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HUMAN RIGHTS & RELIGIOUS
FREEDOM IN INDIA



The Indian American Muslim Council (IAMC) is a Washington, D.C.-based advocacy organization established in 2002, with chapters across the United States. A 501(c)3 tax-exempt non-profit, IAMC is the largest advocacy and human rights organization representing the Indian Muslim diaspora.

The core mission of Indian American Muslim Council is 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 hateful ideologies responsible for violence in India;

To increase awareness about India in order to improve cultural and trade relations between the United States and the Republic of India.

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Executive Summary

Human rights conditions for minorities in India continued to deteriorate throughout 2024 with the introduction of new discriminatory policies, surges in anti-minority violence and lynchings, police brutality, hate speech, and voter suppression during elections.

Despite the ruling Hindu supremacist Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) significant loss of seats in India's general elections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's third term ushered in a new wave of violence against Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Dalits, and other minorities.

Violence was often carried out by members of Hindu militant groups, including the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), and the Bajrang Dal. Throughout the year, Hindu militant mob violence against Muslim individuals, neighborhoods, and places of worship remained pervasive and surged around Hindu festivals. In January, the consecration of the Ram Temple in Uttar Pradesh's Ayodhya, which was built on the site of the demolished Babri Mosque, sparked nationwide violence against Muslims. During elections, hate speech ran rampant while opposition parties were suppressed.

In addition to controlling the mainstream media, the Modi regime abused government

agencies to jail opposition leaders, freeze the Congress Party's bank accounts, and exclude Muslim voters.

Modi and BJP candidates regularly delivered anti-Muslim hate speeches in clear violation of Indian election laws, which prohibit speeches that take a communal (i.e. polarizing between different groups) angle as a means to win votes. At the polls, Muslims reported voter suppression in the form of violence, intimidation, and manipulation of voter registries. Police brutality was also widespread throughout the year, including reports of police carrying out targeted suppression against Muslim voters.

Police opened fire on Muslim protestors in two major incidents, first in Uttarakhand's Haldwani in February, then in Uttar Pradesh's Sambhal in November. In both cases, multiple Muslims were killed, and state governments cracked down on the affected Muslim communities in the aftermath.

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

1. Anti-Minority Violence & Discrimination

India is home to one of the largest Muslim populations in the world, with 200 million people (about 14% of the overall population) comprising the nation's second-largest religious group and largest religious minority.^[1] Under the Hindu supremacist government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his far-right Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Muslims have faced discriminatory laws and policies, judicial discrimination, rampant hate speech, and increasing violence. Anti-Muslim hate speech is widespread in Hindu supremacist events and election rallies, BJP leaders' speeches, mainstream news media, and social media platforms.

1.1 Mob Lynchings

Mob lynchings surged in the weeks after Modi was elected for a third term as prime minister, beginning on June 6 with the murders of 23-year-old Chand Miyan, 35-year-old Guddu Khan, and 23-year-old Saddam Qureshi in Odisha state. The victims were lynched by cow vigilantes who had followed their truck and planted nails in their path. Their bodies were found beneath a 30-foot-high bridge, from which they had jumped or been thrown.^[2]

On June 19, a Muslim man, Mohammad Farid, was murdered by a Hindu supremacist mob in Uttar Pradesh over alleged theft.^[3] A mob of at least twelve people punched, kicked, and beat him with batons and hockey sticks until he died. Starting that same day, West Bengal state saw a string of mob lynchings, during which four people from marginalized groups were lynched and 10 people were injured in 12 separate incidents over the course of two weeks.^[4] All of the victims were falsely labeled as thieves by Hindu mobs before being attacked. On June 22, 23-year-old Salman Vohra was beaten to death by a mob of Hindu extremists at a cricket tournament in Gujarat. Witnesses reported that the mob had been angered by the fact that Muslim players were excelling in the match. His death left his pregnant wife and child without a husband and father.^[5] Around the same time, a Muslim mechanic, Irshad Alam, was lynched by a mob in West Bengal's Kolkata after he was accused of stealing a cell phone. A mob of fourteen people held him captive in a hostel while they beat him with bats and sticks.^[6]

On June 26, police arrested BJP leader Raja Agarwal and four others in connection with the mob lynching of three Muslim men in Chattisgarh's Raipur. All five perpetrators were mem-

bers of Hindu extremist groups. Hindu militant groups later held a rally in support of the murderers.^[7] On June 30, a Hindu mob in Jharkhand lynched an imam who had been involved in a bike accident. The victim, Maulana Sahabuddin, accidentally collided his bike with an



Mob lynching victim Maulana Sahabuddin

auto carrying a Hindu woman, leaving her with a minor injury. The mob beat him to death with bats and sticks over this minor accident, ignoring the woman's pleas to stop beating him.^[8]

On August 27, Hindu extremists in Haryana lynched a 22-year-old Muslim migrant worker after accusing him of cooking beef, consumption of which is forbidden in Hinduism, in his shanty. The victim, Sabir Malik, was a rag-seller from West Bengal state who had migrated to Haryana with his wife and two-year-old daughter. A witness reported that Malik was attacked before being abducted on a motorcycle by the extremists, who then beat him to death.^[9] Laboratory tests later confirmed that the meat in Malik's home was not beef; the victim was killed over a false allegation.^[10]

On October 21, a 22-year-old Muslim man, Zahid, was abducted and beaten to the point of severe injury by Hindu extremists in Rajasthan's Jhunjhunu. The victim died a week later during treatment.^[11] On November 15, in Karnataka's Belagavi, a minor traffic collision escalated into the mob lynching of 23-year-old Muslim truck driver Azim Malikrihan Ippery. A Hindu mob pursued his vehicle for over 1.5 kilometers before intercepting it, dragging the victim out, and beating him to death.^[12] On December 18, Sheikh Tajuddin, a 48-year-old Muslim man, succumbed to his injuries six days after being brutally beaten with sticks and rods by a Hindu mob in Jharkhand's Saraikela-Kharsawan district.

The victim's family reported that he was attacked for being visibly Muslim.^[13] On December 31, a Muslim man from Uttar Pradesh's Moradabad, Shahid Din, died after being brutally beaten by extremists who had accused him of slaughtering a stray calf.^[14]

1.2 Cow Vigilantism

Cow vigilantism is a form of Hindu extremist violence stemming from the Hindu religious belief that cows are a sacred animal. Cow vigilantes, often operating in armed groups or

militias, attack and often kill individuals who have been accused of buying, selling, or eating beef. While the victims are primarily Muslim cattle transporters, cow vigilantes also regularly attack families accused of possessing beef, food workers, and even individuals with no connection to the cattle trade.

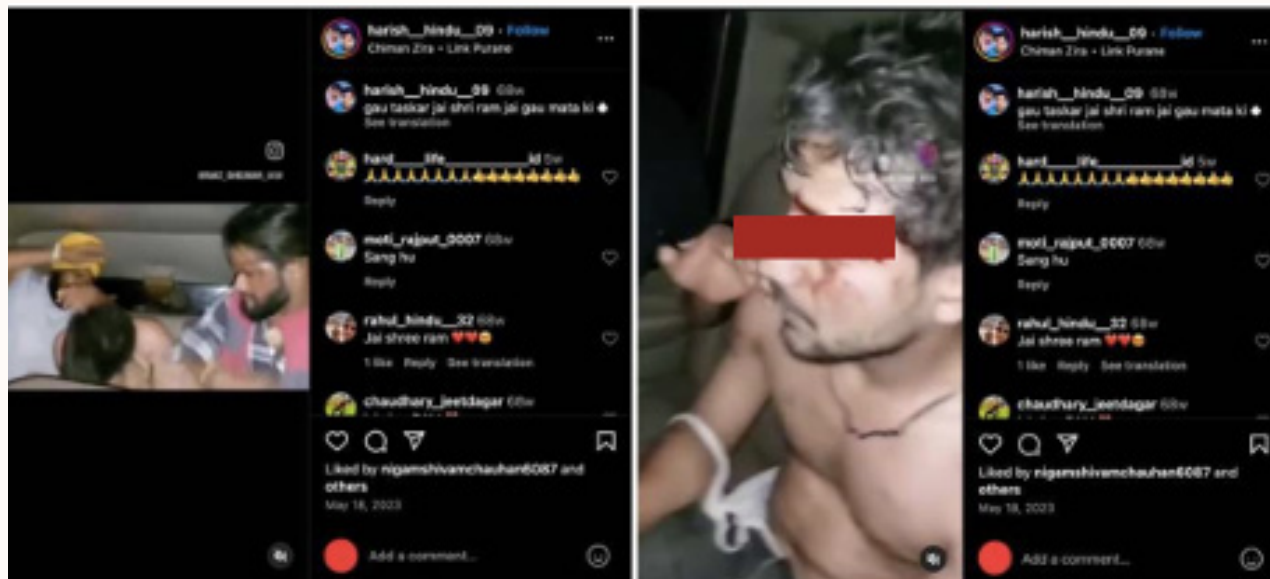
On January 2, in Gujarat's Bharuch, cow vigilantes brutally assaulted a Muslim man, Aslam, over allegations that he was transporting cattle. Aslam's unconscious body was thrown into a forest and left for dead. He was transferred to a hospital in critical condition.^[15] On January 29, Hindu extremists 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.^[16] On March 29, cow vigilante groups based in Haryana crossed the state border into Uttar Pradesh to seize a 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.^[17] On August 26, a 55-year-old Muslim woman died from a panic attack in Uttar Pradesh's Bijnor district after police officials stormed her home and ransacked it, following a baseless tip-off that beef was stored in her house.^[18]

On August 30, in an incident that sparked outrage across India, a group of Hindu supremacists on a train beat a passenger, 72-year-old Ashraf Ali Sayyed Hussain, who was traveling to visit his daughter in Maharashtra's Kalyan. A viral video of the attack shows the extremists—each on their way to take an exam to become policemen—accusing the elderly man of carrying beef with him on the train. The extremists then began striking him on his face and chest and threatening to throw him off the train and rape the women in his family. Hussain was left with a black eye and a swollen face. At the police station, he was unable to speak due to the trauma of the incident.^[19]

On November 20, the US-based Center for the Study of Organized Hate (CSOH) published a report titled "Streaming Violence: How Instagram Fuels Cow Vigilantism in India," exposing the platform's role in facilitating the promotion of violence, anti-Muslim propaganda, and fundraising by cow vigilante groups. The study analyzed over 1,000 Instagram accounts linked to such groups and documented 167 posts containing explicit violence, none of which were removed by the platform. The report underscored that vigilante content, including violent reels, amassed millions of views. It further highlights allegations that state

programs in BJP-led regions have provided indirect support to these groups, effectively using them as proxies for law enforcement.^[20]



Videos posted to Instagram by cow vigilantes

1.3 Discrimination & Violence

In 2024, anti-Muslim violence and discrimination remained rampant, with interpersonal violence and discrimination largely carried out by radicalized Hindu civilians and individuals affiliated with Hindu militant groups. While Muslim men were most often targeted in these attacks, violence was also directed towards Muslim children, women, the elderly, and families.

Muslims were frequently targeted over accusations of petty crimes, disputes, or displays of faith, both in public and in private. Muslim men were often targeted for interacting with Hindu women and accused by Hindu mobs as “love jihad,” a baseless conspiracy that claims Muslim men have an agenda to seduce and convert Hindu women.

On February 10, a Muslim family— Asif, Jasmine, and their children—were traveling on a train when they were ordered by a group of young Hindu extremists, who noticed that Jasmine was the only hijabi woman in the train car, to chant “Jai Shri Ram” (“Glory to Lord Ram”), a slogan commonly associated with mob lynchings.^[21] 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.^[22]

On March 18, Hindu militants from the Bajrang Dal abducted and assaulted a 25-year-old Muslim student in Karnataka's Yadgir after he allegedly spoke to a Hindu woman.^[23] The victim reported that he was leaving his university when nine militants kidnapped him. The



A Hindu mob beats a Muslim man, Asif, in front of his family

militants took him to a room, where they beat him for five hours and threatened to kill him if he spoke to the woman again. Weeks later, on June 3, a Hindu extremist mob in Uttar Pradesh's Aligarh stripped a young Muslim man naked and beat him over accusations of love jihad.^[24] On July 2, a 36-year-old Muslim man was beaten by Hindu extremist passengers on a bus journey from Karnataka.

The victim had fallen sick while on the bus, and when he asked for a medicine tablet, two other passengers asked him his name. Upon learning his religious identity, Hindu passengers

began to beat him with sticks and belts, calling him a thief. Despite the victim's attempts to escape, he was again assaulted by Hindu locals from the area, incited by the other passengers.^[25]

On August 26, Hindu residents of a housing complex in Uttar Pradesh's Ghaziabad disrupted the recitation of the Qur'an by madrasa students in one of the neighboring apartments.^[26] The students had been invited for a recitation event held by a Muslim woman in the hopes of blessing her sick daughter. The Hindu residents accused the family of attempting to convert the flat into a madrasa and went on to claim that recitation couldn't be held without permission from authorities. Police then registered a complaint against the students who recited the Qur'an.

On October 26, in Uttar Pradesh's Aligarh, a Muslim man who was driving his sick father to the hospital by scooter was brutally assaulted by a mob of Hindu extremists, who shouted "kill this bearded man" after he was involved in a minor collision with another vehicle.^[27]

On October 29, a viral video surfaced out of Mumbai showing a Muslim woman being kicked out of line at a food distribution outside of a hospital. An organizer of the distribution, which was aimed at feeding patients and their families, demanded that the woman chant "Jai Shri Ram" if she wanted food. When she refused, he threatened to kick her, saying, "Those who won't say Ram should not stand in line."^[28]

In November, a Muslim family enjoying a picnic in BJP-ruled Gujarat's Gandhinagar was violently attacked by a mob following a disagreement with a train ride operator. The assailants, armed with knives and sticks, injured children, women, and men alike.^[29]

On December 6, a Muslim couple was forced to abandon plans to move into a newly-purchased home in Uttar Pradesh's Moradabad after Hindu supremacist neighbors held protests for nearly a week over the planned move. One of the residents, Megha Arora, was quoted as saying, "We cannot tolerate a Muslim family living right in front of our local temple. This is also a question of the safety of our women [...] We cannot allow people from another faith to come and live here."^[30] On the same day, in Uttarakhand's Dehradun, Hindu militants held a protest against a Muslim congregation for Friday prayers, during which the extremists gave anti-Muslim hate speeches over loudspeakers and called the congregants "jihadis." Following the protest, police put a ban on Friday prayers in the area.^[31]

On December 13, in Uttar Pradesh's Aligarh, a mob of Hindu militants protested outside

the post-wedding reception of an interfaith couple who had recently gotten married in the United States, calling the marriage “love jihad.” The militants threatened violence at the event and demanded that authorities intervene to shut it down.^[32]

1.4 Illegal and Punitive Demolitions

Demolitions of Muslim-owned properties, including homes, shops, mosques, and shrines, grew more frequent throughout the year. Amnesty International has criticized state BJP governments’ use of targeted demolitions against minority communities—known colloquially as “bulldozer justice”—as a violation of international law.^[33]

While India’s Supreme Court ruled on November 13 that punitive demolitions are unconstitutional and that issuing a demolition notice in accordance with the rule of law is mandatory, politicians and civic officials have continued to respond to pressure from Hindu supremacist groups and illegally demolish Muslim-owned properties.^[34]



A demolition drive in Uttar Pradesh’s Akbar Nagar

Following two days of violent celebrations around the consecration of the Ram Temple in January, officials demolished at least 15 Muslim-owned buildings in the Mumbai suburb of Mira Road, a Muslim-majority area.^[35] On January 24, Mumbai officials bulldozed around 40 shops on Mohammed Ali Road, another Muslim-majority area. Both areas were the target of Hindu supremacist mob violence.^[36] Between May and June, authorities in both Assam and Uttar Pradesh carried out mass demolition drives in predominantly Muslim neighborhoods, rendering tens of thousands

homeless. Specifically, these drives affected 2,000 predominantly Muslim families in Assam’s Dholpur on May 21, 10,000 residents in Uttar Pradesh’s Lucknow on June 10, and 8,000 Muslims in Assam’s Morigaon on June 24. In all three cases, the neighborhoods were declared “illegal encroachments.”^[37] In at least one reported case in Lucknow, a man committed suicide after losing his livelihood and being forced to live in a tent.^[38]

On June 16, in Madhya Pradesh’s Mandla, officials bulldozed the homes of 11 Muslim families after police claimed they had found beef stored in their refrigerators—before testing the meat samples found in their homes.^[39] Around 50 people were left homeless, with victims reporting that their families and belongings were left on the road, struggling to find food to eat, with children left “crying in pain” due to the heat.^[40]

In the early hours of September 28, officials in Gujarat’s Gir Somnath demolished a Muslim shrine that was over a thousand years old, along with a mosque, graveyard, and several Muslim-owned homes as part of an “anti-encroachment drive.” Police also arrested 150 Muslims who protested the demolition, which was carried out in flagrant defiance of a Supreme Court order staying all unauthorized demolitions nationwide.^[41]



Bulldozers deployed against a historic Muslim shrine in Gujarat’s Gir Somnath

On November 20, BJP lawmaker Pradeep Patel was detained by police in Madhya Pradesh’s Manganj for driving a bulldozer towards a predominantly Muslim settlement near a temple. Days later, however, civic officials followed through on Patel’s threats, demolishing several homes in the area.^[42] Patel showed no remorse for his clear violation of the Supreme Court’s ruling against illegal demolitions, saying he would “do it again.”^[43]

On November 30, Madhya Pradesh officials in Khandwa again defied the Supreme Court

ruling, demolishing several Muslim-owned slaughterhouses after labeling them “illegal constructions.” The owners of the facilities reported that they had only been given a demolition notice the night before, and at least one individual had paperwork proving that his slaughterhouse had been constructed legally.^[44]

1.5 Attacks on Places of Worship

Hindu supremacists targeted mosques in a variety of ways throughout 2024, including demolitions, legal cases seeking control over certain historic mosques, and the parading of Hindu religious processions 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”).^[45]

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, which Hindu extremists have been seeking to convert to a temple for years.^[46] 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.^[47]

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 a saint, Sheikh Badruddin Shah, is buried.^[48]

On March 19, Hindu extremists opened gunfire outside a mosque in Uttar Pradesh’s Mahoba while worshippers were praying inside.^[49] 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.^[50]

On July 14, a Hindu extremist mob, led by a former lawmaker, destroyed parts of a mosque using sledgehammers and attacked around 50-60 Muslim-owned homes in Maharashtra’s Kolhapur. The mob also attacked at least 40 Muslims, including children, before going on to attack Muslim homes in neighboring areas, where they set a house on fire along with several

vehicles.^[51]

In September, Hindu supremacist groups in Uttarakhand's Uttarkashi held a protest seeking the demolition of a local mosque, which police later confirmed was built on land legally acquired by the town's Muslim community. However, Hindu supremacist groups escalated their complaints, culminating in a protest against the mosque that turned violent on October 24. Several people, including police officers, were injured.^[52]

On October 13, in Uttar Pradesh's Barabanki, a Hindu supremacist mob deliberately held a ceremony with an idol outside of a mosque while blasting anti-Muslim music. The mob also vandalized the mosque, throwing shoes and powdered colors into its courtyard.^[53]



Hindu supremacists surround a mosque with Israeli flags and vandalize it

In early November, a man participating in a Hindu religious procession climbed a mosque dome and vandalized it with a saffron flag in Bhagalpur, Bihar.^[54] Identified as Shivam Kumar, the man was cheered on by a crowd of Hindu supremacists waving saffron and Israeli flags to indicate support for the genocide of Palestinians. On November 2, Hindu extremists armed with knives threw explosives at a mosque in Morbi, Gujarat, targeting an elderly Muslim man after prayers.^[55]

On November 19, the Archeological Survey of India (ASI), a body that regularly investigates historic mosques to legitimize claims that they were once Hindu temples, conducted a survey of the centuries-old Shahi Jama Masjid in Uttar Pradesh's Sambhal. The demand for a survey was made by a Hindu supremacist group seeking to seize the place of worship for Hindus by claiming the mosque was built on the ruins of a temple.^[56] Days later, on November 24, a second survey team was sent to the mosque, accompanied by a group of Hindu supremacists chanting "Jai Shri Ram." Police opened fire on the Muslims who had gathered to protest the survey, killing six individuals.^[57]

In December, officials in Uttar Pradesh's Fatehpur demolished a portion of the 180-year-old Noori Jama Masjid after claiming the mosque was "obstructing" a road-widening project. After the demolition, 25,000 people were placed under house arrest to avoid protests and violence.^[58] On December 29, in Uttar Pradesh's Sitapur, officials demolished a 40-year-old Islamic seminary, declaring it was built illegally.^[59]

1.6 Christians

Christians, who make up around 2.4% India's population, contended with routine attacks from both state and non-state actors affiliated with the BJP in 2024. The mere attempt to practice the Christian faith resulted in legal persecution and violence. Christians falsely accused of "forcible conversion" were the victims of Hindu supremacist violence and wanton arrest. 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.^[60] On April 16, a Hindu extremist Wmob vandalized a Christian-owned school, breaking windows, pelting stones at a statue of Mother Teresa, and assaulting a Christian priest in Telangana's Mancherial. The mob attacked after accusing the school administration of not permitting Hindu students to wear their religious garments, an accusation that the school has vehemently denied.^[61]

On June 1, prayer services at a church in a village in Madhya Pradesh state were suspended following a Hindu extremist attack on Christian worshipers. A mob of about 20 villagers, led by members of the Hindu militant group Bajrang Dal, broke into the house of a pastor and began beating the 50 people gathered for prayer, including women and children. The mob also seized a 54-year-old Christian man and pelted him with stones, threatening to kill anyone else who gathered for prayers there again.^[62]

On June 12, in Chhattisgarh's Jagdalpur, Hindu extremists forced Christian families to sign a pact denouncing their religion and convert to Hinduism within 10 days. The same mob beat two Christian victims unconscious, attacked properties, demolished field walls, and destroyed crops, resulting in many thousands of dollars of damage.^[63]

On August 4, around 120 Christian villagers in Odisha's Koraput district were forcefully converted to Hinduism after facing harassment and discrimination from local Hindu supremacist groups and officials. The victims reported that they were barred from accessing a community drinking well, and local leaders had stopped providing them with subsidized foods.^[64]

On November 6, in Chhattisgarh's Ratanpur, Hindu supremacists held a rally decrying the inauguration of a church. Speakers claimed that the church was fostering a "conspiracy to convert Hindus." Police were deployed in the area to prevent an outbreak of violence. On November 10, in Chhattisgarh's Raigarh, BJP leader Anshu Tuteja led a crowd of Hindu supremacists in protesting outside a Christian pastor's house for holding prayer meetings. The protesters accused the pastor of "forced conversions" of Hindus and chanted Hindu supremacist slogans. In the aftermath, police took several Christians into custody.^[65]

Like Muslims, Christians were also the target of hate speeches, with Hindu extremist leaders and politicians calling for violence against Christian worshippers, missionaries, and religious leaders.^[66] 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 Christians were involved in forced religious conversions of Hindus.^[67] 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, then [we] will stop it in our own style."^[68]

Around Christmas, Hindu supremacists attacked several holiday celebrations.^[69] In Uttar Pradesh's Lucknow, a crowd of around 1,000 Hindu supremacists gathered outside a well-known Catholic church to harass people attending a Christmas celebration, chanting praises of Hindu deities and slogans such as, "We are Sanatanis (Hindus), we will not say Merry Christmas, but 'Hare Krishna Hare Ram.'"

In Rajasthan, Hindu militants attacked a Christmas carnival at a school, vandalised decorations, burned posters, and blasted Hindu songs that included the slogan "Jai Shri Ram." In Madhya Pradesh's Indore, a food delivery worker was forced to remove his Santa Claus cos-

tume by a Hindu extremist group.^[70]

On December 27, in Uttar Pradesh’s Fatehpur, Hindu militants shaved the head of a Christian Dalit man, paraded him through the village, and then forced him to convert back to Hinduism at a temple, chanting “Jesus Murdabad,” meaning “defeat to Jesus.”^[71] On December 29, two Christian women from Odisha’s Balasore were beaten and tied to a tree by Hindu militants a day after Christmas over allegations of forced conversions. The victims, according to a local pastor, were dragged out of a house, choked, kicked, and stripped. One of them was hospitalized in critical condition.^[72]

1.7 Sikhs

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.^[73] In response, the state cracked down on protesters through internet shutdowns, the censoring of prominent Sikh activists and journalists on social media, and police brutality, including the use of tear gas, drones, and pellet guns.^[74] 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 13, Al Jazeera reported that in order to prevent the farmers’ march from entering Delhi, the Modi government had barricaded highways with cement blocks and barbed



Sikh protesters fleeing tear gas shells fired by police (AP Photo/Altaf Qadri)

wire.^[75] On February 11, the Haryana government imposed internet restrictions on seven districts in the state.^[76] 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 passport cancellation.^[77]

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.^[78] On February 21, 24-year-old Shubh Karan Singh was killed after Haryana police dropped tear gas shells on protestors. The Quint, an Indian news outlet, reported that Singh died from a bullet wound to the head.^[79] On the same day, the Global Government Affairs team at X 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.^[80]

On April 17, cow vigilantes in Haryana's Sonapat 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 off the victim's turban and used it to bind his feet together.^[81] Sikhs in the diaspora, particularly in the United States and Canada, were also targeted by the Indian government through transnational repression (see section 6).

1.8 Dalits

Dalits, also known as "Untouchables," are a vulnerable minority group in India under the hierarchical caste system. According to the US-based civil rights group Equality Labs, "The caste system consists of graded levels of alleged purity and places people within a certain hierarchy—leaving those in the lowest tier [...] subject to abuse, attacks, and systemic social exclusion." While illegal in India, caste discrimination persists in every sector of Indian society, with Hindu supremacists seeking to reinforce caste hierarchies via anti-Dalit violence and discrimination. This violence persisted throughout 2024.

On January 22, amid celebrations of the Ram Temple consecration, a 17-year-old Dalit student in Karnataka was assaulted by Hindu extremists and forced to chant "Jai Shri Ram" after he posted a WhatsApp status featuring images of Hindu deity Ram and historic Dalit revolutionary B.R. Ambedkar. The extremists claimed the victim was "belittling Lord Ram."^[82]

On February 1, in Rajasthan's Ajmer, a 17-year-old Dalit boy was beaten and urinated upon by a group of men. In a video of the attack, the victim can be seen being forced to kneel and repeat self-deprecating statements.^[83] On February 28, in Uttar Pradesh's Rampur, a 17-year-old Dalit boy was killed and two others were injured in an outbreak of violence after Hindu supremacists protested the installation of a signboard depicting Ambedkar.^[84] On May 20, shortly after India's elections, BJP workers beat a Dalit man in front of his family in Uttar Pradesh's Kaushambi after learning he did not vote for Modi.^[85]

On October 11, a 19-year-old Dalit woman in Madhya Pradesh's Khandwa was set on fire by the son of a man she had accused of sexual harassment, leaving 27% of her body covered in burns.^[86] Instead of condemning the crime, BJP leader Mukesh Tanve defended the accused, claiming the victim had attempted "self-immolation." The accused was jailed, but released on bail.

In schools, Dalit children were subjected to abuse by teachers and administrators. In July, a schoolteacher in Uttar Pradesh's Bareilly locked a nine-year-old Dalit student in a classroom and beat him after he refused to pick fruits for the teacher.^[87] On August 7, in Uttar Pradesh's Muzaffarnagar, a six-year-old Dalit boy was forced to clean the toilet by his teachers and was then locked in a classroom until after school hours.^[88] Dalits were also vulnerable to illegal demolition drives, which are often carried out in low-income or minority neighborhoods. In February, officials in Mumbai bulldozed a number of houses in an area predominantly occupied by Dalits, Buddhists, and Muslims, leaving 110 families homeless.^[89]

1.9 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.

Throughout 2024, Indian forces killed multiple Kashmiris and labeled them "terrorists." The watchdog Kashmir Law and Justice Project reported that at least 52 individuals were murdered by Indian forces between January and October.^[90] On January 23, 2024, Jammu and Kashmir Police arrested a minor in Chatroo, Kishtwar over a social media post, calling it "derogatory."^[91] 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.^[92] On February 7, the government imposed an internet shutdown in Kashmir's Poonch and Rajouri districts after civilians held protests against the bill.^[93]

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 de-

tained, frisked, and harassed in the name of security.^[94] 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. On April 4, 2024, Indian army officials killed a six-year-old boy in Budhal, Rajouri by running him over.^[95] On June 17, the Indian government denied permission for Eid prayers to be held in Kashmir's largest mosque, Jamia Masjid, for the sixth time. Muslim cleric Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, who delivers sermons and leads the prayer in the mosque, was also placed under house arrest around Eid.^[96]



Paramilitary soldiers stand guard in front of a billboard welcoming Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Kashmir (AP Photo)

In early July, a video went viral on social media, which appeared to show Indian armed forces using Kashmiri civilians as human shields. In the clip, army personnel can be heard ordering a civilian to enter a bunker where militants were believed to be hiding, squeeze into tight spaces, and film the endeavor.^[97] The incident follows a long history of Indian army personnel using Kashmiris as human shields.

On November 20, four civilians from Jammu reported that they had been tortured by Indian army officials. The victims were all laborers who had been summoned for questioning over a recent militant attack. Family members reported that the victims were severely injured, to the point where they could barely walk.^[98] Throughout the year, Kashmiri human rights defenders were arrested or continued lengthy prison sentences. 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. Sultan was initially arrested in August 2018 after writing an article on the death of militant leader Burhan Wani, who was killed in a clash with Indian government forces.^[99]



Kashmiri Muslim journalist Asif Sultan (Getty Images)

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.^[100]

On July 11, lawyer Nazir Ahmad Ronga, a vocal critic of the Modi government's abrogation of Kashmir's autonomous status, was arrested under the Public Safety Act (PSA), a law that Amnesty International has criticized as a way for the Indian government to detain Kashmiris without adequate evidence of a crime. His family reported that he was picked up from his residence in the middle of the night, without an arrest warrant.^[101]

2. Electoral Hate & Intimidation

2.1 Elections: Campaign of Hate

Campaigns for India’s 2024 general elections, which were held between April 19 and June 1, were rife with anti-Muslim hate speech. Despite the fact that Indian law prohibits communal speech during elections, BJP leaders—including Modi—repeatedly deployed anti-Muslim hate speech on the campaign trail. According to Human Rights



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses an election rally in Hyderabad (AP Photo/ Mahesh Kumar A.)

Watch, at least 110 out of 173 campaign speeches made by Modi contained “Islamophobic remarks apparently intended to undermine the political opposition.”^[102] US-based watchdog group Hindutva Watch similarly documented hundreds of rallies throughout the election season where senior BJP officials targeted Muslims.^[103] Another US-based research institute, India Hate Lab, “noted a discernable rise in anti-Muslim hate speeches at election rallies,” including the labeling of Muslims as “infiltrators,” “child breeders,” and other slurs that painted the Muslim community as a “civilizational threat” to Hindus.^[104]

On April 23, the BJP’s Karnataka wing made an X post containing blatantly anti-Muslim disinformation in a bid to polarize voters.^[105] The post, titled “Congress Manifesto or Muslim League Manifesto?”, claimed that the opposition promised “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 not only blatantly false, but painted a number of basic civil liberties for Muslims as a detriment to Hindus.

Throughout his campaign, Modi spread anti-Muslim propaganda in his speeches. At election rallies in Telangana and Gujarat on April 30 and May 1, Modi declared that Muslims must be stripped of benefits provided by the reservation system, the Indian equivalent of affirmative action for disenfranchised minorities.^[106] On May 2, he mentioned the anti-Muslim conspiracy theories of “love jihad” and “land jihad” for the first time at a rally in Gujarat.^[107] Both myths are routinely used by Hindu extremists to justify mob violence, discrimination, and other hate crimes against Muslims.

In Maharashtra, BJP leaders Navneet Rana and Raksha Khadse displayed a placard that read “Hindu Rashtra” (Hindu nation) during an election rally on May 9.^[108] Both Rana and Hyderabad candidate Madhavi Latha went viral for miming shooting arrows at nearby mosques.^[109]

During a May 11 speech in Telangana’s Karimnagar, BJP lawmaker and serial hater T. Raja Singh threatened violence against Muslims, saying, “We [Hindus] don’t need 15 minutes, we just need 15 seconds [to kill them].”^[110] At a May 12 event in Delhi, BJP lawmaker Rakesh Sinha declared, “We know how to chop off the fingers of those (Muslims) pointing fingers at Lord Ram, Krishna and Shiva’s mandirs (temples).”^[111]

On the same day, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma encouraged an audience to destroy historic mosques and replace them with temples, saying, “We need to liberate the birthplace of Krishna (from Shahi Idgah mosque) in Mathura... And in place of Gyanvapi Mosque, we need to build the grand Shiv Temple.”^[112]

On May 16 in Bihar, Home Minister Amit Shah said in a campaign speech that “You have a problem of rampant cow slaughter here. Give Modi a third term and we will fix these cow killers.”^[113] On May 21 in Uttar Pradesh, BJP minister and Hindu militant monk Yogi Adityanath referred to Indian Muslims as “infiltrators from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan.”^[114] Adityanath also repeated Modi’s Islamophobic propaganda claim that the opposition Congress party would take Hindus’ assets and “give [them] to infiltrators from Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, and also the Rohingya.”

On the same day, at an election event in Delhi, BJP leader Kapil Mishra openly threatened to kill Muslims, saying, “They asked how many Afzals [Muslims] you will kill? You will find Afzal in each household. Wherever Afzal comes out, we will enter that house and kill him.”^[115] He

also referred to Muslims as “termites” and “diseases,” adding that Narendra Modi was only laying the foundation and removing termites: “In this third term, all these diseases would be treated,” implying mass violence and ethnic cleansing of Muslims.

On May 26 in Maharashtra, T. Raja Singh gave another speech urging Hindu youth to learn how to use weapons in order to kill Muslims, saying, “Shoot the chest of people who do love jihad.”^[116] BJP leaders openly called for violence against Muslims at election rallies across states in direct violation of Indian law, while Hindu militants continued to organize weapon training for Hindu men, women and minors. In November, the Election Commission of India ordered the BJP’s Jharkhand unit to take down an ad it had posted portraying Muslims as “Bangladeshi intruders” attacking Hindu households.^[117]

2.2 Voter Suppression and Intimidation

During India’s general elections between April and June, Muslims and other marginalized groups reported violence and intimidation at the polling booths. Across India, Muslim voters found their names deleted from the electoral roll without notice during election season, driving up concern that the BJP deliberately and systemically suppressed Muslim voters. In May, the names of 700 Muslim voters from Gujarat were deleted from the voter list.

The victims reported that the year prior, their homes had also been demolished. Similar concerns surfaced in Uttar Pradesh’s Sitapur, with residents reporting that over a hundred Muslim voters’ names were missing from the electoral roll.^[118] On May 7, Muslims attempting to vote in BJP-ruled Uttar Pradesh’s Sambhal were beaten by police and prevented from casting their votes.^[119] On May 5, villagers in BJP-ruled Gujarat’s Devbhoomi Dwarka reported that more than 500 Muslim names were removed from the voter list.

The affected individuals reported that they were able to vote in previous general elections in 2019, and were “deliberately sidelined” this year.^[120] On May 13, BJP electoral candidate Dharmapuri Arvind harassed Muslim women who arrived at a polling booth in Nizamabad, Telangana, while wearing the burka. In a video of the incident, Arvind can be seen entering the polling booth and arguing with Muslim women as they cast their votes. Arvind was also filmed berating the staff, demanding to know if women were allowed to vote without comparing their faces and ID cards.^[121]

In a similar incident on the same day, the BJP’s candidate in Hyderabad, Madhavi Latha, demanded that Muslim women lift their veils at a polling booth.^[122] On May 20, Hindu extremist workers of the BJP beat a Dalit man in front of his family in Uttar Pradesh’s Kaushambi after

learning he did not vote for the BJP.^[123] A video of the incident shows the man being attacked by a BJP worker in a home before other family members intervene.

On April 17 in Assam, BJP lawmaker Vijay Mallakar threatened to demolish voters' homes en masse if they didn't vote for the BJP.^[124] On July 10, several Muslim voters were attacked and stopped from voting during a clash in an Uttarakhand district by-election.^[125] In videos circulated on social media, many Muslims, including the elderly, can be seen covered in blood. Opposition candidate Qazi Nizamuddin reported that bullets were fired at Muslim voters.

On November 19, Muslim voters across 50 villages in Uttar Pradesh reported facing police brutality at the polling stations during state elections, sparking concerns of targeted voter suppression against Muslims.^[126] In several cases, Muslim voters were harassed, asked for their IDs, and charged with batons. Muslim women were also harassed and ordered to remove their veils in order to vote. One viral video shows a police officer claiming he “had orders” to shoot as he pointed a gun at a group of Muslim women.^[127]



Police officer in Uttar Pradesh tells Muslim women voters he has orders to “shoot”

3. Institutional Decay & Expansion of Authoritarian Rule

3.1 Decay of Judiciary

The Indian judiciary was repeatedly compromised in 2024. Lower courts and state High Courts routinely passed rulings in favor of Hindu perpetrators while unfairly punishing minorities for similar crimes or on false charges, and acquitted alleged Hindu perpetrators despite circumstantial evidence to the contrary while imprisoning minorities under false cases. Hindu supremacists flouted court orders or demolished and violently attacked minority religious sites before cases were due to be heard in court. Judges, civic officials, police and Hindu extremist groups were all complicit in crimes committed against minorities. The courts also acquitted Hindu perpetrators of violence committed against Muslims.

On January 31, shortly after the Ram Temple consecration, a court in Uttar Pradesh announced that it would allow Hindus to pray in the basement of the historic Gyanvapi Mosque, which Hindu extremists have been seeking to convert to a temple for years.^[128] 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.

On February 6, an Uttar Pradesh court ordered that a 600-year-old shrine honoring a Muslim saint be handed over to Hindus.^[129] The court also rejected a decades-old plea filed by a group of Muslims seeking ownership of the site where the saint, Sheikh Badruddin Shah, is buried.

On February 19, four men accused of murdering two Muslim men during the 2020 Delhi pogrom were acquitted by a local court.^[130] Although the prosecution presented circumstantial evidence, such as call detail records and the recovery of weapons and clothing allegedly belonging to the accused, the court acquitted all four defendants.

On March 30, a Kerala court acquitted three RSS workers accused in the 2017 Riyas Moulavi murder case after a delay of seven years before the verdict.^[131] Riyas, a madrasa teacher in Kasaragod, was hacked to death on March 20, 2017. The accused were adherents of Hindu supremacist ideology, and the case against them included blood and DNA evidence.

On May 16, a Mumbai college imposed restrictions on wearing the hijab and burka on campus, doubling down on an anti-Muslim dress code it had instated in August 2023.^[132] Despite students' protests, the Bombay High Court dismissed a plea challenging the hijab ban, claiming it was “not inclined to interfere” with the school's discriminatory directive.

In May, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) conducted a physical excavation during an ongoing survey at the Maulana Kamal Masjid-Bhojshala complex in Madhya Pradesh despite a Supreme Court order against it.^[133] The mosque committee members said deep pits were dug and the mosque structure was tampered with in contempt of the Supreme Court order.

On September 13, the Karnataka High Court ruled that shouting “Jai Shri Ram” inside a mosque did not “outrage the religious feelings of any class” and quashed criminal proceedings against two people.^[134] The accused had allegedly entered a mosque in Karnataka, shouted “Jai Shri Ram,” and threatened Muslim worshippers.

On October 5, a Himachal Pradesh court ordered the demolition of the top three floors of a mosque in the district following demands from Hindu supremacist groups.^[135]

Judges were also implicated in hate speeches against minorities and activities with Hindu militant groups. On September 8, Federal Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal and around 30 retired judges of the Supreme Court and several high courts attended a meeting in Delhi organized by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP).^[136] Attendees discussed legal pathways to claim historic mosques as temples, the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, and the criminalization of conversion to Islam and Christianity.

On September 18, a judge referred to a Muslim-dominated locality in Bengaluru as “Pakistan” while hearing a case at the Karnataka High Court, sparking widespread criticism.^[137] A video posted on social media shows him discussing traffic congestion near the locality, claiming that the strictest policeman will be beaten up by residents there.

On December 8, a sitting judge of the Allahabad High Court library, Shekhar Kumar Yadav, delivered a hate speech at an event organized by the Hindu extremist group Vishwa Hindu Parishad.^[138] He made several references to the “ills” in the Muslim society, claiming that Muslim children were exposed to violence at a young age, whereas Hindus learned kindness and thus had non-violence and tolerance ingrained in them. He further asserted that India should function according to the wishes of the Hindu majority.

3.2 Prisoners of Conscience and Unlawful Detention or Imprisonment

The Indian government continued to imprison political opponents, activists, and prisoners of conscience in 2024, in some cases years after their initial arrest. With the help of the judiciary, the government targeted critics of the government's discriminatory laws and policies. Several political leaders were also imprisoned in the run-up to India's general elections in an attempt to suppress the opposition.

On February 19, a Delhi court denied Muslim student leader Sharjeel Imam bail in a case under the draconian Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA). Imam has been imprisoned since January 2020 due to his involvement in the 2019 protests against the anti-Muslim Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), despite the court finding no evidence of incitement to violence in his speeches criticizing the CAA.^[139]

In March, just before India's election season began, opposition politician and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal was arrested. He remained in judicial custody for five months before being released on bail in September.^[140] Opposition leaders criticized the arrest as an act of retaliation for Kejriwal's party joining an alliance in opposition to the BJP. Similarly, Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren was imprisoned. 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.^[141] Bhatt is a whistleblower and the last surviving witness who can testify to Modi's orchestration of the 2002 Gujarat pogrom, during which Hindu mobs slaughtered nearly 2,000 Muslim men, women, and children. He was imprisoned after being falsely convicted in a number of cases, and continues to serve time despite being acquitted of other politically motivated charges on December 8.^[142]



*Political of conscience and whistleblower
Sanjiv Bhatt*

In May, a Delhi court denied bail to prisoner of conscience and human rights activist Umar Khalid, who was arrested over false charges of inciting violence during the anti-CAA protests which preceded the anti-Muslim Delhi pogrom in 2020.^[143] Khalid has been imprisoned for over three years under the UAPA. Also in May, the Delhi High Court denied bail to 72-year-old Muslim leader E. Abubacker, the former chair-

man of the banned Indian Muslim outfit Popular Front of India (PFI).^[144]

Abubacker is a cancer survivor and now suffers from Parkinson’s disease. However, the court refused to place Abubacker under house arrest so he could receive adequate medical care, as per his family’s request. On June 3, Sunita Pottam, an Adivasi (tribal) human rights defender known for protesting police and paramilitary violence against tribals, was arrested by Chhattisgarh police over alleged ties to the banned Communist Party of India (Maoist).^[145] The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, Mary Lawlor, called Pottam’s arrest “disturbing” in a social media post, adding that the arrest was seemingly the result of Pottam’s peaceful advocacy for the protection of tribal communities.

In August, the rights group Campaign for Judicial Accountability and Reforms (CJAR) expressed significant concerns over the excessive delay in bail proceedings in cases involving Muslim activists who were arrested for protesting the CAA.^[146]

CJAR specifically mentioned the cases of Gulfisha Fatima and Khalid Saifi, student activists who were arrested in 2020 under the UAPA. On September 11, a Lucknow special court sentenced 12 individuals to life imprisonment, including prominent Muslim clerics Maulana Kaleem Siddiqui and Umar Gautam, after accusing them of “mass converting” Hindus to Islam.^[147] On November 11, the Supreme Court declined to entertain the bail plea of anti-CAA activist Gulfisha Fatima, who remains in judicial custody.^[148] Fatima has been imprisoned since April 2020 under baseless terror charges.

3.3 Discriminatory Laws & Policies

Minorities faced structural violence through discriminatory policies, including laws that criminalized conversion to Islam and Christianity, stripped Muslims of their citizenship, and created legal pathways for Hindu supremacists to usurp ownership of Muslim-owned property.

3.3.1 Anti-Conversion Laws

The implementation of anti-conversion laws in 12 of India’s 28 states, which effectively criminalize religious conversion away from Hinduism, has led to a significant rise in extremist violence and harassment targeting Muslims and Christians over the years. In 2024, these laws continued to provide cover for Hindu supremacist attacks on minority communities under the pretense of opposition to “forced conversions.”

On April 2, Hindu militants joined the family of a young man who converted to Islam in harassing a Muslim doctor and forming a mob outside his home, baselessly claiming that the doctor had forced the individual to convert to Islam.^[149]

On August 4, following in the footsteps of the Uttar Pradesh government, Assam's Hindu supremacist Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma declared the state would enforce stricter punishments for "love jihad" offenses, with the penalty now extending to life imprisonment.^[150] The government also proposed to make the Chief Minister's consent necessary for land transactions between Hindus and Muslims in an attempt to curb land sales to Muslims. On July 17 in Madhya Pradesh, police arrested three Christian nurses after they were baselessly accused of forcibly converting Hindus to Christianity.^[151]

On July 21, a Pentecostal pastor in Chhattisgarh's Dhamtari district was accused of "illegal conversion" and subsequently attacked. The incident occurred while the pastor was attending a housewarming prayer meeting at the residence of a church member. Approximately 20 Hindu nationalist individuals entered the house, alleging forced conversions and demanding an immediate end to the prayer meeting. They then summoned the police, who kicked the pastor out of the house.^[152]

On August 5, police in Maharashtra arrested a Muslim woman after her Hindu neighbor decided to convert to Islam.^[153] Police also arrested a local mosque trustee who stamped the woman's official conversion declaration in 2022. The woman left her house after converting, leading the family to file a missing person report. When questioned by the police, she willingly admitted to her conversion. The arrests came after the woman's family filed a complaint alleging that she was forcibly converted.

On September 15, ten Christians, including six women and a pastor, were arrested in Uttar Pradesh's Sultanpur district. The arrests followed allegations by a Hindu supremacist group that the individuals were involved in converting Dalits to Christianity. Based on the group's complaint, police detained the individuals under Uttar Pradesh's anti-conversion law.^[154]

In October, based on the testimonies of a BJP worker, his associate, and two police officers, a court in Uttar Pradesh's Azamgarh district convicted three Christians of "mass conversion" and sentenced them to six years in prison. However, subsequent findings revealed that no one had been converted from Hinduism to Christianity by the accused. Moreover, the case lacked independent witnesses to substantiate the allegations.^[155]

3.3.2 Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024

On July 28, 2024, the Indian government introduced the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024 as a way to seize control over Muslim community lands and properties. A waqf is a property given for a religious, educational or charitable cause by Muslim philanthropists; the country's Muslim-run waqf boards are entrusted with allocation and management of Muslim owned properties.

However, the Waqf (Amendment) Bill proposes mandatory inclusion of non-Muslims in waqf boards, limiting boards' power to declare a property as a waqf and changing ownership rules, all of which would impact waqf boards' control over historic mosques and graveyards.

The bill also mandates boards to register their properties with district collectors, who would then be able to advise the government on the validity of the waqf's property claims. According to Indian Muslim academic Mujibur Rehman, the bill "seems to be an attempt not only to get the state's control over Muslims' properties, but also of the Hindu community over the Muslim community's lives."^[156]

Muslim organizations and opposition parties criticized the Waqf (Amendment) Bill as being "intended to grab... properties from Muslims."^[157] The All India Muslim Personal Law Board raised concerns that the bill would make it easier for the government or any individual to usurp waqf properties, particularly at a time when Muslim places of worship are regularly attacked by Hindu extremists.

On July 22, tensions rose in a Telangana district after Bajrang Dal militants staged a protest demanding that a newly laid base for the reconstruction of a centuries-old mosque be razed.^[158] Despite standing on waqf land, the mosque was destroyed by a private company.

According to police, affiliates of the company believed the mosque was located on land the company had purchased. Three individuals, including the construction vehicle driver and a realtor, have been booked. On July 29, civic officials in Delhi demolished the 52-year-old Faizyab Mosque and its adjoining madrasa registered with the Waqf Board.^[159] The president of the Waqf Welfare Forum reported that the demolition was part of a larger scheme to gradually remove mosques from prominent locations. On August 16, Bajrang Dal militants in Haryana installed idols inside a structure on waqf property, chanted Hindu prayers, and placed saffron flags on the structure's domes on August 16.^[160]

In September, BJP leader Nishikant Dubey called for an investigation into the large number of public feedback submissions received by the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) that

reviewed the Waqf (Amendment) Bill.^[161] Dubey, a member of the committee, baselessly claimed the possible involvement of countries like Pakistan and China because they received over 12 million emails and 75,000 letters in September. A leader of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad supported Dubey’s claims, referring to the wave of emails as “email jihad.”



Indian Muslims protest the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024 (Getty Images)

In November, the Union government urged the Karnataka High Court to remove a madrasa operating within the Jama Masjid in Srirangapatna, a site designated as a protected monument in 1951^[162]. The Waqf Board, opposing this move, asserted that the mosque is its property and defended the madrasa’s operations as lawful. The issue was brought to the court following a public interest litigation (PIL) alleging “unauthorised madrasa activities” at the mosque.

3.3.3 Uniform Civil Code (UCC)

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.^[163] The UCC, a sweeping bill long proposed by Hindu supremacists, 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 violates 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.

On February 7, the Uniform Civil Code Uttarakhand 2024 Bill passed the House^[164] On March 13, Uttarakhand's Uniform Civil Code (UCC) Bill 2024 was approved by President Droupadi Murmu, making Uttarakhand the first Indian state to officially enact the UCC.^[165]

In August, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced plans to introduce a “tailored” version of the UCC bill in the state assembly, which he declared would be aimed at compulsory registration of marriages and divorces for Muslims specifically.^[166]

3.3.4 CAA-NRC Trends in Assam

On March 11, the first day of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, the Indian government announced rules to implement the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), a discriminatory law that experts say is aimed at stripping Muslims of their citizenship en masse. The law aims to fast-track Indian citizenship for “persecuted minorities”—defined as Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, and Christians—from Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh. Muslims, however, are blatantly excluded from this provision.

Combined with the National Register of Citizens (NRC), a controversial list of Indian citizens designed to abet the identification and deportation “illegal” immigrants, it could allow the government to expel all of those deemed “illegal” migrants but allow Hindus, Parsis, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains and Christians to re-enter, with the exception of Muslims. The BJP has declared its intent to implement the NRC nationwide.^[167]

In Assam, where the NRC was published in 2019, detention camps have been built to contain Rohingya refugees as well as people who have been left off the NRC and accused of being illegal migrants. Amnesty International India has reported rampant human rights abuses in these camps, including police brutality against detainees, beatings, and inadequate health-care.^[168]

In July, the Assam government asked the state's border police not to forward the cases of Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Parsi, Jain, and Christian people who entered India “illegally” before 2014 to the Foreigners Tribunals (FT), citing the CAA. This effectively means that Hindu Bengalis, among other non-Muslims in the state, will not be prosecuted by the FTs at the moment.

On September 2, police in Assam sent 28 Muslims to a detention center to be deported after

declaring them “non-citizens.”^[169] All 28 people—19 men and nine women—are Bengali speakers. Some members of the same family were declared “foreigners” while others were not.

3.4 Collaboration Between Hindu Militants and Law Enforcement/Elected Officials

Law enforcement officials and elected officials regularly joined forces with Hindu militants in attacks on minorities in 2024. Police seized the personal property of Muslims based on accusations made by cow vigilantes, shut down peaceful events over complaints made by Hindu militant groups, and arrested the victims of Hindu mob violence instead of the perpetrators.

On January 20, days before the Ram Temple consecration ceremony, a cafe in Hyderabad hosting a screening of a documentary on the destruction of the Babri Mosque was attacked by Hindu militants. In the aftermath, police arrested the two organizers and a cafe owner.^[170] On May 29, police booked 17 Muslim students at a university in Karnataka after they objected to a Hindu supremacist song played at a college event, sparking a fight on campus.^[171]

In June, police in Uttar Pradesh shut down two cafes and arrested a cafe owner for allegedly selling beef burgers as part of their menu after a local Hindu supremacist leader from the Bajrang Dal complained that the food items hurt Hindu sentiments.^[172] In July, cow vigilantes and police jointly raided a café, accusing the establishment of “cafe jihad.”^[173]

On September 8, Hindu extremists in Gujarat accused Muslim and Dalit children of deliberately throwing stones at a Hindu procession. While witnesses reported that the stones had hit the procession by accident as the children were playing, Hindu mobs retaliated by attacking Muslim-owned shops, vehicles, and a mosque.^[174] The children were taken to the police station after members of Hindu militant groups and a local BJP leader accused them of being responsible for the stone pelting. In the aftermath of the violence, Muslim residents reported that plainclothes police officers conducted a raid on Muslim households at 2 a.m., breaking into homes and detaining 27 people.

On September 27 in Uttarakhand, Hindu supremacists vandalized the store of a Muslim man and accused him of “love jihad” after allegedly finding him at the home of a Hindu girl, demanding his arrest and the seizure of his property.^[175] In response, police seized his store and home.

On October 24, Indian publication *The Quint* published a report revealing that police had given Hindu rioters “free hands” for two hours as they attacked Muslims and invaded their

homes during an October 14 riot in Uttar Pradesh’s Bahraich.^[176] The riot occurred during a Hindu religious procession, and escalated to Hindu extremists attacking Muslim residents and breaking into their homes. In a hidden camera recording, rioters acknowledged that the violence was premeditated, claiming that they had the freedom to damage anyone and anything during that time—a tacit acknowledgement that the violence was premeditated, sponsored and supported by the system. Out of the seven First Information Reports (FIR) opened after the fact, five were filed against Muslims.

3.5 Police Brutality

2024 saw widespread incidents of police brutality, with police targeting minorities, shooting at protesters, confiscating personal property, staging extrajudicial killings, and brutally beating victims, sometimes resulting in their deaths. Two high-profile cases of police brutality against Muslim protesters occurred in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand, resulting in several deaths.

3.5.1 Haldwani Violence

On February 8, 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.^[177] Local Muslims reported that a demolition notice had been provided on January 30, after which the caretakers of the buildings moved



Violence against protesters erupts in Haldwani, Uttarakhand

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. When protests ensued, the state government issued “shoot at sight” orders against Muslim demonstrators.^[178] Six Muslims were killed by police fire, including a 16-year-old boy.^[179] Following the violence, police arrested at least 90 Muslims, including five Muslim politicians. On February 18, government officials confiscated the

house of a Muslim man over allegations that he had masterminded the Haldwani protests.^[180]

3.5.2 Sambhal Violence

On November 24 in Sambhal, Uttar Pradesh, police opened fire on Muslims protesting against a court-ordered survey of the federally protected 400-year-old Shahi Jama Masjid. Five people were killed, one of whom was only 17 years old.^[181] Eyewitness accounts from Muslim demonstrators confirmed that the victims were fatally shot without provocation.

The protest was organized in opposition to an archaeological survey of the mosque, which was initiated under pressure from Hindu supremacist groups. Such surveys are frequently weaponized to advance baseless claims that historic mosques were constructed over demolished Hindu temples as a pretense for their seizure and transfer to Hindu control.^[182]

Following the murders, police claimed that the protests were pre-planned with the intent to spark communal violence. In the aftermath, around 2,750 Muslims were booked, and both Sambhal Member of Parliament (MP) Zia-ur-Rehman and Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) Iqbal Mehmood's son Sohail Iqbal were arrested over charges of inciting violence.

3.5.3 Other Violence

On January 3, a 12-year-old Muslim boy was beaten by police in Jharkhand for using a slang term to refer to nearby officers. Police dragged him into a local police station, beat him, and repeatedly called him and his classmates “terrorists.”^[183] When a senior student tried to intervene, the police officer assaulted him as well, injuring his forehead.

On March 7, a Delhi policeman was caught on video kicking and punching Muslim worshippers who were offering Friday prayers outdoors.^[184] On May 2, a 28-year-old Muslim egg seller in Gujarat was brutally beaten by police for keeping his store open late. The victim was left paralyzed due to the severity of his injuries, and died a month later.^[185] On May 30, Delhi police tortured a 26-year-old Muslim man for riding a motorcycle without a license plate.^[186] The victim reported that after he told the officers his name, they called him by anti-Muslim slurs and detained him, after which he was tied up, beaten, dragged by his genitals, and threatened with castration.

On July 20, a Dalit man was tortured by the police over a domestic dispute.^[187] The victim reported that the officers were inebriated when he was detained, called him by casteist slurs, and brutally beat him to the point where his genitals were injured and he lost consciousness.

When he regained consciousness, the officers forced him to massage their hands and feet throughout the night. On August 25 in Uttarakhand, it was alleged a Muslim man suspected of involvement in illegal cow slaughter drowned in a pond after he jumped into it while trying to run away from the police.^[188] However, witnesses later reported that the man was beaten and pushed into the pond by police.

A day later, a 55-year-old Muslim woman died from a panic attack in an Uttar Pradesh village after four police officers stormed her home, following a tip-off that beef was stored in her house.^[189] During the raid, police harassed the women of the family and ransacked the household, due to which the victim had a panic attack and died. The officers did not find any beef in the home. On September 12, at least two Muslim men were shot dead by police in an Assam district during an attempt to evict 60 Muslim families from an area where over 140 homes had been bulldozed just days prior by the state government.^[190] When the residents protested, police opened fire on them.

On October 6, police opened fire during a violent clash in Tripura state, sparked by Hindu extremists beating two Muslim men and a woman after they refused to donate alms to a Hindu religious procession.^[191] Tripura police intervened by opening fire, killing a Muslim man who was protecting his shop. A day later, in Kerala, an elderly auto-rickshaw driver and father of three took his life after posting a Facebook live video in which he accused local police officers of harassment.^[192] In the video, the man accused police of illegally impounding his vehicle over a petty offence, refusing to return it to him, and harassing him.

On October 6, police in Uttarakhand raided the homes of two Muslim men accused of cow slaughter, confiscating tractors, beds, furniture, electronics and doors.^[193] In a similar case in Uttar Pradesh on October 14, authorities seized the house and land of a Muslim man over alleged involvement in cattle slaughter.^[194] In a public display during the raid, local officials brought in a drummer to play as the house was seized.

On November 20, police in Uttar Pradesh raided the pre-wedding celebration of a Muslim family over accusations that they had served beef to the guests.^[195] The victims reported that the police vandalized their home, looted INR 3 lakh (\$3500 USD), assaulted men and women alike, and threw out all the food prepared for the guests.

3.6 Press Censorship & Suppression of Journalists

The Modi government frequently censored content critical of the government and Hindu supremacy. Censorship was often enforced via the overreaching Information Technology Act, 2000, which enables government officials to restrict or remove social media accounts,

posts, documentaries, and other content. Social media users, media organizations, and journalists living outside of India were also affected. Prominent right-wing figures also regularly harassed and abused journalists from religious minority groups online.

The X accounts of the Indian American Muslim Council and Hindus for Human Rights, which work to combat Hindu supremacy globally, have continued to be withheld in India since their initial restriction by the platform in October 2023, as per the demands of the Indian government.^[196] On January 16, the X account of Hindutva Watch, a research initiative that monitors Hindu extremist attacks on religious minorities, was withheld in India in response to a legal demand from the central government.^[197]

In an affidavit, X labeled the suspension of Hindutva Watch as being contrary to Indian law, calling it a “disproportionate” move that “renders the right to be heard meaningless.”^[198] Journalist Raqib Hameed Naik, who runs the account, stated that prior to the suspension, the Indian government had been working to censor Hindutva Watch’s individual posts for two years.^[199]

On July 1, independent Muslim journalist Meer Faisal initiated legal action against OpIndia, a popular Hindu far-right propaganda site, after it published an article falsely accusing him of “spreading hate against Hindus.”^[200] The website is known for promoting hate speech, fake news, and smear campaigns against critics of Hindu supremacy, Modi, and the BJP.

In a notice sent to OpIndia’s director, Faisal’s lawyer stated that OpIndia repeatedly slandered Faisal in several articles, portraying him as an extremist and associating him with illegal organizations. On July 7, Uttar Pradesh police filed a police report against Hindustani Media, a Muslim-run YouTube channel, for reporting on the mob lynching of a Muslim man.^[201] The channel, which has more than 300,000 subscribers, is run by Muslim journalist Sadaf Kamran. On July 6, police booked two more Muslim journalists, Zakir Ali Tyagi and Wasim Akram Tyagi, for reporting the same story.^[202]

On February 9, a mob of BJP workers attacked journalist Nikhil Wagle for making a social media post criticizing Prime Minister Narendra Modi.^[203] A video of the incident shows BJP workers attacking Wagle’s car, damaging its windshield and side panels. BJP politician Sunil Deodhar also filed a case against Wagle, accusing him of “defamation” and “promoting enmity between different groups.” On October 7, police in Uttar Pradesh’s Ghaziabad booked prominent journalist and fact-checker Mohammed Zubair for “endangering the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India” over a social media post criticizing the hate speech of Yati Narsinghanand, a Hindu supremacist monk who regularly spreads anti-Muslim propaganda.^[204] Zubair had criticized a speech made by Narsinghanand on September 29, in which he called on Hindus to burn effigies of Prophet Muhammad. Zubair was booked following a complaint

made by Narsinghanand's aide.^[205]

On October 13, BJP lawmaker Shalabh Mani Tripathi shared a list of Muslim journalists' names on social media for covering an outbreak of Hindu extremist violence in Uttar Pradesh's Bahraich, during which Hindu mobs arsoned a private hospital and several Muslim-owned properties. In his post, Tripathi wrote, "Just read the names of the journalists sending news from Bahraich... the whole system is engaged in saving the rioters and in spreading lies."^[206]

Also in October, Muslim investigative journalist and *Washington Post* columnist Rana Ayyub was followed and repeatedly questioned by intelligence agents during a reporting trip in Manipur state, where ethnic violence between the Hindu-majority Meitei and the predominantly Christian Kuki minority group has been raging since 2023.^[207] Weeks later, on November 8, Hindu extremist groups circulated a sexually explicit deepfake video featuring Ayyub's likeness, as well as her government documents, email, bank, and social media account passwords. Ayyub stated that the harassment campaign was an attempt to silence her frequent criticism of the Indian government.^[208]

3.7 Suppression of Dissent

The Indian government continued its years-long trend of restricting free speech and dissent, particularly against minority communities. Common tactics of suppression included internet shutdowns and blocking websites that reported on anti-minority violence. Police also regularly booked peaceful protestors opposed to Hindu supremacy, anti-minority violence, and Israel's genocide in Palestine. By May 2024, India had witnessed at least 134 instances of free speech violations, according to a report published by the watchdog group Free Speech Collective.^[209] The report further noted that "a single event could result in the blocking of multiple social media accounts," citing the blocking of over 100 accounts around the Ram Temple consecration in January and another nearly 200 accounts during farmers' protests in February.

On March 11, after the government announced plans to implement the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), police lathi-charged student protesters, including women, in Kerala.^[210] Days later, police arrested two student activists for organizing an anti-CAA protest at Allahabad University in Uttar Pradesh.^[211] On August 31, Muslim singer Altaf Hussain was arrested in Assam after he released a protest song in which he drew attention to the discrimination faced by Bengali-origin Muslims in Assam.^[212] On October 6, Uttar Pradesh police arrested six Muslim men for protesting against the hate speech of a prominent Hindu extremist monk, Yati Narsinghanand, who called on Hindus to burn effigies of Prophet Muhammad.^[213] In a similar incident on October 20, police in Uttar Pradesh's Muzaffarnagar booked 700 Muslims for protesting Hindu supremacist Akhil Tyagi after he insulted Allah and Islam on social media.^[214] Nineteen Muslims, including prominent opposition leaders, were also arrested.^[215]

4. Hate and Discrimination in Public and Private Life

4.1 Economic Apartheid

Hindu supremacists and militant groups routinely urge Hindus to boycott Muslim businesses. In some cases, trade unions have sought to ban Muslim vendors and business owners from participating in temple fairs, effectively creating “Hindu-only areas” for sellers.^[216] Hindu supremacist groups also routinely attempt to bar Muslims from setting up stalls at festivals and events, religious or otherwise.

However, in 2024, police in BJP-governed Uttar Pradesh explicitly enabled discriminatory practices targeting Muslim business owners and favoring their Hindu counterparts.^[217] On July 13, authorities issued an unconstitutional directive requiring all vendors and business owners in Muzaffarnagar and other cities to publicly disclose their religious identity by displaying their names in front of their establishments.

Police stated that the move was in preparation for a Hindu religious procession and would “ensure that there is no confusion among the kanwariyas (Hindu devotees)” participating. Legal experts condemned the order, arguing that it laid the groundwork for an economic boycott of Muslims. Activists and politicians further warned that the directive would allow Hindu extremists to easily single out Muslims, heightening their vulnerability to hate crimes and mob violence. Muslim politician Asaduddin Owaisi criticized the mandate as establishing “economic apartheid.” Though the Supreme Court stayed the order, Hindu extremist groups and politicians across India have attempted to enforce similar practices at both the state and region levels.^[218] Muslim shopkeepers have cited fears that such directives will make it easier for Hindu customers to boycott, putting their livelihoods at risk.

On September 24, just over two months after the Muzaffarnagar directive controversy, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath—a Hindu militant monk and close ally of Modi—ordered all restaurants in the state to “prominently display the names and addresses of [all] their operators, proprietors and managers” on their storefronts.^[219] While the order was presented as a move to “ensure cleanliness” in restaurants, activists described it as a “thinly

veiled attack on Muslim workers and establishments.” By October, several Muslim food service workers, ranging from chefs to restaurant owners, reported losing their jobs or fearing the threat of their businesses shutting down entirely.^[220]

Between October and November, BJP Delhi councilor Ravinder Singh Negi was filmed multiple times harassing and “investigating” Muslim business owners, ordering them to display their names on their shops in order to protect “Sanatani (Hindu) piety.”^[221] During one raid on a Muslim-owned business, Negi was filmed saying, “We Hindus should know whom we buy these things from.”^[222]

In other videos, Negi was seen placing saffron flags on carts owned by Hindu vendors, distinguishing them from their Muslim counterparts. Singh himself boasts of these raids on X, where he posts videos of himself harassing Muslim business owners, often captioned with threats such as, “We won’t allow such shops in our area where Muslim owners are using Hindu names.”^[223] On October 29, the Hindu supremacist group Sanskriti Bachao Manch launched a campaign urging Hindus to boycott Muslim-owned businesses in Madhya Pradesh’s Bhopal. The group placed signs declaring “I am Sanatani (Hindu)” on Hindu-owned shops, along with placards ordering Hindu shoppers to “buy only from those who will celebrate Diwali with the money [you spend].”^[224]



A Muslim vendor displays a sign with his name on it following Uttar Pradesh police’s unconstitutional directive

4.2 Discrimination and Violence in the Education System

Anti-Muslim violence and discrimination have permeated India's education system at all levels. Throughout 2024, this anti-Muslim hatred affected students from elementary school to college, as well as Muslim teachers and administrators. This abuse is perpetrated and condoned by Hindu students, teachers, and administrators alike. Adding fuel to on-campus bigotry are non-student Hindu extremists, from militant groups to BJP politicians, who regularly conduct activities in and around schools, including by giving hate speeches to student assemblies,^[225] protesting schools they deem to be “anti-Hindu,”^[226] and threatening harm against marginalized teachers and students.^[227]

Throughout India, students flagged attempts by administrators to ban Muslim religious expression. Female students reported being told to remove their hijabs in order to enter school grounds or take exams; to a lesser extent, male students reported being ordered to shave or trim their beards. Students in several cases were denied permission to hold congregational prayers on campus^[228] or harassed both by school personnel and Hindu militant groups for holding quiet individual prayers. Verbal and physical abuse from teachers, administrators, and peers was commonly reported as well.

Discrimination affected those as young as elementary schoolers. 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.^[229] 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 bullying, saying, “We will cut your throat and give it to you in your hands.” Just days after reporting the incident, the victim was struck on the head with a bottle by a Hindu classmate. The school administration took no effective disciplinary action against the students perpetuating the abuse.

In a case that made global headlines, over 200 Hindu extremists attacked Muslim international students while they were offering congregational Ramadan prayers, known as taraweeh, at their university hostel in Gujarat's Ahmedabad on March 16.^[230] The mob attacked the students with knives, cricket bats, stones and other weapons while chanting the “Jai Shri Ram.” The extremists also ransacked the hostel rooms, destroying laptops, phones, and bikes. Five students sustained severe injuries. Despite widespread outcry following the attack, police arrested only three attackers out of a mob of 200. Additionally, the university refused to compensate the victims for their damaged property or transfer them to another hostel. Three weeks after the attack, seven of the victims were ordered by university authorities to immediately vacate their hostel rooms, with no explanation given.

In August, Muslim students at a government-run school in Delhi reached out to Supreme Court lawyer Ashok Agarwal, calling on him to investigate severe abuses by teachers and staff against marginalized students, including forcing Muslim and Dalit students to sit at the back of classrooms.^[231] In their letter to Agarwal, the students reported a particularly egregious incident in which teachers beat Muslim children in a school restroom, forced them to strip, called them by slurs, and filmed the abuse, threatening to release the videos if the students were to make the incident public.

On August 16, in Assam’s Cachar, a 12th-grade Muslim student was brutally assaulted by a mob of radicalized Hindu youth—including two of his classmates—for talking to a female Hindu friend.^[232] The extremists accused the victim of “love jihad”, stripped him of his shirt, bound his hands, and dragged him by a rope in front of a crowd as an act of public humiliation. The girl was also harassed and assaulted by the mob. Although no extremists were arrested for the assault, the victim was arrested under the POCSO (Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act), despite the girl insisting that the two were friends and not involved romantically.

In December, in Bihar’s Muzaffarpur, Muslim college student Nabi Hasan was brutally assaulted and humiliated by Hindu supremacist bullies. The attackers filmed him as they beat him with a stick and belt, forced him to lick their spit, and made him do sit-ups while holding his ears.^[233] In a number of cases, Muslim teachers and administrators lost their jobs due to protests from Hindu supremacists, including militant groups, after complaints that they had allowed Muslim students to practice their faith or allegations that they had discriminated against Hindu students in some way.^[234] In one such case on February 21, three Muslim teachers at a secondary school in Rajasthan’s Kota were suspended by the state’s Education Department after a local Hindu supremacist group waged a smear campaign against them. The extremists, who were accused by the schoolchildren of coercing Hindu students into making false allegations against their teachers, claimed that the teachers were forcing Hindu students to perform Muslim prayers and converting them to Islam.^[235]

4.3 Media as a Megaphone for Hate and Disinformation

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) describes India’s media as being in an “unofficial state of emergency” due to Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s cultivation of a symbiotic relationship between his government and the press. Four of India’s five most-watched English language channels—Republic TV, India Today, CNN News 18, and Wion—are run by individuals with links to either Modi or the BJP.^[236]

As a result, news coverage from these mainstream outlets has fallen into lockstep with the government’s Hindu supremacist ideology, to the extent that in June 2022, the Editors’ Guild

of India compared the media to Radio Rwanda, observing that several channels “deliberately [create] circumstances that target vulnerable communities by spewing hatred towards them and their beliefs.”^[237] These outlets also employ personalities who are known for spreading anti-minority hate speech both on and off air, including Sudarshan News Editor-in-Chief Suresh Chavhanke and Republic TV anchor Arnab Goswami.

The press’s role in manufacturing and amplifying hate speech was especially visible in the run-up to India’s general elections. Mainstream outlets repeatedly failed to fact-check Modi’s numerous anti-Muslim hate speeches, instead alternating between praising him, discrediting his political opponents, and pitting Hindus against minorities. A study conducted by independent outlet *NewsLaundry* found that out of 429 primetime news segments aired between February 1 and April 12, 52% were critical of the opposition, 27% were pro-BJP, and 5.6% had an explicitly communal angle.^[238]

In a late April news segment on the parliamentary elections, Indian news anchor Mukesh Kumar declared, “Muslims have turned up for voting not because of their faith in democracy, but because of their hatred for Modi.”^[239] In May, the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM) published a report claiming a slight decline in the Hindu population alongside a rise in the Muslim population. This assertion was promptly challenged by the Population Foundation of India, which criticized it as both inaccurate and alarmist.^[240]

On May 11, Asianet Suvarna News amplified the claim with an inflammatory headline: “Hindu Population Has Decreased, Muslim Population Has Increased Enormously.” The broadcast further fueled division by using the Indian flag to symbolize the Hindu population and the Pakistani flag to represent Muslims, echoing the Hindu supremacist narrative that Muslims cannot be “true” Indians and inherently belong in Pakistan.^[241]

Days later, major outlets like the *Hindustan Times* and *India Today* provided cover for Modi when he declared, “The day I do Hindu-Muslim [communal rhetoric], I will be unworthy of public life.” Most news outlets reported the remark on its face, largely without noting that Modi had repeatedly communalized his speeches at rallies, in violation of the Election Commission of India’s Model Code of Conduct.^[242]

On April 13, Sudarshan News, a far-right news outlet that frequently runs anti-Muslim propaganda, published a YouTube video whose thumbnail depicted Muslim politician Asaduddin Owaisi with devil horns, a forked tongue, and a bloody mouth.^[243]

On June 9, far-right political commentator Anand Ranganathan was invited as a podcast

guest by the news agency Asian News International, which frequently pushes far-right and Hindu supremacist narratives. While on the show, Ranganathan called on India to enact an “Israel-like solution” against the Muslim-majority population of Kashmir.^[244]

Drawing parallels between the inherently anti-Muslim ideologies of Hindu supremacy and Zionism, Ranganathan implied that Islam was at the root of the problem: “Israel has catered to its people, but we haven’t... there may never be a solution because of the ideology of the people who hate Israelis and the ideology of the people who hate Hindus.”

In October, a reporter working for the channel Bharatpur Live harassed a young Muslim man who was selling fish bones, accusing him of “hurting Hindu sentiments” for selling animal products during the Hindu holiday Navratri. In a video of the incident, the reporter can be seen holding his microphone, insulting the Muslim man both to his face and in front of the camera as the segment was being filmed.^[245]

4.4 Hate Speech and Incitement

Throughout the year, Hindu extremist leaders and BJP officials alike continued to propagate public hate speech against Muslims and minorities, including explicit calls for violence. In many cases, Hindu supremacists used slurs along with dehumanizing terms to refer to Muslims, including “demons,” “sewage,” “snakes,” “termites,” and “disease.”^[246] The process of dehumanizing a minority group through hate speech and propaganda is labeled as Stage IV of genocide by the human rights group Genocide Watch.^[247]

During a May 16 event in Maharashtra’s Mumbai, Hindu extremist group leader Dhananjay Desai compared Rohingya refugees to termites and referred to Indian minorities in similarly dehumanizing terms, saying, “Non-Hindus living in India are like a disease living in a human body.”^[248] On July 17, federal minister and BJP leader Giriraj Singh claimed that India’s “biggest mistake was to let Muslims live here.”^[249] On August 3, at an event in Maharashtra’s Mumbai, VHP and Bajrang Dal leader Gautam Kanji Rawaria threatened to “pluck out” Muslim men’s eyes and “cut off their hands” while peddling the anti-Muslim conspiracy of love jihad.^[250] On August 17, a Hindu extremist monk in Rajasthan’s Balotra region delivered a hate speech labeling Muslims as “demons” and “cannibals,” saying, “If they (Muslims) kill a Hindu, we will kill a hundred. We will go to their homes and kill them.”^[251]

A day later, Nitesh Rane threatened that Hindus will “kill [Muslims] one by one,” and urged Hindus to “take inspiration from Ayodhya,” referring to the “quick” demolition of the historic Babri Masjid by a Hindu militant mob in 1992.^[252] On October 4, Yati Narasinghanand, a



Hindu militant monk Yati Narasinghanand

prominent Hindu militant monk who has been repeatedly booked for hate speech, urged Hindus to “burn effigies of Prophet Muhammad” and “strive until Hindutva reaches Mecca.” On several occasions, Indian activists have called Narasinghanand a dangerous figure who regularly seeks to provoke anti-Muslim violence; however, no significant punitive action has been taken against him by law enforcement.^[253]

On October 31, Lakhpat Bhandari, a senior BJP official from Uttarakhand state, called on Hindus at a rally to “burn down shops belonging to members of the minority (Muslim) community” and “gouge out their eyes” on the pretext of punishing “love jihad.”^[254] Notably, Muslims in Uttarakhand have faced repeated threats of expulsion and ethnic cleansing at the hands of Hindu supremacists. In at least one case, several Muslim families were driven out of an Uttarakhand town on the heels of accusations of love jihad.^[255]

In a speech in Uttar Pradesh on December 17, Hindu militant leader Pravin Togadia glorified the 2002 Gujarat pogrom—during which nearly 2,000 Muslims were butchered, burned alive, and raped—by calling it a “war strategy” against Muslims. Togadia boasted that Hindu militants had “cleaned up” Muslims from 5,000 villages as “revenge” for the killing of 57 Hindus in the Godhra train incident. Praising Israel’s genocide in Gaza, he added, “If Hindus were awakened in every village and town, hundreds of leaders like Netanyahu would emerge.”^[256]

4.5 Anti-Bangladeshi Incitement

Following a popular uprising in Bangladesh which culminated in the ousting of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on August 5, Indian Hindu extremists pushed disinformation on social media regarding attacks against Bangladesh’s Hindu minority, weaponizing a dangerous situation for the vulnerable group in order to incite violence against Muslims in India.

On August 5, BJP leader Nitesh Rane threatened retaliation against Bangladeshi Muslims in India for any attacks in Bangladesh against Hindus. In a social media post, he wrote, “We will kill them one by one.”^[257] In Maharashtra, a Hindu extremist speaker called for gruesome anti-Muslim violence during a protest against violence faced by Hindus in Bangladesh, saying, “If they kill Hindus there, we will also cut (Muslim) people here and throw them in

drains.”^[258] These threats played a direct role in inciting violence against Muslims perceived to be from Bangladesh, including residents of slums and poor migrant laborers. In Delhi, days after Rane and others made their threats, Hindu extremists attacked Muslim scrap collectors, falsely accusing them of being Bangladeshi immigrants or Rohingya refugees.^[259] Meanwhile, in Uttar Pradesh’s Ghaziabad, militants from the group Hindu Raksha Dal attacked Muslim residents of a slum, accusing them of being Bangladeshis. The attackers beat the victims with sticks and set their shanties on fire.^[260]

Near the end of August, Assamese ethno-nationalist groups launched a campaign targeting Bengali-speaking Muslims. The groups went door to door with threats, demanding that Muslim families vacate their homes within a week.^[261] “Bangladeshi” continued to be used as a slur against Muslims throughout the rest of the year, fueling Hindu supremacist campaigns to investigate Muslim communities for Bangladeshi heritage. On December 12 in Rajasthan’s Jaipur, BJP lawmaker Balmukund Acharya led a raid on a Muslim neighborhood, demanding to see their documents as proof that they were not from Bangladesh.^[262] Within the same week, Hindu militants put up posters in Gujarat’s Ahmedabad using “Bangladeshi” as a slur: “Run away, or we will chase you out. Bangladeshi jihadis, leave India.”^[263]

4.6 Anti-Palestinian Sentiment

Following the latest surge of Israel’s genocidal bombardment of Palestine in October 2023, the Hindu right has declared its vocal support for both Israel and Zionism, conflating Islam, Palestinians, and terrorism into a singular entity portrayed as a threat to both India and Israel. This narrative continued to be exploited by BJP leaders and Hindu extremists for domestic political gains in 2024, using Indian Muslims’ widespread support for Palestine as an excuse to call for violence against them. In a number of cases, police across India also cracked down on individuals for protesting Israel’s atrocities or waving Palestinian flags.

On July 19, at an event in Madhya Pradesh’s Khandwa, Hindu extremist leader Ashok Paliwal called on his supporters to “hunt down” and “kill all supporters of Palestine.” Following his hate speech, members of Hindu supremacist groups marched in the streets while brandishing Israeli flags.^[264] On August 9, Delhi police detained prominent human rights activists and politicians over a silent march in solidarity with the people of Palestine, despite the activists having informed law enforcement of their protest. The march, demanding an immediate cease-fire in Gaza, was stopped by police as it headed towards the Israeli Embassy.^[265] On September 8, Karnataka police detained and interrogated six minors for waving a Palestinian flag, filed a case against them for “disturbing communal harmony,” and seized both their motorbike and their flag.^[266]

On October 10, police in Rajasthan’s Ajmer arrested Muslim activist Wajid Khan on the complaint of a Hindu extremist social media user, accusing him of “ruining the communal harmony” for posting about atrocities committed by Israeli forces against Palestinians. Police also announced that they would work to identify individuals who liked Khan’s tweets.^[267]



Activists and politicians hold a silent solidarity march for Palestine in Delhi

In November, a man was arrested in Bihar’s Bhagalpur after a viral video showed him climbing a mosque dome to vandalize it with a saffron flag during a Hindu religious procession. The man, later identified as Shivam Kumar, was cheered on by a crowd of Hindu supremacists waving saffron and Israeli flags to indicate support for the genocide of Palestinians.^[268] On November 12, Kerala’s Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) questioned the elderly parents of Muslim activist and journalist Rejaz M. Sheeba Sydeek, reportedly due to his involvement in pro-Palestine protests.^[269] Sydeek and four others were detained for wearing a keffiyeh during a sports match.

5. Religion in the Crossfire of Extremism

5.1 Weaponization of Religious Festivals and Processions

Throughout the year, Hindu festivals and religious processions were weaponized to intimidate, police, and launch violent attacks against Muslims. Hindu processions passing through Muslim-majority areas often targeted mosques, broke into and looted Muslim-owned homes, arsoned Muslim properties, and attacked individuals, or sought to provoke communal violence by blasting anti-Muslim pop songs. In some areas, BJP leaders banned the sale of meat during Hindu holidays, targeting the safety and livelihoods of Muslim butchers, vendors, and restaurant owners.

In Rajasthan, a Hindu religious procession blasted anti-Muslim songs while passing by a mosque during prayer time, sparking a clash.^[270] The resulting violence left one dead and 12 injured.

A number of incidents of anti-Muslim harassment were reported around the Hindu festival Holi. On March 24, Hindu men and teens filmed their harassment of a Muslim family during Holi celebrations in Uttar Pradesh. In a viral video, teenagers can be seen dousing water on Muslim women using a pipe and buckets, despite their protests, and forcefully applying colors to their faces while chanting Hindu religious slogans.^[271] A day later in Maharashtra, a Muslim auto-rickshaw driver reported that a group of Hindus celebrating Holi broke his windshield, forcibly applied colors on him, and doused him with water despite his pleas that he was fasting.^[272] The victim reported that he had to break his fast in the aftermath.

On July 26, authorities in Uttarakhand hid two mosques and a Muslim shrine with large white sheets because they were situated along the route of a Hindu procession.^[273] The administration claimed that the measure was taken to prevent “hurt to the sentiments” of Hindu devotees.

On August 1 in Uttar Pradesh, a group of Hindu extremists participating in a religious procession attempted to break into a madrasa while chanting the Hindu supremacist war cry “Jai Shri Ram.”^[274] The group tried to force their way in by hitting the school’s gate with sticks and threatened the madrasa staff. On August 26, during a Hindu festival, Hindu supremacist leader Gopal Chahar attempted to perform Hindu rituals on the stairs of the historic Jama

Masjid in Uttar Pradesh, claiming that an idol was buried under the mosque's stairs by a Mughal emperor.^[275]

On September 22, Hindu extremist leader Gangadhar Kulkarni announced to the media that his militant group, Shri Ram Sene, would attend Hindu religious processions in Karnataka while armed.^[276] In a video clip, he declared, "I warn the Muslim goons, you can't pelt stones or wave swords... Shri Ram will give protection to the processions, and fifty youth will carry swords."

On October 3, officials in Uttar Pradesh's Ayodhya ordered a ban on the sale of poultry and meat during a nine-day-long Hindu religious festival, warning that strict legal action would be taken against any business that failed to comply.^[277] The move blatantly targeted Muslims, who are the main demographic selling meat.

Also on October 3, a local reporter in Rajasthan harassed a Muslim vendor during a broadcast, accusing him of "hurting Hindu sentiments" during an ongoing festival by selling fish bones.^[278] On the same day, a Hindu extremist aimed a cannon towards a mosque during a Hindu religious procession in Maharashtra.^[279] On October 6 in Madhya Pradesh, Hindu extremists from the Hindu Jagran Manch intruded a Hindu festival's celebration and physically assaulted Muslim men attending the event, accusing them of infiltrating the event to engage in "love jihad" before handing them over to the police.^[280]

On October 11, during celebrations of a Hindu festival in Uttar Pradesh, Hindu extremists staged a play depicting Muslims as "terrorists" attempting to abduct the sister of an Indian Army soldier.^[281] On October 19, Hindu militants in Delhi harassed Muslim henna artists for taking Hindu women as clients during a Hindu festival.^[282]

5.2 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.

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.^[283] 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.^[284] Locals also reported that some Hindu mobs brandished guns as part of their

processions. On January 24, Hindu extremist mobs livestreamed incidents of anti-Muslim brutality in the area on social media.^[285]

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.^[286]

Other areas of 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.^[287] 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."

Similar violent celebrations were reported across India, with Hindu mobs attacking 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 Shri Ram" and "Mullah (Muslim), go to Pakistan." In Bihar, a Hindu rally set a Muslim graveyard on fire.^[288] In Uttar Pradesh, three Hindu men climbed onto the roof of an Uttar Pradesh mosque and replaced its green flag with a saffron one.^[289]

There were also several cases of hate speech in relation to the consecration of the Ram Temple. In Uttar Pradesh on January 16, far-right monk Yati Narsinghanand delivered a hate speech peddling conspiracy theories targeting Muslims.^[290] He called for a complete ban on Muslims from entering Ayodhya city, where the consecration ceremony of the Ram Temple on the site of the demolished Babri mosque was held. On January 21 in Uttar Pradesh's Ayodhya, Hindu supremacist TV personality Suresh Chavhanke called for building temples by replacing 400,000 mosques.^[291] During an anti-Muslim hate speech in Madhya Pradesh on January 22,^[292] far-right monk Acharya Ramswaroopbhamchari called for replacing mosques in Kashi and Mathura with temples. BJP leader T Raja Singh^[293] made a similar call in Chhattisgarh the following day.

A statement released on January 23 by a coalition of diaspora groups warned that the Ram Temple is a weaponization of religion for the BJP's gain, stating: "The 'consecration' of the temple... is a signal that India has moved to the brink of implementing the long-term RSS goals of making India a Hindu Rashtra (State) and replacing the Constitution with the Manusmriti, a violently Brahminical, anti-Dalit and patriarchal ancient Hindu text."^[294]

On January 22, a Muslim teen was assaulted and sexually humiliated by a Hindu mob celebrating the Ram Temple consecration.^[295] The mob accused him of making a social media post disrespecting the saffron flag, and proceeded to film him as he was beaten, stripped, and

paraded naked with fire thrown at his genitals. The victim was arrested days later after Hindu extremists filed a case against him.

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.^[296] 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.^[297]

Individuals who protested or criticized the Babri Mosque demolition around this time were subjected to repression by the state and its supporters. In multiple cases, Hindu mobs attacked venues hosting events commemorating the Babri Mosque,^[298] students were banned from protesting by their administrations,^[299] and a man holding a protest was arrested under charges of “intent to cause a riot.”^[300]

BJP leaders were complicit in enabling this 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.^[301] BJP lawmaker Nitesh Rane threatened to “find and kill” those who had put up defensive barricades to protect a Muslim neighborhood in Mumbai.^[302]

A school principal in Chhattisgarh was arrested on charges of hurting religious sentiments for preaching Buddhism and discouraging belief in Hindu gods during a gathering on January 28. Ratanlal Sarovar, 60, reportedly made the speech on the day of the consecration ceremony of the Ram Temple. Sarovar was also suspended by the district’s education department and jailed.

5.3 Violence on Muslim Holidays

On the Muslim holiday Eid-al-Adha, which is celebrated by sacrificing and distributing animal meat to the needy, Hindu supremacist cow vigilantes launched several attacks against Muslims. Muslims were also harassed by law enforcement during congregational Eid prayers. There was an increase in the criminalization of Muslim symbols and practices by the BJP government. Muslims across India faced criminal charges for offering prayers in public spaces or for any display of religious symbols and practices. The growing weaponization of violent Hindu supremacists is a cause of concern for religious minorities, who are being threatened with mass slaughter by Hindu extremist groups.

On March 15, students at the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC), one of India's top journalism schools, accused the university administration of religious discrimination after being denied permission to organize an iftar party on campus.^[303] The Muslim students pointed out that Hindu festivals like Holi and Diwali were recently celebrated on campus with the participation of the administration, students, staff, and faculty.

On June 15 In Maharashtra, Hindu militants from the Bajrang Dal created a disturbance outside a housing complex where Muslim families brought home lambs for sacrifice on Eid.^[304] Similar incidents were also reported in other cities in Maharashtra.

In West Bengal's Birbhum, a 19-year-old Muslim man, Tufan Sekh, was brutally assaulted by a Hindu extremist mob on June 17.^[305] Sekh was falsely accused of throwing a packet of meat in front of a Hindu temple. According to the victim's brother, Sekh was on his way to a relative's house to distribute the sacrificial meat on Eid, when one of the meat packets dropped out on the road. When he returned to retrieve it, he was accused of deliberately throwing it in front of the Hindu temple to hurt their sentiments. The mob tied Sekh to a pole, and brutally beat him with bamboo sticks.

On June 17, the management body of Jamia Masjid, the largest mosque in Kashmir, reported that the Hindu supremacist Modi-led government had denied permission for Eid prayers in the mosque for the sixth time in a row.^[306] Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, who delivers sermons and leads the prayer in the mosque, was also placed under house arrest. The mosque remained closed for months after the abrogation of Kashmir's autonomous status in August 2019.

In Himachal Pradesh on June 19, a Hindu extremist mob violently attacked and looted a shop in the presence of police after its Muslim owner shared a picture of an animal sacrifice for Eid on WhatsApp.^[307] After the incident, members of Hindu militant groups VHP and Bajrang Dal pressured seven Muslim businessmen to leave within 24 hours, prompting an exodus of Muslim businessmen from Nahan who feared for their safety and livelihoods. At least 16 Muslim businessmen were forced to leave due to the attack.

Curfews and internet suspensions were put in place in Odisha after communal clashes broke out over allegations of cow slaughter on June 19, the day of Eid.^[308] Tensions began after a few Hindu supremacists alleged that cows were being slaughtered for Eid and attacked the houses of Muslim families, triggering an escalation of violence. At least 15 people, including five policemen, were injured.

Police in Uttar Pradesh arrested eleven Muslims, including minors and elderly people, for offering Eid-ul-Adha prayers on an open ground on June 19.^[309] The local Muslim residents claimed that since they did not have a designated space for Eid prayers, they chose to pray

outside, an act that has been criminalized by the Hindu supremacist state government. In 2023, more than 2,000 people were booked for offering prayers on a roadside on Eid.

In another incident on April 12, police in Uttar Pradesh booked at least 200 Muslims for offering Eid prayers on the roadside outside of a mosque alleging that it led to traffic congestion.^[310] Two Muslim religious leaders were arrested by the police on June 25 for sharing an educational social media post describing the Islamic procedure for animal sacrifice on Eid-al-Adha.^[311] The police alleged that the post could potentially “provoke breach of communal peace,” arguing that it was intended to “promote enmity” and offend the religious sentiments of Hindus.

Indian comedian Daniel Ferndandes was forced to cancel a June 29 show in Telangana after BJP leader T. Raja Singh threatened Ferndandes with physical violence over a joke he had made previously.^[312] “Our workers will come and thrash you,” Singh threatened, after Ferndandes joked about a group of Jains who, in an Islamophobic incident, dressed as Muslims in order to buy goats and “save” them from being sacrificed for the Muslim holiday Eid al-Adha.

6. Transnational Impacts

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) defines transnational repression as the strategies used by foreign governments to threaten, intimidate, and silence individuals residing in other countries. Under Modi, the Indian government has engaged in various forms of transnational repression against the Indian diaspora, including assassination, digital censorship and harassment, the cancellation of Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cards, and surveillance.

Actors linked to the Modi government, including BJP leaders, the party's IT cell, and cyber volunteers, frequently rally their Hindu supremacist supporters to digitally harass individuals who criticize the Modi government or its ideology. India's external intelligence agency, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), has also launched covert online operations aimed at discrediting US-based human rights groups and activists through disinformation campaigns.^[313]

Organizations with financial and organizational ties to violent anti-Muslim paramilitaries in India, such as the Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America and the Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh, have collaborated with Indian consulates in the United States to sponsor public programming aimed at expanding Hindu supremacy abroad.^[314] Additionally, far-right diaspora groups such as the Hindu American Foundation (HAF) frequently lobby for the interests of the Indian government and amplify BJP propaganda.^[315]

International concerns around India's transnational repression significantly increased after Canadian Sikh separatist leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar was reportedly assassinated by Indian government agents in June 2023, and the United States government foiled a plot to assassinate American Sikh separatist leader Gurpatwant Singh Pannun that same year.^[316] Canadian police are currently investigating three other murders of Sikh individuals, one of them an 11-year-old boy who was killed along with his father, which may be linked to the assassination of Nijjar.^[317]

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.^[318]

In February 2024, Naik’s father was interrogated by Indian intelligence officials in a military camp. There, one official told Naik’s father that his son should “write nicer articles” about India.^[319] 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.^[320] X was also ordered to remove links to watch the documentary in India.^[321]

On October 5, the *Sacramento Bee* published a story titled “In the shadow of a freeway shooting lurks the fear of Sikhs threatened in California,” reporting that in August, a gunman had fired shots from a car at three Sikh separatist activists in Sacramento.^[322] Human rights groups believe that this was another assassination attempt by the Indian government. The story further reported that a number of American Hindu far-right groups were behind a concerted effort to increase the policing of the Sikh community and calling for the surveillance of gurudwaras (Sikh places of worship).

These groups, including the Hindu American Foundation and Coalition of Hindus of North America, reportedly pushed the same talking points used by the Indian government to demonize Sikhs, labeling them as “extremists,” “terrorists,” and agents aimed at spreading hatred against Hindus.

These Hindu nationalists conducted trainings with law enforcement and met with numerous prosecutors and elected officials, including Fresno Mayor Jerry Dyer in October 2023. The groups also smeared Sikh individuals as “terrorists,” including a school board member and a journalist, potentially placing them at risk of further retaliation from the Indian government.

7. Conclusion

The persistence of anti-minority violence in 2024 reflected deep-rooted societal and institutional biases maintained by an authoritarian state at war with its most vulnerable citizens. Mob lynchings continued unabated, often under the guise of cow protection, with victims overwhelmingly from Muslim and Dalit communities. The continued impunity of cow vigilante groups reflected a deeper trend of collaboration between Hindu extremist militias and law enforcement, which repeatedly worked together to enforce violent retribution for allegations of cow slaughter and alleged beef consumption.

Discriminatory laws such as anti-conversion legislation were used to harass and criminalize Christian pastors and congregants, while Muslims were attacked and charged over accusations of “love jihad.” In Kashmir, Indian security forces and BJP government continued to disenfranchise the Muslim-majority population through extrajudicial killings, custodial torture cases, seizure of property, and wanton arrests. These patterns of violence and discrimination illustrate the systematic marginalization of minorities across religious, caste, and regional lines.

The 2024 electoral cycle further entrenched hate and intimidation as political tools. BJP candidates and their affiliates weaponized hate speech during their campaigns and oversaw the arrest of opposition candidates, blatantly violating Indian election laws while facing little to no accountability. Muslims and other minority voters reported widespread voter suppression, including violence at polling stations, intimidation by law enforcement, and manipulation of voter rolls. These efforts were part of a broader strategy to marginalize opposition voices and minorities, undermining the democratic process.

Institutional decay under Modi’s leadership further facilitated authoritarian rule and emboldened Hindu supremacist violence. The judiciary’s declining independence, along with the planned introduction of discriminatory laws such as the Waqf (Amendment) Bill and the Uniform Civil Code (UCC), reflected a systematic erosion of constitutional protections for minorities. Attacks on places of worship and punitive demolitions, often targeting Muslim-owned properties, became routine measures to intimidate communities.

Police brutality, exemplified by the Sambhal violence, demonstrated the complicity of state

forces in suppressing dissent and silencing victims. Press censorship, unlawful detention of political prisoners, and crackdowns on activists and journalists exposed the government's growing intolerance of criticism and dissent.

The epidemic of mob violence, hate speech, voter suppression, and police brutality underscores a deliberate and coordinated assault on India's pluralistic fabric—one that is driven by Hindu supremacist ideology and its collaborators at all levels of government and society.

8. Recommendations

- 1.** The US Department of State should heed the United States Commission for International Religious Freedom's (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.
- 2.** The President of the United States has the power to place sanctions on individuals who have committed, directly aided, ordered, or are complicit in gross human rights violations through the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act. These sanctions include barring entry to the US or blocking any transactions relating to property or interests held in the United States. These sanctions could also be applicable to those responsible for or complicit in the ongoing persecution of religious minorities, including politicians and elected officials from India's ruling political party, the BJP, at the federal level and in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Haryana.
- 3.** The US government should use its diplomatic channels to express concern over the issue of religious persecution in India and publicly condemn any acts of violence or discrimination against religious minorities.
- 4.** The US State Department must include human rights and religious freedoms as an integral part of the US-India Strategic Dialogue.
- 5.** The US government must also make defense relations and the sale of US weaponry and systems conditional on an improvement of human rights in India.

6. The US government must use its trade and economic leverage to encourage the Indian government to take action to protect the rights of religious minorities. This can include linking trade agreements and economic aid to improvements in human rights.

7. The US government must provide support to civil society organizations in India that are working to promote religious tolerance and protect the rights of religious minorities. This can include providing funding and resources to these organizations, as well as partnering with them to promote their work.

8. The US government must support international human rights monitoring in India to ensure that the issue of religious persecution is being monitored and addressed. This can include supporting the work of the Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and other international organizations working to promote human rights in India.

9. 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.

10. 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.

11. The Union government must pass a national anti-lynching bill to protect religious minorities from Hindu militias and cow vigilante groups.

12. The Waqf (Amendment) Bill, the Citizenship Amendment Act, the National Register of Citizens, the Uniform Civil Code, anti-conversion laws, and other laws that target rights of minorities must be revoked.

13. The judiciary must block Hindu supremacist attempts to seize historic mosques and convert them into temples by upholding the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991, which prevents the alteration of the religious character of all places of worship as they existed on August 15, 1947.

14. BJP-led state governments must heed the Supreme Court's ruling on the unconstitutionality of punitive or extrajudicial demolitions and immediately stop bulldozing Muslim homes, livelihoods, and places of worship.

15. The government should, under no circumstances, allow police or civic authorities to enable economic apartheid or any other coordinated discrimination campaigns against minorities. Calls for economic boycotts against minorities by Hindu extremists should result in swift and appropriate legal action.

16. The government must take steps to address widespread police brutality against minorities, including against protesters. Punitive action must be taken against police officers who collaborate with Hindu militants or cow vigilantes to endanger vulnerable groups.

17. State governments and law enforcement units engaging in targeted voter suppression against Muslims and other minorities must be swiftly held to account by the Indian judiciary.

18. All prisoners of conscience must immediately be released.

19. The international community should actively engage with the Indian government to express concerns regarding the treatment of religious minorities and increasing cases of transnational repression.

20. 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.

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