



Genocide Watch
The Alliance Against Genocide

Country Report: Pakistan-administered Kashmir March 2025 By Finia Hilmes

Since the 1947 partition of British India, Pakistan-administered Kashmir (Pakistani Kashmir), comprising Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, has been a focal point of [the ongoing conflict](#) between India and Pakistan. Both countries [claim the entire Jammu and Kashmir region](#), resulting in repeated conflicts and military tensions. The [Line of Control](#) separating Pakistan-administered Kashmir and India-administered Kashmir further intensifies regional instability.

While Azad Jammu and Kashmir (Azad) and Gilgit-Baltistan (Gilgit) are legally autonomous, they are heavily controlled by Pakistan, with [limited local governance and significant federal oversight](#) over security, the judiciary, and policy matters. Azad has its own government but [remains restricted](#) in areas like defense and foreign affairs, while Gilgit [lacks the nominal self-rule of Azad](#), being governed by Pakistani-appointed officials.

Human rights abuses in Pakistani Kashmir include [restrictions on political freedoms](#), [suppression of independence movements](#), and [systemic discrimination against religious minorities](#). Authorities [suppress political parties and activists advocating](#) for self-determination or greater autonomy, particularly in Gilgit, where [anti-terror laws are often misused](#) to target critics. Dissent is met with repression, including [arbitrary arrests, torture](#), and [enforced disappearances](#). [Security forces](#), including [intelligence agencies](#), target activists, journalists, and human rights defenders who criticize Pakistan's policies or advocate for greater autonomy.

Religious minorities, especially [Ahmadis](#) and [Shia Muslims](#), face [targeted violence, sectarian discrimination](#), and state-backed enforcement of [blasphemy laws](#). [Ahmadis are criminalized](#) under anti-Ahmadiyya laws, leading to [systematic harassment, arrests and attacks on their communities](#).

[Land dispossession](#) is a significant issue, particularly in Gilgit, where Pakistani authorities and private entities have been accused of illegally acquiring land for infrastructure projects linked to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, [displacing indigenous communities](#) without adequate compensation, causing [unrest and anger](#) among the local population.

[Freedom of speech and assembly is heavily restricted](#). The media faces [stringent state controls](#), and journalists are forced into self-censorship due to state pressure. The Azad interim constitution explicitly [prohibits dissent against the ideology of accession to Pakistan](#), effectively silencing independent voices. [Journalists and activists](#) critical of Pakistan's policies or those documenting human rights abuses face threats, censorship, and imprisonment.

The [UN](#) and [human rights organizations](#) have expressed concern over the region's human rights situation, including Kashmir's right to self-determination and the continuing conflict between Pakistan and India. At the 55th UNHRC Session in 2024, the [United Kashmir People's National Party \(UNKPNP\)](#) urged global action. Meanwhile, Pakistan maintains tight control over the territories, stifling reform.

Genocide Watch categorizes Pakistani Kashmir at **Stage 3 (Discrimination)** due to marginalization of religious minorities. **Stage 5 (Organization)** due to laws that suppress minorities and the opposition. The systematic targeting of minorities, activists, journalists, and human rights defenders are indicators of **Stage 8 (Persecution)**.

Genocide Watch recommends:

- Pakistan should grant genuine autonomy to Azad and Gilgit, guaranteeing local governance and political freedom.
- Pakistan should cease using anti-terrorism and sedition laws to suppress dissent.
- Pakistan should halt displacement of indigenous ethnic groups, ensuring fair compensation and land rights protection.
- Pakistan and India should resolve the Kashmir conflict through peaceful dialogue, prioritizing self-determination, human rights, and regional stability.
- The UN Human Rights Council should create an independent commission of inquiry to investigate and document human rights violations in Pakistani Kashmir.
- The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights should support civil society organizations and journalists in Azad and Gilgit to amplify their voices and protect their right to safely report human rights abuses.