

Amnesty UK South Asia

October 2025



South Asia Coordinator Team

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Thank you for your support.

Cherry, Jerry, Irfan, Faissal & Will

INDIA

Health crisis among India's political prisoners

Ill-treatment in prison is resulting in long-term health impacts on political prisoners, even after their release. A clear example is Prof. GN Saibaba, who died only seven months after his release, at the age of 57 years. The first anniversary of his death was on 12 October. He was imprisoned for a total of over eight years on charges that are widely said to be baseless and politically motivated. A lifetime defender of the rights of Adivasis he was a wheelchair user as a result of a childhood illness. During his time in jail no account was taken of his health and disability needs, so that by the time of his release in 2024 he was suffering from 19 new ailments necessitating multiple medical appointments.



"Sitting in a broken wheelchair, unable to move even to drink a glass of water, he would listen to the Adivasi prisoners scream for hours, while they were mercilessly beaten in the cells beside his" said his partner, AS Vasantha Kumari. "After his release from prison, we were just rushing from one hospital to another, looking into the treatment of all his ailments." His death in October 2024, has been attributed to the severe medical negligence that he faced during his prolonged incarceration. "Since his wheelchair was broken, he could not move around the cell for water or food. There was no bed, so he could not get off his wheelchair to lie down. The commode in the cell was Indian style

and no one was assigned to assist him,” says Vasantha. “It was only after fellow prisoners protested and appealed to the jail authorities to let them assist him that he was able to attend to bare necessities.”



Mahesh Raut, a BK16 prisoner who was granted bail but has not been released also has quite severe arthritis now, despite being only 37 years old. He has been in prison for seven years.

Other prisoners describe the way dehumanisation defines the very structure of the prison, impacting the mental health of prisoners. “The architecture was basic and punitive. Many cells had open top walls, allowing extreme heat in the summer and severe cold in the winter to pour in. There was no proper ventilation or insulation. Warm clothing wasn’t provided to all inmates during winter, and there was no escape from the heat in summer. The large halls and overcrowded cells were meant to hold as many people as possible, with no regard for dignity, privacy, or rehabilitation. The design reflected a purely custodial mindset.”

“The way human spirit is crushed can be witnessed firsthand in a prison.”

*Because I tried to extend your liberties,
Mine were curtailed.
Because I tried to rear the temple of freedom for you all,
I was thrown into the cell of a felon’s jail...
Because I tried to give voice to truth,
I was condemned to silence...
You may say this is not a public question.
But it is!
— Ernest Charles Jones*

Read more in the Outlook India article [here](#).

And the report in The Wire of a suicide in jail [here](#).

Coordinated letter writing for Indian political prisoners

There are plans afoot for coordinated letter writing by Amnesty groups in various countries on 10 December, International Human Rights Day. More details to follow in the November newsletter, but we could cover the BK16 who are still in jail, those detained for the Delhi riots, activists for Adivasi rights and for Indian administered Kashmir. I’m sure you have the date noted in your diaries anyway, and may already have actions planned that could be expanded to include this idea.



Event: Scripting State Violence and Criminalisation of Resistance in India

This session, run by InSAF India and The London Mining Network on Tuesday 21 October 2025 at 3.30 pm, will discuss the patterns of violence and repression by the Indian state against all forms of people’s resistance in India and Indian Administered Kashmir, with a particular focus on the rights of Adivasi communities. Speakers are **Mohamed Junaid**, Kashmiri writer and Assistant Professor of Anthropology, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, USA and **Suchitra Vijayan**, The Polis Project.

Register [here](#).

India's bid for permanent membership of the UN Security Council

As world leaders gathered in New York for the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly last week, India's external minister, S. Jaishankar, underlined the country's ambition to secure a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, saying that *"both permanent and non-permanent membership of the council must be expanded. A reformed Council must be truly representative, and India stands ready to assume greater responsibilities."*

India has already served eight terms as a non-permanent member and is seeking election for 2028–2029. But a recent REDRESS [report](#) found that torture in India is so pervasive that it has become normalised. India is the only member of the Security Council – permanent or non-permanent – that has not ratified the UN Convention Against Torture, nearly 30 years after signing. So, if India aspires to a permanent seat, one message must be clear: no state that permits torture to go unchecked can credibly claim the role of safeguarding international peace and security.

Background: The Security Council is the UN's most powerful body, tasked with safeguarding international peace and security. It has 15 members: five permanent (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States) and ten non-permanent elected for two-year terms. Unlike other UN organs, its decisions are binding – from deploying peacekeepers and imposing sanctions to authorising the use of force and establishing international tribunals.

UK trade deal with India bears fruit, but

A recent UK press release stated that nearly 7,000 new UK jobs will be created as a result of the Prime Minister's trip to India. Thanks to a raft of major new deals secured:

- 64 Indian companies will invest over £1 billion into the UK, creating 6,900 jobs
- Doors will be opened for British business to drive growth – delivering on the Plan for Change
- Investments cement the UK's reputation as one of the best places in the world to do business

Note it is all about growth, with no mention of human rights.

KASHMIR

Book ban raises concerns about freedom of speech



In August the Indian State in Kashmir formally banned 25 books under new criminal codes. Without due process or judicial hearing, the order declared that these books “propagate false narratives and secessionism” and must be forfeited to the government. This makes it a crime to possess copies of the books listed, which include the well-known author, Arundhati Roy. Raids were immediately carried out on bookshops to seize any of the listed titles.

A discussion about the academic implications of such a ban and ways to “resist the authoritarian occupation of knowledge” was organised by Polis and InSAF India on 26 September.

Anuradha Bhasin, editor and author of *A Dismantled State*, whose work is now banned, described the order as the product of a larger regime of fear. “This is quite bizarre, picking 25 books that seem randomly selected... Most are about history, politics, or human rights in the borderlands,” she said. “This government wants to control the narrative and silence any voice critical of the state.” The timing is telling, and Bhasin also said that “In Kashmir, the government does this every now and then to induce a new level of fear. They need to remind people who's the boss.”

Read the Polis report [here](#).

Yasin Malik at risk of hanging

Yasin Malik was once a militant, but renounced violence in 1994, when the Jammu & Kashmir Liberation Front that he leads was established as a political movement. He engaged in dialogue with governments under different Indian prime ministers. However, the JKLF is banned by the Indian government as a “terrorist organisation”. He has been imprisoned for life under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and there are fears that he may be hanged. His wife continues to campaign for his release.



Read the article by The Wire [here](#).

You can also read Cherry’s blog about how “development” is affecting the lives of rural people in Kashmir [here](#).

Protests in Pakistan-Administered Kashmir



At least nine people, including six protesters and three police officers, are reported to have been killed in recent protests, and hundreds of others have been injured. The protests were organised by the Jammu Kashmir Joint Awami Action Committee (JKJAAC), an alliance demanding civil liberties and political rights in the region, demanding an end to special privileges for government officials, restoration of student unions, access to free and quality healthcare and education, among others. The

JKJAAC engaged in talks with the government before calling for a region-wide strike on 29 September. In the lead up to the strike, the government shut down all mobile, landline and internet services in the region from 28 September.

Babu Ram Pant, Amnesty International’s Deputy Regional Director for South Asia, said “The situation in Pakistan-administered Jammu and Kashmir was preventable and now the priority of the authorities must be to ensure that there are no further injuries or loss of life. There should also be an immediate, impartial and transparent investigation into all incidents of deaths and injuries, including investigating the excessive use of force by law enforcement This is not the first time the authorities have cracked down on peaceful protests in the region. Pakistani authorities have a positive obligation under international human rights law to respect the right to peaceful assembly and to facilitate and protect peaceful protesters. Read the full statement [here](#).

AFGHANISTAN

UN established accountability mechanism for crimes under international law

Amnesty International welcomes the decision of the United Nations Human Rights Council to formally establish an independent mechanism to collect and analyse evidence of past and ongoing crimes against international humanitarian law and human rights. According to AI’s secretary general, Agnès Callamard, the decision “*paves the way for victims and survivors to access justice, reparation, and truth.*” Civil Society and Human Rights Organisations including AI have been calling for such a mechanism since 2021, as they provide the basis for prosecuting those responsible for the ongoing injustice and repression coming from the Taliban and other actors such as the Islamic State and former government officials. Read more on this [here](#).



Take this further by [signing the petition](#) to end human rights violations in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan enters new age of government censorship

The Taliban have begun restricting content on major social media platforms, including Instagram, Facebook and X. Citizens across the country report that images and videos are being blocked, and complained about long loading times. It is not yet clear which websites and content are affected, but de facto government officials have previously made statements in the past about preventing “immoral content”. In reality, this state-level censorship marks yet another regressive step for freedom of speech. It follows just days after a complete internet outage, with both events likely being linked.

Read more on this [here](#).

Taliban cut internet access across country, causing chaos

A 48-hour internet blackout left the entire country cut off from the outside world, affecting internet and mobile networks. Afghans were unable to communicate with relatives inside and outside the country, with some traveling to the border in hopes of regain signal to contact loved ones. Banks were unable to operate, flights were grounded, and humanitarian work was severely disrupted. Once again, women and girls were disproportionately affected, as the internet is their only lifeline to education through online schools such as [Children on the Edge](#).

The move faced fierce criticism from the international community, including the United Nations. Smriti Singh, Amnesty International Regional Director for South Asia, said in a statement:

“Communication and access to information are critical tools for protection and promotion of human rights and by tightening their chokehold on the flow of information, the Taliban de-facto authorities are making sure that the world doesn’t get to know about the ongoing violations inside the country.”

Read more on this [here](#).

BANGLADESH

Call for Urgent Action on deadly violence in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT)

This account is from a joint statement by the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, the Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission, FIAN International and Minority Group Rights (MRG). [Please see the full statement.](#)

Violence targeting Indigenous Peoples of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), perpetrated by the military and Bengali settlers has increased over the last year. The CHT Commission has documented 8 incidents of rape (of which 5 cases of gang rape), 1 incident of murder following alleged rape, 7 cases of attempted rape, and 4 cases of sexual harassment.



On 23 September 2025, a 12-year-old indigenous girl was reportedly gang-raped by three Bengali men in the CHT. In response, local indigenous students and youth organised a peaceful protest rally on 25th September and called for a demonstration march on the following day. However, instead of taking actions to prosecute the alleged perpetrators, military detained one of the student leaders at gunpoint. On the 26th, when indigenous youth started their peaceful protest demonstration, military reportedly intervened and obstructed the gathering. Bengali settlers announced they would also hold a protest rally in Khagrachari against the so-called ‘attack on the army’ by indigenous youth.

On the 27th, the settlers, in the presence of the army, carried out attacks on the indigenous people, severely injuring many Jumma individuals and destroying property. The attacks continued over the next few days resulting in three deaths of indigenous people and many properties being burnt.

“No evidence of rape”

On 2nd October, a government medical board claimed there was “no evidence of rape” in the case of the 12-year-old girl whose assault sparked widespread protests. The Bangladesh Feminist Archive, strongly condemn these remarks. “Under no law of Bangladesh can a doctor determine whether rape occurred. Such conclusions lie only within the court’s jurisdiction, based on full evidence—not medical opinion.” “No evidence of rape” has been used in many cases of attacks on indigenous women in the past.

New crackdown under anti-terrorism law

Interim government is increasingly using anti-terrorism laws. [Human Rights Watch has published a report](#) on the increasing use of anti-terrorism legislation to arrest alleged supporters of the Awami League party. Thousands have been arrested under the interim government, many on dubious murder allegations. Police detained 16 people, including journalists and academics, on 28th August at a discussion organised to celebrate Bangladesh’s independence from Pakistan in 1971.

“The Bangladeshi government should stop abusing the anti-terrorism law, which is just becoming political repression by another name,” “The interim government should instead focus on creating conditions for safe and participatory elections.” The United Nations human rights team in Bangladesh should immediately seek the release of those arbitrarily detained and encourage the authorities to uphold rights.

[Please see the Blog on the Amnesty International UK site](#), which concentrates on the arrests of Khasirul, Haque, Shahrir Kabir and Shomi Kaiser.

UN Member States must step-up efforts to protect and meet the urgent humanitarian needs of the Rohingya refugees



In 2017, almost one million refugees were forced into Bangladesh. Most of them still live in Kutupalong camp. The refugee population has grown to 1.2 million. The inhabitants are exposed to the dangers of floods and fires because of the location of the camps and the high security fences. Access to education, the health system and drinking water is restricted, as is freedom of movement and assembly. Women are particularly in danger.

The Bangladesh government see refooulment (the return of refugees to unsafe situations) as the solution.

Amnesty International completed a research visit and produced briefing on 26 September 2025 detailing the deteriorating situation. The briefing highlights:

- the impact of aid cuts;
- overcrowding and unsanitary living conditions;
- limited access to education;
- health and medical needs; insecurity and protection issues; and restrictions on movement.

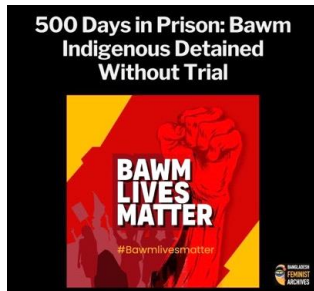
[Please see the report](#)

Bawm Prisoners Individuals at Risk Case

The Bawm Prisoner IAR Case needs your support by writing letters to MPs.

Since April 2024, 126 Indigenous Bawm people, including 30 women and children, have been arbitrarily arrested as part of an ongoing military operation in the Chittagong Hill Tracts in southeastern Bangladesh. Three of the Bawm prisoners have died in jail.

Amnesty International said: “There is CCTV footage of the robbery that shows who robbed the banks,” “Instead of using it to identify the perpetrators, your government is persecuting an entire Indigenous community.” It is collective punishment.



We are asking that you help to raise awareness of these prisoners by writing a letter or email to your MP. The suggested text is attached with a summary description. For further information please contact jerry.allen@amnesty.org.uk

SRI LANKA

Sri Lankan government rejects the UNHRC resolution

The UN Human Rights Council adopted a resolution ‘Promoting reconciliation, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka’ on 6 October.

Amnesty International welcomes the resolution to continue the mandate of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to collect, consolidate, analyse and preserve information and evidence for future accountability processes for gross violations and abuses under international human rights law and international humanitarian law in Sri Lanka, through the Sri Lanka Accountability Project.

Despite promising a “historic journey towards transformational change”, and constructive engagement with the Council earlier, the Sri Lankan government maintained the previous government's position by rejecting the resolution. This is disappointing. Victims of Sri Lanka’s internal armed conflict have waited decades for truth, justice and reparations. Sri Lankan government must prove its commitment through concrete efforts towards justice, not just empty words.

The battle for accountability

Sri Lanka’s total defeat of the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) cost tens of thousands of civilian lives. For survivors and the families of victims, the suffering never ends. [Please see the latest Human Rights Watch report](#) on the need for accountability.

Families of disappeared demand international inquiry into mass graves in north & east

The Association for Relatives of Enforced Disappearances in Sri Lanka's North and East has rejected domestic investigations and called for an independent international commission to probe mass graves, including the Chemmani site. In a letter to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the group announced a rotational hunger strike demanding international justice for alleged genocide and enforced disappearances of Tamil people.

[Please the report.](#)



NEPAL

One month on from the Gen Z protests



A month since the youth-led movement toppled the Nepali government, Nepalis held a vigil outside parliament last week and vowed to maintain pressure ahead of elections, with one attendee stating, "the sacrifice of so many people should not go to waste." The vigil was held for the victims of violence during the Gen-Z demonstrations against a brief social media ban. The government responded to these demonstrations with deadly force, killing at least 73 people. The subsequent protests saw parliament and

government offices set on fire.

As a result of the uprising, the KP Sharma Oli government collapsed, meaning elections will take place on 5 March 2026. The 73-year-old former chief justice Sushila Karki is serving as interim prime minister in the meantime. Karki faces increasing pressure to demonstrate that she is willing to crack down on corruption, but there are considerable bureaucratic obstacles to implementing the desired reform. Sudan Gurung, the "face of the grassroots uprising", has said he will run for election and work to ensure every Nepali voice is heard.

Bulk of information and image sourced from the NDTV report [here](#).

Information about Sudan Gurung is from the Al Jazeera report [here](#).

Slow pace of change

There is frustration at the slow pace of change following the so-called Gen-Z protests in September, which toppled the government. Prakash Bohora was one of the protesters who was injured. One month on he is still in hospital as doctors fight to save his leg. Sitting in the trauma ward, he expressed his frustration, saying that many of their demands have not been met. He was driven to protest in anger at a system that seemed to be making the politicians and their children wildly rich while he had faced unemployment and exploitation. As a qualified health worker, he was not able to find work, yet the need for health care in the country is huge.

Read the Guardian article [here](#).