

(Photo by Sajjad QAYYUM / AFP via Getty Images)

< NEWS

28 July 2026

Also available in Русский

Pakistan: Authorities must lift communications blackout following reports of lethal force used against protesters amid elections

Reacting to reports that security forces used lethal force against protesters in Rawalakot, Pakistan-administered Jammu and Kashmir, on the first day of the regional election, Isabelle Lassee, Amnesty International's Acting Regional Director for South Asia, said:

"The disturbing reports emerging from Rawalakot are consistent with the Pakistani authorities' long history of unlawful violence against protesters in Jammu and Kashmir. A prompt, independent, and transparent investigation must be ordered into the security forces' use of force against protesters. So long as an internet and mobile services blackout remains in place, it will severely impede the independent verification of the full extent of the situation on the ground. We urge the Pakistani authorities to restore all communications access and allow media and independent observers into the area.

"

We urge the Pakistani authorities to restore all communications access and allow media and independent observers into the area

Isabelle Lassee, Amnesty International's Acting Regional Director for South Asia

"Tensions around this election are being heightened by the unlawful ban on the Jammu and Kashmir Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC). Amnesty International has repeatedly called on the Pakistani authorities to lift the ban on this protest movement and stop weaponizing anti-terror laws to silence and arbitrarily detain JAAC members and supporters. The ban cannot be used as an excuse to mete out deadly violence against protesters."

Background

On 27 July, there were reports of violence in Rawalakot as well as one incident in Kotli, where a political worker was killed during a clash between supporters of rival parties. According to the JAAC, 19 people were killed and dozens injured after security forces fired at protesters. Media outlets have reported that there were some casualties, but have not ascribed a number, while police have reported that two of its personnel were injured. Mobile internet services have remained suspended in Jammu & Kashmir since 5 June.

The JAAC was designated as a "proscribed organization" under the first schedule of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Anti-Terrorism Act, 2014 on 5 June 2026.

In the lead up to the election, media have reported that at least 40 people have been killed, 34 of them protesters, and six were police and paramilitary personnel.

NEWS PAKISTAN PROTESTS AND DEMONSTRATIONS

< NEWS