

India (Kashmir) (1989 -)



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The status of Kashmir has been contested since the British colonial government left and partitioned the Indian subcontinent between India and Pakistan in 1947. Often simply called Kashmir, in the full title of the Indian state is Jammu and Kashmir: Jammu refers to the highlands and Kashmir to the valley. At the time of partition, the Maharaja of Kashmir was expected to choose between accession to India or to Pakistan. He signed a friendship pact with Pakistan, but delayed a decision on accession to either country hoping that the state could remain independent. When pro-Pakistani militants began an uprising several months later, the Maharaja acceded to India in exchange for military support.

Since then, three international wars have been fought in Kashmir. The first conflict, which ended in 1949, created a UN-monitored ceasefire line between Pakistan-administered and Indian-administered parts of Kashmir. Pakistan oversees one third of the territory, calling it *azad* (free) Kashmir, and India oversees two thirds. In 1965, a Pakistani incursion into Indian-administered Kashmir erupted into a brief but full-scale war between the two countries. During third India-Pakistan war, provoked by Bangladesh's war for independence from Pakistan in 1971, there was again sporadic fighting in Kashmir. The 1972 Simla Agreement between India and Pakistan provided for the restoration of the 1949 line and created a structure for bilateral talks to resolve disputed claims on territory.

Although the majority of people in both Pakistan-administered and Indian-administered Kashmir are Muslims, many are also Hindus and Sikhs. Elections in Indian-administered Kashmir in 1987 stirred both nationalist and Islamic fundamentalist groups, and after they did poorly in the elections, armed movements gained strength. Mass protests against poor economic conditions grew violent, and there was a rise in anti-Indian sentiments, a trend exacerbated in the next few years by the Indian army's harsh response to militants.

Several armed groups operate in Kashmir, including Jaish-e-Mohammad and Lashkar-e-Toiba, both of which are associated with seminaries in Pakistan and have pan-Islamic goals. Over twenty smaller groups are in an alliance called the United Jihad Council (UJC), each operating autonomously in various parts of the region. Other parties that have had substantial popular support include Hizbul, a pro-Pakistan group; the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), a pro-independence group; and the All-Party Hurriyat (Freedom) Conference (APHC), a peaceful umbrella group.

Amnesty International claims that the Indian military has used rape, torture, and assassination in suppressing opposition in Kashmir, and that it has burnt entire villages suspected of sympathizing with the rebels. Kashmir-based terrorists, meanwhile, have perpetrated attacks elsewhere in India, including an assault on the Parliament in New Delhi in 2001.

India accuses Pakistan of supporting Kashmir-based terrorists, a claim that the Pakistan government denies. Pakistan has proposed to settle the Kashmir dispute by means of a Kashmiri referendum on joining either India or Pakistan. India wants to negotiate the situation bilaterally with Pakistan, under the terms of the 1971 Simla agreement. Neither country favors Kashmiri independence.

Print Resources

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Wirsing, Robert G. (2003) *Kashmir: In the Shadow of War*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.

Hoyt, T. (2003) "Politics, proximity and paranoia: the evolution of Kashmir as a nuclear flashpoint," *India Review*, Vol. 2, Issue 3.

Online Resources

BBC News. *In-Depth: Kashmir Flashpoint*.

International Crisis Group. *Kashmir Documents*.

Amnesty International. *India Documents*.

Human Rights Watch (1999) *Behind the Kashmir Conflict*.

Kashmir Virtual Library.

Timeline

1947 - India and Pakistan split, Jammu and Kashmir do not accede to either country; insurgency begins, Maharaja accedes to India; Pakistan and India fight in Kashmir

1949 - UN-brokered peace ends the war, creates line of control

1962 - Pakistan and India begin talks over Kashmir, but they fail a year later

1965 - border clashes between troops trigger 3-week war; parties agree to UN ceasefire, return to 1949 boundaries

1972 - Simla Accord signed by Pakistan and India

1984 - Pakistan and India clash at disputed border zone in Kashmir

1987 - elections in Jammu and Kashmir reveal growth of Islamic fundamentalism

1989 - many armed groups seeking Kashmiri independence or union with Pakistan begin fighting Indian government in Kashmir

1990 - Indian military cracks down, perpetrates alleged human rights abuses; mass displacements

1996 - Indian government begins talks with four main militant groups

1998 - Pakistan and India perform tests of nuclear weapons

1999 - fighting between India and Pakistan in Kargil; Musharraf leads coup in Pakistan

2000 - India declares 6-month unilateral ceasefire

2001 - negotiations fail, fighting continues; attacks on government in Srinagar and Delhi

2002 - tensions escalate between India and Pakistan

2003 - diplomatic relations restored, India and Pakistan agree to talks

2004 - Pakistan and India begin peace talks