

## *India: Extremism & Terrorism*

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On January 29, 2021, an improvised explosive device exploded outside of the Israeli embassy in New Delhi, a kilometer from where Indian President Ram Nath Kovind and Prime Minister Narendra Modi were participating in a military ceremony. No casualties or damage to the embassy were reported, though there was minor damage to nearby parked cars. A letter found at the scene promised Israel this was just a “trailer” of coming attacks and referred to deceased Iranian Quds Force commander Qasem Soleimani and Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh as martyrs. Previously unknown group Jaish-ul-Hind claimed responsibility. Authorities suspect the group is backed by Iran. Indian security forces issued a request from the country’s Bureau of Immigration for any information on Iranian citizens who had recently entered the country. (Sources: [India Today](#), [Jerusalem Post](#), [Jerusalem Post](#), [Twitter](#), [BBC News](#), [Reuters](#))

On February 27, 2020, it was reported that Al-Qitaal Media Center, a pro-ISIS media outlet, and Junudul Khilafah al-Hind launched an India-centric publication called “Voice of Hind.” The publication has emerged in the midst of large scale sectarian violence initiated by the controversial Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), which critics believe discriminates against India’s Muslims. Mahmood Paracha, a senior lawyer accused of inciting communal hatred in the past, is featured on the cover of “Voice of Hind.” Notably, Paracha helped conduct a camp in Lucknow that would teach Muslims and Dalits about the “right to self-defense” and how to apply for a firearm license to combat violence perpetrated by hardline Hindu nationalists. The magazine further states that there is no place for nationalism in Islam, and that India’s Muslims should join the caliphate instead. ISIS has not made major headway in India, though, security agencies have arrested over 127 individuals with suspected links to ISIS, according to reports. (Sources: [OpIndia](#), [OpIndia](#))

### **Overview**

Since gaining independence from British colonial rule in 1947, India—a country today comprised of over a billion people—has been plagued by several conflicts, many of which have given rise to various forms of terrorism and extremism. For example, India has fought three wars against Pakistan over Kashmir, a disputed territory over which India, Pakistan, and China all claim partial or complete ownership. Kashmir has been the source of a violent insurgency since the late 1980s. Islamic militant groups seeking independence have carried out attacks against Indian targets both in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir and elsewhere in the country, including the infamous November 2008 terrorist attacks in Mumbai perpetrated by Lashkar-e-Taiba. (Sources: [Council on Foreign Relations](#), [CNN](#))

Islamic extremism in India remains primarily focused on the conflict in Kashmir, and global Islamic terror groups such as ISIS and al-Qaeda have only made limited inroads into the country. Though India has the second largest Muslim population in the world, Muslims remain a minority there, making up approximately 14 percent of India’s Hindu-majority population. Hindu extremism, however, continues to carry out violence against Muslims, Christians, and other religious minorities in India. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is India’s Hindu nationalist party and wields significant influence in the Indian government, especially since BJP member Narendra Modi became India’s prime minister in 2014. In 2015, violent attacks on religious minorities in India reportedly averaged one per day. There have also been several reports of state authorities participating in such violence. Indian NGO FactChecker recorded 254 reported crimes targeting religious minorities between January 2009 and October 2018. (Sources: [Pew Research Center](#), [Diplomat](#), [Diplomat](#), [New York Times](#), [Hudson Institute](#), [Vice News](#), [National Review](#), [Human Rights Watch](#))

Kashmir has been the source of a violent insurgency since the late 1980s.

Though India experiences several forms of religious extremism, in 2006, then-Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh named left-wing extremists as the “single biggest internal security threat” in the country. Left-wing rebels, also known as Naxalites or Maoists, have waged a low-level insurgency in India’s south-central regions since 1967. The Communist Party of India (Maoist) (CPI-M) emerged in 2004, and was reportedly the single largest armed group operating within India as of 2017. Despite counterinsurgency operations launched by the Indian government and a stalemate in recent years, no peace agreement has been reached, and over 20,000 people—mostly civilians—have reportedly been killed in the Naxalite insurgency since 1980. (Sources: [Council on Foreign Relations](#), [Diplomat](#), [Al Jazeera](#))

Northeast India, which is comprised of seven states connected to the rest of the country by a land corridor less than 30 kilometers wide, has also been a highly volatile region since Indian independence. Each of the seven states has experienced an insurgency at some point since 1947, after which the area was largely neglected by the Indian government. Most violence has been directed either at the Indian government or at illegal immigrants from neighboring Bangladesh. Some of the states in Northeast India, including Nagaland and Assam, have not yet reached a settlement and remain in a state of active or suspended conflict today. (Sources: [Council on Foreign Relations](#), [Indian Defence Review](#), [YaleGlobal](#))

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Although the Indian government's response to terrorism has been criticized as incoherent and reactionary, the U.S. Department of State assessed that it has improved in the wake of the 2008 terror attacks in Mumbai. The Indian government has several intelligence, military, and police organizations that work to launch counterinsurgency operations, sometimes along with help from paramilitary and other local groups, though some of these groups have been accused of perpetrating human rights abuses. India also has domestic legislation in place to prosecute terrorist activities, as well as anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing (AML/CTF) legislation that it has amended to comply with international standards. However, some legislation has been highly controversial, such as the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA). AFSPA, which gives unconditional permission to Indian security forces to shoot on sight, has been implemented in several Indian states since 1958 in response to insurgencies. India also has implemented some de-radicalization initiatives, as well as counter-messaging initiatives aimed at countering the online propaganda of ISIS. (Sources: [Council on Foreign Relations](#), [U.S. Department of State](#), [Diplomat](#), [BBC News](#), [FirstPost](#))

India is a founding member of the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) and promotes multilateral efforts to combat terrorism, though it has not participated in global anti-ISIS efforts. India regularly cooperates with the United States on bilateral counterterrorism initiatives, and the United States has helped India to implement U.N. Security Council counterterrorism resolutions and sanctions domestically. (Sources: [U.S. Department of State](#), [Diplomat](#))

Public concern over the threat of terrorism in India is high. In 2013, India had the fourth highest number of citizens who labeled Islamic extremist groups as a "major threat" out of 40 countries polled. Two years after the 2008 terror attacks perpetrated by Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) in Mumbai, a plurality of Indians named LeT as the greatest threat to the country. Nonetheless, grievances still exist in Kashmir and Northeast India that hinder the resolution of the conflicts there, and the BJP, India's Hindu nationalist party, enjoys widespread public support. (Sources: [Pew Research Center](#), [Pew Research Center](#), [BBC News](#), [Diplomat](#), [Hudson Institute](#))

### **Radicalization and Foreign Fighters**

There are several forms of extremism present in India, including religious extremism, left-wing extremism, and ethnic separatism. Various extremist movements are concentrated in different parts of India, and have distinct objectives and paths to radicalization. (Sources: [Council on Foreign Relations](#), [Independent](#), [Economist](#))

#### *Islamic Extremism*

With 180 million Muslims, India has the second largest Muslim population in the world. However, few Indian Muslims have become radicalized. There are several explanations as to why: a 2009 *New York Times* article suggested that due to India's robust democratic traditions, Indian Muslims "are not afraid to speak out against religious extremism in their midst," citing a trend in which Indian Muslims refused to bury the bodies of suicide bombers. A 2014 *Economist* editorial cited India's democratic traditions, history of cultural integration with Hindus and other religious groups, and the domination of Sufism, a less hardline form of Islam, in the country. However, others have challenged these explanations, given the rise of Hindu extremism and anti-minority sentiment in recent years. A 2013 Bloomberg View article posited that Indian Muslims, many of whom live in urban poverty, do not turn to radical Islam simply because they "have many of their own problems to deal with" instead. (Source: [New York Times](#), [New York Times](#), [Economist](#), [Bloomberg View](#))

#### *The Kashmir Insurgency*

Nonetheless, Indian Muslims seeking jihad have tended to gravitate toward the insurgency in Kashmir rather than the appeal of global Islamic extremist groups such as ISIS and al-Qaeda. The northern Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir comprises about 45 percent of the entire Kashmir region, along with territory controlled by Pakistan and China. At the end of colonial rule in 1947, the British did not partition Kashmir but left its princes to choose allegiance to either Pakistan or India, creating a profound rivalry between the two countries that ultimately spurred three wars between them. Several Sunni Islamic militant groups are fighting for an independent Kashmir in the present-day insurgency in the region, which began in the late 1980s. These groups seek to undermine Indian control in Jammu and Kashmir and unite the entire Kashmir region in an Islamic state governed under their own respective interpretations of sharia law. Some have even conducted attacks elsewhere in India in a broader attempt to undermine Indian control wherever possible. Several of these groups have also allegedly received support from the Pakistani government and intelligence services, which reportedly view them as a counterweight to India. Though violence in Kashmir peaked in the mid-2000s, it continues today with total death toll estimates well over 40,000. (Sources: [Council on Foreign Relations](#), [Diplomat](#), [Diplomat](#), [CNN](#), [Foreign Policy](#), [Hindu](#),

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[Hindustan Times](#), [Stanford University](#), [Stanford University](#), [Stanford University](#), [Long War Journal](#))

### *Harakat-ul-Mujahideen*

Harakat-ul-Mujahideen (HuM) (a.k.a. Harakat-ul-Ansar) is a militant group that was initially founded in 1985 to fight the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, but changed its focus to waging jihad against Indian forces in Jammu and Kashmir in the 1990s. HuM was designated as a terrorist organization by the United States in 1997, and gained international attention for hijacking a domestic Indian Airlines flight in December 1999. Though HuM's membership mainly consists of individuals from Pakistan, Kashmir, and Afghanistan, it has also drawn fighters from locations around the world, including Southeast Asia, the Middle East, the United Kingdom, and the United States. HuM is allied with several other militant groups in Kashmir, including Hizb-il-Mujahideen and Lashkar-e-Taiba, and also maintains ties to al-Qaeda. The group has been notably less active since 2013. (Source: [Stanford University](#))

### *Hizb-il-Mujahideen*

Hizb-il-Mujahideen (HM) is a militant group that was formed in September 1989 as the military wing of Jamaat-e-Islami (JeL), a conservative Islamist political party in Pakistan. According to the U.S. Department of the Treasury, which designated HM as a terrorist organization in August 2017, the militant group is one of the largest operating in Jammu and Kashmir today. Most of HM's fighters are from Pakistan, though the group has also utilized social media and video tutorials in an effort to recruit and train Kashmiri youth in recent years. (Sources: [South Asia Terrorism Portal](#), [U.S. Department of the Treasury](#), [Hindustan Times](#), [International Business Times India](#))?

### *Jaish-e-Mohammed*

Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) is a militant group that was founded in the early 2000s by former HuM member Masood Azhar, allegedly with the support of Osama bin Laden. The group immediately began to carry out deadly attacks in Jammu and Kashmir, such as an October 2001 attack on the state's legislative assembly building that killed 30 people. Following the attack, JeM was designated as a terrorist organization by the United States. JeM also expanded to carry out attacks in other parts of India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. In December 2001, JeM collaborated with Lashkar-e-Taiba in an armed assault on the Indian parliament building in Delhi that reportedly killed 14 people. JeM's membership mostly consists of individuals from Pakistan, though the group has also drawn Kashmiri and Punjabi immigrants living in the United Kingdom to its ranks. In June 2008, JeM reportedly switched its focus from attacking Indian targets in Jammu and Kashmir to expelling Western forces from Afghanistan. Attacks attributed to the group decreased drastically after 2013, though unclear attributions and local reporting have made it difficult to assess JeM's true level of activity in recent years. (Sources: [Stanford University](#), [Long War Journal](#), [U.S. Department of State](#))

According to reports in early February 2020, JeM's training camp in Balakot, Pakistan is active again and is training around 27 jihadists. It is suspected that the operatives will carry out terror attacks in India. (Source: [Hindustan Times](#))

### *Lashkar-e-Taiba*

[Lashkar-e-Taiba](#) (LeT) is a militant group that was founded in Afghanistan in 1990 by Hafiz Mohammed Saeed. It is currently based in Pakistan, where it maintains a vast network of training camps and branch offices. It was designated as a terrorist organization by the United States in 2001. LeT views the dispute over Jammu and Kashmir as part of a global struggle against Muslim oppression, and has carried out several notorious attacks in India, such as a December 2001 collaborated assault with JeM on the Indian parliament in Delhi, and the November 2008 coordinated attacks in Mumbai that killed over 160 people. LeT has also attacked Delhi's symbolic Red Fort palace and carried out massacres of minority groups in Jammu and Kashmir. Though most of LeT's membership is Pakistani, the group has also exploited Hindu-Muslim tensions to recruit Indian Muslims, and has launched recruitment campaigns across Asia, Europe, and North America. (Sources: [South Asia Terrorism Portal](#), [Stanford University](#), [Carnegie Endowment for International Peace](#), [Washington Post](#), [U.S. Department of State](#))

### *Indian Mujahideen*

LeT also supports proxy Islamist groups within India, the most prominent of which is the Indian Mujahideen (IM), which came into operation in 2003. Its stated goal is to avenge violence against Indian Muslims. Although IM declared that it was an independent organization in December 2007,

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some analysts have suspected that it is actually a direct proxy of LeT or even of Pakistani intelligence services. Since IM's founding, it has been difficult to determine whether attacks have been carried out by IM or LeT, since the two groups support each other's operations. IM and LeT have also carried out joint attacks, such as a February 2010 attack targeting foreigners at a bakery in Pune, India, that killed nine. However, although IM has been called "the most lethal urban terrorist group" in India by security analysts, the group has overall managed to keep a fairly low profile in the country. The group was later linked to ISIS after one of its known members, Muhammad Sajid, was reported to have been killed fighting on behalf of ISIS in Syria in 2015. (Sources: [Stanford University](#), [BBC News](#), [Diplomat](#))

### *Al-Qaeda*

On July 27, 2017, al-Qaeda announced that it was establishing an affiliate in Jammu and Kashmir called Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind (AGH) led by Zakir Musa, a former leader of HM. Al-Qaeda's announcement was met with disapproval from many of the established militant groups fighting in Jammu and Kashmir, including LeT, JeM, and HM, the latter of which even accused AGH as being part of an Indian intelligence operation. However, in November 2017, ISIS's Amaq News Agency claimed an attack in Kashmir on behalf of AGH, suggesting that the group had actually switched its allegiance to ISIS. Regardless, according to analysts, AGH has yet to prove that it will significantly change the trajectory of fighting in Jammu and Kashmir. (Sources: [Diplomat](#), [Terrorism Research & Analysis Consortium](#), [Jamestown Foundation](#))

The U.S.-designated [al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent](#) (AQIS), whose formation was announced in September 2014, is another al-Qaeda affiliate allegedly operating in India. AQIS is allied with the Taliban and claims to operate in Pakistan, India, Afghanistan, Myanmar (Burma), and Bangladesh, though most of its operations to date have been in Pakistan. Some analysts believe that AQIS was formed as an attempt to preserve al-Qaeda's safe havens in Pakistan and Afghanistan and take attention away from ISIS, though the group claims to be fighting on behalf of Muslim oppression in the region. AQIS has been unable to conduct any larger-scale attacks typical of al-Qaeda, and has not yet carried out any notable attacks on Indian soil. However, in November 2017, AQIS claimed to be re-focusing its efforts on Indian targets, specifically referencing the oppressions of Muslims by Hindu extremists in a propaganda video released that month. (Sources: [Stanford University](#), [Long War Journal](#), [Diplomat](#), [BBC Monitoring](#))

Several of the militant groups and militant leaders fighting in Kashmir have long-standing ties to al-Qaeda, and have received logistical and financial support from the group. However, few Indian Muslims have sought to join the global al-Qaeda movement. Former Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who served as prime minister from 2004 to 2014, regularly boasted that not one of India's 180 million Muslims had joined al-Qaeda. In an audio recording released in June 2017, Musa reproached Indian Muslims for not joining jihad, calling them the "most shameless Muslims in the world." (Sources: [Council on Foreign Relations](#), [Stanford University](#), [Stanford University](#), [Stanford University](#), [Bloomberg View](#), [Times of India](#))

### *ISIS*

India banned ISIS in December 2014 following the group's abduction of 39 Indian construction workers outside of Mosul, Iraq, earlier that year. ISIS has had some success in recruiting supporters from India. According to India's Ministry of Home Affairs, 75 Indian nationals had joined the group as of March 2017. In one notorious case in May 2014, four engineering students traveled to Iraq to become foreign fighters for ISIS. Two years later, in May 2016, one of them appeared in the first ISIS recruitment video to feature Indians, urging Indian Muslims to join the group. Indian authorities have expressed concern over ISIS's ability to attract members through online propaganda, and have arrested several recruiters, propagandists, and supporters in the country. According to the U.S. Department of State, Indian authorities arrested 68 ISIS supporters in 2016 alone. Nearly half of all Indians arrested for their links to ISIS have reportedly been linked to a single Syria-based online recruiter, Shafi Armar (a.k.a. Yusuf al-Hindi). Armar, who is from Bhaktal, India, was reportedly still alive and actively recruiting Indians to ISIS as of June 2017, when the U.S. government designated him a Specially Designated Global Terrorist. (Sources: [Diplomat](#), [Washington Post](#), [Government of India](#), [Hindu](#), [Hindustan Times](#), [U.S. Department of State](#), [U.S. Department of State](#))

In January 2015, ISIS announced the establishment of its affiliate Khorasan Province (ISIS-K), active in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and parts of India. Though ISIS-K has not gained significant traction in India, and some of its supporters were linked to a March 2017 bombing on a passenger train in Madhya Pradesh. The U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) reported that ISIS-K was responsible for 2,181 civilian casualties (681 deaths and 1,500 injured) in Afghanistan in 2018, representing 20 percent of all civilian casualties that year. (Sources: [Hindustan Times](#), [Diplomat](#), [Times of India](#), [Indian Express](#), [Long War Journal](#))

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On May 10, 2019, ISIS claimed that it established a province in India called “Wilayah of Hind.” The statement, issued by ISIS’s Amaq News Agency, was released after clashes between militants and Indian security forces in the disputed Kashmir region killed a militant with purported ties to the terrorist group. ISIS characterized the incident as an attack, and claimed that the group was responsible for inflicting casualties on Indian army soldiers in the town of Amshipora, Shopian district of Kashmir. According to an Indian military official, the militant who was killed, Ishfaq Ahmad Sofi, may have been the only militant left in Kashmir associated with ISIS. Additionally, a police official claimed the announcement was pure propaganda and that, though there was an “ideological inclination,” ISIS had not gained traction in Kashmir. Analysts believe the move is part of ISIS’s strategy to bolster itself in the wake of its territorial demise in Iraq and Syria. (Sources: [Al Jazeera](#), [Reuters](#), [Quartz](#))

Several militant groups in Kashmir have condemned both ISIS and al-Qaeda for justifying indiscriminate violence against Muslims. LeT chief Mehmood Shah stated that “all they have done has...brought upon [Muslims] injustice, brutality and oppression.” (Source: [Diplomat](#))

### *Hindu Extremism*

Observers have recorded a rise in Hindu nationalism since 2014. The Hindu nationalist movement in India—collectively known as the Sangh Parivar—emerged in response to colonialism in the 1920s. It aims to ensure the predominance of Hinduism in Indian culture and society and seeks to drive out religious minorities from the country, claiming that Hindus are threatened by growing Muslim and Christian populations. The movement, which is comprised of several affiliate organizations, has encouraged and utilized violent tactics against these religious minorities. The Sangh Parivar’s principal organization, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), is a paramilitary organization with millions of members. The RSS’s educational wing, the Vidhya Barati, operates twenty thousand schools in India in which Hindu nationalist propaganda is disseminated to two million students. The Sangh Parivar also includes a propaganda organization that conducts hate campaigns that sometimes encourage violence against religious minorities. (Sources: [Human Rights Watch](#), [Hudson Institute](#))

RSS’s political wing, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), is the largest political party in India. BJP member Narendra Modi has served as India’s prime minister since the party won India’s national elections in 2014. The party has attempted to pass laws banning conversions from Hinduism and restricting the rights of religious minorities. The BJP has also permitted state authorities to excuse, facilitate, and at times even participate in violence against religious minorities. For example, mobs that conducted anti-Muslim riots in the state of Gujarat in 2002 that killed more than 1,000 people were found to be in possession of lists of homes and businesses that could only have been acquired from government sources. State authorities and police reportedly “stood by or joined in” during acts of violence, which included dismemberment and burning people alive. State authorities also reportedly impeded the subsequent prosecutions. For example, one 19-year-old girl stated to media sources that she had “testified falsely [in a trial] after Hindu politicians repeatedly threatened her family.” Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who was previously the chief minister of Gujarat, has also been accused of allowing the riots to take place. (Sources: [Hudson Institute](#), [Deutsche Welle](#), [BBC News](#))

BJP has also been linked to a spate of vigilante violence against cattle consumption and harvesting. Between May 2015 and December 2018, vigilante cow protection groups killed at least 44 people—mostly Muslim—accused of slaughtering, transporting, or consuming cattle. Indian authorities have ignored or covered up cow vigilante crimes, according to a February 2019 Human Rights Watch (HRW) report. According to HRW, members of BJP “have increasingly used communal rhetoric that has spurred a violent vigilante campaign against beef consumption and those deemed linked to it.” In one case in September 2015 a mob in Uttar Pradesh state killed a 50-year-old man and critically wounded his 22-year-old son after the pair allegedly slaughtered a calf. Police arrested a BJP leader’s son and other relatives, which sparked further protests. In 2017, BJP member and Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Raman Singh threatened to hang “those who kill cows.” (Sources: [Human Rights Watch](#), [CNN](#), [New York Times](#), [India Today](#))

Hindu extremists have targeted Christians as well as Muslims. Indian NGO FactChecker runs the Hate Crime Watch database, which recorded 254 reported crimes targeting religious minorities between January 2009 and October 2018. Of these crimes, 91 people were killed and 579 were injured. Fifty-eight percent of the crimes targeted Muslims while 14 percent targeted Christians. Fifty-seven percent of the perpetrators were Hindu. HRW accuses Indian authorities of delaying investigation into crimes against minorities. In 2008, a Hindu mob killed more than 100 Christians and destroyed over 300 churches in the city of Kandhamal. In December 2017, 30 Christian priests and seminarians singing Christmas carols were arrested in Madhya Pradesh for allegedly violating an anti-conversion law, and eight individuals who attempted to help them were physically assaulted. Violence against religious minorities in India exacerbated after Narendra Modi became India’s prime minister in 2014. In 2015, attacks on religious minorities averaged one per day, a 20 percent increase from the previous year. (Sources: [Human Rights Watch](#), [New York Times](#), [FactChecker](#), [Hudson Institute](#), [Vice News](#), [National Review](#))

### *Communist Party of India (Maoist)*

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India's left-wing extremist movement surfaced when peasants in the Naxalbari district of West Bengal staged an armed uprising in 1967. The left-wing or "Naxalite" insurgency was largely subdued by the Indian government throughout the 1970s and 1980s, but several radical left-wing groups have since emerged, including the People's War Group (PWG) in 1976, the Communist Party of India (Marxist Leninist) Janashakti in 1992, and the Communist Party of India (Maoist) (CPI-M) in 2004. CPI-M, which draws most of its membership from local tribal communities, claims that it is fighting for the rights of India's marginalized tribal communities and waging a "protracted armed struggle" to seize power from the government in line with traditional Maoist practice. As of 2017, CPI-M was reportedly the single largest armed group operating within India, with an estimated 8,000 to 10,000 fighters operating in India's central and eastern states—particularly Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. Former Indian prime minister Manmohan Singh named CPI-M as the greatest internal security threat in India in 2006. (Sources: [Al Jazeera](#), [Independent](#), [Diplomat](#), [South Asian Terrorism Portal](#), [Council on Foreign Relations](#), [Diplomat](#))

In 2009, India launched a counterinsurgency operation against CPI-M. Violence peaked in 2010 and has since decreased, though this has been mainly due to a stalemate rather than any peace settlement. Nonetheless, as of 2017, estimates suggested that Naxalite rebels were present in 10 of India's 28 states, compared to 20 almost a decade earlier. However, Indian security forces have been accused of committing mass human rights abuses against civilians, including executions, torture, and sexual abuse. More than 20,000 people have been killed in the Naxalite insurgency since 1980. (Sources: [Al Jazeera](#), [Independent](#), [Diplomat](#))

### *Northeast India*

Northeast India has been one of the country's most volatile regions since the region was partitioned when the country gained independence in 1947. Northeast India is made up of seven states—Assam, Manipur, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura, Meghalaya, and Mizoram, which are connected to the rest of India by a land corridor only 28 kilometers wide. The area is home to 213 tribes that are culturally and historically distinct from the rest of India. Physically alienated from the rest of country, Northeast India was largely neglected by the government after Indian independence. Each of the seven states has experienced an insurgency at some point since 1947, with violence directed at the Indian government in protest of widespread poverty, neglect, and discrimination, as well as at illegal immigrants from neighboring Bangladesh who have been viewed as a cultural and political threat by the region's native tribes. Conflict has still plagued much of the region in recent years, with the exception of Mizoram, whose two-decade long insurgency was permanently resolved in a political settlement in 1986. (Sources: [Indian Defence Review](#), [Council on Foreign Relations](#))

### *Nagaland*

Nagaland's insurgency, which began in the 1952, is the oldest in Northeast India. The National Socialist Council of Nagaland – Isak-Muivah (NSCN-IM) formed in 1988 when its predecessor split, and it quickly became one of the most powerful groups fighting in the Naga insurgency. The NSCN (IM) seeks to establish an independent Naga state comprising all areas inhabited by the Naga people, which includes other Indian states beside Nagaland and even parts of Myanmar. Since 1997, the group has undergone more than 80 rounds of peace talks and signed multiple ceasefire agreements with the Indian government. Although violence has largely been suspended over the last decade, no permanent solution has yet been found. (Sources: [Indian Defence Review](#), [YaleGlobal](#), [Indian Express](#))

### *Assam*

The insurgency in Assam erupted in the 1970s in response to a large influx of illegal immigrants from the newly established country of Bangladesh seeking to escape poverty and land scarcity. The United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) emerged in 1979 with the aim of expelling immigrants and establishing an independent state for the Assamese people. The group, which also spread to parts of Arunachal Pradesh, carried out several attacks on politicians, security forces, and infrastructure in the 1990s, which provoked a harsh response from the Indian government that diminished the group's ranks from over 3,000 to only a few hundred. The National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB), another group based in Assam, emerged in 1986 with the aim of creating an independent state for the Bodo people. The group quickly became infamous for its brutal attacks against civilians. Both the ULFA and NDFB are still active today, though ULFA violence has significantly decreased in recent years after the group signed an agreement with the local Assamese government in 2011. NDFB has continued to carry out deadly attacks targeting civilians, such as a series of attacks in December 2014 that killed more than 70 people, including several women and children. (Sources: [Indian Defence Review](#), [YaleGlobal](#), [Diplomat](#), [Hindu](#), [Council on Foreign Relations](#))

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Tripura's insurgency also largely emerged in response to a large influx of illegal immigrants from Bangladesh in the 1970s. The National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT) and All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF) both sought to expel immigrants and establish an independent state for Tripura. In the 1990s and 2000s, the two groups launched several brutal massacres and an ethnic cleansing operation called "Operation Roukhala" aimed at driving out Bengali immigrants. After violence peaked in 2004, counterinsurgency operations combined with efforts to rehabilitate militants and reintroduced them into society have effectively ended violence in the state. In 2015, an 18-year-old law called the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) was finally removed. AFSPA had given unconditional permission to Indian security forces to shoot on sight, arrest individuals without a warrant, and conduct searches without consent. (Sources: [Indian Defence Review](#), [Hindu](#), [BBC News](#), [FirstPost](#), [South Asian Terrorism Portal](#))

### *Kashmir Separatism*

Though most of the militant groups fighting for an independent state in Kashmir can be classified as Islamic fundamentalist, the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) was a secular group that sought an independent state for Kashmiris. The JKLF was formed in 1977 and received support from the Pakistani military, carrying out its first attack against an Indian target in 1988—effectively marking the start of the Kashmir insurgency. However, following the subsequent withdrawal of Pakistani support, the group largely lost influence after 1990. (Sources: [YaleGlobal](#), [BBC News](#), [BBC News](#))

### *Sikh Separatism*

Sikhs in India have advocated for an independent state since the 1920s. Sikhs continued to face discrimination and oppression from the Indian government even after the majority-Sikh Indian state of Punjab was established in 1966. Punjab's creation led to the emergence of a separatist movement there called the Khalistan movement in the 1980s. In 1982, armed Sikh militants reportedly seeking to evade arrest took up residence in the Golden Temple in Amritsar, where they began amassing weapons. In response, the Indian army assaulted the temple in June 1984, killing over 500 people—including many civilians. That October, two Sikh bodyguards assassinated then-Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, who had sanctioned the attack. More than 3,000 were killed in anti-Sikh riots across India the following month. Khalistan militancy continued through the 1990s, with several militant outfits supporting the movement. Though violence significantly decreased and ultimately ended later in the decade, support for the Khalistan movement still exists, especially from the Sikh diaspora in the United States, United Kingdom, and Canada. (Sources: [International Business Times](#), [Indian Express](#), [BBC News](#), [Indian Express](#), [United Press International](#))

### *Tamil Separatism*

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) was a Sri Lankan-based militant group that was founded in 1972 and sought an independent state for the Tamil people on the island. During the 1980s, the LTTE received substantial support from Indian intelligence services and Tamil populations in India. Several Tamil separatist groups, such as the Tamil Nadu Liberation Army (TNLA), also emerged in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, which functioned as a sanctuary and important transit point for the group's weapons and contraband. In one of the LTTE's most infamous attacks, a female suicide bomber blew herself up on Indian soil, assassinating former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. Gandhi was targeted because he had ordered Indian troops to intervene against the LTTE in the Sri Lankan civil war. The LTTE was ultimately defeated by the Sri Lankan government in 2009, and Tamil separatist sentiment in both Sri Lankan and India has significantly decreased since. (Sources: [Stanford University](#), [Independent](#), [South Asian Terrorism Portal](#))

### *Foreign Fighters*

Though India has the world's third-largest Muslim population, Indians have largely refrained from joining jihadist conflicts abroad as foreign fighters. During the 1980s, India did not have a significant representation in the Afghan jihad against the Soviet Union. Because India was quietly aligned with the Soviet Union, the Indian government and religious organizations dissuaded Indian Muslims from taking up arms. At the height of ISIS's power in 2014, the terror group attracted some 30,000 foreign fighters from around the world. India, however, contributed only approximately 100 foreign fighters to the jihadist campaigns in Syria and Iraq. Travel logistics helped deter Indians from joining with ISIS, as travel to Turkey—from where many foreign fighters crossed into Syria—from India is laborious amid visa restrictions that U.S. and European foreign fighters did not encounter. Nonetheless, Indian nationals have fought as part of ISIS's Khorasan Province in Afghanistan. (Sources: [European Eye on Radicalization](#), [WION](#), [Atlantic Council](#), [Foreign Policy](#))

## *India: Extremism & Terrorism*

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### **Major Extremist and Terrorist Incidents**

#### *Major Political Assassinations*

On October 31, 1984, Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi was assassinated by two of her Sikh bodyguards who opened fire on her near her home in Delhi. Her assassination was thought to be in response to Operation Blue Star, a government operation carried out earlier that year against Sikh militants occupying the Golden Temple in Amritsar. The operation, which she sanctioned, killed more than 500 people, including civilians. The following month, in response to her assassination, anti-Sikh riots erupted across the country, in which more than 3,000 were killed. Gandhi had been elected as India's prime minister four times since 1966. (Sources: [New York Times](#), [BBC News](#))

On May 21, 1991, former Indian prime minister Rajiv Gandhi was killed by a 17-year-old female suicide bomber from the LTTE, in an attack considered to be one of the most politically devastating of all time. The suicide bomber, known as Dhanu, had rushed up to him as he was conducting an election campaign in Sriperumbudur, a town in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu. Gandhi, who had served as India's prime minister between 1984 and 1989, was believed to have been targeted because he had ordered Indian troops to intervene against the LTTE in the Sri Lankan civil war. Following the assassination, India almost completely withdrew from involvement in Sri Lanka. The LTTE issued an apology in 2006, though it was rejected by the Indian government. (Sources: [Stanford University](#), [Independent](#), [New York Times](#), [Guardian](#), [BBC News](#))

#### *2008 Mumbai Attacks*

To date, India's worst terrorist incident has been the coordinated attack in Mumbai carried out by LeT in November 2008. Ten LeT militants traveled from Karachi, Pakistan, to Mumbai by boat prior to the attack. On their way, they hijacked a fishing boat, killing four crew members and the captain. Once they docked in Mumbai on November 26, the militants split up into three groups, hijacked cars, and carried out several bombing and shooting attacks across the city. The major attacks included a gun assault on the Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus railway station that killed approximately 58 people, an attack on the Café Leopold that killed about 10, and an ambush outside the Cama and Alless Hospital that killed six police officers. There were also several rogue shootings and bombings conducted on various streets. Three additional assaults devolved into sieges. Approximately 30 people were killed in a three-day siege at the Oberoi-Trident Hotel, 31 people at a four-day siege at the Taj Mahal Palace and Tower Hotel, and seven people in a three-day siege at Nariman House, a Jewish community center in the city. (Sources: [PBS](#), [CNN](#), [Guardian](#))

In total, at least 164 people were killed and approximately 300 more were injured. Nine of the 10 assailants were also killed, and the lone surviving militant, Mohammed Ajmal Kasab, was tried and executed in November 2012. However, Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi, the LeT leader charged with masterminding the attacks, was granted bail and released from prison in Pakistan in April 2015. Hafiz Mohammed Saeed, another LeT leader suspected of involvement in planning the attacks, was released from house arrest in Pakistan in November 2017. (Sources: [PBS](#), [CNN](#), [CNN](#), [CNN](#))

- **January 29, 2021:** An improvised explosive device explodes outside of the Israeli embassy in New Delhi, a kilometer from where Indian President Ram Nath Kovind and Prime Minister Narendra Modi are participating in a military ceremony. No casualties or damage to the embassy are reported, though there is minor damage to nearby parked cars. A letter found at the scene promises Israel this is just a "trailer" of coming attacks and refers to deceased Iranian Quds Force commander Qasem Soleimani and Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhri-zadeh as martyrs. Previously unknown group Jaish-ul-Hind claims responsibility. Authorities suspect the group is backed by Iran. Indian security forces issue a request from the country's Bureau of Immigration for any information on Iranian citizens who had recently entered the country. Sources: [India Today](#), [Jerusalem Post](#), [Jerusalem Post](#), [Twitter](#), [BBC News](#), [Reuters](#)
- **February 27, 2020:** According to a report by OpIndia, Al-Qitaal Media Center, a pro-ISIS media outlet, and Junudul Khilafah al-Hind have launched an India-centric publication called "Voice of Hind." Mahmood Paracha, a senior lawyer accused of inciting communal hatred in the past, is featured on the cover of the publication. Notably, Paracha helped conduct a camp in Lucknow that would teach Muslims and Dalits about the "right to self-defense" and how to apply for a firearm license to combat violence perpetrated by hardline Hindu nationalists. The magazine further states that there is no place for nationalism in Islam, and that India's Muslims should join the caliphate instead. Source: [OpIndia](#)
- **February 22, 2020 - February 25, 2020:** Over 46 people are killed and more than 250 people are wounded in Muslim-populated areas of northeast Delhi after protesting the discriminatory Citizenship Amendment Act. Security officials have been accused of looking the other way as mobs have been killing people and damaging mosques. Sources: [Al Jazeera](#), [New York Times](#)
- **February 5, 2020:** Militants ambush security forces in Lawaypora, Jammu and Kashmir. One security force member is killed. According to reports, the attackers were affiliated with Hizbul Mujahideen, Lashkar-e-Taiba, and ISIS in Jammu and Kashmir. Sources: [India Today](#), [Anadolu Agency](#)



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- **January 31, 2020:** An unidentified shooter opens fire on Jamia Millia University students protesting India's Citizenship Amendment Act. One person is injured in the attack before the attacker is apprehended by the police. The perpetrator claims to not be affiliated with any movement or organization. Source: [Times of India](#)
  - **November 26, 2019:** Suspected rebels carry out two grenade attacks in Badasgam village, south Kashmir, and at the University of Kashmir. The first attack, which kills two and wounds four others, occurs during a village meeting to address public grievances. The second attack, which injures four, occurs at the entrance of the University of Kashmir. No group claims responsibility for the attack. Source: [Al Jazeera](#)
  - **November 25, 2019:** Delhi police arrest three individuals from a suspected ISIS cell in Assam. Police claim the individuals, who possessed IEDs when arrested, were planning an IED blast at the "Rasmela," a local fair in Assam which they sought to replicate in Delhi. Source: [OpIndia](#)
  - **October 15, 2019:** Unidentified gunmen rob and kill an apple truck driver in Indian controlled Kashmir. Regional police claim that Kashmiri separatists attack apple merchants so that life comes to a halt in the Kashmir Valley to protest India's decision to strip Kashmir of its autonomy. The apple trade makes up more than 20 percent of Kashmir's economy. Sources: [ABC news](#), [New York Times](#)
  - **October 14, 2019:** The National Investigation Agency (NIA) claims that over 127 individuals have been arrested by security agencies in India for suspected ISIS links. At least three of the suspects claimed to have been radicalized by the speeches of Islamic preacher Zakir Naik. Source: [OpIndia](#)
  - **September 7, 2019:** India's national security adviser, Ajit Kumar Doval, claims that more than 200 suspected militants are trying to cross into Indian Kashmir from Pakistan, seeking to initiate violence in the area. Doval's claims are based on radio intercepts and intelligence from military officials. Source: [Reuters](#)
  - **August 5, 2019:** Hours after a major security clampdown in Kashmir—in which the Indian government cuts off communications and deploys thousands of troops in the region—the Indian government scraps Article 370 and 35A of the constitution. The move to strip Kashmir of its autonomy is expected to inflame tensions in the Muslim-majority region as well as increase hostility with Pakistan. Sources: [Al Jazeera](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Associated Press](#)
  - **August 3, 2019:** Indian authorities and the Kashmiri government order thousands of Hindu pilgrims and tourists to leave Indian-administered Kashmir after officials warn of a "terror threat" at the Amarnath shrine. Indian officials claim Pakistani-backed militants were planning an attack on the annual pilgrimage. Source: [BBC News](#)
  - **August 2, 2019:** Indian security officials claim to find evidence of attacks planned by Pakistani-backed militants on a major Hindu pilgrimage in Kashmir. Following intelligence reports of likely attacks on routes used by hundreds of thousands of Hindu pilgrims, India officials claim to have found weapon-filled mines along the route. The mines were covered in Pakistani ordinance markings. Source: [Reuters](#)
  - **July 10, 2019:** Al-Qaeda's chief, Ayman al-Zawahiri, releases a video calling on jihadists in Kashmir to launch unrelenting attacks against India as well as against Pakistan's army. Zawahiri claims the Pakistani military is full of "failures, defeats, corruption and treachery" and cannot be trusted to free Kashmir. Source: [Telegraph](#)
  - **June 28, 2019:** An unidentified militant group attacks another militant group in Anantnag district, Jammu and Kashmir. The clash kills one person and injures another. It is suspected that there was a clash between Hizbul Mujahideen, an insurgency that backs Pakistan, and ISIS in Jammu and Kashmir which is critical of Pakistan. Source: [Hindustan Times](#)
  - **June 20, 2019 - June 21, 2019:** Unidentified gunmen abduct and open fire on two relatives of an active member of Lashkar-e-Toiba in Kashmir. The victims sustain injuries and are dumped in a graveyard in Arwani. Source: [Deccan Herald](#)
  - **June 13, 2019:** Indian anti-terrorism investigators arrest one man and detain five others with alleged links to the suicide bomber who planned Sri Lanka's deadly Easter attacks. Federal investigators accuse all six of propagating the teachings of ISIS and attempting to recruit vulnerable youth. Source: [BBC News](#)
  - **June 12, 2019:** Militants open fire on security forces deployed in Anantnag town, Jammu and Kashmir. Six people, including one militant, are killed, and five are wounded. The attack is claimed by Al Umar Mujahideen. Source: [Reuters](#)
  - **June 7, 2019:** Six militants open fire on Indian security forces in Pulwama district, Kashmir. All six militants are killed. The assailants, two of which were former auxiliary police officers, are suspected of belonging to Jaish-e-Mohammed, a Pakistan-based group. Source: [Reuters](#)
  - **June 3, 2019:** Unidentified gunmen open fire and kill a civilian in Srinagar city, Jammu and Kashmir. Source: [News 18](#)
  - **May 28, 2019:** Unidentified gunmen shoot and kill a former militant of Hizbul Mujahideen in northern Kashmir. Source: [Times of India](#)
  - **May 24, 2019:** Indian security officials shoot and kill Zakir Musa, an influential Kashmiri militant who led Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind, the first al-Qaeda-affiliated cell in the region. Musa was considered the successor of another militant, Burhan Wani, the leader of Hizbul Mujahideen before he was killed in July 2016. Source: [Guardian](#)
  - **May 22, 2019:** Indian security forces open fire on and kill a militant hiding in the Gopalpora village of Kulgam district in Jammu Kashmir. Source: [Economic Times](#)
  - **May 21, 2019:** An unconfirmed number of insurgents open fire on a convoy of vehicles in Tirap district, Arunachal Pradesh.
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- The attack kills 11, including Tirong Aboh, a state legislator. It is suspected that the attackers are separatists belonging to the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) who have previously made threats to Aboh. Source: [Voice of America](#)
- **May 16, 2019:** Indian troops and separatist militants clash in Indian-controlled Kashmir. Nine people are killed, including a Pakistani commander, two members of the local Hizbul Mujahideen, two Indian soldiers and two civilians. It is uncertain who initiated the attack. Source: [Reuters](#)
  - **May 15, 2019:** Militants throw a grenade from a car near a shopping mall in Guwahati. At least 12 people are injured. A local separatist group, the United Liberation Front of Asom, claims responsibility. Source: [The Hindu](#)
  - **May 10, 2019:** Militants clash with Indian security forces in the disputed Kashmir region, during which a fighter with alleged ties to ISIS is killed. ISIS claims responsibility and claims that it is responsible for inflicting casualties on Indian army soldiers. The terrorist group also announces the establishment of a province in India called “Wilayah of Hind.” Sources: [Al Jazeera](#), [Reuters](#)
  - **May 6, 2019:** Militants in the Pulwama district of Kashmir attack two polling stations with grenades. The attack occurs after separatist leaders issue calls to boycott India’s national election. Source: [New York Times](#)
  - **May 1, 2019:** Maoist rebels trigger a land mine blast targeting a van carrying police commandos in the insurgent stronghold of Gadchiroli, Maharashtra. Sixteen people are killed. It is suspected that it was a revenge attack after security forces killed 37 insurgents in two different gun battles in the region in April. Source: [Associated Press](#)
  - **April 9, 2019:** Maoist insurgents set off an explosive device and open fire on a vehicle in Dantewada, Chhattisgarh. Five people are killed, including a legislator from India’s governing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Source: [BBC News](#)
  - **March 7, 2019:** An unidentified man throws a grenade at a bus stop in the city of Jammu in India-controlled Kashmir, killing at least one and wounding 28. Police capture the suspected militant shortly after and identify him as a 17-year-old member of a militant group fighting against Indian control of Kashmir. The suspect allegedly confessed to throwing the grenade during interrogation. Sources: [Times of India](#), [New York Times](#)
  - **February 14, 2019 - March 1, 2019:** On February 14, a suicide car bomb in the Pulwama district of the Indian-controlled state of Jammu and Kashmir kills at least 40 Indian paramilitary police officers and wounds five others. Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) claims responsibility. The Indian government accuses Pakistan of having a “direct hand” in the attack. On February 26, India launches air strikes on JeM training camps inside Pakistan, allegedly killing hundreds of JeM militants. It is India’s first direct air strike in Pakistan since 1971. Pakistan retaliates on February 27, resulting in aerial combat between Indian and Pakistani forces and the capture of Indian pilot Abhinandan Varthaman. The Pakistani government returns Varthaman on March 1 and pledges to crack down JeM. Sources: [CNN](#), [Washington Post](#), [NDTV](#), [Reuters](#), [BBC News](#)
  - **March 13, 2018:** CPI-M bombs a vehicle in the Sukman district of Chhattisgarh, killing nine Central Reserve Police Force personnel. Source: [Times of India](#)
  - Indian authorities arrest 30 priests and seminarians singing Christian carols in Madhya Pradesh state for allegedly violating the state’s anti-conversion law. Eight priests who try to aid them are physically assaulted. Source: [National Review](#)
  - **November 18, 2017:** ISIS’s Amaq News Agency claims their first attack in Kashmir on behalf of al-Qaeda affiliate AGH, raising questions about the affiliate’s allegiance. Source: [Terrorism Research & Analysis Consortium](#)
  - AQIS releases a propaganda video in which it claims to be re-focusing on Indian targets, specifically referencing the oppressions of Muslims by Hindu extremists. Source: [BBC Monitoring](#)
  - **July 26, 2017:** Al-Qaeda announces that is launching an affiliate in Jammu and Kashmir called Ansar Ghazwsat al-Hind (AGH). Source: [Jamestown Foundation](#)
  - **July 10, 2017:** Militants attack a bus carrying Hindu pilgrims in southern Kashmir, killing seven and injuring 19. Police blame the attack on LeT. Source: [FirstPost](#)
  - **June 6, 2017:** AGH commander Zakir Musa releases an audio recording in which he reproaches Indian Muslims for not joining jihad, calling them the “most shameless Muslims in the world.” Source: [Times of India](#)
  - **April 24, 2017:** CPI-M launches an ambush on the Central Reserve Paramilitary Force in Chhattisgarh’s Sukma district, killing 26. Source: [FirstPost](#)
  - **March 7, 2017:** A pipe bomb explodes on a train near Kalapipal, Madhya Pradesh. The suspects are determined to have been radicalized online. At least one, who is killed in a shootout with police the following day, is thought to be part of an ISIS-K cell. Source: [Diplomat](#)
  - **November 29, 2016:** Militants attack an army base in Nagrota, Jammu and Kashmir, killing seven soldiers. Source: [U.S. Department of State](#)
  - **October 3, 2016:** Militants attack an Indian army camp in the Baramulla district of Jammu and Kashmir, killing one officer. JeM is suspected. Source: [U.S. Department of State](#)
  - **September 18, 2016:** Militants attack an Indian Army brigade headquarters in Uri, Jammu and Kashmir, killing 19 soldiers and injuring over 30 others.
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- LeT is suspected. Source: [U.S. Department of State](#)
- **August 5, 2016:** Militants attack a marketplace in Kokrajhar, Assam, killing 14 people and injuring at least 20 others. The NDFB is suspected. Sources: [Times of India](#), [U.S. Department of State](#)
  - **June 25, 2016:** Militants attack a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) convoy in Pampore, Jammu and Kashmir, killing eight officers and injuring 20 others. LeT is suspected. Source: [U.S. Department of State](#)
  - India's National Investigation Agency (NIA) raids a suspected ISIS cell in Hyderabad that ordered explosive chemicals. Source: [Diplomat](#)
  - ISIS releases a video urging all Indian Muslims to join the group. It is the first ISIS video to feature Indian citizens. Source: [Diplomat](#)
  - **January 2, 2016:** Militants attack Pathankot Air Force Station in Punjab, killing eight security personnel and one civilian. India's Ministry of Home Affairs accuses JeM of carrying out the attack. Source: [U.S. Department of State](#)
  - HuM claims responsibility for an attack in Handwor in Pooch that killed five Indian troops. Source: [Stanford University](#)
  - **August 5, 2015:** LeT militants attack a Border Security Force (BSF) convoy in Udhampur, Jammu and Kashmir, killing two. Source: [U.S. Department of State](#)
  - **July 27, 2015:** LeT militants attack a bus and police station in Gurdaspur, Punjab, killing seven and injuring 15 others. Five bombs are also found on a railway bridge five kilometers away Source: [U.S. Department of State](#)
  - **June 4, 2015:** Tribal insurgents in Manipur attack a military convoy with rockets, killing 20 soldiers and injuring 11 others. Source: [U.S. Department of State](#)
  - Tripura lifts the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), a law in place in the state since 1997 that gave armed forces unconditional permission to shoot on sight. Its removal signals the effective end of the insurgency there. Source: [BBC News](#)
  - **April 12, 2015:** Suspected CPI-M militants detonate two bombs in Chhattisgarh, killing a total of 12 people. Source: [U.S. Department of State](#)
  - **March 20, 2015:** Militants storm a police station in Jammu and Kashmir, killing four people and leaving 10 others injured. Source: [New Indian Express](#)
  - **January 10, 2015:** CPI-M militants kill one and injure three others in Chhattisgarh. Source: [U.S. Department of State](#)
  - ISIS announced the establishment of its affiliate Khorasan Province (ISIS-K), active in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and parts of India. Source: [Hindustan Times](#)
  - **December 23, 2014:** The NDFB conducts a series of attacks in Assam, killing at least 70 people—including women and children. Sources: [Diplomat](#), [Guardian](#)
  - Indian authorities arrest Mehdi Masroor Biswas for operating an ISIS propaganda Twitter account considered to be hugely influential. Source: [Diplomat](#)
  - **September 3, 2014:** Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri announces the establishment of a new al-Qaeda branch, al-Qaeda on the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS). Zawahiri mentions the Indian states of Jammu and Kashmir, Gujarat, and Assam, as potential locations for terrorist operations. Source: [Diplomat](#)
  - ISIS kidnaps 40 Indian construction workers in Mosul days after the group takes control of the city. 39 of the workers are confirmed dead in March 2018. Source: [Washington Post](#)
  - ISIS includes India in a map of its planned caliphate. Source: [Diplomat](#)
  - Four Indian engineering students travel to Iraq to join ISIS. Source: [Diplomat](#)
  - HM launches an explosives attack in Jammu and Kashmir that injures 17 people. Source: [U.S. Department of State](#)
  - **September 26, 2013:** Militants assault an army base in Jammu and Kashmir, killing seven and wounding three. Authorities believe that the attack was a joint operation between JeM and LeT. Source: [Stanford University](#)
  - **May 25, 2013:** CPI-M ambushes a convoy of 27 Congress leaders in the Bastar district of Chhattisgarh, killing 27 people. Source: [Indian Express](#)
  - **April 17, 2013:** A bomb blast in Bangalore injures 17 people, including 12 police personnel. Source: [Hindu](#)
  - **July 20, 2012:** Clashes erupt between Bodos and Muslims in the Indian state of Assam. The violence, which last for five days, kills at least 40 people and displaces approximately 200,000. Source: [FirstPost](#)
  - The UFLA signs an agreement with the local Assamese government. Source: [Hindu](#)
  - **December 7, 2010:** A bomb explodes on the bank of the Ganges River near the Vishwanath temple in Varanasi, killing a one-year-old girl and injuring at least 34 others. IM claims responsibility for the attack. Source: [BBC News](#)
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- **June 29, 2010:** CPI-M kills 26 Central Reserve Paramilitary Force members in an ambush in the Narayanpur district of Chhattisgarh.  
Source: [Hindu](#)
  - CPI-M kills 36 security personnel near the Dantewada district of Chhattisgarh.  
Source: [Al Jazeera](#)
  - **April 6, 2010:** CPI-M kills 75 Central Reserve Paramilitary Force members and a police constable in an ambush in the Sukma district of South Chhattisgarh.  
An additional 50 troops are injured. Sources: [Hindu](#), [Independent](#)
  - **February 15, 2010:** CPI-M attacks a security camp at Silda in West Bengal, killing at least 20 security personnel.  
Source: [Hindu](#)
  - **February 13, 2010:** A bomb attack deliberately targeting foreigners at the German Bakery in Pune, India, kills nine and injures 57 others. LeT and IM are suspected of carrying out the attack in conjunction. Sources: [BBC News](#), [Stanford University](#)
  - **October 8, 2009:** Naxalite rebels launch an ambush on a police outpost in Gadchiroli, Maharashtra, killing 17.  
Source: [Hindu](#)
  - **July 13, 2009:** CPI-M launches three separate attacks in Rajnandgaon, Chhattisgarh, killing 30 police personnel.  
Source: [Hindu](#)
  - The Indian government launches a counterinsurgency called “Operation Green Hunt” against CPI-M in the Indian states of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh, and Maharashtra.  
Sources: [Al Jazeera](#), [Hindu](#)
  - **November 26, 2008 - November 29, 2008:** LeT coordinates attacks on a railway station, a popular restaurant, a hospital, two hotels, and a Jewish center in Mumbai.  
A total of 164 people are killed and approximately 300 are injured in bombings, gun assaults, and sieges. Sources: [CNN](#), [Guardian](#)
  - **September 27, 2008:** A bomb explodes at a market in Delhi, India, killing three people and injuring at least 22 others.  
Sources: [BBC News](#), [Hindustan Times](#)
  - **September 13, 2008:** Five bombs detonate in a half hour timespan in a busy shopping area in Delhi, India, killing at least 30 people and injuring over 100 others.  
IM claims responsibility for the bombings. Sources: [Times of India](#), [BBC News](#), [Hindustan Times](#)
  - - : Hindu mobs attack Christians in the Indian state of Orissa, destroying at least 60 churches and 3,000 homes and killing at least 100 people. These riots follow an August 28 militant attack on a Hindu school that killed five. Sources: [National Review](#), [Guardian](#), [Guardian](#), [CNN](#)
  - - : Muslims and Bodos clash in the Indian state of Assam, killing 70 people and displacing more than 100,000.  
Source: [FirstPost](#)
  - **July 27, 2008:** A bomb blast near a bus stand in Godda, India, injures at least five people.  
Source: [Oneindia](#)
  - **July 26, 2008:** At least 22 small bombs detonate within an hour in public spaces in Ahmedabad, India, killing 49 people and injuring at least 160.  
IM claims responsibility. Sources: [BBC News](#), [Telegraph](#)
  - **July 25, 2008:** Seven bombs detonate in Bangalore, India, killing two people.  
Source: [BBC News](#)
  - **June 29, 2008:** CPI-M ambushes a boat carrying elite Greyhound militants in Orissa state, killing 38 people.  
Source: [Hindu](#)
  - **May 13, 2008:** Seven bombs explode at markets and on crowded streets in Jaipur, India, killing 63 people.  
Source: [BBC News](#)
  - CPI-M kills 55 security personnel in Bastar.  
Source: [Al Jazeera](#)
  - **February 19, 2007:** A bomb explodes on a train traveling from India to Pakistan, killing at least 65 people.  
LeT is suspected. Sources: [BBC News](#), [Council on Foreign Relations](#)
  - **November 11, 2006:** The UFLA attacks a state-owned natural gas pipeline, which kills 17 and injures 46.  
Source: [University of Maryland](#)
  - **July 11, 2006:** Seven bombs explode on trains in Mumbai, India, killing 189 people and injuring more than 800.  
LeT is suspected. Sources: [BBC News](#), [Council on Foreign Relations](#)
  - **June 7, 2006 - June 14, 2006:** The UFLA carries out at least 30 bombings in Assam, which kill seven, wound approximately 100, and damage a significant amount of infrastructure.  
Source: [University of Maryland](#)
  - **March 7, 2006:** Two bombs explode at the Sankat Mochan temple in Varanasi, killing at least 14 and injuring more than 100.  
LeT is suspected. Sources: [New York Times](#), [Stanford University](#)
  - **November 2, 2005:** JeM militants conduct a suicide car bombing in Srinagar outside the home of Mufti Mohammed Sayeed, the outgoing Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir.  
Five are killed and eight are injured in the attack. Source: [Stanford University](#)
  - **October 29, 2005:** LeT launches three coordinated bombings targeting markets and a bus in New Delhi, killing 63 and wounding approximately 200.  
Source: [Stanford University](#)
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- **October 28, 2005:** A LeT gunman opens fire at the Indian Institute of Science campus in Bangalore, killing one scientist and injuring five others.  
Sources: [Hindu](#), [Stanford University](#)
  - **June 19, 2005 - July 1, 2005:** The UFLA bombs the Central Reserve Police Force headquarters in Assam, killing two and injuring 10.  
Source: [University of Maryland](#)
  - **August 26, 2004 - October 5, 2004:** The UFLA claims responsibility for six attacks in Assam, several of which target civilians. The attacks kill at least four and injure more than 40 in total. Source: [University of Maryland](#)
  - **January 20, 2004:** The UFLA attacks a state security patrol in Assam, killing three paramilitary soldiers and wounding seven others.  
Source: [University of Maryland](#)
  - **August 25, 2003:** Two bombs explode within minutes of each other in Mumbai—then-known as Bombay—killing at least 44 people and injuring nearly 150.  
The bombs targeted the Gateway of India, a major tourist attraction, and a busy jewelry market in the city center. LeT is suspected, but no group claims responsibility. Source: [BBC News](#)
  - **March 13, 2003:** A bomb explodes at Mulund railway station, killing 11 people and injuring more than 65.  
An Islamic student group is suspected. Source: [Times of India](#)
  - **January 27, 2003:** A bomb on a bicycle explodes outside the Vile Parle railway station in Mumbai, killing one and injuring at least 30.  
An Islamic student group is suspected. Source: [Times of India](#)
  - **December 6, 2002:** A bomb explodes at a McDonald’s restaurant at the Mumbai Central railway station.  
The blast injures 25. An Islamic student group is suspected. Source: [Times of India](#)
  - **December 2, 2002:** A bomb explodes on a bus in Mumbai, India, outside of the Ghatkopar railway station, killing three people and injuring 28.  
An Islamic student group is suspected. Sources: [Hindu](#), [Times of India](#)
  - **September 24, 2002:** LeT militants launch an assault on Akshardam Temple in Gujarat, killing 33 and injuring 70.  
Source: [Stanford University](#)
  - Militants attack Indian border security forces, killing at least four.  
LeT claims responsibility. Source: [Council on Foreign Relations](#)
  - - : Hindu extremists launch anti-Muslim riots across the Indian state of Gujarat in response to reports that Muslims set fire to a train carriage and killed 58 Hindu pilgrims.  
More than 2,000 Muslims are killed in the resulting violence, which is conducted with the alleged permission—and at times, assistance—of state authorities. Sources: [Hudson Institute](#), [Guardian](#)
  - **December 13, 2001:** Militants storm India’s parliament in Delhi, killing 12 and injuring 22. LeT and JeM are suspected.  
Sources: [BBC News](#), [Firstpost](#)
  - **October 1, 2001:** JeM militants carry out a car bomb and shooting attack against a legislative building in Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir, killing 31 and wounding six.  
Source: [Stanford University](#)
  - **January 17, 2001:** LeT militants attack the Srinagar airport in Jammu and Kashmir, killing five and injuring at least 11 others.  
Sources: [Council on Foreign Relations](#), [New York Times](#)
  - **December 25, 2000:** A car bomb explodes outside an Indian Army facility in Jammu and Kashmir, killing eight people and wounding 23.  
JeM claims responsibility. Source: [Stanford University](#)
  - **December 22, 2000:** LeT attacks an army barracks at Delhi’s historic Red Fort palace, killing two soldiers and one civilian.  
Sources: [Council on Foreign Relations](#), [FirstPost](#), [Stanford University](#)
  - HuM attacks two Indian Army posts in Kashmir, killing 30 people.  
Source: [Stanford University](#)
  - **May 20, 2000 - May 25, 2000:** The NLFT kills over 45 Bengalis in Tripura, including 25 at a refugee camp at Bagber on May 20.  
Source: [Frontline](#)
  - **April 19, 2000:** JeM carries out a suicide car bombing outside an Indian Army facility in Jammu and Kashmir, killing one person and wounding seven in what is believed to be the first suicide attack in India.  
Source: [Stanford University](#)
  - **March 20, 2000:** LeT militants kills 36 Sikhs in Anantnag, India, the day before then-U.S. President Bill Clinton’s official state visit to the country.  
Source: [Stanford University](#)
  - LeT attacks the Srinagar airport in Jammu and Kashmir, killing five Indians.  
Source: [Council on Foreign Relations](#)
  - **December 24, 1999 - December 31, 1999:** HuM hijacks Indian Airlines flight IC 814 bound for Delhi, forcing the plane to land in Kandahar, Afghanistan.  
The group negotiates with the Indian government and secures the release of three militants. Sources: [Stanford University](#), [BBC News](#)
  - **June 29, 1999:** A bomb blast in the Kamrup district of Assam kills seven policemen.  
The UFLA is suspected. Source: [University of Maryland](#)
  - **January 23, 1999:** Australian missionary Graham Staines and his two young sons are burned to death when a crowd of more than 30 Hindu extremists set their vehicle on fire in Manoharpur, Orissa.  
Source: [CNN](#)
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- **December 20, 1998:** A bomb attack in the Dhubri district of Assam kills 6 policemen and 4 civilians. The UFLA is suspected.  
Source: [University of Maryland](#)
  - **February 14, 1998:** 19 bombs detonate in the town of Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, just before a Hindu nationalist election rally, killing 58 and injuring over 200.  
Radical Muslims are suspected. Sources: [OneIndia](#), [BBC News](#)
  - A ceasefire is successfully negotiated in Nagaland, which effectively decreases violence there, though the region remains in a state of suspended conflict and no permanent settlement is achieved.  
Source: [Indian Defence Review](#)
  - **December 30, 1996:** A bomb explodes on a train in Assam, reportedly killing at least 100 people.  
Bodo separatists are suspected. Source: [University of Maryland](#)
  - **January 5, 1996:** LeT kills 16 Hindus in Barshalla, a village in Jammu and Kashmir.  
Source: [Stanford University](#)
  - HuM kidnaps six tourists in Jammu and Kashmir.  
One tourist, a Norwegian, is found decapitated the following month. One escapes, and the others are reportedly killed later in the year. Sources: [Stanford University](#), [FirstPost](#), [New York Times](#), [New York Times](#)
  - HuM kidnaps four foreign tourists in New Delhi and holds them captive in Uttar Pradesh, but they are successfully rescued by Indian security forces.  
Source: [Stanford University](#)
  - HuM abducts two Indian security personnel in an attempt to force the Indian government to release three of the group's leaders, but kills them when the government does not meet its demands.  
Source: [Stanford University](#)
  - **March 12, 1993:** 13 bombs explode in Mumbai—then called Bombay—killing 257, injuring 1,400, and destroying some of the city's most iconic buildings.  
The blasts, which sought to avenge Muslim killings in riots that took place months earlier, also targeted the headquarters of the right-wing Hindu Shiv Sena party. Source: [BBC News](#)
  - - : A mob of Hindu extremists attack the Babri Masjid mosque in the northern Indian town of Ayodhya.  
Muslims launch protests in response, which devolve into riots in which 275 Hindus and 575 Muslims are killed. Sources: [BBC News](#), [FirstPost](#)
  - Sikh militants hijack a passenger train in Punjab and shoot Hindu passengers, killing at least 49 and injuring at least 20.  
Source: [New York Times](#)
  - **October 17, 1991:** Two bombs explode at a Hindu celebration in Rudrapur, killing 41 and injuring 140.  
Sikh militants are suspected. Source: [New York Times](#)
  - **June 15, 1991:** Sikh militants open fire on two passenger trains in Punjab, killing at least 80 people.  
Source: [New York Times](#)
  - **May 21, 1991:** A 17-year-old female militant from the LTTE—a Tamil separatist group based in Sri Lanka—carries out a suicide bombing in India's Tamil Nadu state that assassinates former Indian prime minister Rajiv Gandhi and kills at least 14 others.  
Sources: [New York Times](#), [Guardian](#), [BBC News](#)
  - - : The NLFT and ATTF conduct an ethnic cleansing movement termed "Operation Roukhala."  
Its aim is to expel Bengali immigrants who settled in Tripura after 1949. Sources: [South Asian Terrorism Portal](#), [FirstPost](#)
  - The UFLA conducts a series of assassinations, kidnappings, and bomb attacks in Assam.  
In response, the Indian government launches a counterinsurgency operation called Operation Bajrang. Source: [University of Maryland](#)
  - LeT ambushes a small group of Indian Air Force personnel in its first attack in India.  
Source: [Stanford University](#)
  - **April 10, 1988:** The TNLA carries out a bomb attack in Madras city, which kills one person and injures two others.  
Source: [South Asian Terrorism Portal](#)
  - Militants attack two buses in Haryana, killing 34 Hindu passengers.  
Sikh separatists claim responsibility. Source: [New York Times](#)
  - The TNLA carries out a bomb explosion at a railway bridge at Marudayar, which derails a train and kills 25 people.  
Source: [South Asian Terrorism Portal](#)
  - **July 31, 1988:** JKLF declares war on India by launching a bomb attack in Srinagar, effectively marking the start of the Kashmir insurgency.  
Source: [BBC News](#)
  - **June 30, 1986:** After two decades of insurgency in the Indian state of Mizoram, the conflict is finally resolved with a political settlement.  
It is the first insurgent conflict in Northeast India to be successfully resolved. Source: [Indian Defence Review](#)
  - Anti-Sikh riots erupt across India in response to the assassination of Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi.  
More than 3,000 are killed in the violence. Source: [BBC News](#)
  - **October 31, 1984:** Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi, who sanctioned an assault on Sikh militants at the Golden Temple in Amritsar in June, is assassinated by two Sikh bodyguards.  
Source: [BBC News](#)
  - **August 2, 1984:** A bomb explodes in the Madras Meenambakkam airport in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, killing 30 and injuring 25.  
Tamil separatists from Sri Lanka are suspected. Sources: [Hindu](#), [New Indian Express](#)
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- **June 3, 1984 - June 8, 1984:** The Indian army launches an assault called Operation Blue Star on the Golden Temple in Amritsar, where armed Sikh militants had taken up residence in protest for the past two years. At least 575 people—including many civilians—are killed. Source: [BBC News](#)
- **February 18, 1983:** Riots kill more than 2,000 during a six-hour period in Assam. Most of the violence is perpetrated by Assamese people against Bangladeshi immigrants. Sources: [YaleGlobal](#), [Hindustan Times](#)
- **June 8, 1980:** Tribal insurgents in Tripura brutally kill nearly 400 Bengalis, severing limbs and crushing the heads of victims. Source: [Telegraph India](#)
- **May 25, 1967:** In the first instance of left-wing violence in India, rebels stage an armed uprising in the Naxalbari village in the Indian state of West Bengal. Sources: [Al Jazeera](#), [Hindustan Times](#)
- India first introduces the Armed Forces Special Powers Act in Nagaland in response to the insurgency there. The law gives Indian security forces unconditional permission to shoot on sight. Sources: [Indian Defence Review](#), [FirstPost](#)

### Domestic Counter-Extremism

India's Ministry of Home Affairs oversees several intelligence, military, and police organizations that work to combat terrorism in the country. India's Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) oversees external intelligence affairs, and the country's Intelligence Bureau (IB) oversees internal intelligence. There are also paramilitary groups that patrol the country's borders and lend support to other security agencies, though some, such as the Central Reserve Police Force, have been accused of perpetrating human rights abuses. (Source: [Council on Foreign Relations](#))

India has some domestic legislation in place to prosecute terrorist activities, including the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) of 1967 and a Suppression of Terrorism Act passed in 1993. India also has anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing (AML/CTF) legislation in place, which it has amended to comply with international standards. However, according to the U.S. Department of State, India does not always effectively enforce its AML/CTF legislation and rarely takes proactive measures to curb AML/CTF activity. The Indian government supervises the money services business (MSB) sector, but illicit activities still frequently manage to take place. (Source: [U.S. Department of State](#))

According to a 2008 report by the Council on Foreign Relations, the Indian government's responses to terror attacks have been reactionary. Rather than formulate a coherent strategic response to terrorism, the government has frequently just implemented short-term measures in the wake of an attack. However, the U.S. State Department reports that India has attempted to improve its domestic counterterrorism capabilities since the 2008 terror attacks in Mumbai. Although India's governmental agencies still struggle with coordination and information sharing, the government has attempted to address the issue by forming a Multi-Agency Centre aimed at facilitating such processes. Local law enforcement continues to suffer from inadequate training and a lack of resources, but many national and state officials have participated in U.S.-sponsored security training aimed at enhancing their counterterrorism capabilities. (Sources: [Council on Foreign Relations](#), [U.S. Department of State](#))

Following intelligence reports on August 2, 2019, Indian security forces discovered mines covered with Pakistani ordinance markings filled with ammunitions and weapons along a pilgrimage route in Jammu and Kashmir. The route expected over 20,000 pilgrims. On August 3, 2019, Indian authorities and Kashmir's government ordered thousands of tourists and Hindu pilgrims to leave Indian-administered Kashmir, warning of a "terror threat" against Hindu pilgrims heading to the Amarnath shrine. On August 5, 2019, hours after deploying an additional 10,000 troops in Kashmir and cutting off all communications, the Indian government revoked Article 370 and 35A of the constitution. Article 370 allowed the Jammu and Kashmir region jurisdiction to make its own laws in all matters except finance, defense, foreign affairs, and communications. Article 35A allowed the local legislature to define permanent residents of the region and forbade Indians outside the state from permanently settling in the area. The abolishment of Articles 370 and 35A is suspected by critics to be way for the Indian government to shift Kashmir's Muslim-majority demographics. The government has also split the state into two union territories: Jammu and Kashmir which will have a legislature, and Ladakh which will be ruled directly by the central government. In response to India's actions, Pakistani military officials claim they will "go to any extent" to support the Kashmiris and Prime Minister Imran Khan claimed that, "with an approach of this nature, incidents like Pulwama are bound to happen again." The event of Pulwama refers to the Kashmiri terrorist attack in February 2019 in which 40 Indian paramilitary police were killed and almost resulted in Pakistan and India going to war. (Sources: [BBC News](#), [Bloomberg](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Telegraph](#), [Associated Press](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Al Jazeera](#))

#### *The Citizenship Amendment Act (2019)*

On December 11, 2019, lawmakers in India passed controversial changes to its citizenship law. The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), in conjunction with the National Register of Citizens (NRC), now includes religion as a criterion for nationality, representing a move away from

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India's founding principle of secularism. The new legislation provides a path for citizenship for practicing Hindus and five other South Asian religions—Buddhism, Christianity, Sikhism, Jainism, and Zoroastrianism—but does not include Islam. Currently, there are over 200 million Indians within the country who are practicing Muslims. The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) claims the amendment is necessary to protect persecuted minorities from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan who were living in “theocratic” countries before settling in India. Since Prime Minister Narendra Modi's reelection in May, his administration has largely endorsed a Hindu identity for the country and has demonstrated hostility towards secularism and Islam. For example, Modi stripped Kashmir, a Muslim-majority state, of its autonomy in August 2019, and in November 2019, India's Supreme Court approved construction of a Hindu temple at the site of a 16th century mosque. In recent weeks, extremists affiliated with Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, a Hindu nationalist paramilitary group, have become incensed by demonstrations against the CAA and have begun to carry out violent attacks against India's Muslim community. From February 22 until February 25, 2020, Muslim-populated areas of northeast Delhi faced some of the deadliest attacks induced by religious violence in decades. Within those four days, over 46 people were killed, more than 250 were injured and four mosques were set on fire. Victims included those who were protesting the new law, as well as passersby who attackers assumed were Muslim due to clothing choice or facial hair. Police officers have been accused of looking the other way, and even participating in the violence, as Hindu mobs have been killing people and damaging mosques. (Sources: [Washington Post](#), [Washington Post](#), [Reuters](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Guardian](#), [New York Times](#), [France 24](#), [India Today](#))

### *Islamic Extremism and ISIS*

The Indian government has several de-radicalization initiatives in place aimed at targeting the appeal of Islamic extremism. These include programs to regulate curricula in madrassas and to rehabilitate and reintegrate former terrorists into society. Additionally, India's National Investigation Agency has issued two arrest warrants for Zakir Naik, a radical Islamic televangelist and preacher wanted for his alleged role in influencing a July 2016 terror attack in Dhaka, Bangladesh, and India's Ministry of Home Affairs has banned his Islamic Research Foundation from the country. (Sources: [U.S. Department of State](#), [Star Online](#))

Though India banned ISIS in 2014, the Indian government has expressed concern about the group's ability to attract members through online propaganda. In late 2014, Intelligence Bureau officials began posing as ISIS recruiters on Twitter in an effort to target susceptible youth, and in October 2016, India's Ministry of Home Affairs appointed a Senior Advisor to Curb Online Radicalization. Indian authorities have arrested several recruiters, propagandists, and supporters of the group in the country, including 68 ISIS supporters in 2016 alone. (Sources: [U.S. Department of State](#), [Diplomat](#), [Government of India](#))

The Indian government has called for nations to develop individually tailored solutions to repatriate and rehabilitate teenage foreign fighters and children of foreign fighters. Indian officials have warned that applying the term “foreign terrorist fighter” to children could stigmatize and dehumanize them. In January 2021, India's Deputy Permanent Representative to the U.N. Ambassador K Nagaraj Naidu called for children to be treated based on respect, protection, and the fulfillment of human rights agreements such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. (Source: [Hitavada](#), [Hindu](#))

### *Kashmir Insurgency*

The Indian Army regularly conducts counterterrorism operations in Jammu and Kashmir. However, some of these operations have inflicted civilian casualties and been met with widespread protest, such as an April 2018 operation targeting LeT, JeM, and HM that killed four civilians in addition to 13 terrorists. The government in Jammu and Kashmir introduced a law called the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) in 1989 following the outbreak of insurgency, which gave unconditional permission to Indian security forces to shoot on sight, arrest individuals without a warrant, and conduct searches without consent. AFSPA has been heavily criticized and blamed as the cause of several unnecessary killings in the region. Paramilitary groups also contribute to counter-terrorism efforts in Jammu and Kashmir, though some, such as the Central Reserve Police Force, have been accused of committing human rights violations there. (Sources: [Council on Foreign Relations](#), [Council on Foreign Relations](#), [Long War Journal](#), [BBC News](#), [FirstPost](#))

### *Hindu Extremism*

There are few controls against Hindu extremist violence in India. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the political party of the Hindu nationalist movement Sangh Parivar, has been a major player in India's government since 1998. At times, the BJP and its affiliated state authorities have permitted, excused, or even facilitated violence against religious minorities. For example, mobs that conducted anti-Muslim riots in the state of Gujarat in 2002 that killed over 1,000 people were found to be in possession of lists of homes and businesses that could only have been acquired

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from government sources. State authorities and police reportedly “stood by or joined in” during acts of violence and impeded the subsequent prosecutions. One nineteen-year-old girl stated to media sources that she had “testified falsely [in a trial] after Hindu politicians repeatedly threatened her family.” Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who was previously the chief minister of Gujarat, has been accused of allowing the riots to take place. (Sources: [Hudson Institute](#), [Deutsche Welle](#), [BBC News](#))

A 2019 Human Rights Watch (HRW) report accused Indian authorities of delaying investigations into crimes against minorities. According to HRW South Asia director Meenakshi Ganguly, police “initially stalled investigations, ignored procedures, or even played a complicit role in the killings and cover-up of crimes.” In 2018, the Indian Supreme Court called on parliament to criminalize mob lynching, but observers have questioned whether the police would enforce harsher laws and penalties. (Sources: [New York Times](#), [Bloomberg](#))

### *Left-Wing Extremism*

In 2006, then-Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh named left-wing extremists as the “single biggest internal security threat” in India. Indian authorities have attempted to combat left-wing Naxalite rebels with a variety of strategies at both the state and federal level, with the assistance of local vigilante groups, paramilitary forces, and elite commando units such as the Greyhound force. However, the lack of effective coordination and a coherent strategy has continually hindered permanent success. In 2009, India launched a counterinsurgency operation against the CPI-M called “Operation Green Hunt,” which has so far been successful at diminishing Naxalite presence in the country. As of 2017, estimates suggested that Naxalite rebels were present in 10 of India’s 28 states, as opposed to 20 almost a decade earlier. Nonetheless, violence against civilians escalated at the start of the operation, and Indian security forces as well as local paramilitary groups have been accused of mass human rights abuses, including torture and sexual abuse. (Sources: [Council on Foreign Relations](#), [Combating Terrorism Center](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Independent](#), [Diplomat](#))

### *Northeast India*

Since independence in 1947, the Indian government’s routine response to unrest in Northeast India has been to deploy the military to conduct counterinsurgency operations. The Indian government has made few attempts to address the root causes of insurgency in the region, such as grievances over poverty and discrimination, or integrate the culturally distinct Northeast with the rest of India. In 1958, the Indian government passed a highly controversial law called the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) in the state of Manipur, which gave unconditional permission to Indian security forces to shoot on sight, arrest individuals without a warrant, and conduct searches without consent. Despite heavy criticism of the law, AFSPA was eventually extended to all seven Northeast Indian states. (Sources: [Indian Defence Review](#), [BBC News](#), [FirstPost](#))

Although a political agreement effectively ended violence in the northeastern state of Mizoram in 1986, similar agreements have yet to permanently resolve the conflicts in the states of Nagaland and Assam. Nagaland remains in a state of suspended conflict despite more than 80 rounds of peace talks between the Indian government and NSCN-IM, the primary insurgent group operating there. However, counterinsurgency operations in the state of Tripura in the 2000s saw success when they were paired with efforts to rehabilitate militants and reintroduce them into society. By 2011, violence there had effectively ended, and AFSPA was lifted in Tripura in 2015 after having been in effect there for 18 years. (Sources: [Indian Defence Review](#), [Indian Express](#), [Hindu](#), [FirstPost](#), [BBC News](#))

## **International Counter-Extremism**

As a founding member of the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF), India participates in GCTF and United Nations counterterrorism forums and promotes multilateral efforts to combat terrorism. India works with neighboring countries such as Bangladesh to prevent illicit border activities, and regularly cooperates with the United States on domestic and bilateral counter-terrorism initiatives. In July 2016, the two countries developed a U.S.-India Counterterrorism Joint Working Group and finalized a bilateral agreement to facilitate the sharing of terrorism screening information. India has also worked with the United States to implement U.N. Security Council counterterrorism resolutions and sanctions domestically. (Source: [U.S. Department of State](#))

India has not joined the U.S.-led Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS or attempted to combat ISIS on a more global scale, but it has publicly acknowledged the threat that ISIS and other terrorist groups pose to global security. India also complies with U.N. sanctions against al-Qaeda and ISIS-linked individuals and entities. (Source: [U.S. Department of State](#), [Diplomat](#))

India has also amended its domestic AML/CTF legislation to comply with international regulations. India is a member of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and two regional AML/CTF organizations—the Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism and

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the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering. (Source: [U.S. Department of State](#))

### **Public Opinion**

#### *Islamic Extremism*

Public concern over the threat of Islamic extremism in India is high. According to a 2013 Pew Research Center poll, 82 percent of Indians view Islamic extremist groups as a threat, with 67 percent labeling them as a “major threat.” Only three out of 40 countries polled had a higher percentage of citizens who labeled Islamic extremist groups as a “major threat.” According to a 2017 poll, 66 percent of Indians believe that ISIS specifically poses a major threat to the country. In 2019, 65 percent of Indians believed terrorism was a threat, making it the fourth-biggest concern for Indians behind corrupt officials, rising prices, and lack of employment opportunities. In March 2019, Pew released its 2018 poll, which found that 59 percent of Indians believed terrorism had worsened in the past five years, while 21 percent felt it had gotten better. (Sources: [Pew Research Center](#), [Pew Research Center](#), [Pew Research Center](#), [Pew Research Center](#))

Although India has the second-largest Muslim population in the world with at least 180 million Muslims, there is little support among them for radical Islamic groups and practices. A 2009 *New York Times* article reported that there was a growing trend among Indian Muslims to refuse to bury the bodies of suicide bombers, and that in general they “are not afraid to speak out against religious extremism in their midst.” (Sources: [Pew Research Center](#), [New York Times](#), [New York Times](#))

#### *Kashmir Insurgency*

In general, Indian citizens from nearer Kashmir and Pakistan appear to view terrorism as a larger problem. A 2017 Pew Research Center poll suggested that 81 percent of citizens from the north of India viewed it as a “big problem,” compared with 74 percent elsewhere in the country. In 2010, two years following the 2008 attacks perpetrated by Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) in Mumbai, a plurality—42 percent—of Indians named LeT as the greatest threat facing the country. 33 percent named Pakistan as the great threat, which, according to the report, was likely related, as 58 percent responded that they believed Pakistan supported extremist groups like LeT. As of 2018, 76 percent of Indians viewed Pakistan as a somewhat or serious threat to the country. (Source: [Pew Research Center](#), [Pew Research Center](#), [Pew Research Center](#))

In the 2018 Pew Research Center poll, 55 percent of Indians viewed the situation in Kashmir specifically as a “big problem,” down from 62 percent the year before. As of 2018, 53 percent of Indians believed the situation in Kashmir was worsening, while 58 percent thought more force was necessary to address the Kashmir problem, representing a 5 percent decrease from the previous poll on the issue of force. In 2017, 63 percent supported the use of more military force there. A 2012 poll revealed that 77 percent of Indians thought it was important to resolve the Kashmir dispute. However, opinions differed greatly—especially within Jammu and Kashmir itself—as to how the conflict should be resolved. A 2010 Chatham House survey suggested that although 43 percent of individuals living in Jammu and Kashmir supported independence, nearly all of that support came from individuals living in the Muslim-majority Kashmir Valley, where somewhere between 74 and 95 percent of individuals favored independence. In contrast, almost no individuals living in the Hindu-majority Jammu area of the state favored independence. A 2016 *Deutsche Welle* report suggested that many Muslims living in other parts of India are also in favor of greater Kashmiri autonomy. (Sources: [Pew Research Center](#), [Pew Research Center](#), [Pew Research Center](#), [BBC News](#), [Pew Research Center](#), [Deutsche Welle](#))

#### *Hindu Extremism*

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the political party of the Sangh Parivar Hindu nationalist movement, enjoys widespread public support in India. The party won by an “unexpectedly wide margin” with 31 percent of the vote in India’s 2014 general elections, enough to win a majority and bring Prime Minister Narendra Modi to power. As of 2017, Modi enjoyed extensive support in India. A Pew Research Center poll that year revealed that 88 percent of Indians held a favorable view of him, with 69 percent holding a “very favorable view.” (Sources: [Hudson Institute](#), [Guardian](#), [Times of India](#), [Pew Research Center](#))

#### *Naxalites*



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According to a 2009 report from the *Economist*, the Indian government has strived to influence public opinion against Naxalite left-wing rebels through propaganda campaigns. For example, the government has sponsored newspaper advertisements that proclaim that Naxalites are “cold-blooded murderers.” According to a 2012 Pew Research Center poll, 71 percent of Indians view Naxalites as a threat to India, with 44 percent labeling them as a “very serious threat.” (Sources: [Economist](#), [Pew Research Center](#))

### *Northeast India*

The insurgencies in Northeast India are largely rooted in popular grievances over widespread neglect, poverty, and discrimination in the region. According to Indian journalist Rajeev Bhattacharyya, much of the local population is fatigued by the insurgent activities in the region that have been going on since 1947. Nonetheless, the population still largely feels alienated and neglected by the Indian government. (Sources: [Indian Defence Review](#), [Diplomat](#))