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IAMC.COM

# PERSECUTION OF RELIGIOUS MINORITIES IN INDIA





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

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

IAMC's core values are as follows:

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

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the third quarter of 2023, India continued to grapple with a distressing surge in communal violence, targeted attacks, and hate speech directed against religious minorities. Muslims and Christians remained particularly vulnerable to these incidents, exacerbating the prevailing atmosphere of persecution and discrimination faced by minority groups. This escalating violence and intolerance has sounded a resounding alarm among human rights organizations.

Violent cow vigilantism targeting Muslims witnessed a notable increase as self-proclaimed cow protectors continued to engage in targeted attacks, ostensibly in the name of preventing beef consumption and cattle transportation. Additionally, there was a notable uptick in the illegal demolition of Muslim homes and targeting of religious structures, resulting in the displacement of entire communities, particularly in regions of Manipur and Haryana.

In Jammu and Kashmir, human rights violations persisted unchecked, with widespread abuses targeting journalists, political activists, and the local population. This trend of stifling dissent and curtailing fundamental freedoms in the region remained deeply concerning.

Given these grave concerns, it remains imperative for the Indian government and the international community to urgently address these issues, ensuring accountability and justice for the victims. Effective action is crucial not only for safeguarding democracy but also for promoting tolerance and upholding human rights within India.

# PERSECUTION & DISCRIMINATION AGAINST MUSLIMS

On July 1st, during the last day of Eid celebrations, a Muslim juice vendor faced harassment and abuse<sup>1</sup> from a group of four Hindu women in Uttarakhand's Dehradun. The women learned about the vendor's Muslim identity and began shouting Islamophobic slurs at him. In a video shared on social media, the women were seen causing a disturbance at the shop, claiming they do not consume anything prepared by Muslims and accusing the vendor of hiding his identity.

Also on July 1st, BJP legislator Sharanu Salagar, along with eight of his supporters, were booked for storming into a Muslim electrician's home in the Bidar district of Karnataka and verbally abusing his family members for slaughtering cows during Eid Al-Adha.<sup>2</sup> The 27-year-old electrician, Mehraj, lodged a complaint, accusing him of unlawful assembly, rioting, intentional insult, criminal intimidation, house trespass, deliberate acts to outrage religious feelings, and being part of an unlawful assembly with a common criminal objective. Despite efforts by Mehraj

and his neighbors to clarify the situation, Salagar continued to verbally abuse and threaten the women in the family. A video of the incident went viral online. The police are yet to initiate an investigation, even though the MLA and his supporters have been booked for their actions.



Tensions flared in Uttar Pradesh's Rataul village, after a 26-year-old father of three named Sajid Abbasi was tortured by the local police.<sup>3</sup> Sajid's family claimed he was mistakenly apprehended as a gambler while innocently playing a game of ludo in a park, then severely beaten by four policemen before being released. On July 2nd, he passed away while being transported to a nearby medical facility in Khekra.

<sup>1</sup> [maktoobmedia.com/india/why-did-hindu-women-heckle-a-muslim-juice-seller-and-filmed-it](https://maktoobmedia.com/india/why-did-hindu-women-heckle-a-muslim-juice-seller-and-filmed-it)

<sup>2</sup> [clarionindia.net/karnataka-alleging-cow-slaughter-bjp-legislator-barges-into-muslim-home](https://clarionindia.net/karnataka-alleging-cow-slaughter-bjp-legislator-barges-into-muslim-home)

<sup>3</sup> [maktoobmedia.com/india/up-muslim-man-dies-after-detention-family-alleges-custodial-torture](https://maktoobmedia.com/india/up-muslim-man-dies-after-detention-family-alleges-custodial-torture)

After the village staged a roadblock as a form of protest, disrupting local traffic, the police began to actively investigate the situation.<sup>4</sup>



On July 4th, in Gajwel, Telangana, a gathering of approximately 300 members from local Hindu groups was observed outside Tanjamul Masjid following the reported desecration of a Shivaji statue by a Muslim man the previous day. Sayyad Yousufuddin, a resident of Gajwel, reported the mosque being pelted with stones and trashed by the mob screaming Islamophobic remarks. Two individuals were arrested based on Yousufuddin's complaint.<sup>5</sup>

Also on July 4th, in Agra, Uttar Pradesh, four men forcibly entered the home of a Muslim family and sexually assaulted an 18-year-old girl.<sup>6</sup> When family members tried to intervene, they, too, were subjected to attacks. The accused, identified as Vishal Kumar, Sanjay Kumar, Sheelu, and Chotu, all aged between 20 and

30, not only molested the girl but also vandalized her family's home. During the assault, a brick struck the girl on the head, rendering her unconscious. The attack lasted for over 30 minutes, and no assistance arrived despite their pleas. The family believes they were singled out due to being the only Muslim family in the locality.

In Davanagere, Karnataka, on July 4th, two individuals forcibly entered a cinema theater to assault two Muslim youths accompanying a Hindu girl to a movie.<sup>7</sup> The assailants subjected the youths to caste-based verbal abuse and physical assault, recording the incident and later shared it on social media. The Hindu girl, Soundarya, later filed a complaint with the police, stating she had also been physically assaulted.

On July 7th in Gwalior, a Muslim youth named Mohsin Khan was brutally attacked by a group of Gurjar men in a moving car. A video posted



<sup>4</sup> theobserverpost.com/muslim-youth-allegedly-tortured-to-death-by-police-in-uttar-pradesh-rataul

<sup>5</sup> thenewsminute.com/article/tension-gajwel-hindutva-mob-circled-mosque-alleges-masjid-committee-179412

<sup>6</sup> timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/agra/articleshow/101527778.cms

<sup>7</sup> theobserverpost.com/two-muslim-students-beaten-for-accompanying-hindu-classmate-at-theatre-in-karnataka

to social media depicts the assailants forcing Khan to address one of them, Golu Gurjar, as his father and making him lick their feet. Golu Gurjar was identified as the main aggressor, physically assaulting Khan and repeatedly hitting him with a shoe. Two individuals, including Gurjar, were arrested in connection with this attack.<sup>8</sup>

On July 8th in Rajasthan's Bhiwara district, a 21-year-old Muslim youth named Saheb Ali Khan out buying groceries was verbally abused, physically assaulted, and forced to chant 'Jai Shri Ram,' a Hindu slogan. He suffered severe injuries, including 15 stitches to his head and impaired hand function.<sup>9</sup>



In Assam's Burha Chapori Wildlife Sanctuary on July 17th, a clash took place between forest department officials and displaced Muslim residents who were returning to the sanctuary due to flooding in their makeshift settlements. The forest guards resorted

to firing their weapons, resulting in the death of Rahima Khatun, a Muslim woman. Her husband, Samser Ali, was also injured and hospitalized, along with three others.<sup>10</sup>



In Hazaribagh, Jharkhand on July 18th, a young Muslim man named Mohammad Ashfaq Khan reportedly lost his life while in police custody at the Barhi police station.<sup>11</sup> Reportedly, Khan had been apprehended by the police on theft charges. His family alleges that he endured severe physical abuse during his overnight detention, which ultimately led to him passing away. His death has devastated his family, for whom he was the sole breadwinner.

On the same day, in Uttar Pradesh's Baghpat district, Imam Mujib-ur-Rahman was stopped by three young individuals on his way home after evening prayers at a mosque. The imam was then forced at gunpoint to

<sup>8</sup> maktoobmedia.com/india/mp-gurjar-men-brutally-thrash-muslim-man-force-him-to-lick-feet-in-moving-car

<sup>9</sup> maktoobmedia.com/latest-news/rajasthan-muslim-youth-brutally-attacked-by-hindu-men-for-questioning-forced-chanting-of-jai-shri-ram

<sup>10</sup> scroll.in/latest/1052816/assam-woman-dead-six-injured-in-clash-with-forest-officials-over-land

<sup>11</sup> theobserverpost.com/muslim-youth-allegedly-killed-in-police-custody-in-jharkhand-family-demands-justice

chant “Jai Shri Ram” and “Hindustan Zindabad” and physically assaulted when he refused. The attackers—Rahul Chauhan, Jitendra Sharma, and Neeraj Kumar—were identified with the help of CCTV footage and arrested the following evening.<sup>12</sup>

On July 21st, a Muslim boy was assaulted at Mumbai’s Bandra Terminus railway station, reportedly due to his relationship with a Hindu girl.<sup>13</sup> Videos show a mob of men dragging the boy outside the railway station and beating him up while shouting “Jai Shri Ram.” Local elected officials have called for a thorough investigation and condemned the religiously motivated violence.



On July 23rd, a 27-year-old man from Rajasthan died in police custody in Faridabad, Haryana, just days after his arrest. Saikul Khan had been picked up by Faridabad police, allegedly due to mistaken identity.<sup>14</sup>

According to community leader Sher Mohammed, Khan was wrongly taken into custody and subjected to severe physical abuse. Khan’s body showed significant injury marks, with bleeding from the nose and injuries on the shoulder, backside, and legs. His deteriorating condition ultimately led to his death in custody. An FIR for murder was filed against two police officials after protests by Khan’s family, locals, and social activists.



On July 25th, a Hindu mob from Ahotguri village in the Morigaon district of central Assam lynched 27-year-old Muslim youth Saddam Hussain<sup>15</sup>, who, along with five friends, was returning from a kabaddi match. The mob accused them of cattle theft, a charge vehemently denied by the victims. The police were unable to rescue the victims until the following day. Saddam died from his injuries, and two others were hospitalized.

<sup>12</sup> [theobserverpost.com/imam-forced-into-chanting-jai-shri-ram-at-gunpoint-in-uttar-pradesh](https://theobserverpost.com/imam-forced-into-chanting-jai-shri-ram-at-gunpoint-in-uttar-pradesh)

<sup>13</sup> [scroll.in/latest/1054400/mumbai-mob-shouting-jai-shri-ram-beats-up-boy-at-bandra-station-for-going-out-with-hindu-girl](https://scroll.in/latest/1054400/mumbai-mob-shouting-jai-shri-ram-beats-up-boy-at-bandra-station-for-going-out-with-hindu-girl)

<sup>14</sup> [clarionindia.net/haryana-newly-wed-muslim-youth-dies-in-police-custody-family-alleges-torture](https://clarionindia.net/haryana-newly-wed-muslim-youth-dies-in-police-custody-family-alleges-torture)

<sup>15</sup> [maktoobmedia.com/features/muslim-youth-lynched-to-death-in-assams-morigaon-survivor-says-familiar-men-among-mob](https://maktoobmedia.com/features/muslim-youth-lynched-to-death-in-assams-morigaon-survivor-says-familiar-men-among-mob)



The following day, in Ramnagar, Uttar Pradesh, a 5-year-old Muslim girl was abducted and raped by a middle-aged man named Rinku Verma. After attacking the child, he left her unconscious, bleeding, and in critical condition. She was discovered the following day after the rapist's son came forward. After being informed, the police transported the girl to the district hospital, where she was reported to be in stable condition.<sup>16</sup>



On July 31st, a shocking incident occurred on the Jaipur-Mumbai Central Express train when a Railway Protection Force constable, Chetan Kumar Choudhary, opened fire, killing his superior officer, Assistant Sub-Inspector Tika Ram Meena, and three other Muslim passengers for their faith.<sup>17</sup> Choudhary was arrested after the attack and faces murder charges under section 302 of the

Indian Penal Code. The son of the deceased, Hussain, plans to relocate his family to Dubai due to the traumatic experience.<sup>18</sup>



In Rajasthan's Alwar, a Muslim man lost his life, and two others were injured when a mob attacked them for 'illegally' chopping wood. The incident occurred in the Rampur area on August 19th, after locals informed the police and the forest department, leading to an altercation with the trio. One man succumbed to his injuries. Police have taken several people into custody, including four forest officials and six villagers.<sup>19</sup>

On the same day, in Rajeypur village of Uttar Pradesh, a Muslim couple was allegedly attacked with iron rods and sticks by their neighbors, resulting in their deaths. According to Sitapur Superintendent of Police Chakresh Mishra, the incident stemmed from a dispute that arose a few years ago when Abbas's son eloped with a girl from a

<sup>16</sup> [theobserverpost.com/5-year-old-muslim-girl-allegedly-raped-in-uttar-pradeshs-ramnagar](https://theobserverpost.com/5-year-old-muslim-girl-allegedly-raped-in-uttar-pradeshs-ramnagar)

<sup>17</sup> [indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/maharashtra-rpf-jawan-shoots-dead-four-persons-train-8868611](https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/maharashtra-rpf-jawan-shoots-dead-four-persons-train-8868611)

<sup>18</sup> [thewire.in/communalism/just-not-safe-kin-of-train-shooting-victim-says-of-living-in-india](https://thewire.in/communalism/just-not-safe-kin-of-train-shooting-victim-says-of-living-in-india)

<sup>19</sup> [indiatoday.in/india/story/2423377-2023-08-19](https://indiatoday.in/india/story/2423377-2023-08-19)

neighboring Hindu family. Abbas's son had been sent to jail in connection with the case, and upon his recent release, tensions flared again, leading to the tragic incident.<sup>20</sup>

Also on August 19th, Aamir Khan, a 28-year-old auto driver, went missing after reportedly taking passengers to Mewat, an area recently affected by communal violence. Concerned about his sudden disappearance, Khan's family searched for him with the help of fellow auto drivers and discovered him dead in a field in Haryana's Sohna district on Monday. His body displayed visible signs of severe beatings, particularly on his head, prompting suspicions of a brutal assault.<sup>21</sup>



On August 20th, a 21-year-old mechanic named Mohammad Monis was attacked by two individuals with a broken beer bottle in Gurugram. The assailants, identified as Rakesh Chinnu



and Rajiv Nagar, targeted Monis after discovering he was Muslim.<sup>22</sup> One of them began verbally abusing him, while the other assaulted him with a broken beer bottle found on the ground.

In Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh, on August 22nd, a mob attacked two Muslim men over allegations of 'love jihad.' The incident, captured on video and widely shared on social media, showed a group of youths physically assaulting the victims and claiming that the two victims were Muslims attempting to rape Hindu women.<sup>23</sup>

On August 25th, in Rajasthan's Chittorgarh district, a group of unidentified individuals targeted Kashmiri students, injuring at least a dozen students. The incident initially began as a minor dispute between two students in the university's kitchen but was intensified when outsiders

<sup>20</sup> [newindianexpress.com/nation/2023/aug/19/2606852.html](https://newindianexpress.com/nation/2023/aug/19/2606852.html)

<sup>21</sup> [maktoobmedia.com/latest-news/missing-muslim-youths-body-found-in-mewat-sister-alleges-beating-death-calls-for-justice](https://maktoobmedia.com/latest-news/missing-muslim-youths-body-found-in-mewat-sister-alleges-beating-death-calls-for-justice)

<sup>22</sup> [indiatoday.in/cities/gurugram/story/2427867-2023-08-28](https://indiatoday.in/cities/gurugram/story/2427867-2023-08-28)

<sup>23</sup> [freepressjournal.in/ujjain/mp-viral-video-mob-thrash-2-muslim-men-in-ujjain-over-love-jihad](https://freepressjournal.in/ujjain/mp-viral-video-mob-thrash-2-muslim-men-in-ujjain-over-love-jihad)

entered the campus, raising Hindutva slogans' and launching a violent attack on the Kashmiri students. The situation further escalated when the police arrived and subsequently detained six Kashmiri students.<sup>24</sup>



In the Muzaffarnagar district of northern Uttar Pradesh, a teacher encouraged her students to slap a 7-year-old Muslim child. A video of the incident, which shows the young child crying as his classmates take turns slapping him and the teacher urging them to do it 'properly,' surfaced in late August of 2023 and sparked widespread international outrage. The teacher also made derogatory comments about the boy's religion, suggesting that his academic performance was influenced by his Muslim background. Police in the district have registered a case against the teacher, and an investigation is underway.<sup>25</sup>

On September 8th in Tijara, Rajasthan, a 22-year-old Muslim man named Wakeel Ahmed fell victim to a brutal hate crime.<sup>26</sup> Ahmed, who was returning home, was abducted by Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Purshottam Saini and his associates. They forcibly took Wakeel to a nearby jungle, where he was violently attacked. Local villagers discovered him with severe injuries and rushed him to a local hospital. He succumbed to his injuries on September 13th.

On September 10th, a communal conflict occurred in the Satara district of Maharashtra state. Local residents and leaders alleged that Hindutva groups deliberately targeted the Muslim-majority area. A mosque was attacked by a mob of around 150-200 Hindu men, who proceeded to pelt stones, damaging parked vehicles, and eventually forced their way inside.<sup>27</sup>



<sup>24</sup> [thekashmiriyat.co.uk/kashmiri-students-attacked-in-rajasthan-at-least-six-detained](https://thekashmiriyat.co.uk/kashmiri-students-attacked-in-rajasthan-at-least-six-detained)

<sup>25</sup> [cnn.com/2023/08/28/india/india-muslim-student-slapped-teacher-video-intl-hnk/index.html](https://cnn.com/2023/08/28/india/india-muslim-student-slapped-teacher-video-intl-hnk/index.html)

<sup>26</sup> [maktoobmedia.com/latest-news/muslim-youth-succumbed-to-injuries-due-to-hate-crime-in-rajasthan](https://maktoobmedia.com/latest-news/muslim-youth-succumbed-to-injuries-due-to-hate-crime-in-rajasthan)

<sup>27</sup> [maktoobmedia.com/latest-news/satara-muslim-man-killed-after-violence-erupt-over-social-media-post-family-locals-accuse-bjp-state-vp-involvement](https://maktoobmedia.com/latest-news/satara-muslim-man-killed-after-violence-erupt-over-social-media-post-family-locals-accuse-bjp-state-vp-involvement)

Once inside, they assaulted those present with iron rods and batons, resulting in the death of one man and severe injuries to at least fourteen others. Muslim-owned houses and businesses were also attacked. As a precaution, the Satara district administration suspended internet services in the region and appealed for calm on social media to prevent communal discord.<sup>28</sup>

On September 14th, at Desh Bhagat University in the Fatehgarh Sahib district of Punjab, a group of Kashmiri students reportedly endured violent attacks during protests against the university's decision to transfer their admissions to a college lacking accreditation. The demonstrations had been ongoing for over two weeks when authorities confronted the protesting students. Several students were arrested, forcibly dragged outside, and even beaten. Muslim female students' hijabs were forcibly removed. In response, the University was shut down until further notice.<sup>29</sup>



On September 15th, in Uttar Pradesh's Bareilly cantonment area, a 25-year-old Muslim youth named Ishaan was assaulted inside a temple.<sup>30</sup> The victim was looking out for his missing Hindu neighbor but was interrupted by four men who questioned his identity and then attacked him. The situation escalated until other temple-goers restored order. After a video of the incident went viral, an FIR was filed, and Ishaan received medical treatment.



Also, in Bareilly on September 19th, a young Muslim man and Hindu woman were brutally assaulted by locals who suspected them of 'love jihad.' In his early 30s, the man was accompanying his female friend to a temple searching for her missing sister when a group of vigilantes beat the man, despite the woman saying they were merely friends. Four individuals were arrested after a video of the attack went viral, and efforts to identify the others involved are ongoing.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>28</sup> [aljazeera.com/news/2023/9/15/shattered-muslim-engineer-killed-by-mob-at-mosque-in-indias-maharashtra](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/9/15/shattered-muslim-engineer-killed-by-mob-at-mosque-in-indias-maharashtra)

<sup>29</sup> [observerpost.com/hijabs-forcibly-pulled-from-our-heads-kashmiri-students-allegedly-thrashed-at-desh-bhagat-university-campus-closed-amid-protests](https://www.observerpost.com/hijabs-forcibly-pulled-from-our-heads-kashmiri-students-allegedly-thrashed-at-desh-bhagat-university-campus-closed-amid-protests)

<sup>30</sup> [clarionindia.net/up-two-arrested-for-assaulting-muslim-youth-inside-temple-in-bareilly](https://www.clarionindia.net/up-two-arrested-for-assaulting-muslim-youth-inside-temple-in-bareilly)

<sup>31</sup> [freepressjournal.in/india/up-muslim-man-brutally-thrashed-for-sitting-with-hindu-woman-inside-temple-in-bareilly-video-surfaces](https://www.freepressjournal.in/india/up-muslim-man-brutally-thrashed-for-sitting-with-hindu-woman-inside-temple-in-bareilly-video-surfaces)

In the village of Gaura in Deoria district, Uttar Pradesh, a tragic incident occurred on September 21st, when two Muslim farmers were allegedly struck by a Police Response Vehicle while returning from their paddy fields on bicycles. The incident resulted in the death of one Samiullah Ansari while his cousin Hamid Ansari sustained



severe injuries. Samiullah's wife, Shehla Khatoon, alleged that the police did not permit her to see her husband's body before burial. The incident prompted protests in the village, and the police have allegedly filed charges against more than 200 people, including some minors, who were demanding justice for Samiullah's death. The situation in the area remains tense, with some residents reportedly leaving due to fears of apprehension.<sup>32</sup>

In the Garib Nawaz Colony in Indore on September 25th, tensions erupted when a group associated with a Hindu right-wing organization clashed with Muslim women

who were celebrating Eid-e-Milad Un Nabi. According to eyewitnesses, the dispute began when members of the Hindu far-right groups raised objections to the festive decorations honoring Eid-e-Milad Un Nabi. The disagreement quickly escalated into a violent confrontation as the Muslim women responsible for the decorations attempted to prevent their removal.<sup>33</sup>

In Delhi's Nand Nagri area on September 26th, a 26-year-old disabled Muslim man named Mohammed Israr died after a mob brutally attacked him.<sup>34</sup> According to Israr's father, Abdul Wajid, his son ate a religious offering, resulting in brutal mob violence. He was falsely accused of theft, tied to a pole, and then brutally assaulted. He succumbed to his injuries that evening.



<sup>32</sup> maktoobmedia.com/latest-news/up-muslim-farmer-killed-another-injured-in-police-vehicle-hit-and-run

<sup>33</sup> muslimmirror.com/eng/indore-hindu-mob-assaults-muslim-women-over-eid-e-milad-un-nabi-decorations

<sup>34</sup> maktoobmedia.com/latest-news/in-delhi-muslim-man-brutally-thrashed-and-tied-to-pole-succumbs-to-injuries

## *Violence in Nuh*

In late July, communal violence broke out in Muslim majority Nuh district of BJP-ruled Haryana state<sup>35</sup>, resulting in multiple fatalities during the Brajmandal Jalabhishek Yatra. The yatra (rally) to Nalhar Mahadev Mandir was organized by Hindu militant groups, Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and Bajrang Dal. The yatra aimed to rejuvenate sacred Hindu sites



in the district, where Muslims constitute a significant amount of the population. The trigger for violence is said to have been some threatening videos featuring the infamous cow vigilantes Monu Manesar and Bittu Bajrangi.<sup>36</sup> After the violence, the state deputy chief minister, Dushyant Chautala, alleged that the organizers did not fully inform the authorities of their yatra.

VHP joint secretary Surendra Jain was spotted at the Nalhar Mahadev Mandir before the outbreak of violence, where he delivered anti-Muslim hate speech. “We need to change Mewat’s character,” he told the crowd.

The violence continued for days, and resulted in six killings, injuries to dozens, and damage to hundreds of cars, homes, and places of worship. On August 1st, hours after the violence, the Hindu extremists targeted a mosque in Gurugram, a suburb in Haryana bordering the Indian capital, New Delhi, and murdered a 19-year-old Imam named Maulana Saad.<sup>37</sup>

Also on August 1st, at least 14 shops were set on fire in Gurugram’s Badshahpur<sup>38</sup> by a mob of approximately 200. The attackers targeted shops selling biryani and chanted ‘Jai Shri Ram’ during the assault, leading to the market’s closure. Similar slogans



<sup>35</sup> [indianexpress.com/article/political-pulse/nuh-communal-violence-yatra-violence-8873437](https://indianexpress.com/article/political-pulse/nuh-communal-violence-yatra-violence-8873437)

<sup>36</sup> [thewire.in/communalism/haryana-violence-mewat-hate-and-provocative-videos](https://thewire.in/communalism/haryana-violence-mewat-hate-and-provocative-videos)

<sup>37</sup> [aljazeera.com/news/2023/8/1/imam-killed-after-hindu-mob-attacks-mosque-in-indias-gurugram](https://aljazeera.com/news/2023/8/1/imam-killed-after-hindu-mob-attacks-mosque-in-indias-gurugram)

<sup>38</sup> [thewire.in/communalism/gurugram-at-least-14-shops-mostly-belonging-to-muslims-burnt-down-by-mob-shouting-jai-shri-ram](https://thewire.in/communalism/gurugram-at-least-14-shops-mostly-belonging-to-muslims-burnt-down-by-mob-shouting-jai-shri-ram)

were reportedly chanted in front of a mosque in Badshahpur as well. To maintain public safety, educational institutions and fuel stations in the Sohna subdivision of Gurugram remained closed in the following days. Although the police managed to quell the initial unrest within 48 hours, other Muslim localities and places of worship were targeted in other districts of Haryana in the subsequent days.



While siding with Hindu nationalists, police conducted raids<sup>39</sup> on Muslims, prompting over 3,000 impoverished Muslim migrant workers to flee the area due to escalating fears for their safety.<sup>40</sup>

The situation escalated after a brutal police crackdown led to the detention of several individuals, including minors. The detainees' families were left in the dark about the reasons behind the arrests, and women who tried to intervene were allegedly

subjected to abuse by the police. Amid this turmoil, approximately 2,000 youths fled homes, seeking refuge in nearby forests and mountains.



Four minors who were arrested for offenses related to communal violence spent time in police custody without due adherence to legal norms.<sup>41</sup> Under the Juvenile Justice Act, minors should be immediately placed in observation homes upon arrest and should not be subjected to handcuffs or force. Parents of the suspect should also be notified promptly. However, according to the families, the police arrested the minors without proper verification, subjected them to mistreatment, and detained them unlawfully. Three of them who had initially been presented as adults were eventually transferred to juvenile observation homes. The fourth minor had been declared a juvenile but still had not been transferred to a juvenile observation home.

<sup>39</sup> maktoobmedia.com/india/nuh-violence-police-raids-force-muslims-to-flee-from-meoli-village-several-camps-in-forest

<sup>40</sup> reuters.com/world/india/muslims-flee-indian-business-hub-after-religious-clashes-attacks-2023-08-10

<sup>41</sup> newslaundry.com/2023/08/18/jj-act-violation-in-nuh-crackdown-4-minors-thrashed-put-in-police-lock-up-or-jail

While escalating the state crackdown on Muslims, authorities in the Nuh district demolished over 1200 Muslim houses and structures, claiming they were linked to communal violence<sup>42</sup> and ‘illegal encroachments.’ The residents maintained that these were not illegal constructions and that they had received no prior notice from the administration before the demolitions began.<sup>43</sup>



Taking suo-moto cognizance, the state high court issued a notice to the government over summary demolitions and raised concerns about the ethnic cleansing of Muslims. “The issue also arises whether the buildings belonging to a particular community are being brought down under the guise of law and order problem and an exercise of ethnic cleansing is being

conducted by the state,” the court observed.<sup>44</sup>

On August 31st, a man named Razzak Khan, a resident of Tapkan village went missing after traveling to Gurugram. Concerns arose when he failed to respond to phone calls that night. His elder son, Shakir Khan, filed a complaint, speculating that his father had been targeted in connection with the violence in Nuh. Khan was unfortunately found dead the next day, allegedly due to a mob killing.<sup>45</sup> The Gurugram police have initiated an investigation into the matter, but the Muslim community in the Mewat region, already subjected to a series of Islamophobic attacks, is now on edge.



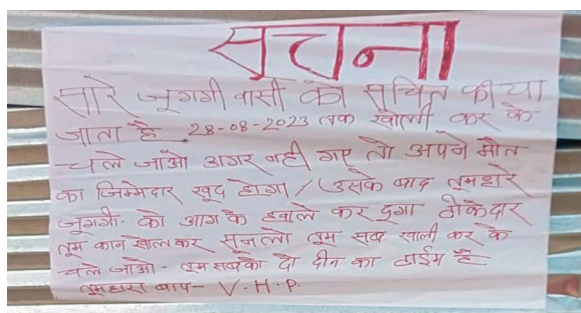
<sup>42</sup> [indianexpress.com/article/india/days-after-communal-flare-up-crackdown-in-nuh-200-arrested-so-far-houses-demolished-8877269](https://indianexpress.com/article/india/days-after-communal-flare-up-crackdown-in-nuh-200-arrested-so-far-houses-demolished-8877269)

<sup>43</sup> [indianexpress.com/article/cities/delhi/a-restaurant-a-tiles-shop-amid-nuh-demolitions-one-claim-no-notice-sent-8879959](https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/delhi/a-restaurant-a-tiles-shop-amid-nuh-demolitions-one-claim-no-notice-sent-8879959)

<sup>44</sup> [aljazeera.com/news/2023/8/8/india-court-asks-if-nuh-demolitions-were-an-exercise-of-ethnic-cleansing](https://aljazeera.com/news/2023/8/8/india-court-asks-if-nuh-demolitions-were-an-exercise-of-ethnic-cleansing)

<sup>45</sup> [maktoobmedia.com/latest-news/muslim-man-from-nuh-found-dead-in-gurugram-family-alleges-mob-killing](https://maktoobmedia.com/latest-news/muslim-man-from-nuh-found-dead-in-gurugram-family-alleges-mob-killing)





Muslim migrant workers continue to face threats, as posters<sup>46</sup> threatening them to leave the area continue to appear sporadically.

### *Hate Speech*

On July 6th, far-right leader and Sudarshan News chairperson Suresh Chavhanke ignited controversy by delivering inflammatory speeches filled with fake news and threats against Muslims and Christians.<sup>47</sup> During a public gathering in Jhansi, Madhya Pradesh, Chavhanke used his platform to disseminate divisive rhetoric, fear-mongering tactics, and conspiracy theories targeting Muslims, particularly Rohingya refugees. He questioned historical narratives and made dubious claims, further stoking communal tensions. Meanwhile, an event organized by Chavhanke in Ujjain brought together extremist monks who delivered hateful speeches, including calls for extreme violence against Muslims. One monk even advocated for ‘kar

seva,’ the physical demolition of 250 mosques.

During a public gathering in Bilaspur, Himachal Pradesh on the following day, Kamal Gautam, a leader of the Hindu Jagran Manch, delivered a hate speech targeting Muslims. He used derogatory language and threats. Gautam propagated slogans like “Islamic Jihad Murdabad” and delved into the controversial concept of love jihad. Despite his inflammatory remarks, there was no apparent action taken by authorities.<sup>48</sup>



On July 9th, at Delhi’s Talkatora Stadium, the atmosphere turned hostile as hard-line Hindu nationalists gathered for the Antarashtriya Hindu Parishad (AHP)-organized Virat Hindu Sammelan.<sup>49</sup> Far-right leader Samiksha Singh delivered a vehement hate speech, openly inciting violence against Muslims. Her inflammatory rhetoric labeled Muslims as ‘jihadis’

<sup>46</sup> [deccanherald.com/india/haryana/2667475](https://deccanherald.com/india/haryana/2667475)

<sup>47</sup> [cjp.org.in/suresh-chavhanke-others-stoke-tensions-at-an-event-in-mp-seemingly-filled-with-hate-speech-fake-news](https://cjp.org.in/suresh-chavhanke-others-stoke-tensions-at-an-event-in-mp-seemingly-filled-with-hate-speech-fake-news)

<sup>48</sup> [sabrangindia.in/unchecked-hate-speech-sparks-concerns-for-communal-harmony-in-himachal-pradesh](https://sabrangindia.in/unchecked-hate-speech-sparks-concerns-for-communal-harmony-in-himachal-pradesh)

<sup>49</sup> [sabrangindia.in/anti-muslim-hate-speech-at-delhis-famous-stadium](https://sabrangindia.in/anti-muslim-hate-speech-at-delhis-famous-stadium)

and called for violence. Praveen Togadia, a staunch Hindu nationalist and former international president of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, also spoke at the event, vowing not to let the Muslim population increase. Togadia expressed confidence in the government's initiatives, including constructing the Ram Mandir and formulating the Uniform Civil Code, and claimed a forthcoming Population Control Bill ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.



On the 13th of July, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma of Assam sparked controversy by attributing the rising vegetable prices in Guwahati to the Bengali-origin Muslim community, pejoratively referred to as 'miyas'. Sarma claimed that miyas charged higher prices compared to Assamese traders. Furthermore, he encouraged Assamese youth to compete vigorously with 'miyas' in business. These statements drew sharp criticism from various quarters, with opponents accusing

him of creating a divisive narrative and fueling communal tensions.<sup>50</sup>

In Solapur, Maharashtra on July 14th, extremists and notorious hate speakers continued to spread divisive ideologies through rallies and incendiary speeches. Notably, a video surfaced featuring Kalicharan Maharaj inciting violence and calling for Hindu unification while baselessly claiming temples were being demolished due to caste divisions among Hindus.<sup>51</sup> Maharaj has an extensive history of hate speech cases filed against him. Another video captured leaders at a Hindu Jan Aakrosh Morcha organized by the Sakal Hindu Samaj, threatening those who praised Aurangzeb. Hate speech incidents such as these are on the rise in Maharashtra.

In Osmanabad, president of Hindu Rashtra Sena Dhananjay Desai, delivered an inflammatory speech during a Hindu Janakrosh Sabha on July 24th. Desai suggested that India should learn from China's treatment of Uyghurs, referencing the widely condemned human rights abuses against the Muslim population in Xinjiang.<sup>52</sup>

On August 2nd in Hisar, Haryana, during a rally orchestrated by VHP and

<sup>50</sup> [scroll.in/latest/1052715/opposition-criticises-assam-cm-for-blaming-bengali-origin-muslims-for-hike-in-vegetable-prices](https://scroll.in/latest/1052715/opposition-criticises-assam-cm-for-blaming-bengali-origin-muslims-for-hike-in-vegetable-prices)

<sup>51</sup> [cjp.org.in/notorious-leaders-spread-communal-and-divisive-ideology-in-solapur-maharashtra](https://cjp.org.in/notorious-leaders-spread-communal-and-divisive-ideology-in-solapur-maharashtra)

<sup>52</sup> [sabrangindia.in/unchecked-hate-speech-sparks-concerns-for-communal-harmony-in-himachal-pradesh](https://sabrangindia.in/unchecked-hate-speech-sparks-concerns-for-communal-harmony-in-himachal-pradesh)

Bajrang Dal, a demonstrator issued a warning to local shopkeepers, urging them to dismiss any Muslim employees, or face potential boycotting. Another implied threats of violence against Muslims and suggested armed retaliation. Provocative slogans insinuating violence against Muslims were also chanted.<sup>53</sup>

On the same day in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, a protest was organized and led by retired IPS officer K. P. Singh, now associated with the VHP. During the demonstration, a group was seen assaulting a tractor driver and stopping a bus while chanting Hindu slogans. Derogatory remarks about Muslims were made, likening them to snakes.<sup>54</sup>



On August 3rd in Assandh, Haryana, Hindu youths organized a protest rally in response to the Nuh violence. A 27-minute livestream of the protest captured participants chanting slogans including “Desh ke gaddaron ko goli maaron saalon ko”

(“shoot the traitors of the country”) and “Allah kehne nahi dena, ek bhi mullah rehene nahi dena” (“we won’t let them say Allah, and we won’t let Muslims live”). The rally commenced in front of the Assandh police station and concluded at the sub-divisional Magistrate’s office, with these communal chants persisting throughout the demonstration.<sup>55</sup>



An unauthorized Mahapanchayat took place on August 6th in Tigra, Haryana, where speakers called for the release of ‘innocent Hindu brothers’ arrested after clashes in Nuh and demanded a societal boycott of Muslims. VHP leader Yashwant Shekhawat condemned what he referred to as ‘violence by jihadis,’ and urged Hindus to unite in boycotting Muslims. Two days later, speakers Kulbhushan Bhardwaj and Babita Gurjar faced legal consequences for their speeches at the event, and an FIR was registered under multiple sections of the Indian Penal Code.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>53</sup> [thewire.in/communalism/haryana-hisar-rally-hindutva-muslims-boycott-fir](https://thewire.in/communalism/haryana-hisar-rally-hindutva-muslims-boycott-fir)

<sup>54</sup> [twitter.com/HindutvaWatchIn/status/1686998985985204224](https://twitter.com/HindutvaWatchIn/status/1686998985985204224)

<sup>55</sup> [twitter.com/HindutvaWatchIn/status/1687336153303687168](https://twitter.com/HindutvaWatchIn/status/1687336153303687168)

<sup>56</sup> [tribuneindia.com/news/haryana/mahapanchayat-at-tighara-village-calls-for-economic-boycott-of-minority-community-532781](https://tribuneindia.com/news/haryana/mahapanchayat-at-tighara-village-calls-for-economic-boycott-of-minority-community-532781)



On August 11th, in Palwal district, Haryana, a Hindu Mahapanchayat held at Pondri village featured speakers who openly issued threats in the presence of police personnel, despite prior warnings against hate speech.<sup>57</sup> One speaker notably stated, “If you raise a finger, we will cut off your hands.” This gathering was part of a series of rallies and Mahapanchayats held in several states, including Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand, following communal clashes in Nuh on July 31st.

In September, a disturbing series of incidents unfolded across various locations in India. On September 21st in Rudraprayag, Uttarakhand, a Hindu far-right leader delivered an inflammatory speech during a VHP-Bajrang Dal event, demonizing Muslims and calling for their ostracization.<sup>58</sup> The following day, on September 22nd, in Sankhwas Gaon, Nagaur, Rajasthan, a Bajrang Dal leader issued threats against

Muslims, asserting that his organization would not tolerate the presence of mosques and Muslim shrines in India.<sup>59</sup> On September 24th, in Chandni Chowk, New Delhi, Hindu Raksha Dal leader Pinky Chaudhry delivered hate speeches against Muslims, employing anti-Muslim slurs and attempting to incite hostility against the Muslim community in the area.<sup>60</sup>

### *Report: BJP States Top Hate Speech Chart*

On September 23rd, US-based journalist Raqib Hameed Naik, along with scholar Abhyudaya Tyagi and Paris-based journalist Aarushi Srivastava, released a report<sup>61</sup> documenting all verified instances of hate speech events organized by Hindu far-right groups against India’s Muslim minorities in the first half of 2023.

The report reveals that in the first 181 days of 2023, there were 255 recorded instances of hate speech gatherings targeting Muslims across 17 states in India, including the National Capital Territory of Delhi and the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. This alarming statistic highlights an average of over one hate speech event occurring daily. Overwhelmingly, 80% of these

<sup>57</sup> [altnews.in/nuh-violence-after-vhp-rallies-in-several-states-call-for-killing-of-muslims-social-economic-boycott](https://altnews.in/nuh-violence-after-vhp-rallies-in-several-states-call-for-killing-of-muslims-social-economic-boycott)

<sup>58</sup> [twitter.com/HindutvaWatchIn/status/1705484646191141188?s=20](https://twitter.com/HindutvaWatchIn/status/1705484646191141188?s=20)

<sup>59</sup> [twitter.com/HindutvaWatchIn/status/1705507293331173884?s=20](https://twitter.com/HindutvaWatchIn/status/1705507293331173884?s=20)

<sup>60</sup> [twitter.com/HindutvaWatchIn/status/1705817433242542480?s=20](https://twitter.com/HindutvaWatchIn/status/1705817433242542480?s=20)

<sup>61</sup> [bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-09-25/modi-s-party-linked-with-most-hate-speech-in-india-report-finds](https://bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-09-25/modi-s-party-linked-with-most-hate-speech-in-india-report-finds)

hate speech events (205) occurred in BJP-ruled states and union territories.

Maharashtra, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Gujarat witnessed the highest number of hate speech gatherings, with Maharashtra alone accounting for 29% of such incidents, while seven out of the top eight states with the highest number of hate speech events are governed by the BJP and its coalition partners. Around 42% of all hate speech gatherings were organized by RSS-affiliated groups.

The report found that 51% of all the hate speech gatherings featured anti-Muslim conspiracy theories such as “love jihad,” “land jihad,” “mazar jihad,” “halal jihad,” and others. A concerning 33% of all the gatherings explicitly called for violence against Muslims. About 11% of events included explicit calls for Hindus to boycott Muslims. Disturbingly, 4% of all the events featured hate-filled and sexist speeches explicitly targeting Muslim women. Nearly 12% of events featured calls to arms.

Overall, 33% of hate speech events occurred in states that have already conducted or are set to conduct state legislative elections in 2023, while over

36% occurred in states slated to hold legislative elections in 2024. Nearly 70% of these events were reported in states with legislative elections either in 2023 or 2024.

### *Illegal Demolitions and Evictions*

On July 15th, in Maharashtra’s Erandol town, a mosque dating back to the 16th century was temporarily sealed by the district administration following claims by the Hindutva group Pandav Vara Sangharsh Samiti that the mosque



was built by demolishing the Pandav Vara structure at the same site.<sup>62</sup> The Mosque Committee Trust moved the Aurangabad High Court to challenge the order and requested permission to continue praying there, emphasizing the urgency of the matter. The trust’s advocate argued that the collector’s order to seal the mosque was illegal since it is located on a registered waqf

<sup>62</sup> [theobserverpost.com/historical-mosque-in-maharashtra-sealed-following-hindutva-groups-land-claim](https://theobserverpost.com/historical-mosque-in-maharashtra-sealed-following-hindutva-groups-land-claim)

property, and the Waqf tribunal should handle decisions concerning waqf properties. There has been a temporary ban on prayers at the mosque due to the situation's sensitivity.

In Sambhal, Uttar Pradesh, in July, approximately 40 restaurants selling non-vegetarian food, primarily owned by Muslims, were ordered to shut down during the two monsoon months when Kanwariyas (devotees of Lord Shiva) pass through the town.<sup>63</sup> This directive was unofficial and lacked a clear origin. Despite attempts by restaurant owners to only sell vegetarian food (which the police did not permit), restaurant owners and employees were left in a state of financial distress, being out of work. While police claim these measures were taken to maintain law and order during the Kanwar Yatra, the restaurant owners argue that their businesses are being unfairly targeted.

On July 22nd, the Indian Railways issued a “removal of encroachment” notice to two mosques in the heart of New Delhi: Bengali Market Mosque and the Babbar Shah Takiya Mosque.<sup>64</sup> Due to both mosques being located on railway land along the primary route between Delhi and Ghaziabad, mosque-goers were instructed to vacate



within 15 days. The notices stated, “Railway property has been illegally invaded upon. You must voluntarily dismantle any unlicensed structures, including temples, mosques, or shrines within 15 days of receiving this alert or the railway administration will take legal action.” According to the Delhi Waqf Board, who claimed ownership of the mosques, they had been in possession of the buildings before India had even gained independence from Britain. The Babbar Shah Takiya Mosque holds particular significance, as it has stood for nearly 400 years.<sup>65</sup> Both mosques have been an integral part of the religious and cultural landscape of Delhi for centuries.

Also on the 22nd, the administration in Uttarakhand's Nainital City conducted a demolition<sup>66</sup> operation, bulldozing multiple structures with the assistance of six JCB machines, five Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) companies, 80 sub-inspectors,

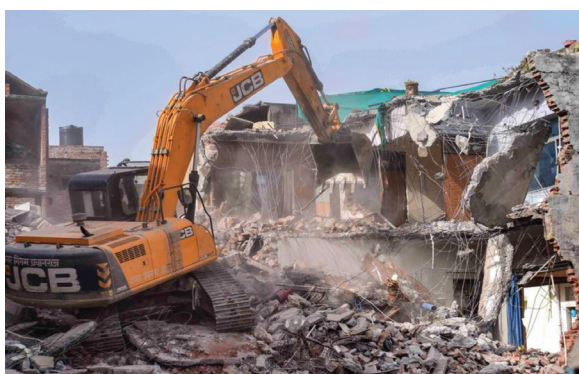
<sup>63</sup> [theprint.in/ground-reports/no-written-order-but-up-police-has-shut-muslim-restaurants-in-sambhal-for-kanwar-yatra/1689476](https://theprint.in/ground-reports/no-written-order-but-up-police-has-shut-muslim-restaurants-in-sambhal-for-kanwar-yatra/1689476)

<sup>64</sup> <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Delhi/article67110142.ece>

<sup>65</sup> <https://en.abna24.com/story/1381848>

<sup>66</sup> [opindia.com/2023/07/nainital-illegal-structures-enemy-properties-demolished-leftists-islamists-outrage/](https://opindia.com/2023/07/nainital-illegal-structures-enemy-properties-demolished-leftists-islamists-outrage/)

and 150 constables. Before the operation, the district administration issued notices to the illegal occupants, instructing them to vacate the houses. When these encroachers approached the Uttarakhand High Court seeking relief, their plea was dismissed, and the High Court ordered their immediate eviction. Over 134 Muslim families were affected.



On the same day, 210 families residing in Nanke Daranga were accused by the forest department in Assam of ‘encroaching’ upon Daranga forest land.<sup>67</sup> The notices issued by the department ordered the villagers to vacate the land within 15 days, citing illegal occupation and the threat of appropriate action under forest laws. The village, which consists of non-surveyed land, falls under the Bodoland Territorial Region, an autonomous administrative region grappling with land rights issues for non-tribal communities. Village residents lack official land deeds

despite being settled there for decades.

A wave of demolitions<sup>68</sup> in the Nai Basti area in Mathura, Uttar Pradesh on August 9th and 14th has left over five hundred people homeless and struggling. 137 Muslim houses<sup>69</sup> were destroyed after being labeled as “illegal encroachments on government land” and their displaced residents were left in precarious living conditions, with tents along the roadside becoming their temporary shelters. Children stopped attending school with no alternative arrangements in place. The residents had previously filed a petition in civil court against the eviction notice but to no avail.



On August 28th, a disturbing incident occurred in the Rishikesh area of Uttarakhand state, when a group of individuals associated with the Devbhoomi Raksha Abhiyan allegedly used sledgehammers to demolish a Muslim shrine at Amit Gram while

<sup>67</sup> [bit.ly/3Q75Dg6](https://bit.ly/3Q75Dg6)

<sup>68</sup> [timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/agra/mathura-homes-razed-people-selling-debris-to-make-ends-meet/articleshowprint/102815836.cms](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/agra/mathura-homes-razed-people-selling-debris-to-make-ends-meet/articleshowprint/102815836.cms)

<sup>69</sup> [thewire.in/communalism/they-bulldozed-our-life-mathuras-muslims-struggle-as-the-state-crushes-their-homes](https://thewire.in/communalism/they-bulldozed-our-life-mathuras-muslims-struggle-as-the-state-crushes-their-homes)

chanting “Jai Shri Ram” slogans. This act of vandalism and religious provocation has caused shock and outrage in the region. The video footage capturing the incident has quickly circulated on social media platforms, further amplifying the incident’s impact and raising concerns about communal tensions and the need for swift action and investigation by local authorities.<sup>70</sup>



On September 3rd in the Amit Gram area of Rishikesh, Uttarakhand, at least three dargahs were vandalized.<sup>71</sup> Shocking videos of the incident went viral online, depicting members of Devbhoomi Raksha Abhiyan using sledgehammers to smash headstones while shouting “Jai Shri Ram.”

### *Cow Vigilantism*

In Gurugram on July 4th, Bittu Bajrangi, a cow vigilante and leader of the Bajrang Force in Faridabad, was

charged by the police for allegedly attacking and seizing cattle from a Muslim family.<sup>72</sup> The villagers claimed that Bajrangi and his associates came at them with swords, made Islamophobic comments, and fled with 60 cows and 17 goats. The vigilantes then took the cattle to a gaushala (cow shelter) and tried to claim that the cattle did not have ownership. Other cow vigilante groups and right-wing organizations supported Bajrangi, alleging they had received information about potential slaughter plans. To protect against potential retaliation, villagers initiated night patrols, and the affected family sought refuge with relatives for safety.

On the same day in Najafgarh, members of VHP and Bajrang Dal conducted visits to several meat shops<sup>73</sup>, asserting their authority and insisting on strict adherence to the mandatory closure of these shops on Tuesdays, citing the importance of respecting “Hindu sentiments.” In one specific incident, a group of Bajrang Dal members threatened a Muslim shop owner and forced him to surrender his unsold meat, giving it to dogs.<sup>74</sup>

On July 6th in Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh, members of the extremist Hindu group Rashtriya Bajrang Dal

<sup>70</sup> [thehindustangazette.com/crime/hindutva-goons-demolish-muslim-shrine-with-sledge-hammers-while-chanting-jai-shri-ram-slogans-at-amit-gram-17681](https://thehindustangazette.com/crime/hindutva-goons-demolish-muslim-shrine-with-sledge-hammers-while-chanting-jai-shri-ram-slogans-at-amit-gram-17681)

<sup>71</sup> [maktoobmedia.com/latest-news/three-dargahs-bulldozed-smashed-by-hindutva-group-amid-jai-shri-ram-war-cry-in-rishikesh](https://maktoobmedia.com/latest-news/three-dargahs-bulldozed-smashed-by-hindutva-group-amid-jai-shri-ram-war-cry-in-rishikesh)

<sup>72</sup> [tribuneindia.com/news/haryana/cow-vigilante-booked-for-snatching-cattle-from-muslim-family-in-faridabad-522754](https://tribuneindia.com/news/haryana/cow-vigilante-booked-for-snatching-cattle-from-muslim-family-in-faridabad-522754)

<sup>73</sup> [twitter.com/HindutvaWatchIn/status/1676436152826429440](https://twitter.com/HindutvaWatchIn/status/1676436152826429440)

<sup>74</sup> [twitter.com/meerfaisal01/status/1684455631871426560?s=20](https://twitter.com/meerfaisal01/status/1684455631871426560?s=20)



conducted raids on Muslim-owned meat shops, forcing them to cease their operations.<sup>75</sup>

On July 8th in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh, local authorities initiated attempts to remove Muslim-owned meat shops, citing potential offense to the sentiments of Mahakal devotees.<sup>76</sup> A video circulating online depicts concerned civilians pleading with the officials against the closure of their shops. Several Muslim city council members arrived at the scene to oppose the move.



On July 13th, in Nala, Jamtara, Jharkhand, a disturbing incident of Hindu extremist cow vigilantism unfolded as members of the Bajrang Dal reportedly tied a Muslim man's hands with a thick rope and filmed him under suspicion of carrying beef.<sup>77</sup> In a video of the incident, the man can be seen with his wrists bound while the Hindu militants interrogate him,

questioning his identity and purpose in the area.

On July 25th in Assam's Morigaon district, three men were attacked by a mob suspecting them of cattle theft.<sup>78</sup> When police arrived, the mob escalated the situation by pelting stones at the officers. Eventually, the police managed to rescue the three victims, but one of them, Saddam Hussain, succumbed to his injuries. The other two, identified as Billal Ali and Mizarul Haque, remain stable and are currently receiving medical treatment.

On August 13th, Hifjur Rahman from Jayantia Basti entered the Hindu-dominated village of Bamungaon in Hojai district, Assam. Rahman was suspected of cow theft and apprehended by a local cow vigilante group. They severely beat him to the point of death.<sup>79</sup> Rahman's family vehemently denied the allegation of theft, emphasizing his poor mental health condition and history of wandering, and argued that despite his condition, he was not a thief and should not have been subjected to such violence.

On the 23rd of August in Bidar, Karnataka, members of the Hindutva armed group Sri Ram Sena targeted

<sup>75</sup> [twitter.com/HindutvaWatchIn/status/1676830683434459136](https://twitter.com/HindutvaWatchIn/status/1676830683434459136)

<sup>76</sup> [twitter.com/HindutvaWatchIn/status/1677894279467761664](https://twitter.com/HindutvaWatchIn/status/1677894279467761664)

<sup>77</sup> [twitter.com/HindutvaWatchIn/status/1679373683624669184?s=20](https://twitter.com/HindutvaWatchIn/status/1679373683624669184?s=20)

<sup>78</sup> [siasat.com/man-lynched-on-suspicion-of-cattle-theft-in-assam-2650781](https://siasat.com/man-lynched-on-suspicion-of-cattle-theft-in-assam-2650781)

<sup>79</sup> [maktoobmedia.com/latest-news/muslim-man-with-mental-health-conditions-lynched-in-assam](https://maktoobmedia.com/latest-news/muslim-man-with-mental-health-conditions-lynched-in-assam)

Muslim cattle traders. According to the complaint from cattle trader Abdul Salim, the Hindutva mob forcibly stopped a van at APMC Market in Aurad town, assaulting the driver as well as the owner of the cattle, who were subsequently hospitalized.<sup>80</sup>



On September 9th, in Gadag district near Naragund, Karnataka, a group of cow vigilantes reportedly affiliated with Bajrang Dal and Sangh Parivar attacked two traders. Mohammad and Ashraf Bepari had been transporting cattle to Gadag, and were returning home after failing to sell the meat. The attackers intercepted and assaulted them, accusing them of illegally trafficking cows. Both victims sustained injuries and received treatment at the Karnataka Institute of Medical Sciences in Hubballi.<sup>81</sup>

later claimed that the meat transporters had tried to run them over. They were arrested, and the vehicles and meat were seized.<sup>82</sup>

In Doddaballapura, Karnataka on September 24th, a sixteen-person group of cow vigilantes with Sri Ram Sena intercepted four trucks transporting beef from Hindupur to Bengaluru. The attackers confiscated money and cell phones, physically assaulted the drivers, and set a car on fire. They then forced the occupants of the trucks to carry the butchered animals and paraded them around. The attackers

<sup>80</sup> <https://maktoobmedia.com/latest-news/karnataka-hindutva-mob-attacks-muslim-cattle-traders-in-bidar>

<sup>81</sup> [thehindu.com/news/national/karnataka/traders-attacked-allegedly-by-cow-vigilantes-in-karnataka/article67292465.ece](https://thehindu.com/news/national/karnataka/traders-attacked-allegedly-by-cow-vigilantes-in-karnataka/article67292465.ece)

<sup>82</sup> [deccanherald.com/india/karnataka/bengaluru/hindutva-activists-torch-vehicle-attack-beef-transporters-near-bengaluru-several-arrested-2699264](https://deccanherald.com/india/karnataka/bengaluru/hindutva-activists-torch-vehicle-attack-beef-transporters-near-bengaluru-several-arrested-2699264)

## PERSECUTION & DISCRIMINATION AGAINST CHRISTIANS

On July 4th, Alexander Coates Reed, the principal of DY Patil High School in Talegaon, Pune, Maharashtra, was assaulted by members of the Bajrang Dal and some parents, allegedly for forcing students to recite Christian prayers and installing CCTV cameras in the girls' toilet.<sup>83</sup> However, subsequent investigations by the Pimpri-Chinchwad police found no evidence of forced prayer and clarified that the CCTVs were not inside the toilets but in common areas. An anonymous teacher from the school corroborated the findings, denying any forceful recitation of Christian prayers and explaining that the CCTVs were meant to deter fighting and bullying among students.<sup>84</sup>



On July 10th in Bahraich, Uttar Pradesh, ten individuals, including a pastor named Baburam, were arrested for allegedly engaging in illegal religious conversion.<sup>85</sup> Authorities in BJP-ruled states have weaponized religious conversion laws to target minorities, particularly Christians.



On July 23rd, in the Raebareli district of Uttar Pradesh, a mob of approximately 30 radical Hindu nationalists violently attacked a Christian pastor and his family, accusing them of converting villagers to Christianity.<sup>86</sup> During the assault, the pastor's wife sustained a severe head injury, leaving her unconscious, and several others suffered internal injuries, necessitating hospitalization. The attackers also vandalized the house church. When the pastor sought police assistance, he

<sup>83</sup> [newindianexpress.com/nation/2023/jul/06/2592025.html](https://newindianexpress.com/nation/2023/jul/06/2592025.html)

<sup>84</sup> [newslandry.com/2023/07/13/pune-principals-assault-no-evidence-of-forced-christian-prayers-complainant-backtracks-too](https://newslandry.com/2023/07/13/pune-principals-assault-no-evidence-of-forced-christian-prayers-complainant-backtracks-too)

<sup>85</sup> [telanganatoday.com/10-arrested-in-up-for-illegal-religious-conversion](https://telanganatoday.com/10-arrested-in-up-for-illegal-religious-conversion)

<sup>86</sup> [persecution.org/2023/07/25/hindu-mob-attacks-christian-family](https://persecution.org/2023/07/25/hindu-mob-attacks-christian-family)

was detained and accused of conducting illegal conversions. He and his wife were held in police custody for over 24 hours before being released on bail.

On July 26th, a Christian orphanage in Madhya Pradesh was abruptly shut down due to allegations of religious conversion attempts. Child rights officials conducted a surprise raid on the orphanage, which housed 73 children, and accused the orphanage of engaging in religious conversion after discovering bibles inside.<sup>87</sup> About 30 orphaned children were moved to government facilities, while single-parented children returned home. Pastor Emmanuel Dawar asserted that the conversion allegations were politically motivated due to upcoming elections in the area.



On August 8th, posters restricting the entry of Muslim and Christian traders were displayed in Dhaura gram panchayat, located in the Ashoknagar

district of Madhya Pradesh. This proposal was introduced by the BJP district president and Dhaura gram panchayat head, Bablu Yadav, who emphasized the need to verify traders' religious affiliations amid concerns of 'love jihad' and religious conversions. Traders from these communities are now required to carry their Aadhar cards and will only be permitted entry after convincing the panchayat head that their visit is solely for business purposes.<sup>88</sup>



During a Christian prayer gathering on August 20th, a disturbing incident unfolded at the Siyyon Prarthna Bhawan in Delhi's Tahirpur area. A group of individuals associated with the Bajrang Dal entered the building and disrupted the prayers by loudly proclaiming promises of a 'Hindu nation' over loudspeakers.<sup>89</sup> Armed with swords and sticks, the mob began to assault Christian community members with sticks while they were praying and destroyed Bibles. Several

<sup>87</sup> [ucanews.com/news/christian-orphanage-in-india-shut-down-alleging-conversion/102100](https://ucanews.com/news/christian-orphanage-in-india-shut-down-alleging-conversion/102100)

<sup>88</sup> [evbharat.com/english/state/madhya-pradesh/madhya-pradesh-entry-of-muslim-christian-traders-banned-in-dhaura-gram-panchayat/na20230808160105915915142](https://evbharat.com/english/state/madhya-pradesh/madhya-pradesh-entry-of-muslim-christian-traders-banned-in-dhaura-gram-panchayat/na20230808160105915915142)

<sup>89</sup> [thewire.in/communalism/christians-attacked-in-delhi-church-during-sunday-service](https://thewire.in/communalism/christians-attacked-in-delhi-church-during-sunday-service)

people suffered injuries during the attack, with allegations of attempted harassment and sexual assault of the women. In response, some Christians went to the GTB Enclave police station to file a complaint, leading to over 100 people from the Bajrang Dal, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad gathering outside the police station, chanting Hindu slogans.

In late August, police in Indore, Madhya Pradesh, issued intrusive questionnaires to around 40 churches, requesting information on Christian activities over the past three months. The questionnaires covered various aspects, including Christian objectives, suspicious conversions, NGO operations, and foreign funding. This move, considered discriminatory and intrusive, has led many churches to shift to online services due to concerns that the data may be used by Hindu extremists to further target Christians.<sup>90</sup>



In the Kanpur Vishnupuri Labour colony, two men were arrested on the charge of illegal conversions.<sup>91</sup> VHP and Bajrang Dal members alleged that religious conversion efforts were taking place in the locality, along with the unlawful construction of a church. In response to the complaints—which suggested that these individuals were converting Hindus to Christianity by offering incentives such as money, employment, medical treatment, and education—the police launched an investigation and ultimately arrested the two individuals on September 3rd.

In Uttar Pradesh, seventeen individuals were arrested under the state's anti-conversion law during a Sunday prayer service on September 17th.<sup>92</sup> A local villager, Subhash Chandra Jatav, accused another villager, Dinesh Chandrashekhar, of inviting him to a prayer service where the organizers allegedly tried to convert people to Christianity and offered financial support in return. Minakshi Singh (general secretary of Unity in Compassion, a Delhi-based charity) described the allegations as baseless and criticized the police action against peaceful worshippers, considering it a breach of the constitutional right to practice one's religion of choice. Singh

<sup>90</sup> [christianpost.com/news/india-police-send-suspicious-notices-to-at-least-40-churches.html](https://christianpost.com/news/india-police-send-suspicious-notices-to-at-least-40-churches.html)

<sup>91</sup> [timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kanpur/two-arrested-on-charges-of-forced-religious-conversion/articleshowprint/103374814.cms](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kanpur/two-arrested-on-charges-of-forced-religious-conversion/articleshowprint/103374814.cms)

<sup>92</sup> [ucanews.com/news/17-christians-held-under-indias-anti-conversion-law/102640](https://ucanews.com/news/17-christians-held-under-indias-anti-conversion-law/102640)

announced plans to seek bail for the arrested individuals. Uttar Pradesh has reported the highest number of incidents related to religious conversions in India over the past eight months, with the state's anti-conversion law being enforced vigorously.

On September 26th, Hindu extremists stormed St. Mary's Convent School in Deori, Madhya Pradesh, accusing the school of disrespecting the Hindu god Ganesh and demanding a police investigation.<sup>93</sup> The protesters gathered at the school gate, alleging that a sketch of Ganesh had been removed from the notice board. Some of them forcibly entered the principal's office and began questioning the nun-principal, Sister Sarita Joseph. The school staff called the police for assistance as the protesters continued their demonstrations.



St. Mary's Convent School follows an inclusive approach, celebrating festivals of all religions and providing education

to all students equally, regardless of their religious background. Christian leaders view such incidents as attempts to tarnish the school's image and create communal discord ahead of the state elections, as the pro-Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party faces a challenging election in a state it has previously governed for 18 years.



### *Violence in Manipur*

The catalyst for the latest outbreak of violence in Manipur occurred in May, sparked by plans to recognize the Meitei as a Scheduled Tribe (ST), a status already granted to the Kuki. ST status would provide Meiteis with affirmative action benefits, including government job and college admission quotas. Fearing a reduction in their entitlements, Kuki groups protested. The clashes can be traced back to long-standing tensions between the Meitei majority, predominantly Hindu, and the Kuki-Zo, mainly

<sup>93</sup> [ucanews.com/news/indian-catholic-school-targeted-by-hardline-hindu-mob/102738](https://ucanews.com/news/indian-catholic-school-targeted-by-hardline-hindu-mob/102738)

Christian tribal groups. These tensions have historically revolved around competition for land and public jobs, with some local leaders accused of exacerbating ethnic divisions for political gain. This has resulted in at least 180 deaths—mostly from the Kuki ethnic community<sup>94</sup>—alleged acts of sexual violence, extrajudicial killings,



extensive property destruction, torture, and the forced displacement of approximately 60,000 people. While efforts to restore peace and stability continue, with the government deploying troops, imposing curfews, and conducting investigations into the violence, the situation remains precarious, and violence persists.<sup>95</sup>

On August 5, fresh violence erupted in Manipur's Imphal West district, with reports of fifteen houses being set on fire at Langol Games village.<sup>96</sup> A mob went on a rampage, prompting security personnel to respond by firing several rounds of tear gas shells

to control the situation. During the violence, a 45-year-old man sustained bullet wounds on his left thigh and was admitted to the Regional Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS). While the situation improved the following morning, restrictions remained in place.

On the same day, officials reported three more casualties and a series of house burnings in the Bishnupur and Imphal East districts.<sup>97</sup>

On August 18th, three Kuki men were killed in the Ukhrul area of Manipur.<sup>98</sup> The victims, identified as Thangkhokai Haokip, Jamkhogin Haokip, and Hollenson Baite, were designated guards for the Kuki village of Thowai Kuki. Around 4:30 in the morning, unknown assailants entered the village and opened fire on the guards, killing them.



<sup>94</sup> ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2023/09/india-un-experts-alarmed-continuing-abuses-manipur

<sup>95</sup> aljazeera.com/news/2023/8/9/why-ethnic-violence-in-indias-manipur-has-been-going-on-for-three-months

<sup>96</sup> thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/article67164344.ece

<sup>97</sup> reuters.com/world/india/three-people-killed-houses-set-ablaze-fresh-violence-indias-manipur-state-2023-08-05

<sup>98</sup> thewire.in/security/three-kuki-people-killed-in-fresh-violence-in-manipur

In Manipur's Pallel village on the 8th of September, a group of armed men engaged in a shootout with security forces, resulting in at least three fatalities and numerous injuries. As news of the shooting spread, hundreds of people from the Meiti community rushed to the scene out of fear of potential attacks by the Kuki ethnic group. The police responded with tear gas, and among the 140 injured were one army officer and three police personnel.<sup>99</sup>



In late September, authorities in Manipur imposed a curfew.<sup>100</sup> This action was preceded by violent protests related to the abduction and murder of two students who had gone missing in July and were later discovered dead. The situation escalated on September 27th, after armed mobs vandalized a governing party office and launched petrol bombs at police units, and resulted in more than 80 students being injured. Mobile internet services were suspended in the state for five days.

<sup>99</sup> [apnews.com/article/india-ethnic-violence-manipur-state-9f59705f30b17cff4e12cdb32db85188](https://apnews.com/article/india-ethnic-violence-manipur-state-9f59705f30b17cff4e12cdb32db85188)

<sup>100</sup> [aljazeera.com/news/2023/9/28/curfew-in-parts-of-indias-manipur-after-protests-over-killing-of-students](https://aljazeera.com/news/2023/9/28/curfew-in-parts-of-indias-manipur-after-protests-over-killing-of-students)



## JAMMU AND KASHMIR

In July, political leaders and members of the Shi'a community in Kashmir urged authorities to remove restrictions on their traditional processions for the month of Muharram, which have been prohibited since 1986 due to security concerns.<sup>101</sup> These restrictions have notably affected processions in central Srinagar, including areas like Abi Guzar and Dalgate, leading to growing frustration within the community



due to the repeated denial of their religious observances. Mayor of Srinagar, Junaid Azim Mattu, expressed that the current stability in the region warranted the reinstatement of these processions. Shi'a leader Abid Hussain Ansari underscored the community's desire for recognition, emphasizing their sole wish to observe Muharram without external interventions.



In Kishtwar on July 25th, two Delhi-based private companies, reportedly in collusion with the Jammu and Kashmir administration, forcibly occupied a piece of land to facilitate an ongoing Hindu pilgrimage to the temple of Mata Chandi.<sup>102</sup> In response to a petition, the court ordered the administration to vacate the land, which was being utilized as a helipad by the two private aviation companies, Himalayan Heli Services Pvt Ltd and Aryan Aviation Pvt Ltd, to transport pilgrims to the shrine. The landowner, Prithvi Raj, had objected to the land's occupation, alleging that it occurred without his consent and without payment of rent. The court ruled in favor of the landowner, asserting that his rights had been compromised by the administration's actions. While the Machail yatra, a challenging pilgrimage to the

<sup>101</sup> [newsclick.in/locals-urge-authorities-allow-muharram-processions-kashmir](https://newsclick.in/locals-urge-authorities-allow-muharram-processions-kashmir)

<sup>102</sup> [thewire.in/rights/jk-admin-forcibly-occupying-private-land-helipad-pilgrimage](https://thewire.in/rights/jk-admin-forcibly-occupying-private-land-helipad-pilgrimage)

high-altitude Himalayan shrine of Mata Chandi, is a significant annual event, controversy surrounds the use of private land for helicopter services along the pilgrimage route.



In late July, the Indian government suspended the passports<sup>103</sup> of several Kashmiris, including journalists and critics, in a move viewed as an effort to suppress dissent in the region. Approximately ten individuals, both in Kashmir and abroad, received emails citing Section 10(3) of The Passports Act, alleging they posed a threat to Indian security. However, they claim there were no charges against them. This action is part of a broader crackdown on dissent in Kashmir, including delays in passport issuance and harassment of journalists and activists. Press freedom has been under significant pressure in Kashmir since 2019,

with foreign correspondents unable to report from the region without explicit permission from India.

In addition, the Jammu and Kashmir Police claim to have forged direct cooperation with major social media platforms—such as WhatsApp, X (formerly known as Twitter), Snapchat, Instagram, Telegram, and TikTok—granting them access to track individuals and entities involved in activities classified as “anti-national” on these platforms.<sup>104</sup> They are actively monitoring the IP addresses of those involved in such activities to maintain law and order in the region. This partnership was revealed following an operation by the Jammu and Kashmir Police’s Cyber Investigation Kashmir (CIK) wing, resulting in the apprehension of an individual from Srinagar operating a fake Instagram account and posting supposed ‘anti-national’ content.

On July 28th, members of the Muslim Gujjar-Bakarwal tribe demonstrated in Jammu against the Central government’s proposed inclusion of the “Pahari Ethnic Group” in the Scheduled Tribe (ST) list.<sup>105</sup> This move has agitated the Gujjar-Bakarwal tribes, who fear that their reservation benefits will be divided if the Pahari

<sup>103</sup> [middleeasteye.net/news/indian-government-strips-passports-kashmiri-dissent-modi](https://middleeasteye.net/news/indian-government-strips-passports-kashmiri-dissent-modi)

<sup>104</sup> [theobserverpost.com/whatsapp-x-instagram-and-other-platforms-provide-free-access-to-jk-police-for-tracking-anti-national-elements-officials](https://theobserverpost.com/whatsapp-x-instagram-and-other-platforms-provide-free-access-to-jk-police-for-tracking-anti-national-elements-officials)

<sup>105</sup> [frontline.thehindu.com/politics/gujjar-bakarwals-agitated-over-bill-granting-st-status-for-paharis/article67152879.ece](https://frontline.thehindu.com/politics/gujjar-bakarwals-agitated-over-bill-granting-st-status-for-paharis/article67152879.ece)



Ethnic Group is granted tribal status. The Gujjar-Bakarwals, traditionally a nomadic community, have faced numerous challenges, including loss of livestock, anti-encroachment drives, and conflicts over natural resources. The proposed bill has raised concerns about potential political maneuvering by the BJP ahead of Assembly elections, as the party seeks to build social coalitions with non-Kashmiri Muslim communities. While some Pahari Muslim leaders support the move, Gujjar-Bakarwals and other tribal communities argue that the Pahari Ethnic Group does not meet the criteria for ST status.<sup>105</sup>

In August, the Kashmiri administration removed works<sup>106</sup> by award-winning writers, Basharat Peer and Agha Shahid Ali, from M.A English curricula at government-run universities, alleging “secessionist ideology.” The

move, criticized by local academicians, reflects a broader trend of intellectual repression since Kashmir’s autonomy was revoked. Human Rights Watch has raised concerns<sup>107</sup> over the escalating repression, asserting that Indian authorities are “restricting free expression, peaceful assembly, and other basic rights,” and that “repressive policies and failure to investigate and prosecute alleged security force abuses have increased insecurity.” Academics argue that removing these literary voices suppresses indigenous perspectives, undermining academic integrity and student enrichment.



Former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister and PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti expressed concern<sup>108</sup> about the alleged incitement of hatred and calls for Muslim genocide during a Tiranga rally<sup>109</sup> in Jammu on August 13th, as depicted in videos posted to social

<sup>106</sup> [asiacentinel.com/p/kashmir-universities-ordered-drop-native-writers](https://asiacentinel.com/p/kashmir-universities-ordered-drop-native-writers)

<sup>107</sup> [hrw.org/news/2021/10/08/india-gunmen-target-minorities-jammu-and-kashmir](https://hrw.org/news/2021/10/08/india-gunmen-target-minorities-jammu-and-kashmir)

<sup>108</sup> [etvbharat.com/english/state/jammu-and-kashmir/na20230819171051800800802](https://etvbharat.com/english/state/jammu-and-kashmir/na20230819171051800800802)

<sup>109</sup> [siasat.com/hate-speeches-calls-for-violence-stain-i-day-fete-at-many-places-2669628](https://siasat.com/hate-speeches-calls-for-violence-stain-i-day-fete-at-many-places-2669628)

media. Mufti highlighted the stark disparity between the celebration of the Tiranga Yatra in Kashmir and the alarming hate-filled rally in Jammu, and questioned the administration's lack of response to the situation.

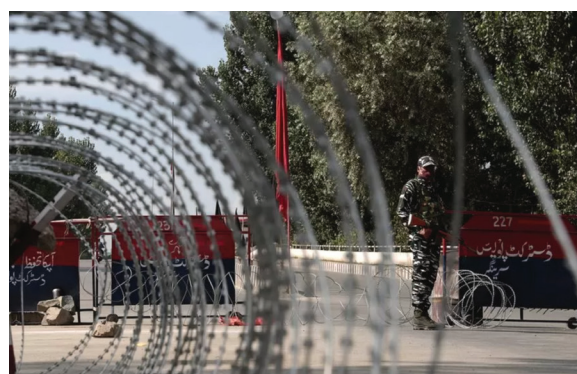
On the 1st of September, Kashmiri socio-political activist Waqar H. Bhatti was arrested due to a complaint made by Dr. Darakhshan Andrabi, a BJP



leader and chairperson of the Jammu and Kashmir Waqf Board.<sup>110</sup> Andrabi accused Bhatti of damaging her reputation and inciting religious discord through his critical remarks, labeling him as an 'anti-India so-called activist.' Bhatti was granted interim bail by a judicial court in Srinagar on September 14th and faces charges under sections 153 A, 500, and 506 of the Indian Penal Code. Various activists and political parties have weighed in, criticizing Bhatti's arbitrary detention and

claiming that the incident reflects a stifling of voices and democratic rights in Kashmir.

Also on September 1st, an article-titled "Any story could be your last – India's crackdown on Kashmir press" was published by BBC, shedding light on press freedom issues in the region. The article<sup>111</sup> highlighted the cases of several Kashmiri journalists detained on "terrorism" charges, making it challenging for them to secure bail, as well as documented the daily harassment and intimidation faced by journalists from security forces. During this investigation, the BBC encountered challenges, including the need to meet with journalists in secret, as many of them requested anonymity out of fear of reprisals. The journalists interviewed uniformly expressed concerns that the government's arbitrary arrests of media figures were intended to send a clear and chilling warning to all journalists operating in the area.



<sup>110</sup> [maktoobmedia.com/latest-news/kashmir-activist-spends-14-days-in-jail-for-comments-against-bjp-leader](https://maktoobmedia.com/latest-news/kashmir-activist-spends-14-days-in-jail-for-comments-against-bjp-leader)

<sup>111</sup> [bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-66155796](https://bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-66155796)



One of the cases highlighted in the article is that of Aasif Sultan, an assistant editor for a Srinagar-based English magazine. Sultan has been incarcerated since August 2018 under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA). He faces allegations of “harbouring known militants,” a charge he vehemently denies. His is just one example of the challenges and legal issues faced by journalists in Indian-administered Kashmir, where press freedom has been a topic of significant concern.

The article also touched upon the backdrop of anti-India sentiment and conflict in the region, which has seen a long-standing rebellion, and India’s efforts to integrate the disputed territory into the country. In response, the Jammu and Kashmir Police released a statement<sup>112</sup> on X (previously known as Twitter), objecting to the article and claiming that it unfairly criticizes their efforts to maintain law and order. They have since threatened legal action.<sup>113</sup>

<sup>112</sup> [twitter.com/JmuKmrPolice/status/1697904951455019027](https://twitter.com/JmuKmrPolice/status/1697904951455019027)

<sup>113</sup> [aljazeera.com/news/2023/9/2/indian-police-condemn-bbc-for-article-on-press-freedom-in-kashmir](https://aljazeera.com/news/2023/9/2/indian-police-condemn-bbc-for-article-on-press-freedom-in-kashmir)

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Indian government should prioritize enacting and enforcing robust legislation that specifically protects the rights of religious minorities. This legislation should address hate speech, communal violence, and targeted attacks, holding perpetrators accountable for their actions. It should also guarantee the right to freedom of religion, ensuring that individuals can practice their faith without fear of persecution or coercion. By reinforcing legal protections, the government can send a clear message that any form of discrimination or violence against religious minorities will not be tolerated.

To address the issue of human rights violations and ensure impartial investigations, independent oversight bodies should be established to monitor and report cases of abuse and discrimination against religious minorities. These bodies should be able to conduct investigations, prosecute offenders, and recommend measures to prevent further violations. This step will demonstrate the government's commitment to upholding human rights and will help rebuild trust among religious minority communities.

The government should immediately take decisive action to halt the violence against Kuki-Zomi tribals in Manipur. The center and state governments should enforce stringent measures to protect ethnic minorities and ensure their safety.

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

BJP-led state governments must uphold every citizen's right to a safe home and immediately stop bulldozing Muslim homes, livelihoods, and places of worship in the name of anti-encroachment drives.

The international community should engage with the Indian government and express concern over the treatment of religious minorities. Diplomatic efforts should encourage India to uphold its commitment to religious freedom and

human rights as enshrined in the Indian constitution and various international agreements. Sanctions or trade measures may be considered if there is a persistent failure to address the issue. International pressure can serve as an incentive for the Indian government to take concrete steps toward safeguarding the rights of religious minorities and promoting inclusivity and diversity.

The President of the United States can place sanctions on individuals who have committed, directly aided, ordered, or are complicit in gross human rights violations through the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act. The Biden administration should impose sanctions on leaders and members of RSS, VHP, Bajrang Dal, and other Hindu militant groups, including its offshoots in the United States.

The US Department of State should accept the United States Commission for International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) recommendation to designate India as a Country of Particular Concern (CPC) for its egregious violations of human rights and religious freedoms.

The US State Department must include human rights and religious freedoms as an integral part of the US-India Strategic Dialogue.