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The Effect of State Repression on Rebel and Insurgent Use of Violence

by

Sarosh Sultan

Under the Direction of Carrie Manning, PhD

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2024

ABSTRACT

The impact of state repression on rebel violence and terrorism is a critical aspect of conflict dynamics. Existing research underscores a dynamic interplay between a state's repressive measures and insurgent violence but mainly focuses on repression being a response to rebel activity. This paper offers a differing perspective by examining how various forms of state repression can shape and incite rebel violence rather than being a mere reaction to it. The study delves into the case of India-administered Jammu and Kashmir and posits that increased state repression can fuel grievances and increase rebel recruitment, driving groups towards more aggressive tactics, especially when avenues for nonviolent dissent are restricted.

INDEX WORDS: State Repression, State violence, Rebel violence, Terrorism, Mobilization, Human rights abuses

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2024

The Effect of State Repression on Rebel and Insurgent Use of Violence

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May 2024

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my family, whose unwavering support and steadfast encouragement have been my pillars of strength throughout this academic endeavor. None of my accomplishments would have been possible without them.

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I would like to sincerely thank the members of my committee Dr. Carrie Manning, Dr. Louis-Alexandre Berg, and Dr. Dan Altman, for your encouragement and mentorship throughout this process. Your guidance, support, and crucial insights made this thesis possible. A special thank you to thank all the professors of the Political Science Department at Georgia State University, particularly Dr. Charles Hankla, for their valuable guidance and support throughout my graduate studies.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The literature on state repression emphasizes its role in political control, categorizing monopoly on the use of force as a legitimate aspect of statehood. This study narrows the focus to state repression, exploring its impact on collective action and rebellion mobilization. It challenges the idea that state violence is solely reactive, delving into the use of repression as a preemptive strategy employed to reduce dissent. The research aims to understand how state actions influence dissent and opposition activities, particularly in the context of the Kashmir conflict.

Methodologically, the study relies on secondary data sources and news reports covering the Kashmir conflict from 2015 to 2019. This period is crucial due to significant as it saw the revival of the Kashmiri insurgency and was the most violent time in the past decade in the region. In 2016, the region experienced an uptick in violence following relatively low levels in the preceding five years. This escalation coincided with the killing of Burhan Wani, a popular separatist militant leader of Hizbul Mujahideen. Subsequently, 2018 was considered the deadliest year of the last decade in Kashmir, with a peak in violence resulting in the deaths of at least over 500 people in different incidents, followed by 2019 which marked a one of the deadliest attacks on Indian army.

State repression is defined as the threat or use of violence infringing upon civilian rights, affecting both nonviolent and violent opposition actions, and rebel violence is the terrorist activity used by rebel groups against state personal and civilians. This study contends that as state violence escalates, there is a corresponding escalation in insurgent violence, and the effect is most pronounced over a long period of time.

This research is significant as it goes beyond the typical view of state repression triggering dissent. It explores the reciprocal relationship, investigating how state actions influence opposition activities. By delving into the Kashmir conflict, a longstanding and complex issue, the study contributes nuanced insights into the interplay of state repression and dissent.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

States are defined to possess legitimate authority and the capacity for coercion, encompassing the use of physical force.¹² However, this threat or use of violence and coercion becomes repression when it threatens basic human rights, administration of laws, and the security of citizens.³ Within political science research, repression and political violence are viewed as strategic tools employed by governments to achieve political and military objectives, primarily centered around maintaining control and the underlying wish to remain in power.⁴ Zimmerman states that "there are theoretical arguments for all conceivable basic relationships between government coercion and group protest and rebellion, except for no relationship."⁵

There is a vast yet disparate literature on state violence which calls for a need to clearly define what state coercive activities are and when they are employed. George Lopez and Michael Stohl classify state tactics into three types: state oppression, state repression, and state terrorism. State oppression is when social and economic privileges are denied to whole classes of people regardless of whether they oppose the authorities. State repression is the use of coercion or the threat of coercion against opponents or potential opponents to prevent or weaken their capability to oppose the authorities and their policies. Lastly, state terrorism is the purposeful act or threat of violence to create fear and/or compliant behavior in a victim and/or audience of the act or threat. This paper focuses specifically on state repression and terrorism, defining it as activities that elevate the cost of collective action and mobilization for rebellion.⁶

¹ Dusza, Karl. "Max Weber's Conception of the State"

² Davenport, Christian. "Multi-Dimensional Threat Perception and State Repression: An Inquiry into Why States Apply Negative Sanctions."

³ deMeritt, Jacqueline H. R. "The Strategic Use of State Repression and Political Violence."

⁴ Mamalakis, Markos. "Political Survival: Politicians and Public Policy in Latin America. by Barry Ames. Berkeley"

⁵ Gladun, Andrii. "Impact of Repression on Mobilization: The Case of the Euromaidan Protests in Ukraine."

⁶ Tilly, Charles "From mobilization to revolution"

Various studies within political science show how dissent and rebel activity impact state use of repression. Earl et al.'s "Threat-Response Theory" posits that a behavioral threat prompts state responses in the form of police violence,⁷ while Davenport's "Law of Coercive Responsiveness" suggests that repression is employed to maintain the status quo in response to behavioral threats.⁸⁹

While the dissent-repression pathway is generally accepted, some scholars have made clear distinctions in the choice to repress vs. the method of repression employed. Davenport argues that the nature of state repression varies based on conflict frequency, strategic rebel variety, and cultural limits on rebel violence.¹⁰ Different forms of repression can come about as a response to different dissent activities. Dissent tactics include demonstrations, strikes, riots, guerrilla attacks, and revolutions. State responses can include abuse of freedoms like freedom of speech and assembly, violations of physical integrity, and the use of particular tactics like torture and extrajudicial killings.¹¹

While this literature commonly assumes that political violence is a reactive measure against opposition, emerging research emphasizes the role of repression as a preemptive strategy.¹² States may use preemptive repression to forestall domestic rebellions, especially during neighboring states' upheavals and to deter young people, a significant demographic in rebellions, from joining opposition movements.¹³¹⁴

⁷ Earl, Jennifer, Sarah A. Soule, and John D. McCarthy. "Protest under Fire? Explaining the Policing of Protest."

⁸ Davenport, Christian. "State Repression and Political Order."

⁹ King, John C. "REPRESSION, DOMESTIC THREAT, AND INTERACTIONS IN ARGENTINA AND CHILE."

¹⁰ Davenport, Christian. "Multi-Dimensional Threat Perception and State Repression: An Inquiry into Why States Apply Negative Sanctions."

¹¹ deMeritt, Jacqueline

¹² Danneman, N., & Ritter, E. H. (2014). Contagious Rebellion and Preemptive Repression.

¹³ RITTER, EMILY HENCKEN, and COURTENAY R. CONRAD. "Preventing and Responding to Dissent: The Observational Challenges of Explaining Strategic Repression."

¹⁴ Nordås, Ragnhild, and Christian Davenport. "Fight the Youth: Youth Bulges and State Repression."

Contrary to the prevalent focus on how dissent triggers state repression, this paper examines the reciprocal relationship: how state repression influences opposition activities. While scholars widely agree that state force plays a crucial role in shaping opposition violence, the nature of this influence remains debated.

A different line of argument on state and rebel violence states that anti-state violence increases in response to state repression, deepening grievances and emboldening opposition.¹⁵¹⁶¹⁷ Bartusevičius demonstrates a positive association between perceived repression and intentions for violence.¹⁸ Others like Tezcur contend that indiscriminate state violence contributes to increased rebel recruitment by fostering a desire for revenge against perpetrators, in this case the state.¹⁹ In contrast, deterrence-based explanations posit that repression deters dissent by raising the costs of participation, hindering mobilization and creating obstacles to recruitment and insurgency. Coercion by the state raises barriers, making it more challenging for opposition movements to recruit, motivate, and organize constituents.

The direct effect of state repression on rebellion may not be universal, as evidenced by Lyall's work on Chechnya. Repression's impact varies based on whether state forces use selective or indiscriminate violence, showing that indiscriminate violence by state forces can decrease likelihood of insurgent violence in retaliation.²⁰ Some scholars also argue that the relationship between government repression and rebellion activity is curvilinear, meaning that rebel activity is low both when state repression is low and when it is extremely high. Zukov presents a similar argument that state violence can suppress rebellion if that violence is sufficiently high and past a

¹⁵ Lichbach, Mark Irving. "Deterrence or Escalation? The Puzzle of Aggregate Studies of Repression and Dissent."

¹⁶ Carr, Caleb. *The Lessons of Terror*.

¹⁷ Gurr, Ted Robert, and Mark Irving Lichbach. "Forecasting Internal Conflict."

¹⁸ Bartusevičius H, van Leeuwen F, Petersen MB. "Political repression motivates anti-government violence."

¹⁹ Tezcur, Gunes, Murat. "Ordinary People, Extraordinary Risks: Participation in an Ethnic Rebellion."

²⁰ Lyall, Jason. "Does Indiscriminate Violence Incite Insurgent Attacks? Evidence from Chechnya."

threshold that civilians are convinced that supporting the rebels is more costly. However, if states use violence without escalating it beyond this point, they only provoke reciprocal escalation by the rebels.²¹

The impact of state repression on dissent may also hinge on sequencing whereby an increase in government repression of non-violence could reduce nonviolent activities but increase violent ones within an opposition group.²² Other studies also show that repression's effects depend on the recent trajectory of dissent: it tends to increase dissent when it has been decreasing but suppresses opposition challenges when dissent has recently risen.²³

The temporal dimension adds more complexity, with studies showing that repression initially suppressing dissent but potentially contributing to increased dissident activity over time.²⁴ Repression may initially suppress dissent in the short term, it can contribute to increased dissident activity over time. State violence is likely to be perceived as being illegitimate by people and espouse negative sentiments that can overtime reinforced and increase grievances.²⁵ If the state violence continues for prolonged periods of time while avenues for peaceful dissent are suppressed, it can be expected that people will be motivated to join in violent resistance. Agent-based models, as demonstrated by Mason and Krane, introduce emotional aspects, suggesting that state violence might fuel dissent in the long run, while non-violent repression, such as curfews, could suppress it.²⁶ Beggan's study of North Ireland during the Trouble yields similar results, whereby the efficacy of repression decreases as more time passes.²⁷

²¹ Lyall, Jason. "Does Indiscriminate Violence Incite Insurgent Attacks? Evidence from Chechnya."

²² Lichbach, Mark Irving. "Deterrence or Escalation? The Puzzle of Aggregate Studies of Repression and Dissent."

²³ Sullivan, Christopher M., Cyanne E. Loyle, and Christian Davenport. 2012. "The Coercive Weight of the Past: Temporal Dependence and the Conflict-Repression Nexus in the Northern Ireland 'Troubles.'"

²⁴ Rasler, Karen. "Concessions, Repression, and Political Protest in the Iranian Revolution."

²⁵ Goodwin, Jeff. 2001. *No Other Way out States and Revolutionary Movements, 1945-1991*

²⁶ Jason, T. David, and Dale A. Krane. "The Political Economy of Death Squads: Toward a Theory of the Impact of State-Sanctioned Terror."

²⁷ Beggan, Dominic M. "STATE REPRESSION AND POLITICAL VIOLENCE: INSURGENCY IN NORTHERN IRELAND."

2.1 Definitions and Theoretical Explanation

This paper will focus on the Kashmir conflict, analyzing state force and repression by India-governed Jammu and Kashmir. State repression is defined here as the threat or use of violence and coercion to infringe upon civilians' rights to freedom and security. This includes aspects such as freedom of speech, association, belief, and movement, as well as political self-determination, access to free and fair media, and the security of physical integrity rights.

The period of analysis spans from 2015 to 2019, marked by significant shifts in state control in the region. State repression and violence can be categorized into two forms; Type 1, infringement on liberties such as freedom of association, speech, and press and Type 2, repression of physical integrity rights such as arbitrary state violence, detention, arrests, extrajudicial killings, etc. These definitions borrow from Demeril-Pegg's definition of state use violence, with Type 1 being preventative repression and Type 2 being reactionary repression.²⁸

Rebels are defined as paramilitary organizations, or individuals that support/join such organizations, that act against the state's status quo and utilizing violence as a strategic means to influence political conditions. The repertoire of these rebels encompasses both violent and non-violent activities, and can vary in frequency and intensity or lethality. Since the same groups are also referred as rebels, insurgents, terrorists, militants, and freedom fighters depending on the source use, this paper will follow David Taylor's example and use insurgent and militant as these terms are more generic and descriptive.²⁹

Rebels' responses to state repression of civilian freedom can be categorized into two main groups. The first involves mobilization of civilians, where dissidents engage in protests, riots,

²⁸ Demirel-Pegg, Tijen. 2014. "From the Streets to the Mountains: The Dynamics of Transition from a Protest Wave to an Insurgency in Kashmir."

²⁹ Taylor, David. 1991. "The Kashmir Crisis."

quasi-violence and the second is use of violent attacks against state and state-backed forces or civilians, such as bombings, artillery fire, and kidnappings.

State repression, infringing on one or more of the aforementioned civilian rights, elicits diverse responses from dissidents. Repression can function as a suppressor of dissent when it effectively raises the cost of participation in a rebellion. Conversely, it can act as a stimulant when it closes avenues for peaceful dissent or heightens group grievances.

For instance, the prohibition of protests suppresses freedom of association can potentially increasing group grievances while simultaneously limiting avenues for dissent, resulting in an upswing in violent responses. On the other hand, violations of physical integrity rights, such as mass murder, disappearances, and extrajudicial killings, can also escalate the cost of participating in opposition, thereby suppressing rebel violent activity. Additionally, temporal variations play a crucial role, where repression may effectively quell rebel activity in the short term but potentially amplify it in the long term.

This study posits that state use of Type 2 violence influences the frequency and lethality of insurgent activity in the Kashmir conflict. In this case, Type 1 repression, characterized by restrictions on nonviolent avenues for dissent, is considered a background condition as the Indian State and its armed forces have a heavily presence in J&K and the region is heavily militarized and surveillanced.

The paper argues that when state increases its use of violence, it creates deeper resentment in the population and given the already limited avenues for peaceful expression, groups turn to more confrontational methods like terrorism as an alternative means of resistance. The people effected by state brutality are motivated to join rebellion and carry out increased

attacks, especially on state forces. If this is true, there should also be a difference in targeting, with rebel groups mainly targeting state personnel and forces rather than civilians.

The paper also looks at the inverse relation to tackle literature that severe state violence can reduce insurgent activity. Here, it analyzes when state increases Type 2 repression if there is any decrease the frequency and lethality of rebel use of terrorism and violence. The rationale here lies in the assumption that the heightened cost of participation, including the risk of physical harm, would deter individuals from engaging in terrorist activities.

In scenarios where Type 2 repression is low, the literature does not explicitly address the expected impact on terrorist activity. However, one could speculate that the influence might be ambiguous; without severe physical integrity repression, individuals may still harbor grievances and motivations for dissent, but the absence of significant consequences might lead some to opt for nonviolent means of expressing opposition. These hypotheses provide a theoretical framework that will be further explored and validated through empirical analysis in the study of the Kashmir conflict.

This research assumes that any political violence caused by militants is based on perceived grievances and also treats insurgents and state forces as rational actors.

2.2 Methodology

This study will employ the use of secondary resources to analyze the context of violence in J&K. This includes human rights reports, news reports, analysis, as well as data sets on conflict and violence in the region. The study will make use of aggregate data from Global Terrorism Data (GTD), South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP), and Jammu Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society (JKCCS) annual reports. Following Lyall's framework, the study will use a 90-day treatment window between state repression and rebel response.³⁰ Beyond the 90 days, any

³⁰ Lyall, Jason. "Are Coethnics More Effective Counterinsurgents? Evidence from the Second Chechen War."

changes will be considered to not be directly related to the state's activity. As the length between treatment and observed response increases, other unobserved events are more likely to have intervened and a direct action-reaction relationship between state and rebel activity cannot be confidently asserted. These unobserved variables includes increased fighting across Line of Control (LoC) between India and Pakistan, LoC violations by either state or state-backed forces, or changes in political dynamics in the region. The study will also focus on attacks and violence within the Jammu and Kashmir region only. This is because there is a lower frequency of rebel attacks and terrorism coupled with extremely limited data and reporting available on the Pakistan-administered side. In order to mitigate biases in reporting, this study incorporates diverse news sources, reports, and analysis from Indian, Pakistani, Kashmiri, and international sources.

The paper will first provide an overview of the history and political context for Jammu and Kashmir and give a descriptive outline of how tensions in the region began. The next section will focus on the major rebel groups present in the region and their motivations. The next section then looks at the situation of state use of violence for repression, followed by an analysis of two major incidents in the last time period, 2016 Wani death and 2019 Pulwama attack, in order to analyze the validity of the two hypothesis. Lastly, the paper will discuss the implication of the research and analyze its at limitations.

The research aims to achieve the following objective:

To examine how state repression, particularly in the repression of physical integrity rights, impacts militant activities in the Kashmir conflict.

2.2.1 Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: Given that high levels of Type 1 state repression exist, high levels of Type

2 state violence will be correlated with an increase in terrorist activity by militants.

Hypothesis 2: Given that high levels of Type 1 state repression exist, increases in Type 2 state violence will be associated with decreased levels of terrorist activity by militants

3 JAMMU AND KASHMIR CASE STUDY

3.1 History and Regional Context

Since gaining independence from Britain in 1947, the area of Kashmir has been a major point of conflict between India and Pakistan. The region was one of the largest princely states under British Raj in India. As per the India Independence Act of 1947, princely states were granted the option to maintain their independence or accede to either of the newly established countries, India or Pakistan. Upon British Viceroy Lord Mountbatten's encouragement, most all princely states acceded to one or the other country.³¹

Maharaja Hari Singh, the Hindu ruler presiding over an 80 per cent Muslim-majority Kashmir, initially opted for independence while giving Pakistan administrative control over railways and communication.³²³³ However, under the threat of invading Pashtun forces, he allegedly acceded to India by signing the Instrument of Accession on October 26, 1947.³⁴ There has been contention surrounding the document on several accounts. There is debate on whether this document was signed before or after Indian forces had arrived in Kashmir and if it was signed before the Pashtun's invaded or after. The fact that the document remains missing, excluding an electronic copy that was added in recent years to Indian Home Ministry's website, add further questions, with the electronic document being called an empty form that will simply filled by Hari Singh rather than a document drafted for Kashmir.³⁵³⁶ The questions of legality and

³¹ Farrell, Brian. 2023. "The Role of International Law in the Kashmir Conflict."

³² Ibid

³³ Gupta, Jyoti Bhusan. n.d. Jammu and Kashmir.

³⁴ Lamb, Alastair. 1992. Kashmir: A Disputed Legacy: 1846-1990.

³⁵ Faheem, Farrukh. 2020. "Doing Research in a 'Conflict Zone': History Writing and Archival (IM) Possibilities in Jammu and Kashmir."

³⁶ Nayak, Venkatesh. 2019. "The Backstory of Article 370: A True Copy of J&K's Instrument of Accession."

validity of the document gave both India and Pakistan a basis to lay claim on Kashmir.³⁷³⁸ As a result, a conflict between Indian and Pakistani forces ensued, prompting India to bring the matter before the United Nations Security Council on January 1, 1948, with Pakistan expressing its concerns to the Security Council two weeks later.

On January 20, 1948, the Security Council, through Resolution 39, established the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) to investigate the allegations presented by both Indian and Pakistani governments and to aid in mediating the dispute.³⁹ The mandate of the Commission was expanded on April 21, 1948, with Security Council Resolution 47.⁴⁰ By 1949, a ceasefire line was created,⁴¹ later delineated as the Line of Control (LoC) in 1972, dividing Kashmir into two administrative regions, placing Gilgit-Baltistan (formerly called Northern Areas) and Azad Kashmir under Pakistani control and Ladakh, Jammu, and Kashmir under Indian control. The Sino-Indian border war in 1962 further divide the region, with China gaining control over the north-eastern Aksai-Chin.⁴²⁴³

Since 1948, the United Nations has issued a series of resolutions pertaining to the dispute, totaling over a dozen interventions under the “India-Pakistan Question.”⁴⁴ These resolutions advocated for a free and impartial plebiscite to decide the region's accession to India or Pakistan. These resolutions underscore the importance of dialogue between the concerned parties to address tensions, with subsequent resolutions calling for the people’s right to self-determination and prescribing conditions for demilitarization. Despite these attempts, a plebiscite is yet to be

³⁷ Anand, Adarsh Sein. “ACCESSION OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR STATE – HISTORICAL & LEGAL PERSPECTIVE.”

³⁸ Farrell, Brian. 2023.

³⁹ UN Security Council. "Security Council Resolution 39 (1948) [The India-Pakistan Question]."

⁴⁰ UN Security Council. "Security Council Resolution 47 (1948) [The India-Pakistan Question]."

⁴¹ Farrell, Brian. 2023.

⁴² “INDIA-PAKISTAN: JOINT STATEMENT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SIMLA AGREEMENT.”

⁴³ Ganguly, Sumit. 2016. *Deadly Impasse: Indo-Pakistani Relations at the Dawn of a New Century*.

⁴⁴ “UN RESOLUTIONS ON JAMMU & KASHMIR.” 2024.

held and India and Pakistan have engaged in three major conflicts and several skirmishes along the LoC.⁴⁵



Figure 1: Map of the Kashmir Region - Lesniewski, Vector Map of the Territorial Tenure of Kashmir (Adobe Stock)

The conflicting claims to J&K, failures in governance, and subsequent persistent internal conflicts have continued to further complicate the situation.⁴⁶ The breakdown of political and administrative structures in the state allowed for armed resistance against Indian control to arise, especially after India increased its control and limited political autonomy in J&K. In 1953, India removed Sheikh Abdullah, the first elected Prime Minister of J&K, who was an advocate for an

⁴⁵ Ganguly, Sumit. 2016.

⁴⁶ Narain, Akanksha. 2016. "Revival of Violence in Kashmir: The Threat to India's Security."

independent Kashmir, and placed him under arrest.⁴⁷ A puppet regime was installed by the central government before gradually diminishing J&K's autonomy through constitutional means. Despite a political compromise made with Abdullah's party allowing him to become Chief Minister later on in 1975, this served as source of distrust for Kashmiris and reduced faith in a political resolution to their problems.

The 1974 Indira-Sheikh accord and the alliance of Kashmiri National Conference with Indian Congress alliance in 1987 further served as indicators of increasing control on the region by Delhi. Militant groups used this growing distrust to order an active boycotts of the November 1989 elections in the region.^{48,49} In December 1989, militants demanded release of prisoners in exchange for releasing the Kashmiri Home Minister's daughter.⁵⁰ Although the government agreed, the situation only escalated further and an insurgency fueled by separatist and ethno-religious ideologies began. The insurgents were mainly concerned with deficiencies in India's federal system for Kashmiris and used this opportunity to give a sudden start to rebellion.

Moreover, during the Soviet-Afghan conflict in Afghanistan, Pakistan also acted to exacerbate tensions in J&K by funding and arming local militant groups while support for militancy from Afghan Mujahideen and import of Islamist ideology were also on the rise, contributing further unrest against Indian authority. The focus of the rebels diversified over time, where initially insurgent groups were calling for independence but as external influences from Pakistani and Afghani recruits grew, there was shifting focus towards jihad against foreign forces post-1996. Kashmiri insurgency took quick hold and from 1980s on-wards and jihadist ideologies also continued to be a part of the narrative.⁵¹ This was most explicitly evident when

⁴⁷ Noorani, A.G. 2011. "Sheikh Abdullah's Arrest."

⁴⁸ Narain, Akanksha. 2016

⁴⁹ "Jammu and Kashmir Background." 2001

⁵⁰ Taylor, David. 1991. "The Kashmir Crisis."

⁵¹ "Jammu and Kashmir Background." 2001.

Kashmiri Hindus were threatened and forced to leave their homes, leading to the Hindu Pandit Exodus whereby over 100,000 people were forcefully dispossessed in 1989.⁵²

There was also an increase in public protests and demonstration in Kashmir during the same period, which also led to the increased use of force by state and police, further fueling insurgency. Terrorist activity reached the highest points in 1996, with over 1400 recorded civilian deaths and over 2900 total casualties (compared to a total death toll of 31 people in 1988).⁵³ As civilian deaths mounted, the support for militancy and terrorism declined significantly among the local youths, while crack downs against jihadist and Islamist outfits in Pakistan resulted in fewer foreign recruits. However, conditions in J&K still remained with consistent quasi-violence and protests by civilians and increasingly harsh measures by the Indian State. The coalition between Jammu and Kashmir People's Democratic Party, the Kashmiri state party, and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), a Hindu, right-wing, political party, in the J&K Legislative Assembly in 2014 incited a new state of distrust among Kashmiris.⁵⁴ Coupled with incidents like state violence against protests in 2016 and repealing of Article 370, a renewed wave of insurgency has begun in the region.

3.2 Rebel and Insurgent Groups

The history of insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir with the primary goal of establishing a separate homeland for the people is deeply intertwined with religion and marked by violence.

“Kashmiris Insurgents” are united by their demand of wanting independence from Indian

⁵² Essa, Azad. 2022. “Kashmiri Pandits: Why We Never Fled Kashmir.”

⁵³ Insurgency Related Killings in Jammu and Kashmir: 1988 -2000.” n.d. South Asia Terrorism Portal

⁵⁴ Narain, Akanksha. 2016

⁵⁵ D’Souza, Shanthie Mariet, and Bibhu Prasad Routray. 2016. “Jihad in Jammu and Kashmir: Actors, Agendas and Expanding Benchmarks.”

control in J&K.⁵⁶ As many as 40 different organizations have operated in the region with varying goals and organizational strength. While some aim to target Indian forces and government within J&K, others have expanded their actions into Indian mainland and created connections with transnational terrorist groups including Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State and other terrorist outfits within South Asia. Leaders from many have also frequently met and worked with each other to reach immediate goals, however, the exact methods of collaboration and loyalties between groups are hard to discern.

The Jammu and Kashmir has seen a large amount of violence, both against government forces and against civilians, carried out by a large number of actors and insurgents including groups such as the Hizbul-Mujahideen, Jaish-e-Mohammed, Lashkar-e-Taiba, Al-Qaeda in South Asia, Al-Badr and Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front.⁵⁷ The goals of these groups vary, from being pro-Pakistani to pro-independence and nationalist. In the past two decades, Islamist and Wahabi ideologies have been on a steady increase as well, with “*Azadi baraye Islam*”, Freedom through Islam, becoming a popular narrative.⁵⁸ The groups target Indian military forces and, on a lesser extent, civilians, with civilian to security forces death ratio being 1:5 and injury being 1:3 between 2005 and 2020.⁵⁹

Pakistan has repeatedly been accused of providing the Kashmiri insurgents arms, training, financing, and logistical support. In 2001, the Indian intelligence agency Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) claimed that ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence) spent anywhere from US\$125 and \$250 million on militant yearly.⁶⁰ Pakistan denies all of these allegations of financing and arms but does admitted supporting political goals of some militants. Most groups

⁵⁶ Uppsala Conflict Data Program.” 2024.

⁵⁷ Kronstadt, K. Alan. 2023. Terrorist and Other Militant Groups in Pakistan - CRS Reports

⁵⁸ Pandya, Abhinav. “The Threat of Transnational Terrorist Groups in Kashmir.”

⁵⁹ “Yearly Suicide Attacks.” n.d. Datasheet-Terrorist-Attack-Suicide-Attacks.

⁶⁰ Chalk, Peter. n.d. Pakistan’s Role in the Kashmir Insurgency

also receive financial assistance through direct donations and by utilizing *hawala*, an informal money transfer system where a network of *hawaladars* and receive money and move funds across borders without physical movement of cash.^{61,62,63}

There are varying estimate on the number of recruits in each group, different estimates falling in ranges of two to three digits, however, most estimates states that many recruits work from outside of Kashmir. Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, Lashkar-e-Taiba, and Jaish-e-Mohammad are the three primary groups operating in J&K and have continued the insurgency in the region.⁶⁴

Table 1: Major Insurgent Groups in Jammu and Kashmir

Group	Goal	Organizational Strength	Area of Influence in J&K
Hizb-ul-Mujahideen	Uniting Kashmir and accession to Pakistan	Moderate	Kashmir Valley, Poonch, Rajauri, Doda
Harkat-Ul-Ansar/ Harkat-Ul-Jehad-e-Islami	Establishment of Islamic Rule in Kashmir	Low	Kashmir Valley, Poonch, Rajauri, Doda
Lashkar-e-Taiba	Establishment of an Islamic caliphate in Indian subcontinent	High	Poonch, Rajauri, Doda, Kashmiri Independence
Al Badr	Establishment of Islamic rule in Kashmir	Low	Srinagar
Al Barq	Uniting Kashmir and accession to Pakistan	Low	Kupwara, Baramula
Jamait-Ul-Mujahideen	Uniting Kashmir and accession to Pakistan	Low	Kupwara, Srinagar & Pulwama
Jammu & Kashmir	Secular and Independent Kashmir State	N/A	Srinagar, Badgam & Baramulla

⁶¹ “Terrorist Outfits Operating in India.” n.d. South Asia Terrorism Portal.

⁶² Sharma, Surinder, and Soumya Awasthi. 2022.

⁶³ “Hawala: From Ancient Remittance Transfer System to Terrorist Financing Method.” n.d. EFSAS.

⁶⁴ Ligon, Gina, Michael Logan, and Lauren Zimmerman. 2019.

Liberation Front			
Jaish-e-Muhammad	Uniting Kashmir and accession to Pakistan	Moderate	Southern Kashmir, Doda, Kashmir Valley

3.2.1 *Hizb-ul-Mujahideen*

Established in 1989, Hizbul Mujahideen was formed with the objective of uniting the Pakistan and Indian controlled regions of Kashmir in order to integrate it into Pakistan. The group operates from Muzaffarabad in Kashmir. Under Syed Salahuddin’s leadership, the organization has pursued an assertive strategy to achieve this aim.⁶⁵ Salahuddin enjoys popularity within Kashmir and has also made threats to increase suicide attacks carried out by HM. The group employs a two-tier system with leadership overseeing administrators, the latter of whom are responsible for administrative tasks such as logistics and supplies for militants in the field. HM has carried out dozens of attacks on Indian security forces, from guerrilla raids on personnel and convoys to remote explosions and suicide attacks.

HM is also one of the few groups that primarily recruits indigenous Kashmiris, both men and women, and as such has a greater influence amongst the local population.⁶⁶ The groups utilizes the Kashmir tradition of student politics for political agency and has a strong online and social media presence to reach the youth.⁶⁷ HM has been closely associated with the United Jihad Council and HM has reported affiliations with Jamaat-e-Islami as well as ISI.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Ibid

⁶⁶ “Incidents and Statements Involving Hizb-Ul-Mujahideen: 2005-2012.” n.d. South Asia Terrorism Portal.

⁶⁷ Pandit, Huzaifa. “Schools of Resistance – a Brief History of Student Activism in Kashmir.”

⁶⁸ “Hizb-Ul- Mujahideen (HM) Jammu & Kashmir.” n.d. South Asia Terrorism

3.2.2 *Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM)*

Jaish-e-Muhammad was founded by Maulana Masood Azhar in Karachi in 2000.⁶⁹ The group has claimed responsibility for numerous major attacks in J&K and other parts of India and is mainly based in Pakistan. The group has been accused by India of sponsoring attacks on Indian territory and despite Pakistani government outlawing JeM in 2002, its intelligence agencies are also reported to be a part of creating it. Following Masood Azhar's release from Indian detention through an exchange involving over 150 hostages held on a hijacked Indian Airlines flight diverted to Kandahar, JeM reportedly established connections with al-Qaeda and has since established a presence in Afghanistan as well as with Pakistani Islamists groups including Sipah-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ).⁷⁰⁷¹

The group's power has declined since 2007 and has struggled to regain power since, opting to maintain itself by raising money through front charity groups.⁷² The current estimate of JeM forces is approximately several hundred, where most are Afghan, Pakistani, or Kashmiri unemployed youths. JeM carried out a terrorist attack on December 13th, 2001 on the Indian Parliament in New Delhi.⁷³

3.2.3 *Lashkar-e-Taiba*

Lashkar-e-Taiba or the "army of the pure" is an Islamic militant group founded by Hafiz Muhammad Saeed in 1990 in Afghanistan and has operated from Pakistan. The main goal of the organization is to expel Indian forces from Kashmir and establish an Islamic caliphate in the Indian subcontinent. LeT is estimated to have several thousand fighters and a hierarchical leadership team responsible for fundraising, recruitment, and other organizational

⁶⁹ Jaish-e-Mohammed (JEM) Jammu & Kashmir." n.d. South Asia Terrorism Portal.

⁷⁰ "Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan." n.d. South Asia Terrorism Portal.

⁷¹ "Lashkar-e- Jhangvi (LeJ) Pakistan." n.d. South Asia Terrorism Portal.

⁷² Ligon, Gina, Michael Logan, and Lauren Zimmerman. 2019. "

⁷³ Hashim, Asad, and Rifat Fareed. 2019. "Explainer: Who Are Kashmir's Armed Groups?"

functions. Saeed has been a proponent for using violence in Kashmir and relies on a structured top-management team overseeing various departments in the organization to manage activities both locally and internationally. LeT recruits are organized at district levels with ‘district commanders’ in charge. LeT recruits are mostly young, educated men from Pakistan and Afghanistan.⁷⁴ A unique tactical aspect of LeT’s attack strategy involves heavily-armed militant units using fidayeen (suicide attacks) tactics aimed at causing maximum damage coordinated by its sophisticated organization structure.⁷⁵ This group has also been trained and provided arms and resources by Pakistani ISI but was later proscribed by General Musharraf in 2002.⁷⁶

3.2.4 Other Groups

Several other insurgent groups operate in the region, which encompass terrorist, nationalist, and Islamist ideology. One such group was the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front which started during the 1980’s unrest was one of the oldest and most widely supported insurgents groups in Kashmir.⁷⁷ In August 1990 most of the JKLF leadership was arrested by authorities leading Yasin Malik to form a parallel group and by 1996 almost all members in the political and militant wings were killed.⁷⁸ Bands of the organization can be found internationally which now provide financial assistance to Jammu Kashmir Students Liberation Front, the student wing of JKLF.

Another prominent group has been Al Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) a branch of Al Qaeda created in 2014, and its affiliate Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind (AGuH), with the goal of increasing Al Qaeda influence in South Asia.⁷⁹ AQIS’ focus is on jihad and expanding Sharia

⁷⁴ D’Souza, Shanthie Mariet, and Bibhu Prasad Routray. 2016.

⁷⁵ Ligon, Gina, Michael Logan, and Lauren Zimmerman. 2019

⁷⁶ “Sair Archive Lashkar-e-Taiba: Let: Lashkar-e-Taiba Terrorist Latest on SATP ‘Army of the Pure.’”

⁷⁷ Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front.” n.d. South Asia Terrorism Portal.

⁷⁸ Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF).”

⁷⁹ Ligon, Gina, Michael Logan, and Lauren Zimmerman. 2019.

⁸⁰ Pandya, Abhinav. “The Threat of Transnational Terrorist Groups in Kashmir.”

Law in the region and the group has strong ties with the Taliban.

As of 2022, several non-Islamist and nationalist militant groups have also started to emerge, including the Resistance Front, Kashmir Tigers, and United Liberation Front of Kashmir. While this indicates a shift away from Islamist ideologies, the groups are still too young and lack military capacity compared to established groups like HM.⁸¹

3.3 State Violence and Repression

The Indian government and state forces have been accused of human rights violations in the Jammu and Kashmir region for several. While there is some difficulty in discerning all the claims due to lack of access to third party observers, human rights institutions including the United Nations Human Rights Commission have created several comprehensive reports detailing state repression on J&K residents. The region has seen persistent Type 1 repression, including restricting and dispersing protests, limiting access to internet and mobile services, persecuting journalists and reporters, and curbing political freedom, as well as Type 2 repression against physical integrity including arbitrary arrests, torture, extra judicial killings and disappearances.⁸²

Indian state forces enjoy impunity for human rights violations under laws such as the Armed Forces (Jammu and Kashmir) Special Powers Act (AFSPA), 1990 and the J&K Public Safety Act (PSA), 1978. Under AFSPA, security forces have the legal authority to use lethal force against civilians and are effectively immune from prosecution in civilian courts.^{83,84}

Approval from the central government is required for any potential prosecutions. As a result,

⁸¹ “Violence in Kashmir: Why a Spike in Killings Signals an Ominous New Trend.” 2024

⁸² Joseph, Teresa. 2000. “Kashmir, Human Rights and the Indian Press.”

⁸³ “Report on the Situation of Human Rights in Kashmir: Developments in the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir from June 2016 to April 2018, and General Human Rights Concerns in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit#Baltistan | Ohchr.” 2018.

⁸⁴ “India: A ‘Lawless Law’: Detentions under the Jammu and Kashmir Public Safety Act.” 2021.

extrajudicial killings have been encouraged without any army personnel in J&K being prosecuted for illegally using lethal force. Indian authorities contend that allegations of human rights violations by security forces are adequately addressed by the military justice system under the 1950 Army, Air Force, and Navy Acts. However, according to the Special Rapporteur on Independence of Judges and Lawyers, military courts are unsuitable for trying offenses committed against civilians as they fall short of international fair trial standards. Even if any investigation in army human rights abuses is carried out, the most severe punishments do not exceed dismissals or suspensions from duty.⁸⁵

Furthermore, PSA is regularly used for administrative detention as it authorizes issuing detention orders for a wide range of vaguely defined activities that are considered a potential threat "security of the state" or "public order."⁸⁶⁸⁷ The act allows for detention without charge or trial for up to two years and significantly limits a detainees' ability to challenge the legality of their detainment. There are also several reports of security officers bribing, intimidating, and threatening civilians from taking actions against them.⁸⁸ Between 1994 and 2006, the Indian state forces have been involved in 35 recorded massacres which have resulted in the death of 632 people.⁸⁹ Civil society reports state anywhere from 500,000-700,000 army and military personnel being present to combat 150-250 militant in the entire state, making the area a highly militarized zone with a disproportionate military presence.⁹⁰ This militarization has led to

⁸⁵ INDIA'S SECRET ARMY IN KASHMIR New Patterns of Abuse Emerge in the Conflict." 1996.

⁸⁶ MENON, MEENA. "A Dirge for Kashmir."

⁸⁷ "India: A 'Lawless Law': Detentions under the Jammu and Kashmir Public Safety Act." 2021.

⁸⁸ Ibid

⁸⁹ The International Peoples' Tribunal on Human Rights and Justice in Indian-Administered Kashmir, and The Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons. 2015.

⁹⁰ Ashraf, Ajaz. 2022. "'Do You Need 700,000 Soldiers to Fight 150 Militants?': Kashmiri Rights Activist Khurram Parvez."

widespread human rights abuses and violations, including extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, unlawful detentions, and sexual violence.⁹¹

The Indian state has consistently been accused of using systematic violence and constant presence of military forces, monitoring, punitive measures, and apprehension have become routine aspects of life for the civil society in Kashmir, resulting in a scenario where acts of violence are not only outside the jurisdiction of the law but also sanctioned by it. The organized and deliberate application of lethal force and aggression in Indian-administered Kashmir is labeled as constituting human rights violations within the framework of an ongoing conflict. The unearthing of 2,700 unidentified and unmarked mass graves in 2010 was a striking example of state violence in the regions of Bandipora, Baramulla, and Kupwara districts within Kashmir.⁹² The number of unidentified graves was update to 6000 in 2012.⁹³ Over 8000 cases of enforced and involuntarily disappearance by state forces also still remain unresolved.⁹⁴ Use of sexual violence is also considered rampant, one such incident being the 1991 Kunan Poshpora, where 4th Rajput soldiers gang raped 50 women. According to an MSF study respondents reported that between 1989 and 2005, over 99 percent witnessed crackdowns, 85 percent experiences frisking by security forces, and 82 per cent reported round-up raids in villages as well as deliberate damage to property.⁹⁵

Indian government has also been accused of exaggerating cases of Paksitani infiltration across LoC. While infiltration a genuine and significant concern, India has also used them as an excuse to increase state intervention and frequently made connections between foreign terrorism with local Kashmiri civilians. These assertions also allow the Indian administration to carry fake

⁹¹ Mathur, Shubh. 2016. *The Human Toll of the Kashmir Conflict Grief and Courage in a South Asian Borderland*.

⁹² Chatterji, Angana, Parvez Imroz, Gautam Navlakha, Zahir-Ud-Din, Mihir Desai, and Khurram Parvez. n.d. "Fake Encounters and State Terror in Kashmir: A Brief." 2010

⁹³ Scott-Clark, Cathy. n.d. "The Mass Graves of Kashmir."

⁹⁴ "Year 2018 Was Deadliest in Human Losses, JKCCS Report." 2018.

⁹⁵ 2006. *Kashmir: Violence and Health*.

encounters.⁹⁶ According to reports Indian forces, 335 militants were killed in 2008 and 236 militants in 2009. However, other independent sources have stated that only three militant killings on the LoC and international border had been confirmed over one-and-a-half years. All information about encounters with militants and insurgents is collected, disseminated, and regulated by the Indian Army as media personnel are not allowed near encounter locations close to the LoC or international border zones. Thus, it can be observed that both Type 1 and 2 state repression is frequently employed in the region.

⁹⁶ Chatterji, Angana, Parvez Imroz, Gautam Navlakha, Zahir-Ud-Din, Mihir Desai, and Khurram Parvez. 2010.

4 ANALYSIS

Given the long and complex history of the region, analyzing the pathways between state repression and violent rebellion and terrorism in Kashmir is a complicated task. This section will look at two specific instances of high levels of state repression, both Type 1 and 2, to analyze how they led to differing rebel responses. The first is the unrest following death of Burhan Wani in 2016, which marked the first increase in terrorism incidents in the region and the second is the Pulwama attack in 2019. These two attacks are significant as they occur with changing trends in state and rebel use of violence in thre region. Up until 2016, there was a relative plateau in insurgent terrorist attacks, but a steady increase is observed after Wani’s death in 2016, leading to renewed conflict. 2018 and 2019 saw highest levels of violence in the decade. 2018 had highest number of terrorism incidents the past decade and 2019 marked the most number of injuries and deaths in terrorism incidents. The most significant attack in these two years was the Pulwama attack, warranting a need to understand what led to this incident.

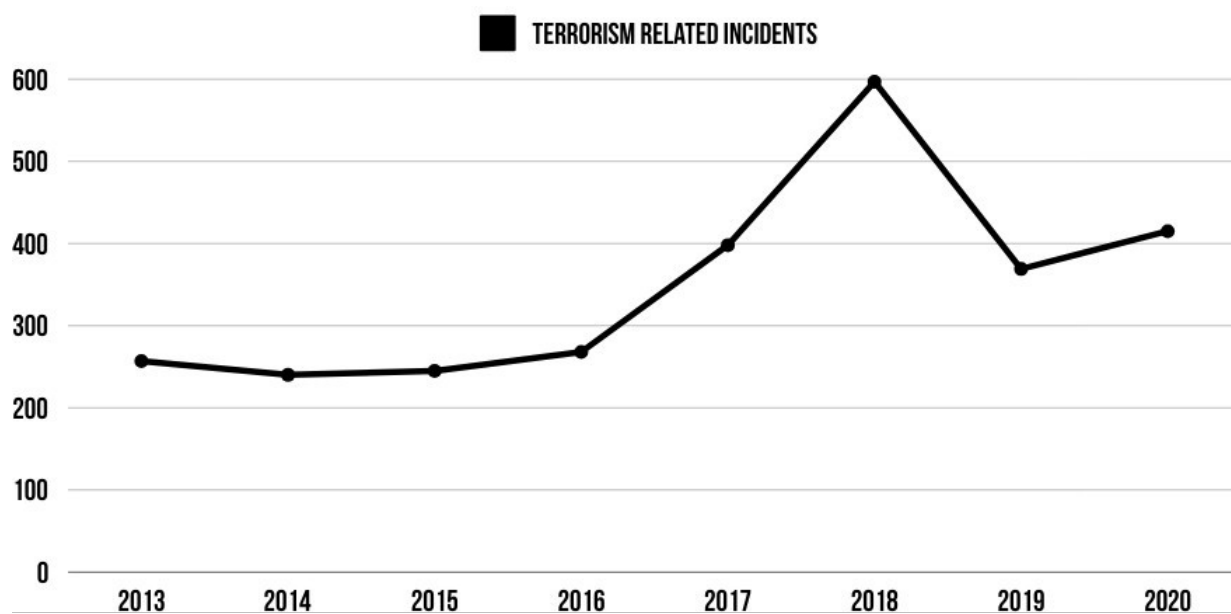


Figure 2: Terrorist Incited Incidents Between 2013 and 2020

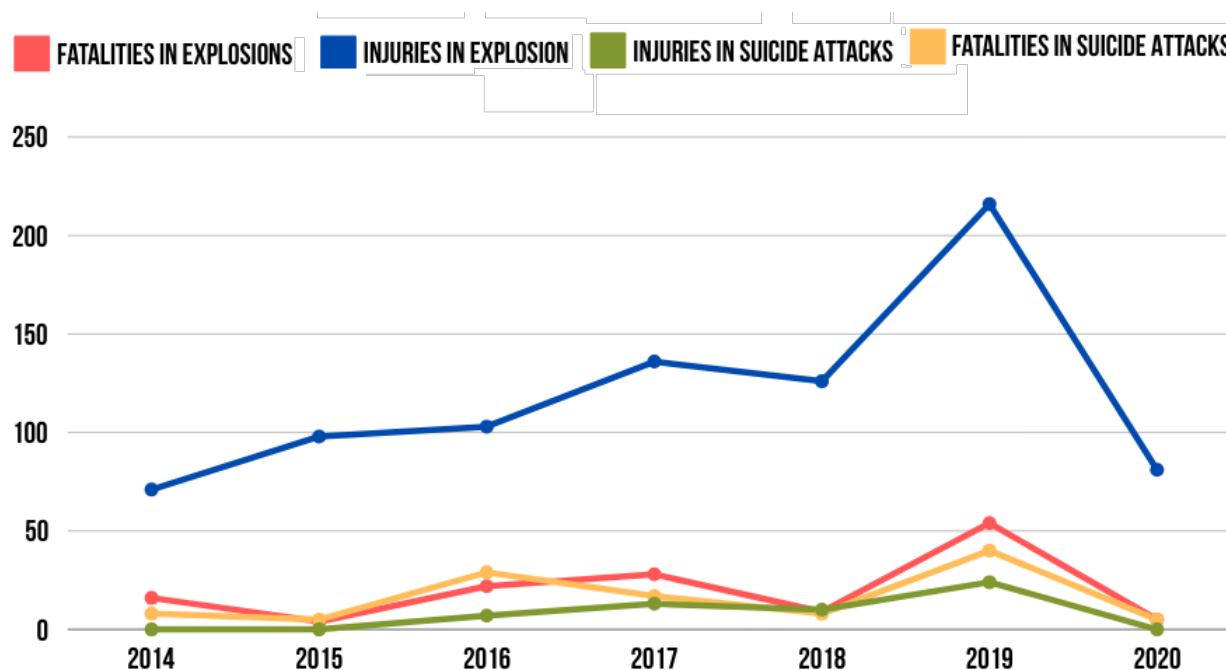


Figure 3: Injuries to Civilian and State Forces

4.1 Incident 1: Burhan Wani Killing

On July 8, Burhan Wani, the young leader of Hizbul Mujahidin, was killed in an armed confrontation with Indian security forces in Jammu and Kashmir. Given his popularity among the youth, the aftermath of his killing witnessed widespread and unprecedented protests across the region. Indian security forces in turn employed forceful measures, resulting in numerous casualties and alleged human rights violations. Unlike previous protest waves, these recent protests involved a larger and younger, middle class demographic. There had been a steady increase in crackdowns against insurgent groups since 2014, with a major jump between 2015 and 2016. In 2015, the total number of insurgents killed was 115 in 2015 whereas the number rose to 165 in 2016 and the number of arrests increasing from 82 to 92.

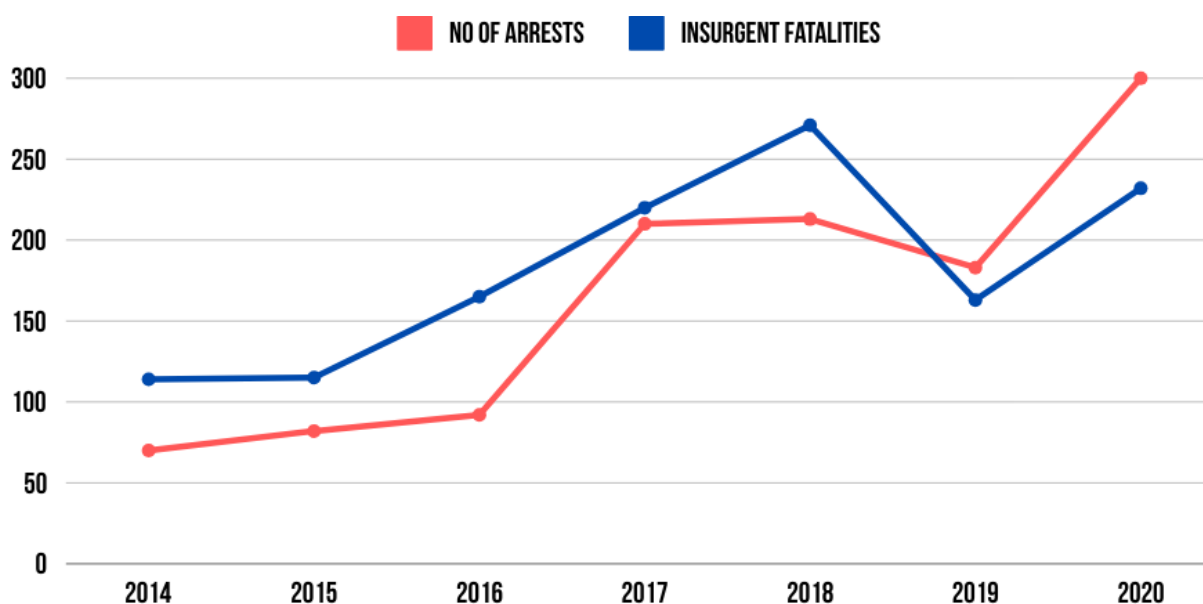


Figure 4: State Forces Actions Against Insurgents and Militants

A period of unrest followed the killing, also known as the Burhan aftermath. Curfews were enforced across all districts within the valley and mobile services were suspended on July 15th. Protests spread throughout the region and continued despite curfew orders with instances of violence against security forces and public properties. In response to protests, Indian security forces employed disproportionate force resulting in illegal fatalities and a significantly large number of casualties, including using 1.3 million pump-action gun pellets and 8,650 tear smoke shells.⁹⁷ A 53 day of curfew placed till 31st August 2016 and in the first five days, 57 civilians were killed by security forces. 62 to 69 civilians were killed in July alone and 5,000 injured.⁹⁸

India also launched Operation Calm Down in Southern areas of Kashmir in the beginning of September 2016, deployed 4000 troops in southern Kashmir to curb protests and

⁹⁷ Annual Human Rights Review.” 2016

⁹⁸ “Tracking Conflict Worldwide.” n.d. Crisis Group.

mobilization.⁹⁹ Despite claims of using minimum force, anywhere from 9,000 to 15,000 civilians were injured in the state response between July 2016 and February 2017.¹⁰⁰ A total of 130 to 145 civilians are estimated to have been killed unlawfully by security forces between July 2016 and August 2017, while armed groups caused the deaths of about 16 to 20 civilians during the same period. During this period, over 1,000 individuals, including minors, are reported to have been held in custody under the PSA.¹⁰¹¹⁰²

State forces also carried out multiple accounts of assaults on essential medical services while prolonged curfews and communication blockades also significantly affected people's ability to obtain medical assistance in Kashmir. Over 100 extrajudicial killings were carried out by Indian forces.¹⁰³ Following the July incident, there was a significant increase in terrorist attacks in J&K, with the number more than doubling from 31 incidents in the 90 days before the incident to 60 incidents in the following 90 days.¹⁰⁴ The number of fatalities among security forces due to rebel attacks also grew from 30 to 58 and while there were no suicide attacks reported in the first half of the year, the second half had 4 suicide attack incidents, 3 of which were within the three-month time frame.¹⁰⁵ These suicide attacks also includes the most fatal attack on Indian forces in the past two decades in Uri, Pathankot. JeM claimed responsibility for the attack, killing 20 to 35 (depending on sources) soldiers and injuring and additional 17 to 24 personal.¹⁰⁶¹⁰⁷ While the number of explosions remained relatively the same, only increasing

⁹⁹ "Army Starts Operation 'calm down' in J&K, Deploys Additional 4,000 Troops: India News - Times of India."

¹⁰⁰ Mir, Hilal. 2018. "Essay: Kashmir's Everlasting Insurgency."

¹⁰¹ Bhakto, Anando. 2018. "UN Report Condemns Kashmir's Public Safety Act."

¹⁰² "Report on the Situation of Human Rights in Kashmir: Developments in the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir from June 2016 to April 2018, and General Human Rights Concerns in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan | Ohchr." 2018.

¹⁰³ "Annual Human Rights Review." 2016.

¹⁰⁴ "Global Terrorism Data." n.d. GTD.

¹⁰⁵ "Yearly Suicide Attacks." South Asia Terrorism Portal.

¹⁰⁶ "Uri Attack: An inside Story of How It Happened." 2016.

¹⁰⁷ "Sequence of the Uri Attack & the Plan of the Terrorists."

from 12 to 15, their lethality increased considerable, killing 25 people before July and 78 after.¹⁰⁸

The events of 2016 support the expectation that high levels of type 2 state violence were associated with an increase in terrorist activity. The number of terrorist incidents more than doubled and a notable increase in the lethality of attacks was seen. However, it must be noted that it is difficult to delineate how each militant group reacts in response to increased state aggression, given the fact that Wani belonged to HM and that it is difficult to differentiate how many of the victims of ensuing state violence were rebels and civilians, coupled with the fact that specific groups did not declare responsibility for many attacks during 2016. There is still a clear correlation seen between increased use of Type 2 violence, together with existing Type 1 violence, and an increase in rebel and insurgent response.

The assertion by hypothesis two, on the other hand, is undermined as no evidence is seen to suggest that increased state violence led to a decrease in terrorist incidents during this period.

Instead, the information suggests that the increase in state violence was followed by a surge in terrorist incidents, contradicting the expectation of decreased terrorist activity under conditions of high state repression.

4.2 Incident 2: Pulwama Attack

State violence and militancy continued into 2017 and 2018. In 2017, J&K witnessed the Operation All-Out as well as the Amarnath Yatra terror attack by HM in Anantang, J&K.¹⁰⁹ State violence continued to increased into 2018, with JKCCS reporting 191 incidents of excessive use of force, 40 extra-judicial executions, and at least 275 Cordon and Search Operations. The use of violence led to 160 civilians deaths and 267 militant deaths.¹¹⁰ Reports by SATP put the civilian

¹⁰⁸ “Yearly Explosions.” n.d. Datasheet-Terrorist-Attack-Explosions.

¹⁰⁹ Masoodi, Nazir, Neeta Sharma, and Deepshikha Ghosh. 2019. “Amarnath Yatra Pilgrims, Tourists Asked to Leave J&K amid Security Threat.”

¹¹⁰ Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons, and Jammu Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society. 2018. Annual Human Rights Review of 2018.

death toll at 86, still the highest in past ten years.¹¹¹ Civilian deaths in 2018 are reported to have been near armed encounters between state and militants, however, many of these were either bystanders or located far from the encounter sites.¹¹² Civilians were also injured after protesting near encounter sites in support of militants, as security forces also allegedly continued use of pellet-firing shotguns to target protesters, as well as during Search and Condor operations, however, a clear number is not identifiable. The districts of Kulgam, Jammu, Pulwama and Shopian districts faced the highest number of casualties. Type 1 repression was also present throughout 2018, with control over protests and limited freedom of speech and media. 65 out of 135 total internet shutdowns in India being in J&K.¹¹³

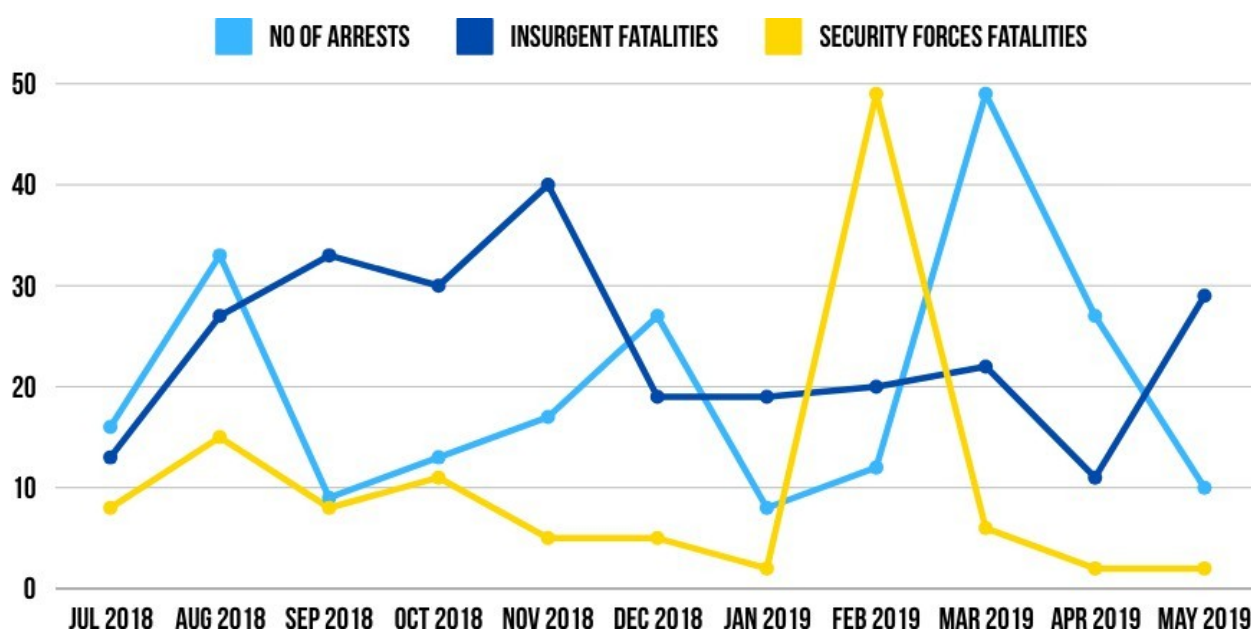


Figure 5: State Forces and Militant Activity Prior to Pulwama Attack

The incidents of terrorism seem to fluctuate with state brutality for the year. Terrorism related incidents by militants were highest during this period, with 89 recorded incidents in

¹¹¹ “Yearly Fatalities.” n.d. South Asia Terrorism Portal.

¹¹² OHCHR. 2019. Update of the Situation of Human Rights in Indian-Administered Kashmir and Pakistan-Administered Kashmir from May 2018 to April 2019 | OHCHR

¹¹³ Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons, and Jammu Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society. 2018.

August and a total of 597 in the whole year.¹¹⁴ There was highest number of militant arrests in August 2018 (33 incidents) followed by another peak in December 2018 (28 incidents). Similarly, militant fatality continued to rise and were highest in November 2018 at 40 deaths. Comparatively, state force fatalities did not show a significant increase. They were 88 and 83 in 2016 and 2017 respectively, compared to 95 in 2018. Security forces fatalities were not significantly higher until Jan 2019 either, however, there is again a major rise in February 2019.¹¹⁵

On 14th February, Adil Ahmed Dar, a JeM militant, launched explosives on a security convoy in Pulwama and killed 40 security officer.¹¹⁶ This attack falls just outside of the 90 day period after the peak number of killings by state forces in November. The attack caused tensions between Pakistan and India as the later accused the former of training and assisting militants to carry out the attack. This escalation further after India carried out air strikes on JeM camp inside Pakistan territory. In J&K, state control grew and there was a greater number of searches, detention, and arrests.

A case can be made for the Pulwama attack being in retaliation of the state use of violence in the prior months, however, it is difficult to isolate the events as roll-over violence post July 2016 was still being carried out and many of the militants involved in terrorist activity had joined as a retaliation to state brutality during the protests. With fluctuations in the number of arrests and militant deaths and the overlap in the incidents and multiple events occur within a same 90 day period.

There appears to have been a greater motivation for people to act against the state after its use of brutal violence against civilians and rebels alike in 2016 protests and riots and the

¹¹⁴ “Number of Terrorism Related Incidents Year Wise.” n.d. South Asia Terrorism Portal.

¹¹⁵ “Yearly Fatalities.” n.d. South Asia Terrorism Portal.

¹¹⁶ Zia, Ather. 2019. “Violence Breeds More Violence in Kashmir.”

following years. These increased resentments lead to an increase in recruitment of newer rebels, many of whom had lost family and friends in the years prior, and consequently led to an increase in insurgent activity. This also makes it difficult to draw a direct correlation between the state's use of violence and the lethality of rebel attacks in a short-term window, showing a correlation over a longer, two-three years period instead. Dar himself claimed to have joined the militants after the killing of his cousin in the repression following 2016, much like many of the civilians arrested during the unrest who joined militant outfits in the following year.¹¹⁷

4.3 Implications and Limitations

By delving into the reciprocal dynamics between state repression and opposition activities, the research contributes to a nuanced understanding of conflict dynamics. The findings challenge traditional perspectives that view repression solely as a reactive measure, opening up avenues for reevaluating existing theoretical frameworks. This theoretical advancement holds significance for the broader field of political science, offering a more comprehensive perspective on the complex interplay between state actions and dissent in protracted conflicts. The nature of a protracted and long term conflict makes it difficult to discern the exact causes for a single event, and factors other than state violence, such as third state involvement, grievances, and militant organization also play a role in the final outcome. Nonetheless, there is some evidence to show that state repression, particularly of physical integrity rights, has a correlation with increased intensity and frequency of rebel attacks, especially in the long-term rather than short-term. As a result, the effects of state use of violence against civilians are more pronounced as repression continues and grievances also continue to accumulate, giving people greater incentives to join opposition, as with few avenues for peaceful political protest, the incidents of terrorism increase.

¹¹⁷ “Kashmir Attack: Tracing the Path That Led to Pulwama.” 2019.

The events following Wani's killing illustrate how escalated state violence can lead to a reciprocal surge in insurgent activities, highlighting the interconnections of state repression and rebel responses in conflict dynamics. The Pulwama attack presents a more nuanced picture. While the attack itself falls outside the specific 90-day window analyzed in the study, the broader context of escalating state violence and militant activities in the preceding months offers insights into the relationship between state repression and terrorist incidents, while also supporting the assertion that state repression can cause non-violent movements to turn into contentious insurgencies.

The evidence from the incidents does not provide support the second hypothesis that under conditions of high Type 1 state repression, increases in Type 2 state violence will be associated with decreased levels of terrorist activity. Despite the presence of high levels Type 2 state violence, there is was no associated in decrease in militant and rebel activities in 2016. On the other hand, evidence from Pulwama attack does not show a clear pattern of escalation or de-escalation in militant activity 2019. The evidence suggests that intensified state repression can exacerbate rather than mitigate insurgent activities in the Kashmir conflict, opposing the popular counterinsurgency arguments found in literataure.

The study contributes to theoretical frameworks to understand relationship between state repression, state violence, and insurgent activities in conflict-affected regions like Kashmir. It offers an alternative approach to the narrative that states only employ violence as a counterinsurgency measure and indicates how they can serve as the cause of escalation in terrorism.

However, the study also faces limitation in its scope. Firstly, it is challenging to obtain accurate and reliable data on conflict-related events in the J&K as conflicting reports and

discrepancies in numbers, particularly when sourced from state forces or official channels, hinder the accuracy and reliability of the analysis. Most of the data is compiled through secondary sources, like news papers and reports, and there is next to no primary data collected on the ground. Secondly, identifying and isolating the specific mechanisms through which state repression influences rebel responses may prove challenging as multiple events occur within short time frames and create endogenous causality, making it difficult to understand if there is a clear causality from state repression to rebel use of violence. Thirdly, the conflict is characterized by multifaceted and interrelated factors, including historical grievances, socio-political dynamics, and external influences. This complexity presents challenges in comprehensively capturing and analyzing the myriad factors contributing to conflict escalation. The study's focus on specific incidents and variables may simplify the intricate dynamics at play, potentially overlooking contributing factors. Lastly, the study's narrow focus on a short-term window limits its ability to fully understand recruitment pathways for rebels following state repression, making it more difficult to prove hypothesis 1. A new study with long-term windows of two to three years would be better suited for this undertaking. Moreover, a more comprehensive analysis that considers a wider range of factors, including socio-economic factors, governance issues, and external influences, could provide a more holistic understanding of conflict dynamics in the region.

5 CONCLUSION

The conflict in Kashmir has deep historical roots, originating from the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947. The unresolved territorial dispute has fueled decades of unrest and violence, with both the Indian state and armed militant groups perpetuating cycles of violence and suppression. The toll on civilian lives has been staggering, with thousands lost and countless families torn apart.

As escalation unfolds in Jammu and Kashmir, determining causal relationships becomes increasingly challenging. However, at the outset of each incident, a discernible pattern emerges: heightened security force measures against rebel groups coincide with an increase in rebel attacks and casualties. This initial surge in violence preceded a period of relative stability before state forces used repression as means of controlling the region, showing that counterinsurgency logic can cause increased conflict in an area.

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