession cheering as she does so.¹³⁹



On April 19, BJP candidate Navneet Rana delivered a communal speech in Amravati, Maharashtra, claiming that



only Hindus belong in India: “If you want to live in India, then you have to say ‘Jai Sri Ram.’”¹⁴⁰

At an election rally in Rajasthan on April 22, Modi gave a speech in which he claimed that the opposition Congress party would redistribute the nation's wealth among Muslims. He then referred to Muslims as “infiltrators”, a loaded dog whistle that implies Muslims do not belong in India. He also called Muslims “those who have more children”, referencing a Hindu supremacist conspiracy that claims Muslim population growth is steadily replacing Hindus.¹⁴¹

“[Your money] will be distributed to infiltrators. Should your hard-earned money go to infiltrators?” Modi asked. He repeated the same anti-Muslim claims at rallies in Rajasthan and

¹³⁷ <https://hindutvawatch.org/bjp-leader-seen-flashing-sword-while-participating-in-a-shobha-yatra>

¹³⁸ <https://www.thenewsminute.com/telangana/day-is-not-far-when-we-will-reclaim-kashi-mathura-bjp-mla-rajasingh>

¹³⁹ <https://www.news18.com/politics/hyderabad-bjp-candidate-madhavi-latha-viral-video-imaginary-arrow-action-near-mosque-controversy-latest-news-8858280.html>

¹⁴⁰ <https://www.indiatvnews.com/maharashtra/navneet-rana-to-aimim-mp-imtiaj-jaleel-say-jai-shri-ram-if-you-want-live-in-country-ram-mandir-babri-masjid-amravati-lok-sabha-elections-latest-news-2024-02-21-917934>

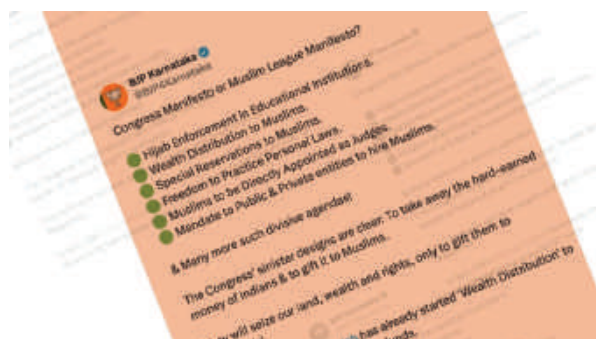
Chhattisgarh on April 23;¹⁴¹ in Uttar Pradesh on April 25;¹⁴² West Bengal and Bihar on April 26;¹⁴³ and Maharashtra on April 30.¹⁴⁴



On April 22, at an election rally in Kankar, Chhattisgarh, federal minister Amit Shah repeated Modi's Hindu supremacist talking points, claiming that the Congress party would redistribute the nation's wealth among Muslims if voted to power.¹⁴⁵

The following day, Yogi Adityanath declared that the Congress party "will implement Sharia law" at a rally in Uttar Pradesh's Moradabad.¹⁴⁶

On April 23, the BJP's Karnataka wing posted Islamophobic disinformation to



X in a bid to sway voters.¹⁴⁷ In a post titled "Congress Manifesto or Muslim League Manifesto?", the BJP claimed that the opposition party's manifesto promises 'Hijab Enforcement in Educational Institutions', 'Wealth Distribution to Muslims', 'Special Reservations for Muslims', 'Freedom to Practice Personal Laws', 'Direct Appointment of Muslims as Judges', and a 'Mandate for Public & Private Entities to Hire Muslims'. All claims made by the post were false, and painted civil liberties for Muslims as a threat to Hindus.



On April 24, in Uttar Pradesh's Unnao, BJP lawmaker Sakshi Maharaj

¹⁴¹ <https://tinyurl.com/9b2wry2k>

¹⁴² <https://www.narendramodi.in/prime-minister-narendra-modi-attends-public-meeting-in-malda-uttar-west-bengal-581816>

¹⁴³ <https://ecoti.in/fE50tZ>

¹⁴⁴ <https://iamc.com/pm-modi-continues-anti-muslim-hate-speech-in-election-rallies>

¹⁴⁵ thehindu.com/elections/lok-sabha/at-kanker-rally-amit-shah-hails-chhattisgarh-govts-handling-of-naxal-conflict/article68093551.ece

¹⁴⁶ <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/congress-will-implement-sharia-law-in-country-says-yogi-adityanath-5506389>

¹⁴⁷ <https://shorturl.at/RuZcJ>

called on Hindus to take over historic mosques, saying, “Ram Temple is ready. Kashi (Gyanvapi Mosque) is almost ours, Mathura (Shahi Idgah Mosque) is next.” Maharaj also called for a Muslim population control bill, saying, “They have four wives and produce forty children. It won’t be tolerated anymore.”¹⁴⁸



On April 26 in Madhya Pradesh, Amit Shah again claimed that the Congress party would redistribute India’s wealth among Muslims. The next day, in rallies across Uttar Pradesh, Yogi referred to Muslims as “Bangladeshi and Rohingya infiltrators”, promising voters that the BJP would facilitate a Hindu takeover of the historic Shahi Idgah mosque.¹⁴⁹

At a rally in Maharashtra on April 27, Modi declared that Muslims should be stripped of benefits provided by the reservation system, the Indian equivalent of affirmative action for disenfranchised minorities.¹⁵⁰ The following day,

at a rally in Karnataka, Modi called opposition political parties “Aurangzeb parties”, referencing a Mughal Muslim ruler who is frequently demonized in Hindu supremacist understandings of history. Modi also peddled the ahistorical claim that Aurangzeb killed cows and destroyed temples wantonly.¹⁵¹

On April 28, in Gujarat’s Banaskantha, BJP leader C.R. Patil claimed that Muslims “have no business other than producing children.”¹⁵²

On the same day, a speaker at a BJP rally in Gujarat’s Anand claimed that India’s Muslim population has increased to 26% - while in reality, the Muslim population remains at 14%. The speaker also called Muslims “unpatriotic” and “undeserving” of living in India.¹⁵³

On April 30, at a rally in West Bengal’s Berhampore, Yogi Adityanath threatened violence against Muslims, saying, “Infiltrators are let into West Bengal with the aim of changing your demography. If anybody dares to interrupt Hindu festivals in UP, we will deal with them so harshly that their descendants will remember.”¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁸ <https://iamc.com/senior-bjp-ministers-repeat-modis-anti-muslim-talking-points-during-election-rallies>

¹⁴⁹ <https://iamc.com/muslim-cleric-beaten-to-death-inside-mosque-in-rajasthan>

¹⁵⁰ hindustantimes.com/india-news/no-reservation-based-on-religion-to-muslims-as-long-as-i-am-alive-pm-modi-101714488053718.html

¹⁵¹ <https://tinyurl.com/2z4v5u35>

¹⁵² <https://www.siasat.com/lok-sabha-polls-now-gujarat-bjp-leader-calls-muslims-infiltrators-3016815>

¹⁵³ <https://iamc.com/muslim-cleric-beaten-to-death-inside-mosque-in-rajasthan>

¹⁵⁴ <https://iamc.com/yogi-adityanath-threatens-to-treat-muslims-so-harshly-that-their-descendants-will-remember>

PERSECUTION & DISCRIMINATION AGAINST CHRISTIANS

Between January and March alone, Delhi-based human rights group United Christian Forum (UCF) documented over 150 attacks on Indian Christians as the result of “state-sponsored harassment of Christians.” UCF also predicted that the number of attacks in 2024 were likely to set a new record compared to those of the previous years, drawing closer to the widespread levels of vigilante violence against Muslims and Dalits.¹⁵⁵



Anti-Christian violence also continued to be perpetrated in Manipur state, where ethnic violence between the predominantly Hindu Meitei and the predominantly Christian Kuki-Zo tribal minority has been smoldering since March 2023.



On February 13, at least 20 Christians were injured in Telangana state after a Hindu mob attacked a local church community, demanding that the church be demolished as part of a road-widening project.¹⁵⁶ On March 3 in Jamui, Bihar, Hindu extremists from the militant group Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) assaulted three Christians and forced them to chant the Hindu supremacist warcry “Jai Shri Ram.” On March 5, in Durg, Chhattisgarh, Hindu militants from the Bajrang Dal attacked a church, injuring dozens by pelting stones.¹⁵⁷

On April 16, a Hindu extremist mob vandalized a Christian-owned school, breaking windows, pelting stones at a statue of Mother Teresa, and assaulting a Christian priest¹⁵⁸ in Telangana’s

¹⁵⁵ <https://theobserverpost.com/more-than-150-attacks-on-christians-in-india-in-just-75-days-of-2024-ucf>

¹⁵⁶ <https://www.ucanews.com/news/21-indian-christians-hurt-in-clashes-over-church-land-row/104148>

¹⁵⁷ <https://iamc.com/hindu-militants-attack-christians-church-over-alleged-religious-conversion>

¹⁵⁸ <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/hindu-mob-vandalizes-catholic-school-in-telangana-fir-filed-against-school-no-cases-against-mob>

Mancherial. The mob attacked after accusing the school management of not permitting Hindu students to wear their religious garments, an accusation that has been denied.

Hindu extremists also attacked and shut down Christian prayer meets, which are often held in homes and other private spaces, over allegations of forced conversions. Several of these attacks resulted in Christians being arrested. Between January 3-5, a string of such incidents occurred in Madhya Pradesh. Police arrested one Christian in Alirajpur on January 3, and a number of Christians in Khargone on January 4.¹⁵⁹ On January 5, also in Khargone, two Christians were arrested after Hindu extremists attacked a prayer meet.¹⁶⁰



On the 18th of January, in Jashpur, Chattisgarh, Hindu extremists barged into a home where a prayer meet was being held, accusing the occupants of forced conversions and leading to the arrest of a pastor.¹⁶¹



In Balrampur, Chhattisgarh on January 31, members of the extremist group Hindu Mahasabha attacked a Christian prayer meet over allegations of forced conversions, landing five Christians in police custody.¹⁶²

On February 6, Uttar Pradesh police raided a church after Hindu supremacists alleged that Christians were forcibly converting Hindus inside, leading to the arrest of a pastor and nine others. The majority of the congregants were from caste-oppressed communities.¹⁶³

On February 12, in Bharatpur, Rajasthan, members of the Hindu group

¹⁵⁹ <https://iamc.com/muslim-man-assaulted-left-for-dead-by-hindu-extremist-cow-vigilantes-in-gujarat>

¹⁶⁰ <https://scroll.in/latest/1061690/mp-two-arrested-for-alleged-forced-conversion-after-hindutva-group-disrupts-christian-event>

¹⁶¹ <https://iamc.com/hindu-extremist-cow-vigilantes-assault-truck-driver-in-rajasthan>

¹⁶² <https://hindutvawatch.org/hindu-mahasabha-members-disrupted-a-christian-prayer-meet-over-allegations-of-religious-conversions>

¹⁶³ <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/priest-among-10-arrested-for-conversion-bid-at-up-church-101707248703838.html>

Vishwa Hindu Parishad disrupted an event organized by Christians in a hotel, after which police detained nearly 20 people for questioning.¹⁶⁴



In Uttar Pradesh's Kaushambi, police arrested eight Christians over allegations of forced religious conversion, on April 3.¹⁶⁵ Two days later, police in Uttar Pradesh's Raebareli detained six Christians after the individuals visited people's homes.¹⁶⁶

Like Muslims, Christians were also the target of hate speech by Hindu extremist leaders and politicians. On January 1 in Madhya Pradesh, Hindu militant group Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) leader Azad Prem Singh called for violence against Christian missionaries.¹⁶⁷

On January 12, BJP politician Bhojraj Nag threatened that people who convert



to Christianity would not be allowed to live in Madhya Pradesh's Bastar district, claiming that the Christian community was involved in forced religious conversions of Hindus.¹⁶⁸ On Feb 24, in Maharashtra's Ahmednagar, BJP politician Mahesh Landge gave a speech supporting violence against Christians.¹⁶⁹



On March 5th, in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh, Hindu preacher Swami Sachchidanand called on Hindus to

¹⁶⁴ <https://hindutvawatch.org/vishwa-hindu-parishad-members-disrupt-an-event-organized-by-members-of-christian-community>

¹⁶⁵ <https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/lucknow-news/eight-held-for-illegal-conversion-in-u-p-s-kaushambi-101711993868528.html>

¹⁶⁶ <https://iamc.com/police-arrest-five-muslims-for-organizing-party-with-beef-dishes>

¹⁶⁷ <https://iamc.com/police-arrest-4-after-hindu-supremacists-accuse-christians-of-forced-conversion>

¹⁶⁸ <https://www.hindujagruti.org/news/195124.html>

¹⁶⁹ <https://hindutvawatch.org/bjp-mla-mahesh-landge-delivers-hate-speech-against-christians>

convert both Muslims and Christians to Hinduism in order to “save Hindus.”¹⁷⁰ On March 6, in Chhattisgarh’s Durg, Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) members organized an anti-Christian rally, where attendees chanted slogans against pastors and accused them of forcibly converting Hindus to Christianity.¹⁷¹



On April 23, during celebrations of a Hindu religious festival in Assam’s Dibrugarh, Hindu supremacist group leader Prakash Rai claimed that Christians were converting Hindus in exchange for money. He then threatened, “The Hindu Kranti Dal will not tolerate this. If the conversion of Hindus continues, the [we] will stop it in our own style.”¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰ <https://hindutvawatch.org/preacher-swami-sachchidanand-weaponizes-history-to-whip-up-hate-against-muslims-and-christians>

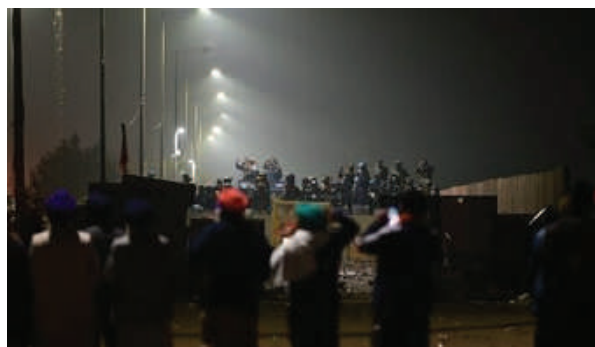
¹⁷¹ hindutvawatch.org/vishwa-hindu-parishad-members-took-out-a-rally-chanting-slogans-against-pastors-over-alleged-religious-conversions

¹⁷² <https://iamc.com/senior-bjp-ministers-repeat-modis-anti-muslim-talking-points-during-election-rallies>

PERSECUTION OF SIKH FARMERS

In February 2024, in a revival of the largely successful farmers' protests of 2021, Sikh farmers from Haryana and Punjab states once again began protesting against the Modi government, organizing a march to the capital city of New Delhi to demand higher prices for their produce.¹⁷³

In response, the state cracked down on protesters through internet shut-downs, the censoring of prominent Sikh activists and journalists on social media, and police brutality, including the use of tear gas, drones, and pellet guns.¹⁷⁴ On February 13, Al Jazeera reported that in order to prevent the farmers' march from entering Delhi, the Modi government barricaded highways with cement blocks and barbed wire.¹⁷⁵



On February 11, the Haryana government imposed internet restrictions on seven districts in the state.¹⁷⁶ On the same day, politician Abhay Singh Chautala shared a video on social media showing Haryana police threatening the residents of a village over loudspeakers, ordering them not participate in the farmers protest under threat of their passports being canceled.¹⁷⁷

On February 16, Punjab Health Minister Balbir Singh reported that three protestors had lost an eye after being shot with bullets and pellet guns by police. Nearly 100 others were hospitalized with serious injuries.¹⁷⁸

On February 21, 24-year-old Shubh Karan Singh was killed after Haryana

¹⁷³ <https://apnews.com/article/india-farmers-protest-minimum-crop-prices-72f48ace2126ccf933675b76ff83944a>

¹⁷⁴ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/02/29/india-protect-farmers-right-peaceful-protest>

¹⁷⁵ <https://www.aljazeera.com/gallery/2024/2/13/tight-security-and-barricades-as-indian-farmers-march-to-new-delhi>

¹⁷⁶ <https://tinyurl.com/3394buv6>

¹⁷⁷ <https://tinyurl.com/mr3c365r>

¹⁷⁸ <https://news.abplive.com/news/india/farmers-protest-punjab-haryana-delhi-border-chandigarh-1664895>

police dropped tear gas shells on protesters. The Quint, an Indian news outlet, reported that Singh died from a bullet wound to the head.¹⁷⁹ On the same day, the Global Government Affairs team at X (formerly Twitter) reported that the Indian government had ordered them to take down the accounts of journalists, farmers union leaders, and other Sikh activists who were posting regularly about the farmers' protests.¹⁸⁰



Amid the protests, Hindu supremacists and BJP supporters referred to protesting Sikhs as “separatists” and “terrorists” as a way to demonize the group as a whole. On February 20, a Sikh superintendent of police in West Bengal state was called a “Khalistani”, a term that is often used synonymously with “separatist”, by BJP leaders Agnimitra Paul, Shankar Ghosh, and Suwendu Adhikari.¹⁸¹ In response, local Sikhs held protests against the BJP leaders in question.

¹⁷⁹ <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/24-year-old-farmer-killed-in-haryana-police-violence-at-khanauri-border>

¹⁸⁰ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/02/29/india-protect-farmers-right-peaceful-protest>

¹⁸¹ <https://www.newslaundry.com/2024/02/22/respected-across-ranks-khalistani-slur-row-puts-sikh-ips-officer-in-focus>

CRACKDOWN ON OPPOSITION LEADERS & GOVERNMENT CRITICS

In several alarming incidents leading up to India's general elections, the Modi government abused government agencies to crack down on prominent opposition parties, politicians, and critics. According to Amnesty International, such crackdowns have "reached a crisis point" due to the repeated weaponization of "various financial and terrorism laws to systematically crackdown on human rights defenders, activists, critics... [and] political opposition."¹⁸²



On January 31, politician Hemant Soren was arrested for corruption by the Indian government's Enforcement Directorate (ED) just hours after stepping down as Chief Minister of Jharkhand state.¹⁸³ Notably, Soren's party, the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha

(JMM), is part of the 27-party INDIA coalition, which sought to challenge the BJP's hold on power in India during elections. The JMM accused Modi and the BJP of weaponizing government agencies to target opposition leaders ahead of election season. As of May 20, Soren remains imprisoned.



On February 16, the opposition Indian National Congress party announced that its bank accounts, containing 2.1 billion rupees (\$25 million), were frozen by the income tax (IT) department just ahead of general elections. Prominent Congress leader Rahul Gandhi declared the move "a criminal action on the Congress party done by the prime minister and the home minister."¹⁸⁴

¹⁸² <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/03/india-crackdown-on-opposition-reaches-a-crisis-point-ahead-of-national-elections>

¹⁸³ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-68163338>

¹⁸⁴ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/3/21/indias-congress-party-accuses-government-of-freezing-accounts-before-polls>

On February 19, a Delhi court denied Muslim student leader Sharjeel Imam bail in a case under the draconian Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA), despite finding no evidence of incitement to violence in his speeches criticizing India's anti-Muslim Citizenship law. Imam was arrested in January 2020 due to his involvement in the 2019 anti-CAA protests and has been imprisoned since.¹⁸⁵



On March 21, prominent opposition politician and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal became the first sitting Chief Minister to be arrested over corruption allegations by India's financial crimes agency. Kejriwal leads the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), which, like the JMM, is part of the INDIA alliance. Kejriwal has called his arrest "politically motivated", while other AAP leaders have claimed that the arrest is meant to prevent Kejriwal from participating in elections.¹⁸⁶

On the 27th of April, Usman Ghani, the BJP's Minority Morcha District President in Rajasthan's Bikaner, was ousted from the party and arrested for criticizing Modi's hate speech labeling Muslims as "infiltrators" during a campaign rally. After Ghani pointed out that the BJP "is anticipated to lose" a number of seats in Rajasthan and should therefore refrain from isolating minorities, the BJP claimed Ghani had attempted to "discredit" the party and breached "discipline."¹⁸⁷

On March 29, a Gujarat court sentenced former police officer and political prisoner Sanjiv Bhatt to an additional 20 years in prison on top of his existing life sentence, declaring him guilty of involvement in a fabricated drug case.¹⁸⁸ Bhatt is a whistleblower and the last surviving witness who can testify to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's orchestration of the 2002 Gujarat pogrom, during which Hindu mobs slaughtered nearly 2,000 Muslim men, women, and children.

¹⁸⁵ <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/his-speeches-were-so-powerful-delhi-court-says-while-denying-bail-to-sharjeel-imam>

¹⁸⁶ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-68634000>

¹⁸⁷ <https://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2024/Apr/28/bjp-bikaner-minority-cell-president-expelled-and-arrested-after-criticising-pm-modi>

¹⁸⁸ <https://www.siasat.com/former-ips-sanjiv-bhatt-gets-20-years-in-jail-in-1996-drug-planting-case-3000337/>

CENSORSHIP AND TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION

Since the beginning of the year, India witnessed at least 134 instances of censorship, according to a study by the watchdog group Free Speech Collective.¹⁸⁹ In several cases, the Modi government engaged in transnational repression by blocking online platforms and social media accounts run by individuals based outside of India, including in the US and Canada.



On January 17, the Modi government canceled the license to receive foreign funds for the Centre for Policy Research (CPR), India's leading policy research institution, after it published reports on "current affairs programs".¹⁹⁰ The government claimed

that in commenting on current affairs, the institute had violated the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA), a widely criticized law that allows the government to block foreign donations from NGOs under vague and overbroad pretexts.¹⁹¹

On January 29, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEITY) blocked access to India Hate Lab and Hindutva Watch, two websites devoted to tracking hate speech run by US-based journalist Raqib Hameed Naik. Both websites were blocked under section 69A of the Information Technology (IT) Act, which allows the government to ban any content that it deems a threat to the "interest of sovereignty, integrity, and security" of India.¹⁹²

On February 13, prominent alternative news portal Caravan Magazine was ordered by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) to take down an article documenting the Indian military's torture of civilians in Jammu within 24

¹⁸⁹ <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/india-witnessed-134-instances-of-free-speech-violations-this-year-free-speech-collective>

¹⁹⁰ <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/centre-for-policy-researchs-fcra-license-cancelled-by-home-ministry>

¹⁹¹ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/press-release/2022/01/india-should-stop-using-abusive-foreign-funding-law>

¹⁹² <https://aje.io/63bq30>

¹⁹³ <https://www.thenewsminute.com/news/govt-asks-caravan-to-take-down-story-on-torture-by-army-within-24-hours-uses-it-act>

hours.¹⁹³ On February 14 and 19, during the farmers' protest, MEITY blocked at least 177 social media accounts and web links under section 69A of the IT Act, acting on requests from the Ministry of Home Affairs.¹⁹⁴



On March 13, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC News) reported that on MEITY's orders, YouTube blocked the channel's investigative documentary on the Indian government's assassination of Canadian citizen and Sikh separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar.¹⁹⁵ X was also ordered to remove links to watch the documentary in India.¹⁹⁶

YouTube channels known for posting content critical of the government were also targeted ahead of election season. On April 3, YouTube blocked the news channels Bolta Hindustan and National

Dastak under orders from the MIB, citing section 69A of the IT Act and Rule 15(2) of the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules. National Dastak editor Shambhu Kumar Singh stated after the block, "National Dastak raises the voice of the Dalits, backward, and marginalized people of the country. We report on their issues. The government has a problem with this." Similarly, Bolta Hindustan's Samar Raj called the block a "political decision."¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁴ <https://freespeechcollective.in/crossing-the-line18th-lok-sabha-elections-and-free-speech-in-india>

¹⁹⁵ <https://cbc.ca/news/canada/india-fifth-estate-video-story-1.7142721>

¹⁹⁶ <https://thequint.com/tech-and-auto/tech-news/national-dastak-bolta-hindustan-youtube-channel-blocked-legal-analysis-it-act-2000>

¹⁹⁷ <https://thequint.com/tech-and-auto/tech-news/national-dastak-bolta-hindustan-youtube-channel-blocked-legal-analysis-it-act-2000>

JAMMU AND KASHMIR

In 2024, the Muslim-majority region of Jammu and Kashmir began its fourth year under the full control of Prime Minister Modi's government after the region was stripped of its special autonomous status in August 2019. Kashmiris remained subjected to increased government surveillance, wanton arrests, and other human rights abuses. Journalists and human rights defenders remained particularly vulnerable to arrest under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA), India's draconian anti-terror law.

On February 5, the Modi government introduced the Local Bodies Laws (Amendment) Bill, which would further disenfranchise Kashmiri Muslims by offering government reservations to pro-BJP and upper-caste ethnic groups in the region.¹⁹⁸ On February 7, the government imposed an internet shutdown in Kashmir's Poonch and Rajouri districts after civilians held protests against the bill.¹⁹⁹

Throughout February, a number

of Kashmiri Muslims were arbitrarily arrested, and raids were conducted by Indian government agencies on several occasions. On February 9, Mirwaz Umar Farooq, the sermon-giver of the prominent Jamia Masjid in Srinagar, was placed under house arrest to prevent him from delivering a special sermon on a Muslim holiday.²⁰⁰ Between February 11 and 15, five individuals were arrested over terrorism allegations.²⁰¹ On February 16, Jammu and Kashmir Police detained 50 trade union activists in Srinagar who had planned a protest in solidarity with the Sikh farmers' protests.²⁰²



On February 26, the Modi government barred congregational prayers at the Jamia Masjid ahead of the Muslim

¹⁹⁸ <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/centre-moves-bill-to-provide-reservation-to-obcs-in-local-bodies-in-jk/article67814697.ece>

¹⁹⁹ <https://thekashmiriyat.co.uk/internet-suspended-in-poonch-and-rajouri-districts-of-jammu-kashmir>

²⁰⁰ <https://networkknt.com/2024/02/mirwaiz-barred-from-giving-sermon-at-jamia-masjid>

²⁰¹ assets-global.website-files.com/6031a13f23a42e1120a8c37c/66185b345fa91d3bb0f05397_Kashmir%20Updates%20February%202024.pdf

²⁰² <https://kashmiobserver.net/2024/02/16/50-detained-in-srinagar-ahead-of-protests-in-farmers-support>

holiday Shab-e-Barat, during which observers spend time in congregational worship. Mirwaz Umar Farooq was also placed under house arrest again to prevent him from delivering a special sermon for the holiday.²⁰³ On February 28, the Modi government banned the Muslim Conference Jammu and Kashmir, a political party that supports Kashmiri self-determination, for five years. After the ban, Home Minister Amit Shah took to social media to suggest that the party was part of a “terror network.”²⁰⁴

On February 29, Kashmiri Muslim journalist Asif Sultan was re-arrested just five hours after being released from prison, where he had spent over 2,000 days over baseless charges of terrorism.²⁰⁵ Sultan was initially arrested



in August 2018 after writing an article on the death of Kashmiri militant leader Burhan Wani, who was killed in a clash with Indian government forces. In March, Prime Minister Modi visited Kashmir. Ahead of his visit, thousands of police troops and paramilitary forces were deployed in Srinagar, leading to civilians being arbitrarily detained, frisked, and harassed in the name of security.²⁰⁶ Despite Modi’s unpopularity in Kashmir, 13 regional government departments were ordered to send their employees to the Prime Minister’s rally in Srinagar on March 4.²⁰⁷



On March 9, a Muslim man, Habbibullah Shergojri, was killed after being run over by officers of India’s Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) in a police vehicle. The vehicle dragged Shergojri for a few meters, causing extensive damage to his face. Similar cases of

²⁰³ <https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/chandigarh-news/shabebarat-observed-in-kashmir-prayers-not-allowed-at-jamia-masjid-101708973458715.html>

²⁰⁴ <https://www.livemint.com/news/india/govt-bans-two-factions-of-muslim-conference-jammu-and-kashmir-sumji-faction-bhat-faction-11709129816023.html>

²⁰⁵ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-68508882>

²⁰⁶ <https://www.voanews.com/a/security-tightened-some-residents-detained-ahead-of-modi-s-kashmir-visit/7516723.html>

²⁰⁷ <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/we-want-justice-man-crushed-to-death-by-crpf-vehicle-in-north-kashmir/#:~:text=On%209%20>

Kashmiri civilians being killed by Indian police vehicles have been reported since 2019.²⁰⁸



On March 20, senior Kashmiri journalist and human rights defender Irfan Mehraj completed his first year in jail after being arrested under baseless terrorism charges by the Indian government. In March 2023, Mehraj was summoned for questioning and then detained by India's National Investigation Agency (NIA), falsely charged under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) with 'sedition' and 'funding terror activities.' According to the Kashmir Law and Justice Project, Mehraj was targeted for his close association with Kashmiri human rights defender and prisoner of conscience Khurram Parvez, who has been in jail for over two years under similar charges. Both men remain in pre-trial detention in a maximum-security prison in New Delhi.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁸ maktoobmedia.com/india/we-want-justice-man-crushed-to-death-by-crpf-vehicle-in-north-kashmir

²⁰⁹ kljp.org/articles/immediately-release-irfan-mehraj---a-call-from-civil-society-on-the-first-anniversary-of-his-continuing-arbitrary-detention

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Election Commission of India should take immediate action against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and all BJP elected officials and candidates who have engaged in anti-minority hate speech in flagrant violation of the law.
- All opposition politicians who have been imprisoned for participating in democratic elections and challenging the BJP's hold on power must be released immediately. All civil society leaders and journalists who have been jailed in retaliation for criticizing the government must also be immediately released.
- The Indian government must prioritize the creation and enforcement of comprehensive legislation aimed at safeguarding the rights of religious minorities. Such laws should explicitly address hate speech, communal violence, and targeted attacks, ensuring that those responsible are held to account. Additionally, the legislation should affirm the right to freedom of religion, allowing individuals to practice their faith without fear of persecution or coercion. By enhancing legal protections, the government can send a decisive message that any form of discrimination or violence against religious minorities is unacceptable.
- To effectively tackle human rights violations and ensure unbiased investigations, independent oversight bodies should be established. These bodies should be tasked with monitoring and reporting instances of abuse and discrimination against religious minorities, with the authority to conduct thorough investigations, prosecute offenders, and recommend preventative measures. This approach will demonstrate the government's dedication to upholding human rights and will help restore trust within religious minority communities.
- The Union government must pass a national anti-lynching bill to protect religious minorities from Hindu militias and cow vigilante groups.

- The Citizenship Amendment Act, the Uniform Civil Code, and other laws that disenfranchise minorities must be revoked.
- BJP-led state governments must uphold every citizen's right to a safe home and immediately stop bulldozing Muslim homes, livelihoods, and places of worship in the name of anti-encroachment drives.
- The international community should actively engage with the Indian government to express concerns regarding the treatment of religious minorities and increasingly frequent cases of transnational repression.
- If the Indian government fails to address these issues, sanctions or trade measures should be considered. The President of the United States has the authority to impose sanctions on individuals involved in severe human rights violations through the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act. The Biden administration should consider sanctioning leaders and members of RSS, VHP, Bajrang Dal, and other Hindu militant groups, including their affiliates in the United States.
- Additionally, the US Department of State should heed the United States Commission for International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) recommendation to designate India as a Country of Particular Concern (CPC) for its serious violations of human rights and religious freedoms. Human rights and religious freedoms should be integral components of the US-India Strategic Dialogue.