

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL INDIA

## PUBLIC STATEMENT

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### **India: Authorities must avoid excessive use of force and investigate killings in Jammu and Kashmir**

Authorities in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) must avoid excessive use of force while policing demonstrations, Amnesty International India said today.

Dozens of people have been injured in many parts of J&K in widespread clashes between security forces and protestors. The protests began on 18 July, when four people were killed by paramilitary forces in Ramban district.

Protesters have defied curfew regulations and held violent demonstrations. Authorities have reportedly used excessive force, including firing live ammunition, against protestors.

Local residents in Ganderbal district have told journalists that two people were seriously injured on 19 July when the J&K police and paramilitary forces from the Central Police Reserve Force (CRPF) opened fire at demonstrators, some of whom were throwing stones. The police have claimed that they only used pellet guns.

There are also reports that the police and CRPF fired live ammunition at protestors in Qazigund and Koimoi towns in south Kashmir.

Authorities have placed curfew regulations on major towns in the Kashmir Valley.

On 19 July, four people were killed and forty injured in Gool, Ramban district, when paramilitary personnel of the Border Security Force (BSF) opened fire on protestors demonstrating against the alleged roughing up of a cleric by security forces.

The BSF has stated that its forces fired in self-defence when the protestors turned violent. However eyewitnesses have said that the BSF personnel opened fire indiscriminately at protestors.

The J&K police have said in a preliminary report that the firing by the BSF forces was “uncalled for” and “indiscriminate.” India’s Minister of Home Affairs and the J&K government have ordered investigations into the killings.

Amnesty International India calls on authorities in Jammu and Kashmir to protect the right to life in accordance with the Constitution of India and international law - including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which India is a state party - and international standards, in particular the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials and the Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials.

Law enforcement officials must always apply non-violent means before resorting to the use of force, including when policing public demonstrations. They must use force with restraint, and only when it is absolutely necessary and proportional to the threat to public safety.

Firearms should only be used as a last resort, and the intentional lethal use of firearms must only be employed when strictly unavoidable in order to protect life.

Amnesty International India urges authorities to conduct a full, impartial and effective investigation into any possible excessive use of force by security forces in J&K, and all deaths or serious injuries caused by the use of force or firearms. All suspects, including those with command responsibility, must be prosecuted in a competent, independent and impartial civilian court

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