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# 2026

# ANNUAL

# REPORT

HUMAN RIGHTS & RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN INDIA



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

The core mission of the 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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# A Message from the President

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Since assuming power in 2014, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) have sought to realize a dangerous vision of India: one in which Hindus reign supreme and religious minorities, particularly Muslims and Christians, are second-class citizens. Modi and the BJP espouse Hindutva, or Hindu nationalism, a distinctive, authoritarian, supremacist ideology first espoused in the 20th century by admirers of Hitler and Mussolini.

The BJP is the political offshoot of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a paramilitary organization modeled on 20th-century fascist parties in Germany and Italy.<sup>1</sup> The RSS is the progenitor of Hindutva (Hindu nationalism), and argues that Hindu Indians are superior to non-Hindus, that India must purify itself of Christian and Muslim influence, and that therefore Christians and Muslims should not enjoy the same rights as the majority. The overwhelming volume of hate crimes in India today stems from these Hindu nationalist organizations, including the RSS and its thousands of affiliates.

The BJP continues to maintain close ties with its parent organization, the RSS, and a broad umbrella of subsidiary Hindu nationalist paramilitaries — including the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and Bajrang Dal — which it relies on to incite and orchestrate violence in contested regions during election seasons, a strategy that reliably yields votes.<sup>2</sup> On numerous occasions in 2025 and in years past, BJP officials have directly encouraged and participated in mass violence against Muslims. Guided by Hindutva, Modi and the BJP have overhauled India's laws, media, courts, and police to make life for religious minorities more dangerous, more constricted, and more economically precarious.

The Indian American Muslim Council (IAMC) was founded in 2002 in the aftermath of a massive anti-Muslim pogrom in Gujarat state presided over by Narendra Modi.<sup>3</sup> It aims to raise awareness about declining conditions for religious minorities, principally Muslims and Christians, in India. In our more than two decades in existence, we have grown to be the largest and most established Indian diaspora organization advocating for Indian religious minorities.

Our annual report aims to provide legislators with the tools they need to make informed policy decisions based on knowledge of on-the-ground conditions in India, rather than through the BJP-filtered narratives that continue to influence US discourse. It focuses on the Modi regime's role in inflaming anti-minority hate and violence, punitive demolitions, passing discriminatory legislations, and weaponizing anti-immigrant sentiment to target Indian Muslims.

It also discusses the Modi-led Indian government's introduction of new laws that could:

- Facilitate the expulsion of opposition legislators
- Enable investigative agencies to spy on journalists and potentially monitor their movements
- Strip Muslim and indigenous communities of autonomy over their lands

Laws like these illustrate why India was downgraded from "Free" to "Partly Free" status by the internationally respected democracy watchdog Freedom House.<sup>4</sup> The same should be said for V-Dem's downgrading of India from a "Democracy" to an "Electoral Autocracy,"<sup>5</sup> or the Human Rights Foundation's decision to recategorize India as a hybrid authoritarian state.<sup>6</sup>

With interfaith marriage and conversion to Islam and Christianity criminalized in twelve BJP- ruled states, much of India now effectively has two sets of laws: one for the majority faith of Hindus, and another for minorities. In law and in brutal practice, minorities live in a different world from the majority.

Over the course of 2025, thousands of Muslims and Christians living in BJP- ruled states had their homes or places of worship bulldozed. Some Christians saw their homes torn apart by militant Hindu nationalist groups and police for merely hosting a prayer service in an apartment. It is no exaggeration to say

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1 <https://theloop.ecpr.eu/hindutva-fascism-is-threatening-the-worlds-largest-democracy/>

2 <https://policytensor.com/2013/11/21/the-great-indian-riot-machine/>

3 <https://time.com/4004261/sanjiv-bhatt-police-officer-narendra-modi-gujarat-riots-2002/>

4 <https://freedomhouse.org/country/india>

5 [https://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/peace/human\\_rights/i-policy/what-democratic-backsliding-means-for-india-021023.pdf](https://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/peace/human_rights/i-policy/what-democratic-backsliding-means-for-india-021023.pdf)

6 <https://hrf.org/latest/the-dictators-toolkit-disguised-judicial-attacks/>

that for India's Muslims and Christians, the constitutional guarantee of freedom of religion has already been destroyed.

Though the Indian government's sordid treatment of religious minorities is well-known—indeed, Modi was banned from entering the U.S. for nearly a decade after his role in a major anti-Muslim pogrom — the Indian prime minister was nonetheless treated well by American leaders during his February visit. Treated to banquets, hand-picked press coverage, and lavish praise from leading American diplomats, the U.S.' highest officials issued no public criticism of Modi's deplorable record on religious freedom as prime minister. Given the current administration's concern with persecution of Christians, it is important to highlight this ongoing threat.

In 2025, as in years past, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) urged the State Department to designate India as a "Country of Particular Concern" (CPC) — its highest warning. The pervasiveness of hate speech coming from the ruling party and the participation of its allies in India's daily hate crimes, often on a massive scale, has informed USCIRF's decision, which corroborates research published by

Amnesty International<sup>7</sup>, Human Rights Watch<sup>8</sup>, Genocide Watch<sup>9</sup>, and the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum,<sup>10</sup> all of which have warned of impending genocide and/or mass atrocities in India. Nonetheless, the State Department has not added India to the list of CPCs.

As a democratic nation that upholds the principles of freedom and equality, the United States must ensure that its strategic alliance with India is grounded in a mutual commitment to religious freedom and civil rights. With the ongoing dialogue between India and the United States, the State Department has ample opportunities to advance human rights conditions in India.

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7 <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/asia-and-the-pacific/south-asia/india/report-india/>

8 <https://www.hrw.org/asia/india>

9 <https://www.genocidewatch.com/single-post/country-report-india>

10 <https://www.ushmm.org/genocide-prevention/blog/rising-mass-atrocity-risks-in-india>

To help inform this dialogue, the Indian American Muslim Council (IAMC) has released its annual report “Human Rights and Religious Freedoms in India – 2025,” which provides timely analysis of BJP policies and their relationship to conditions on the ground in India, along with meticulous documentation of the state-led persecution, hate crimes, religious apartheid policies, and economic discrimination that have come to dominate everyday life in Modi’s India.

Sincerely,

Mohammed Jawad  
President  
IAMC

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# Executive Summary

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IAMC's annual report presents comprehensive, contemporary research examining the relationship between state policy and the growing risk of genocidal violence in India, with the aim of equipping policymakers to make informed foreign policy decisions on India. While India is home to many religious minorities, Indian Muslims and Christians are the only communities that have been systematically targeted by the BJP-led government and subjected to persistent, state-sanctioned violence, warranting the special focus accorded to them in this report. The report also analyzes the Modi regime's assault on democratic norms, the situation in Jammu and Kashmir, and the mass violence and discrimination faced by Adivasis (Indigenous peoples) and Dalits (caste-oppressed communities) throughout 2025.

Chapter 1, "Democratic Backsliding and the Architecture of Repression," describes the efforts of the Modi regime to transform India's historic democracy into an authoritarian state. Following the mass expulsion of opposition legislators in 2023, the Modi regime introduced new legislation in 2025 to make it easier to permanently ban opposition figures from parliament.<sup>11</sup> <sup>12</sup> New laws also expanded the Indian government's censorship capabilities, enabling even lower officials to issue social media bans against accounts they deem "security threats."



Ajazeera, Altaf Qadri/AP Photo

2025 also saw instances of substantial voter manipulation in key elections, Indian democratic watchdogs and opposition leaders say. According to data scrutinized by the Congress party, as many as 100,250 (nearly one in six) voters in the election for one assembly seat in Karnataka were manipulated, helping the BJP win a crucial seat in the state.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/dec/22/mahua-moitra-indian-parliament-expulsion>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/8/23/a-new-indian-bill-punishes-jailed-politicians-why-has-it-sparked-outrage>

<sup>13</sup> <https://theprint.in/politics/rahuls-80-voters-in-one-home-charge-what-theprint-found-at-house-no-35-in-mahadevapura/2717544/>

The Indian government has also escalated its attacks on critics at home and abroad, invoking draconian anti-terror laws domestically to arrest dissident activists and journalists, and resorting to social media censorship, harassment, propaganda campaigns, and lawsuits to target critics abroad.

Many of India's most repressive actions in 2025 were relayed through Elon Musk's X platform, which readily complied with censorship requests in spite of its founder's public defense of "free speech." In July 2025, leading global news service Reuters was suspended on X, and in September, a district level-police officer also issued notices to X to remove posts made by a man who had published allegations of corruption within his district, demonstrating the potential for abuse of India's newly broadened censorship powers.<sup>14</sup> <sup>15</sup> Independent media organizations that had previously reported on the Indian government's involvement in a corruption scandal concerning the Adani Group — one of the largest in history — were also punished throughout 2025, with several being deplatformed and losing their tax-exempt status.<sup>16</sup> In 2025, India continued to lead the world in the number of government-enforced internet shutdowns.<sup>17</sup>



Anushree Fadnavis/Reuters

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14 <https://www.reuters.com/sustainability/society-equity/x-suspends-reuters-account-india-after-legal-demand-government-denies-making-2025-07-06/>

15 <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2025/9/8/india-expands-censorship-powers-lets-lower-officials-demand-takedowns>

16 <https://cpj.org/2025/02/india-revokes-nonprofit-and-tax-status-of-news-outlets/>

17 <https://english.amarujaladigital.com/technology/internet-shutdowns-report-2025-india-tops-with-total-421-times-2025-12-28>

Chapter 2, “Transnational Repression,” examines the host of tactics that the RSS and BJP uses to extend its authoritarian reach overseas. In addition to the Indian government’s well-publicized assassination attempts on North American soil, the report discusses the more covert influence of Indian consulates, who use domestic spying to silence Kashmiri dissidents, influence local and national legislation, and promote anti-Muslim events in American cities. The section also discusses how the Indian government weaponizes its visa system to revoke the travel privileges of Indian Americans, and the activities of Indian intelligence agency-associated officials whose fabricated smear campaigns have been distributed in the halls of Congress. In 2025, Hindu nationalist groups issued numerous death threats to American academics and the leaders of domestic religious freedom organizations. The cumulative impact of this transnational repression has been to induce a chilling effect on the free speech of American citizens, many of whom fear reprisals here.

Chapter 3, “Institutionalizing Hate,” documents how high-ranking BJP officials have encouraged, orchestrated, and even been direct participants in violence against Muslims, Christians, and other minorities. In September, BJP Member of Legislative Council (MLC) CT Ravi urged supporters to behead Muslims and “bury them” – just one incident that reflects the virulence of the BJP’s ideology.<sup>18</sup>

Countless other BJP politicians, including Modi’s second-in-command, Home Minister Amit Shah, continued to espouse ludicrous anti-Muslim and anti-Christian conspiracy theories like “love jihad” and “land jihad” which have motivated violent attacks on Muslims and Christians on countless occasions.<sup>19 20</sup> According to an earlier report covered by Bloomberg, the majority of hate speech in India is linked to Prime Minister Modi’s political party.<sup>21</sup>

Modi’s BJP also continued to maintain close relationships with a broad array of violent paramilitaries, including the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), Bajrang Dal, and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), whose members have orchestrated a wave of violent attacks against Muslims, Christians, and other religious minorities since Modi assumed power. In addition to enjoying the patronage of the BJP, all of these organizations have sister chapters in the United States, including the particularly violent Vishwa Hindu Parishad,

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18 <https://clarionindia.net/karnataka-bjp-leader-booked-for-behave-or-get-beheaded-threat-to-muslims/>

19 <https://www.hindutvawatch.org/in-siwan-amit-shah-vows-to-identify-and-expel-alleged-infiltrators-in-campaign-speech/>

20 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jan/21/they-cut-him-into-pieces-indias-love-jihad-conspiracy-theory-turns-lethal>

21 <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-09-25/modi-s-party-linked-with-most-hate-speech-in-india-report-finds#xj4y7vzkg>

which has received millions of dollars from overseas supporters.<sup>22</sup> VHP members and Bajrang Dal members lynched Muslims throughout 2025, accusing them of transporting cows (considered sacred by some Hindus), beating them and in some cases killing them. These same paramilitaries were also involved in numerous instances of violence during weaponized religious processions, with members loudly antagonizing Muslims outside of places of worship and starting fights and fires that often resulted in the destruction of mosques and Muslim-owned residences. Christians throughout Chhattisgarh, in particular, were routinely harassed and beaten inside houses of worship by Hindu nationalist groups, which accused them of conducting forced conversions.

Building on years of similar discriminatory state-level legislation passed in Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Madhya Pradesh, BJP-ruled Rajasthan passed a law criminalising consensual interfaith marriages and peaceful religious practices in September of this year.<sup>23</sup>

The act emboldened violence in the region, where a mob of approximately 20 Hindu extremists burst into a Rajasthan church in September, accusing the pastor of forced conversions and beating parishioners so badly that several required hospitalization. Local police refused to prosecute the attackers, instead imprisoning the pastor of the church.<sup>24</sup> The cumulative effect of these policies is to criminalize the practice of minority faiths and institutionalize the faith of the majority.

Chapter 4, "Anti-Christian Violence," describes the devastating conditions that Christians live under in India. From January to November 2025, 2,900 anti-Christian attacks occurred throughout India, and as of December, at least 112 Christians were imprisoned, the majority held under spurious charges of forcibly converting others to Christianity.<sup>25</sup> Bolstered by BJP- promoted narratives of a Christian conspiracy to seduce Hindus to their faith, numerous Hindu nationalist groups disrupted prayer meetings and attacked pastors, churches, recent converts to Christianity, Adivasi (Indigenous) and Dalit (caste-oppressed) Christians in 2025. Anti- conversion laws, passed in 12 BJP-ruled states, open Christians to criminal persecution for practicing their faith and encourage law enforcement and paramilitaries to adopt violence in dealing with Christians. Dozens of attacks around Christmas put Christians in danger simply for wearing Santa hats or singing carols in public.

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22 <https://chicago.suntimes.com/2023/12/1/23978677/india-hindu-nationalism-ideology-narendra-modi-american-problem-rasheed-ahmed>

23 <https://thewire.in/rights/how-modi-govt-turned-constitutional-rights-into-criminal-offences-a-2025-snapshot>

24 <https://www.opendorsuk.org/news/latest-news/india-rajasthan-attacks/>

25 <https://www.ucanews.com/news/a-silent-christmas-for-families-of-112-jailed-indian-christians/111404>

Chapter 5, “State-Led Punitive Demolitions,” discusses the Modi regime’s extensive, punitive destruction of Muslim and Christian property throughout the country. Often justified on the spurious ground of preventing “encroachment” on government land, the BJP-led bulldozer drives in fact serve to punish regime dissidents and minority faiths. Assam state saw one of the most extensive punitive bulldozer campaigns in recent history, with bulldozers tearing through the homes of over 10,000 Bengali speaking Muslims accused of being “infiltrators” from Bangladesh, despite the fact that many possessed valid papers and had lived in India for years. The Indian government also conducted a massive demolition campaign in an industrial area of Pune, where an estimated 5,000, predominantly Muslim-owned businesses were destroyed. In the wake of the Pahalgam terrorist attacks in Jammu and Kashmir, families spuriously accused of supporting the attackers also had their homes destroyed.

Chapter 6, “Economic Destruction,” details the impact of the Modi regime’s discriminatory and sexist ideology on India’s economic development. Despite Modi’s promise to add 100 million manufacturing jobs, India has actually lost 24 million industrial jobs since he assumed power.<sup>26</sup> After initially promising to raise the proportion of industrial manufacturing jobs from 17% to 25% of GDP, the overall share has actually fallen to 16% of GDP.

State-enabled sexism<sup>27</sup> also severely hampers Indian economic growth, with the Modi regime’s refusal to adequately fund the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act keeping thousands of women out of the workforce.<sup>28</sup> Under the Modi regime, only seven out of 100 urban women are employed — a significant decline that places the nation behind even Saudi Arabia in terms of female labor participation.<sup>29</sup> Human rights group India Hate Lab (IHL) also recorded 111 hate speeches by leading Hindu nationalist figures calling for the social or economic boycott of minority communities, primarily Muslims — a 27.6% increase from 2023.<sup>30</sup> These boycotts have a profound impact on targeted individuals who, according to a 2022 report by Oxfam India and NCDHR, suffer economic losses ranging from 30 to 70%.<sup>31</sup> In encouraging such discrimination, India’s government slows down the progress of the nation as a whole.

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26 <https://archive.is/o/08lpb/https://ceda.ashoka.edu.in/ceda-cmie-bulletin-manufacturing-employment-halves-in-5-years/>

27 <https://archive.is/o/08lpb/https://www.economist.com/leaders/2021/02/20/only-7-of-urban-indian-women-have-paid-jobs>

28 <https://archive.is/o/08lpb/https://thewire.in/rights/chart-decline-expenditure-social-security-schemes-budget-2023>

29 <https://archive.is/o/08lpb/https://www.economist.com/leaders/2021/02/20/only-7-of-urban-indian-women-have-paid-jobs>

30 <https://www.indiahatelab.com/2025/02/10/hate-speech-events-in-india-2024/>

31 <https://indiatomorrow.net/2025/05/01/religion-based-economic-boycott-a-new-face-of-social-hatred/>

Chapter 7, “Jammu and Kashmir,” details the increasingly draconian tactics that the Modi regime has used to take over the Muslim-majority region, whose autonomy is guaranteed in the Indian constitution. The Supreme Court’s 2023 decision to uphold the revocation of Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, which provided the region with semi-autonomy, has dealt a death blow to Kashmiris’ democratic rights.<sup>32</sup> Currently, the region continues to be run by the administrators appointed by the central government, who routinely deploy authoritarian tactics to control the resident population.

Following the April 22, 2025 terrorist attack that claimed 25 lives in Pahalgam, Indian authorities led a historic crackdown in the region. State forces allegedly killed 13 people, arbitrarily detained more than 4,000, and used explosives to destroy at least 10 homes belonging to the relatives of individuals alleged to have served a role in perpetrating the terrorist attack.<sup>33</sup> Indian authorities also initiated numerous internet shutdowns that affected Kashmir’s health and banking systems, meaning that the region would once again lead the world in the number of total internet shutdowns.<sup>34</sup> In the ensuing repression, officials also launched a sweeping ban of 25 books critical of the central government’s colonial approach towards governance in Kashmir, including the well regarded Verso title *Kashmir: The Case for Freedom*, featuring writing from Arundhati Roy, Pankaj Mishra, Tariq Ali, and others.<sup>35</sup>

Chapters 8 and 9, on Adivasis and Dalits respectively, discuss the ongoing threats to two of India’s most historically oppressed communities. In 2025, Adivasis (Indigenous Indians) continued to deal with discriminatory violence and the government sanctioned expropriation of ancestral lands. New administrative guidelines issued by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs moved control over Adivasi lands away from the constitutionally protected authority of Gram Sabhas, or tribal governing councils, and into the hands of central government officials — a move that many Adivasi groups fear will be used to expropriate additional land.<sup>36</sup>

Adivasi Christians in Chhattisgarh suffered greatly in 2025, with state police working hand in glove with Hindu nationalist paramilitaries to persecute them under the false pretext of preventing forced religious conversions. Between January and July 2025 alone, there were at least 53 reported cases of violence against predominantly Adivasi

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32 <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-67634689>

33 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/may/04/kashmir-crackdown-india-response-to-deadly-tourist-attack>

34 [https://freedomhouse.org/country/india/freedom-net/2025#footnote2\\_9gw1Oo0rtv2KfOqGQPbP4OUpQfbH-kpRNvbJi0uE8\\_oNUdF3wSaA1a](https://freedomhouse.org/country/india/freedom-net/2025#footnote2_9gw1Oo0rtv2KfOqGQPbP4OUpQfbH-kpRNvbJi0uE8_oNUdF3wSaA1a)

35 <https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/news/political-censorship-and-the-25-book-ban-in-kashmir>

36 <https://theindiantribal.com/2025/08/25/gram-sabha-powers-being-undermined-tribal-rights-groups-allege/>

37 <https://www.news Laundry.com/2025/09/12/vandalism-assaults-exhumations-inside-the-hindutva-campaign-against-christian-adivasis-in-chhattisgarh>

Christians in the state, most of them involving the Bajrang Dal or VHP, according to the Chhattisgarh-based community organisation Progressive Christian Alliance (PCA).<sup>37</sup>

Chapter 10, “Recommendations,” includes a list of concrete steps, proposals, and policies that the US State Department, the United Nations, the European Union can take right now to address India’s declining conditions on religious freedom. It also discusses how the Indian Union Government can reverse the declines ushered in by the Modi regime.

# 1. Democratic Backsliding and the Architecture of Repression

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## 1.1 Manipulation of Voter Rolls

Free and fair elections are a hallmark of functioning democracies, but evidence suggests that India's BJP-led government has pursued policies to systematically disenfranchise voters and manipulate election results. When politicians, journalists, and activists have moved to expose voter fraud and vote suppression, the Modi regime has responded swiftly to detain, intimidate, and otherwise silence defenders of Indians' constitutionally guaranteed rights.

In August 2025, Indian Congress head Rahul Gandhi shared evidence that the Electoral Commission of India (ECI) had engaged in widespread voter manipulation during the 2024 Indian general election. According to data scrutinized by the Congress party, up to 100,250 (or nearly one in six) voters in the election for one assembly seat in Karnataka were manipulated, helping the BJP win the critical position.<sup>38</sup>

Gandhi shared evidence that these electoral rolls included 11,956 duplicate voters, 40,009 invalid addresses, 4,132 invalid identifying photos, and 33,692 existing voters doubling their votes by registering as new voters.<sup>39</sup> Independent investigative outlet The Print India later found that 80 voters had registered as living in one 10-foot-wide house.<sup>40</sup> At least 22 different voters had used the same photographs of a Brazilian model as their identifier during the 2024 election.<sup>41</sup>

Partially in response to these discrepancies, the Indian government moved to implement a different measure which critics say has further undermined India's electoral integrity: the ECI's Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise. Within a month of its announcement, voters in Bihar were required to present proof of their Indian citizenship.

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<sup>38</sup> <https://theprint.in/politics/rahuls-80-voters-in-one-home-charge-what-theprint-found-at-house-no-35-in-mahadevpura/2717544/>

<sup>39</sup> <https://thefederal.com/category/news/rahul-gandhi-ec-vote-fraud-expose-election-fake-200669>

<sup>40</sup> <https://theprint.in/politics/rahuls-80-voters-in-one-home-charge-what-theprint-found-at-house-no-35-in-mahadevpura/2717544/>,

<sup>41</sup> <https://thewire.in/government/voter-rolls-and-the-crisis-of-trust-in-indian-elections>

Under the new requirements, critics allege, millions of Indian citizens who had previously been able to vote will now be unable to do so.<sup>42</sup> In Bihar, India's poorest state, more than 30% of births are not registered with the state, and only 2% of residents have passports. The state's nearly 80 million residents could not use the most commonly used ID card in India as valid proof of their identities.

Following the SIR exercise, the BJP-led Indian government removed six million registered Bihari residents from lists of eligible voters in an effort to prevent "infiltrators" — a coded word frequently used to demonize Indian Muslims — from influencing elections.<sup>43</sup> The ECI also replaced the digital files of the draft rolls it had initially uploaded with different lists of voter names that were not easily scannable.<sup>44</sup> An analysis by independent Indian investigative outlet Scroll.in found that five of the ten state districts with the largest share of Muslims living in them also had the highest number of voters removed from electoral rolls.<sup>45</sup>



Representative image. | Diptendu Dutta/AFP

Anjali Bhardwaj, co-convenor of the National Campaign for People's Right to Information, stated that changes to the electoral rolls in Bihar resulted, on average, in about 27,000 voter registrations being deleted from each constituency.

42 <https://www.trtworld.com/article/d2ba220c0b5a>

43 <https://thewire.in/government/voter-rolls-and-the-crisis-of-trust-in-indian-elections>

44 <https://scroll.in/latest/1085399/election-commission-removes-digital-draft-voter-lists-in-bihar>

45 <https://scroll.in/article/1085160/highest-exclusion-in-bihar-draft-roll-women-muslim-dominant-districts>

"In a state where most seats are won by a slender margin, this number exceeds the winning margin in two-thirds of seats in the 2020 elections," Bhardwaj said. "This scale of deletions could potentially swing the electoral outcome in most assembly constituencies."<sup>46</sup>

On August 11, lawmakers from Congress, Samajwadi Party, Trinamool Congress, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, Rashtriya Janata Dal, and Shiv Sena (UBT) were detained by police for protesting the changes to electoral rolls in Bihar.<sup>47</sup> Opposition figures at the New Delhi demonstration had accused the BJP of attempting to disenfranchise the state's Muslim voters and other critics of its Hindu nationalist politics.



Rahul Gandhi, leader of India's main opposition Congress party, is stopped by police along with other lawmakers during a protest in New Delhi. / Reuters

In the later months of 2025, India's government expanded the implementation of SIR to every state in the country, requiring state employees to re-examine the documentation of 500 million registered voters. In the wake of the national rollout, Indian opposition parties have reported their councillors wrongfully declared dead. More than a dozen officials conducting the revision have committed suicide.<sup>48</sup>

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46 <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/08/11/world/asia/india-election-arrests-modi.html>

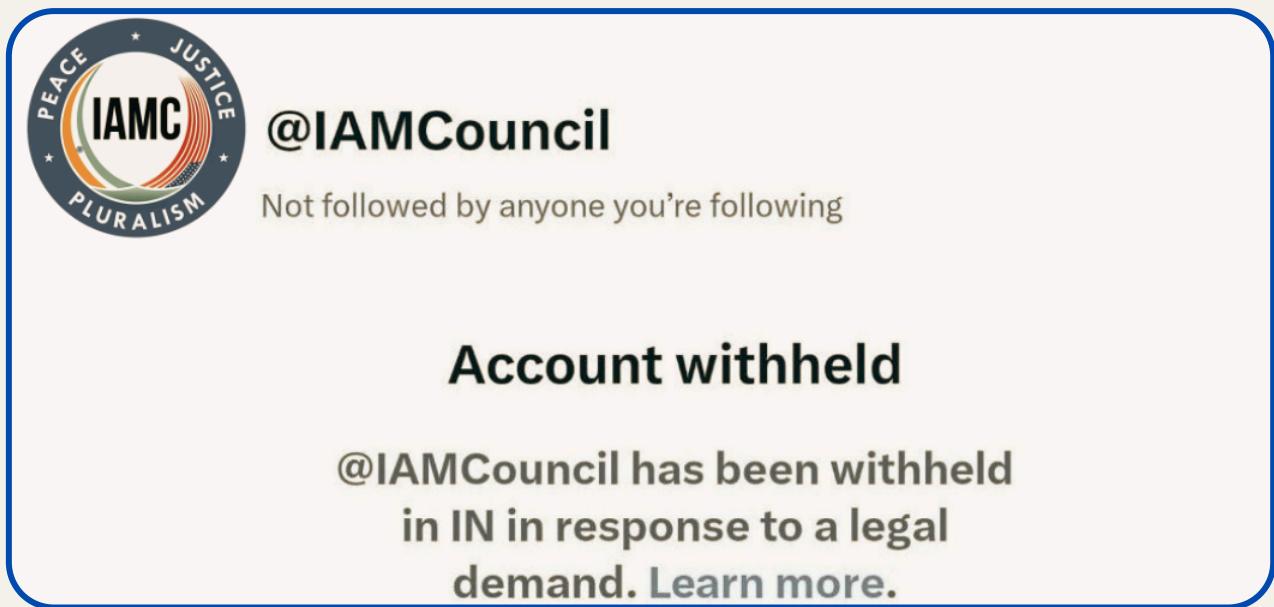
47 <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/08/11/world/asia/india-election-arrests-modi.html>

48 <https://www.cnn.com/2025/12/24/india/india-voter-registration-intl-hnk-dst>

## 1.2 The Expanding Reach of Indian Government Censorship

In recent years, the Modi regime has taken concerning steps to expand the censorship capabilities of officials at all levels of government, while expanding and intensifying previous longstanding practices used to silence critics and impinge citizens' ability to access information in times of critical need.

Among the most dramatic policy changes occurred in October 2024, when the Indian government moved to grant every government agency the power to issue censorship demands to social media companies. Expanding a power previously granted exclusively to the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (IT) and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (I&B), the new law enabled all federal and state agencies, including district-level officials and police officers, to issue demands for the removal of online content.<sup>49</sup>



As of September 2025, Indian government agencies had taken advantage of these increasingly broad powers to demand the removal of 3,465 URLs. The Indian American Muslim Council and Hindus for Human Rights, both leading Indian American human rights organizations, both had their accounts blocked on Indian social media in 2025.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>49</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2025/9/8/india-expands-censorship-powers-lets-lower-officials-demand-takedowns>

<sup>50</sup> <https://iamc.com/censorship-alert-iamc-urgently-demands-restoration-of-x-account-access-in-india/>

Two days after the suspension, X wrote to IAMC, stating that the account had been withheld after X received “a legal removal demand from the Government of India [which] claims the following content violates India’s Information Technology Act, 2000.” Social media companies that refused to comply with these demands have been threatened with the loss of their “intermediary immunity” status, which protects them from liability for content posted on their sites.

The intimidatory tactics appear to have resulted in increased compliance from social media companies. Thus far, at least 72 major tech companies have complied with the Indian government’s demands, even going so far as to appoint in-house staffers to comply with censorship requests relayed through the government’s proprietary Sahyog (“collaboration”) platform. Meta’s WhatsApp and Instagram, Apple, LinkedIn, Google, Telegram, and Snapchat have all joined Sahyog and appointed an Indian government-mandated staffer in charge of censorship.

Several examples suggest that this censorship apparatus will be used to remove content far beyond what is deemed vital to national security. Organizations and entities, large and small, have already contended with existential threats.

### **1.3 Parliamentary Repression**

In 2024, the Indian government suspended more than 140 politicians from parliament, including the nation’s leading opposition figure, Rahul Gandhi. In 2025, the Modi regime took steps to make it easier to silence opposition legislators in the future by introducing a new law which revokes legislative powers from any politician who has been jailed for 30 days.<sup>51</sup>

Presented to the public as a means of combating corruption, the new legislation is to be understood in the context of the Indian government’s history of jailing opposition figures on spurious grounds. According to a 2023 Indian Supreme Court petition, 95% of cases taken up by India’s Central Bureau of Intelligence (CBI) and Enforcement Directorate (ED) concerned politicians opposing Modi’s BJP. Prior to India’s 2024 general elections, both the ED and CBI were heavily weaponized to target opposition, with agencies arresting Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal; his deputy, Manish Sisodia; and Hemant Soren, former chief minister of the state of Jharkhand.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/8/23/a-new-indian-bill-punishes-jailed-politicians-why-has-it-sparked-outrage>

<sup>52</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/3/22/dead-democracy-will-arvind-kejriwals-arrest-unite-indias-opposition>

Since Modi assumed power, investigative agencies have detained and jailed at least 12 sitting opposition ministers for more than 30 days. Critics allege that as written, the law would facilitate further retribution, requiring courts to find politicians guilty of no crime before their powers are revoked.

## 1.4 Silencing India's Free Press

X served as a vital conduit for India's repressive campaign in 2025. In July, leading global news service Reuters was temporarily suspended on X in compliance with a legal demand issued by the Indian government.<sup>53</sup> In September, a district-level police officer also issued notices to X to remove posts made by a man who had published allegations of corruption within his district, demonstrating the potential for abuse of India's censorship powers.<sup>54</sup>



@narendramodi/X via Reuters

The Indian government's passage of the Income Tax Law of 2025 was another milestone in its lengthy campaign to silence critical media organizations. Previous tax laws permitted the Indian government to conduct raids on the offices of media organizations that it had accused of concealing sources of income. In practice, these

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53 <https://www.reuters.com/sustainability/society-equity/x-suspends-reuters-account-india-after-legal-demand-government-denies-making-2025-07-06/>

54 <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2025/9/8/india-expands-censorship-powers-lets-lower-officials-demand-takedowns>

accusations were utilized to justify attacks on organizations that had published materials critical of the Modi regime, as was the case with a 2023 tax raid on India's BBC headquarters shortly after their release of a documentary critical of the Indian PM.<sup>55</sup> 2025 tax laws expand the government's weaponized investigative apparatus to the so called "virtual digital space," enabling authorities to demand access to journalists' private online accounts and possibly to monitor their movements via Google Maps history.<sup>56</sup>

Late 2024 and 2025 also saw the increased weaponization of non-profit tax law to target media organizations that have published reports critical of the Modi regime. Karnataka-based investigative outlet The File had its tax-exempt status revoked in December 2024 following the publication of critical investigations on local politicians. The Reporters' Collective also lost its non-profit status in 2025 after publishing a slew of reports alleging corruption and cronyism in the Modi regime, particularly regarding the financial scandal surrounding the Adani Group.<sup>57</sup> Journalists Abhisar Sharma and Raju Parulekar also received judicial sanctions for reporting on suspicious land sales to the Adani group in Assam.<sup>58</sup>

In 2025, India continued to lead the world in the number of government-enforced internet shutdowns, with full blackouts in Kashmir after the April 2025 Pahalgam terrorist attack, as well as the blocking of news outlets Maktoob Media, Free Press Kashmir and The Kashmiriyat on X. The May 7 arrest of the Kashmiri freelance journalist Hilal Mir adds to the growing roster of detained journalists from the region, including Irfan Mehraj, who has been detained since 2023.<sup>59</sup>

Leading news outlet The Wire and another 8,000 X accounts were also blocked nationwide in the wake of the attacks — a targeted censorship campaign that affected access to critical journalism throughout the country.<sup>60</sup>

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55 <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2024/apr/10/bbc-india-raid-delhi-mumbai-independent-collective-newsroom>

56

<https://cpj.org/2025/09/no-safeguards-why-indias-new-tax-law-poses-a-severe-risk-to-journalists/>

57 <https://cpj.org/2025/02/india-revokes-nonprofit-and-tax-status-of-news-outlets/>

58 <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/gujarat-court-issues-notices-to-2-journalists-abhisar-sharma-raju-parulekar-on-adani-groups-defamation-complaint-9287545>

59 <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/kashmiri-journalist-irfan-mehraj-completes-two-years-in-jail-under-draconian-uapa/>

60 <https://cpj.org/2025/05/the-wires-website-8000-x-accounts-blocked-in-india-amid-conflict-with-pakistan/>

## 1.5 Compromised Judiciary

India's Judiciary was rocked with a scandal in March 2025 when firefighters discovered an enormous cache of partially burnt banknotes on the property of Delhi High Court Justice Yashwant Varma. After launching a probe into Varma's conduct, a panel found that the judge bore responsibility for the undeclared cash, prompting a nationwide discussion on judicial accountability.<sup>61</sup> Critics from across the political spectrum argued that India's judiciary is ripe for reform, with a backlog of 50 million cases and nakedly partisan capture of courts.



cjp.org.in

On November 25, the Supreme Court also marked a historic shift in its treatment of hate crimes, with justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta writing: "We are not inclined to either legislate or monitor every small incident which takes place in X, Y, Z pocket of this country...There are high courts, there are police stations, there are legislative measures. They are already in place." Previously, in *Tehseen Poonawalla vs. Union of India* (2018), the Supreme Court stated that preventing hate crimes is the State's "sacrosanct duty," placing constitutional responsibility on the judiciary to ensure compliance. Critics allege that the more recent remarks signal a retreat from their prior commitment to address lynchings and other acts of Hindu nationalist violence.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> [https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/cash-row-sc-probe-panel-report-says-misconduct-posed-poses-justice-yashwant-varmas-removal/articleshow/121952456.cms?utm\\_](https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/cash-row-sc-probe-panel-report-says-misconduct-proved-poses-justice-yashwant-varmas-removal/articleshow/121952456.cms?utm_)

<sup>62</sup> <https://cjp.org.in/a-retreat-how-the-supreme-court-is-redrawing-the-boundaries-of-hate-speech-enforcement/>

This follows the Modi government and the BJP's successful maneuvers in previous years to ensure that lower and mid-level courts passed judgments favorable to their policies, acquitted political allies implicated in violent crimes, fast-tracked policies permitting states to destroy Muslim and Christian-owned properties, and selectively appointed judges aligned with their Hindu nationalist agenda.

In the book *Modi's India: Hindu Nationalism and the Rise of Ethnic Democracy*, Christophe Jaffrelot, a leading scholar on Hindu nationalism, shows how the Modi regime refused appointments to those who had previously challenged its policies, including the judges K.M. Joseph, Basharat Ali Khan, Mohammad Mansoor, Jayant Patel, Akil Kureshi, and Ramendra Jain. Judges who legally should have become chief judges in various high courts were also routinely transferred to different courts, lowering their standing in violation of Article 222 of the Indian Constitution.<sup>63</sup>

Previously a bastion of independence and a bulwark against the abuses of the lower courts, even the Supreme Court of India has now fallen under the sway of the Modi regime. In 2023, the Supreme Court decided to uphold Modi's revocation of Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, which guaranteed the semi-autonomy of Kashmir. In the Supreme Court's words, this measure represented "a culmination of the process of integration [of Kashmir with the rest of India] and, as such, a valid exercise of power" — a ludicrous defense of a patently undemocratic attack.<sup>64</sup>

Having refused to protect the constitutional rights of native Kashmiris, the Supreme Court also failed to hear the hundreds of petitions filed by Kashmiris held in patently unconstitutional "preventative detention" during periods of mass protest.<sup>65</sup>

In January 2025, the Indian Supreme Court also denied bail to two Muslim prisoners of conscience, Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam.<sup>66</sup> The Court further denied Khalid and Imam the right to seek bail for an additional year, despite the fact that both men have already been imprisoned for five years without trial.

Khalid and Imam were arrested in 2020 under India's draconian Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) after their rise to prominence as student leaders of nationwide protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), a discriminatory law that

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63 <https://www.lawfaremedia.org/article/india-s-justice-system-is-no-longer-independent-part-ii>

64 [https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2023/12/27/in-india-narendra-modi-s-grip-on-the-supreme-court\\_6378593\\_4.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2023/12/27/in-india-narendra-modi-s-grip-on-the-supreme-court_6378593_4.html)

65 <https://theprint.in/judiciary/99-habeas-corpus-pleas-filed-in-jk-since-article-370-move-are-pending-hc-bar-tells-cji/450281/>

66 <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cd0ye2z33x90>

excludes Muslim immigrants from the right to fast-tracked citizenship. The men were accused of inciting an outbreak of violence in Delhi that year that resulted in over 50 deaths, most of them Muslim. Investigations into the riots, however, showed that the main perpetrators were Hindu supremacist mobs, emboldened by the violent rhetoric of elected officials from Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) rather than the speeches of peaceful protesters.<sup>67</sup>

Accusations that the Supreme Court has assigned cases to ruling party-aligned justices have plagued the court since Modi assumed power. Though the court is procedurally required to assign certain cases to justices of greater seniority, numerous cases of extraordinary national import have been assigned to lower-ranking (but BJP aligned) Justice Bela M. Trivedi. Among the cases reassigned to her are the bail hearing for one of India's most prominent student activists, Umar Khalid, who has been refused a court date for four years in violation of his constitutional rights,<sup>68</sup> and a skill development scam of which former Andhra Pradesh chiefminister and BJP-aligned politician Chandrababu Naidu stands accused.<sup>69</sup>

The Supreme Court has also been complicit in developing and implementing the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam, which requires residents of the region to provide documentation to prove citizenship, otherwise running the risk of denaturalization and deportation. Under the NRC, thousands of Assamese, predominantly Muslims, have been stripped of their citizenship, including in 2025.<sup>70</sup> The courts introduced the usage of "sealed covers" to prevent the public from accessing the information justices used to inform their rulings on citizenship cases.<sup>71</sup> They have thereby prevented citizens from knowing what information has led to their deportation.

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67 <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/1/5/delhi-riots-case-why-wont-india-release-umar-khalid-and-sharjeel-imam>

68 <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-67980484>

<https://article-14.com/post/2023-the-year-imprisoned-political-activist-umar-khalid-was-not-heard-by-the-supreme-court--65791f597efad>

69 <https://article-14.com/post/contrary-to-sc-s-rules-of-assignment-at-least-8-politically-sensitive-cases-moved-to-one-judge-in-4-months-65713ae124602>

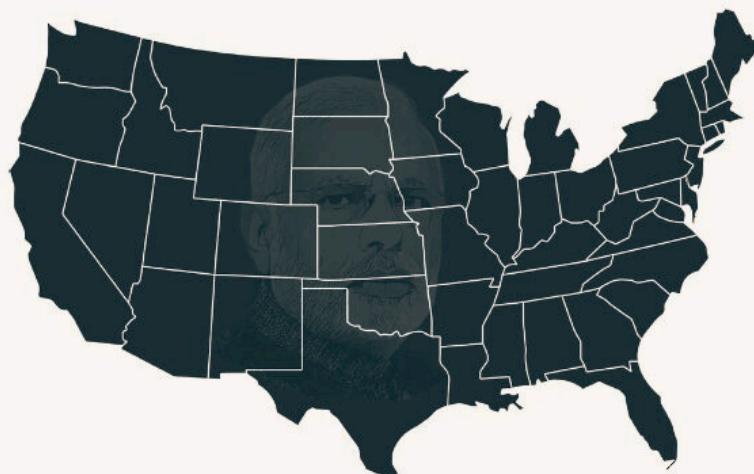
70 <https://thewire.in/law/chief-justice-ranjan-gogoi-legacy>

71 <https://thewire.in/law/chief-justice-ranjan-gogoi-legacy>

## 2. Transnational Repression

In June 2025, IAMC released a major investigative report which compiled numerous instances of the Indian government's transnational repression (TNR) campaign within the United States.<sup>72</sup> In all, the report found that agents of the Indian government have practiced at least nine out of the 11 forms of transnational repression (TNR) identified by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), including attempted assassination.

### *Modi Regime's Targeting of Critics in the United States*



iamc.com

The most dramatic instance of TNR occurred in 2023, when Indian agents allegedly assassinated one Canadian Sikh leader, Hardeep Singh Nijjar, while conspiring but failing to assassinate a Sikh leader in New York City, Gurpatwant Singh Pannun.<sup>73</sup> Though investigations are ongoing, preliminary findings suggest that two close associates of Indian PM Narendra Modi were linked to the plot: Samant Goel, the former chief of India's foreign intelligence agency, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW); and Ajit Doval, Modi's national security advisor. The investigations have also found with greater certainty that senior Indian intelligence officials within RAW ordered the killings.<sup>74</sup>

72 <https://iamc.com/iamc-report-transnational-repression-modi-regimes-targeting-of-critics-in-the-united-states/>

73 <https://www.reuters.com/world/who-is-gurpatwant-pannun-target-foiled-murder-plot-us-2023-11-23/>

74 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/04/29/india-assassination-raw-sikhs-modi/>

75 <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/article/2024/aug/22/california-sikh-separatist-leader-shooting-assassination-attempt>

In August 2024, unknown assailants conducted another assassination attempt on a Sikh leader living in California, Satinder Pal Singh Raju, who was the victim of a drive-by shooting. Raju was connected to the Canadian Sikh leader, Nijjar, giving cause to investigate this incident as yet another instance of India's increasingly violent campaign of TNR against American citizens.<sup>75</sup>

Indian consulates were also found to play a key role in perpetrating transnational repression from abroad. They serve as the long arm of the Indian government within the United States, influencing domestic policy, infiltrating diaspora communities with undercover agents, undermining routine citizenship processes, and denying Indian Americans their constitutional rights.

In alignment with the BJP's push to silence criticism of its more extreme policies, domestic Indian consulates have on several occasions allied with domestic Hindu nationalist groups to challenge opponents of the Modi regime.

In 2024, the Consulate General of India in New York City worked with the VHPA to promote an anti-Muslim hate symbol in the city's annual India Day Parade. The VHPA's float included a recreation of the Ram Mandir, a Hindu temple built directly over the ruins of a mosque raised by Hindu nationalist mobs in 1992.<sup>76</sup> This partnership is particularly troubling given the history of the VHPA's Indian counterpart, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP). In 2002, after the destruction of the mosque where the Ram Mandir now stands, VHP members helped to organize the killing of more than 2,000 predominantly Muslim Indians.<sup>77</sup>

The involvement of Indian consular officials in quashing a Chicago City Council resolution illustrates the effect of Indian transnational repression on local governments. In 2021, Chicago alderwoman Maria Hadden sponsored a City Council resolution that would have condemned Hindu nationalist violence and the Citizenship Amendment Act championed by Modi and the BJP.<sup>78</sup> After the resolution was introduced, Amit Kumar, then the consul general of India in Chicago, joined members of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America (VHPA), a domestic Hindu nationalist group, in lobbying against the resolution.<sup>79</sup> The VHPA has sent more than \$7 million to its foreign

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76 <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/1/22/babri-mosque-to-ram-temple-a-timeline-from-1528-to-2024>

77 <https://bridge.georgetown.edu/research/factsheet-vishwa-hindu-parishad-of-america-vhp/>

78 <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/03/india-citizenship-amendment-act-is-a-blow-to-indian-constitutional-values-and-international-standards/>

79 <https://www.chicagotribune.com/2021/03/24/symbolic-city-council-resolution-addressing-tensions-in-india-voted-down-after-months-of-negotiation-and-pushback/>

counterpart, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), an Indian paramilitary organization that has perpetrated violence against Indian Muslims.<sup>80</sup> In response to its lobbying, the resolution was ultimately vetoed.

In 2025, California Governor Gavin Newsom vetoed SB509, a bill aimed at protecting communities from transnational repression (TNR) from foreign governments, including far-right authoritarian regimes like Modi's. Newsom's veto was announced in the wake of a concerted opposition campaign conducted by domestic Hindu nationalist groups, despite the bill passing both the California Senate and Assembly with support from a broad coalition of Indian Americans, including Sikhs, Muslims, Hindus, Dalits, and other communities.<sup>81</sup>

The Indian government has revoked the passports of thousands of Kashmiris, and has also worked with foreign consulates to revoke the Overseas Citizenship of India status of Modi-critical journalists like Aatish Taseer and Angad Singh.<sup>82</sup> <sup>83</sup> In May 2025, India cancelled the OCI status of British-Kashmiri academic Nitasha Kaul, a British Kashmiri academic who had criticized the Modi regime in India.<sup>84</sup>

In 2025, the Indian intelligence-associated propaganda outfit Disinfo Lab continued its years-long disinformation campaign by publishing spurious reports targeting Hindus for Human Rights, IAMC, Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal (D-WA 7th District), the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), and other organizations and individuals critical of the Modi regime.<sup>85</sup>

According to a former employee of the organization who was quoted in a Washington Post report on the organization, Disinfo Lab is led by Lt. Col. Dibya Satpathy, a RAW officer who is reportedly connected to India's National Security Advisor, Ajit Doval. U.S.-based Hindu nationalist organizations have disseminated Disinfo Lab's fabricated reports in the halls of Congress and in the California legislature. These reports have falsely presented IAMC as a front organization of Pakistan's Inter-Service Intelligence agency, while leveling similarly outrageous allegations against U.S. Representative

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80 [https://www.wearesavera.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Cut-from-the-Same-Cloth\\_Savera-Report-2.pdf](https://www.wearesavera.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Cut-from-the-Same-Cloth_Savera-Report-2.pdf)

81 <https://iamc.com/iamc-alarmed-by-gov-gavin-newsoms-veto-of-bill-aimed-at-protecting-californians-from-transnational-repression/>

82 <https://time.com/5721667/aatish-taseer-india-oci/>

83 <https://www.news laundry.com/2024/05/04/reporters-without-orders-ep-320-what-its-like-to-be-blacklisted-by-india>

84 <https://thewire.in/rights/how-modi-govt-turned-constitutional-rights-into-criminal-offences-a-2025-snapshot>

85 <https://thedisinfolab.org/new-year-new-agenda/>

Pramila Jayapal, who they have falsely claimed to be under the influence of “Islamist funding.”<sup>86</sup>

The Indian Government also successfully censored the X accounts of IAMC and our coalition partner Hindus for Human Rights, effectively silencing the two most prominent U.S.-based Indian human rights groups in India. Our accounts have been fully withdrawn in India despite repeated pleas with X staff to restore access to the hundreds of thousands of followers and millions of viewers who regularly engage with our organization via social media.

Canadian National Security and Intelligence Advisor Jody Thomas has stated that India is among the top sources of foreign interference in Canada,<sup>87</sup> while a report by Canadian intelligence officials raised the alarm of Indian government interference into Canadian economic matters and elections as early as July 2019.<sup>88</sup>

In interviews conducted by IAMC, the impact of the Modi regime’s TNR was found to be wide-reaching, impeding academic production, journalism, human rights research, and bonds between community members within the United States. The climate of fear induced by the Indian government’s actions results in widespread self censorship and directly challenges Americans’ First Amendment freedoms.

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86 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/12/10/india-the-disinfo-lab-discredit-critics/>

87 [https://www.thestar.com/politics/federal/india-among-top-actors-for-foreign-interference-in-canada-national-security-adviser/article\\_8454f625-61b5-5022-8c16-c07bf325adeb.html](https://www.thestar.com/politics/federal/india-among-top-actors-for-foreign-interference-in-canada-national-security-adviser/article_8454f625-61b5-5022-8c16-c07bf325adeb.html)

88 <https://nationalpost.com/news/politics/officials-warned-china-india-could-use-communities-in-canada-to-advance-agendas>

### 3. Institutionalizing Hate, Discrimination, and Violence

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Officials within Modi's BJP and allied Hindu nationalist paramilitaries played a key role in anti-Muslim violence throughout 2025 by instigating riots through false rumors, fighting to protect the perpetrators of hate crimes, and broadcasting Islamophobic rhetoric that inflamed communal tensions throughout India.

On October 23, BJP leader Madan Joshi allegedly incited violence against a Muslim truck driver. After Joshi falsely accused Nasir Jahan of transporting beef, mobs dragged the man out of his vehicle and beat him with stones. Police in BJP-led Uttarakhand were accused of inaction and siding with the attackers, choosing to take Joshi to the police station instead of the hospital after he sustained his injuries.<sup>89</sup> The Uttarakhand High Court has subsequently urged local police to take action against Joshi for his role in the violence and reprimanded local police.<sup>90</sup> In November, notorious hatemonger and leader of the BJP government in Uttar Pradesh, Yogi Adityanath, moved to pardon all the accused parties in one of the first and most brutal incidents of cow vigilante mob violence in India. In 2015, a mob of ten men, including the son of local BJP leader Sanjay Rana, allegedly killed Mohammad Akhlaq after rumors spread that he had slaughtered a cow and stored beef inside his home. The mob lynched Akhlaq after a nearby temple broadcast the beef rumor, dragging the 52-year-old and his son outside of their home and beating the father to death. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Adityanath's petition was met with approval from the governor of the state, and is now likely to acquit the ten credibly accused men, broadcasting a message of impunity for all perpetrators of anti-Muslim mob violence.<sup>91</sup>

Earlier in 2025, a mob of approximately 30 people, including members of the BJP-linked paramilitary group Bajrang Dal, killed a Muslim man in the city of Kudupu, Karnataka. The husband of former BJP corporator Sangeetha Nail was accused by eyewitnesses of having encouraged the crowd to beat the man.<sup>92</sup> BJP legislator Bharat Shetty later justified the attack by claiming the victim had chanted "pro-Pakistan slogans."<sup>93</sup>

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89 <https://sabrangindia.in/content-author/sabrangindia-14-19466/>

90 <https://sabrangindia.in/uttarakhand-hc-pulls-up-police-over-mob-attack-in-ramnagar-seeks-action-against-bjp-leader-for-inciting-communal-violence/>

91 <https://thewire.in/communalism/in-akhlaqs-village-anger-towards-the-lynched-empathy-for-the-accused>

92 <https://www.thenewsminute.com/karnataka/mangaluru-mob-lynching-activists-accuse-police-of-inaction-against-local-bjp-leader>

93 <https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/karnataka/2025/May/01/current-anti-pakistan-atmosphere-might-have-triggered-mob-lynching-bjp-mla-bharat-shetty>

In April 2025, BJP Minister Nitesh Rane condemned the Wadala Police for clashing with violent Hindu nationalist paramilitaries, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and Bajrang Dal, who had previously instigated violence during an unauthorised Ram Navami rally in Mumbai. Rane urged Hindus to unite in a “Hindu Rashtra” and threatened Muslims with violence, saying: “We will hit them in that area of their body that even their father will remember Pakistan.” He referred to Indian Muslims as “green snakes” and warned them: “If anybody looks at our Hindus, their eyes won’t be present.”<sup>94</sup>

In May, BJP workers vandalised a restaurant called Karachi Bakery in retaliation for perceived allegiance to Pakistan.<sup>95</sup> The location has been targeted repeatedly throughout the years by Hindu nationalist mobs.

Meanwhile, the BJP’s growing influence in Odisha has transformed the once-peaceful territory into a hotbed of communal violence, critics say. After decades without major incidents of anti- Muslim violence, the state has seen heightened violence alongside the local ascendency of the BJP.



People vandalising the Karachi Bakery. Photo: X/@anusharavi10.

Throughout Odisha, Muslim traders have been approached by mobs who accused them of being illegal Bangladeshi residents of India, a conspiracy theory widely promulgated by BJP leaders.<sup>96</sup>

### 3.1 Anti-Minority Violence

In incidents of violence that have not directly implicated BJP members and leadership, closely associated paramilitary groups have often been responsible. Two of the most common forms of attacks in 2025 were the mob lynching of Muslims alleged to have

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<sup>94</sup> <https://www.hindutvawatch.org/bjp-minister-nitesh-rane-incites-anti-muslim-hate-at-ram-navami-rally-threatens-violence/>

<sup>95</sup> <https://m.thewire.in/article/communalism/vandalism-of-karachi-bakery-and-the-weaponisation-of-food-to-portray-a-shallow-form-of-patriotism>

<sup>96</sup> <https://www.telegraphindia.com/india/odisha-opposition-slams-mob-attacks-on-bengalis-accuses-bjp-government-of-complicity-prnt/cid/2135577>

transported and/or sold cattle (so-called “cow vigilante” attacks), and attacks on Muslim people, Muslim-owned homes, and religious sites during weaponized religious processions. Indian police, who work far more closely with elected officials than their American counterparts and maintain far greater decision-making power, were also responsible for a spate of attacks and even killings of Indian muslims.

### 3.1.1 Cow Vigilantism

On February 22, a group of cow vigilantes in Palwal, Haryana beat two truck drivers transporting cattle and threw their bodies into canals. The assistant driver drowned after sustaining life-threatening injuries from the beatings, and his body was recovered a day later.<sup>97</sup> Shortly thereafter, in late March, members of the BJP-affiliated Bajrang Dal paramilitary group assaulted two Muslim truck drivers for allegedly transporting cattle. Nine attackers stopped the two men in Beluvai, Karnataka, beating one of them so badly that he could no longer open his mouth.<sup>98</sup> On May 20, Bajrang Dal vigilantes in Washim, Maharashtra detained, interrogated, and beat three Muslim cattle transporters, seizing their livestock and turning the men over to the police.<sup>99</sup>



A protest against instances of mob lynching by vigilantes. Image for representation. | AFP

97 <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/haryana-cow-vigilantes-throw-2-men-into-canal-one-dies-5-arrested-101741079334032.html>

98 <https://www.thenewsminute.com/karnataka/karnataka-two-bajrang-dal-members-arrested-for-assaulting-farmer-transporting-cow>

99 <https://www.hindutvawatch.org/in-medsi-bajrang-dal-assaults-muslim-cattle-transporters-seizes-livestock-and-hands-them-to-police/>

Bajrang Dal members had set fire to a cattle truck in Rajasthan just one day before the beating in Maharashtra.<sup>100</sup>

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On May 24, Bajrang Dal members in Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh brutally assaulted four Muslim men who were transporting meat from a factory to their store, alleging it was beef. Victims later claimed that local police refused to help after arriving on the scene, instead ordering the men out of their car and sending their meat for laboratory testing.<sup>101</sup>

On June 5, cow vigilantes in Madhya Pradesh killed Junaid Qureshi, after approaching the cattle trader and his partner in their pickup truck. A mob of 20 attackers beat the two men throughout the night and stole \$2200 from them, with Qureshi succumbing to his injuries later on. A countersuit filed by one of the supporters of the cow vigilantes later accused the men of having violated the BJP-ruled state's "Prohibition of Slaughter of Cows Act."<sup>102</sup>

In August, Indian legislator Sadabhau Khot reported that cow vigilantes had manhandled him while he was accompanying farmers on their way to retrieve stolen buffaloes.<sup>103</sup> Two Catholic brothers were assaulted on August 19 after trying to sell a cow in order to pay for family medical costs. Odisha police initially refused to investigate the matter and reportedly questioned the brothers' rights to their cattle.<sup>104</sup>

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100 <https://x.com/HindutvaWatchIn/status/1925266797873209458>

101 <https://x.com/HindutvaWatchIn/status/1926339738400612679>

102 <https://scroll.in/latest/1083609/madhya-pradesh-muslim-man-beaten-by-cow-vigilantes-dies-another-critical>

103 <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/pune/mla-khot-alleges-manhandling-by-cow-vigilantes-in-pune-police-deny-charges/articleshow/123511890.cms>

104 <https://mattersindia.com/2025/08/cow-vigilantes-assault-leaves-two-catholic-brothers-shattered/>

In September, a 32-year-old Muslim man, Sheru Susadiy, died after being beaten by cow vigilantes who falsely accused him of cattle smuggling. He leaves behind his wife Naseem and two children.<sup>105</sup>

In late September, a mob of approximately 15 men blocked the path of two farmers returning from a cattle fair in Madhya Pradesh, forced them off the road, and robbed and beat them. Aasif Multani later died from his injuries, while his cousin Mohsin narrowly survived. Multani leaves behind his wife, a two-and-a-half-year-old daughter, and an eight-month-old son. His brother told the press: "My brother's only 'crime' was that he was Muslim and transporting cattle. There wasn't even a cow in the van — only oxen and buffaloes. They killed him because of who he was."<sup>106</sup>

These incidents reveal the extreme risks religious minorities face in going about their daily lives, undertaking routine business transactions, and trying to travel throughout the country with cattle. Police routinely refuse to intervene on behalf of targeted farmers, truck drivers, instead siding with violent Hindu nationalist mobs, many of whom are linked organizationally to India's ruling BJP.

## **3.2 Weaponization of Religious Festivals**

Throughout 2025, religious festivals and processions continued to be used as a pretext for terrorizing Muslim communities in India. The violence followed what is now a well established pattern, with Hindu nationalist groups leading loud, disruptive crowds through Muslim neighborhoods, antagonizing local residents by forcing them to chant religious slogans or hear them over loudspeakers, and/or forcing Muslims to install Hindu gods inside of Muslim structures. When Muslims refused or fought against these mobs, violence predictably broke out, with Muslims routinely blamed as the antagonists. As in years past, police in BJP-controlled states often sided with the perpetrators of violence rather than protecting the targeted communities.

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<sup>105</sup> <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/hindutva-vigilantes-lynch-muslim-man-in-rajasthan-after-branding-him-cattle-smuggler/>

<sup>106</sup> <https://cjp.org.in/madhya-pradesh-muslim-man-lynched-in-rajasthans-bhilwara-family-alleges-religious-targeting-masked-as-cow-vigilantism/>

A notable incident of communal violence occurred on February 26 during the Hindu festival of Maha Shivaratri. Groups of Hindus led a procession through a heavily Muslim district in Hazaribagh, Jharkhand, where they attempted to install religious flags and played slogans from loudspeakers. After violence broke out, BJP legislators blamed the violence on “Bangladeshi infiltrators,” a coded insult frequently used against India’s Muslim population.<sup>107</sup> At the same time, in Bihar, Bajrang Dal members paraded an anti-Muslim “love jihad” float during a Maha Shivaratri procession, featuring props that showed the body parts of a woman dismembered by Muslims.<sup>108</sup>



Two community groups clash during the second Mangala (Mangalwari) procession ahead of the Ram Navami festival in Hazaribagh district of Jharkhand, Tuesday night. Photo | PTI

A March 14 Holi procession passing through Giridih, Jharkhand also inflamed communal tensions, resulting in several Muslim shops being set on fire.<sup>109</sup> Just a week later, Ram Navami processions in Hazaribagh once again culminated in episodes of communal violence, with Hindu nationalist groups pelting stones outside the Jama Masjid Chowk, a mosque in a predominantly Muslim neighborhood in Hazaribagh.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/jharkhand-hazaribagh-shivratri-decorations-violence-stones-thrown-shops-torched-2685890-2025-02-26>

<sup>108</sup> <https://www.hindutvawatch.org/bajrang-dal-shivratri-procession-features-disturbing-love-jihad-tableau-with-mutilated-mannequin/>

<sup>109</sup> <https://www.siasat.com/jharkhand-clash-during-holi-procession-leaves-several-injured-shops-torched-3195144/>

<sup>110</sup> <https://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2025/Mar/26/tension-erupts-in-jharkhand-hazaribag-after-stone-pelted-during-religious-procession>

In Jharkhand and West Bengal, several Ram Navami procession participants brandished weapons, including a gun, while passing in front of mosques.<sup>111</sup> <sup>112</sup> At a BJP led Ram Navami procession in Mumbai, participants chanted hate speech and danced to anti-Muslim music performed by BJP Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) T. Raja Singh.<sup>113</sup>

Later in April, Hindu nationalist groups weaponised processions in honor of the god Hanuman, chanting hate-speech outside of a mosque in Madhya Pradesh and attacking worshipers when they exited.<sup>114</sup> During a separate Hanuman Jayanti event in Madhesh Province, Nepal, BJP- affiliated paramilitary Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) members set fire to vehicles and targeted Muslim-owned shops and properties.<sup>115</sup> In Hooghly, West Bengal, procession participants brandished swords and other weapons while dancing to hate-filled songs targeting Muslims, one of which included the lyric: “The one wearing a cap will bow down and chant ‘Jai Shri Ram.’”<sup>116</sup> A day after the Hanuman Jayanti violence, one Jharkhand Hindu nationalist group set fire to multiple Muslim-owned houses and vehicles as part of a Mahayagya religious procession.<sup>117</sup>

Throughout August, Hindu nationalist groups held processions aimed at intimidating and antagonizing Muslim communities. On August 2, VHP and Bajrang Dal members in Bihar organised a procession in which participants brandished swords and paraded a bulldozer decorated with “Bulldozer Baba” posters on its exterior — a reference to BJP leader and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, and his use of bulldozers to destroy Muslim homes.<sup>118</sup> On August 11, Bajrang Dal members in Uttarakhand held a procession demanding the expulsion of “Bangladeshi infiltrators,” i.e. Muslims, from India.<sup>119</sup> On August 18, Hindu nationalists fought participants in a Muslim chadar procession and accused local police of colluding with Muslims.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> <https://www.hindutvawatch.org/man-brandishes-gun-while-chanting-jai-shri-ram-at-ram-navami-detained-by-police/>

<sup>112</sup> <https://www.hindutvawatch.org/weapons-brandished-and-hindutva-pop-played-as-ram-navami-procession-passes-jama-masjid/>

<sup>113</sup> <https://www.hindutvawatch.org/bjp-led-ram-navami-yatra-plays-explicit-anti-muslim-slogans-and-hate-music-by-t-raja-singh/>

<sup>114</sup> <https://www.hindutvawatch.org/hanuman-jayanti-procession-triggers-clash-after-unauthorized-sloganeering-at-mosque/>

<sup>115</sup> <https://www.hindutvawatch.org/communal-violence-erupts-during-vhp-hanuman-jayanti-procession-muslim-shops-and-vehicles-set-ablaze/>

<sup>116</sup> <https://www.hindutvawatch.org/hanuman-jayanti-procession-features-weapons-and-hate-songs-targeting-muslims/>

<sup>117</sup> <https://www.hindutvawatch.org/hindu-groups-torch-muslim-homes-and-vehicles-during-mahayagya-religious-procession/>

<sup>118</sup> <https://www.hindutvawatch.org/in-rajwa-vhp-bajrang-dal-parade-bulldozer-and-swords-in-procession-honouring-yogi-adityanath/>

<sup>119</sup> <https://www.hindutvawatch.org/in-haldwani-ahp-rashtriya-bajrang-dal-procession-demands-eviction-of-alleged-bangladeshi-infiltrators/>

<sup>120</sup> <https://www.hindutvawatch.org/in-bareilly-clash-over-chadar-procession-at-urs/>

Throughout late August and September, Hindu nationalists weaponized traditionally harmonious Ganesh Chaturthi celebrations throughout the country. In Kota, Rajasthan, activists from the VHP and Bajrang Dal harassed the owners of a non-vegetarian restaurant for including images of Ganesh on its menu;<sup>121</sup> in Sangareddy, a Hindu nationalist procession played anti-Muslim songs outside of a mosque;<sup>122</sup> and in Uttarakhand, Hindu nationalist leader Swami Darshan Bharti argued that Muslims must be “crushed” at a Ganesh procession.<sup>123</sup>

October saw some of the most violent incidents of weaponized religious processions in 2025, with approximately 6,000 men descending on a majority Muslim area in Cuttack, Odisha to burn shops and destroy Muslim-owned property. The violence stemmed from a Durga idol immersion procession that had taken place two days earlier, when participants had played loud Hindu slogans outside of a Dargah and refused to comply with requests to turn down their loudspeakers. Tensions escalated after reports emerged that some of the men had urinated on the walls of the structure, and both



Photo: Countercurrents

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121 <https://sabrangindia.in/unifying-cultural-celebration-weaponised-ganesh-processions-turned-into-stages-for-hate-speech-moral-policing/>

122 <https://www.hindutvawatch.org/in-sangareddy-ganesh-procession-plays-anti-muslim-song-outside-mosque-causing-tension/>

123 <https://sabrangindia.in/unifying-cultural-celebration-weaponised-ganesh-processions-turned-into- stages-for-hate-speech-moral-policing/>

Muslims and Hindus began throwing rocks at one another. Hindu groups looted and burned neighborhood businesses allegedly in retaliation for this earlier, procession-related incident.<sup>124</sup>

That same month, authorities bulldozed 186 structures belonging to Muslims accused of stone- pelting during the Navratri festival in Bahiyal village. During the festival violence, more than 60 Muslim-owned shops and structures were looted and/or burned.<sup>125</sup>

### 3.3 Forced Expulsion of Bengali Muslims

In the wake of the Pahalgam terror attacks (in which the Indian government failed to protect its own citizens), officials quickly sought to instrumentalize the atmosphere of fear by scapegoating “Muslim infiltrators from Bangladesh” as the cause of violence and instability.



Aran Ali, 53, looks out of a makeshift shelter that is now his new home following a demolition drive by authorities in Goalpara district in the northeastern state of Assam, India, July 18, 2025. REUTERS/Sahiba Chawdhary

124 [https://theobserverpost.com/our-shops-were-attacked-and-set-on-fire-during-durga-puja-procession-muslim-shopkeepers-in-cut-tack-speak-out/](https://theobserverpost.com/our-shops-were-attacked-and-set-on-fire-during-durga-puja-procession-muslim-shopkeepers-in-cuttack-speak-out/)

125 <https://www.hindutvawatch.org/in-gandhinagar-186-muslim-structures-demolished-after-navratri-clashes-mass-detentions/>

126 <https://www.indiahatelab.com/2025/07/31/hate-campaign-in-assam/>

BJP officials, including Assam State Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, delivered dozens of inflammatory speeches demanding the expulsion of “infiltrators” after the attacks. Between July 9 and July 30, India Hate Lab (IHL) documented 18 hate rallies across 14 districts in Assam, many of them organized by the BJP, where crowds exhorted the demolition of Muslim homes. Between July 19 and July 30, IHL also documented nine cases of targeted violence against Bengali Muslims.<sup>126</sup>

Throughout July, the Indian government initiated large-scale eviction and deportation drives in Assam, almost exclusively targeting Muslim communities. In their wake, hundreds of Indian Muslims were unlawfully expelled to Bangladesh. After one eviction drive in Goalpara, 1,800 predominantly Muslim families were left homeless. By July, 3,200 people in total had been expelled from the state in massive deportation raids.<sup>127</sup>

<sup>128</sup> An untold number of Indian citizens, as well as around 100 predominantly Muslim Rohingya refugees, have been deported without due process. <sup>129</sup> Dozens of Bengali Muslim citizens reported being targeted simply for speaking their language. <sup>130</sup>



A boy stands with his mother inside a makeshift shelter camp in Goalpara district in the northeastern state of Assam, India, July 18, 2025. REUTERS/Sahiba Chawdhary

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma also announced the passage of legislation making it easier for Assamese Indigenous communities to obtain weapons in Muslim majority areas of Assam, bordering Bangladesh. The move was immediately criticized by opponents as a means of encouraging violence against Bengali-origin Muslims. Assam Trinamool Congress official Sushmita Dev called the liberalization of weapons licenses a “betrayal of public trust,” saying, “Granting arms licences is a reckless decision that will undoubtedly instigate violence and destabilise communities.”<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/evictions-expulsions-muslims-bangladesh-precede-indian-state-polls-2025-07-28/>

<sup>128</sup> <https://liberties.aljazeera.com/en/forced-expulsions-of-muslims-undermine-indias-human-rights-commitments/>

<sup>129</sup> <https://www.npr.org/2025/10/11/nx-s1-5564784/india-muslims>

<sup>130</sup> [www.nytimes.com/2025/08/10/world/asia/india-migrants-raids-muslims-bengalis.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2025/08/10/world/asia/india-migrants-raids-muslims-bengalis.html)

<sup>131</sup> <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/assam-move-to-grant-arms-licences-to-indigenous-people-in-areas-along-bangladesh-border-sparks-outrage/>

The 2019 passage of the National Register of Citizens (NRC), a citizenship law widely criticized for its anti-Muslim bent, was also first implemented in Assam, and led to the denaturalization of nearly two million people, the majority of them Muslim.<sup>132</sup>

### 3.4 Discriminatory Legislations

In 2025, the BJP continued to pass laws that sought to undermine, disenfranchise, and criminalize the lives of Muslims, Christians, and other religious minorities in India. Of ongoing concern were the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC), laws passed in previous years but with long-lasting implications that continued to be felt in 2025.

#### 3.4.1 CAA and NRC

The 2019 CAA is the first law to add religion as a clause for citizenship in the history of independent India. It provides “illegal migrants” with citizenship if they originate from Bangladesh, Pakistan, or Afghanistan and are Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Jewish, Parsi or Christian. Notably absent from this list are Muslims, despite the fact that they make up the lion’s share of refugees in the region escaping persecution in Myanmar (Rohingya), Afghanistan (Shia) and Pakistan (Ahmadiyya).



Photo: The Quint

<sup>132</sup> <https://www.trtworld.com/article/30c4b9ca3fbf,,>

The CAA is one part of a larger citizenship policy pathway pursued by the BJP, which could be used to disenfranchise resident Indian Muslims by reclassifying them as refugees from nearby countries and then deporting them. The National Register of Citizens (NRC), a database under construction that is intended to contain information about every citizen in India, has already been used in a similar manner in the state of Assam, where hundreds of thousands of Muslim lifelong residents of India were wrongly labeled as foreigners and stripped of citizenship on the grounds that they lacked proper paperwork.<sup>133</sup>



Photo: India Today

In January 2020, a group of retired bureaucrats warned of this exact threat, writing that the amendment “has the scope to be employed in an arbitrary and discriminatory manner, subject to local pressures and to meet specific political objectives, not to mention the unbridled scope for large-scale corruption.”<sup>134</sup> The strident government repression of previous anti-CAA protests — which resulted in the killing of 27 people and thousands of arrests in 2019 and 2020<sup>135</sup> — continued through 2025, with several trials of protestors still ongoing.<sup>136</sup>

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133 <https://www.thequint.com/news/india/over-30000-illegal-foreigners-deported-till-31-august-based-on-assam-accord-says-minister>

134 <https://www.hrw.org/report/2020/04/09/shoot-traitors/discrimination-against-muslims-under-indias-new-citizenship-policy>

135 <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/anti-citizenship-amendment-bill-assam-protest-1627464-2019-12-11>

136 <https://www.livelaw.in/high-court/allahabad-high-court/allahabad-high-court-amu-student-caa-nrc-protests-cognizance-order-286497>

Student organizer Umar Khalid continues to be held under false terrorism charges for his actions organizing anti-CAA protests in 2020, bringing his total prison sentence to five years for violence he did not commit. Leading intellectuals in India and beyond, including Amitav Ghosh, Naseeruddin Shah, Romila Thapar, Jayati Ghosh, Harsh Mander and Christophe Jaffrelot, demanded his release in January of this year, as well as the speedy resolution of the cases against Gulifsha Fatima, Sharjeel Imam, Khalid Saifi, Meeran Haider, Athar Khan Shifa Ur Rahman, and other activists targeted in the aftermath of the anti-CAA protests. The statement demanding Khalid's release cited "repeated denial of bail and prolonged incarceration without trial" as a hallmark of the cases against these activists.

In Nadia, which borders Bangladesh, residents have reported widespread fears of being placed in deportation camps, and have queued up at the residence of local BJP legislator Asim Sarkar to petition him for inclusion as citizens.<sup>137</sup>

Also of consequence were the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025; the implementation of the Uniform Civil Code in Gujarat; and the continuing expansion of laws that criminalize conversion to Islam and Christianity.

### **3.4.2 Waqf Bill Amendment**

In April, the BJP-led government passed the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025 after fierce opposition from protestors, Muslim leaders, and members of the opposition Congress party. The amendment grants the BJP-led government greater power to appoint members to the governing bodies of Muslim-owned waqf properties.

In Islamic tradition, a waqf is a charitable or religious donation that cannot be bought or sold and which must be used exclusively for the benefit of the community. More than 870,000 waqf properties, worth an estimated \$14 billion, exist throughout India, providing Muslims and other groups with spaces for education, prayer, providing food to the elderly, and providing medical care to the poor, among other things.<sup>138 139</sup> Prime Minister Modi and his party leaders have alleged that the governance of waqf properties is overly opaque, and have justified the amendment on the grounds of improving efficiency and transparency.

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<sup>137</sup> <https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/kolkata/they-will-send-us-back-fear-of-deportation-spurs-rush-to-bjp-mlas-caa-enlisting-camp-in-nadia-10328850/>

<sup>138</sup> <https://foreignpolicy.com/2025/05/13/india-muslim-property-law-waqf-amendment-act-protests/>

<sup>139</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/04/04/world/asia/india-bill-muslim-land-waqfs.html>

However, seen in the context of the government's broader practice of destroying ancient mosques and Muslim-owned homes on the spurious pretext of "encroachment" or lacking paperwork, it is reasonable to expect that the BJP will use the amendment to introduce legal processes and to appoint leaders to waqf boards whose agendas undermine Muslim land tenure in India. Of particular concern is the removal of the "waqf by user" provision from the Waqf Act, 1995, which had recognized the validity of properties which had historically been used for charitable and religious purposes but which had nonetheless not secured official paperwork documenting their waqf status in the past. Thousands of waqf properties were donated to Muslim communities orally, and only became legally recognized as waqf because of the "waqf by user" provision.

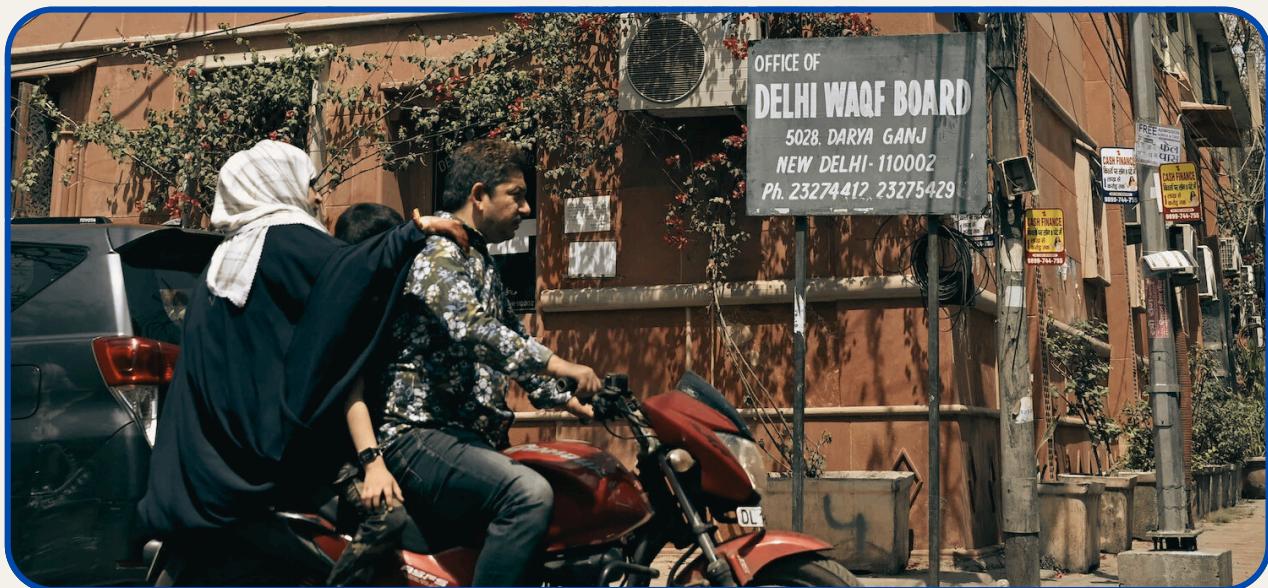


Photo: foreign policy

Accompanying the removal of this passage is the demand that only properties established by individuals who have "practiced Islam for at least five years" shall qualify as waqf. Critics fear that this clause will undermine the rights of more recent converts.<sup>140</sup>

Though apparently concerned with religious purity among would-be donors of waqf assets, the government displays a more agnostic approach when it comes to the appointment of waqf board governors. The Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025 permits the appointment of non-Muslims to waqf boards and empowers state officials to adjudicate disputes.<sup>141</sup>

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140 <https://thewire.in/religion/waqf-jpc-report-amendment-bill-concerns>

141 <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/04/04/world/asia/india-bill-muslim-land-waqfs.html>

### 3.4.3 Anti-Conversion Laws

Building on years of similar discriminatory state-level legislation passed in Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan passed a law criminalising consensual interfaith marriages and peaceful religious practices in September.<sup>142</sup> Although presented as a means of preventing “forced conversions,” the law has already been used to persecute consensually married interfaith couples and peaceful practitioners of minority faiths in the state. Christians in Rajasthan have reported a surge in attacks following the passage of the bill.

On September 21, a mob of approximately 20 Hindu extremists burst into a Rajasthan church, accusing the pastor of forced conversions and beating parishioners so badly that several required hospitalization. Emboldened by the new law, local police refused to prosecute the attackers, instead imprisoning the pastor of the church.<sup>143</sup> Four similar incidents ensued shortly after the passage of the bill, with police imprisoning other pastors and forcing churches to close down.

In August, Uttarakhand amended its existing anti-conversion law to be more punitive, increasing the maximum punishment for forced conversions from ten years to life in prison, and adding language that criminalizes social media posts which might lead someone to convert.<sup>144</sup> In response, Christian pastors throughout the state have taken their websites offline for fear of being persecuted.

Critics throughout India have argued that Uttarakhand’s amended legislation challenges Indian’s constitutionally protected freedom to practice their faith, enshrined in Article 25 of the Indian Constitution.<sup>145</sup>

In July, Devendra Fadnavis, the chief minister of Maharashtra and a member of the BJP, announced further legislation selectively punishing Muslims and Christians. Referring to a 2024 Supreme Court order, Chief Minister Fadnavis said that converts to Islam and Christianity would no longer be eligible for Scheduled Caste (SC) status, a constitutionally protected legal designation that affords government benefits to members of historically marginalized caste groups such as Dalits. Critics allege that the cancellation of SC status for Muslims and Christians would impede their access to scholarships, employment quotas in public sector jobs and reserved seats at various levels of government.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> <https://thewire.in/rights/how-modi-govt-turned-constitutional-rights-into-criminal-offences-a-2025-snapshot>

<sup>143</sup> <https://www.opendatauk.org/news/latest-news/india-rajasthan-attacks/>

<sup>144</sup> <https://www.christiandaily.com/news/indias-harshest-anti-conversion-law-approved-in-uttarakhand>

<sup>145</sup> <https://morningstarnews.org/2025/08/indias-harshest-anti-conversion-law-approved-in-uttarakhand/>

<sup>146</sup> <https://www.csv.org.uk/2025/07/23/press/6583/article.htm>

### **3.4.4 Uniform Civil Code**

The January passage of a Uniform Civil Code in BJP-ruled Uttarakhand, and later in BJP-ruled Gujarat, posed another substantial legal threat to Indian religious autonomy. Justified by BJP leaders' backers as a means of assuring legal equality and as a means of standardizing legal proceedings among all religious groups, critics allege that the UCC in fact selectively targets Indian Muslims, who are, according to the Indian constitution, legally permitted to resolve marital, inheritance, and other civil matters using traditional laws.

The UCC excludes scheduled tribes (a certain category of Indigenous Indian) from having to abide by its provisions. It also includes provisions requiring couples who move in together to notify local authorities within one month of doing so, which critics have argued is invasive.

### **3.5 Hate Speech**

Leading BJP officials contributed to anti-minority violence with inflammatory rhetoric and hate speech throughout the year, consistently presenting Indian Muslims as jihadists, rapists, and murderers intent on destroying India. According to the research organization India Hate Lab (IHL), the number of hate speech incidents targeting religious minorities increased from 668 in 2023 to 1,165 in 2024 and 1,318 in 2025: a 13% increase from 2024 to 2024, and a 97% increase from 2023 to 2024. Following the Pahalgam terrorist attacks in April 2025, IHL recorded a huge spike in hate speech events organized by Hindu nationalist groups throughout India<sup>147</sup>

In 2025, Muslims were also increasingly demonized by BJP officials as “Bangladeshi infiltrators,” a dangerous conflation of faith and nationality intended to present Indian Muslims as outsiders without rights. Promoted heavily by the BJP, the insinuation that Muslims are in fact foreigners helps to create an atmosphere of internal xenophobia in line with their efforts to expel Indian Muslims from the country, as in Assam, where the government expelled five Muslims in November.<sup>148</sup> Despite strong anti-hate speech laws in India, government officials demonized religious minorities with impunity, facing next to no legal consequences for distributing harmful propaganda.

Home Minister Amit Shah, India's second most powerful politician after Prime Minister Modi, has been a leading promoter of anti-Muslim hate speech. In a fiery speech

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147 <https://www.indiahatelab.com/2025/05/02/hate-speech-post-pahalgam-attack/>

148 <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/assam-invokes-1950-expulsion-act-for-first-time-foreigners-tribunal-orders-five-declared-foreigners-to-leave-india-in-24-hours/>

delivered on October 27, he stated that “They [Muslims] are snatching our youth’s jobs and the ration of our poor. These infiltrators are involved in anti-national activities; the BJP is determined to pick them out one by one and expel them from the country.”

At a January event organized by the Hindu nationalist group Chetna, BJP leader Nazia Elahi Khan shouted out: “Tell them [Muslims] to get education, they will not! Tell them to become human, they will not! Tell them to study, they will not study! Tell them to do

something, they will not do it! But if you tell them to rape, they will do it immediately. Tell them to do love jihad, they will do it immediately. Tell them to throw bombs, bullets, and ammunition! They will throw it immediately. Tell them to create terror, they will do it immediately.” The civil rights group Citizens for Justice and Peace (CJP) has filed a complaint with the Chief Electoral Office of Delhi alleging Khan’s remarks violate India’s Model Code of Conduct (MCC) provisions.<sup>149</sup>

On February 2, Maharashtra BJP MLA Nitesh Rane called Muslims “green snakes” and “jihadis” while promoting the sort of Islamophobic conspiracy theories which have motivated countless lynchings throughout India. Presenting Muslims as engaged in “land jihad” (the supposed theft of Hindu-owned land) and “love jihad” (the supposed Muslim seduction and conversion of Hindu women), Rane urged “Hindu unity” against these fabricated threats, offering to pay bail for anyone detained for attacking Muslim men in the name of defending Hindu women.<sup>150</sup> Three days later, at a public event organized by a coalition of far-right groups, Rane urged Hindus to refuse to rent their homes to Muslims, saying, “it starts with one Aslam, and then you have a hundred Aslams.”<sup>151</sup>



Photo: hindutvawatch

149 <https://cjp.org.in/cjp-files-complaint-against-bjp-leader-nazia-elahi-khan-over-hate-speech-in-delhi/>

150 <https://www.hindutvawatch.org/bjp-minister-nitesh-rane-calls-muslims-green-snakes-urges-hindu-unity-against-jihadis/>

151 <https://www.hindutvawatch.org/bjp-minister-calls-for-housing-discrimination-against-muslims-labels-renting-to-them-a-threat/>

In March, BJP MLA Asha Nautiyal called for a ban on non-Hindus visiting Kedarnath, a Hindu holy site, claiming that their presence offended pilgrims at the historically open, accessible sites of the Char Dham Yatra.<sup>152</sup> That same month, BJP MLA Balmukund Acharya criticized Muslim prayer (alaazan), calling for a ban on loudspeakers which amplify the call to prayer five times a day.<sup>153</sup>



BJP MLA Asha Nautiyal, Photo: Muslim Mirror



BJP MLA Balmukund Acharya, Photo: Indian Express

September saw one of the most violent threats from any party official, with BJP leader and Member of Legislative Council (MLC) CT Ravi urging supporters to behead Muslims and to “bury them.”<sup>154</sup>

In October run-up to the Bihar election season, the BJP promoted hate speech through official channels, posting a meme depicting the opposition Congress party driving a bus filled with Muslim devils on the main party account. While campaigning, Giriraj Singh, a BJP MP in Bihar, also called Muslims infiltrators and deployed a slew of anti-Muslim slurs in a speech.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> <https://muslimmirror.com/uttarakhand-bjp-mla-calls-to-ban-on-non-hindus-at-kedarnath-sparks-controversy/>

<sup>153</sup> [https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/jaipur/bjp-mla-balmukund-acharya-loudspeakers-mosque-9893294/?utm\\_source=Taboola\\_Recirculation&utm\\_medium=RC&utm\\_campaign=IE&tbref=hp](https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/jaipur/bjp-mla-balmukund-acharya-loudspeakers-mosque-9893294/?utm_source=Taboola_Recirculation&utm_medium=RC&utm_campaign=IE&tbref=hp)

<sup>154</sup> <https://clarionindia.net/karnataka-bjp-leader-booked-for-behave-or-get-beheaded-threat-to-muslims/>

<sup>155</sup> <https://www.thequint.com/news/politics/from-namak-haram-to-burqa-ghuspaithiya-jibe-the-hate-in-bihar-elections>

In another October speech, former Uttar Pradesh BJP MLA Raghvendra Pratap Singh said that Hindu boys who “bring” home (and by implication, convert) Muslim girls would receive government jobs. “The Hindu boy who brings a Muslim girl, we will arrange a job for him,” he said to a cheering crowd.<sup>156</sup>

Following the election of Zohran Mamdani, Mumbai BJP Chief Ameet Satam said the city would not tolerate “the imposition of a Khan” and that “we are not afraid of people like you, sons of Pakistan.”<sup>157</sup>



BJP Mumbai Chief, Mr. Satam, Photo: Siasat Daily

### 3.6 Police Violence

Indian police served a critical role in advancing and enforcing the Modi regime’s authoritarianism and anti-minority biases, using their power to terrorize, intimidate, torture, and imprison political opponents, Muslims, Christians, Adivasis, Dalits, and others. Police violently disrupted prayer services in mosques and churches at least weekly throughout the year, and regularly accompanied Hindu nationalist paramilitaries on raids of religious spaces.<sup>158</sup>

In addition to active persecution, the police also routinely refused to use their power to prosecute those credibly accused of hate crimes, inciting violence, and government corruption. In countless instances throughout the year, police released violent Hindu nationalist rioters or refused to investigate credible reports of politicians inciting lynchings.

According to a 2025 survey of 8,276 senior and junior police personnel across 82

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<sup>156</sup> <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/bring-a-muslim-girl-get-a-job-bjp-ex-mlas-hate-speech-in-up-spark-outrage/>

<sup>157</sup> <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/mumbai/legal-notice-to-mumbai-police-for-failure-to-file-fir-against-bjp-city-president-for-hate-speech/article70330030.ece>

<sup>158</sup> <https://www.hindutvawatch.org/bajrang-dal-raids-christian-prayer-meeting-harasses-worshippers-calls-police/>

locations in 17 states, conducted by Lokniti-CSDS and Common Cause, 25% of police personnel in India support mob justice, and 22% would prefer to execute “dangerous criminals” rather than give them a trial.<sup>159</sup> In BJP-ruled Gujarat, 63% of Indian police personnel “strongly endorse[d]” the use of torture, and 50% supported mob violence against those accused of slaughtering cows.<sup>160</sup> The majority of Gujarat police surveyed believed that Muslims, Dalits (caste-oppressed), and Adivasi (Indigenous) communities are “naturally prone to crime.”<sup>161</sup>

In January and throughout the year, Delhi police harassed and arrested Muslim citizens in the city, whom they accused of being “Bangladeshi infiltrators” even after being presented with valid documents. Assamese Muslims in particular faced near constant harassment at the hands of local police.<sup>162</sup> Five years after being accused of severely beating Muslim university students protesting the Citizenship Amendment Act — including one who lost his eye as a result of police-incurred injuries — no police have faced consequences for their actions.<sup>163</sup>

In February, Indian police arrested a young Muslim boy seen with a Hindu girl,<sup>164</sup> arrested and publicly paraded a Muslim man who had posted a pro-Pakistan slogan online,<sup>165</sup> and arrested the Muslim chancellor of a respected private science university in Assam, who had been targeted by the state’s BJP Chief Minister under the ludicrous allegation of promoting “flood jihad,” or Muslim-instigated flooding, in the region.<sup>166</sup>

In March, police raided the Juba Catholic church in Odisha without a warrant, alleging that parishioners were engaging in forced conversions. They attacked two girls aged 12 and 18 as they prepared for Sunday prayers, as well as a 38-year-old cook. According to a fact-finding report, “Two male police caught hold of her neck and gave a strong blow to the face, tore the kurtis (upper clothes) of the woman, pulling at the neck without any concern that they were outraging the modesty of the woman.”<sup>167</sup>

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159 [https://www.commoncause.in/wotadmin/upload/SPIR\\_2025.pdf](https://www.commoncause.in/wotadmin/upload/SPIR_2025.pdf)

160 <https://www.counterview.net/2025/03/gujarat-no-1-here-too-cops-justify.html>

161 <https://www.counterview.net/2025/03/gujarat-no-1-here-too-cops-justify.html>

162 <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/we-have-all-documents-why-pick-us-up-muslim-migrants-from-assam-wb-ask-as-delhi-police-conducts-crackdown-on-illegal-immigrants/>

163 <https://www.hindutvawatch.org/5-years-after-delhi-police-beat-students-inside-jamia-no-accountability-or-compensation-article-14/>

164 <https://www.hindutvawatch.org/bajrang-dal-assaults-muslim-youth-in-park-over-love-jihad-allegation-hands-him-to-police/>

165 <https://www.hindutvawatch.org/vhp-bajrang-dal-and-police-parade-muslim-man-for-chhota-pakistan-social-media-post/>

166 <https://www.hindutvawatch.org/targeted-attack-criticism-erupts-against-assam-police-arrest-of-mahbubul-hoque-already-facing-hate-campaign-from-assam-cm-maktoob-media/>

167 <https://religionunplugged.com/news/2025/5/16/fact-finding-teams-exposes-violence-against-christians-in-india-state-of-odisha>

April saw further persecution of Christians, with Chhattisgarh police conducting five separate raids on Christian groups throughout the state, including Adivasi Christians.<sup>168</sup> As was often the case throughout the year, the police collaborated with local Hindu nationalist groups which had already been harassing the Christian communities. There were several reports of police responding to calls from Hindutva groups alleging that Muslim truck drivers were transporting cattle, and subsequently harassing and/or detaining the drivers.<sup>169 170 171</sup>

In May, after Hindu nationalist groups assaulted Gaza solidarity protestors in Maharashtra, police arrested the victims of the violence rather than those who had attacked them on the street.<sup>172</sup> Police in Kerala arrested a journalist for allegedly spreading anti-government and anti-army sentiments. 26-year-old independent journalist Rejaz M. Sheeba Sydeek had publicly criticized the Indian army's Operation Sindoor conflict, which unfolded earlier in May, before being detained by police while traveling to a World Press Freedom day event.<sup>173</sup>



Rejaz M. Sheeba Sydeek. Photo: The South First

A global Torture Index Report released in late June revealed startling year-by-year increases in the number of deaths in police custody throughout India. The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) recorded 2,739 custodial deaths in 2024, following approximately 2,400 such deaths in 2023, itself a startling increase from 2022, when 1,995 prisoners reportedly died in judicial custody.<sup>174</sup>

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168 <https://www.hindutvawatch.org/hindu-nationalists-police-raid-five-christian-prayer-meets-accuse-conversions/>

169 <https://www.hindutvawatch.org/in-nuh-gau-raksha-dal-seizes-cattle-truck-hands-muslim-drivers-over-to-police/>

170 <https://www.hindutvawatch.org/cow-vigilantes-and-police-seize-transporters-meat-force-him-to-kneel/>

171 <https://www.hindutvawatch.org/sonu-hindu-led-gau-raksha-dal-hands-over-five-suspected-cattle-smugglers-to-police/>

172 <https://www.hindutvawatch.org/mob-assaults-gaza-protestors-distributing-bds-pamphlets-police-detain-victims/>

173 <https://thesouthfirst.com/kerala/kerala-based-journalist-arrested-by-nagpur-police-for-allegedly-criticising-operation-sindoor/>

174 <https://theobserverpost.com/mumbai-police-remove-loudspeakers-from-1500-places-of-worship-say-action-is-not-targeted/>

In July, two nuns, Preethi Mary and Vandana Francis, as well as a man identified as Sukaman Mandavi, were arrested by the Government Railway Police in Chhattisgarh, Kerala after being falsely accused of using violence to convert local women to Catholicism. Bajrang Dal members had pressured officials to make the arrest at the railway station where the nuns were present, illustrating the close linkages between anti-minority Hindu nationalist paramilitary groups and local police.<sup>175</sup> The nuns were charged under the country's forced conversion laws and with human trafficking, though the alleged women victims denied that they had been harmed.<sup>176</sup> In October, as Muslim protestors celebrated their faith in defiance of the Indian state, police removed "I Love Mohamed" posters throughout Mawana, Bareilly, and elsewhere in India.<sup>177</sup>

In October, police officials in Mumbai marched in a parade led by a Hindutva paramilitary whom they were supposed to be investigating for lynching a 20-year-old Muslim youth.<sup>178</sup>

In December, Muzaffarnagar police removed nearly 60 loudspeakers from local mosques in response to alleged noise pollution complaints, following a year of similar removal campaigns that, while targeting some temples, nonetheless evinced a clear anti-Muslim bias.<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/arrested-for-conversion-in-chhattisgarh-how-case-of-kerala-nuns-caused-ripples-in-parliament-10158231/>

<sup>176</sup> <https://www.thenewsminute.com/kerala/cbci-demands-quashing-of-case-against-two-kerala-nuns>

<sup>177</sup> <https://www.hindutvawatch.org/in-mawana-police-remove-i-love-mohammad-posters-and-detain-several/>

<sup>178</sup> <https://thewire.in/communalism/in-jamner-police-officials-join-march-by-hindutva-outfit-under-scanner-for-a-muslim-youths-lynching>

<sup>179</sup> <https://muslimmirror.com/uttar-pradesh-muzaffarnagar-police-remove-over-55-loudspeakers-from-mosques/>

## 4. Anti-Christian Violence

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2025 was a devastating year for anti-Christian violence in India, with numerous attacks on pastors, Churches, recent converts to Christianity, Adivasi (Indigenous), and Dalit (caste-oppressed) Christians. Demonized by BJP leaders and Hindu nationalist groups as practitioners of an “outsider” faith, Christians are also frequently tarred as covert agents “forcibly” converting Hindus to Christianity. Anti-conversion laws, passed in 12 BJP-ruled states, open Christians to criminal persecution for practicing their faith and encourage law enforcement and paramilitaries to adopt violence in dealing with Christians.

From January to November 2025, Christian human rights group Open Doors recorded 2,900 anti-Christian attacks throughout India.<sup>180</sup> As of December, at least 112 Christians were imprisoned across India, the majority of them held under spurious allegations of forcibly converting others to Christianity.<sup>181</sup> Attacks around Christmas alone offer a devastating glimpse at the conditions Indian Christians must contend with.

During one Christmas celebration, Jabalpur BJP City Vice President Anju Bhargava physically attacked a visually impaired woman, shouting: “You will be blind even in the next life.”<sup>182</sup> In Assam, Bajrang Dal members tore down Christmas decorations and set them alight, while in Odisha, street vendors were verbally abused and told to remove their Santa hats. Two weeks earlier, RSS and Bajrang Dal members stormed into St. Joseph’s Catholic Church in Rajasthan, where they threatened local clergy and told them prayer would not be tolerated. In Chhattisgarh, mobs set a Christian man’s home on fire and vandalized local churches. Shortly thereafter, a Christmas program for postal workers in Kerala was cancelled after union members demanded that a Hindu nationalist RSS anthem play during the celebrations.<sup>183</sup>

In Jhabua, BJP authorities denied Catholic parishes permission to host Christmas carol singing after local police also refused to accept their program applications. Hindu nationalist objectors also succeeded in cancelling Christmas celebrations in Haridwar, Uttarakhand, writing, “Events related to foreign culture will not be tolerated on the banks

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<sup>180</sup> <https://www.opendoorsuk.org/news/latest-news/india-prayers-christmas/>

<sup>181</sup> <https://www.ucanews.com/news/a-silent-christmas-for-families-of-112-jailed-indian-christians/111404>

<sup>182</sup> <https://www.hindutvawatch.org/jingle-hell-hate-crimes-against-christians-see-a-spike-around-christmas-against-the-quint/>

<sup>183</sup> <https://azadessa.substack.com/p/the-war-on-christians-in-india>

of the Ganges." In Palakkad, Kerala, a mob of BJP-RSS harassed and intimidated carolers, while several Christian women in Delhi were verbally abused by Bajrang Dal men. Christmas decorations at the Magneto Mall in Raipur were also torn down by a mob who alleged that the innocuous Santa display promoted "forced conversions." Schools in Uttar Pradesh also stopped considering Christmas a school holiday.<sup>184</sup>



Attacks against Christians during Christmas have only increased over the years. (Photo: The Quint)

In February, a village headman in Chhattisgarh beat a pregnant Christian woman because of her faith, causing her to suffer a miscarriage. She suffered wounds to the head and abdomen after being struck with bamboo sticks.<sup>185</sup> In March, a Bajrang Dal mob demolished a church in Chhattisgarh's Raipur, alleging that it too had been used for forced conversions. One of the church's attackers referenced 2024's mass violence against Christians in the northern state of Manipur, where hundreds of Christians had been killed.<sup>186</sup>

In April, BJP supporters called for the destruction of Christians at a rally in Himachal Pradesh despite strong anti-hate speech laws.<sup>187</sup> At a training event organised by Antarashtriya Hindu Parishad, a Rashtriya Bajrang Dal leader claimed that the Christian

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184 <https://azadessa.substack.com/p/the-war-on-christians-in-india>

185 <https://thewire.in/communalism/christian-women-leaders-appeal-to-president-murmu-for-intervention-over-targeted-violence>

186 <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/church-vandalised-in-raipur-as-attacks-on-christians-rise-in-chhattisgarh-hindu-boys-in-20s-say-we-did-it/>

187 <https://www.hindutvawatch.org/bjp-rally-features-genocidal-slogans-targeting-muslims-and-christians/>

population had increased from 1% to 4%, warned about the rise of churches, and encouraged his followers to take revenge on Christians as Israel had against Gazans.<sup>188</sup>

In May, Bajrang Dal and VHP members violently assaulted worshippers at a church service in Chhattisgarh. Joshua Jose Thomas, a Christian, alleged that members of paramilitary groups threatened to kill them for their faith.<sup>189</sup> May also saw yet another instance of an increasingly familiar and tragic phenomenon in Chhattisgarh, with mobs descending on a Christian woman's burial and forcing her family to bury her more than 30 kilometers away.<sup>190</sup>

June saw several notable instances of anti-Christian hate speech, with Bengaluru monk Atmananda Saraswati Swamiji exhorting his followers to kill: "Muslims and Christians must be eliminated using modern weapons," he said. "There is no wrong in killing thousands if they go against Sanatana Dharma."<sup>191</sup> In Bathinda, BJP leader and lawyer Ashwini Upadhyay called for the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), the Gangster Act, and treason charges to be applied against missionaries, "jihadis," and Jamatis, labelling them as part of organised crime. Attendees of his speech also called for a Christian-free Punjab.<sup>192</sup>

In July, Jharkhand BJP leader Gunjan Yadav led a large group of Hindu nationalists in a raid on a Christian family's home, alleging involvement in religious conversion. Following their complaint, the police took 11 people into custody and seized Bibles and other religious items as evidence.<sup>193</sup> Around July 20, a Christian family was also forcibly expelled from their village in Chhattisgarh.<sup>194</sup>

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188 <https://www.hindutvawatch.org/in-aonla-rashtriya-bajrang-dal-leader-spreads-hate-against-christians-and-muslims-urges-israel-style-retaliation/>

189 <https://www.thequint.com/news/politics/vhp-bajrang-dal-christian-family-chhattisgarh-kawardha-religious-conversion>

190 <https://www.hindutvawatch.org/in-sanaud-christian-burial-blocked-by-villagers-family-forced-to-bury-woman-30-km-away/>

191 [https://x.com/TheSiasatDaily/status/1934966057275637828?](https://x.com/TheSiasatDaily/status/1934966057275637828)

ref\_src=twsrct%5Etw%7Ctwcamp%5Etwembed%7Ctwterm%5E1934966057275637828%7Ctwgr%5Eba70c9f0c26fe9a0a5e8ca25490f25ef424be7bd%7Ctwcon%5Esl\_&ref\_url=https%3A%2Fwww.hindutvawatch.org%2Fhindutva-priest-booked-for-hate-speech-targeting-muslims-and-christians-muslim-mirror%2F

192 <https://www.hindutvawatch.org/in-bathinda-hate-speech-targets-christians-and-muslims-bjp-leader-calls-for-harsh-laws/>

193 <https://www.hindutvawatch.org/in-jamshedpur-bjp-leader-gunjan-yadav-leads-raid-on-christian-home-11-detained/>

194 <https://persecution.org/2025/07/23/christian-family-banned-from-indian-village-for-refusing-to-convert-to-hinduism/>

The Supreme Court refused to entertain a plea seeking action against the Shivashakthi Foundation and other Hindu nationalist outfits, for allegedly spreading hate towards the Christian community and instigating people towards desecration of the Holy Bible.<sup>195</sup>

The same month, Hindu nationalist leader Kajal Hindustani, who has previously encouraged anti-Christian violence, was hosted at an event in Dallas, Texas which invited condemnation from the New York State Council of Churches and other American groups.<sup>196</sup>

In August, Hindu nationalist groups vandalized a 115-year-old Christian hospital in Chhattisgarh, alleging that its staff enforced conversions on patients. It was the second attack on the Mennonite-run facility, following a previous incident in which VHP members installed Hindutva flags inside the building, smeared the ground with cow dung, and damaged wheelchairs. Instead of coming to the hospital's defense, the government has complied with Hindutva groups' request to conduct an inquiry into the hospital for allegedly conducting forced conversions.<sup>197</sup>

Earlier that month, Maharashtra BJP MLA Gopichand Padalkar put out a public bounty against Christian missionaries who proselytized in villages, offering different amounts for different kinds of Christians killed, with the highest amount being reserved for pastors. Critics demanded his expulsion from parliament in response.<sup>198</sup>

In September, Indian authorities demolished the homes of Christian Jabbar Khan, who had been accused of forcible conversions. Following a Bajrang Dal raid on a Sunday prayer meeting at Khan's residence, authorities bulldozed his apartment in broad daylight with police protection.<sup>199</sup> Earlier in the month, BJP leader Raghubar Das had alleged a nationwide "business" of luring Hindus into Christianity with temptations.<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> <https://www.livelaw.in/top-stories/supreme-court-plea-seeking-action-against-shivashakthi-foundation-members-others-for-spreading-hate-towards-christians-disposed-of-298352>

<sup>196</sup> <https://clarionindia.net/christian-leaders-and-churches-slam-hate-speech-event-in-dallas/>

<sup>197</sup> <https://www.christianpost.com/news/century-old-christian-hospital-under-investigation-in-india.html>

<sup>198</sup> <https://persecution.org/2025/07/07/legislator-puts-bounty-on-evangelists-in-india/>

<sup>199</sup> <https://scroll.in/latest/1086702/madhya-pradesh-bulldozes-home-of-jabbar-khan-accused-of-carrying-forcible-religious-conversion>

<sup>200</sup> <https://www.hindutvawatch.org/in-ranchi-bjp-leader-raghubar-das-accuses-christians-of-conversions-to-destroy-culture/>

Following Rajasthan's passage of a state-level anti-conversion law in September, attacks on Christians within the state increased. Later that month, a Hindu nationalist group threatened some 20 Christians with death unless they renounced their faith, beating the pastor and several parishioners to the point that they required medical treatment.<sup>201</sup>

In November 2025, police in Jammu and Kashmir told a Christian group to flee under their protection so as to avoid being attacked by local Hindu nationalist groups. However, soon after joining the police escort, the Christian group's bus was attacked by a mob wielding iron rods, forced outside, and severely beaten. Only one officer attempted to intervene in the violence, while the rest stood idly by, the Christian group said.<sup>202</sup> Earlier in the month, Hindu nationalist groups forced Christian villagers in Haryana to burn their Bibles, handing them jugs of gasoline and threatening them lest they refused.<sup>203</sup>

On December 15, a mob of villagers in Chhattisgarh attempted to exhume the body of a Christian father after his relatives had buried him, claiming that the land belonged to a local deity and that a Christian burial was therefore impermissible. The mob eventually relented, with the police later exhuming the body and moving it to a Christian cemetery some distance away.<sup>204</sup> The attempted exhumation was part of a growing trend: across 22 Chhattisgarh villages, more than 400 people gathered on October 5 and collectively decided to deny Christians their burial rights. During the meeting, a Christian man was questioned about his caste, community, religion, and conversion, and then pressured to undergo Ghar Wapsi, a ceremonial reconversion to Hinduism.<sup>205</sup>

Anti-conversion laws and conspiracy theories promulgated by leading BJP officials fanned the flames of anti-Christian sentiment in India, motivating numerous acts of violence and killings throughout the year. Christians practicing their faith quietly in private homes fared little better than those who worshipped in the open, with dozens of groups falling victim to mob attacks and, in some cases, state-sanctioned bulldozer campaigns.

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201 <https://clarionindia.net/attacks-on-rajasthan-christians-increase-after-strict-anti-conversion-law-passed/>

202 <https://www.christianitytoday.com/2025/11/hindu-nationalists-missionaries-jammu-kashmir-attack/>

203 <https://clarionindia.net/mob-forces-christians-to-burn-copies-of-bible-renounce-faith-in-haryanas-rohtak/>

204 <https://cjp.org.in/no-rest-even-in-death-christians-in-india-and-the-growing-targeted-violence-in-chhattisgarh/>

205 <https://persecution.org/2025/10/08/22-hindu-villages-decide-to-strip-christians-of-basic-rights/>

## 5. State-led Punitive Demolitions

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2025 saw some of the most extensive destruction of Muslim and Christian property in recent history, with BJP-led bulldozer drives destroying thousands of homes, mosques, and churches. Despite a historic Indian Supreme Court ruling that prohibited the destruction of property from those accused of crimes or properties which may lack documentation, the Modi regime continued to use criminal charges, often fabricated, as a pretext to target religious minorities and political opponents.

In January, the BJP led government in Pune, Maharashtra, bulldozed a mosque and a madrasa in response to complaints from local Hindu groups, who claimed the structures had been built without sufficient paperwork.<sup>206</sup> Muslims in the community reported that they had not been given a fair chance to contest the claims of illegality and defend their properties.



Bulldozers being used to demolish an allegedly encroached part of the Noori Jama Masjid in UP. (NDTV)

Shortly thereafter, on February 4th, the BJP-led government in Gujarat demolished 12 religious structures in the village of Balapur, claiming that they had encroached on public lands. One resident called the demolition drive “a violation of our rights to practice our religion freely,” while another said, “These are not just buildings; they are part of our heritage, our history, and our hearts.”<sup>207</sup>

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206 <https://clarionindia.net/mosque-madrassa-bulldozed-in-pune-after-complaints-from-hindu-groups/>

207 <https://clarionindia.net/gujarat-mosque-shrine-and-graveyard-among-12-structures-bulldozed-in-balapur/>

Again in Pune, the government conducted a massive demolition campaign, this time in an industrial area filled with thousands of predominantly Muslim-owned small businesses. Beginning on February 8, government employees destroyed an estimated 5,000 businesses in Chikhli, Kudalwadi, Jadhuvadi, Hargode Vasti, and Pawar Vasti, leaving the zones in ruins. The operation stoked widespread fear of mass unemployment in the Muslim communities in these areas, with some estimating as many as 100,000 jobs lost. Congress Party representative Hussain Dalwai stated, “It is clear that Muslim businesses are being deliberately targeted. This demolition drive is part of a broader agenda to weaken our economic base. We demand immediate rehabilitation and compensation for the affected families.”<sup>208</sup>

In March, government forces bulldozed the house of a man accused of slaughtering cows by Hindu nationalist groups in Madhya Pradesh. A butcher, he had previously been accosted by a Hindu nationalist mob, and fired his gun.<sup>209</sup> Shortly thereafter, local officials threatened to demolish an estimated 300 Muslim-owned homes in an area populated by butchers in retaliation for this incident of alleged cow slaughter.<sup>210</sup>

Later in March, Haryana officials bulldozed the temporary homes of approximately 300 migrant workers in Gurugram, allegedly without having notified the residents. Bengali speaking residents claim the action was based on linguistic discrimination and unfounded suspicions of their being Bangladeshi. Residents of the settlement had been celebrating Eid when their homes were demolished. Many have been left homeless.<sup>211</sup>

Another devastating large-scale eviction drive in BJP-ruled Assam began at the end of March and continued throughout May. A total of 10,000 Bengali-speaking Muslims were displaced from the Chirakuta 1 and 2 areas, Charuakhara Jungle Block, and Santoshpur villages. Though displaced residents were earmarked to receive approximately \$550 in resettlement fees, many reported they never received the sum. Bulldozers tore through their homes to make room for a large government power project.<sup>212</sup>

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208 <https://clarionindia.net/maharashtra-bulldozer-operation-in-pune-leaves-thousands-of-muslims-jobless/?noamp=mobile>

209 <https://clarionindia.net/bulldozer-action-house-of-cow-slaughter-accused-razed-in-madhya-pradeshs-damoh/?amp=1>

210 <https://clarionindia.net/cow-slaughter-case-over-300-muslim-homes-face-demolition-in-mps-damoh/?amp=1>

211 <https://theobserverpost.com/speaking-bengali-is-now-a-crime-300-migrant-families-rendered-homeless-in-gurugram-demolition-labeled-bangladeshis/>

212 <https://scroll.in/latest/1084333/assam-homes-of-1400-bengali-origin-muslim-families-bulldozed-in-dhubri>

In various Indo-Nepal border areas in BJP-ruled Uttar Pradesh, bulldozers destroyed mosques, madrasas, Dargahs, and Idgahs, all of which officials allege were built illegally on government-owned land. Local Muslim leaders reported that other structures built on government-owned land were not demolished, suggesting that their buildings were discriminatorily targeted.<sup>213</sup>

In early August, Rajasthan officials in the historic city of Ajmer began a large-scale demolition drive targeting Muslim property. The Forest Department destroyed hundreds of homes and businesses against the objection of residents who had presented officials with valid land ownership documents and pending court cases. National police forces were called in to prevent protestors from impeding the demolition.<sup>214</sup>

On October 9, authorities in Gujarat launched a demolition drive targeting Muslims alleged to have thrown stones at Hindu groups during a Navratri procession in retaliation for an offensive social media post.<sup>215</sup>

In November, authorities in Kashmir used explosives to destroy a residential house owned by the father of the young doctor who investigators have described as the “prime suspect” in the Red Fort blast case in Delhi. The family reportedly never received advanced notice of the imminent explosion of their home.<sup>216</sup>

Relentlessly amplified across social media and championed by leading Hindu nationalists, these state-led bulldozing campaigns create an atmosphere of terror for religious minorities. Just for practicing Islam or Christianity, Indians can lose their home, their wealth, and their livelihoods.

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213 <https://clarionindia.net/more-border-area-madrasas-bulldozed-in-ups-drive-against-encroachments/>

214 <https://clarionindia.net/rajasthan-bulldozer-action-sparks-fear-and-anger-in-ajmers-muslim-community/>

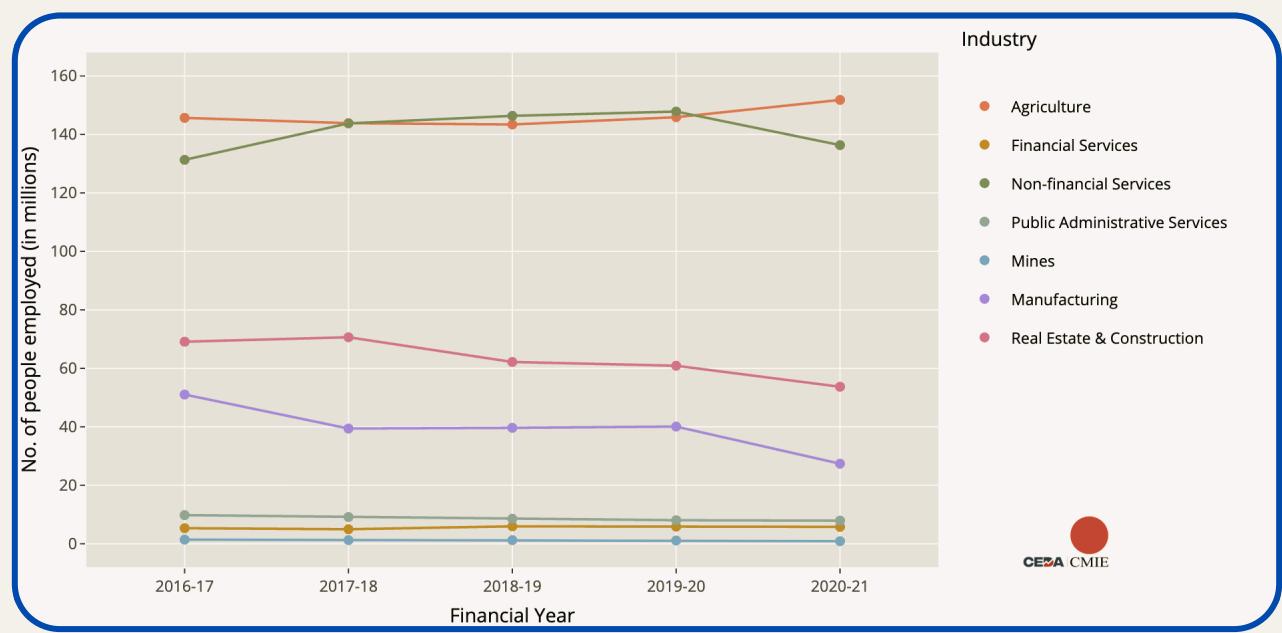
215 <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/gujarat/authorities-bulldoze-186-properties-after-navratri-clash-in-gujarat/article70143823.ece>

216 <https://www.hindutvawatch.org/family-home-of-delhi-blast-prime-accused-demolished-in-jks-pulwama-the-wire/>

## 6. Economic Destruction

The Modi regime has pioneered a novel form of economic apartheid, which aggressively punishes Muslims, Christians, Dalits, and Adivasis and doles out scant rewards to Hindu nationalist followers, all the while maintaining one of the most lopsided, unequal, and corrupt economies in the world. The combination of high-level corruption with everyday economic discrimination has ensured that, despite claims to the contrary and the widespread celebration of surpassing Japan in terms of GDP, the Modi regime has undermined India's long-term economic trajectory.

By using state violence to prevent Muslims from doing business, cutting support for religious minorities to advance economically, targeting regime critics with capricious tax raids, and enabling massive corrupt corporations to commit fraud with impunity, the BJP is in fact undermining the economy of the entirety of India. Its narratives of success simply do not ring true.



Despite promises to add 100 million manufacturing jobs, Modi's India has actually lost 24 million industrial jobs between 2017 and 2021.<sup>217</sup> After initially promising to raise the proportion of industrial manufacturing jobs from 17% of GDP to 25% of GDP, the overall share has actually fallen to 16% of GDP. Agriculture now employs a higher percentage of

<sup>217</sup> <https://archive.is/o/08lpb/https://ceda.ashoka.edu.in/ceda-cmie-bulletin-manufacturing-employment-halves-in-5-years/>

workers than five years ago, leading to stunning situations like in 2019, when 12.5 million people applied for 35,000 railway jobs.<sup>218</sup> With only 100 million people to India's 1.4 billion, Vietnam now exports approximately the same value in manufactured goods.<sup>219</sup>

Indians' average income of \$2,880 places them well behind Vietnamese (\$4,810) and Filipino (\$4,350) citizens. The World Inequality Report 2022 shows that the top one percent of Indians hold over 40 percent of the country's wealth, while the bottom half — over 700 million people — own just 5.9 percent.<sup>220</sup> Dire poverty and inadequate health services have created large gaps in life expectancy throughout the country, which saw its overall life expectancy drop for the first time in five decades this year.<sup>221</sup>

Modi's distinctive brand of crony capitalism, which doles out massive government contracts to a select few political allies, has given lavish benefits to the richest Indians while failing to generate a middle-class consumer base large enough to entice international investors.<sup>222</sup> Private investment has declined under the Modi regime, with investors also admitting that they fear retribution from the tax-authority bulldogs which Modi's government uses to intimidate political foes.<sup>223</sup>

State-enabled sexism<sup>224</sup> also severely hampers Indian economic growth, with the Modi regime's refusal to adequately fund the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act keeping thousands of women out of the workforce.<sup>225</sup> Under the Modi regime, only seven out of 100 urban women are employed — a significant decline that places the nation behind even Saudi Arabia in terms of female labor participation.<sup>226</sup>

The Modi regime's December 2025 decision to scrap the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act in favor of the Viksit Bharat – Guarantee For Rozgar And Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) Bill, 2025 (VB-G RAM G) is yet another way the

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218 <https://archive.is/4SxTx>

219 <https://www.dripcapital.com/resources/blog/vietnam-vs-india-exports>

220 <https://thediplomat.com/2025/06/indias-economic-growth-masks-a-deeper-malaise/>

221 <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/health/life-expectancy-in-india-drops-for-the-first-time-in-five-decades-2020-21-saw-2-million-excess-deaths>

222 <https://www.phenomenalworld.org/analysis/family-business/>

223 <https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/06/23/modi-india-economy-success-story/>

224 <https://archive.is/o/08lpb/https://www.economist.com/leaders/2021/02/20/only-7-of-urban-indian-women-have-paid-jobs>

225 <https://archive.is/o/08lpb/https://thewire.in/rights/chart-decline-expenditure-social-security-schemes-budget-2023>

226 <https://archive.is/o/08lpb/https://www.economist.com/leaders/2021/02/20/only-7-of-urban-indian-women-have-paid-jobs>

government has undermined job access. Presented as a means of lengthening the number of days of guaranteed employment offered each year, the new bill (passed without consultation from any labor groups) gives the government discretion over whether or not to fund certain areas of the country — a privilege that some critics fear will be abused to selectively target minority-dominant regions. The new law also gives the Indian government discretion over how much the rural employment fund requires each year, which may portend future cuts.<sup>227</sup>

Under Modi, the Rupee has performed the worst of any Asian currency. It fell more than 6% against the dollar in 2025 alone as investors shied away from India amidst uncertainty over ailing manufacturing and the country's shrinking exports to the United States.<sup>228</sup>

Against this backdrop, research group IHL recorded 111 hate speeches by leading Hindu nationalist figures calling for the social or economic boycott of minority communities, primarily Muslims — a 27.6% increase compared to 2023.<sup>229</sup> These boycotts have a profound impact on targeted individuals who, according to a 2022 report by Oxfam India and NCDHR, suffer economic losses ranging from 30 to 70%.<sup>230</sup> Individuals at the bottom of the economic ladder often suffer the most. An online campaign launched by Hindu nationalist influencers before the Deepavali holiday reflects the poverty of the boycott victims, with online right-wing groups calling for Hindus to refuse to buy clay pots from roadside sellers.<sup>231</sup> Such speeches speak to the conditions of extraordinary oppression under which Muslim communities operate, and which explain the faith's consistent placement at the bottom of economic attainment rankings in India.

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227 <https://countercurrents.org/2025/12/the-right-to-work-repealed/>

228 <https://asiatimes.com/2025/12/rupees-freefall-tells-the-real-story-about-indias-outlook/>

229 <https://www.indiahatelab.com/2025/02/10/hate-speech-events-in-india-2024/>

230 <https://indiatomorrow.net/2025/05/01/religion-based-economic-boycott-a-new-face-of-social-hatred/>

231 <https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/technology/platform-x-used-to-promote-hate-speech-economic-boycott-of-muslims-ahead-of-deepavali/article70178214.ece>

## 7. Repression in Jammu and Kashmir

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In 2023, the Indian Supreme Court made the decision to uphold the revocation of Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, which granted autonomy to the state of Jammu and Kashmir.<sup>232</sup> Article 35A of the Constitution, which empowered the state's legislature to define its permanent residents and confer special privileges and rights, has also been revoked. With the removal of both guarantees and the Supreme Court's support of this removal, the BJP-led Indian government has fulfilled its Hindu nationalist pledge to seize control of the historically autonomous region, inflamed anti-Muslim sentiment, and undermined the constitutional rights of residents of Kashmir.



Indian paramilitary personnel patrol a road in Srinagar ahead of Supreme Court's verdict (Photo: BBC News)

The decision has divided the region into two federal territories, Ladakh and Jammu-Kashmir, both to be ruled directly by the central government without the intervention of a locally elected legislature. Unelected government officials continue to run the majority-Muslim region, which has lost its own constitution, flag, and criminal code.<sup>233</sup>

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<sup>232</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-67634689>

<sup>233</sup> <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/india-supreme-court-upholds-decision-remove-kashmir-special-status-rcna128982>

Following the revocation of Article 370, the BJP led an extensive authoritarian crackdown in the region, involving a substantial deployment of armed forces, imprisonment of political leaders, imposition of stringent curfews, and periodic internet shutdowns that have grave consequences for the region's economy and healthcare systems.<sup>234</sup>

In an effort to bring about demographic change in favor of the ruling party, the Modi regime has encouraged aggressive settlement of Kashmir by non-local Hindus, and in 2023 constructed 6,000 "transit camp" houses for the purpose. Since 2019, over six million people have been granted residency rights in Jammu and Kashmir — a state of only eight million — in order to usher in these sought-after political changes.<sup>235</sup> In the past two years, the Indian government issued 83,000 domicile (or residency) certificates to non-local Kashmiris, further tipping demographic balances toward non Muslims.<sup>236</sup>

In 2023, BJP leaders introduced new technologies which enable the central government to exercise tighter control over everyone in the region, including forging direct cooperation agreements with major social media platforms to track individuals that the Jammu and Kashmir police deem to be engaging in "anti-national" activities.<sup>237</sup> The government also implemented a new eight-digit digital identity system for Kashmiris accessing social welfare benefits, which has raised fears among many of increased government control over their lives.<sup>238</sup> The new electronic system has prevented Kashmiris from accessing welfare benefits during the BJP-imposed internet shutdowns. With 445 internet shutdowns since Modi first became prime minister in 2014, Kashmir has experienced more internet shutdowns than anywhere else in the world.<sup>239</sup>

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234 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/dec/11/india-supreme-court-upholds-move-to-strip-kashmir-of-special-status>

235 [https://assets-global.website-files.com/6031a13f23a42e1120a8c37c/650b132fe545a72547a44ac5\\_Kashmir\\_Updates\\_August\\_2023.pdf](https://assets-global.website-files.com/6031a13f23a42e1120a8c37c/650b132fe545a72547a44ac5_Kashmir_Updates_August_2023.pdf)

236 <https://kashmirlife.net/over-83000-domicile-certificates-issued-to-non-state-subjects-in-jammu-kashmir-in-two-years-government-tells-house-amid-chaos-387746/>

237 <http://theobserverpost.com/whatsapp-x-instagram-and-other-platforms-provide-free-access-to-jk-police-for-tracking-anti-national-elements-officials>

238 <http://moderndiplomacy.eu/2023/02/20/india-issued-new-digital-ids-in-jammu-kashmir-surveillance-concerns>

239 <https://internetshutdowns.in/>

In addition to systematic, pervasive physical surveillance, Indian authorities utilize extensive digital data collection and surveillance systems in Jammu and Kashmir, including CCTV, facial recognition systems and spyware from NSO Group's Pegasus, which has been condemned by human rights groups around the world.

Following the April 22, 2025 terrorist attack that claimed 25 lives in Pahalgam, Indian authorities led a historic crackdown in the region. State forces allegedly killed 13 people, detained more than 4,000, and used explosives to destroy at least ten homes belonging to the relatives of individuals alleged to have served a role in perpetrating the terrorist attack.<sup>240</sup> Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha moved quickly to further strip local officials of autonomy after the attack, forcefully transferring 48 Kashmiri officials from their titles and consolidating their roles under his own offices.<sup>241</sup>

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<sup>240</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/may/04/kashmir-crackdown-india-response-to-deadly-tourist-attack>

<sup>241</sup> <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/jammu-and-kashmir/disquiet-in-jk-govt-as-l-g-establishes-complete-control-over-bureaucracy/article69404805.ece>

## 7.1 Killings, Torture and Arbitrary Detentions

Throughout 2025, Indian army and police personnel extrajudicially killed, tortured, and arbitrarily detained numerous people in Jammu and Kashmir, accusing them of other acts of terrorism and supporting Pakistan.

The year began with two unexplained deaths and one unresolved disappearance among the Gujjar tribal community in Kashmir. Since 1989, between 8,000 and 10,000 Kashmiris have disappeared, according to the local advocacy organization the Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons (APDP). These three deaths were believed to follow the pattern of similar disappearances linked to the actions of the Indian military. From the end of December 2024 through early January 2025, 17 people in the Gujjar tribal community died under unexplained circumstances widely believed to be linked to local security forces.<sup>242</sup>



A group of Gujjar men gather to mourn and talk about the recent disappearances and deaths in Kulgam, Indian-administered Kashmir [Sajad Hameed/Al Jazeera]

In February, five people in Pakistan-administered Kashmir were killed after stepping on landmines,<sup>243</sup> just weeks after the young Kashmiri Makhan Din killed himself in a public plea to stop police torture. "I swear by Allah and his messenger that I have never seen militants," Makhan Din said in a recorded statement just before his suicide, following days of torture by the police on spurious terrorism allegations.<sup>244</sup>

242 <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2025/4/8/wave-of-kashmir-disappearances-mystery-deaths-spook-tribal-community#:~:text=Three%20Gujjar%20men%20E2%80%94%20Mohammad%20Showkat,exist%20to%20those%20in%20power.%E2%80%9D>

243 <https://kashmirlife.net/five-pakistani-militants-killed-in-landmine-blast-in-jammu-kashmir-382071/>

244 <https://scroll.in/article/1079473/they-will-beat-me-again-what-led-to-the-death-of-a-young-man-in-jammu-village>

In April and May, as part of the Indian government's retaliatory crackdowns following the Pahalgam attacks, authorities moved to deport Pakistani spouses of Kashmiri men, violently fragmenting families by sending dozens of women out of the country.<sup>245</sup> Hindu nationalist groups active in Kashmir assaulted numerous Kashmiri shawl vendors with no relationship to the terrorist attack, leaving many in the community feeling too unsafe to resume their trade or live in the territory.<sup>246</sup>

The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights condemned widespread reports of arbitrary detention and torture as part of the Pahalgam crackdown. "Such actions constitute collective punishment and defy the 2024 ruling by India's Supreme Court, which found that such demolitions are unconstitutional and violate the rights to life and human dignity, which includes the right to protection against arbitrary displacement," UN experts said.<sup>247</sup>

The reverberations of the crackdown continued to play out through May and June, with authorities raiding 20 locations under the UAPA on May 12, and shutting down the historic Jama Masjid and Eidgah in Srinagar, where Muslims were prevented from performing Eid prayers for the seventh straight year.<sup>248 249</sup>

In December, the counter-intelligence wing of the Jammu and Kashmir police raided twelve buildings and detained twelve suspects, whom they alleged exploited human rights advocacy, environmental causes, and female empowerment causes in order to pursue "anti-national" activities.<sup>250</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> <https://www.hindutvawatch.org/this-feels-like-a-living-funeral-families-torn-apart-as-pakistani-wives-in-kashmir-are-forced-out-article-14/>

<sup>246</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/crrz4ezzlxjo>

<sup>247</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/11/un-experts-alarmed-indian-counter-terrorism-operations-violating-human>

<sup>248</sup> <https://www.hindutvawatch.org/sharing-info-about-security-forces-installations-sia-raids-20-places-in-kashmir-indian-express/>

<sup>249</sup> <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/srinagars-jama-masjid-shut-for-7th-eid-mirwaiz-under-house-arrest/>

<sup>250</sup> [https://economictimes.indiatimes.com//news/india/jk-police-detains-12-suspects-for-exploiting-environment-causes-women-empowerment-for-anti-national-activities/articleshow/126031402.cmsutm\\_source=contentofinterest&utm\\_medium=text\\_&utm\\_campaign=cppst](https://economictimes.indiatimes.com//news/india/jk-police-detains-12-suspects-for-exploiting-environment-causes-women-empowerment-for-anti-national-activities/articleshow/126031402.cmsutm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text_&utm_campaign=cppst)

## 7.2 Suppressing Dissent, Enforcing Obedience

Kashmir's free press and civil society apparatus have both been systematically undermined through extensive deployment of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), an anti-terrorism bill with a notorious history of illegal use.

As of October 2025, human rights defender Khurram Parvez had been illegally imprisoned for four years (1,457 days), journalist Irfan Mehraj had been illegally imprisoned for over two and a half years (973 days), human rights lawyer Mian Abdul Qayoom had been illegally imprisoned for almost a year and a half (511 days) and scholar Shafat Wani had been illegally imprisoned for over seven months (218 days).<sup>251</sup> All were initially charged on spurious grounds under the UAPA.

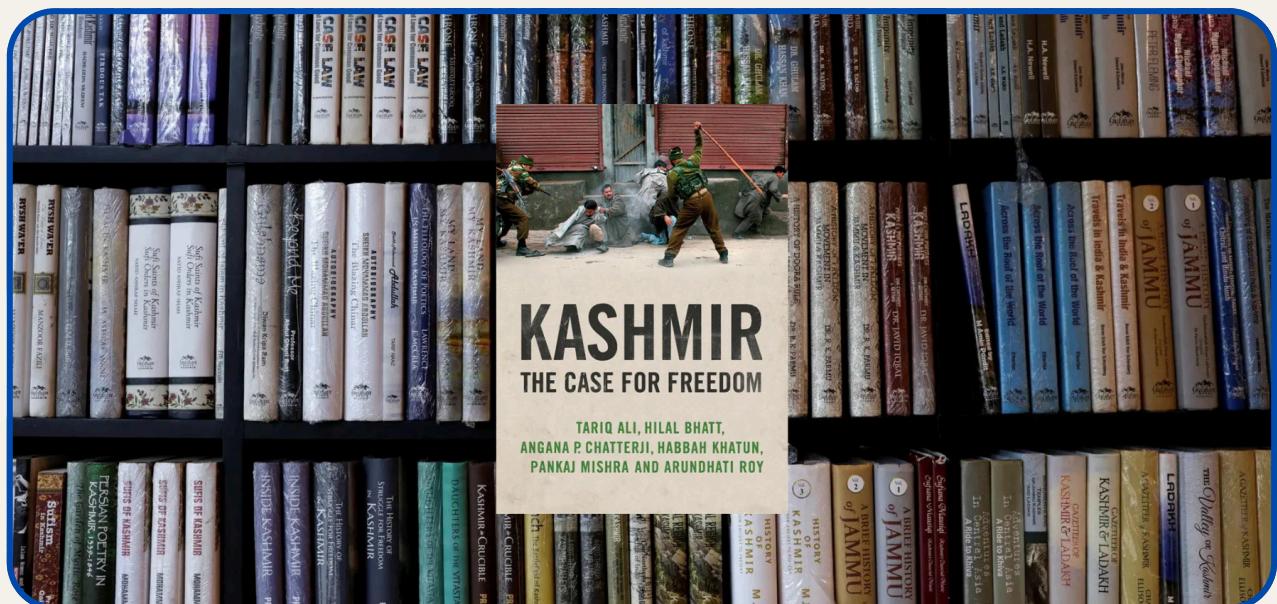


Photo: versobooks

Following the Pahalgam terrorist attacks in April, Indian authorities initiated numerous internet shutdowns that affected Kashmir's health and banking systems, grinding many vital social functions to a halt.<sup>252</sup> Officials also launched a sweeping ban of 25 books critical of the central government's colonial approach towards governing Kashmir, including the well-regarded Verso title *Kashmir: The Case for Freedom*, featuring writing from Arundhati Roy, Pankaj Mishra, Tariq Ali, and others.<sup>253</sup> Officials raided numerous Kashmiri bookstores to enforce the ban throughout August.

<sup>251</sup> <https://www.kljp.org/articles/key-developments-in-the-human-rights-situation-in-indian-administered-kashmir-october-1---october-31-2025>

<sup>252</sup> [https://freedomhouse.org/country/india/freedom-net/2025#footnote2\\_9gw1Oo0rtvv2KfOqGQPbP4OUpQfbH-kpRNvbJi0uE8\\_oNUdF3wSaA1a253](https://freedomhouse.org/country/india/freedom-net/2025#footnote2_9gw1Oo0rtvv2KfOqGQPbP4OUpQfbH-kpRNvbJi0uE8_oNUdF3wSaA1a253) <https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/news/political-censorship-and-the-25-book-ban-in-kashmir>

<sup>253</sup> <https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/news/political-censorship-and-the-25-book-ban-in-kashmir>

In September, Indian officials arrested MLA Mehraj Malik under the Jammu and Kashmir Public Safety Act (PSA), 1978. This marked the first time any Kashmiri legislator had been detained under the draconian law, which permits authorities to detain criminal suspects for up to two years without trial. Malik had vocally defended moving a village health center to a newer facility when he was charged by the government of violating land policies. Shortly after a heated confrontation with police, Malik was detained and presented with a 33-page dossier listing accusing him of turning “political activism into disorder,” criticizing his legacy of leading sit-ins and storming official meetings.<sup>254</sup>

On October 4, Indian authorities publicized an order that prohibited public sector employees in Kashmir from online expression critical of the Indian government. Two days later, authorities filed a case against a Facebook administrator for allegedly “spreading false information” after publishing a local news story contrary to official accounts. Later in October, Indian authorities seized the local political offices of the Tehreek-e-Hurriyat party, labeling it a terrorist organization under the UAPA.<sup>255</sup>

Beginning in November, students in schools throughout Jammu and Kashmir were forced to recite a patriotic Indian anthem that refers to the country as “mother,” a slogan that many local Muslims consider idolatrous.<sup>256</sup> Then, on November 27, authorities demolished the family home of journalist Arfaz Ahmad Daing, whose reporting linked local authorities to drug trafficking operations. The demolition left Daing’s elderly parents, wife, and three children homeless.<sup>257</sup>

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254 <https://article-14.com/post/first-j-k-legislator-held-under-draconian-detention-law-in-kashmir-fights-back-6902f97a316c4>

255 <https://risingkashmir.com/office-of-banned-tehreek-e-hurriyat-kashmir-attached/>

256 <https://m.thewire.in/article/government/doda-administration-vande-mataram-recitation-schools-outrage>

257 <https://thewire.in/rights/jammu-authorities-demolish-family-home-journalist-who-linked-cop-with-drug-smuggling>

## 8. Dalits

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Though the constitution of India prohibits discrimination based on caste and untouchability, India's most oppressed castes continue to face persecution and violence from both state and non-state actors.

Some adherents to a Brahminical form of Hinduism continue to believe and uphold a vision of society where the lowest castes should be confined to degrading forms of labor and dehumanizing treatment at the hands of higher castes. Concrete measures aimed at reducing discrimination, such as the Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe (SC/ST) Act of 1995 and the Prevention of Atrocities Act, have largely failed to achieve their stated aim — the result of both deliberate ostracization at the level of civil society and the BJP-ruled government's deliberate attempts to inhibit progress. Throughout India, BJP politicians promise to undo the affirmative action programs designed to empower both of these minority communities. Comprising a shared 25% of India's population, Dalits still suffer from markedly lower levels of educational, professional, and economic attainment.

In 2025, Dalit Christians and Dalit Muslims continued to be excluded from the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribal benefits (including affirmative action, employment and educational assistance, and healthcare subsidies) extended to Hindu, Sikh, and Buddhist Dalits.<sup>258</sup> Hindu nationalist groups have vehemently opposed efforts to recognize the rights of Muslim and Christian Dalits, and support the ongoing exclusion that denies some of India's most vulnerable communities.<sup>259</sup>

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<sup>258</sup> <https://catholicconnect.in/news/religious-minorities-and-the-challenge-of-caste-data-in-2025-census>

<sup>259</sup> <https://catholicconnect.in/news/religious-minorities-and-the-challenge-of-caste-data-in-2025-census/>

## 8.1 Hate Crimes

Dalits continued to be subject to routine violence, including rape and extrajudicial killings, throughout 2025. The human rights organization Citizens for Justice and Peace recorded 113 anti-Dalit atrocities as of June 2025, though the number is certainly an undercount and represents a small fraction of cases.<sup>260</sup> According to the latest data from India's National Crime Records Bureau (which only extends to 2022), crimes against Dalits are up by 46.11% since 2013, increasing from 50,744 in 2021 to 57,428 in 2022. The atrocities are highest overall in two BJP-ruled states.<sup>261</sup>



A video purportedly shows the two men crawling with grass clamped between their teeth as some men follow them. (Photo: Screengrab from X/@AmiyaPandav and @\_ambedkaritee via indianexpress)

One June case is illustrative of the humiliating, violent treatment Dalits routinely receive from upper-caste peers. Around June 24, a mob accosted two Dalit men walking two cows and a calf along a road in Odisha. After the men said they were unable to pay the money demanded from them, the mob allegedly beat them, shaved their heads, made them crawl on the ground, and forced them to drink sewage water while chewing grass clamped between their teeth.<sup>262</sup> It is difficult to quantify how many similarly dehumanizing assaults occurred throughout the year, though dozens culminated in lynching.

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260 <https://cjp.org.in/everyday-atrocity-mapping-the-normalisation-of-violence-against-dalits-and-adivasis-in-2025/>  
261 <https://www.telegraphindia.com/opinion/free-to-hurt-editorial-on-ncrb-data-showing-increasing-crimes-against-adivasis-and-dalits/cid/1986509> <https://www.outlookindia.com/national/crimes-against-women-dalits-to-rise-in-uapa-cases-ncrb-data-beyond-numbers-news-337023>

262 <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/dalit-men-tonsure-forced-crawl-cow-smuggling-allegations-odisha-10083930/>

On February 20, mobs in BJP-ruled Uttar Pradesh attacked two Dalit weddings. Brandishing sticks and swords, the mob knocked a groom off his horse, beat at least six women, and shouted casteist slurs at the wedding parties. The upper-caste Thakur mobs reportedly objected to a Dalit riding a horse.<sup>263</sup>

In March, a mob of upper-caste men sedated and kidnapped a 14-year-old Dalit girl, whom they proceeded to gang-rape over a period of two months. While imprisoning her inside a small room, the men burned an “om” symbol into her skin with acid. Some upper-caste men continue to view it as an ordained right to rape Dalit women.<sup>264</sup>

In August, police in BJP-ruled Haryana arrested and allegedly tortured Dalit human rights lawyer Rajat Kalsan, who had been fighting several cases on caste-based atrocities, including gang rapes, killings, and house burnings. A mob of approximately 20 police officers allegedly shouted numerous casteist slurs and beat the lawyer after accosting him at a car market without following any clear procedure.

In September, a mob beat an eight-year-old Dalit boy in Rajasthan’s Barmer district and hung him upside down from a tree after he had touched a water pot belonging to an upper-caste person.<sup>265</sup> In October, a mob allegedly pledging allegiance to BJP leader Yogi Adityanath lynched 38-year-old Dalit Hari Om on suspicion of being a “drone thief”. Authorities later found his battered, half-naked body near a railway station.<sup>266</sup>

In November, scholar Vipin Vijayan of Kerala University alleged that Dr. C. N. Vijayakumari, dean of the Sanskrit Department, had denied him a PhD because of his belonging to an oppressed caste. Vijayakumari, who allegedly has connections to the RSS-BJP, told Vijayan that “No matter how much a Pulayan or Parayan bows, Sanskrit will never yield to them as it does to Brahmins,” before denying him his doctorate.<sup>267</sup>

Later the same month, two teachers in Himachal Pradesh allegedly forced an eight-year-old Dalit boy into the bathroom where they told him to take his pants down and placed a scorpion near his genitals. The teachers had allegedly beaten the boy throughout the year, to the point of making

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263 <https://thewire.in/rights/dalit-weddings-upper-caste-disrupted>

264 <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/dalit-girl-14-tortured-and-gang-raped-in-uttar-pradeshs-moradabad-om-tattoo-on-hand-forced-to-eat-meat-101741222891521.html>

265 <https://theobserverpost.com/rajasthan-8-year-old-dalit-boy-beaten-hung-upside-down-for-touching-water-pot-in-barmer/>

266 <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/dalit-youth-lynched-in-up-congress-alleges-attackers-mocked-victim-saying-we-are-babas-men/>

267 <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/you-cant-study-sanskrit-like-a-brahmin-phd-withheld-by-hindutva-affiliated-dean-says-dalit-phd-scholar-from-kerala-university/>

his ears bleed. Residents later threatened the father for speaking publicly about his son's abuse at the hands of his teachers, telling him they would kill his family should he continue to do so.<sup>268</sup>

On November 22, a group of upper-caste men kidnapped a Dalit youth after offering him a cigarette. He was taken to the house of one of the men, where the men punched him and beat him with shoes, threatened him with a gun, forced him to strip, and finally forced him to touch one of their feet.

In December, a family based in Haryana kidnapped and tortured a ten-year-old Dalit boy for 12 hours after accusing him of theft.<sup>269</sup> Throughout the year, Indian prison administrators compelled Dalits to clean toilets in Indian prisons.<sup>270</sup>

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268 <https://theobserverpost.com/they-put-a-scorpion-in-his-pants-8-year-old-dalit-boy-in-shimla-district-subjected-to-abuse-by-teachers/>

269 <https://www.hindutvawatch.org/haryana-dalit-minor-confined-tortured-over-suspicion-of-theft-in-palwal-10-booked-scroll/>

270 <https://www.thequint.com/opinion/manual-scavenging-indian-prison-caste-based-abuse>

## 9. Adivasis

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The ethnic forest-dwelling or tribal minorities in India, also collectively known as Adivasis, have lived in Indian forests for millennia. According to the 2011 census, the Adivasi community makes up a substantial minority population in India,<sup>271</sup> comprising up to 8.6% of the country's population. They have witnessed colossal injustices and land theft in the name of development and conservation.

In 2025, Adivasis continued to be subject to routine violence because of their status. According to the latest data from India's National Crime Records Bureau, crimes against Adivasis are up by 48.15%. The atrocities are highest in BJP-ruled Madhya Pradesh, where more than a dozen Adivasis were killed in 2025.<sup>272 273</sup>



Saraswati Oyam, an Adivasi woman, at a government hospital in Chhattisgarh after she stepped on an IED. Adivasi civilians say they are bearing grievous consequences from the Indian government's brutal anti-Naxalite drive, while the police deny any impact on civilians. (Photo: himalmag)

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271 <http://archive.indianexpress.com/news/scs-sts-form-25--of-population-says-census-2011-data/1109988/>

272 <https://www.telegraphindia.com/opinion/free-to-hurt-editorial-on-ncrb-data-showing-increasing-crimes-against-adivasis-and-dalits/cid/1986509> <https://www.outlookindia.com/national/crimes-against-women-dalits-to-rise-in-uapa-cases-ncrb-data-beyond-numbers-news-337023>

273 <https://inc.in/congress-sandesh/comment/escalating-atrocities-against-tribals-a-human-rights-crisis-in-madhya-pradesh>

In Madhya Pradesh's Indore, following the brutal rape of an Adivasi woman, communities protested to demand a police investigation, only to be shot at by local officers.<sup>274</sup> In spring and summer, the Indian government initiated Operation Kagar, whose mission was to suppress Maoist Naxalite groups by establishing paramilitary Central Reserve Police Force bases, drones, and satellite surveillance across Chhattisgarh. The operation has also had serious consequences for Adivasi civilians, with two reportedly killed in April and 228 Naxalites killed in 2025, compared with only 20 under Congress rule in 2023.<sup>275</sup> Adivasis have reported that many alleged Naxalites were in fact innocent civilians, calling into question the government-reported death toll.<sup>276</sup>

## 9.1 Legal Threats

Among the most significant ongoing threats to Adivasi livelihoods was the passage of the Forest (Conservation) Amendment Act, 2023. This modified existing legislation to allow the Indian government to seize forest land for projects related to national security and defense within a 100km radius of border territories, where many Adivasi communities live. Nearly 28% of India's forest, much of it biodiverse and ecologically sensitive, became vulnerable to government threats under the modified legislation.<sup>277</sup>

A 2025 case in Maharashtra's eastern Vidarbha region illustrates the threats Adivasis face under the new legislation. Previously protected under the Forest Conservation Act of 1980, which recognized community use of the land even in the absence of documented titles, Adivasis in the Zudpi Jungle now contend with restrictions that threaten their livelihoods. Villagers who had customarily grazed cattle in the Jungle freely must now seek formal permission from the collector's office before doing so. Restricted to grazing times between 10am and 2pm, they also may not raise sheep and goats as they had previously done.<sup>278</sup> In the future, they may simply lose the land.

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<sup>274</sup> <https://inc.in/congress-sandesh/comment/escalating-atrocities-against-tribals-a-human-rights-crisis-in-madhya-pradesh>

<sup>275</sup> <https://www.himalmag.com/politics/india-naxal-maoist-adivasi-bastar-chhattisgarh>

<sup>276</sup> <https://frontline.thehindu.com/the-nation/naxalism-chhattisgarh-amit-shah-maoists-bastar-security-forces-coal-mining-tribal-rights/article69050123.ece>

<sup>277</sup> <https://scroll.in/article/1054010/amendment-to-forest-conservation-act-leaves-28-of-indias-forest-cover-vulnerable>

<sup>278</sup> <https://thewire.in/rights/maharashtra-unrest-across-eastern-vidarbha-adivasi-communities-zudpi-jungle>

In August 2025, more than 150 Adivasi rights groups and civil society organizations demanded the withdrawal of another piece of newly introduced legislation that they said undermined the powers of gram sabhas (or tribal rights councils) under the Forest Rights Act, 2006. New administrative guidelines issued by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and other ministries move control over community lands into the hands of central government officials, rather than deferring to the hitherto constitutionally protected authority of Gram Sabhas.<sup>279</sup> According to the coalitions' complaint, "The entire mission has transformed the Forest Rights Act into a techno- managerial and bureaucratic exercise where the powers of gram sabhas have been circumvented by creation of parallel institutional structures."<sup>280</sup>

## 9.2 Discrimination

Adivasis of all religious persuasions continued to face discrimination, but Christian and Muslim Adivasis in particular bore the brunt of government-issued hate speech and threats from Hindu nationalist groups.

In Chhattisgarh, state police have colluded with the Hindu nationalist paramilitaries Bajrang Dal and Vishwa Hindu Parishad to persecute Adivasi Christians under the false pretext of preventing forced religious conversions. Between January and July 2025 alone, there were at least 53 reported cases of violence against predominantly Adivasi Christians in the state, most of them involving the Bajrang Dal or VHP, according to the Chhattisgarh-based community organisation Progressive Christian Alliance (PCA).<sup>281</sup> Throughout the state, Hindu nationalist groups, including one led by BJP leader Bhojraj Nag, have a history of exhuming the bodies of deceased Adivasi Christians and demanding that they be buried elsewhere.<sup>282</sup>

In August 2025, Hindu nationalist cow vigilantes brutally assaulted two elderly Christian Adivasi men after falsely accusing them of cattle smuggling. The victims were transporting their bulls and calves to a buyer to raise money for one victim's wife's medical treatment.<sup>283</sup>

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279 <https://theindiantribal.com/2025/08/25/gram-sabha-powers-being-undermined-tribal-rights-groups-allege/>

280 <https://theindiantribal.com/2025/08/25/gram-sabha-powers-being-undermined-tribal-rights-groups-allege/>

281 <https://www.news Laundry.com/2025/09/12/vandalism-assaults-exhumations-inside-the-hindutva-campaign-against-christian-adivasis-in-chhattisgarh>

282 <https://caravanmagazine.in/religion/christian-adivasis-chhattisgarh>

283 <https://www.hindutvawatch.org/in-telendihi-odisha-vigilantes-assault-elderly-christian-adivasis/>

BJP leaders repeatedly presented Adivasis as victims of decisions they had made deliberately, demonizing Muslim and Christian tribals by insisting they had been converted by force. On October 25, BJP leader Abhay Singh said in a speech that, "Adivasi sisters are being lured into religious conversion and are accepting Islam." In March 2025, BJP MLA and Minister Nagar Singh Chouhan alleged that Christian converts should never be considered Adivasis, accusing Christian Adivasis of claiming rights intended for tribals, and urging other Adivasis to compile lists of converts in their villages so that he could revoke their benefits.<sup>284</sup>

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<sup>284</sup> <https://www.hindutvawatch.org/bjp-minister-targets-christian-adivasis-and-calls-for-list-of-converts-to-revoke-benefits/>

# 10. Recommendations

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## 10.1 Recommendations for the United States Government

**1. Designate India as a Country of Particular Concern (CPC):** The U.S. Secretary of State should designate India as a Country of Particular Concern (CPC) under the Frank Wolf International Religious Freedom Act, consistent with the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF)'s repeated recommendations since 2020. The U.S. government should impose targeted sanctions and visa restrictions, including under the Global Magnitsky framework, on Indian government officials credibly implicated in serious human rights abuses, including unlawful killings, arbitrary detention, torture or ill-treatment, and enforced disappearances. In line with USCIRF recommendations, sanctions should include Indian intelligence and security officials, particularly those associated with India's external intelligence agency (RAW), for their alleged involvement in transnational repression, including the attempted assassination of a Sikh American lawyer on U.S. soil. The U.S. government should also sanction Indian officials who were found by the RCMP to be involved in campaigns of arson, homicide and extortion in Canada.

**2. Establish a whole-of-government response to transnational repression:** The United States should develop a coordinated interagency framework to prevent, investigate, and prosecute transnational repression targeting diaspora communities by the Indian state and its proxies. This framework should include:

- Specialized training and operational guidance for the Department of Justice, Department of State, and Department of Homeland Security on identifying and investigating foreign-directed intimidation, stalking, threats, cyber harassment, financial coercion, and influence operations.
- Empowering law enforcement to investigate proxy groups, front organizations, and informal networks operating in the United States on behalf of the Indian state, including those that are reportedly aligned with the Hindutva ideology.
- Clear reporting pathways and victim protection protocols for affected communities, including Sikhs, Muslims, Christians, journalists, and human rights defenders, especially since those who have reached out to local police and also the FBI have repeatedly heard back that there is no clear guidance on this issue.
- Systematic diplomatic escalation when foreign missions or officials are implicated in harassment or intimidation.

**3. Elevate human rights and religious freedom in U.S.-India relations:** Human rights, religious freedom, and democratic norms should be treated as core pillars of U.S.-India engagement, raised consistently and publicly in all high-level bilateral dialogues. The U.S. should articulate clear benchmarks, including:

- Ending misuse of anti-terror, financial, and sedition-like laws against peaceful dissent.
- Accountability for vigilante violence and hate crimes.
- Protection of journalists, students, lawyers, academics, and civil society organizations.

**4. Condition U.S.-India security and defense cooperation:** The United States should foreground human rights, religious freedom, and rule-of-law commitments in all current and forthcoming security and defense cooperation with India. The U.S. should apply this standard across major and expanding areas of defense engagement, including:

- Defense industrial collaboration and co-production initiatives (including jet-engine collaboration discussions and related advanced manufacturing partnerships).
- Procurement and operational integration of armed and intelligence/surveillance platforms, including drones and other ISR capabilities.
- Secure interoperability and intelligence cooperation, including secure communications and geospatial cooperation frameworks that deepen real-time operational coordination.
- Space, cyber, and other critical / emerging technology cooperation with security implications. Progress in these areas should be explicitly conditioned on measurable improvements, including:
  - Accountability for mob violence, vigilante attacks, and hate crimes targeting minorities.
  - Ending misuse of anti-terror, financial, and public-order laws against peaceful dissent and minority communities.
  - Safeguards against prolonged pretrial detention and meaningful protections for judicial independence.
  - Protection of journalists, students, lawyers, civil society organizations, and human rights defenders from harassment and reprisal.

5. The United States should strengthen and rigorously apply Leahy vetting and related safeguards across training, arms transfers, intelligence cooperation, and joint activities, and restrict cooperation with units credibly implicated in abuses until accountability is demonstrated.
6. The U.S. should apply robust end-use monitoring and oversight to defense exports and sensitive technologies to ensure they are not used to enable repression, unlawful surveillance, or targeting of minorities and dissenters.
7. The U.S. should state clearly that deepened defense integration and advanced technology cooperation cannot proceed independently of India's human rights obligations, and that continued democratic backsliding will result in delays, restrictions, recalibration, or suspension of relevant cooperation.

## **10.2 Recommendations for the United Nations System**

**1. Encourage coordinated engagement by UN Special Procedures:** UN Special Rapporteurs and Working Groups with relevant mandates such as freedom of religion or belief, minority issues, freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, human rights defenders, torture, arbitrary detention, and adequate housing should be encouraged to continue and deepen coordinated engagement on India, including through joint or complementary communications that examine patterns of abuse affecting minorities, dissenters, and civil society.

**2. Sustain attention to prolonged pretrial detention and denial of bail:** The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention should be encouraged to continue examining cases and patterns involving prolonged pretrial detention under national security laws, including the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, and to issue opinions and follow-up communications where detention appears arbitrary under international law. It should especially take up the cases such as that of Dr. Umar Khalid, and of the hundreds of Muslims arrested and in indefinite arbitrary detention because they were members of the Popular Front of India.

**3. Engage on punitive demolitions and housing rights concerns:** The Special Rapporteur on housing, in coordination with other relevant mandates, should be encouraged to engage with the Government of India on concerns related to punitive demolitions of homes and places of worship, collective punishment, and due process protections, including the impact on religious minorities and marginalized communities.

**4. India's Universal Periodic Review in 2027:** The UN Human Rights Council, in coordination with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), should consider organizing a preliminary consultation in 2026 with UN member states, UN Special Procedures mandate-holders, and independent civil society organizations to assess emerging human rights concerns in India and inform the preparatory phase of India's 2027 UPR. OHCHR should ensure that civil society — including organizations representing Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Dalits, journalists, and human rights defenders — has early and meaningful opportunities to contribute to stakeholder submissions, pre-sessions and informal briefings, and background documentation for the OHCHR compilation report. The UNHRC should encourage Special Rapporteurs and Working Groups with relevant mandates — such as freedom of religion or belief, minority issues, freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, human rights defenders, torture, arbitrary detention, and adequate housing — to provide thematic inputs or observations that may assist member states during the UPR review of India. In advance of the 2027 review, the UNHRC and OHCHR should encourage a focus on systemic patterns, including:

- Prolonged pretrial detention and denial of bail under national security laws,
- Vigilante violence and impunity,
- Punitive demolitions and collective punishment,
- Restrictions on civic space and reprisals against dissent,
- Discriminatory application of laws affecting religious and caste minorities. The UNHRC should encourage the use of mid-term reporting and follow-up mechanisms to track India's implementation of accepted UPR recommendations, with space for civil society input and independent assessment.

## **10.3 Recommendations for the European Union and European Governments**

- 1. Integrate human rights benchmarks into EU-India engagement:** The EU and its member states should incorporate clear human rights and religious freedom benchmarks into political dialogues, trade discussions, and strategic partnerships with India, accompanied by public reporting.
- 2. Use targeted accountability measures:** European governments should employ visa restrictions and other accountability tools against individuals credibly implicated in severe abuses where domestic remedies are absent.
- 3. Counter transnational repression in Europe:** EU member states should strengthen coordination among law enforcement and intelligence bodies to detect and disrupt transnational repression targeting Indian diaspora communities.
- 4. Support civil society and protection mechanisms:** Increase funding for documentation, legal aid, digital security, and protection pathways for at-risk activists, journalists, and minority leaders.

## **10.4 Recommendations for the Government of India**

### **1. Restore due process and end prolonged pretrial detention**

- Impose statutory limits on pretrial detention, including mandatory, time-bound judicial review at regular intervals, with a presumption of bail unless the prosecution demonstrates necessity and proportionality.
- Amend bail provisions under national security laws, including the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), to ensure that “prima facie” allegations alone cannot justify prolonged incarceration without trial.
- Establish clear timelines for commencement of trials in cases involving pretrial detention and require written justification by courts for delays.
- Provide effective remedies and compensation for individuals subjected to unlawful or excessively prolonged detention.

## **2. Reform draconian and overbroad legal frameworks**

- Amend or repeal provisions of UAPA that invert the presumption of innocence, permit indefinite pretrial detention, criminalize peaceful protest, association, or expression.
- Review and narrow the scope of financial, regulatory, and public-order laws used to target journalists, civil society organizations, and dissenters, ensuring transparent criteria for enforcement; independent oversight mechanisms, and meaningful avenues for appeal and judicial review.
- Repeal or substantially revise anti-conversion laws to prevent their use as tools of harassment against religious minorities and interfaith couples, including penalties for false or malicious complaints.

## **3. End impunity for vigilante violence and communal crimes**

Enact and enforce a comprehensive national anti-lynching and hate crime law that includes:

- Clear definitions of hate crimes and command responsibility,
- Mandatory registration of FIRs,
- Time-bound investigations,
- Witness and victim protection mechanisms,
- Victim compensation and rehabilitation.

● Issue binding directives to police and prosecutors to investigate and prosecute incitement, conspiracy, and organizing of communal violence, including when perpetrators are politically connected. Publish annual, disaggregated data on hate crimes, investigations, prosecutions, and convictions.

## **4. Halt collective punishment and punitive demolitions**

- Immediately prohibit the use of demolitions as a form of punishment, including in the aftermath of protests or communal incidents.
- Also establish binding national guidelines requiring advance notice, opportunity to be heard, independent review, and right to appeal before any demolition.

- Provide restitution, compensation, and reconstruction assistance to individuals whose homes or properties were demolished without due process. Publish disaggregated data on demolitions, including legal basis, notice provided, appeals filed, and outcomes.

## **5. Counter hate speech and incitement with accountability**

- Adopt and enforce clear standards of accountability for public officials and political leaders who engage in or incite hate speech or violence, including prompt disciplinary action, criminal prosecution where warranted, and transparent reporting on enforcement.
- Establish an independent mechanism to monitor and refer cases of severe online incitement and coordinated hate campaigns, while safeguarding legitimate expression and dissent.

## **6. Protect religious freedom and minority rights**

- Ensure equal protection of law for Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Dalits, and other marginalized communities in policing, prosecution, and judicial processes.
- Protect interfaith couples from harassment, violence, and arbitrary detention.
- Safeguard places of worship from attacks, vandalism, and state-enabled destruction, and ensure swift accountability when violations occur.

## **7. Restore and protect civic space**

- Drop retaliatory prosecutions against journalists, students, lawyers, academics, human rights defenders, and activists engaged in peaceful expression or assembly.
- End harassment, surveillance, and intimidation of civil society organizations and independent media. Establish independent oversight of investigative agencies to prevent political misuse. Protect the right to peaceful assembly and protest, including by limiting the use of preventive detention and blanket prohibitory orders.

## **8. Safeguard judicial independence and transparency**

- Ensure transparent, merit-based judicial appointments free from executive interference.

- Limit the use of sealed cover procedures and promote open justice. Strengthen internal judicial accountability mechanisms to address bias, delay, and denial of constitutional protections.

## **9. End transnational repression**

- Publicly commit to non-interference in diaspora communities abroad. Cease surveillance, intimidation, and proxy harassment of critics, journalists, activists, and minority leaders overseas.
- Cooperate fully with lawful investigations into overseas threats, violence, and assassination plots linked to Indian state actors.





## **Peace, Pluralism and Justice**

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