

In the name of Allah, the most merciful, the magnificent

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## **Khurram Parvez: The People's Defender**



**Khurram Parvez:** We believe that memory is the most important tool which oppressed people have. Oppressors want us to have amnesia, that we forget everything. The only potent weapon we have as a weak and oppressed people is memory. Our memory will always help us to sustain the struggle against injustice.'

[Khurram Parvez](#), 44, was [abducted by India's terror-inflicting NIA](#) on Nov. 22, 2021 (Monday) after [raiding his house and office](#) in Srinagar, the capital of Indian Illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

Khurram, popularly referred to as "[People's Defender](#)", is currently [Program Coordinator](#) of Srinagar-based Jammu Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society (JKCCS). The [JKCCS was awarded](#) the Rafto Prize for Human Rights in 2017.

Besides, he is the [Chairperson of Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances](#) which is an international organization with headquarters in Philippines.

He is a recipient of the 2006 Reebok Human Rights Award granted to those who fight for human rights through non-violent means. The award carried a grant of \$50,000 which Khurram Parvez donated to the JKCCS.

In his acceptance speech, [Khurram had said](#), "This award stands as a symbol of remembrance of all those faces unseen, voices unheard and souls familiar as well as strangers whose killings and sufferings everyday have deepened our commitment and cemented our belief in the rights movement."

On 20 April 2004, while monitoring fake elections held by India in north IIOJK's Lolab area, Khurram's car was blown up by a blast triggered by a high-intensity improvised explosive device, which resulted in him losing a leg.

His colleague and fellow rights defender Aasiya Jeelani succumbed to the injuries. Parvez still walks with a mild limp.

[Khurram has two children.](#)

Professor Geeta Patel, an Indian-American scholar wrote in November 2006 issue of 'The Voice' about Khurram Parvez.

[“Khurram was thirteen years old when his grandfather was killed during a peaceful demonstration.](#) Rather than resorting to violence to avenge his grandfather’s death, Khurram studied and turned to a peaceful solution to widespread human rights crisis in Kashmir.”

The family of Khurram was handed over an [arrest memo](#) by NIA which had details of charges brought against him.

[Charges include](#) Section 120B (party to a criminal conspiracy) and Section 121 (waging war against the state) of the Indian Penal Code and under Section 17 (funding a terrorist act), Section 18 (conspiracy), Section 18B (recruitment for the commission of a terrorist act), Section 30 (membership of a terrorist organization) and Section 40 (offences for raising funds for a terrorist organization) of the [Unlawful Activities \(Prevention\) Act](#) (UAPA).

[This was second raid on Khurram Parvez’s house and office.](#) The terror-inflicting NIA had raided his residence and his office last year in October as well. [Along with JKCCS, the office of the Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons \(APDP\) was searched as well.](#)

The JKCCS had not been functioning since 2020 after it was raided by the NIA and had not documented new human-rights violations.

Earlier, [Khurram was stopped by India on 14 September 2016](#) at the Indira Gandhi International Airport from boarding a flight to Geneva, where he was scheduled to attend a UNHRC session.

That year, millions of Kashmiris were on roads seeking plebiscite and end to Indian occupation. The anti-India uprising was triggered by martyrdom of [Shaheed Burhan Wani](#).

Same year, [he was imprisoned for four days](#) at a sub-jail in Kupwara under Sections 107 (security for keeping the peace) and 151 (design to commit any cognizable offence) of the CrPC, and upon his release, he was [re-arrested by the authorities](#), this time under the so-called Public Safety Act (PSA), [a stringent preventive detention law termed as lawless law by Amnesty International](#).

[He was later relocated to the Kot Bhalwal jail in Jammu. After serving 76 days in prison](#), the Jammu and Kashmir High Court quashed his detention under PSA.

That year, [his detention](#) had also [elicited a blistering editorial by The New York Times](#), which accused the Modi government of “inflaming the situation” in Kashmir by arresting Parvez and also condemned what it called “spurious charges”.

Not just for human rights work, Khurram Parvez [has earned respect and honor because of his undaunting attitude](#).

This persona of Khurram Parvez has earned him sobriquet of [“People’s Defender”](#).

It is Khurram Parvez today, tomorrow it is me then you. It is time to stand up, raise voice and hold India accountable and end Indian occupation of Kashmir.

[People of conscience can’t stay silent](#) and let a fascist regime in India mow over basic right of self-determination of people of IIOJK.

## Global [Condemnation](#)

**Pakistan:** Pakistan strongly condemned the arrest of human rights activist Khurram Parvez in Jammu and Kashmir. [Arbitrary arrests of human rights activists on orchestrated charges](#) by Indian occupation forces is clear [evidence of New Delhi's state-terrorism and trampling of fundamental human rights in Indian Illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir](#).

The reprehensible unwarranted searches by Indian National Investigation Agency at the offices and residence of Mr. Khurram Parvez, have also been condemned by international human rights activists and organizations.

**Azad Kashmir Prime Minister:** Sardar Abdul Qayyum Niazi [urged international community to pressure India](#) to release Khurram Parvez.

**Hurriyat Conference:** These kinds of [harassment cannot prove successful](#) in hiding the grave human rights violations committed by Indian occupational forces.

“He is not a terrorist, he is a human rights defender,” the **UN Special Rapporteur** on human rights defenders, [Mary Lawlor](#), wrote on Twitter.

**David Kaye**, a former UN Special Rapporteur for freedom of expression, tweeted, “If, as reported, Khurram Parvez has been arrested by India's ‘counter-terrorism’ NIA, [it's yet another extraordinary abuse in Kashmir](#).”

Geneva-based **World Organisation Against Torture** called for Parvez's immediate release, saying that they were “deeply concerned about the high risk of torture while in custody.”

[The Indian authorities should immediately and unconditionally release](#) Parvez and others arrested in politically motivated cases and drop all charges against them, the groups said. The government should also amend the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act to bring it in line with international human rights law and standards and pending its amendment, it should stop using it to target human rights defenders, critics of the government, and others exercising their basic human rights.

**RAFTO:** This [aggressive invasion into and constriction of the space of human rights defenders](#) and their organizations unfortunately fits a pattern of behavior by the Indian government. Arrest without presentations of credible evidence of crimes is a violations of Mr. Khurram Parvez human rights.

The Rafto Foundation appeals to the United Nations, and to all states committed to the protection of human rights, to express their unequivocal condemnation of the persecution of human rights defenders in India and warn in the clearest possible terms against pursuing prosecution of human rights defenders on national security grounds, which poses a grave threat both to rule of law and democracy in India, and to the efforts of the international community to uphold these values

**Kashmir Bar Association:** Kashmir High Court Bar Association said arrest of Khurram Parvez [amounts to suppress the voice of the voiceless in Kashmir](#).

**Human Rights Watch:** In a statement, Meenakshi Ganguly, South Asia Director for Human Rights Watch, expressed “shock” over Parvez’s arrest.

“At a time when Kashmiris are protesting wrongful killings and other abuses, Indian authorities should be working with human rights activists to address concerns instead of arresting them,” she

said. [“We have repeatedly said](#) that accountability for human rights violations is the key to ending the cycle of violence.”

**Amnesty International:** The arrest of Kashmiri activist Khurram Parvez is yet another example of how anti-terror laws are being misused to [criminalize human rights work](#) & stifle dissent in India. Instead of targeting HRDs, authorities should focus on bringing accountability for human rights violations.

**RFK Human Rights:** Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Calls For Kashmiri Human Rights Defender [Khurram Parvez To Be Immediately Released](#)

“Year after year, Khurram Parvez has bravely documented human rights abuses and provided much-needed assistance to victims of these abuses to encourage India to abide by its international human rights law obligations,” Kerry Kennedy, President of Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights said. “Instead of attempting to silence and punish human rights defenders, Indian authorities should work to end impunity for perpetrators of human rights abuses. [He should be released immediately.](#)”

**International Federation for Human Rights:** The Observatory reiterates its concern over the misuse of the UAPA by the Indian authorities to target human rights defenders and silence dissent, and condemns all acts of harassment and persecution of human rights defenders in India.

[The Observatory recalls that the arbitrary detention of Khurram Parvez](#) takes place in a context of an increased crackdown on civil society by the Indian government, notably by bringing politically motivated criminal cases against human rights defenders, student activists, journalists, and other critics of the government under sedition, terrorism, and other repressive legal provisions, with the aim to silence critical voices in the country.

**Forum Asia:** FORUM-ASIA urges the international community especially the [UN Human Rights Council and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to intervene](#) on the arrest of Khurram Parvez and to call upon the Indian government to drop all charges and immediately release him.

**The Polis Project:** Since it is Khurram Parvez's voice they want to stifle, [it is Khurram Parvez's voice we will amplify](#).

**WKAF:** The World Kashmir Awareness Forum (WKA) issued the following statement on the arrest of Kashmiri human rights activist Khurram Parvez.

[We condemn the arrest of Khurram Parvez](#) that took place today by the National Investigation Agency (NIA). Parvez is one of Kashmir's most courageous and fearless human rights activists, coordinator of Jammu Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society, and chairperson of the Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances.

**PUCL:** People's Union for Civil Liberties believes that the arrest of Khurram Parvez is not just an attack on him or JKCCS but an effort to stop any voices concerning human rights violations from Jammu and Kashmir being allowed to be heard in the larger world.

[It is also an ominous illustration of the implications of the doctrine](#) of the national security adviser Ajit Doval that civil society is the "[new frontier of war](#)".

This government's action of arresting important voices in civil society like Khurram demonstrates the governments contempt for international law which it has itself undertaken to respect and will only further alienate the people of Kashmir and make the political solution to the Kashmir issue that much more distant.

**LFOVK:** Legal Forum for Kashmir condemns the arbitrary use of anti-terrorism law against Mr. Khurram Parvez and calls for his immediate and unconditional release.

[We demand an end to the harassment](#) of human rights defenders, political activists, and journalists. The government of India must remove all legal and administrative barriers that impede their legitimate work. We also call on the international community, notably the other members of the United Nations Human Rights Council, of which India is currently a member, to insist that India comply with its human rights obligations, including by allowing Indian human rights defenders to freely engage in their work and to enjoy their rights to free expression, peaceful assembly, and association.

**Indian American Muslim Council:** IAMC [strongly condemns the arrest of Kashmiri Human Rights defender Khurram Parvez](#) by India's federal investigative agency NIA under draconian terror law UAPA.

Mr. Parvez is being targeted for his work documenting human rights violations in Kashmir.

**Stand with Kashmir:** Khurram is being targeted for his and his organizations consistent work on highlighting human rights violations in Kashmir including mass graves, torture and extrajudicial killings. [After silencing and arresting political leaders, student activists, and journalists](#), India is attempting to silence all civil society groups and human rights defenders as it continues to embark on its settler-colonial project.

# India is scared of Khurram Parvez. Here is why

Khurram, an activist from his college days. A resident of Srinagar's Sonwar area, [he did his schooling from the Burn Hall School](#) at Sonwar which is run by Christian missionaries.

He holds a Master's degree in Mass Communication and Journalism from University of Kashmir. He also studied at the University of Glasgow.

Soon, he joined the JKCCS as a volunteer where he was associated with documentation of human rights abuses and war crimes of Indian state in IIOJK.

**Annual Human Rights Reports:** The JKCCS was regularly publishing annual human rights reports. [This database keeps track of the violence](#) taking place in the region. It publishes yearly and six-monthly reports on killings, attacks and injuries, and even demolitions of residential structures carried out by security forces during gun battles.

These reports helped counter the propaganda of Indian state with its fake statement and records.

**Mass graves:** The [ground breaking work include unmasking of more than 2700 mass graves](#) in five districts of IIOJK in 2008. Later, after further probe, close to 6700 mass graves were identified.

**Enforced Disappearances and Half Widows:** Unmasking of mass graves also led revelation that close to 10,000 Kashmiris were abducted and then forcibly disappeared by the Indian

occupying forces. Among those [who were abducted by Indian state, many were married who left behind their families including children and wives](#).

**Internet Apartheid:** In August 2020, one of [JKCCS's big reports unpacked the dubious legal framework](#) behind the enforcement of Internet shutdowns in the J&K.

**Alleged Perpetrators:** [This unprecedented report](#) sought to deconstruct the “culture of impunity in the highly militarized space” in Kashmir. It seeks a process of accountability for institutional crime, where the identities of the individual perpetrators are known

**Structures of Violence:** This report [detailed how Indian state detained Kashmiris, tortured them and made them dependable for](#) their lives because of injuries inflicted on them that they would never be able to earn for themselves on their own.

This report carries testimonies of hundreds of people.

**Children Terrorized:** The report seeks to examine the situation of children in the ongoing conflict armed in Jammu and Kashmir. [The report seeks to demonstrate that serious crimes](#) have been perpetrated against children in Jammu and Kashmir by perusing data of killings, arrests, sexual violence and impact of violence on the education of children.

**Torture:** [Indian State's Instrument of Control](#) in Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir is the first ever comprehensive report on the phenomenon of torture in Jammu and Kashmir perpetrated by the Indian State from 1990 onwards.

**Occupational Hazards:** Besides widely acknowledged and documented human rights abuses and war crimes, fostered by

legalized and extra-legal impunity, [the military occupation of Jammu and Kashmir has included the expropriation, illegal occupation and weaponization](#) of huge areas of land, the building of large scale permanent military installations including encampments, air force and naval bases, and the creation of militarized infrastructure including roads and railways, helipads, ammunition depots, firing ranges, and military bases in ecologically fragile glaciers, areas of permafrost, mountain highlands and forests, alpine meadows, karewas (plateaus composed of Pleistocene era glacial deposits), water bodies and river beds, all of which have contributed directly to the region's disaster vulnerability.

**Amarnath Yatra - A Militarized Pilgrimage:** In its earliest years, the pilgrimage, which spanned 15 days, was undertaken primarily by sadhus and few civilians totaling a few thousand people. Over a period of time, and especially from the 1990s, [the demographics of the Yatra has changed with lakhs of yatis participating from many regions of India.](#)

Today, with the systematic manner in which the Yatra is conducted and with increased facilities, the duration has increased to 40 – 48 days with access from two different routes.

The manner in which the pilgrimage was conducted in its earlier days and how it has come to become a Yatra supported by the State has multiple reasons.

**Village Destabilizing Committees:** ‘Outsourcing Criminality’ is a JKCCS brief on Village Defense Committees. [The policy of the Indian State to control the people of Jammu and Kashmir](#) through armed forces is entrenched and has resulted in numerous informal and formal networks of forces outside of the regular armed forces.

**UN Reports:** The body of work produced by JKCCS under the supervision of Khurram Parvez proved critical for [two UN High Commissioner for Human Rights \(OHCHR\) reports](#) released in June 2018 and July 2019.

Since [India has blocked international observers, media and human rights defenders from accessing IIOJK](#), the work produced by JKCCS was used by these international organizations to expose India and her war crimes in IIOJK.

### **[Indian State v/s Khurram Parvez: A People's Dossier](#)**

Enjoy this collection of interviews and readings by Khurram Parvez

### **Khurram Parvez: Nobody can stop the wars of Independence**

<http://www.dalitcamera.com/khurram-parvez-nobody-can-stop-wars-independence/>

### **Jail Memoir**

<https://kashmirlife.net/jail-memoir-126500/>

### **The Government Wants Control, Not Peace: An Interview with Khurram Parvez**

<https://caravanmagazine.in/vantage/interview-khurram-parvez-kashmir>

### **‘India’s Kashmir act aims to disempower, exclude local population’**

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/-india-s-kashmir-act-aims-to-disempower-exclude-local-population-/1930678>

## **A Conversation With: Civil Rights Activist Khurram Pervez**

[https://india.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/09/09/a-conversation-with-civil-rights-activist-khurram-pervez/?\\_r=0](https://india.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/09/09/a-conversation-with-civil-rights-activist-khurram-pervez/?_r=0)

**“We are trying to redefine resistance”**

<https://isreview.org/issue/80/we-are-trying-redefine-resistance/>

## **Situation of Human Rights in Kashmir, An Interview with Khurram Parvez**

<https://www.youthkiawaaz.com/2020/11/situation-of-human-rights-in-kashmir-post-article-370-abrogation-an-interview-with-khurr/>

## **Listen: Free Khurram Parvez**

<https://dorabjicom.bandcamp.com/track/free-khurram-parvez>

<https://freekhurram.wordpress.com/2016/10/07/listen-to-interview-on-khurram-parvez/>

## **'Do you need 700,000 soldiers to fight 150 militants?': Kashmiri rights activist Khurram Parvez**

<https://scroll.in/article/812010/do-you-need-700000-soldiers-to-fight-150-militants-kashmiri-rights-activist-khurram-parvez>

## **Exclusive: Listen to Khurram Parvez on a Generation Against the Wall in J&K**

<https://www.thequint.com/news/india/anger-against-india-deep-in-kashmiris-human-rights-activist-khurram-parvez-afspa-psa-burhan-wani-stone-pelting-jandk>

## **Kashmir's Kunan & Poshpora: What Has Indian Judiciary Done For Mass Rape Victims?**

<https://thelogicalindian.com/exclusive/kunan-poshpora-rape-army-justice-19915>

## **Zubin Mehta's Concert Strikes A Discordant Note In Kashmir**

<https://wamu.org/story/13/09/09/zubin-mehtas-concert-strikes-a-discordant-note-in-kashmir/>

## **Is creating a culture of accountability in Kashmir, a problem? Khurram Parvez asks the Govt**

<https://www.videovolunteers.org/is-creating-a-culture-of-accountability-in-kashmir-a-problem-khurram-parvez-asks-the-goi/>

## **India: Freed Kashmiri Rights Activist Vows to Fight On**

<https://www.benarnews.org/english/news/bengali/Khurram-Parvez-12122016131323.html>

#FreeKhurramParvez #FreeKashmir #EndIndianOccupation