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World Report 2025 - India

Prime Minister Narendra Modi of the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won a third term in office in June 2024. The authorities continued to discriminate against members of minority communities. Officials failed to take adequate action against BJP supporters responsible for attacks, and instead targeted victims of the violence, including through unlawful demolitions of Muslim homes and properties. Government critics faced politically motivated prosecutions under tax and foreign funding regulations, and the draconian counterterrorism law.

Indian authorities failed to end the ethnic violence in the northeast state of Manipur, which has killed over 200 people and displaced more than 60,000 since May 2023.

Several foreign governments accused Indian intelligence agencies of targeting terrorism suspects and separatist leaders for assassination in [Canada](#), [the United States](#), and [Pakistan](#). In October 2024, Canada's national police service issued a [public statement](#) on the [alleged role of Indian state agents in criminal activity](#) on Canadian soil, including homicide, extortion, and other violence. Indian authorities also canceled visas or denied entry to government critics, including members of the diaspora.

Despite the Modi administration's deteriorating human rights record, several countries strengthened strategic and economic ties with India. However, in January the European Parliament adopted a [resolution](#) that raised urgent human rights concerns, including "violence, increasing nationalistic rhetoric and divisive policies" against minorities. In May, for a second consecutive year, the United Nations-linked Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions [deferred accreditation](#) to India's National Human Rights Commission.

Jammu and Kashmir

In September, the Indian government held elections for a regional government in Jammu and Kashmir for the first time since revoking its special autonomous status in August 2019. While the [government claimed](#) that it had restored peace and security in the region, many Kashmiris said that they were [voting against](#) the [continued restrictions on basic freedoms](#).

The Jammu region, considered relatively more peaceful, saw a [spike in violence between May and July](#), leading to the death of 15 soldiers and 9 civilians. As of September, there were [40 reported attacks in Jammu and Kashmir](#), in which 18 civilians, 20 security force personnel, and 39 suspected militants were killed.

In March, demonstrators in the now separate territory of Ladakh demanded [a greater participation in governance](#). In October, Indian authorities arbitrarily detained the prominent climate activist Sonam Wangchuk and 120 others from Ladakh, who had walked for 30 days, covering nearly 1,000-kilometers, from Leh, the provincial capital, to Delhi. The activists, demanding a greater say in local governance and stronger environmental safeguards, were released after 36 hours.

[Religious minorities and migrant workers](#) faced risk of [targeted attacks](#) while hundreds of Kashmiris, including journalists and human rights activists, remained in custody. Kashmiri human rights defender [Khurram Parvez](#) has been jailed since November 2021 under the Unlawful Activities Prevention of Atrocities Act (UAPA), India's draconian counterterrorism law.

[Journalists in Kashmir](#) continued to be at risk of police interrogation, raids, threats, physical assault, restrictions on movement, and fabricated criminal cases. In June, authorities [introduced a policy to protect public officials](#) in the region from alleged false complaints and recommended punishing

media publications complicit in spreading so-called misinformation, raising concerns over government accountability and threats to media freedom.

In several cases, the police kept people in custody by filing [new allegations](#) after courts granted them bail or quashed detention orders. In March, authorities filed a new UAPA case to [rearrest Aasif Sultan](#), a Kashmiri journalist released after spending more than five years in prison.

Impunity for Security Forces

Allegations of torture and extrajudicial killings persisted, with the [National Human Rights Commission](#) registering 121 deaths in police custody, 1,558 deaths in judicial custody, and 93 alleged extrajudicial killings in the first nine months in 2024.

The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act remained in effect in Jammu and Kashmir and several northeastern states, providing effective immunity from prosecution to security forces, even for serious human rights abuses.

In September, the Bangladeshi government strongly condemned the killing of two persons at the India-Bangladesh border allegedly by India's Border Security Force (BSF). The BSF has frequently [used excessive force](#) along the Bangladeshi border with impunity, targeting both Indians as well as irregular immigrants and cattle traders from Bangladesh.

Attacks on Religious and Ethnic Minorities, Dalits, and Tribal Groups

Prime Minister Modi's electoral campaign frequently used [hate speech](#) against Muslims and other minorities, inciting discrimination, hostility and violence against them.

Between June and August, there was a [surge in violence by Hindu vigilantes](#), assaulting Muslim men on suspicions of consuming beef or transporting cattle for slaughter. In August, local Hindus in Haryana [killed](#) a 26-year-old Muslim migrant worker from West Bengal for allegedly consuming beef. In Maharashtra, a 72-year-old Muslim man was [harassed and beaten](#) on a train over suspicions of carrying beef. In August, Hindu vigilantes [shot dead](#) a 19-year-old Hindu teenager, suspecting him of being Muslim and smuggling cows.

Several BJP state governments demolished Muslims' homes, businesses, and places of worship without due process and carried out other unlawful practices. BJP leaders dubbed these demolitions, often carried out as apparent collective punishment against the Muslim community for communal clashes or dissent, as "[bulldozer justice](#)." In June, Madhya Pradesh authorities [demolished 11 Muslim houses](#) in Mandla district, saying they had found beef in their refrigerators, as well as animal hides and skeletal remains of cattle. In November, the Supreme Court [ruled](#) such demolitions were illegal and laid down guidelines to ensure adequate due process prior to homes being demolished.

Christians in several BJP-run states risked attacks by Hindu mobs over allegations of "illegal conversions." In July, a group of Hindu men [attacked](#) a pastor in Chhattisgarh state. A militant mob [attacked](#) a prayer congregation in Madhya Pradesh state, beating up men and children. At least 12 of India's 28 states have laws forbidding forced religious conversion that have been used by the authorities to [harass](#) religious minorities, especially Christians from Dalit and Adivasi communities, and have emboldened vigilante violence.

Dalits continued to face [systemic violence and caste-based discrimination](#). In July, three young men in Uttar Pradesh [forced](#) a 15-year old Dalit boy to drink urine. In August, railway police officials in Madhya Pradesh [beat](#) a Dalit woman and her 15-year-old grandson. The [rape of a 20-year old Dalit](#)

nurse by a doctor in a private hospital in Uttar Pradesh in August once again spotlighted that Dalit women and girls are at heightened risk of sexual violence.

The BJP government in Chhattisgarh state, home to many tribal communities, escalated [counterinsurgency operations](#) against Maoist rebels, leading to [abuses against villagers](#) and [allegations of extrajudicial killings](#). The authorities continued to [target human rights activists](#), including on politically motivated charges, accusing them of being Maoists or Maoist supporters.

In September, [renewed ethnic violence](#) in Manipur between armed groups from the predominantly Christian Kuki-Zo community and the mostly Hindu Meitei community [reportedly killed](#) at least 11 people. Students and others [protested the violence](#), and some [clashed](#) with security forces and attacked government buildings. Instead of protecting vulnerable communities and upholding the rule of law, the BJP-run state government deepened longstanding anger and distrust among the communities through polarizing policies.

In July, the UN Human Rights Committee, following its review of India's compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, [raised concerns](#) about discrimination and violence against minority communities including religious minorities, Dalits, and tribal groups.

Civil Society and Freedom of Association

Indian authorities used abusive foreign funding laws such as the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA), counterterrorism laws, trumped-up financial investigations, and other means to unlawfully attack civil society groups and activists. In February, the Central Bureau of Investigation [raided the home and offices](#) of Harsh Mander, a prominent human rights activist. In January, the authorities canceled the FCRA licenses of the research institution, the [Centre for Policy Research](#) and the Christian charity [World Vision India](#), which provides humanitarian support to children in low-income communities.

In June, the Financial Action Task Force, an intergovernmental organization that works to combat threats to the global financial system, [recommended](#) that India put in place measures to [prevent](#) the abuse of counterterrorism policies against nongovernmental groups.

In July, the Indian government enforced three new criminal laws, replacing the Indian penal code, the Code of Criminal Procedure, and the Indian Evidence Act. The new laws [expand police powers](#), raising concerns about the rights to freedom of expression, association, peaceful assembly, and a fair trial.

Freedom of Expression

The government censored peaceful expression online through arbitrary and disproportionate orders to block websites or suspend social media accounts. In January, the authorities [blocked](#) the websites of Hindutva Watch and India Hate Lab, which document hate speech and attacks on India's religious minorities. In February, following a [protest](#) by farmers in Haryana and Punjab, the authorities [blocked dozens](#) of social media accounts, most of them belonging to [journalists reporting on the protests](#), [farmers](#), [union leaders](#), and others supporting the movement.

The Indian government [revoked visa privileges](#) of foreign journalists working in India and foreign citizens of Indian origin who were critical of the government or its policies. As of June, [three foreign journalists](#) claimed they were [forced to leave India](#) after the government refused to renew their work permits.

Indian authorities continued to impose the [largest number of internet shutdowns globally](#), violating Indian law and international human rights standards. The shutdowns [disproportionately hurt](#)

socially and economically marginalized communities by denying them access to free or subsidized food rations and livelihoods.

In September, in a win for free speech, the Bombay High Court [struck down](#) a 2023 amendment to the Information Technology Rules that empowered the government to establish a fact-checking unit to identify and order the takedown of any online information about itself that it deemed to be false or misleading.

Women's and Girls' Rights

The [rape and murder of a 31-year old doctor](#) in a government hospital in Kolkata city in August prompted widespread protests demanding justice and better security and facilities at medical campuses and hospitals. The attack cast a spotlight on how millions of Indian women [remain exposed](#) to abuse in the workplace and continue to face severe [barriers to justice](#) for sexual violence.

India has laws to address [violence against women](#) and protect them from [sexual harassment in the workplace](#). However, the authorities have [failed to effectively enforce the law](#) or ensure complaint committees tackle sexual harassment in both the formal and informal sectors.

Disability Rights

People with disabilities continued to be warehoused in institutions across India. In July, 14 people living in [Asha Kiran](#), a government-run shelter in Delhi, [died](#) within 20 days, raising concerns about the living conditions and quality of drinking water and food. As of August, [27 residents](#) had died in the institution since the beginning of 2024.

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

In September, the central government announced [several measures](#) toward inclusion of couples regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. These included a directive to treat partners in LGBTQI+ relationships as part of the same household for issuing ration cards, no restrictions on opening a joint bank account, and nominating a partner to receive the account's balance in case of death.

The measures follow an October 2023 Supreme Court ruling that [failed to legalize same-sex marriage](#), but directed the formation of a high-level committee to study rights and entitlements for the LGBTQI+ community.

Refugee Rights

Rohingya Muslim refugees in India faced tightened restrictions, arbitrary detention, violent attacks often incited by political leaders, and a heightened risk of forced returns. Indian authorities continued to detain hundreds of Rohingya refugees, prompting the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination to [call](#) on the government in July to end their arbitrary detention and refrain from their forcible deportation and return to Myanmar.

In May, the Indian government [granted](#) the first set of citizenship certificates under the discriminatory [Citizenship Amendment Act \(CAA\)](#), which the parliament had enacted in 2019. The law fast-tracks citizenship requests from non-Muslims fleeing religious persecution from India's Muslim-majority neighbors—Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh—but excludes Muslim refugees from those countries.

