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The target audience is caseworkers, COI researchers, policy makers, and decision making authorities. The answer was finalised on 6 October 2020. Any event taking place after this date is not included in this answer.



COI QUERY RESPONSE

Information on Pakistan-administered Kashmir

1. General information

Historical background

Since 1947, the Kashmir region has been divided between India and Pakistan. The Pakistani part is known as Azad Kashmir (AK) (also Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK)¹) or Pakistan-administered Kashmir, which also includes the area of Gilgit Baltistan². Before 1947, the Jammu and Kashmir region was one of the Indian princely states whose ruler could decide whether to choose independence or to join any of the two countries. After an invasion by tribal forces from Pakistan, the Kashmiri ruler decided to join India.³ Pakistan and India have consequently fought three wars over Kashmir, in 1947, 1965 and 1999.⁴ Pakistani and Indian controlled Kashmir are divided by the Line of Control, managed by Pakistani and Indian armies on either side.⁵ The two parties have agreed on a ceasefire in 2003 that has been regularly violated.⁶ Since 2018, the number of ceasefire violations has reached record highs.⁷ In 2019, some 60 civilians were killed because of fighting across the Line of Control.⁸ It is estimated that between 30,000 - 100,000 civilians have been killed in the conflict so far.⁹

Regional events that have influenced ethnic and religious cohabitation in Kashmir include, for example, the destruction of the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya, India, in 1992, carried out by a Hindu mob, and the 2008 Mumbai attacks by a Pakistan-based group Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), which killed some 170 people.¹⁰ In January 2010, landslides into Hunza river destroyed several villages, killed 19 people and

¹ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2020 – Pakistani Kashmir, [url](#)

² For an ease of reference, the acronyms, AJK for Azad Jammu and Kashmir and GB for Gilgit Baltistan, respectively, will be used throughout this report.

³ UNOCHR, Report on the Situation of Human Rights in Kashmir: Developments in the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir from June 2016 to April 2018, and General Human Rights Concerns in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, 14 June 2018, [url](#), p. 8

⁴ CFR, Conflict Between India and Pakistan, n.d., [url](#); UNOCHR, Report on the Situation of Human Rights in Kashmir: Developments in the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir from June 2016 to April 2018, and General Human Rights Concerns in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, 14 June 2018, [url](#), p. 8

⁵ Kulkarni, T., The escalation of ceasefire violations across the Line of Control, In: South Asian Voices, 20 August 2020, [url](#)

⁶ The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Ceasefire Violations in Kashmir: A War by Other Means?, 24 October 2018, [url](#); CFR, Conflict Between India and Pakistan, n.d., [url](#); Kulkarni, T., The escalation of ceasefire violations across the line of control, In: South Asian Voices, 20 August 2020, [url](#); UNOCHR, Report on the Situation of Human Rights in Kashmir: Developments in the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir from June 2016 to April 2018, and General Human Rights Concerns in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, 14 June 2018, [url](#), p. 54

⁷ Kulkarni, T., The escalation of ceasefire violations across the Line of Control, In: South Asian Voices, 20 August 2020, [url](#)

⁸ Al Jazeera, Pakistan-administered Kashmir's PM calls for 'military' action, 26 February 2020, [url](#); Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2020 – Pakistani Kashmir, 4 March 2020, [url](#)

⁹ Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs, Religion and Conflict, Case Study Series, Kashmir: Religious Diversity Becomes Religious Militancy, August 2013, [url](#), p. 5

¹⁰ Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs, Religion and Conflict, Case Study Series, Kashmir: Religious Diversity Becomes Religious Militancy, August 2013, [url](#), p. 7



displaced thousands.¹¹ During a 2005 earthquake that hit Pakistani Kashmir, some 80 000 people were killed and 3.5 million became homeless.¹² Estimated 60 % of the reconstruction projects finished by 2019, according to the Anadolu Agency (AA).¹³

In September 2016, an attack on an Indian military base in Uri close to Line of Control killed 18 Indian soldiers. India claimed that the armed group Jaish-e Muhammad (JeM) was behind the attack and conducted airstrikes in the Pakistani Kashmir afterwards.¹⁴ Relations between India and Pakistan further deteriorated after an attack in Pulwama in February 2019 claimed by the JeM, and after the cessation of the special constitutional status of Jammu and Kashmir by India in August 2019.¹⁵ Following the JeM attack, which killed 40 Indian soldiers and was assessed as 'the deadliest attack in Kashmir in three decades', India conducted airstrikes aimed at terrorist camp in the Pakistani territory. Pakistan consequently attacked positions in the Indian Kashmir, shot down two Indian planes and captured an Indian pilot.¹⁶

An example of a positive development in the India-Pakistan relations was the opening of the Kartarpur corridor between the two countries in November 2019, allowing Sikh pilgrims to visit their holy sites in both countries.¹⁷

Population and ethnic groups

The population of Azad Kashmir is estimated between 3 and 4.5 million¹⁸, while the population of Gilgit Baltistan between 1.5 and 2 million.¹⁹ Inhabitants of AJK are culturally and linguistically close to Punjab and are distinct from inhabitants of the Jammu and Kashmir state in India.²⁰

According to a 2006 Human Rights Watch (HRW) report, inhabitants of Azad Kashmir are divided into tribal clans (*biradari*). The three main clans include:

- the Gujjars as the largest ethnic groups, at estimated 800 000 people,
- the Sudhans and the Rajputs, each at around 500 000 people, as the most influential group from which political leaders of AJK come,
- the Mirpurir Jats, estimated at 300 000, who have significantly improved their economic situation with remittances from the UK. They are related to Potohari Punjabis.²¹

¹¹ HRCF, Gilgit-Baltistan, Aspirations for identity, integration and autonomy, Report of a fact-finding mission, n.d., [url](#), pp. 18-19

¹² AA, 8 October 2019, Pakistan marks 14th anniversary of 2005 earthquake, [url](#)

¹³ AA, Kashmir earthquake memories continue to haunt victims, 8 October 2019, [url](#)

¹⁴ CFR, Conflict Between India and Pakistan, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁵ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2020 - Pakistan, 4 March 2020, [url](#); HRW, Events of 2019 - Pakistan, 14 January 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶ CFR, Conflict Between India and Pakistan, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁷ South Asian Voices, The Kartarpur Corridor and its impact on Indo-Pak relations, 5 November 2019, [url](#)

¹⁸ Reuters, Explainer: Scenic Kashmir at the heart of India-Pakistani animosity, 15 February 2019, [url](#); Nation (The), Census 2017: AJK population rises to over 4m, 27 August 2017, [url](#)

¹⁹ ICWA, Exploitation of Water and Mineral Resources of Gilgit-Baltistan, 19 March 2019, [url](#), accessed 21 September 2020; Nation (The), The importance of Gilgit Baltistan, 14 November 2018, [url](#)

²⁰ HRW, With Friends Like These..., Human Rights Violations in Azad Kashmir, September 2006, [url](#)

²¹ HRW, With Friends Like These..., Human Rights Violations in Azad Kashmir, September 2006, [url](#)

The Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), an Indian think tank doing research on defence, strategic and security issues, lists the following as the ethnic groups living respectively in AJK and GB:

- AJK: Gujjars, Jats, Mughal, Rajputs, Sudhan, Awan, Qureshi, Pashtuns, Shins, Ladakhi and Baltis,
- GB: Shin, Balti, Puriki, Ladakhi, Wakhi, Yashkun, Tibetan, Mongol, Tatar, Mon, Pashtun, Khowar, Dom, Gujjar, Rajput and Kashmiri.²²

Azad Kashmir's official language is Urdu, while English is also used.²³ Urdu is also said to be a *lingua franca* of the region, while there are other local languages such as the Pahari.²⁴ In 2011, it was reported that all 32 local newspapers were published in Urdu.²⁵ Other spoken languages include Gojri, Dograi, Kashmiri, Hindi and Ladakhi.²⁶ Official languages in GB are Urdu and English, other used languages include Shina, Brushaski, Wakhi, Khowar, Balti, Pushto and Punjabi.²⁷ Another source mentions Balti and Shina as languages spoken in GB.²⁸

Residents of AJK and GB have Pakistani national identity cards and passports and are recognized as Pakistani nationals. There have been reports of passports being denied for those opposing Pakistani control of Kashmir.²⁹

More current information about the ethnic composition of AJK and GB could not be found among the sources consulted by EASO within time constraints.

Returnees in Kashmir and Punjab

Limited information on the Pakistani returnees from Europe suggests that most of the returnees wish to repeatedly emigrate to Europe.³⁰ According to a US Department of State (USDOS) report covering 2019, Pakistani government refused to accept the return of some deported Pakistanis, despite having passports issued by Pakistani embassies abroad.³¹ The Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) suggests that voluntarily returned Pakistanis are treated by the authorities in the same ways as any other Pakistani citizens. Those who returned involuntarily are questioned whether they have previously committed any crime in Pakistan or while abroad.³²

²² IDSA (Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses), Pakistan Occupied Kashmir: Changing the Discourse, May 2011, [url](#), pp. 47-48

²³ Kashmir Council-EU, Pakistan-Administered Kashmir (Azad Kashmir), n.d., [url](#)

²⁴ Portmir Foundation, The Pahari language of 'Azad' Jammu & Kashmir, 14 August 2017, [url](#)

²⁵ ACCORD, Pakistan-administered Kashmir (Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan) - COI Compilation, 7 May 2012, [url](#), p. 97

²⁶ History Pak, Kashmiri Culture, n.d., [url](#)

²⁷ ACCORD, Pakistan-administered Kashmir (Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan) - COI Compilation, 7 May 2012, [url](#), p. 63

²⁸ Nation (The), The importance of Gilgit Baltistan, 14 November 2018, [url](#)

²⁹ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2020 – Pakistani Kashmir, 4 March 2020, [url](#)

³⁰ Spiegel, Die Idee der freiwilligen Rückkehr ad absurdum geführt, 27 February 2020, [url](#)

³¹ USDOS, Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2019 - Pakistan, 11 March 2020, [url](#)

³² DFAT, DFAT Country Information Report Pakistan, 20 February 2019, [url](#), p. 67

Information on returnees to Punjab and Kashmir could not be found among the sources consulted by EASO within time constraints.

Religious demography

Kashmir has been traditionally home to Hindus, Buddhists and Muslims. *Kashmiriyat* has been used as a term describing their peaceful mutual cohabitation and shared Kashmiri identity.³³ After the division of India and Pakistan, militant Muslim separatism and Hindu nationalism (*Hindutva*) have eventually evolved.³⁴ Relations between different religious groups have been influenced by outside factors, such as sectarian events taking place in India³⁵ and Pakistan³⁶. Sources from 2013 and 2016 suggest that almost 100 % of the AJK population are Muslims.³⁷

Pakistan has the second biggest Shia population in the world after Iran. The Shias represent estimated 10-15 % of the Muslims in the country.³⁸ Gilgit Baltistan is the only region in Pakistan where Shia Muslims constitute a majority.³⁹ In GB, estimated 39-41 % are Shias, 27-30 % Sunnis, 18-24 % Ismaili Shia, and 6-16 % are Noorbakhshis (Nurbakhshis, a blended Sufi tradition) (2019 estimates).⁴⁰ Sunni minority in GB has reportedly close ties with the Pakistani government and military.⁴¹

No official data on the religious demography in AJK could be found amongst consulted sources.⁴² Jalaluddin Mughal, an independent journalist from AJK covering politics and conflict in Kashmir with some 10 years of experience⁴³, estimates that there are between 40 000 and 45 000 non-Muslims in AK, mainly Ahmadis, Christians and Baha'is.⁴⁴

Mr. Mughal estimated the numbers of the minorities in 2019 in AJK as follows:

³³ Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs, Religion and Conflict, Case Study Series, Kashmir: Religious Diversity Becomes Religious Militancy, August 2013, [url](#), p. 6

³⁴ Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs, Religion and Conflict, Case Study Series, Kashmir: Religious Diversity Becomes Religious Militancy, August 2013, [url](#), p. 6

³⁵ Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs, Religion and Conflict, Case Study Series, Kashmir: Religious Diversity Becomes Religious Militancy, August 2013, [url](#), p. 6

³⁶ Mishra, V.K., Sectarian Violence in Gilgit-Baltistan, In: Jadavpur Journal of International Relations, 2019, [url](#)

³⁷ Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs, Religion and Conflict, Case Study Series, Kashmir: Religious Diversity Becomes Religious Militancy, August 2013, [url](#), p. 8; World Bank, Water and Sanitation Sector Analysis of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Baseline Survey Report, June 2016, [url](#)

³⁸ All-Party Parliamentary Group for Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Suffocation of the Faithful: The Persecution of Ahmadi Muslims in Pakistan and The Rise of International Extremism, July 2020, [url](#), p. 84

³⁹ Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs, Religion and Conflict, Case Study Series, Kashmir: Religious Diversity Becomes Religious Militancy, August 2013, [url](#), p. 8; DFAT, DFAT Country Information Report Pakistan, 20 February 2019, [url](#), accessed 18 September 2020, p. 35; IRB, Pakistan: Situation and treatment of Shia [Shi'a, Shi'i, Shiite] Muslims, including Hazaras and Turi, particularly in Lahore, Karachi, Islamabad, and Hyderabad; state response to violence against Shias (2017-January 2020), 15 January 2020, [url](#); Mishra, V.K., Sectarian Violence in Gilgit-Baltistan, In: Jadavpur Journal of International Relations, 2019, [url](#), p. 1

⁴⁰ DFAT, DFAT Country Information Report Pakistan, 20 February 2019, [url](#), p. 38; Mishra, V.K., Sectarian Violence in Gilgit-Baltistan, In: Jadavpur Journal of International Relations, 2019, [url](#), p. 5

⁴¹ Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs, Religion and Conflict, Georgetown University, Case Study Series, Kashmir: Religious Diversity Becomes Religious Militancy, August 2013, [url](#), p. 8

⁴² See also: Mughal, J., Unacknowledged existence of minorities in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, In: Voice of Vienna, 8 January 2019, [url](#)

⁴³ Muck Rack, Jalaluddin Mughal, n.d., [url](#); Twitter, Jalaluddin Mughal, n.d., [url](#)

⁴⁴ Mughal, J., Unacknowledged existence of minorities in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, In: Voice of Vienna, 8 January 2019, [url](#)



- The Ahmadis: 20 000-25 000, most of them live in Kotli, Mirpur Bhimber and Muzaffarabad,
- The Christians: 4 500, mostly live in Bhimber, Mirpur and Muzaffarabad. Smaller numbers can be found in Kotli, Poonch and Bagh,
- The Bahai: six families in Muzaffarabad.⁴⁵

Historically present Hindu and Sikh populations have almost completely perished from the AK, with majority being killed or emigrated after 1947.⁴⁶

2. Political situation

Political leadership of AK:

- The president: Sardar Masood Khan
- The Prime minister: Raja Muhammad Farooq Haider Khan
- The Chief Secretary: Dr. Shahzad Khan Bangash⁴⁷

List of political parties in AJK can be consulted at the official website of the AJK government at: [url](#)

Pakistani Kashmir is divided into two separately administered territories, Azad Jammu and Kashmir (or Azad Kashmir) and Gilgit-Baltistan.⁴⁸ Muzaffarabad serves as the capital of AK.⁴⁹ Both, AJK and GB, enjoy a limited autonomy, with each having their own president, prime minister and courts. Local politicians have to support a subsequent accession of the territories to Pakistan.⁵⁰ Real power in the territories lies with the Pakistani authorities, including the prime minister, minister for Kashmiri Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan and intelligence services.⁵¹ Local population is not represented in the Pakistani parliament in Islamabad.⁵² In a 2018 report, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNOCHR) suggests that Pakistani military ‘exercises almost complete control over the territory.’⁵³ Political parties in AJK are seen as extensions of the Pakistani parties.⁵⁴ In practice, only parties based in Pakistan win local elections in Kashmir. All government affairs are overseen by a body called the Kashmir Council, which is headed by the Pakistani prime minister.⁵⁵

⁴⁵ Asianlite Newsdesk, The Plight of Minorities in ‘Azad Kashmir’, 14 January 2019, [url](#)

⁴⁶ Asianlite Newsdesk, The Plight of Minorities in ‘Azad Kashmir’, 14 January 2019, [url](#); Economic Times, Minorities in Pakistan: A life under siege, 20 June 2020, [url](#); DAILYO, Missing Hindus and Sikhs of Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir, 29 August 2016, [url](#)

⁴⁷ See the official website of the AJ&K government at [url](#)

⁴⁸ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2020 – Pakistani Kashmir, 4 March 2020, [url](#)

⁴⁹ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2020 – Pakistani Kashmir, [url](#)

⁵⁰ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2020 – Pakistani Kashmir, 4 March 2020, [url](#)

⁵¹ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2020 – Pakistani Kashmir, 4 March 2020, [url](#); UNOCHR, Report on the Situation of Human Rights in Kashmir: Developments in the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir from June 2016 to April 2018, and General Human Rights Concerns in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, 14 June 2018, [url](#), pp. 41-42

⁵² Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2020 – Pakistani Kashmir, 4 March 2020, [url](#)

⁵³ UNOCHR, Report on the Situation of Human Rights in Kashmir: Developments in the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir from June 2016 to April 2018, and General Human Rights Concerns in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, 14 June 2018, [url](#), p. 42

⁵⁴ Al Jazeera, In Pakistan-administered Kashmir, a shrinking pro-freedom space, 4 Mar 2019, [url](#); Freedom House, ‘Freedom in the World 2020 – Pakistani Kashmir, 4 March 2020 [url](#)

⁵⁵ Al Jazeera, Pakistan is no friend of Kashmir, either, 11 September 2019, [url](#)

AJK has its own court system and does not belong under the jurisdiction of the Pakistani supreme and high courts. Before January 2019, GB had a separate judicial system, too. Its residents can since appeal their cases to the Supreme Court of Pakistan.⁵⁶

Interim constitution of the AJK states that '[N]o person or political party in Azad Jammu and Kashmir shall be permitted to propagate against, or take part in activities prejudicial or detrimental to, the ideology of the State's accession to Pakistan.'⁵⁷ Similar limitations can be found in the Government of Gilgit-Baltistan Order 2018 and the updated Gilgit-Baltistan Governance Reforms 2019. The latter states that '[N]o person or political party in the area comprising Gilgit-Baltistan shall propagate against, or take part in activities prejudicial or detrimental to the ideology of Pakistan.'⁵⁸

Gilgit Baltistan has a 'semi-provincial status', not being part of Azad Kashmir, nor a Pakistani province.⁵⁹ Basic law of GB was the Gilgit-Baltistan (Empowerment and Self Governance) Order 2009 that was replaced by the Government of Gilgit-Baltistan Order 2018 in May 2018. This has met with protests in the region, demanding full democratic rights and political representation in Pakistan. After a court intervention, Pakistan's government adopted a new document called titled Gilgit-Baltistan Governance Reforms 2019, which is reportedly identical to the challenged Government of Gilgit-Baltistan Order 2018.⁶⁰ In September 2020, it was reported that GB will receive a status of a Pakistani province including full rights such as representation in the Pakistani parliament.⁶¹

All candidates for the local government in the AJK have to submit the following oath: 'I solemnly declare that I believe in the ideology of Pakistan, the ideology of state's accession to Pakistan and the integrity and sovereignty of Pakistan (...).'

⁶²

Examples of incidents involving political opposition in AJK and GB:

- In November 2018, 19 activists calling for demilitarisation of Kashmir were charged with 'treason' after holding a rally in the Kotli area.⁶³
- On 15 March 2019, 30 students from the Jammu Kashmir National Students Federation were detained in Rawalpindi after holding a protest and calling for independence from Pakistan.⁶⁴
- In September 2019, over 20 pro-independence demonstrators were arrested after clashes with the police near Tatrinite village.⁶⁵

⁵⁶ USDOS, Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2019 - Pakistan, 11 March 2020, [url](#), p. 12

⁵⁷ UNOCHR, Update of the Situation of Human Rights in Indian-Administered Kashmir and Pakistan-Administered Kashmir from May 2018 to April 2019, 8 July 2019, [url](#), p. 35

⁵⁸ UNOCHR, Update of the Situation of Human Rights in Indian-Administered Kashmir and Pakistan-Administered Kashmir from May 2018 to April 2019, 8 July 2019, [url](#), p. 35

⁵⁹ Mishra, V.K., Sectarian Violence in Gilgit-Baltistan, In: Jadavpur Journal of International Relations, 2019, [url](#), p. 4

⁶⁰ UNOCHR, Update of the Situation of Human Rights in Indian-Administered Kashmir and Pakistan-Administered Kashmir from May 2018 to April 2019, 8 July 2019, [url](#), pp. 34-35

⁶¹ Kashmir Observer, Pak To Elevate Gilgit-Baltistan To Full-Fledged Province: Report, 17 September 2020, [url](#)

⁶² Al Jazeera, In Pakistan-administered Kashmir, a shrinking pro-freedom space, 4 Mar 2019, [url](#)

⁶³ UNOCHR, Update of the Situation of Human Rights in Indian-Administered Kashmir and Pakistan-Administered Kashmir from May 2018 to April 2019, 8 July 2019, [url](#), p. 36

⁶⁴ UNOCHR, Update of the Situation of Human Rights in Indian-Administered Kashmir and Pakistan-Administered Kashmir from May 2018 to April 2019, 8 July 2019, [url](#), p. 36

⁶⁵ Al Jazeera, Pakistan arrests protesters after pro-independence Kashmir rally, 9 September 2019, [url](#)

The so called ‘State Subject Rule’ was abolished in GB in 1974, allowing non-state residents to immigrate to and purchase land in GB. In AJK, it is still not possible.⁶⁶

3. Human rights situation

General overview

Human rights violation in Azad Kashmir include suppression of opposition and pro-independence activists, restrictions on the freedoms of association, assembly, expression and speech, right to information, free media, fair democratic process and surveillance of the population by the Pakistani intelligence services.⁶⁷ Restrictions are placed on the criticism of government and military. In AK, only media owners who have obtained permission from the Kashmir Council and the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs are allowed to publish.⁶⁸

Human rights violations in GB include misuse of the Anti-Terrorism Act against political activists, civil society organisations and human rights activists, including their monitoring, and the issues related to the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project, such as lack of local representation and forced evictions.⁶⁹ Dozens have reportedly faced prosecution over their protests against the Chinese mining projects and complaints suggested lack of compensation for damaged farmlands and infrastructure.⁷⁰

Social groups subjected to discrimination in Pakistan-administered Kashmir include women, LGBT+ people, ethnic minorities, non-Sunni religious groups, Afghan refugees and persons displaced from Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir.⁷¹

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNOCHR) has published two reports on the human rights situation in Kashmir, one in June 2018 and an update in July 2019.⁷² According to the July 2019 report, human rights violations in Pakistan-administered Kashmir included restrictions to freedoms of expression and opinion, assembly and association, limited possibilities to decide on local questions, misuse of counter-terrorism laws, the restrictions on the freedom of religion or belief and enforced disappearances.⁷³

⁶⁶ Mishra, V.K., Sectarian Violence in Gilgit-Baltistan, In: Jadavpur Journal of International Relations, 2019, [url](#), pp. 10-11

⁶⁷ SADF, FOCUS 47 – The myth of Pakistan acting as ‘protector’ of the Kashmiri people, 3 October 2019, [url](#)

⁶⁸ USDOS, Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2019 - Pakistan, 11 March 2020, [url](#), pp. 20-21

⁶⁹ HRCP, Gilgit-Baltistan, Aspirations for identity, integration and autonomy, Report of a fact-finding mission, n.d., [url](#), pp. 17-20

⁷⁰ ICWA, Exploitation of Water and Mineral Resources of Gilgit-Baltistan, 19 March 2019, [url](#)

⁷¹ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2020 – Pakistani Kashmir, 4 March 2020, [url](#)

⁷² UNOCHR, Report on the Situation of Human Rights in Kashmir: Developments in the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir from June 2016 to April 2018, and General Human Rights Concerns in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, 14 June 2018, [url](#); UNOCHR, Update of the Situation of Human Rights in Indian-Administered Kashmir and Pakistan-Administered Kashmir from May 2018 to April 2019, 8 July 2019, [url](#)

⁷³ UNOCHR, Update of the Situation of Human Rights in Indian-Administered Kashmir and Pakistan-Administered Kashmir from May 2018 to April 2019, 8 July 2019, [url](#), pp. 35-39

Political issues include limitations on the freedoms of expression, assembly and association. Political parties that do not support accession of AJK to Pakistan are in practice banned. Opponents to these measures have been reportedly subjected to threats, travel bans, imprisonment and torture.⁷⁴ Political parties seeking independence from Pakistan have to face intimidation and legal action, according to the activists, as quoted by an Al Jazeera article.⁷⁵

Ethnic conflict

No current information on an ethnic conflict in Pakistan-Administered Kashmir could be found among the sources consulted by EASO within time constraints.

Sectarian conflict

There were cases of sectarian violence between Sunni and Shia sects in Gilgit Baltistan in the past, starting in the 1970s.⁷⁶ More recent examples include disputes over the school curricula after 2005 earthquake that some Shias saw as too Sunni-oriented.⁷⁷

In February 2018, the government of Azad Kashmir amended its interim Constitution to define what constitutes a Muslim and to declare Ahmadis as non-Muslim.⁷⁸ Pakistan's blasphemy laws are also in force in both, AJK and GB.⁷⁹

Islamabad and GB were assessed by the Center for Research and Security Studies (CRSS) as the only regions in Pakistan without sectarian violence in 2016.⁸⁰ Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) has not documented any sectarian violence in Gilgit-Baltistan between 1 January 2017 and 6 May 2018.⁸¹ No current data on sectarian violence in AJK and GB is provided by the CRSS⁸², nor by the South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP).⁸³

4. Security situation

Conflict-related violence

⁷⁴ UNOCHR, Report on the Situation of Human Rights in Kashmir: Developments in the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir from June 2016 to April 2018, and General Human Rights Concerns in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, 14 June 2018, [url](#), p. 43

⁷⁵ Al Jazeera, In Pakistan-administered Kashmir, a shrinking pro-freedom space, 4 March 2019, [url](#)

⁷⁶ Mishra, V.K., Sectarian Violence in Gilgit-Baltistan, In: Jadavpur Journal of International Relations, 2019, [url](#), p. 5

⁷⁷ Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs, Religion and Conflict, Case Study Series, Kashmir: Religious Diversity Becomes Religious Militancy, August 2013, [url](#), p. 8

⁷⁸ The News, Ahmadis are not Muslims, decides AJK, 7 February 2018, [url](#); The Nation, AJK Parliament declares Ahmadis as non-Muslims, 7 February 2018, [url](#); USDOS, 2019 Report on International Religious Freedom: Pakistan, 10 June 2020, [url](#)

⁷⁹ UNOCHR, Report on the Situation of Human Rights in Kashmir: Developments in the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir from June 2016 to April 2018, and General Human Rights Concerns in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, 14 June 2018, [url](#), p. 46; UNOCHR, Update of the Situation of Human Rights in Indian-Administered Kashmir and Pakistan-Administered Kashmir from May 2018 to April 2019, 8 July 2019, [url](#), p. 39

⁸⁰ The Express Tribune, Sectarian, religious violence: Islamabad, AJK only regions spared in 2016, 14 January 2016, [url](#)

⁸¹ DFAT, DFAT Country Information Report Pakistan, 20 February 2019, [url](#), p. 38

⁸² CRSS, CRSS Annual Security Report 2019, 28 January 2020, [url](#)

⁸³ SATP, Incidents of Sectarian Violence, Azad Kashmir, n.d., [url](#)

The Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD), using the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) data, has in 2019 reported on 317 incidents in AJK, out of which 52 incidents included fatalities. 125 fatalities were recorded as a result of these incidents. The same source reported on 64 incidents in GB, out of which 1 incident included fatalities. 3 fatalities were recorded as a result of these incidents.⁸⁴ In the first quarter of 2020, the same source has reported on 28 incidents in AJK, out of which 7 incidents included fatalities (with 10 recorded fatalities), and 2 incidents in GB, none of each included fatalities.⁸⁵

ACLED collected data on 96 violent events in Azad Kashmir from reports in open sources in the year 2019, 71 of which were coded as battles, 19 as explosions/remote violence and 6 as violence against civilians.⁸⁶ PIPS did not mention any 'terrorist attack' in Azad Kashmir in 2019 compared to one 'terrorist attack' in 2018.⁸⁷ The Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS) reported on one militant attack in 2019 and described the security situation in Azad Kashmir as 'stable'.⁸⁸

Between 1 January 2020 and 31 July 2020, ACLED recorded 78 violent events in Azad Kashmir, 68 of which were coded as battles, 9 as explosions/remote violence and 1 as violence against civilians.⁸⁹ In this timeframe, most incidents were reported in Haveli (24 violent events), Khotli (21 violent events) and Bhimber (11 violent events).⁹⁰

ACLED collected data on 2 violent events in Gilgit Baltistan from reports in open sources in 2019, both were coded as violence against civilians.⁹¹ According to PICSS, no militant attack took place in 2019 in Gilgit-Baltistan.⁹² Similarly, PIPS did not record any 'terrorist attacks' in GB in 2019.⁹³

Between 1 January and 31 July 2020, ACLED coded 2 violent events in GB, 1 of which was coded as battles, 1 as violence against civilians.⁹⁴

The Center for Research and Security Studies (CRSS), a Pakistani think-tank conducting research on regional security, recorded 9 casualties (1 fatality and 8 injuries) in AJK as a result of 'terror attacks and counter-terror operations' in 2019. The same source did not record any such casualties in GB in

⁸⁴ ACCORD, Pakistan, year 2019: Update on incidents according to the ACLED, 29 June 2020, [url](#)

⁸⁵ ACCORD, Pakistan, first quarter 2020: Update on incidents according to the ACLED, 29 June 2020, [url](#)

⁸⁶ ACLED, Curated Data Files, South Asia (Filters applied: Pakistan; Azad Kashmir; Event types: battles, explosions/remote violence and violence against civilians; 1 January 2019-31 December 2019), [url](#)

⁸⁷ PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2018, 6 January 2019, [url](#), p. 51; PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2019, 5 January 2020, [url](#), p. 20

⁸⁸ PICSS, Annual Security Assessment Report 2019, 9 January 2020, [url](#), p. 51

⁸⁹ ACLED, Curated Data Files, South Asia (Filters applied: Pakistan; Azad Kashmir; Event types: battles, explosions/remote violence and violence against civilians; 1 January 2020-31 July 2020), [url](#)

⁹⁰ ACLED, Curated Data Files, South Asia (Filters applied: Pakistan; Azad Kashmir; Event types: battles, explosions/remote violence and violence against civilians; 1 January 2020-31 July 2020), [url](#)

⁹¹ ACLED, Curated Data Files, South Asia (Filters applied: Pakistan; Gilgit Baltistan; Event types: battles, explosions/remote violence and violence against civilians; 1 January 2019-31 December 2019), [url](#)

⁹² PICSS, Annual Security Assessment Report 2019, 9 January 2020, [url](#), p. 52

⁹³ PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2019, 5 January 2020, [url](#), p. 20

⁹⁴ ACLED, Curated Data Files, South Asia (Filters applied: Pakistan; Gilgit Baltistan; Event types: battles, explosions/remote violence and violence against civilians; 1 January 2020-31 July 2020), [url](#)



2019.⁹⁵ For comparison, the same source recorded 0 fatalities in AJK and 7 fatalities in GB in 2018.⁹⁶ In the first and second quarter of 2020, CRSS did not record any 'casualties from violence' in AJK and GB.⁹⁷

South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP) does not mention any civilian fatalities of terrorist attacks in AJK between 2016 and September 2020. It lists 2 fatalities in 2015 and 13 in 2009, and none in between.⁹⁸

SATP does not mention any civilian fatalities of terrorist attacks in GB between 2017 and September 2020. It lists 2 fatalities in 2016, none in 2015, 3 in 2014, 12 in 2013 and 22 in 2012, 4 in 2011 and 0 in 2010.⁹⁹

On 2 August 2018, 12 schools were burned down after attacks in GB's Diamer district, with no casualties (schools were closed during the attacks).¹⁰⁰

Line of control violations

The Line of Control (LoC) is a 740 km long border separating India-administered Kashmir from Pakistan-administered Kashmir, managed by their respective armies on each side.¹⁰¹ It is known as one of the most heavily militarised borders in the world.¹⁰² Breaches of ceasefire include firing across the border as well as physical transgressions on the other side of the border. After a peak of cross LoC firing in 2001 and 2002, Pakistan announced a cessation of hostilities in November 2003 that became known as the ceasefire agreement.¹⁰³

In 2017, Pakistan recorded 1 970 violations at Indian side, and India recorded 2 936 violations on the Pakistani side, the highest numbers since the ceasefire agreement was signed.¹⁰⁴ According to the UNOCHR data, Pakistan recorded 1 970 Indian violations and India recorded over 970 Pakistani

⁹⁵ CRSS, CRSS Annual Security Report 2019, 28 January 2020, [url](#), p. 5

⁹⁶ CRSS, CRSS Annual Security Report 2019, 28 January 2020, [url](#), pp. 6-7

⁹⁷ CRSS, Quarterly Security Report 2020, First Quarter, 2020, 7 April 2020, [url](#); CRSS, Quarterly Security Report 2020, Second Quarter, 2020, 16 July 2020, [url](#)

⁹⁸ SATP, Datasheet - Azad Kashmir, Yearly Fatalities, n.d., [url](#)

⁹⁹ SATP, Datasheet - Gilgit Baltistan, Yearly Fatalities, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁰⁰ Dawn, 12 schools burnt down overnight in Gilgit-Baltistan's Diamer district, 3 August 2018, [url](#); RFE/RL, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, At Least 12 Schools Burned Down In Northern Pakistan, 3 August 2018, [url](#)

¹⁰¹ CFR, Conflict Between India and Pakistan, n.d., [url](#); Kulkarni, T., The escalation of ceasefire violations across the Line of Control, In: South Asian Voices, 20 August 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰² BBC News, Viewpoint: India and Pakistan up the ante on disputed border, 30 January 2018, [url](#); SBS News, Explained: Kashmir, the most militarised zone in the world, 6 August 2018, [url](#); Kulkarni, T., The escalation of ceasefire violations across the Line of Control, In: South Asian Voices, 20 August 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰³ Kulkarni, T., The escalation of ceasefire violations across the Line of Control, In: South Asian Voices, 20 August 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁴ Kulkarni, T., The escalation of ceasefire violations across the Line of Control, In: South Asian Voices, 20 August 2020, [url](#)



violations in 2017.¹⁰⁵ In 2016, it was 383 Indian and 449 Pakistani violations, according to the UNOCHR.¹⁰⁶

Between 3 300 and 3 500 Indian violations were reported by Pakistan in 2019.¹⁰⁷ India reported on some 3 300 Pakistani violations in the same year.¹⁰⁸ According to the director-general of the police in the Indian Jammu and Kashmir, this represents 70 % increase compared to the number of violations in 2018.¹⁰⁹

In the first six months of 2020, India recorded over 2 400 Pakistani violations¹¹⁰ and Pakistan recorded between 1 600¹¹¹ and 1 800 Indian violations.¹¹²

In September 2020, it was reported that India has committed 2 245 cease-fire violations in 2020 so far, which killed 18 and injured 180 civilians. Pakistan reportedly committed 3 186 violations.¹¹³

Accuracy of the ceasefire violations is impossible to verify, according to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, a US-based think-tank.¹¹⁴

Cross-border attacks

The Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS) recorded 117 cross border attacks along the LoC in 2019.¹¹⁵ According to the source, 85 Pakistani citizens were killed, including 61 civilians, 23 army soldiers and one rangers personnel.¹¹⁶

¹⁰⁵ UNOCHR, Report on the Situation of Human Rights in Kashmir: Developments in the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir from June 2016 to April 2018, and General Human Rights Concerns in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, 14 June 2018, [url](#), p. 47

¹⁰⁶ UNOCHR, Report on the Situation of Human Rights in Kashmir: Developments in the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir from June 2016 to April 2018, and General Human Rights Concerns in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, 14 June 2018, [url](#), p. 47

¹⁰⁷ Gandhara, In Disputed Kashmir, Pakistan Accuses India Of Increased Shelling, 23 July 2020, [url](#), accessed 18 July 2020; Kulkarni, T., The escalation of ceasefire violations across the Line of Control, In: South Asian Voices, 20 August 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁸ The Economic Times, 2019 recorded highest ever ceasefire violations by Pakistan in Jammu and Kashmir in last 16 years, 5 January 2020, [url](#)

¹⁰⁹ NDTV, Nearly 60% Rise In Pak Ceasefire Violations In J&K In 2020: Top Cop Dilbag Singh, 24 July 2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁰ Kulkarni, T., The escalation of ceasefire violations across the Line of Control, In: South Asian Voices, 20 August 2020, [url](#)

¹¹¹ AA, India violated ceasefire 1,595 times in 2020: Pakistan, 7 July 2020, [url](#); Dawn, FO summons Indian envoy to register 'strong protest' after 5 injured by firing across LoC, 6 July 2020, [url](#); Kulkarni, T., The escalation of ceasefire violations across the Line of Control, In: South Asian Voices, 20 August 2020, [url](#)

¹¹² Gandhara, In Disputed Kashmir, Pakistan Accuses India Of Increased Shelling, 23 July 2020, [url](#)

¹¹³ AA, 'Girl killed in Indian firing at Kashmir border', 15 September 2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁴ The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Ceasefire Violations in Kashmir: A War by Other Means?, 24 October 2018, [url](#)

¹¹⁵ PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2019, 5 June 2020, [url](#), pp. 23-24

¹¹⁶ PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2019, 5 June 2020, [url](#), p. 60

Cross border attacks from India along the LoC in 2019 according to the PIPS		
	Attacks	Civilian victims
January	11	3
February	9	5
March	11	12*
April	9	6
May	5	3
June	2	0*
July	10	5
August	13	9
September	11	0
October	20	15
November	7	1*
December	9	5*
	117	

Table 1: Cross border attacks from India along the LoC in 2019, according to the PIPS ¹¹⁷

* In these cases, the source has not specifically stated whether the victims were civilians.

Examples of cross-border violence in 2020

- In February 2020, a shelling in the village of Jura was reported. ¹¹⁸
- On 11 April 2020, at least six civilians were injured after a firing in the villages near the LoC. ¹¹⁹
- On 27 April, a woman was killed after a firing in the Jandrot and Khuiratta sectors. ¹²⁰
- On 21 June 2020, a 13 years old girl was allegedly killed and two other persons were injured in the AK after an exchange of fire between India and Pakistan in Mensar village, Bedori Sector. ¹²¹
- On 7 July 2020, it was reported that five civilians were injured after an Indian shelling in Nikial sector of the Line of Control (LoC). ¹²²
- On 15 September 2020, an 11-year-old girl was killed and four people injured after the firing in Hotspring and Rakhchikri sectors. ¹²³

¹¹⁷ PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2019, 5 June 2020, [url](#), pp. 23-24; PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2019, 5 June 2020, [url](#), p. 60. Table by EASO based on PIPS data.

¹¹⁸ Al Jazeera, A constant fear of death in Pakistan-administered Kashmir, 26 February 2020, [url](#)

¹¹⁹ VOA News, Pakistan: Indian Cross-Border Fire in Kashmir Harms Civilians, 11 April 2020, [url](#)

¹²⁰ Xinhuanet, Pakistani woman killed in Indian firing on Kashmir LoC: Pakistan army, 27 April 2020, [url](#)

¹²¹ AA, 13-year-old girl killed amid gunfire at Kashmir border, 21 June 2020, [url](#)

¹²² AA, India violated ceasefire 1,595 times in 2020: Pakistan, 7 July 2020, [url](#)

¹²³ AA, 'Girl killed in Indian firing at Kashmir border', 15 September 2020, [url](#)

According to the Pakistani government, fighting between Pakistani and Indian forces across the Line of Control caused some 60 civilian deaths in 2019.¹²⁴

Armed groups

Sources report that various groups are active in Kashmir, as illustrated below. Militant groups in Kashmir are known to change their names frequently to avoid possible prosecution or sanctions by the Indian, Pakistani or other governments.¹²⁵ According to Hein Kiessling, a political scientist and historian, Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) reportedly has close ties with a number of extremist armed groups.¹²⁶ In the 1990s, the ISI established close relationships with groups such as Lashkar-e Taiba¹²⁷ and Jaish-e Muhammad to put pressure on India.¹²⁸ The US has accused the ISI of supporting groups such as the Afghan Taliban, the Haqqani Network and Pakistani jihadist groups allied with al-Qaeda.¹²⁹

Militant groups active in Kashmir are known to run social infrastructure such as schools and charities.¹³⁰

Armed groups active in Kashmir include:

- Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HM)¹³¹
- Jaish-e Muhammad (JeM)¹³²
- Lashkar-e Taiba (LeT)¹³³
- Harakat-ul-Mujahideen¹³⁴
- Harakat ul-Jihad-i-Islami (HUJI)¹³⁵

According to the CEP, the Punjabi Taliban is a network of militant groups who have close ties with the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and that include members of Lashkar-e Jhangvi (LeJ), Sipah-e Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) and JeM and their splinter groups.¹³⁶

¹²⁴ Al Jazeera, Pakistan-administered Kashmir's PM calls for 'military' action, 26 Feb 2020, [url](#); Freedom House, 'Freedom in the World 2020 – Pakistani Kashmir', 4 March 2020, [url](#)

¹²⁵ Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs, Religion and Conflict, Case Study Series, Kashmir: Religious Diversity Becomes Religious Militancy, August 2013, [url](#), p. 11

¹²⁶ Kiessling, H., Faith, Unity, Discipline: The Inter-Service-Intelligence (ISI) of Pakistan, October 2016, [url](#)

¹²⁷ BBC News, Hafiz Saeed: Will Pakistan's 'terror cleric' stay in jail? 13 February 2020, [url](#)

¹²⁸ Kiessling, H., Faith, Unity, Discipline: The Inter-Service-Intelligence (ISI) of Pakistan, October 2016, [url](#)

¹²⁹ Al Jazeera, Pakistan appoints new head of powerful intelligence agency, 10 October 2018, [url](#); Reuters, Mattis says will try to work with Pakistan 'one more time', 3 October 2017, [url](#)

¹³⁰ Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs, Religion and Conflict, Case Study Series, Kashmir: Religious Diversity Becomes Religious Militancy, August 2013, [url](#), p. 11

¹³¹ Al Jazeera, Explainer: Who are Kashmir's armed groups?, 3 Mar 2019, [url](#); EASO, Pakistan, Security situation, Country of Origin Information Report, October 2019, [url](#)

¹³² Al Jazeera, Explainer: Who are Kashmir's armed groups?, 3 Mar 2019, [url](#); EASO, Pakistan, Security situation, Country of Origin Information Report, October 2019, [url](#)

¹³³ Al Jazeera, Explainer: Who are Kashmir's armed groups?, 3 Mar 2019, [url](#); EASO, Pakistan, Security situation, Country of Origin Information Report, October 2019, [url](#)

¹³⁴ CEP, Pakistan, n.d., [url](#)

¹³⁵ CIA, World Factbook, Pakistan, n.d., [url](#)

¹³⁶ CEP, Pakistan, n.d., [url](#)



There are reportedly two new armed groups known as The Resistance Front (TRF) and Tehreek-i-Milat-i-Islami (TMI)¹³⁷. The Resistance Front reportedly consists of already existing groups Hizbul Mujahidin, Jaish-e-Mohammad, LeT and Al-Badr.¹³⁸

Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HM)

HM is a militant group operating in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. It is led by Syed Salahuddin who is based in Pakistan.¹³⁹ HM has been reportedly able to freely operate in Pakistan where it runs training camps and it has received support from the ISI (Pakistan intelligence service).¹⁴⁰ The group was founded in 1989 with a goal to oppose Indian presence in Kashmir and to support accession of Kashmir to Pakistan.¹⁴¹ It was created as the military wing of Jamaat-e-Islami (JeL), a Pakistani political party.¹⁴²

HM has conducted numerous attacks in the Indian state Jammu and Kashmir.¹⁴³ The killing of a HM commander Burhan Wani by the Indian forces caused widespread protests in Kashmir in 2016¹⁴⁴, reportedly with 200 000 people visiting his funeral.¹⁴⁵ The group has currently strong presence in the southern Kashmir's Shopian, Kulgam and Pulwama districts. According to the Indian government data, there are currently 119 active HM fighters in Indian Kashmir, mostly in the south.¹⁴⁶

The group is based in Muzaffarabad and has estimated 1 500 fighters, according to the CEP.¹⁴⁷ USDOS states that the number of group's members is unknown.¹⁴⁸ The group was designed as a foreign terrorist organisation by the US in 2017¹⁴⁹ and it was proscribed under the Indian terrorism laws in 2002.¹⁵⁰

Jaish-e Muhammad (JeM)

JeM was founded in 2000, reportedly with the support of al-Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban.¹⁵¹ JeM aims to unite Kashmir with Pakistan, install the rule of Sharia law in the country¹⁵² and to expel foreign

¹³⁷ Zee News, Pakistan forms two new terrorist groups with Lashkar-e-Taiba to launch attacks in Jammu and Kashmir: Sources, [url](#)

¹³⁸ The Economic Times, The Resistance Front: New name of terror groups in Kashmir, 29 April 2019, [url](#)

¹³⁹ Al Jazeera, Explainer: Who are Kashmir's armed groups?, 3 Mar 2019, [url](#)

¹⁴⁰ CEP, Pakistan, n.d., [url](#); SATP, Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁴¹ Al Jazeera, Explainer: Who are Kashmir's armed groups?, 3 Mar 2019, [url](#); USDOS, Country Report on Terrorism 2019 - Chapter 1 - Pakistan, 24 June 2020, [url](#), p. 262

¹⁴² CEP, Pakistan, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁴³ Al Jazeera, Explainer: Who are Kashmir's armed groups?, 3 Mar 2019, [url](#); USDOS, Country Report on Terrorism 2019 - Chapter 1 - Pakistan, 24 June 2020, [url](#), p. 262

¹⁴⁴ BBC News, Kashmir protests over Burhan Wani leave 36 dead, 13 July 2016, [url](#); DW, Why Kashmir is still reeling from rebel Burhan Wani's death, 8 July 2018, [url](#); Diplomat (The), Kashmir: 2 Years After Burhan Wani, 10 July 2018, [url](#); Hindu (The), Kashmir on the boil: a timeline, 20 April 2017, [url](#)

¹⁴⁵ Diplomat (The), Kashmir: 2 Years After Burhan Wani, 10 July 2018, [url](#)

¹⁴⁶ Al Jazeera, Explainer: Who are Kashmir's armed groups?, 3 Mar 2019, [url](#)

¹⁴⁷ CEP, Pakistan, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁴⁸ USDOS, Country Report on Terrorism 2019 - Chapter 1 - Pakistan, 24 June 2020, [url](#), pp. 262-263

¹⁴⁹ USDOS, Country Report on Terrorism 2019 - Chapter 1 - Pakistan, 24 June 2020, [url](#), p. 262

¹⁵⁰ SATP, Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁵¹ Al Jazeera, Explainer: Who are Kashmir's armed groups?, 3 Mar 2019, [url](#); Diplomat (The), Jaish-e-Mohammed: Under the Hood, 13 March 2019, [url](#)

¹⁵² CIA, World Factbook, Pakistan, n.d., [url](#)

forces from Afghanistan¹⁵³. The group is led by Masood Azhar¹⁵⁴ and it is based in Punjab, Pakistan.¹⁵⁵ Despite being banned by Pakistan in 2002, the group has been able to continue with its activities inside the country.¹⁵⁶ JeM has been reportedly supported by the Pakistani state¹⁵⁷, a claim repeatedly made also by India.¹⁵⁸

The group has attacked high profile Indian targets, including the Indian parliament in New Delhi and the legislative assembly in Indian-administered Kashmir. In 2016, JeM attacked Indian base in Uri, killing some 20 soldiers and in 2019, the group claimed the Pulwama attack, killing some 40 Indian soldiers. Pakistani government reportedly took over a seminary complex in the city of Bahawalpur after the attack and confirmed the presence of Azhar in the country.¹⁵⁹

According to Indian government sources quoted by Al Jazeera, there are 56 active JeM fighters in Indian Kashmir (33 foreigners and 23 locals).¹⁶⁰ According to a Pakistani security analyst, Azaz Syed, writing for the Urdu edition of Deutsche Welle (DW), JeM has an estimated strength of 40 000 militants, as quoted in a report by the Nanyang Technological University in Singapore.¹⁶¹ JeM has had connections with Afghan Taliban and Al Qaeda.¹⁶² According to the USDOS, the groups has 'several hundred armed supporters'.¹⁶³ The group was designated as a foreign terrorist organisation by the US in 2001¹⁶⁴ and it was banned by India in the same year¹⁶⁵. The leader of JeM, Masood Azhar, was placed on the list of 'global terrorists' by the United Nations on 1 May 2019.¹⁶⁶

Lashkar-e Taiba (LeT)

¹⁵³ CEP, Pakistan, n.d., [url](#); CIA, World Factbook, Pakistan, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁵⁴ Al Jazeera, Explainer: Who are Kashmir's armed groups?, 3 Mar 2019, [url](#); Zahid, F., Profile of Jaish-e-Muhammad and Leader Masood Azhar, April 2019, Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses, [url](#), pp. 1-5

¹⁵⁵ Zahid, F., Profile of Jaish-e-Muhammad and Leader Masood Azhar, April 2019, Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses, [url](#), p. 5

¹⁵⁶ CEP, Pakistan, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁵⁷ FDD's Long War Journal, Pakistan: Friend or Foe in the Fight Against Terrorism?, 12 July 2016, [url](#); USDOS, Country Report on Terrorism 2019 - Chapter 1 - Pakistan, 24 June 2020, [url](#)

¹⁵⁸ Al Jazeera, Explainer: Who are Kashmir's armed groups?, 3 Mar 2019, [url](#); RFE/RL, India Blames Pakistan, Demands Action After Kashmir Attack, 15 February 2019, [url](#); USDOS, Country Report on Terrorism 2019 - Chapter 1 - Pakistan, 24 June 2020, [url](#), p. 276

¹⁵⁹ Al Jazeera, Explainer: Who are Kashmir's armed groups?, 3 Mar 2019, [url](#)

¹⁶⁰ Al Jazeera, Explainer: Who are Kashmir's armed groups?, 3 Mar 2019, [url](#)

¹⁶¹ Zahid, F., Profile of Jaish-e-Muhammad and Leader Masood Azhar, April 2019, Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses, [url](#), p. 5

¹⁶² SATP, Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) (Army of the Prophet), n.d., [url](#)

¹⁶³ USDOS, Country Report on Terrorism 2019 - Chapter 1 - Pakistan, 24 June 2020, [url](#), p. 277

¹⁶⁴ USDOS, Country Report on Terrorism 2019 - Chapter 1 - Pakistan, 24 June 2020, [url](#), p. 276

¹⁶⁵ SATP, Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) (Army of the Prophet), n.d., [url](#)

¹⁶⁶ Al Jazeera, UN puts Pakistani armed group chief Masood Azhar on 'terror' list, 1 May 2019, [url](#)

Founded in 1990 by Hafiz Muhammad Saeed, who is still its current leader.¹⁶⁷ The group has reportedly enjoyed support of the Pakistani military and intelligence services¹⁶⁸ and has ties with Al-Qaeda¹⁶⁹. LeT aims to unite Kashmir with Pakistan and impose Sharia law rule in South Asia.¹⁷⁰ It is based in Punjab and present in both, Indian and Pakistan administered Kashmir.¹⁷¹ LeT is a military wing of the religious organisation Markaz Dawa-ul-Irshad.¹⁷² LeT is considered to be one of the most prominent armed groups operating on Pakistani soil, reportedly sending fighters across the Line of Control into Indian-administered Kashmir; the group has carried out several attacks against the Indian security forces. In 2018, it was blamed for a Mumbai attacks that killed over 160 people.¹⁷³ Following the attack, Pakistan banned the group, however, its charitable organisations including Jamaat-ud-Dawa reportedly continue to operate in the country.¹⁷⁴ According to the USDOS, the group has changed its name to Jamaat-ud-Dawa in order to avoid sanctions.¹⁷⁵ In 2018, group's members ran as independent candidates in Pakistani elections.¹⁷⁶

According to an Indian government source, as quoted by Al Jazeera, the group has 129 active fighters in Indian administered Kashmir.¹⁷⁷ According to the USDOS, precise number of LeT members is not known.¹⁷⁸ LeT claims to maintain over 2 000 offices in Pakistan,¹⁷⁹ however the groups does not conduct attacks against Pakistan.¹⁸⁰ According to Al Jazeera, charitable wings of the group (Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD) and Filah-e-Insaniyat Foundation (FIF)) have continued to operate in Pakistan freely even after the government announced a crackdown on the group.¹⁸¹ The group was designated as a foreign terrorist organisation by the US in 2001 and banned by Pakistan in 2002¹⁸². It is also banned by India and the UK and proscribed by the UN.¹⁸³ In February 2020, the group's leader was sentenced to 11 years in prison for financing terrorism by a Pakistani court.¹⁸⁴

Harakat ul-Mujahidin (HuM) (previously Harakat ul-Ansar)¹⁸⁵

¹⁶⁷ Al Jazeera, Explainer: Who are Kashmir's armed groups?, 3 Mar 2019, [url](#)

¹⁶⁸ BBC News, Hafiz Saeed: Will Pakistan's 'terror cleric' stay in jail? 13 February 2020, [url](#); CEP, Lashkar-e-Taiba, n.d., [url](#); FDD's Long War Journal, Pakistan: Friend or Foe in the Fight Against Terrorism?, 12 July 2016, [url](#); SATP, Lashkar-e-Taiba | Let | Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorist 'Army of the Pure', n.d., [url](#); USDOS, Country Report on Terrorism 2019 - Chapter 1 - Pakistan, 24 June 2020, [url](#); War on the Rocks, Ten years after Mumbai, the group responsible is deadlier than ever, 26 November 2020, [url](#)

¹⁶⁹ FDD's Long War Journal, Pakistan: Friend or Foe in the Fight Against Terrorism?, 12 July 2016, [url](#)

¹⁷⁰ CIA, World Factbook, Pakistan, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁷¹ CIA, World Factbook, Pakistan, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁷² EFSAS, Pakistan Army and Terrorism; an unholy alliance, n.d., [url](#); FAS, Lashkar-e-Taiba Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (Army of the Righteous), n.d., [url](#); USDOS, Country Reports on Terrorism 2017 - Foreign Terrorist Organizations: Lashkar e-Tayyiba, 19 September 2018, available at: [url](#)

¹⁷³ Al Jazeera, Explainer: Who are Kashmir's armed groups?, 3 Mar 2019, [url](#)

¹⁷⁴ Al Jazeera, Explainer: Who are Kashmir's armed groups?, 3 Mar 2019, [url](#); CEP, Pakistan, n.d., [url](#); CIA, World Factbook, Pakistan, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁷⁵ USDOS, Country Report on Terrorism 2019 - Chapter 1 - Pakistan, 24 June 2020, [url](#), p. 282

¹⁷⁶ Al Jazeera, Explainer: Who are Kashmir's armed groups?, 3 Mar 2019, [url](#)

¹⁷⁷ Al Jazeera, Explainer: Who are Kashmir's armed groups?, 3 Mar 2019, [url](#)

¹⁷⁸ USDOS, Country Report on Terrorism 2019 - Chapter 1 - Pakistan, 24 June 2020, [url](#), p. 283

¹⁷⁹ EFSAS, Pakistan Army and Terrorism; an unholy alliance, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁸⁰ CEP, Pakistan, n.d., [url](#); CIA, World Factbook, Pakistan, [url](#) accessed 18 September 2020

¹⁸¹ Al Jazeera, Explainer: Who are Kashmir's armed groups?, 3 Mar 2019, [url](#)

¹⁸² USDOS, Country Report on Terrorism 2019 - Chapter 1 - Pakistan, 24 June 2020, [url](#), p. 282

¹⁸³ SATP, Lashkar-e-Taiba | Let | Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorist 'Army of the Pure', n.d., [url](#)

¹⁸⁴ BBC News, Hafiz Saeed: Will Pakistan's 'terror cleric' stay in jail? 13 February 2020, [url](#)

¹⁸⁵ SATP, Harkat ul-Ansar, n.d., [url](#)

HuM, also known as Jamiat ul-Ansar, was founded in 1985 to fight the Soviets in Afghanistan. The group's focus has since changed and its aim now is to fight Indian presence in Kashmir, unite Kashmir with Pakistan and to install an Islamic state under Sharia law in Pakistan. HuM has connections to al-Qaeda, Hiz-il-Mujahideen, Lashkar-e-Taiba, and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi.¹⁸⁶ It has reportedly received support from Pakistan.¹⁸⁷ The group is based in Islamabad and runs training camps in the former FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Area) region.¹⁸⁸ It is present in Muzaffarabad and has estimated strength of several thousand supporters in Kashmir and parts of Pakistan.¹⁸⁹ According to the USDOS, '[a]fter 2000, a significant portion of HUM's membership defected to JeM, and only a small number of cadres are reported to still be active.'¹⁹⁰ The group was designated as a foreign terrorist organisation by the US in 1997¹⁹¹. Pakistan banned the group as HuM in 2001 and in 2003 again under its new name Jamiat-ul-Ansar (JuA).¹⁹² HuM is banned in India as a 'terrorist organisation'.¹⁹³

¹⁸⁶ CEP, Pakistan, n.d., [url](#); Stanford University, The Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, CISAC, Harakat-ul-Mujahideen, n.d., [url](#)

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