



THE OBSERVATORY
for the Protection of
Human Rights Defenders



India: Release Khurram Parvez

Kashmiri human rights defender arbitrarily detained for 1,000 days

August 19, 2024

Indian authorities have [arbitrarily detained](#) Kashmiri human rights defender **Khurram Parvez** for over 1,000 days. Khurram remains incarcerated in a maximum-security prison in Delhi, India, in reprisal for his vital and commendable human rights work. We, the undersigned organisations, call [once again](#) for his immediate and unconditional release. We further demand an end to the Indian authorities' relentless repression targeting Kashmiri human rights defenders, journalists, scholars and dissidents.

Khurram is the Program Coordinator of the [Jammu Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society](#) (JKCCS), a civil society organisation in Indian-administered Kashmir that has, due to repression, ceased to operate. He is also the Deputy Secretary-General of the [International Federation for Human Rights](#) (FIDH) and the Chairperson of the [Asian Federation against Involuntary Disappearances](#) (AFAD). His longstanding human rights work has earned him widespread international recognition, including the [Martin Ennals Award](#) (2023) and the [Reebok Human Rights Award](#) (2006).

Khurram was arrested on November 22, 2021, by India's counter-terrorism authority, the National Investigation Agency (NIA), on politically-motivated [charges](#) including "waging, or attempting to wage war, or abetting waging of war, against the government of India" as an act of reprisal for his human rights work. While imprisoned, Indian authorities arrested him again in March 2023 in a separate case on false [charges](#) of "terror financing" along with journalist and human rights defender [Irfan Mehraj](#) (who also remains arbitrarily detained in a maximum-security prison, now for [over 500 days](#)). Khurram had been imprisoned by Indian authorities previously and also been harassed and targeted by Indian authorities for years. In September 2016, he was prevented from attending the United Nations Human Rights Council and [arbitrarily detained](#) for 76 days.

Khurram's continued [arbitrary detention](#) is emblematic of the Indian authorities' escalating crackdown on human rights and civic space in Indian-administered Kashmir, including on the rights to freedom of expression and association. The ongoing crackdown by the Indian authorities is part of a wider pattern of human rights violations, often committed with impunity. The specific escalation targeting Kashmiri human rights defenders and journalists illustrated by Khurram's and Irfan's cases has shown that Indian authorities continue to commit grave and systematic violations with minimal scrutiny.

There has been widespread condemnation of the Indian authorities' persecution of Khurram and Irfan, including by [United Nations human rights experts](#) and [international civil society](#). The Indian government, however, has continued to respond with further violations and repression, labelling and prosecuting human rights defenders and journalists as terrorists. We demand that Indian authorities immediately and unconditionally release Khurram and Irfan, drop all charges against them and end the pattern of targeting of Kashmiri human rights defenders, journalists, scholars and dissidents. Indian authorities must immediately comply with their international legal obligations, including by allowing civil society to freely operate in Indian-administered Kashmir, and cease their longstanding obstruction of international

civil society and inter-governmental organisations, including the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UN Special Procedures and other human rights mechanisms, which should have unfettered access to Indian-administered Kashmir and Kashmiri detainees. The Indian government must halt its continuous crackdown and repression, while also guaranteeing transparent, independent and full accountability for human rights violations. The international community, especially the Member States of the UN, should urge the Indian government, both bilaterally and publicly, to stop criminalizing the defense of human rights in Indian-administered Kashmir.

Signed:

- Anti-Death Penalty Asia Network (ADPAN)
- Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances (AFAD)
- Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)
- CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation
- FIDH (International Federation for Human Rights), in the framework of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders
- Kashmir Law and Justice Project
- World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), within the framework of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders