

KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN INDIAN-ADMINISTERED KASHMIR

January 1, 2026 – January 31, 2026

SUMMARY

In January 2026, Indian authorities continued to commit grave human rights violations in Indian-administered Kashmir (IAK). Indian forces killed at least one person. Indian authorities continued their ongoing systematic campaigns of mass detention and collective punishment through raids, cordon-and-search operations (CASOs) and employment terminations. Indian authorities escalated their crackdown on virtual private network (VPN) use, targeting at least 1,100 people. Indian authorities escalated their repression of Muslim religious institutions and people affiliated with them through a new, extensive surveillance program. Indian authorities continued to intimidate Kashmiri journalists for their reporting, summoning at least six for interrogations.

Thousands of Kashmiri political prisoners continue to be arbitrarily detained, including: human rights defender Khurram Parvez—illegally imprisoned for over four years (1,556 days), journalist Irfan Mehraj—illegally imprisoned for almost three years (1,072 days), human rights lawyer Mian Abdul Qayoom—illegally imprisoned for over 20 months (610 days), and scholar Shafat Wani—illegally imprisoned for almost a year (321 days).

Note: Due to ongoing repression by Indian authorities, key developments in the human rights situation in IAK have gone unreported. Indian authorities have criminalized independent journalism and human rights work; all reporting from IAK is state-controlled. Indian authorities label pro-human rights and pro-self-determination activity “terrorism” and systematically legitimate violations against people in IAK through unsubstantiated, demonizing labels, including: “terrorist,” “militant,” “secessionist,” “overground worker” (or “OGW”), “hybrid militant,” “hybrid terrorist,” “terrorist associate,” “militant associate,” “intruder,” or “infiltrator.”

KILLINGS AND EXCESSIVE USE OF FORCE

On January 23, 2026, Indian forces [killed](#) a person in Billawar, Kathua district and labelled him a “terrorist.”

VIOLATIONS OF THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Indian authorities escalated their [crackdown](#) on VPNs, identifying at least [1,100 alleged users](#) and pursuing at least 130 people criminally. On January 1, 2026, J&K Police initiated proceedings against six [people](#) in Anantnag district. On January 2, 2026, J&K Police took [punitive action](#) against over 100 individuals, including minors. On January 3, 2026, Indian authorities [filed two FIRs](#) against 11 people in Budgam district. On January 17, 2026, Indian authorities arrested [Meena Sharma](#) of Palnoo, Majalata, Poonch district for allegedly using a VPN. On January 9, 2026, [international experts](#) condemned the VPN ban as illegal and an abuse of power.

On January 25, 2026, Indian authorities [arrested](#) Onkar Singh of Kamsar, Poonch district for allegedly posting on social media.

On January 30, 2026, Indian authorities [suspended](#) mobile data service in Kishtwar district.

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS; VIOLATIONS TARGETING JOURNALISTS

In January 2026, Indian authorities [summoned at least six more journalists](#) for police interrogation for their reporting. On January 14, 2026, J&K Police [summoned](#) Bashaarat Masood (*The Indian Express*) for four days and demanded that he sign a bond undertaking not to repeat “mistakes” in his reporting. On January 19, 2026, J&K Police [summoned](#) Ashiq Hussain (*Hindustan Times*). At least [25 Kashmiri journalists have been summoned](#) by J&K Police over the last year, with local and freelance journalists especially targeted. On January 21, 2026, the Committee to Protect Journalists [condemned](#) the “pattern of intimidation” against media in IAK.

ARBITRARY DETENTIONS AND RAIDS

On January 1, 2026, Indian authorities [raided](#) a home in Dadsara, Awantipora, Pulwama district.

On January 2, 2026, Indian authorities [arrested](#) Ghulam Nabi Mir of Bandipora district and Shabnum Nazir of Ganderbal district and labelled them “terrorist associates.”

On January 6, 2026, Indian authorities arrested a [15-year old](#) of Samba district and labelled him a “spy.”

On January 7, 2026, Counter Intelligence Kashmir [raided](#) 22 locations in Kashmir.

On January 15, 2026, an NIA Court [convicted](#) political prisoners Asiya Andrabi, Sofi Fahmida and Nahida Nasreen, arbitrarily detained since 2018, of “terrorism” offences under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act for their pro-self-determination expression.

TAKING AND DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY; ECONOMIC DISEMPOWERMENT

On January 1, 2026, Indian authorities [expropriated](#) the real property of Rafiq Nai in Nar, Mendhar, Poonch district.

On January 3, 2026, Indian authorities [expropriated](#) the real property of Jamal Lone of Chamber Kanari, Mandi, Poonch district.

On January 6, 2026, Indian authorities, responding to Hindu supremacist demands, [canceled](#) the medical program at Mata Vaishno Devi Medical College after 42 of 50 spots went to Muslims (on the basis of their merit).

POLITICAL DISEMPOWERMENT, VIOLATION OF POLITICAL RIGHTS, AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE

On January 24, 2026, [BJP leader](#) Ashwani Kumar Chrungoo announced that the “Government of India and all institutional structure(s)” are “working on” changing Kashmir’s demography in favor of non-local Hindus.

COLLECTIVE PUNISHMENT

On January 7, 2026, Indian forces [imposed](#) a CASO in Kamdah Nullah, Kathua district.

On January 8, 2026, Indian forces [imposed](#) a CASO in Billawar, Kathua district.

On January 9, 2026, Indian forces [imposed](#) a CASO in Katli, Samba district.

On January 13, 2026, Indian authorities [terminated](#) the employment of Mohd. Ishfaq (a teacher), Tariq Ahmad Rah (a lab technician), Bashir Ahmad Mir (an assistant lineman), Farooq Ahmad Bhat (a Forest Department employee) and Mohd. Yousf Kumar (a driver) for alleged links to groups banned by Indian authorities.

On January 15, 2026, Indian forces [imposed](#) a CASO in Billawar, Kathua district.

On January 18, 2026, Indian forces [imposed](#) a CASO in Chatroo, Kishtwar district.

On January 21, 2026, Indian forces [imposed](#) a CASO in Jammu city areas in which Rohingya refugees live.

On January 24, 2026, Indian forces [imposed](#) a CASO Lawaypora, Srinagar district.

On January 28, 2026, Indian forces [imposed](#) a CASO in Rati Tari, Karnah, Kupwara district.

On January 31, 2026, Indian forces [imposed](#) a CASO in the Chillyari, Samba district.

VIOLATIONS OF RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

On January 2, 2026, Indian authorities again imposed house arrest on Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and [prevented](#) him from delivering the Friday sermon at Jamia Masjid, Srinagar.

On January 12, 2026, Indian authorities launched a [systematic campaign](#) to collect intensive data on Muslim religious institutions and people associated with them across Kashmir.

On January 19, 2026, Indian authorities [intensified their profiling](#) of Muslim religious institutions in Jammu.

ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS

Indian authorities continued to enable large-scale [environmental destruction](#) through illegal mining operations, permitting the destruction of hundreds of acres of agricultural land and livelihoods in villages across Pulwama and Budgam districts. Primary and culturally important sources of freshwater, including famous springs, continue to [die and be severely depleted](#) across Kashmir.

TARGETING OF KASHMIRIS; DISCRIMINATION

On January 18, 2026, a mob in Himachal Pradesh led by an Indian Army veteran [assaulted](#) Ayub, a Kashmiri man.

On January 21, 2026, a mob in Kalawad, Haryana [assaulted](#) Nazir Ahmad Khwaja and Imtiyaz Ahmad.

On January 29, 2026, a mob in Vikas Nagar, Uttarakhand [assaulted](#) Tabish Rashid, an 18-year-old, and his brother Danish Ganai.

DISINFORMATION; PROPAGANDA

Hindu supremacists and Indian media outlets launched a [coordinated attack](#) on Nazia Amin's 2023 peer-reviewed paper "Tyranny of Indian Nationalism and Resistance in Kashmir".

PUBLIC STATEMENTS, COMMUNICATIONS, AND REPORTS

On January 5, 2026, Noor Eman [published](#) “How Prolonged Instability Shapes Life in Kashmir.”

On January 13, 2026, CIVICUS [published](#) “India: Civic freedoms remain at risk with crackdown on protests, internet restrictions and denial of bail to activists.”

On January 30, 2026, Human Rights Foundation and FORUM-ASIA [submitted](#) a UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention complaint seeking confirmation that Irfan Mehraj’s ongoing detention violates international law.

In January 2026, South Asia Justice Campaign [published](#) its “India Persecution Tracker 2025 Annual Overview.”

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Published February 25, 2026



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