



## **Lemkin Institute Statement on Escalating Violence between India and Pakistan**

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The Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention and Human Security strongly condemns the escalation of violence across the Line of Control (LoC) between Indian- and Pakistan-administered Kashmir. This escalation has followed India's launch of *Operation Sindoor* on 7 May in retaliation for the [Pahalgam](#) terror attack on 22 April, which India blames on Pakistan. Since then, India has [carried](#) out missile strikes targeting sites in Pakistan's Punjab province and Pakistan-administered Kashmir, which have resulted in the deaths of at least 31 people, including children as young as three years old, and injured dozens. Equally condemnable is the loss of at least 10 lives, including children, in Indian-administered Kashmir due to Pakistani retaliatory fire. Civilian lives are not bargaining chips in geopolitical conflicts.

We further denounce, in the strongest terms, India's [attack](#) on the Noseri Dam in Pakistan-administered Kashmir, which is part of the Neelum Jhelum Hydropower Project, a civilian infrastructure facility critical to the lives and well-being of the population. Attacks on civilian targets are prohibited under international humanitarian law and must be condemned without reservation. The destruction of infrastructure that sustains the civilian life of a group, including roads, railways, bridges, airports, public transit systems, tunnels, water supply, sewers, electrical grids, and telecommunications, can be a red flag for impending genocide, as it was in Gaza.

The Indian government's unilateral action in response to the Pahalgam terror attack irresponsibly undermines the prospects for peace in a region that is already facing escalating political tensions along religious lines. India has hastily [blamed](#) Pakistan for the attack without providing credible evidence. It has also rejected Pakistan's [offer](#) to support an

independent “neutral investigation.” India’s quickness to react with lethal force demonstrates a reckless political opportunism on the part of the Indian Prime Minister. The region’s politico-religious divides are ripe for mass atrocity and India’s escalation feeds into violent ideologies and tendencies on various sides. Accountability should never be forsaken for opportunistic escalation.

More broadly, we are deeply alarmed by the Indian government’s increasingly hostile and jingoistic posture, rooted in the Hindu-supremacist [ideology](#) of “Hindutva” that promotes religious division, anti-Muslim Indian nationalism, and, in the case of Prime Minister Modi’s administration, a pattern of rhetoric and policy that international [observers](#) have widely criticized for enabling majoritarianism and human rights abuses. Such ideologies are incompatible with democratic values and global human rights standards and are certainly red flags for potential genocide.

We further express serious concern over India’s [violation](#) of Pakistan’s airspace through the deployment of loitering munition drones (commonly known as kamikaze or suicide drones). Loitering munition drones are a type of precision weapon that can hover over a target area for extended periods before identifying and striking targets by crashing into them and detonating on impact. The use of these weapons represents a serious escalation of the conflict, especially following India’s earlier missile strikes on Pakistani cities—an act to which Pakistan did not respond with immediate retaliation, instead appealing for peace.

Reports [indicate](#) that India’s loitering munition drones are Heron MK 2 models manufactured in Israel, which raises concerns about Israel’s export of weaponry that has been tested extensively in Gaza. India’s use of these drones on a new battlefield signals that Israel’s global impunity is encouraging not only the spread of its profoundly destructive technology but also the spread of its radical and asymmetrical use of this technology, further endangering civilian populations in the South Asian region and undermining international peace and security.

We are equally troubled by the threat these drones pose to civilian lives and the damage they cause to civilian infrastructure. Pakistan has [reportedly](#) intercepted and destroyed 25 Heron drones deployed by India. Reports of damage and deaths caused during the interception of these drones are deeply troubling.

India’s continued use of provocative tactics against Pakistan makes it clear that the Modi government is not pursuing de-escalation, but instead appears intent on causing further conflict. Just yesterday, Prime Minister Modi threatened to stop the flow of water across international borders, a threat that many observers believe was directed at Pakistan. “Now, India’s water will flow for India’s benefit, it will be conserved for India’s benefit, and it will be used for India’s progress,” Modi [announced](#). The Prime Minister [suspended](#) the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) on April 23 of this year. The Lemkin Institute is deeply concerned about the risk of a genocidal use of resource deprivation if hostilities continue to escalate.

In the past two weeks, [nationalists](#) in India have called for mass [violence](#) against Pakistanis as well as against Muslims living in Indian-controlled Kashmir. Emboldened by the world's current permissiveness towards genocide, India could follow the same playbook as Israel: Use self-defense as an excuse to achieve territorial expansion (in Kashmir), committing forced displacement and genocide in the process. Early warning signs of this kind of behavior include India's recent [targeting](#) of civilian infrastructure and cultural sites in Pakistan, including [mosques](#). If India is allowed to continue this escalation against Pakistan and Muslims in Kashmir, it will give a green light to Hindutva radicals to pursue communal violence against Muslims across India.

Both India and Pakistan are signatories to international treaties that require respect for human rights, civilian protection, and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. They both have also signed the 1948 Treaty on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. The ongoing violence endangers these obligations and puts millions at risk.

We call on both India and Pakistan to exercise maximum restraint and cease all forms of military aggression immediately. Escalating this conflict serves no national interest and only brings immense suffering to millions of innocent civilians on both sides.

We urge the international community, particularly key global actors and multilateral institutions, to intervene immediately and bring both countries to the negotiating table. The world cannot afford another catastrophic conflict—especially one involving two nuclear powers.

This moment demands courageous diplomacy, not belligerence. The people of South Asia deserve peace, dignity, and a future free from the threat of war and genocide. Powerful states and international institutions, embarrassed and weakened by their lack of action regarding Azerbaijan's genocide in Nagorno-Karabakh, Israel's genocide in Palestine, and the UAE-sponsored genocide in Sudan, must not let another regional conflict escalate into mass atrocity.