



Photo: Muhammed Shahamath/Maktoob



# HUMAN RIGHTS & RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN INDIA

**SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT** January – June 2026



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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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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Between January and June 2026, India's religious minorities faced an intensifying and well-documented pattern of persecution. Muslims, Christians, and other marginalized communities experienced mob lynchings, mass demolitions of places of worship, systematic voter disenfranchisement, hate speech by political leaders, and discriminatory legislation enacted by the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its allied governments across the country.

Every major international human rights monitor that reported during this period documented a sharp deterioration in conditions for minorities. The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) recommended India as a Country of Particular Concern for the seventh consecutive year and, in a first-of-its-kind move, called on the U.S. State Department to impose targeted sanctions against the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), India's largest Hindu supremacist paramilitary organization.<sup>1</sup> The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum ranked India fourth among 168 countries most at risk of mass violence against civilians.<sup>2</sup>

The period saw at least 13 Muslims killed in religiously motivated hate crimes in the first four months alone, with four killed by state actors.<sup>3</sup> The APCR (Association for Protection of Civil Rights) recorded 46 anti-Muslim hate crimes in just 18 days around Eid al-Adha alone, with three Muslims killed. An election-monitoring report by Diaspora in Action for Human Rights and Democracy (DAHRD), identified 432 AI-generated anti-Muslim posts during the Assam elections with a combined network reach of 407.4 million followers.<sup>4</sup> A separate study identified 523 Hindutva hate songs on YouTube, Spotify, Apple Music, and Meta's Music Library that directly threatened or incited violence against religious minorities.

On the ground, at least 23 mosques, shrines, and madrasas were demolished across six BJP-ruled states in just 45 days between May and June.<sup>5</sup> In West Bengal, the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process removed millions of names from electoral rolls, with

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1 <https://www.uscifr.gov/annual-reports>

2 <https://earlywarningproject.ushmm.org/countries/india>

3 <https://maktoobmedia.com/post?id=115464&slug=at-least-13-muslims-killed-in-hate-crimes-in-first-quarter-of-2026-four-by-state-actors-report>

4 <https://dahrd.org/report/assam-assembly-elections-monitoring-report-april-6-2026-pdf>

5 <https://muslimmirror.com/over-23-mosques-madrasas-eidgahs-and-dargahs-demolished-in-45-days-all-in-bjp-ruled-states/>



independent studies showing that Muslims comprised up to 95% of those deleted in some constituencies.<sup>6</sup> The Waqf Amendment Act resulted in the cancellation of over 31,000 waqf property registrations in Uttar Pradesh alone.<sup>7</sup> Maharashtra state cancelled the five percent reservation for Muslims in education and government jobs.<sup>8</sup>

India's democratic standing continued to erode. The V-Dem Institute classified India as an electoral autocracy for the ninth consecutive year, ranking it 105th out of 179 countries on the liberal democracy index.<sup>9</sup> Reporters Without Borders placed India at 157th out of 180 countries on its press freedom index, its lowest ranking ever.<sup>10</sup> Freedom House scored India 62 out of 100, placing it in the 'Partly Free' category.<sup>11</sup>

Anti-Muslim violence during religious holidays was particularly intense. During Ramadan, Muslims were attacked, arrested, and killed across multiple states. Around Eid al-Adha, the APCR documented 46 incidents of violence and harassment in just 18 days.<sup>12</sup>

This report provides a comprehensive and sourced account of the persecution of India's religious minorities during the first half of 2026. It draws on data from the independent fact-finding reports, international assessments, and news coverage from across the Indian and international press. The evidence presented here reinforces the urgent need for the international community to hold the Indian government accountable and to press for the protection of fundamental rights guaranteed under India's own constitution and its obligations under international human rights law.

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6 <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/95-of-deleted-voters-in-west-bengals-nandigram-sir-supplementary-list-are-muslims-study/>

7 <https://indiatomorrow.net/2026/05/31/registration-of-31328-waqf-properties-on-umeed-portal-cancelled-in-uttar-pradesh/>

8 <https://www.telegraphindia.com/india/maharashtra-cancels-5-muslim-quota-opposition-alleges-anti-minority-mindset/cid/2147917>

9 [https://www.v-dem.net/documents/43/v-dem\\_dr2026.pdf](https://www.v-dem.net/documents/43/v-dem_dr2026.pdf)

10 <https://rsf.org/en/index>

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

12 <https://maktoobmedia.com/post?id=115652&slug=apcr-records-46-anti-muslim-hate-crimes-around-eid-three-killed>

# INTERNATIONAL ASSESSMENTS

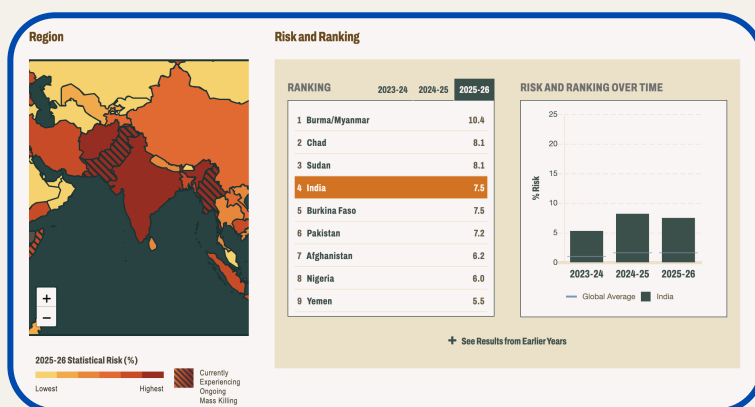
In the first half of 2026, an unprecedented convergence of international assessments documented the scale and severity of minority persecution in India. Seven leading global institutions independently flagged India for democratic backsliding, religious persecution, and atrocity risk, providing a body of evidence that is difficult to dismiss.

## U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom

The USCIRF's 2026 Annual Report, released on March 4, recommended India as a Country of Particular Concern (CPC) for the seventh consecutive year, citing systematic violations of religious freedom against Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, and Dalits. In a historic first, USCIRF recommended that the U.S. government impose targeted sanctions on the RSS and India's Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), including asset freezes and entry bans, for their role in enabling and tolerating severe violations of religious freedom.<sup>13</sup> India's Ministry of External Affairs rejected the findings, calling them 'motivated and biased.' In a separate statement in May, USCIRF renewed its calls to designate India a CPC, specifically highlighting escalating attacks on Christians.<sup>14</sup>

## U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum

The Early Warning Project of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum assessed India as the world's fourth most at-risk country for a new mass killing, estimating a 7.5% probability (approximately one in 13) that a new mass killing of civilians could begin in 2025 or 2026. Of the 168 countries assessed, India ranked first among those not already experiencing widespread large-scale violence. Only Myanmar, Chad, and Sudan ranked higher.<sup>15</sup>



2025-26 Statistical Risk Assessment for Intrastate Mass Killing | Courtesy: earlywarningproject.ushmm.org

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.uscifr.gov/annual-reports>

<sup>14</sup> <https://thewire.in/world/uscifr-renews-call-to-designate-india-country-of-particular-concern-over-increasing-attack-on-christians>

<sup>15</sup> <https://earlywarningproject.ushmm.org/countries/india>

## Human Rights Watch

In its World Report 2026 released on February 4, Human Rights Watch stated that India's BJP-led government had 'normalized violence against religious minorities, marginalized groups, and critics through discriminatory policies, hate speech, and politically motivated prosecutions.' The report documented unlawful deportations of Rohingya refugees, collective punishment through demolitions, and continued use of the UAPA to suppress dissent.<sup>16</sup> In June, HRW issued a separate report documenting that Bangladeshi border guards had foiled 21 attempts by India's BSF since June 1 to illegally push more than 200 people, including children, into Bangladesh.<sup>17</sup>

## Panel of Independent International Experts (PIIE)

In March 2026, the Panel of Independent International Experts (PIIE), comprising three internationally recognized investigators and jurists (Sonja Biserko, Marzuki Darusman, and Stephen Rapp), released a comprehensive report at King's College London examining alleged violations of international law against Muslims in Assam and Uttar Pradesh between 2022 and early 2026. The Panel found credible evidence of "widespread and systematic" human rights violations against Muslims in both states and stated there was a "reasonable basis" to believe that some actions could amount to international crimes, including persecution, torture, and deportation as crimes against humanity.<sup>18</sup>

## V-Dem Democracy Report

The V-Dem Institute of the University of Gothenburg classified India as an electoral autocracy for the ninth consecutive year (having entered this category in 2017). India ranked 105th out of 179 countries on the liberal democracy index, dropping five places from the prior year. The report cited the ruling BJP and Prime Minister Modi for deteriorating freedom of expression, media independence, harassment of journalists, and attacks on civil society and the political opposition.<sup>19</sup>

## Reporters Without Borders

India fell to 157th out of 180 countries in the 2026 World Press Freedom Index released on April 30, down from 151st in 2025. The report noted that press freedom is in crisis in what it called the world's largest democracy and observed that Hindu nationalist ideology had become a dominant force in Indian media, with many outlets openly advocating hatred of Muslims.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2026>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/news/2026/06/16/india-ethnic-bengalis-unlawfully-expelled>

<sup>18</sup> <https://piieindia.org/2026report/>

<sup>19</sup> <https://thewire.in/government/democracy-declines-globally-india-among-largest-electoral-autocracies-v-dem-report>

<sup>20</sup> <https://maktoobmedia.com/post?id=115363&slug=india-slips-to-157-in-world-press-freedom-index-report-flags-growing-islamophobic-media-narratives>

## India Hate Lab

The India Hate Lab's annual report, released on January 13 by the Center for the Study of Organized Hate in Washington, D.C., documented 1,318 in-person hate speech events targeting religious minorities across 21 states during 2025. Muslims were targeted in 98% of all events. Anti-Christian hate speech rose 41%, with 162 events recorded. A total of 1,164 incidents (88%) took place in BJP-governed states, a 25% increase from the 931 incidents recorded in such states in 2024. The top individual perpetrators included Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami (71 speeches), AHP chief Pravin Togadia (46), and BJP's Ashwini Upadhyay (35). The VHP and Bajrang Dal organized 289 events (22% of the total). The report found 276 speeches that called for the destruction of places of worship and 308 that included explicit calls for violence.<sup>21</sup>

## Other Notable Assessments

Freedom House scored India 62 out of 100, placing it in the 'Partly Free' category, noting further deterioration over the prior year.<sup>22</sup> The South Asia Justice Campaign documented at least 50 extrajudicial killings of Muslims in 2025, with 27 victims killed by Hindu extremist non-state actors and 23 by police, armed forces, or other state security personnel, including two children.<sup>23</sup>

The European Parliament adopted a resolution in January 2026 on EU-India relations raising concerns about violence, increasing nationalistic rhetoric, and divisive policies against minorities, and recommended upgrading the EU-India Human Rights Dialogue to a biannual, headquarters-level format. Amnesty International urged both the EU and India to prioritize human rights ahead of the January 27 EU-India Summit.<sup>24</sup>

A separate report by the Center for the Study of Organized Hate and the Internet Freedom Foundation raised concerns about India's AI governance model amid democratic backsliding, noting the potential for AI systems to disproportionately harm minorities and marginalized communities.<sup>25</sup>

In June, a report identified 523 Hindutva hate songs across YouTube, Spotify, Apple Music, and Meta's Music Library that violated the platforms' content policies by promoting hatred, dehumanization, and incitement to violence against Muslims and Christians. More than half of the songs directly threatened or incited violence against religious minorities.<sup>26</sup>

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21 <https://www.indiahatelab.com/2026/01/13/hate-speech-events-in-india-2025/>

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

23 <https://southasiajusticecampaign.org/ipt2025/>

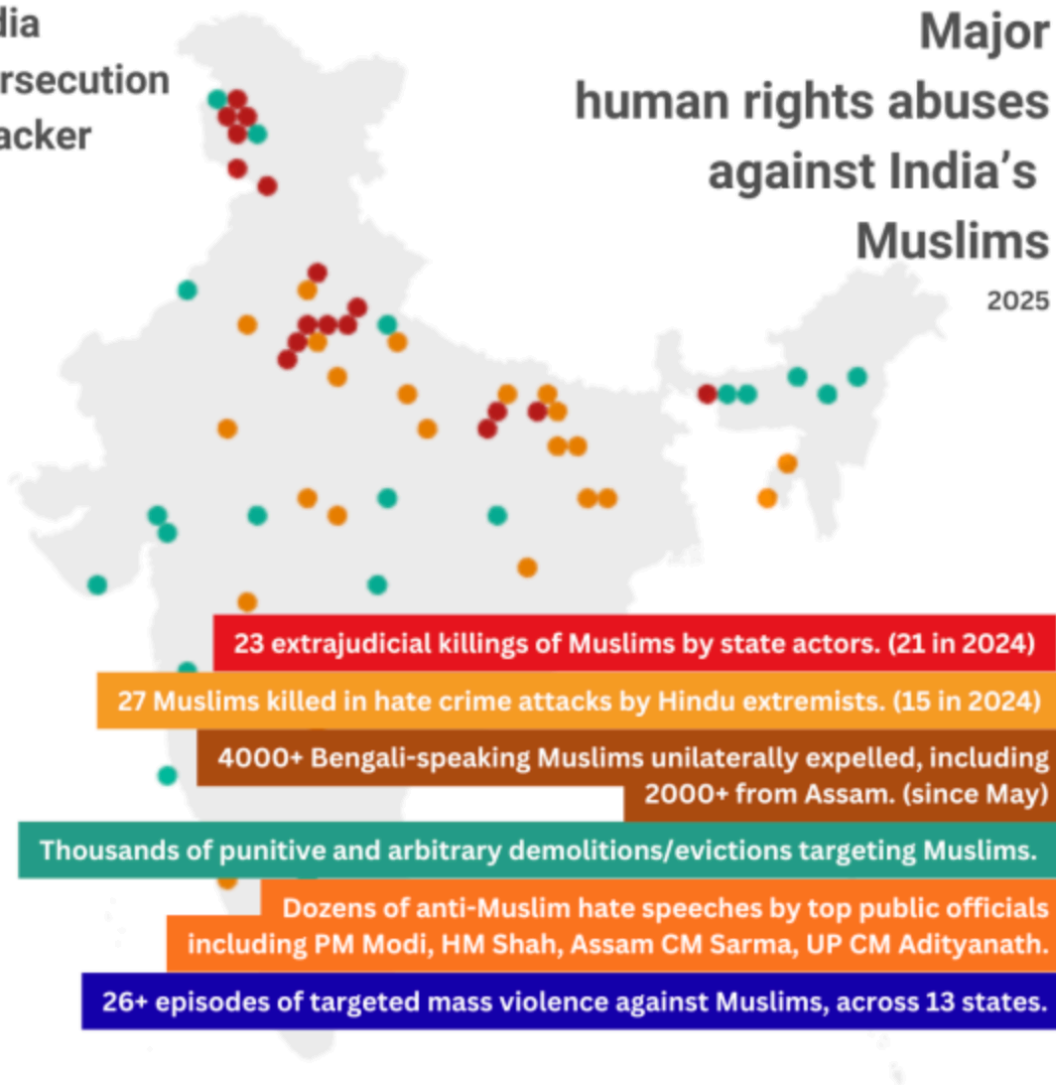
24 <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2026/01/eu-india-crucial-partners-must-prioritize-human-rights-at-forthcoming-summit/>

25 <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/report-flags-risks-to-minorities-privacy-as-india-hosts-ai-impact-summit-2026/>

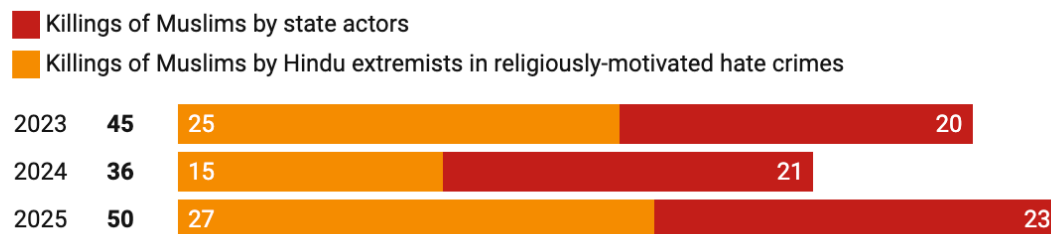
26 <https://maktoobmedia.com/post?id=115728&slug=report-maps-indias-hindutva-hate-music-industry-flags-523-songs-across-big-tech-platforms>

## India Persecution Tracker

## Major human rights abuses against India's Muslims 2025



## Extrajudicial killings of Muslims in India (2023-2025)



Courtesy: maktoobmedia.com



# MOB VIOLENCE AND EXTRAJUDICIAL KILLINGS

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Mob violence against Muslims remained pervasive throughout the first half of 2026. India Persecution Tracker data, published by the South Asia Justice Campaign, showed that at least 13 Muslims, including two women, a 15-year-old boy, and a 65-year-old man, were killed in religiously motivated hate crimes in the first four months alone, with four killed by state actors.<sup>27</sup> Victims were targeted on the basis of their religious identity, often over fabricated accusations of theft, cattle smuggling, or interfaith relationships.

## Mob Lynchings

In January, 45-year-old Pappu Ansari, a cattle transporter from Jharkhand's Godda, was killed by a mob of 20 to 25 people near the Bihar border. According to the FIR filed by his wife, the attackers stopped his vehicle, asked his name, and after confirming he was Muslim, assaulted him with an axe, arrows, and sharp weapons. His brother alleged that the mob stripped him to identify his religion and beat him to death while saying "he is a Muslim, kill him." Ansari possessed valid documents for the legal transport of cattle.<sup>28</sup>

In Bihar's Darbhanga, 65-year-old Abdul Salam was killed after he objected to Islamophobic slurs by a group of young men.<sup>29</sup> In Bihar's Madhubani in early March, a Muslim woman named Roshan Khatoon was tied to a pole and beaten to death by a mob allegedly led by Manu Singh, the son of the village head, after she sought resolution of a local dispute.<sup>30</sup> Later that month, on March 24, Hasan Raza Khan, 32, was lynched on a state highway in Rohtas district, Bihar. His hands and legs were tied, and he was dragged and beaten in public view. His wife, Reshma Khatoon, subsequently died by suicide along with her two children in the days that followed. The attack reportedly originated from a land dispute that escalated along communal lines.<sup>31</sup>

In Meghalaya's West Garo Hills in March, two Bengali Muslim men were killed during communal violence linked to tensions over non-tribal candidates contesting the Garo

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27 <https://southasiajusticecampaign.org/ip2026-1>

28 <https://theobserverpost.com/they-stripped-him-identified-him-as-muslim-then-killed-him-man-lynched-on-cattle-theft-suspicion-in-jharkhand-family-alleges-hate-crime/>

29 <https://maktoobmedia.com/post?id=113853&slug=bihar-65-year-old-muslim-man-killed-after-objecting-to-anti-muslim-remarks-four-arrested>

30 <https://maktoobmedia.com/post?id=113822&slug=muslim-woman-dies-after-mob-violence-led-by-village-heads-son-in-bihars-madhubani>

31 <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/patna/after-husbands-lynching-woman-dies-by-suicide-in-rohtas/articleshow/129934464.cms>

Hills Autonomous District Council elections. The violence underscored the vulnerability of Bengali-speaking Muslim communities to ethnic targeting.<sup>32</sup>

In April, three Muslim men, identified as Saifullah, Ajbür, and Enamul Haque, were beaten to death by a mob in Nagaon district, Assam, after being accused of dacoity. The attack occurred around 2 a.m. in the village of Kathpara, days before the Assam state elections, during a period of intensified anti-Muslim rhetoric by the ruling BJP.<sup>33</sup> On May 21, two more Muslim men from Morigaon district were lynched by a mob in Sonitpur, Assam, over allegations of cattle theft.<sup>34</sup>

In June, three Muslim men were killed across India within five days. In Delhi, 26-year-old Arbaaz was stabbed to death on the day of Eid.<sup>35</sup> In Bihar's Siwan, 25-year-old Shahzad Ali was dragged from his home, tied to a tree, and beaten to death. Police acted only after media pressure, eventually arresting five accused and suspending an officer for negligence.<sup>36</sup> In Madhya Pradesh, 24-year-old Ali Khan was dragged off a train at midnight by a mob chanting religious slogans and beaten to death following a seat dispute with a man claiming ties to a right-wing group.<sup>37</sup>



Shahzad Ali lynched to death in Siwan | Photo: The Observer Post

32 <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/two-bengali-muslim-men-killed-in-meghalaya-during-violence-over-non-tribal-candidates-in-ghadc-polls/>

33 <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/three-muslim-men-killed-in-mob-attack-over-suspected-dacoity-in-assams-nagaon/>

34 <https://maktoobmedia.com/post?id=111546&slug=mob-kills-45-year-old-muslim-man-after-accusing-him-of-cattle-theft-in-jharkhand>

35 <https://www.thequint.com/news/politics/muslim-man-stabbed-in-delhi-outcry-against-goats-price-for-celebrating-eid-al-adha>

36 <https://theobserverpost.com/bihar-family-demands-justice-after-siwan-youth-shahzad-ali-lynched-says-elder-brother-was-also-killed-months-earlier/>

37 <https://theobserverpost.com/mp-24-year-old-ali-khan-beaten-to-death-after-train-seat-dispute/>

Also in June, 71-year-old Sheikh Shah Alam was beaten to death by a group of BJP workers in West Bengal's Hooghly district, as part of a documented pattern of post-election violence carried out by local BJP supporters against Muslims perceived as sympathizers of the opposition Trinamool Congress. The mob gathered outside his home and attacked him with bamboo sticks, bricks, and iron rods.<sup>38</sup>

In Delhi's Nand Nagri in May, a Muslim man was shot dead after rushing to rescue his teenage son from a group that was reportedly assaulting him over his religious identity.<sup>39</sup>

## Cow Vigilantism

Cow vigilante violence persisted as a tool of communal terror throughout the reporting period. In Rajasthan, 28-year-old truck driver Aamir was shot dead near Bhiwadi on March 2 while transporting fruit to Delhi. His family reported that cow vigilantes affiliated with the Bajrang Dal rammed his pickup truck and shot him in the head.<sup>40</sup>

In Siwan, Bihar in May, Hindu extremist cow vigilantes brutally assaulted three Muslim men over suspicion of transporting beef.<sup>41</sup> In Assam's Patharkandi in June, two Muslim youths aged 17 and 18 were attacked by a Hindu mob and shot at with an air gun over allegations of cattle theft, although they had simply been searching for their stray cattle.<sup>42</sup> In Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh, police shot at and arrested two Muslim men allegedly involved in cow slaughter.<sup>43</sup>

In Bihar's Gopalganj in January, a Muslim man was tied to a pole and publicly beaten on suspicion of carrying beef.<sup>44</sup> In Pune, police booked self-styled cow vigilantes for allegedly forcing a Muslim truck driver to eat cow dung. An elderly Muslim man was beaten in Jhalawar, Rajasthan, after being accused of eating beef and branded a 'Rohingya and Bangladeshi infiltrator'.<sup>45</sup>

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38 <https://maktoobmedia.com/post?id=115737&slug=71-year-old-muslim-man-dies-after-assault-by-bjp-workers-in-wbs-hooghly-family-demands-arrests>

39 <https://www.thequint.com/news/politics/he-went-to-save-his-son-but-they-shot-him-dead-inside-a-hate-crime-delhi-nand-nagri>

40 <https://thewire.in/communalism/rajasthan-young-man-killed-as-cow-vigilantes-clash-with-men-transporting-cattle>

41 <https://muslimmirror.com/mob-violence-in-bihar-cow-vigilantes-attack-three-muslim-men-amid-rising-hindutva-vigilantism/>

42 <https://maktoobmedia.com/post?id=115647&slug=two-muslim-youths-attacked-by-hindu-mob-in-assams-patharkandi-shot-at-with-air-gun-over-alleged-cattle-theft>

43 <https://theobserverpost.com/two-men-arrested-in-forest-shootout-over-illegal-cow-slaughter-one-injured-bareilly-police/>

44 <https://clarionindia.net/muslim-man-tied-to-pole-thrashed-in-gopalganj-over-alleged-beef/>

45 <https://maktoobmedia.com/post?id=111433&slug=rajasthan-elderly-man-beaten-in-aklera-called-rohingya-bangladeshi-shows-video>

Murder-accused cow vigilante leader Monu Manesar was released from jail after the Rajasthan High Court granted bail. Manesar is the prime accused in the 2023 murders of two Muslim men, Junaid and Nasir, who were kidnapped, brutally beaten, and then set on fire by cow vigilantes in Haryana. He was welcomed by supporters with garlands and drumbeats.<sup>46</sup>

## Communal Assaults and Public Humiliation

In January, Bajrang Dal militants stormed the birthday celebration of a nursing student at a cafe in Uttar Pradesh's Bareilly, assaulted guests, and raised slogans accusing two Muslim boys of 'love jihad.'<sup>47</sup> In Tripura's Agartala, a Muslim rickshaw puller was assaulted, partially buried in sand, and nearly set on fire.<sup>48</sup> A Muslim labourer in Bihar's Madhubani was assaulted after being labelled a 'Bangladeshi.'

In April, a Muslim youth in Uttar Pradesh's Bareilly was assaulted, humiliated, and forced to chant Hindu slogans.<sup>49</sup> A Muslim man was brutally beaten by a group of five men on a train near Hyderabad because he was 'visibly Muslim,' wearing a skullcap and a beard.

In June, the pattern escalated further. In Shimla, two Muslim men were paraded through the streets and publicly humiliated by a VHP-linked mob.<sup>50</sup> In Dehradun, members of the VHP and Bajrang Dal entered a shoe showroom and pasted 'Jihadi' labels on Muslim employees.<sup>51</sup> In Sultanpur, Uttar Pradesh, two Muslim youths were assaulted and forced to chant 'Jai Shri Ram.'<sup>52</sup> In Siddharthnagar, a young Muslim man was stopped on a road, asked his name, and then allegedly stripped and beaten on his private parts.<sup>53</sup> In Lakhimpur Kheri, an elderly Muslim hawker was forced to chant 'Jai Shri Ram.'<sup>54</sup>

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46 <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/nasir-junaid-murder-case-accused-monu-manesar-receives-grand-welcome-in-gurugram-village-after-bail/>

47 <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/birthday-party-at-bareilly-cafe-turns-violent-after-bajrang-dal-disruption-over-love-jihad-accusation/>

48 <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/muslim-rickshaw-puller-assaulted-partially-buried-in-sand-set-on-fire-by-hindutva-men-in-agartala/>

49 <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/bareilly-muslim-youth-assaulted-humiliated-forced-to-chant-hindutva-slogans-main-accused-arrested/>

50 <https://muslimmirror.com/two-muslim-youths-publicly-humiliated-by-vhp-linked-mob-on-shimla-streets/>

51 <https://maktoobmedia.com/post?id=115499&slug=vhp-bajrang-dal-members-paste-jihadi-slips-on-muslim-employees-at-metro-store-in-dehradun>

52 <https://maktoobmedia.com/post?id=115707&slug=two-muslim-youth-assaulted-forced-to-chant-jai-shree-ram-in-uttar-pradesh-sultanpur>

53 <https://theobserverpost.com/they-asked-my-name-then-attacked-young-muslim-man-allegedly-stripped-beaten-on-private-parts-after-being-stopped-on-road-in-ups-siddharthnagar/>

54 <https://theobserverpost.com/elderly-muslim-hawker-allegedly-forced-to-chant-jai-shri-ram-in-ups-lakhimpur-kheri/>



In Maharashtra's Parli, a 36-year-old Muslim man was murdered by two of his friends following a monetary dispute, and his body was dumped on railway tracks to stage it as a suicide.<sup>55</sup> In Bihar, a Muslim man died after being sent to jail in a passport fraud case. His family alleged torture and claimed he was branded a 'terrorist.'<sup>56</sup>

In Pratapgarh, Uttar Pradesh, an elderly Muslim hawker, Maqsood Ali, was assaulted, robbed, and subjected to communal slurs. His attacker pulled his beard, snatched his skullcap, beat him with sticks and rods, and told him to 'Go to Pakistan.'<sup>57</sup>

## Violence During Ramadan, Ram Navami, and Eid

Ramadan 2026 was marked by multiple incidents of targeted violence against Muslims across several states, including Varanasi, Pune, Bhopal, Lucknow, Haryana, Bihar, Uttarakhand, and Meghalaya.<sup>58</sup> A mosque in Haryana's Palwal was set on fire during the fasting month.<sup>59</sup> Four Muslim youths were attacked after offering prayers in Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh.



Photo: Aroop Mishra/The Quint

55 <https://foej.in/tauheed-khan-murder-case-parli-maharashtra-body-found-railway-track/>

56 <https://theobserverpost.com/they-called-him-a-terrorist-bihar-muslim-man-dies-after-being-sent-to-jail-in-passport-fraud-case-family-alleges-torture-and-bribery-demand/>

57 <https://muslimmirror.com/elderly-muslim-hawker-assaulted-and-robbed-in-pratapgarh-alleges-communal-abuse/>

58 <https://www.thequint.com/news/politics/firs-for-chicken-biryani-namaz-iftar-inside-rising-hate-crimes-this-ramzan>

59 <https://theobserverpost.com/mosque-set-on-fire-in-palwal-during-ramadan/>

Ram Navami processions across several states in April were marked by provocative slogans, anti-Muslim displays, and targeted attacks on Muslims and places of worship, documented through widely circulated online videos.<sup>60</sup>

Around Eid al-Adha, the Association for Protection of Civil Rights (APCR) documented 46 incidents of violence, intimidation, hate speech, and harassment targeting Muslims between May 11 and May 29. Three Muslims were killed during this period.<sup>61</sup> In Mumbai, Hindu extremists brought a pig into a housing society on Mira Road to protest Muslim families keeping goats for sacrifice. Similar protests erupted across Mumbai neighbourhoods.<sup>62</sup> In Ghaziabad, BJP Mayor Sunita Dayal posted a video alleging she had caught two Muslim children carrying meat, after which police arrested three men linked to a local madrasa.<sup>63</sup>



Mosque set on fire in Palwal | Photo: The Observer Post

60 <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/ram-navami-processions-turn-flashpoints-across-states-videos-show-targeting-of-muslims-mosques/>

61 <https://maktoobmedia.com/post?id=115652&slug=apcr-records-46-anti-muslim-hate-crimes-around-eid-three-killed>

62 <https://maktoobmedia.com/post?id=115567&slug=hindutva-groups-protest-eid-sacrifice-plans-in-mumbais-mira-road-bring-pig-into-housing-society>

63 <https://maktoobmedia.com/post?id=115572&slug=ghaziabad-mayor-films-minors-shares-video-accusing-them-of-carrying-meat-police-arrest-three-linked-to-childrens-madrasa>



In Bijnor, Uttar Pradesh, 40 people including 15 named individuals were booked for offering prayers on a road outside an overcrowded Eidgah on Eid al-Adha.<sup>64</sup> In Fatehpur, Uttar Pradesh, two Muslim men were detained over a WhatsApp Eid al-Adha status that allegedly featured a cow image.<sup>65</sup> An elderly Muslim man in Meerut was arrested on Eid day for making critical remarks about the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister.<sup>66</sup>

Ahead of Eid al-Adha, the West Bengal government imposed stringent restrictions on cattle slaughter and made official certification mandatory.<sup>67</sup>

## Extrajudicial Killings by State Actors

State actors were directly responsible for killing of Muslims during the reporting period. Of the 13 Muslims killed in religiously motivated hate crimes in the first four months alone, four were killed by state actors, including police personnel, according to South Asia Justice Campaign.<sup>68</sup> In Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh, police shot at and arrested two Muslim men allegedly involved in cow slaughter. In Gujarat, 70-year-old Zaheer Shaikh died in police custody in connection with a cattle slaughter case in May, with his family alleging physical assault and humiliation during detention.<sup>69</sup>

In January 2026, the Allahabad High Court separately rebuked Uttar Pradesh Police for the illegal practice of staged "half encounters," warning that such shootings of accused persons cannot be justified under the rule of law.<sup>70</sup>

In February 2026, the UN Special Rapporteur on torture and the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions warned of 'systemic' policing failures in India, citing credible information of a 'pervasive pattern of excessive and often lethal use of force by police', particularly in Uttar Pradesh and Assam, with Muslims, Dalits and Adivasis disproportionately affected.<sup>71</sup>

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64 <https://theobserverpost.com/up-40-booked-15-named-for-allegedly-offering-namaz-on-road-outside-eidgah-on-eid-al-adha/>

65 <https://clarionindia.net/two-muslims-detained-in-ups-fatehpur-over-whatsapp-status-with-cow-image>

66 <https://muslimmirror.com/up-elderly-muslim-man-arrested-for-calling-yogi-and-modi-goons/>

67 <https://maktoobmedia.com/post?id=115469&slug=days-before-eid-al-adha-west-bengal-bans-public-slaughter-of-animals-mandates-certificates>

68 <https://southasiajusticecampaign.org/ipt2026-1/>

69 <https://maktoobmedia.com/post?id=115527&slug=ahmedabad-70-year-old-muslim-man-dies-after-cattle-slaughter-arrest-son-alleges-they-killed-my-father>

70 <https://theobserverpost.com/half-encounters-are-illegal-allahabad-high-court-slams-up-police-for-shooting-accused-in-the-legs/>

71 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2026/02/india-un-experts-warn-systemic-policing-failures-over-reports-deaths-and>

# DEMOLITIONS AND DESTRUCTION OF RELIGIOUS HERITAGE

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The systematic demolition of Muslim-owned property, places of worship, and cultural heritage sites accelerated dramatically during the first half of 2026. What rights groups and international organizations have termed 'bulldozer justice' expanded from isolated punitive actions into a coordinated campaign spanning multiple BJP-governed states.

## Demolition Drives Across States

Despite a landmark Supreme Court ruling on November 13, 2024 that categorically prohibited punitive demolitions and declared that "the executive cannot become a judge and demolish properties," state-led demolition drives targeting Muslim homes, mosques, madrasas, shrines, and graveyards continued and intensified across BJP-ruled states during the first half of 2026.<sup>72</sup>



Demolitions near century-old mosque at Turkman Gate | Photo: Muhammed Shahamath/ Maktoob

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<sup>72</sup> <https://www.scobserver.in/journal/bulldozer-demolitions-remind-of-a-lawless-ruthless-state-of-affairs-declares-supreme-court-as-it-issues-pan-india-guidelines/>

In January, officials in Delhi carried out a demolition drive near the century-old Faiz-e-Elahi Mosque in the Turkman Gate area and used tear gas and batons against residents who protested.<sup>73</sup> In Assam's Sonitpur, around 1,200 homes of Bengali Muslim families were demolished.<sup>74</sup> In Sambhal, Uttar Pradesh, government bulldozers flattened a mosque and a madrasa.<sup>75</sup> In Shahjahanpur, Uttar Pradesh, a centuries-old mosque was partially razed.<sup>76</sup>

In March, nearly 500 homes were razed in Assam's Kamrup district in the Azara area. In Telangana, officials demolished a centuries-old shrine despite Waqf Board objections.<sup>77</sup> In Gujarat's Bharuch, three Muslim shrines were destroyed.<sup>78</sup>

In April, civic officials in Delhi demolished a Muslim family's house in Uttam Nagar after Hindu extremist groups staged protests linking the property to one of the accused in a murder case.<sup>79</sup>

In Varanasi, a road-widening demolition drive in the Dalmandi area razed over 60 buildings, with six mosques among the approximately 180 structures earmarked for removal.<sup>80</sup> A nearly 200-year-old mosque was separately demolished as part of a railway redevelopment project.<sup>81</sup>

In May, more than 100 houses in Mumbai's Darukhana were demolished, leaving families homeless ahead of monsoon.<sup>82</sup> In Delhi's Muslim-majority Jaitpur, bulldozers flattened several homes.<sup>83</sup>

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73 <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/they-fired-tear-gas-inside-our-homes-midnight-demolition-near-historic-turkman-gate-mosque-sparks-protests/>

74 <https://scroll.in/latest/1089853/assam-over-1200-bengali-muslim-homes-demolished-as-state-continues-eviction-drive>

75 <https://www.telegraphindia.com/india/up-bulldozer-action-razes-mosque-madrasa-in-sambhal-amid-hindutva-drive-backlash-prnt/cid/2141073>

76 <https://clarionindia.net/up-shahjahanpur-mosque-partially-razed-muslims-allege-hindutva-pressure-politics/>

77 <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/telangana-govt-under-fire-after-demolition-of-800-year-old-dargah-despite-waqf-board-objections/>

78 <https://clarionindia.net/dargah-two-mazars-bulldozed-in-gujarats-bharuch-muslim-question-timing-fairness/>

79 <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/delhi-municipal-corporation-demolishes-house-of-accused-in-uttam-nagar-murder-case/>

80 <https://theobserverpost.com/varanasi-dalmandi-demolition-drive-resumes-after-eid-al-adha-over-60-buildings-razed-so-far/>

81 <https://theobserverpost.com/200-year-old-mosque-demolished-in-varanasi-during-railway-redevelopment-drive/>

82 <https://maktoobmedia.com/post?id=115483&slug=over-100-homes-demolished-in-mumbais-darukhana-residents-launch-indefinite-sit-in-protest>

83 <https://clarionindia.net/bulldozers-flatten-several-homes-in-muslim-majority-jaitpur-area-of-delhi/>



In Jammu's Sidhra, dozens of homes belonging to Gujjar and Bakarwal tribal Muslim families were demolished.<sup>84</sup> In Mumbai's Bandra, a mosque on railway land was demolished, leading to clashes. Muslim families in Sambhal were ordered to vacate government housing.<sup>85</sup>

In June, over 100 homes in Surat's Nasir Nagar area were demolished with no government agency accepting responsibility.<sup>86</sup> In Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh, five buildings were bulldozed in the Muslim-majority Begum Bagh locality.<sup>87</sup>

## The 45-Day Demolition Wave

Between May and June 2026, at least 23 mosques, dargahs, eidgahs, madrasas, and a graveyard were demolished across six BJP-ruled states, including Delhi, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Haryana.<sup>88</sup>



Photo: Muslim Mirror

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84 <https://maktoobmedia.com/post?id=115526&slug=demolition-drive-in-jammus-sidhra-leave-dozens-of-tribal-muslim-families-homeless>

85 <https://clarionindia.net/selective-action-families-in-sambhal-ordered-to-vacate-govt-housing-units/>

86 <https://maktoobmedia.com/post?id=115689&slug=surat-eviction-row-reaches-high-court-after-over-100-homes-demolished-authorities-deny-role>

87 <https://clarionindia.net/mp-five-buildings-bulldozed-in-ujjains-begum-bagh-muslim-families-in-panic/>

88 <https://muslimmirror.com/over-23-mosques-madrasas-eidgahs-and-dargahs-demolished-in-45-days-all-in-bjp-ruled-states/>

Among the sites destroyed were the approximately 200-year-old Mangolpuri Dargah (Panch Peeran) in Delhi on May 6, the Ajgaib Shaheed Mosque in Varanasi on June 2, and the Masjid Mustafa Qadri in Sambhal on June 6. In Gujarat, three dargahs and a graveyard were razed on June 1. The Noorani Mosque in Jaipur was demolished on June 8, with 3,000 security personnel deployed and mobile internet suspended across parts of the city.<sup>89</sup> The nearly 1,000-year-old Masjid Ganj Shaheeda in Varanasi was served a railway demolition notice requiring vacating by June 20.<sup>90</sup>

In Sambhal, after a roughly 150-year-old mosque was demolished, police booked eight Muslim men, including a mosque caretaker, after claiming to have recovered 49 'I Love Muhammad' posters and a green flag inside the demolished structure, compounding the destruction with criminal prosecution.<sup>91</sup>

## Court-Ordered Targeting

A local revenue court in Uttar Pradesh's Sambhal district ordered the demolition of a mosque, a shrine, and several houses, while also imposing a fine of over \$700,000 on two local imams.<sup>92</sup> In Sitapur, another mosque was demolished following a court order, reigniting concerns over the judiciary's role in facilitating demolitions.<sup>93</sup>

In Madhya Pradesh, the High Court declared the Bhojshala-Kamal Maula Mosque complex in Dhar to be a temple and ended the longstanding arrangement allowing Muslim Friday prayers, directing the state to consider allotting alternate land for a mosque.<sup>94</sup>

## Communal Arson and Vandalism

In Tripura's Fatikroy in January, Muslim-owned homes, shops, and a mosque were set on fire by Hindu extremist groups despite police being present.<sup>95</sup>

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89 <https://maktoobmedia.com/post?id=115664&slug=heavy-police-presence-internet-curbs-as-45-year-old-mosque-demolished-in-jaipur>

90 <https://thehindustangazette.com/national/new-delhi/nearly-1000-year-old-varanasi-mosque-served-with-demolition-notice-asked-to-vacate-by-20-june-46238>

91 <https://maktoobmedia.com/post?id=115666&slug=sambhal-police-book-eight-muslims-after-recovering-i-love-muhammad-posters-from-demolished-mosque>

92 <https://maktoobmedia.com/public/post?id=114005&slug=up-court-orders-demolition-of-mosque-shrine-in-sambhal-village-imposes-nearly-%25e2%2582%25b97-crore-fine-on-imams>

93 <https://theobserverpost.com/sitapur-mosque-demolished-after-court-order/>

94 <https://theobserverpost.com/hindu-devotees-offer-prayers-at-bhojshala-kamal-maula-mosque-complex-after-high-court-ends-friday-namaz-arrangement/>

95 <https://maktoobmedia.com/public/post?id=111663&slug=police-watched-silently-muslim-homes-shops-mosque-set-ablaze-by-hindutva-group-in-tripuras-fatikroy>



In Tripura's Dhalai district, a mosque was desecrated with liquor bottles, a 'Jai Shri Ram' threat note, and a Bajrang Dal flag placed inside the premises.<sup>96</sup> In Telangana's Jalalpur village, a mosque was vandalized and copies of the Quran desecrated.<sup>97</sup> Communal violence rocked Madhya Pradesh's Jabalpur with stone-pelting and vandalism, prompting police to fire teargas.<sup>98</sup>

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96 <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/mosque-desecrated-in-tripura-liquor-bottles-jai-shri-ram-threat-note-bajrang-dal-flag-found/>

97 <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/mosque-vandalised-quran-copies-desecrated-in-telanganas-jalalpur-village-police-register-case/>

98 <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/communal-clash-erupts-in-mps-jabalpur-residents-allege-provocation-police-bias-against-muslims/>

# ELECTORAL DISENFRANCHISEMENT

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One of the most consequential developments of the first half of 2026 was the mass disenfranchisement of Muslim voters through the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process, primarily in West Bengal but also affecting Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, and Assam. The scale and demographic targeting of voter deletions raised grave concerns about the integrity of Indian elections.

## The SIR Process in West Bengal

The SIR process in West Bengal removed millions of names from electoral rolls ahead of the state assembly elections in April 2026. The Supreme Court allowed the Election Commission to bar nearly two million voters with pending appeals, rejecting the state's plea to delay the freeze on voter lists.<sup>99</sup>



People wait to appeal before a tribunal over issues related to the SIR in Murshidabad | Photo: PTI

Independent analysis by the Kolkata-based Sabar Institute found stark demographic disparities. In Nandigram, Muslims constituted 95.5% of those whose names were deleted

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<sup>99</sup> <https://article-14.com/post/ahead-of-west-bengal-polls-2-million-voters-are-excluded-from-electoral-rolls-with-supreme-court-permission-69d4781a25a5f>

despite making up approximately 25% of the local population.<sup>100</sup> In Murshidabad, 432 names were removed from a single Muslim-majority booth in Suti.<sup>101</sup> In Raiganj, one booth reported the exclusion of 115 Muslim voters out of 116. In Basirhat, all 340 Muslim voters from a single booth were removed. Even a Booth Level Officer, Shafiul Alam, found his own family members' names deleted.<sup>102</sup>

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee accused the BJP of attempting to rig the elections, alleging that centrally deployed security forces and election observers were operating at the BJP's direction.<sup>103</sup> Following the elections, the BJP won 207 of 294 seats, and evidence emerged that in at least 105 seats the margin of victory was lower than the number of deleted voters.<sup>104</sup>

## Deaths Linked to Voter Deletions

At least three persons whose names were placed under SIR adjudication died by suicide within 48 hours of the publication of revised voter rolls. In Malda, a 43-year-old woman died by suicide upon discovering that her name had been marked as 'under adjudication.' The Election Commission announced that 500,000 names had been deleted from West Bengal's rolls.<sup>105</sup>

## Voter Deletions in Other States

In Uttar Pradesh, the draft electoral roll proposed the deletion of approximately 28 million voters, nearly 19% of the state's electorate.<sup>106</sup> In Meerut, residents discovered an attempt to remove nearly 200 names, most of them Muslim.<sup>107</sup> In Gujarat's Somnath, more than 15,600 applications were filed in bulk to delete voters, with the majority targeting the Muslim community.<sup>108</sup>

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100 <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/95-of-deleted-voters-in-west-bengals-nandigram-sir-supplementary-list-are-muslims-study/>

101 <https://theobserverpost.com/murshidabad-voter-list-row-432-names-deleted/>

102 <https://theobserverpost.com/west-bengal-voter-list-row-minorities-hit-hard/>

103 <https://www.thehindu.com/elections/west-bengal-assembly/mamata-accuses-bjp-of-trying-to-rig-bengal-elections-alleges-central-forces-acting-at-its-behest/article70919200.ece>

104 <https://www.isas.nus.edu.sg/papers/west-bengal-assembly-election-the-bjps-wave-overwhelms-the-tmc/>

105 <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/west-bengal-sir-three-including-two-muslims-die-by-suicide-one-dies-of-shock-after-names-marked-under-adjudication-complaints-unheard/>

106 <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/major-conspiracy-opposition-flags-mass-disenfranchisement-as-2-89-crore-voters-face-deletion-in-up-sir/>

107 <https://theobserverpost.com/declared-dead-while-alive-attempt-to-remove-200-muslim-voters-names-triggers-tension-in-meerut/>

108 <https://theobserverpost.com/over-15600-voter-deletion-requests-filed-in-gujarats-somnath-muslims-largely-targeted-report/>

In Etawah, Uttar Pradesh, a Booth Level Officer alleged he was assaulted and threatened by a man claiming to be a BJP office-bearer, who pressured him to remove Muslim voters. When the officer refused, the man allegedly beat him, snatched official documents, and broke his mobile phone.<sup>109</sup> In Assam, over one million voter names were identified for deletion.<sup>110</sup>

## Post-Election Consequences

The BJP government in West Bengal, moved within weeks to dismantle the state's minority welfare system. Days after taking office in May, it cut the state's quota for Other Backward Classes, a constitutional category that guarantees access to reserved government jobs and university places, from 17 percent to 7 percent, and removed 77 communities from the eligibility list, all of them Muslim.<sup>111</sup>

In its first budget, presented on June 22, the government cut funding for the department responsible for minority affairs and madrasa education by 62 percent, from approximately 650 million US dollars to 250 million. The state scholarship programme for low-income minority students was reduced from roughly 84 million dollars to 28 million. General minority welfare funding fell from about 12 million dollars to 2 million.<sup>112</sup>

Voters removed during the electoral roll revision faced compounding exclusion. On May 11, state minister Agnimitra Paul announced that those deleted from the rolls, including people whose appeals were still pending, would no longer receive state welfare benefits.<sup>113</sup> The government subsequently confirmed that they would be denied subsidised food rations under the state's main food security programme.<sup>114</sup>

On May 15, police intervened in predominantly Muslim neighbourhoods of Kolkata to stop Friday prayer gatherings that had been held on roadsides for decades.<sup>115</sup> A notification issued days before Eid al-Adha, banned public animal slaughter. Ahead of Muharram celebrations, police deployed closed-circuit cameras and drones over Muslim-majority areas.<sup>116</sup> The government also made the singing of Vande Mataram, the national song, mandatory in all madrasas.

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109 <https://theobserverpost.com/up-etawah-blo-assaulted-for-refusing-to-remove-muslim-voters-files-police-complaint/>

110 <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/over-10-lakh-names-identified-for-deletion-in-assam-electoral-roll-revision/>

111 <https://lawbeat.in/news-updates/west-bengal-assembly-passes-obc-amendment-bills-removes-77-muslim-communities-from-list-1607819>

112 <https://madhyamamonline.com/india/bengal-cuts-minority-affairs-budget-by-62-in-2026-27-1532147>

113 <https://scroll.in/latest/1092781/bengal-persons-excluded-in-sir-will-not-get-welfare-benefits-says-bjp-government>

114 <https://maktoobmedia.com/post?id=115646&slug=west-bengal-to-exclude-sir-deleted-voters-from-ration-benefits>

115 <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2026/05/29/tqqp-m29.html>

116 <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/police-no-permission-for-new-muharram-procession/articleshow/131976069.cms>



# TREATMENT OF ROHINGYA AND BENGALI-SPEAKING MUSLIMS

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The persecution of Rohingya refugees and Bengali-speaking Muslims in India continued during the first half of 2026, characterized by unlawful deportations, targeted violence, and mass evictions.

Human Rights Watch documented that India unlawfully expelled scores of Rohingya refugees, including at least 192 individuals deported to Bangladesh despite holding UNHCR registration.

In June, HRW issued a separate report documenting that Indian Border Security Force personnel had attempted to push more than 200 people, including children, into Bangladesh since June 1, 2026, with Bangladeshi border guards foiling 21 such attempts.<sup>117</sup>



Police detain alleged undocumented Bangladeshis in Ahmedabad, in 2025. | Photo: Amit Dave/Reuters

In January, Indian security forces illegally pushed 14 Bengali-speaking Muslims from Odisha into Bangladesh after labelling them as Bangladeshi nationals. All 14 possessed

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<sup>117</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/news/2026/06/16/india-ethnic-bengalis-unlawfully-expelled>

valid Indian identification documents, including Aadhaar cards, voter ID cards, ration cards, and land records. The group included four children and five women.<sup>118</sup>

In Delhi, a 14-year-old Rohingya refugee was stabbed to death during a fight.<sup>119</sup> In Assam, mass eviction drives continued to displace Bengali-speaking Muslim communities. Since Chief Minister Sarma took office in May 2021, more than 22,000 structures have been demolished and over 20,000 mostly Bengali-speaking Muslim families evicted.<sup>120</sup> An international panel of human rights experts concluded that the pattern of demolitions and violations in Assam may amount to persecution, apartheid, and preparation for ethnic cleansing as crimes against humanity.<sup>121</sup>

The PIIE report documented that between May 2025 and January 2026, at least 2,450 Bengali-speaking Muslims were expelled from Assam, constituting what the Panel characterized as deportation or forcible transfer as a crime against humanity. It further concluded that the pattern of forced evictions, home demolitions, and systematic stripping of citizenship and residence rights from Bengali-speaking Muslims in Assam constituted persecution and apartheid as crimes against humanity.<sup>122</sup>

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118 <https://maktoobmedia.com/post?id=111648&slug=bsf-illegally-pushed-14-bengali-speaking-muslims-from-odisha-into-bangladesh-families-allege>

119 <https://madhyamamonline.com/india/14-year-old-rohingya-refugee-stabbed-to-death-in-delhi-four-teenagers-held-1493109>

120 <https://interactive.thenewhumanitarian.org/stories/2026/03/24/india-assam-evictions-forced-displacement>

121 [https://piieindia.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/PIIE\\_2026.pdf](https://piieindia.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/PIIE_2026.pdf)

122 <https://piieindia.org/2026report/>

# HATE SPEECH, INCITEMENT, AND DISINFORMATION

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Hate speech and incitement to violence against religious minorities reached new levels during the first half of 2026. Multiple state and non-state actors made explicit calls for violence, economic boycotts, and social exclusion of Muslims and Christians. The weaponization of artificial intelligence for disinformation campaigns marked a troubling new frontier.

In February, the Assam BJP's official social media account posted a 17-second AI-generated video titled 'point blank shot' depicting Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma firing a rifle at AI-generated images of two Muslim men wearing skullcaps and beards. The video bore captions including 'No Mercy' and 'Foreigner Free Assam.' Congress called the video 'a call to mass violence and genocide.' The BJP subsequently removed its social media co-convenor, and police complaints were filed.<sup>123</sup>



The video showing Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma symbolically firing at Muslims

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<sup>123</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/2/9/ai-video-of-assam-cm-sarma-shooting-muslims-causes-outrage-in-india>



## AI-Driven Disinformation in Assam Elections

An election monitoring report published by the Netherlands-based Foundation Diaspora in Action for Human Rights and Democracy (DAHRD) documented what it described as the first industrialised artificial intelligence disinformation operation recorded in an Indian state election.<sup>124</sup> Analysing more than 2,400 posts circulated across 273 accounts between November 2025 and April 2026, the report identified 432 posts as AI-generated, together drawing 45.4 million views across a network with a combined reach of 407.4 million followers. A single Instagram account, politooons, accounted for 88 percent of all AI content views while operating without any disclosed affiliation, and the report found that the material circulated through anonymous and unattributed accounts that platforms neither labelled nor removed.

The content targeted the Bengali-speaking Muslim community and the opposition. It included 31 deepfakes of Assam Congress chief Gaurav Gogoi, among them fabricated footage of him reciting Pakistan's national anthem, and six fabricated intimate videos targeting his wife, a private citizen. A separate campaign of 68 posts presented evictions of Muslim families as governance achievements.<sup>125</sup>

The report's central finding was that anonymous online propaganda translated directly into law. The "land jihad" narrative circulated by unattributed AI accounts and amplified by state officials culminated in a February 2026 property law restricting land purchases by Muslims. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had publicly declared that four to five lakh "Miya" votes would be deleted, and 243,000 names were subsequently removed from Assam's rolls.<sup>126</sup>

## Calls for Violence and Genocide

Data compiled by independent news platform Muslim Mirror, which maintains a monthly hate crimes database drawing on mainstream media reporting, found at least ten verified instances of hate speech by public figures during the first six months of 2026.<sup>127</sup>



VHP leaders take an oath during a weapon distribution programme

<sup>124</sup> <https://dahrd.org/report/assam-assembly-elections-monitoring-report-april-6-2026-pdf/>

<sup>125</sup> <https://theobserverpost.com/dahrd-reveals-ai-campaign-against-muslims-in-assam/>

<sup>126</sup> <https://thehindustangazette.com/national/assam/ai-disinformation-voter-exclusion-marked-assam-polls-monitoring-report-44842>

<sup>127</sup> <https://muslimmirror.com/hate-crime-data-base-against-muslim-in-june-2026-bjp-ruled-states-account-for-99-of-the-incidents>



In January, BJP leader Suwendu Adhikari publicly called for India to "teach Bangladesh a lesson like Israel did in Gaza," a direct reference to what international bodies have characterized as a genocide.<sup>128</sup> Later that month, in Raebareli, Uttar Pradesh, speakers glorified the 1989 Bhagalpur riots and urged a "15-minute bloodbath" against Muslims. Despite videos circulating widely, police registered no case until three days of public pressure and complaints by a journalist.<sup>129</sup>

In February, reports found that the federal government had paid approximately \$69,000 for an event at which speakers called for India to be declared a "Hindu Nation" and demanded the "removal" of 25 percent of Indian Muslims, alongside calls for mass conversion and mass deportation. Federal ministers were among the speakers.<sup>130</sup>

That same month, former BJP lawmaker T Raja Singh, at a rally in Chhindwara, Madhya Pradesh, said that "each Bajrangi could behead 10 Bangladeshis." <sup>131</sup> In Almora, Uttarakhand, police booked a Hindu monk, Mahamandleshwar Lal Baba, after he referred to Muslims as "jihadis", warned them to leave the state, and threatened violence at a conference attended by Federal Minister Ajay Tamta.<sup>132</sup>

Ahead of the Assam elections in April, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma threatened to "break the backbone" of the "Miyas" and stated that his job was to "make them suffer." His rhetoric shifted tactically over the campaign, replacing "Miya" with "Bangladeshi infiltrator" after legal scrutiny.<sup>133</sup>

In April, former RSS member and BJP leader Sunil Deodhar, at an event in Pimpri-Chinchwad, Maharashtra, said that Muslims and Christians were looting India's wealth, urged Hindu women to take up weapons, and called for economic boycotts of Muslims.

In June, at a large Hindu religious gathering in Ghaziabad convened by serial hatemonger Yati Narsinghanand Saraswati's aide Anil Yadav, called for the "annihilation" of Muslims, praised Israel's conduct in Gaza as a model response, and recited a poem endorsing bloodshed. Narsinghanand publicly endorsed the remarks. Both men have faced repeated legal proceedings over hate speech.<sup>134</sup>

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128 <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/teach-bangladesh-a-lesson-like-israel-did-in-gaza-bjp-leader-suwendu-adhikaris-genocidal-call-sparks-outrage/>

129 <https://sabrangindia.in/when-genocide-is-provoked-from-the-stage-raebareli-hate-speeches-bhagalpur-dog-whistles-and-a-delayed-fir/>

130 <https://www.thequint.com/news/politics/modi-govt-funded-sanatan-sanstha-event-hindu-rashtra-deporting-muslims-hate-speech>

131 <https://www.siasat.com/mla-raja-singhs-beheading-remark-in-mp-triggers-outrage-3358724/>

132 <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/monk-booked-for-hate-speech-at-uttarakhand-hindu-conference-101771833129006.html>

133 <https://frontline.thehindu.com/the-nation/india-hate-speech-governance-hindutva-2026/article70638320.ece>

134 <https://maktoobmedia.com/post?id=115852&slug=hatemonger-yati-narsinghanands-aide-calls-for-annihilation-of-muslims%C2%A0during-hindu-mahapanchayat>

## Weapon Distribution and Paramilitary Mobilization

On April 12, the VHP distributed 1,700 tridents to Bajrang Dal members at a ceremony in Uttam Nagar, West Delhi, with organizers announcing plans to distribute 30,000 or more across the capital. The event featured dehumanizing rhetoric and the closing oath included the declaration that 'India is a Hindu nation.' Minors were given tridents.<sup>135</sup> A similar ceremony in Himachal Pradesh featured anti-Muslim slogans and a 'trident oath.'<sup>136</sup> In Ghaziabad, ten members of the Hindu Raksha Dal were arrested for distributing swords and raising anti-Muslim slogans.<sup>137</sup>



Hindu extremists distribute swords in Ghaziabad

## Hate Speech in Daily Life

The Islamophobia Research Collective documented 909 Islamophobic incidents in Kerala alone over a 15-month period between January 2025 and March 2026, including 250 in the first three months of 2026.<sup>138</sup>

<sup>135</sup> <https://thewire.in/communalism/vhp-distributes-trishuls-inflammatory-speeches-in-tense-uttam-nagar-after-taruns-murder>

<sup>136</sup> <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/trishul-deeksha-event-in-himachal-pradesh-sees-anti-muslim-jihad-slogans-participants-take-trident-oath/>

<sup>137</sup> <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/hindutva-men-arrested-in-ghaziabad-for-distributing-swords-fir-names-41/>

<sup>138</sup> <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/over-900-islamophobic-incidents-in-15-months-in-kerala-hindutva-and-left-leaders-among-perpetrators-cm-criticised-for-defending-hate-speech/>

In Karnataka, a university professor was suspended after repeatedly calling a Muslim student a 'terrorist' in the classroom.<sup>139</sup> Along the Delhi-Dehradun Expressway, an Islamophobic message reading 'This road is not for Muslims' was painted by the Hindu Raksha Dal. In Muzaffarnagar, Hindu extremists opposed a Muslim family purchasing a house in a Hindu-majority locality, labelling it 'house jihad.' In Haryana's Kurukshetra, Hindu extremist groups attacked a Muslim-owned eatery over its name, vandalizing property and chanting religious slogans as police reportedly failed to intervene.<sup>140</sup>

In Uttarakhand, a viral video showed a temple functionary stopping a minor Muslim girl on the road and pressuring her to chant 'Jai Sri Ram.' In Uttarakhand's Rudrapur, a Muslim man alleged that local leaders stopped him from building a home on legally purchased land, declaring that 'no Muslim shall reside' in the area.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/bengaluru-professor-suspended-after-calling-muslim-student-terrorist-in-classroom>

<sup>140</sup> <https://www.newsclick.in/muslim-run-dhaba-kurukshetra-vandalised-hanuman-chalisa-recited>

<sup>141</sup> <https://muslimmirror.com/uttarakhand-councillor-allegedly-stops-muslim-family-from-building-home-issues-threats/>



# DISCRIMINATORY LEGISLATION AND STATE POLICY

The BJP government continued to advance legislation and executive actions that disproportionately impacted India's religious minorities, particularly Muslims. Multiple new laws and administrative measures enacted during the first half of 2026 targeted Muslim personal law, property, educational institutions, and cultural practices.

## Waqf Amendment Act

Implementation of the Waqf Amendment Act, 2025, led to the cancellation of 31,328 waqf property registrations in Uttar Pradesh alone through the UMEED online portal. The UP Sunni Waqf Board oversees approximately 123,000 properties.<sup>142</sup> The Supreme Court declined to extend the mandatory registration deadline, despite petitioners arguing that the portal was plagued by technical defects, could not process lawful entries, and required historical information (such as the name and address of the original waqif) that was impossible to produce for centuries-old endowments.<sup>143</sup>



Protests against Waqf Amendment Bill | Photo: Mohammed Aleemuddin/ANI

<sup>142</sup> <https://indiatomorrow.net/2026/05/31/registration-of-31328-waqf-properties-on-umeed-portal-cancelled-in-uttar-pradesh/>

<sup>143</sup> <https://www.indiatvnews.com/news/india/supreme-court-declines-to-extend-deadline-for-waqf-properties-registration-on-ummeed-portal-2025-12-01-1019741>



Although the Union Minister of Minority Affairs subsequently announced a three-month moratorium on penalties, the deadline itself was not extended, leaving hundreds of thousands of waqf properties across the country at risk of losing their legal status. Meanwhile, the Act's provisions were being challenged before the Supreme Court by more than 40 petitions filed by Muslim organizations, political parties, and individual mutawallis.<sup>144</sup>

Critics, including the All India Muslim Personal Law Board, the Indian Union Muslim League, and international human rights organizations, condemned the Act as a mechanism for state-sanctioned seizure of Muslim religious properties, arguing that it violates constitutional protections of religious freedom (Articles 25, 26, and 30) and effectively dismantles Muslim community control over endowments that include mosques, schools, graveyards, shrines, and hospitals built over centuries.<sup>145</sup>

## Uniform Civil Code

The Gujarat Assembly passed a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) Bill in March 2026, overriding Muslim personal laws on marriage, divorce, and inheritance. Opposition leaders and Muslim organizations condemned the bill as an attack on constitutionally protected religious freedom and cultural identity, arguing that it effectively imposed majoritarian norms on minority communities. Congress described the bill as "anti-Muslim." Gujarat became one of the first states after Uttarakhand to enact a state-level UCC. The passage of the bill coincided with broader legislative moves by BJP-governed states targeting Muslim personal law during the reporting period.

## Cancellation of Muslim Reservation

The BJP-led Maharashtra government cancelled the five percent reservation for Muslims in education and government jobs, a move that opposition leaders called evidence of an 'anti-minority mindset.'<sup>146</sup>

## Anti-Conversion Laws

In March 2026, two major BJP-ruled states enacted sweeping anti-conversion legislation that was widely condemned by religious freedom advocates internationally. On March 16, the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly passed the Freedom of Religion Bill 2026, prescribing imprisonment of up to seven years and fines for individuals found guilty of unlawful religious conversions carried out through coercion,

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<sup>144</sup> <https://lawbeat.in/top-stories/mutawalli-moves-supreme-court-says-centres-umeed-portal-makes-waqf-uploads-technically-impossible-1545209>

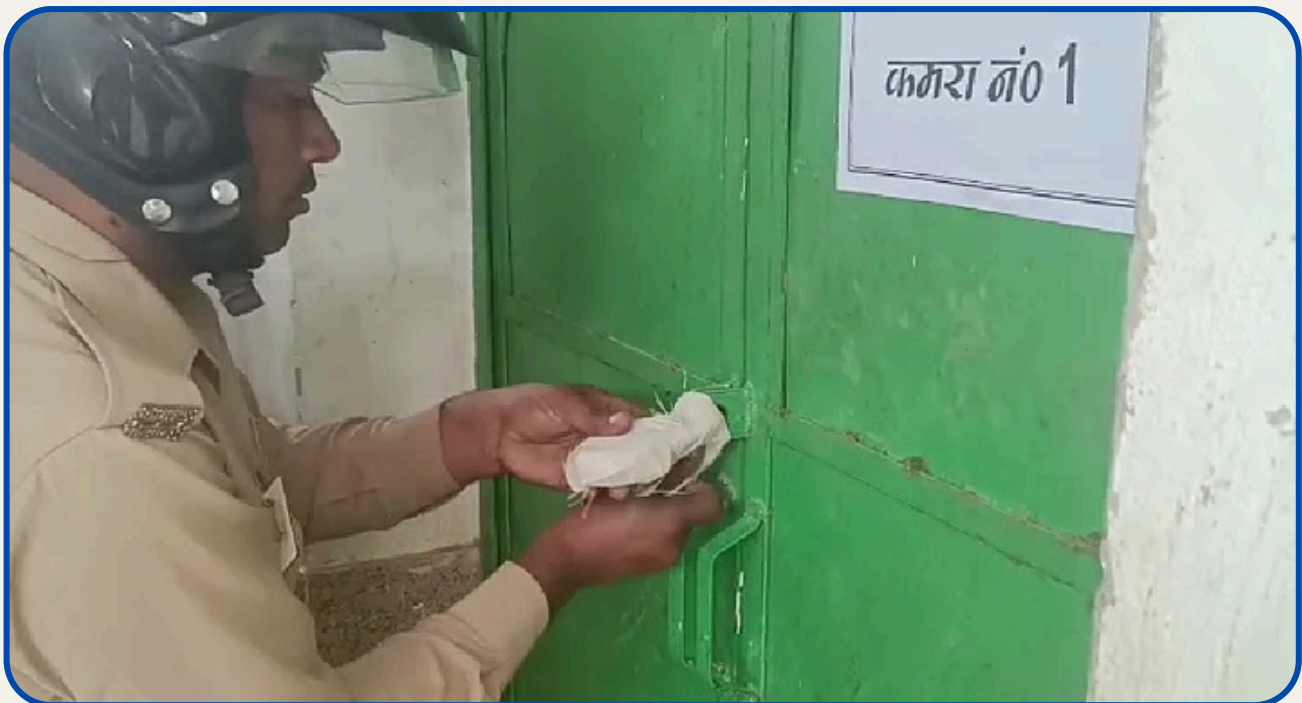
<sup>145</sup> <https://foreignpolicy.com/2025/05/13/india-muslim-property-law-waqf-amendment-act-protests/>

<sup>146</sup> <https://www.telegraphindia.com/india/maharashtra-cancels-5-muslim-quota-opposition-alleges-anti-minority-mindset/cid/2147917>

fraud, inducement, or marriage.<sup>147</sup> Three days later, on March 19, the Chhattisgarh Legislative Assembly passed the Dharm Swatantraya Vidheyak 2026, introducing some of the harshest penalties in the country: seven to ten years of imprisonment, and ten years to life imprisonment for "mass conversion" (defined as the conversion of even two people at the same time). Penalties for offenses involving minors, women, Scheduled Castes, or Scheduled Tribes were further enhanced to ten to twenty years.<sup>148</sup>

The Chhattisgarh law was passed in the absence of the opposition, which staged a walkout after its demand to refer the legislation to a Select Committee was denied. The opposition noted that similar laws from 11 states were pending before the Supreme Court. In both states, conversions to Hinduism were effectively exempted. CSW (Christian Solidarity Worldwide) described the Maharashtra bill as "another grim milestone in a long and growing pattern of state overreach" that "effectively criminalises personal conscience."<sup>149</sup> With these two additions, 13 Indian states now have anti-conversion laws, all either enacted or strengthened under BJP governance. USCIRF's March 2026 report flagged the expansion and increasing stringency of anti-conversion laws across India as a key concern.

## Crackdown on Madrasas



Madrasa being locked down

<sup>147</sup> <https://catholicconnect.in/news/maharashtra-passes-anti-conversion-bill-amid-opposition-concerns>

<sup>148</sup> <https://www.newsgram.com/chhattisgarh/2026/03/20/chhattisgarh-passes-anti-conversion-dharm-swatantraya-bill-2026>

<sup>149</sup> <https://www.csw.org.uk/2026/03/23/press/6765/article.htm>

In Uttar Pradesh, the Anti-Terrorism Squad launched investigations into approximately 4,000 madrasas without evidence of wrongdoing.<sup>150</sup> In Uttarakhand, authorities froze funds for 23 madrasas in Haridwar.<sup>151</sup> In Jammu and Kashmir, the administration banned the Jamia Siraj-ul-Uloom seminary in Shopian under the UAPA.<sup>152</sup> In Assam's Goalpara, a government school moved to expel five Muslim students after allegations that one had brought beef in his tiffin box. Police detained the minor student and arrested his mother, a widowed single parent.<sup>153</sup>

## Mandatory Singing of Vande Mataram

In February 2026, the union government directed that all six stanzas of Vande Mataram, India's national song, be sung whenever the song is officially performed.<sup>154</sup> Muslim lawmakers and organizations opposed the mandate as infringing on religious freedom, due to the later verses likening the nation to the Hindu deities.<sup>155</sup>

The new BJP government in West Bengal also made the singing of Vande Mataram mandatory in all madrasas.<sup>156</sup>

In July 2026, the union government subsequently approved a proposal to criminalize insulting or obstructing the singing of Vande Mataram, carrying penalties of up to three years in prison.<sup>157</sup>

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150 <https://clarionindia.net/educators-raise-alarm-as-ats-puts-4000-up-madrasas-under-scrutiny/>

151 <https://theobserverpost.com/uttarakhand-government-intensifies-madrassa-crackdown-23-institutions-face-fund-freeze/>

152 <https://maktoobmedia.com/public/post?id=115345&slug=jk-bans-jamia-siraj-ul-uloom-shopian-as-unlawful-entity-under-uapa-over-alleged-jei-links>

153 <https://maktoobmedia.com/post?id=115670&slug=assam-school-moves-to-expel-five-muslim-students-over-bringing-beef-mother-arrested-minor-detained>

154 <https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/india/all-stanzas-of-vande-mataram-a-must-before-national-anthem-heres-what-govts-new-guidelines-say/>

155 <https://scroll.in/latest/1090648/six-stanzas-of-vande-mataram-to-be-sung-before-national-anthem-mandates-centre>

156 <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/west-bengal/singing-of-vande-mataram-compulsory-in-all-schools-madrasas-in-bengal-dilip-ghosh/article71009507.ece>

157 <https://maktoobmedia.com/post?id=115416&slug=union-cabinet-clears-amendment-to-make-insult-or-obstruction-to-singing-of-vande-mataram-a-punishable-offence>

# STIFLING OF DISSENT AND PRESS FREEDOM

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The space for independent journalism, academic inquiry, and civil society activism continued to narrow during the first half of 2026.

The Press Club of India expressed concern over 'arbitrary' social media takedown orders targeting content critical of the government.<sup>158</sup>

In Kashmir, police ordered at least three journalists to sign pledges vowing not to "disturb peace" after they reported on a large-scale police exercise to collect information on mosques, their imams, management committees, and funding sources across the Valley.<sup>159</sup>

In January, British NHS doctor and YouTuber Sangram Patil was detained at Mumbai airport for over 15 hours over social media posts critical of the BJP. He was subsequently prevented from leaving the country on a Look Out Circular filed by a BJP Maharashtra social media official.<sup>160</sup>

Jamia Millia Islamia university suspended a faculty member and ordered an FIR after a semester exam question asked about atrocities against Muslims in India.<sup>161</sup> A Muslim woman appearing for a railway recruitment exam in Gujarat alleged she was forced to remove her hijab in front of male staff.<sup>162</sup>

In Mumbai, police cancelled a public discussion featuring activist Anand Teltumbde and ordered related social media posts removed.<sup>163</sup> In Rajasthan, two British nationals were ordered to leave the country for pasting pro-Palestinian posters.<sup>164</sup> The ABVP violently disrupted a student theatre performance critical of caste hierarchy at the University of Hyderabad.<sup>165</sup>

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158 <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/press-club-of-india-flags-arbitrary-social-media-takedowns-warns-of-free-speech-violations/>

159 <https://scroll.in/article/1090125/attempt-to-silence-national-press-four-kashmiri-journalists-get-police-summons>

160 <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c5yjd6ep73o>

161 <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/jmi-suspends-professor-orders-fir-over-semester-exam-question-on-atrocities-against-muslims-in-india/>

162 <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/muslim-woman-alleges-hijab-removal-at-gujarat-railway-exam-centre/>

163 <https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/anand-teltumbde-book-discussion-dropped-from-kala-ghoda-festival-after-online-backlash-organisers-cite-police-request-10513763/>

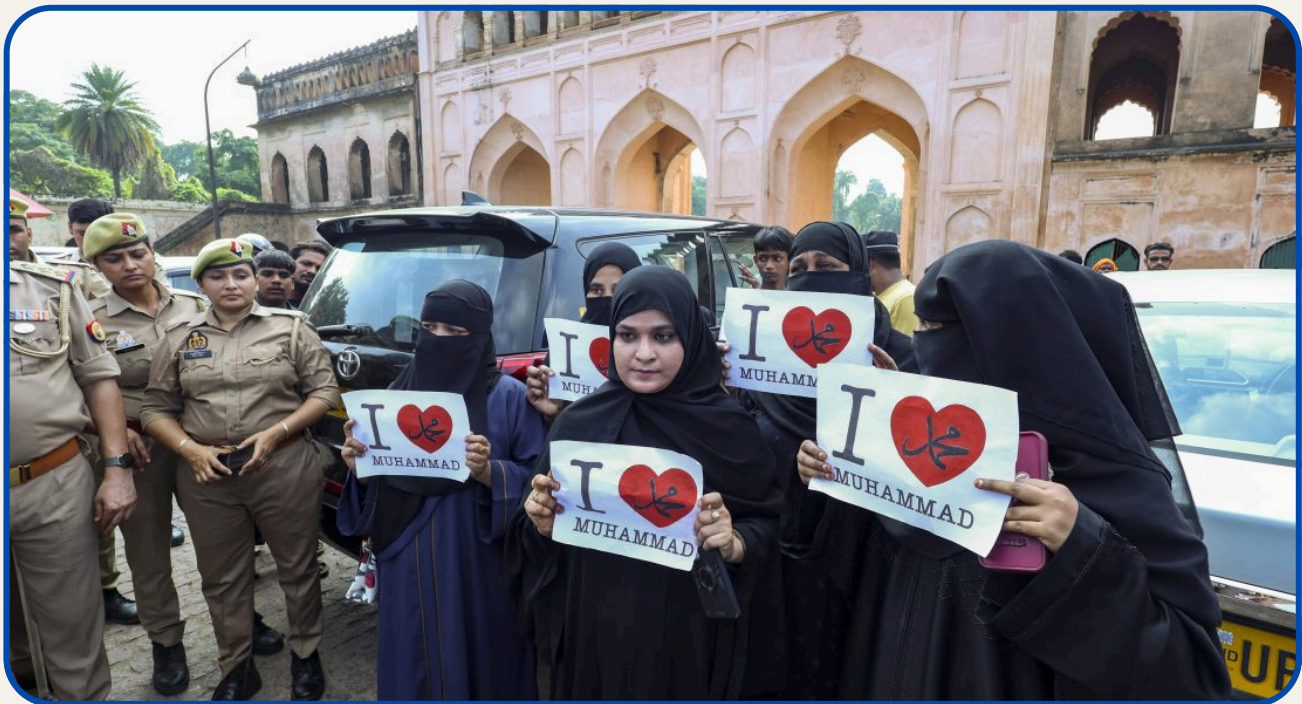
164 <https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/2-british-tourists-get-leave-india-notice-over-free-palestine-stickers-10941388>

165 <https://maktoobmedia.com/post?id=115412&slug=abvp-violently-disrupts-play-critiquing-caste-hierarchy-at-university-of-hyderabad-students-attacked>



The government's censorship extended to cultural and artistic expression. Filmmaker Anand Patwardhan's National Award-winning 1995 documentary *Father, Son and Holy War*, which examines anti-Muslim violence in the context of the Babri Masjid demolition, was removed from YouTube.<sup>166</sup>

The Indian government amended the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA), introducing sweeping new requirements for NGOs receiving foreign funds, including mandatory disclosure of social media accounts and donor chains, and restrictions on approved activities and operating regions. Critics warned the amendments were designed to further squeeze minority-serving institutions and civil society organizations, with over 20,000 organizations already stripped of their FCRA licences under the BJP government.<sup>167</sup>



Police personnel stand guard as women hold placards reading 'I Love Muhammad' | Photo: PTI

In Uttar Pradesh, several Muslim men were detained and arrested for social media posts and peaceful religious expression. Over 265 Muslims were arrested nationwide, mostly in Uttar Pradesh, in connection with the peaceful "I Love Muhammad" affirmation campaign during 2025, and arrests continued into 2026. A Muslim man spent nearly seven months in jail over a social media post linked to the 'I Love Muhammad' campaign, before the Allahabad High Court granted bail.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> <https://maktoobmedia.com/post?id=115672&slug=anand-patwardhans-award-winning-documentary-father-son-and-holy-war-exploring-post-babri-anti-muslim-violence-removed-from-youtube>

<sup>167</sup> <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/centre-amends-fcra-rules-for-receiving-foreign-funds/article71134901.ece>

<sup>168</sup> <https://thewire.in/law/allahabad-high-court-grants-bail-to-man-held-for-7-months-over-i-love-mohammed-post>

In January, five activists who protested against the Citizenship Amendment Act in 2020, including Gulfisha Fatima, Shifa Ur Rehman, Mohd Saleem Khan, Meeran Haider, and Shadab Ahmed, were released after spending over 2,000 days in custody.<sup>169</sup> In May, the Supreme Court granted six-month interim bail to activists Tasleem Ahmed and Khalid Saifi, incarcerated since February 2020.<sup>170</sup> However, the Supreme Court denied bail to prominent activists Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam.

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<sup>169</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cd0ye2z33x9o>

<sup>170</sup> <https://maktoobmedia.com/post?id=115535&slug=sc-grants-six-month-bail-to-anti-caa-activists-tasleem-ahmed-khalid-saifi-in-delhi-pogrom-uapa-case-umar-sharjeel-rulings-referred-to-larger-bench>

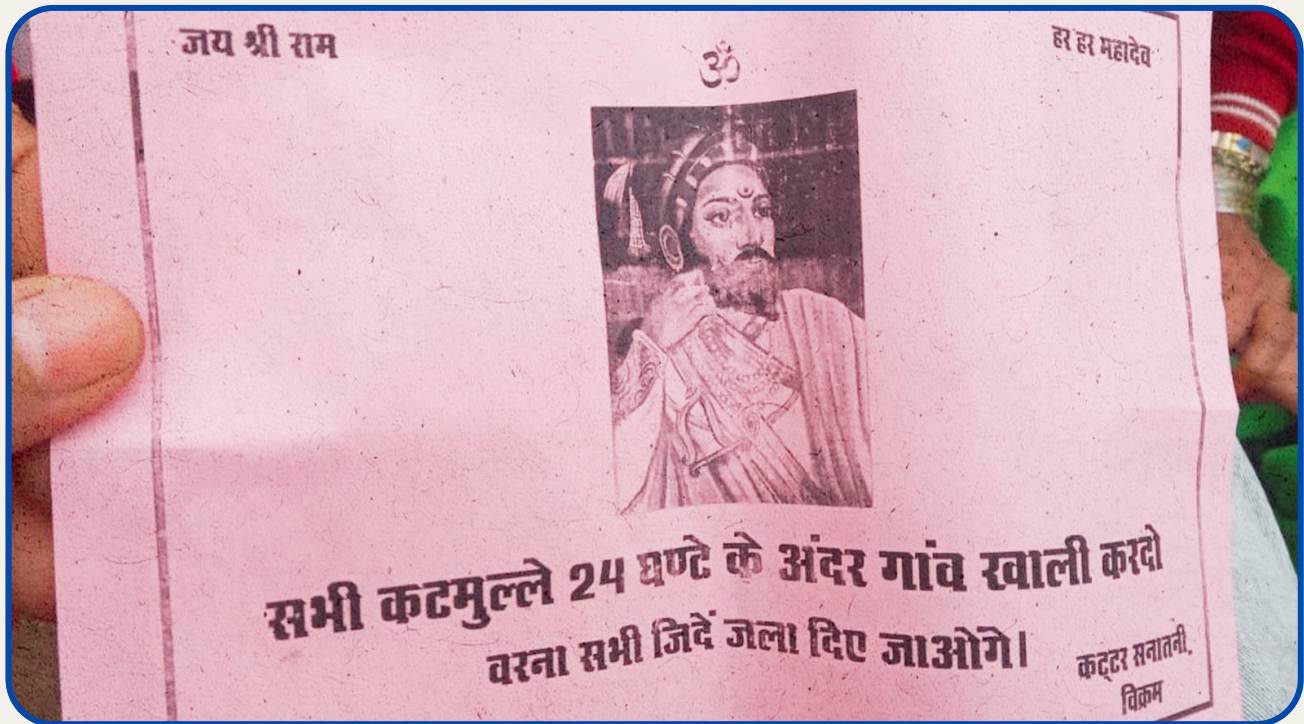
# SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EXCLUSION

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Beyond physical violence and legal persecution, Muslims in India faced increasing social and economic exclusion during the first half of 2026.

In Balaghat district, Madhya Pradesh, ten Muslim families were subjected to a social boycott after inflammatory speeches at a Hindu conference, cut off from daily transactions, services, and employment.<sup>171</sup>

In Rajasthan's Tonk, a BJP leader refused to distribute blankets to three Muslim women at a charitable event after learning their religious identity.<sup>172</sup> In Uttar Pradesh's Sikandrabad, a threat note warning all Muslims to vacate within 24 hours or be burned alive was left inside Muslim homes.<sup>173</sup>



"Leave in 24 hours or be burnt alive": A pamphlet threat in UP's Bhonkhera village

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171 <https://www.themooknayak.com/minority-news/social-boycott-of-10-muslim-families-in-balaghat-mp-transactions-stopped-jobs-lost-lives-in-fear>

172 <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/rajasthan-bjp-leader-refuses-to-give-muslim-women-blankets-video-surfaces-101771822865699.html>

173 <https://maktoobmedia.com/public/post?id=111571&slug=leave-in-24-hours-or-be-burnt-alive-inside-pamphlet-threat-that-terrorised-muslims-in-ups-bhonkhera-village>

In Indore, a private school institutionalized religious segregation by conducting two separate annual functions, one for Muslim students and another for non-Muslim students.<sup>174</sup> In Varanasi, a Muslim teacher alleged she was pressured to remove her hijab or lose her job at a private school.<sup>175</sup> A Muslim postgraduate in Uttar Pradesh alleged religious bias after being rejected from a government lab interview within minutes.<sup>176</sup>

In Chhattisgarh, dozens of Muslim families were asked to prove their land rights after a complaint.<sup>177</sup> In Sambhal, Muslim families were ordered to vacate government housing units.<sup>178</sup> Muslim vendors at a tribal festival in Telangana were confronted in a YouTube video that accused them of promoting 'food jihad.'<sup>179</sup>

In Assam's Goalpara, a minor Muslim student was detained and his widowed single mother arrested after allegations that he had brought beef in his tiffin box to school.<sup>180</sup> In Malegaon, Maharashtra, seven Muslims were booked by police for offering prayers inside a municipal office.<sup>181</sup>

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174 <https://m.thewire.in/article/communalism/indore-school-holds-separate-annual-functions-for-hindu-and-muslim-students-report>

175 <https://maktoobmedia.com/post?id=115447&slug=muslim-teacher-alleges-discrimination-at-varanasi-school-says-she-was-asked-to-remove-hijab-or-resign>

176 <https://theobserverpost.com/muslim-student-alleges-bias-in-govt-internship/>

177 <https://clarionindia.net/dozens-of-muslim-families-asked-to-prove-land-rights-in-chhattisgarh-after-complaint/>

178 <https://clarionindia.net/selective-action-families-in-sambhal-ordered-to-vacate-govt-housing-units/>

179 <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/youtube-channel-targets-muslim-vendors-with-food-jihad-hate-at-telangana-festival/>

180 <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/guwahati/assam-student-held-for-forcing-hindu-classmates-to-eat-beef/articleshow/131561518.cms>

181 <https://muslimmirror.com/malegaon-namaz-row-seven-muslim-booked-for-prayers-in-municipal-electricity-office/>



# PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIANS

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Violence and discrimination against India's Christian minority continued to intensify during the first half of 2026. The India Hate Lab found that anti-Christian hate speech rose 41% in 2025 compared to the prior year, with 162 hate speech events recorded.<sup>182</sup> USCIRF specifically highlighted the escalating attacks on Christians, calling on the U.S. government to hold perpetrators accountable.<sup>183</sup> The Open Doors World Watch List 2026 reported more than 1,600 cases of Christians detained, arrested, or imprisoned in India during the 2025 reporting period, the highest of any country surveyed. Open Doors' India partner reported more than 2,900 incidents of Christian persecution between January and November 2025 alone.<sup>184</sup> Preliminary 2025 data tabulated by Christian Solidarity International suggest that the United Christian Forum recorded approximately 900 verified incidents of violence against Christians in 2025, making it the fifth consecutive year of record levels, and a more than 500% increase from 127 incidents in 2014, under the Modi government.<sup>185</sup>

## Anti-Conversion Laws

The passage of anti-conversion laws in Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh in March 2026 intensified the legal persecution of Christian communities. These laws, while framed in neutral language, have been disproportionately applied against Christian pastors, missionaries, and congregations accused of "forced" or "fraudulent" conversions. Under the Chhattisgarh legislation, penalties extend to life imprisonment for "mass conversion" of even two people, with conversions to Hinduism effectively exempted. Christian leaders warned that the laws effectively criminalize pastoral work, prayer meetings, and charitable activities.

The Chhattisgarh law was passed in the absence of the opposition, which staged a walkout. In both states, conversions to Hinduism were effectively exempted. CSW (Christian Solidarity Worldwide) described the Maharashtra bill as "another grim milestone in a long and growing pattern of state overreach" that "effectively criminalises personal conscience."<sup>186</sup> With these additions, 13 Indian states now have anti-conversion laws, all either enacted or strengthened under BJP governance.

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<sup>182</sup> <https://indiahatelab.com/2026/01/13/hate-speech-events-in-india-2025/>

<sup>183</sup> <https://thewire.in/world/uscirf-renews-call-to-designate-india-country-of-particular-concern-over-increasing-attack-on-christians>

<sup>184</sup> <https://www.baptistpress.com/resource-library/news/world-watch-list-2026-christian-persecution-at-all-time-high-in-15-nations/>

<sup>185</sup> <https://www.csi-int.org/news/2025-marked-fifth-consecutive-year-of-record-violence-against-christians-in-india/>

<sup>186</sup> <https://www.csw.org.uk/2026/03/23/press/6765/article.htm>

## The Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill

On March 25, 2026, the government introduced the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, proposing the most far-reaching expansion of state control over foreign-funded charitable institutions since the parent Act was passed in 2010. The bill creates a government-appointed Designated Authority empowered to take provisional control of the assets of any organisation whose FCRA registration is cancelled, surrendered, allowed to expire, or not renewed. If registration is not restored, those assets may be transferred to government departments or sold to the state. The authority's reach extends to assets only partly created through foreign contributions, meaning schools, hospitals, hostels, and shelters built over decades could vest in the government following an administrative decision taken without prior judicial determination.



Protests against FCRA

The bill arrived against a decade of attrition that has fallen disproportionately on Christian institutions. As of March 2026, 21,933 organisations had lost their FCRA licences, with those working on minority rights, free expression, and climate action most affected.<sup>187</sup> More than 10,000 Christian groups have lost their registrations since 2011, including the Evangelical Fellowship of India, Church Auxiliary for Social Action, World Vision India, and Compassion International. More than 70 percent of the organisations whose licences expired as of January 2022 were aligned with Christian programmes.<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> <https://liberties.aljazeera.com/en/the-state-takes-everything>

<sup>188</sup> <https://persecution.org/2026/04/02/india-further-restricts-funding-of-foreign-ngos>

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of India described the proposed amendments as "dangerous and alarming," objecting to clauses granting the federal government sweeping power to deny renewal or cancel registrations and then assume control over institutions, their funds, and their properties.<sup>189</sup> The bishops noted that the absence of prior judicial determination before the vesting of assets departs from due process and proportionality, and that the renewal process remains entirely within the control of authorities, with deficiencies often never communicated to organisations before adverse decisions are taken.

## Violence Against Christian Communities

In Chhattisgarh's Sukma in May, a mob stormed a Christian prayer meeting, leaving at least five people, including a pastor and his pregnant wife, seriously injured.<sup>190</sup> A tribunal report documented that across Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Odisha, Christians routinely face social boycotts, denial of burial rights, and forced exhumations, with 23 burial-related incidents in 2025 alone, 19 of them in Chhattisgarh.<sup>191</sup> In February 2026, a Christian woman in Chhattisgarh was denied burial despite a Supreme Court



Over 25 Christians injured after Hindu extremists attack prayer service in Sukma

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189 <https://catholicconnect.in/news/cbci-warns-of-dangerous-overreach-as-fcra-amendment-bill-sparks-alarm>

190 <https://theobserverpost.com/over-25-christians-attacked-during-prayer-meeting-in-chhattisgarhs-sukma/>

191 <https://maktoobmedia.com/post?id=115619&slug=from-social-boycott-to-burial-denials-tribunal-documents-widespread-violence-against-christians-in-india>



ruling affirming the right of religious minorities to be buried in public cemeteries. Villagers opposed the burial and demanded "Ghar Wapsi" (reconversion to Hinduism), issuing threats of physical assault and exhumation.<sup>192</sup>

In Chhattisgarh's Bastar, a tribal Christian farmer and his family were repeatedly beaten, had their borewells destroyed and their crops looted, and were ultimately forced to permanently abandon their ancestral village after violent threats demanding forced reconversion to Hinduism.<sup>193</sup> In Chhattisgarh's Jagdalpur, Hindu extremists forced Christian families to sign pacts denouncing their faith and converting to Hinduism within 10 days, destroying their property and beating victims unconscious. A pastor in Odisha's Dhenkanal was assaulted, forced to chant "Jai Shri Ram," and made to eat cow dung by members of the Bajrang Dal after a mob of around 40 people stormed a prayer meeting he was attending with his wife.<sup>194</sup> A teenage Christian boy in Chhattisgarh's Champa was beaten and forced to chant "Jai Shri Ram."<sup>195</sup> In West Bengal's Raniganj, a VHP mob disrupted a Christian prayer meeting, alleging that forced conversions were taking place.<sup>196</sup>

## Arrests and Detention of Pastors

The arrest of Christian pastors and congregants under anti-conversion laws continued as a systematic pattern during the reporting period. In February, Pastor Jose Thomas, a native of Kerala, was arrested in Uttar Pradesh's Ballia district under the state's anti-conversion law following a complaint filed by Bajrang Dal members. He had been addressing a gathering of over 20 women and children. Police seized 124 religious books along with musical instruments and microphones.<sup>197</sup> In a separate case, Pastor Albin, also from Kerala, was detained by police in Ghatampur near Kanpur after a complaint by the Bajrang Dal district convener. In Maharashtra, a priest and his wife were arrested during a Christmas prayer meeting in Nagpur district following complaints by Bajrang Dal activists. In Uttar Pradesh's Bareilly, Pastor Sumit Masey and two others were arrested under anti-conversion provisions following complaints by area residents alleging that Christian gatherings were "pressuring Hindu women and children to convert."<sup>198</sup>

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192 <https://catholicconnect.in/news/burial-denied-to-tribal-christian-woman-in-chhattisgarh-village-despite-top-courts-protective-order>

193 <https://maktoobmedia.com/post?id=115589&slug=tribal-christian-families-in-bastar-threatened-beaten-forced-to-accept-hinduism>

194 <https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/odisha/2026/Jan/17/odisha-pastor-forcefully-made-to-eat-cow-dung-and-chant-jai-shri-ram-by-hindutva-group>

195 <https://clarionindia.net/christian-boy-thrashed-in-chhattisgarhs-champa-forced-to-chant-jai-shri-ram/>

196 <https://muslimmirror.com/vhp-mob-disrupts-christian-prayer-meet-in-raniganj-alleges-forced-conversions/>

197 <https://radiancenews.com/anti-conversion-law-arrests-christian-clergy-india/>

198 <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/kerala-pastor-arrested-in-uttar-pradesh-under-anti-conversion-law/>



In July, Pastor Saroj Kumar, his wife Saroj Devi, and a local resident were arrested in Maharajganj district before a Sunday worship service, preventing the prayer meeting from taking place.<sup>199</sup>

In 2025, Jose and Sheeja Pappachan became the first Christians convicted under Uttar Pradesh's anti-conversion law and were sentenced to five years of imprisonment, marking a new threshold in the legal persecution of Christian communities.<sup>200</sup>

## **India's Blasphemy Law and the Legal Architecture of Persecution**

The legal persecution of Christians in India operates through a dual-track system. At the federal level, Section 299 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), formerly Section 295A of the Indian Penal Code, functions as what USCIRF has formally classified as a blasphemy law, criminalizing "deliberate and malicious" acts "intended to outrage the religious feelings" of any class of citizens, punishable by up to three years' imprisonment. Section 299 is a cognizable, non-bailable, and non-compoundable offense, meaning police may arrest on the basis of any third-party complaint without a warrant, bail is not a matter of right, and the complainant cannot withdraw the case.

At the state level, anti-conversion laws now in force in 13 Indian states operate in tandem with Section 299 to create what IAMC's policy report on India's blasphemy law terms "a self-reinforcing legal architecture that produces a carceral population of religious-minority believers, disproportionately Christians and Muslims, detained, prosecuted, and in some cases convicted for ordinary religious expression and practice."<sup>201</sup>

A Christian pastor who preaches the gospel can be simultaneously charged with "outraging religious feelings" under Section 299 and with conducting an "unlawful conversion" under state law. The combined effect means that virtually every aspect of pastoral ministry, from preaching to offering food, healthcare, education, or spiritual counseling, can be reframed as a criminal offense.

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199 <https://catholicconnect.in/news/pastor-arrested-under-uttar-pradesh-anti-conversion-law-christians-appeal-for-prayers>

200 <https://www.opendoors.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/Open-Doors-World-Watch-List-2026-India-Country-Dossier.pdf>

201 <https://iamc.com/indias-blasphemy-law/>

# REPRESSION IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR

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Jammu and Kashmir remained under tight central government control during the first half of 2026, with continued restrictions on civil liberties, arbitrary detention under anti-terror legislation, and new instances of enforced disappearances being formally acknowledged decades after they occurred.

## Enforced Disappearances and Extrajudicial Killings

The Kashmir Law and Justice Project (KLJP), an advocacy organization led by Kashmiri diaspora lawyers, documented continued and intensifying human rights violations in its monthly dispatches during January to June 2026. In March, Indian forces killed at least three people and injured at least eight. Authorities suppressed protests against attacks on Iran, detaining over 100 people and throttling communication services. Indian authorities forcibly closed Srinagar's Jamia Masjid and prevented Eid prayers for the seventh consecutive year. In May, Indian authorities acknowledged demolishing 81 homes, expropriating 120 properties, and arresting 716 people during January to March 2026 under an "anti-drugs" campaign. Indian forces used 11 people as human shields, resulting in the maiming of Mohammad Jahangir Malik.

In April, a Srinagar court declared Abdul Rashid Wani legally dead, nearly 28 years after he was taken into Army custody by the 2/8 Gorkha Rifles on July 7, 1997. The court found that Wani was murdered in detention by Major V.P. Yadav. Human rights groups estimate 8,000 to 10,000 people have been forcibly disappeared in Jammu and Kashmir since 1989.<sup>202</sup>

In Kashmir's Ganderbal, the family of Rashid Ahmad Mughal disputed the Army's claim that he was a militant killed in an encounter, seeking an independent probe into the killing.<sup>203</sup>

## Political Prisoners and the UAPA

On March 24, a Delhi court sentenced Kashmiri activist Asiya Andrabi to life imprisonment under the UAPA, while her associates Sofi Fehmeeda and Nahida Nasreen received 30 years. The court observed that while there was no direct evidence of violence, their actions 'eulogised militants and indirectly promoted violence.'<sup>204</sup>

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202 <https://maktoobmedia.com/public/post?id=115016&slug=srinagar-court-declares-man-dead-28-years-after-army-custody>

203 <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/kashmir-family-claims-man-killed-in-ganderbal-was-civilian-with-no-militant-links-seeks-probe/>

204 <https://www.middleeasteye.net/big-story/aasiya-andrabi-how-india-terror-laws-turned-dissent-life-sentences>

Numerous Kashmiri journalists, human rights defenders, activists, and dissenters continued to be arbitrarily detained. In June, the Delhi High Court granted bail to activist Khurram Parvez, ending over four and a half years of imprisonment in a terror funding case under the UAPA. Journalist Irfan Mehraj who was arrested in 2023, was also granted bail.<sup>205</sup>

Human rights lawyer Mian Abdul Qayoom, imprisoned for over two years (736 days), and scholar Shafat Wani, imprisoned for over one year (447 days) remain in prison.



Kashmiri human rights defender Khurram Parvez and journalist Irfan Mehraj freed on bail

The Supreme Court itself raised concerns over the extremely low conviction rate under the UAPA in Kashmir, where successful prosecution rates were below 1%.<sup>206</sup> The Jammu and Kashmir administration banned the Jamia Siraj-ul-Uloom seminary in Shopian under the UAPA.<sup>207</sup>

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205 <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/7/23/kashmiri-activist-khurram-parvez-and-journalist-irfan-mehraj-freed-on-bail>

206 <https://theobserverpost.com/supreme-court-flags-low-uapa-conviction-rate-says-kashmir-sees-less-than-1-success-in-cases/>

207 <https://maktoobmedia.com/post?id=115345&slug=jk-bans-jamia-siraj-ul-uloom-shopian-as-unlawful-entity-under-uapa-over-alleged-jei-links>

## Transnational Repression

A special court in Srinagar issued a proclamation directing three people from Kashmir, based in the United States and Germany, to appear before the court, as police said they had been booked for allegedly using social media to fuel unrest. Police launched a large-scale exercise to collect information on mosques in the Valley, including their imams, muezzins, management committee members, and charity wings.

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208 <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/3-kashmiris-based-in-us-germany-booked-for-weaponising-social-media-told-to-appear-before-srinagar-court/>

209 <https://aljazeera.com/news/2026/1/19/india-is-profiling-kashmir-mosques-raising-new-surveillance-fears>



# RECOMMENDATIONS

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## Recommendations for the United States Government

1. The U.S. Secretary of State should designate India as a Country of Particular Concern (CPC), consistent with the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF)'s repeated recommendations since 2020.
2. 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. The government should also accept USCIRF's recommendation to sanction the leaders and members of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).
3. The U.S. should develop a coordinated interagency framework to prevent, investigate, and prosecute transnational repression targeting diaspora communities by the Indian state and its proxies.
4. 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 hate crimes, and protection of journalists, students, lawyers, academics, and civil society organizations.
5. The U.S. should foreground human rights, religious freedom, and rule-of-law commitments in all current and forthcoming security and defense cooperation with India. It should strengthen and rigorously apply Leahy vetting and related safeguards across training, arms transfers, intelligence cooperation, joint activities, and restrict cooperation with units credibly implicated in abuses until accountability is demonstrated.
6. 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.

## Recommendations for the United Nations System

1. 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. 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. 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. 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, press sessions and informal briefings, and background documentation for the OHCHR compilation report.

## Recommendations for the European Union and European Governments

1. 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. 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.

## Recommendations for the Government of India

1. The Government of India must enact and enforce a comprehensive national anti-lynching and hate crime law that includes clear definitions, mandatory registration of FIRs, time-bound investigations, witness and victim protection, and compensation mechanisms, and must ensure that politically connected perpetrators of communal violence are investigated and prosecuted without exception.
2. The government must immediately halt the use of demolitions as a form of collective punishment, establish binding national guidelines requiring advance notice, independent review, and the right to appeal before any demolition, and provide restitution and compensation to individuals whose homes or places of worship were demolished without due process.
3. The government should repeal or substantially amend the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and other national security laws that invert the presumption of innocence, permit indefinite pretrial detention, and criminalize peaceful protest and expression, and should release political prisoners detained without evidence of violent criminal activity, particularly in Jammu and Kashmir where the Supreme Court itself has noted that successful prosecution rates are below 1%.
4. Anti-conversion laws enacted or strengthened by BJP-led state governments should be repealed or substantially revised to prevent their weaponization against religious minorities and interfaith couples, and the government must ensure equal protection of law for Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Dalits, and other marginalized communities in policing, prosecution, and judicial processes.

5. The government must end transnational repression, cease surveillance and intimidation of diaspora critics and journalists abroad, drop retaliatory prosecutions against human rights defenders and independent media, and cooperate fully with lawful investigations into overseas threats linked to Indian state actors.

6. The government must withdraw the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026, and refrain from enacting further restrictions that undermine the independence and functioning of civil society organizations.





## **Peace, Pluralism and Justice**

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