

Child Rights in Jammu and Kashmir

Special Report 2022

THE FORUM FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
IN JAMMU & KASHMIR

FOREWORD

We are pleased to present this special report examining issues pertaining to child rights in Jammu and Kashmir.

In recent years, the State has undergone tremendous changes due to the abrogation of Article 370 of the Indian Constitution leading to its bifurcation into two Union Territories, and the Covid-19 pandemic. The changes have been both structural and social and have perhaps been most keenly felt by children – a section that has the least amount of wherewithal to respond and protect itself.

Deterioration in economic capability and increase in armed conflict are events that affect the society at large. However, the present report highlights the patterns in which they percolate into the lives of our children and alters them forever. This forms the fundamental lens through which this report proceeds. It broadly seeks to examine how the State and its institutions have discharged their responsibilities towards children. As this report shows, children’s rights have been affected in myriad ways. High levels of militarization in the valley certainly reshape a child’s outlook and psyche. Prolonged lack of access to the internet means that the valuable right of education is diluted. Severe lockdown measures have manifested in a number of health and mental health issues amongst children.

This report concludes with a set of suggestions that we hope will be considered and adopted by the State as a guardian of children. The challenges ahead are numerous; however we can take succor from the fact that the responsibilities are shared. There is an urgent need for strengthened efforts, learning from the mistakes of the past, and building on our experiences together so that we can provide our future generations with what is due to them.

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ABOUT THE FORUM FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR

The Forum for Human Rights in Jammu and Kashmir comprises a group of concerned citizens who believe that, in the prevailing situation in the former State, an independent initiative is required so that human rights violations do not go unnoticed. The aim of the Forum is to highlight, report, and seek action. It will focus primarily on human rights protected by the constitutions of India and of Jammu and Kashmir, as well as those identified in international treaties/instruments which India has ratified. It will research evident violations, and may take *suo motu* note of any violation, irrespective of whether or not a formal complaint is received. On issues of common concern, the Forum may include Ladakh in its purview.

The Forum for Human Rights in Jammu and Kashmir will receive information/materials on human rights violations to its email hrforumjk@gmail.com and through other means, and it may report/forward complaints to relevant authorities with recommendations for action. Please note that this is not an adjudicatory body.

The members of the Forum for Human Rights in Jammu and Kashmir take allegations of inaccuracy, bias, or any other criticism founded in fact, very seriously. Criticism of this nature will be considered and responded to in real time.

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Justice AP Shah, former Chief Justice of the Madras, and Delhi, High Court
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INTRODUCTION

The Forum for Human Rights in Jammu and Kashmir through its earlier reports highlighted human rights violations in the aftermath of the abrogation of Article 370 of the Indian Constitution.¹ The present report examines the status of child rights in Jammu and Kashmir since that period, and is based on official sources and media accounts. It also relies upon first-hand testimonies of participants who spoke to the Forum members during their visit to Srinagar in August 2021.

The first part of this report examines the status of child rights in J&K with focus on the juvenile justice system and its response to the situation of conflict; its impact on mental health of children; and status of children's overall health and education. Broadly, it finds that while children in J&K fare comparatively respectably in *indicia* where the community and civil society has a greater role to play – i.e., physical health and nutrition. However, there is an alarming deficiency when it comes to the provision of critical resources provided by the State. These include a protective justice delivery system and an environment that promotes mental health. In light of these findings, this report concludes with a set of recommendations to overcome some of these *lacunae*.

I. JUVENILE JUSTICE

Children and Law Enforcement Agencies

Law enforcement agencies in the State have been wary of the prospect of children and youth being influenced towards militancy and have sought to instil fear in them. Thus, there have been occasions when moments of play with friends have turned into a nightmare in a matter of seconds with boys being picked up by the State forces for questioning. There have also been routine instances of seizures of mobile phones after which their contents are accessed and scrutinized, thereby causing untold anxiety to the children. Some children are able to procure their phones only after repeated pleas and after a gap of a couple of days.²

Children have also been illegally detained at the police station or by the armed forces, with their parents only being informed hours later. This constitutes a complete violation of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015. In an August 2021 report, at least nine minors – between 14-17 years old, had been illegally detained by the police. Several of the detained minors were beaten up or imprisoned for weeks.³

The Act's mandate of remanding minors before the Juvenile Justice Board (JJB) has been consigned to a mere paper dictate. JJBs remain impuissant in the face of high-handedness by the armed forces. The aforementioned report also found that the police had, on occasions, simply misled the JJBs about detention of minors. In one such instance, JJB member Safiya Rahim received a bail application for a minor detained at the police station. When confirmation of the detention was sought by her, the police simply denied the same. The child was only produced before the JJB 15-30 days afterwards, and the FIR was registered following the bail application.⁴

The Juvenile Justice Act is not the only statute that is regularly flouted. In spite of the Jammu and Kashmir Public Safety Act, 1978 (PSA),⁵ that categorically forbids the detention of minors,⁶ there are reports of several minor boys being detained under the statute. 14-year old Aftab (name changed) was taken from his house in Shopian, kept in the local police station, booked under the PSA, and shipped off to a jail in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh. In another incident, Salman (name changed), a juvenile, was arrested and remanded to the JJB, which thereafter enlarged him on bail. While on bail however, Salman was arrested again for offences under the PSA. The JJB's orders were thus rendered ineffectual.⁷

Police officials also egregiously violate norms by often misattributing the ages of minors and showing the detainees' ages as adults while detaining them. This practice is prevalent against children who may look older than they are, i.e. 15-16 years of age and above. The onus to prove the age is then unfairly shifted onto the minor. Ossification tests for the determination of age as carried out by medical boards are ordinarily to be taken with a 2-year margin for error either way. However, the police is reported to regularly take the upper margin instead of granting any

leeway to children.⁸ In absolute contravention of legal safeguards, these practices increase the number of children who are detained. There is no clear estimate of the numbers of youth detained or subject to harassment and empirical evidence of such violence is hard to obtain.

Such detentions wreak havoc on the health and psyche of the detainees and their families alike. Due to the sudden nature of the pick-ups, close relatives remain unaware of their children's whereabouts for long periods. Legal recourse is out of reach. In uncommon instances where parents of detainees are aware of their child's detention, they remain powerless by not having ready access to a lawyer. Families are not informed of charges against the minors, and in many cases an FIR is not filed.⁹

Minors stuck in lock-up

17 year old Javaid (name changed) had joined his friends in protesting against the Government's decision to abrogate Article 370 of the Indian Constitution. He found himself bundled into a security vehicle, kept in lock-up, and severely beaten. He was only released after six days when he fell unconscious. His family in the meantime had been pleading with the police to release him as he had a history of neurological problems.

(Shafaq Shah, *In New J&K, Adults are Younger and Arrests Easier*, Article 14, 27 June 2020. Available at: <https://www.article-14.com/post/in-new-j-k-adults-are-younger-and-arrests-easier>.)

10th-grade student Afaan was booked under the Public Safety Act and charged with protesting against the decision to abrogate Article 370. He spent just under a fortnight behind bars. His father claims that Afaan is suffering from depression in the aftermath of the detention, along with having recurrent body ache and visible scars on his back.

(Nusrat Sidiq, *'Torture, detention of children adds rage in Kashmir'*, Anadolu Agency, 15 October 2019. Available at: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/-torture-detention-of-children-adds-rage-in-kashmir-/1614269>.)

Children are also victims of the dreaded pellet guns used by security forces as a means of crowd control in Kashmir. Children as young as 18-months old have become victims of such weapons, prompting the United Nations Security Council in a May 2021 report to express concern over 'grave violations against children'. The Report noted instances of 11 children who had been maimed by pellet guns over the span of a few months preceding its publication.¹⁰

When not being detained or shot at, minors are used as expendable tools in the hands of law enforcement. Cordon and Search Operations (CASO) carried out by the armed forces use children as canaries in a coal mine to assist in the search.¹¹ This leaves children scarred, both physically and mentally, often incapacitated for life with the loss of limbs or eyes. Using children as fronts for such operations directly pushes them into arenas of escalated violence. Even if they escape physically sound, children remain ridden with guilt and untold trauma.

They are forever denied avenues of peace and healing, which are so essential for personal growth and well-being.

Children and Militancy

Even before the abrogation of article 370 the perceived threat of children turning to militancy has been serious enough for the Indian establishment to introduce initiatives to combat the same.¹² Everlasting exposure to violence amongst children slowly leads to its gradual acceptance. Feelings of *ressentiment*, vengeance, and injustice form a noxious cocktail. While reports show that 66 local youths joined militancy, the actual numbers are likely to be higher.¹³

A recent study by the University of Kashmir found that in twenty-one percent cases, a member of a family joined militancy after the killing of another member who was a militant.¹⁴ Khurram Parvez, a Kashmir-based activist, succinctly noted that children in Kashmir continuously witness two types of violence. First, when they are directly affected by killings, torture, and arrests, and second, when they see their families suffering.¹⁵

The precarious situation of children is illustrated by the story of Hazim, a 16-year-old seventh standard student with a disability. He was reportedly assisting his family in ploughing their field in Wanigam when a shootout began between CRPF personnel and militants. As the family rushed to safety, they realised that Hazim was not with them. He was later found to have died in the gunfire.¹⁶ In this maelstrom of violence, it becomes an impossibility to lead a normal life.

The turn to militancy

21-year-old Zakir Rashid Bhat, a Chandigarh based civil engineering student, had returned to his village home in Noorpura, Pulwama, for a brief vacation with friends. After his friends went home, Zakir was nowhere to be found. His father Rashid woke up to a note which said that Jihad was the only way to deal with the atrocities faced by Kashmiris. His father had hoped that Zakir would be insulated from the insurgency by virtue of his engineering education.

(Harinder Baweja, *Kashmir's disturbing new reality*, Hindustan Times, Available at: [https://www.hindustantimes.com/static/the-young-militants-of-kashmir/.](https://www.hindustantimes.com/static/the-young-militants-of-kashmir/))

Predictably, the fate of children is sealed once they join the world of militancy. 15-year-old Kashif, who was killed on 8th April 2021 had joined the militancy on 20th March 2021. Similarly, 14-year-old Faisal Gulzar, who died “battling” a contingent of armed forces, had only been a militant for four days.¹⁷ This shows the precarious position of the youth and the constant risks faced by them.

There is also a view that militancy propelled by Pakistan is a major provocateur. Locals feel harassed at the hands of the propaganda machinery. Social media and TV fuel anger and inspire

youth to join the ranks of militancy, along with providing them with funding. Even before they are capable of realising the implications of their acts, young adults are entrapped into a web of violence and counter violence, hatred, rage and anger.¹⁸

II. HEALTH

Children and Mental Health

The pervasive atmosphere of violence, constant military presence, and disturbances created by militant forces have an adverse impact on children. It meddles with the process of regular socialisation with peers, stability in the family, and a consistent school routine, which previously acted as anchors in support of children. It causes mental disorders amongst children often leading to disturbing consequences. Feelings of disempowerment, insecurity, and fear can seep down into the generations to come. The Covid-19 lockdowns and closure of schools has further exacerbated the lack of mental wellbeing of children.¹⁹ It is an accepted fact that children in their formative years are sensitive to upheavals in their families or the society.

A recent survey by doctors found that 94.2% of respondents who reached out to professionals through a helpline in Kashmir experienced severe anxiety due to continuous conflict in the region and the COVID-19 induced lockdown.²⁰ Dr. Syed Karrar, a paediatric neuropsychiatrist, states that children from south Kashmir note the presence of security personnel as a trigger for anxiety, irritability, and anger, which leads to flashbacks inducing trauma, scary dreams, and sleep disorders.²¹ As per Dr. Yasir Hussain Rather, psychiatrist at the Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (IMHANS), adolescents up to the age of 16 are being diagnosed with issues such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), hyperkinetic disorders, neurodevelopmental disorders, depression, anxiety, and dementia since the COVID-19 outbreak.²² In Kashmir's present state of affairs professionals too are often constrained to counsel children to attempt to insulate themselves from their lived reality.

In addition, there is a serious deficiency of infrastructure to support mental health amongst children in Kashmir. IMHANS is the only resident inpatient facility in Kashmir for mental health and support.²³ The child psychiatry section is reported to receive 30-40 cases daily,²⁴ and 5400 sessions with children have been recorded in a year until mid-2021.²⁵ Suhail Ahmed (name changed), a student who lost his appetite and became unable to read in the wake of the COVID-19 epidemic, has to be driven 30 kms by his father to IMHANS on a regular basis to provide him the healthcare he needs.²⁶ 13-year-old Umar (name changed), is reported to become irate and stressed when his father attempts to leave, even for daily chores. Umar's psychiatrist believes that this can be attributed to his enforced separation from his father due to COVID-19.²⁷

There is an increase in reports of suicide, drug addiction, and aggression amongst adolescents.²⁸ Doctors at the IMHANS have reported an extremely alarming 1,500% increase in patients seeking treatment for substance abuse in the preceding three years.²⁹ Increased incidents of suicide amongst teenagers have garnered significant public outcry.³⁰

Amit Sen, a child mental health professional, who was part of a team that visited the Valley to compile a fact-finding report in 2019, notes that children do not need to be indoctrinated to form extreme prejudices. It is instead caused by a pattern of breakdown in state institutions which are ordinarily supposed to act as custodians for children. His report found that children in the Valley reported physical, sexual, and emotional abuse due to the pervasive presence of security forces, which led to shared experiences of paralysing fear, anxiety, panic attacks, post traumatic disorder, suicidal tendencies, and severe anger outbursts.³¹ Continuous trauma amongst children, which is endemic to conflict zones, can scar children for life.³²

Physical Health and Nutrition

Children in J&K perform marginally better than their counterparts from across the rest of the country and health outcomes have generally improved. A comparison can be made of key *indicia* using the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) – 5 Report (published in March 2021, for the year 2019-20) and previous NFHS reports.

While there has been a constant improvement in health and nutrition indicators from 1998-99 onwards up to 2015-16, the 2019-20 data shows a downward trend in at least two indicators and negligible improvements in another (as highlighted in the table). This may be on account of Covid-19 induced restrictions, reduced access to various essential services, and the loss of economic opportunities.

Indicator	NFHS-2 1998-99	NFHS-3 2005-06	NFHS-4 2015-16	NFHS-5 2019-20	NFHS-5 (India averages)
Infant mortality (per 1,000 live births)	65.0	44.7	32.4	16.3	35.2
Children stunted (%) under 5 years	44.6	35	27.4	26.9	35.5
Children under-weight (%)	29.2 (under 3 years)	25.6 (under 5 years)	16.6 (under 5 years)	21 (under 5 years)	32.1
Children with any anaemia (%)	71.1 (6-35 months)	58.6 (6-59 months)	54.5 (6-59 months)	72.7 (6-59 months)	67.1

Children (12-23 months) received all basic vaccinations (%)	56.7	66.7	75.1	86.2	76.4
Children under 5 years with acute respiratory infection (ARI) symptoms received treatment from a health facility/ provider (%)	#	71.6	81.9	75.8	69
Children under 5 years with diarrhoea received treatment from a health facility/ provider (%)	#	67.0	74.1	74.9	68.9

Nevertheless, it must be highlighted that since the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution of India on 5 August 2019, there have been reports of closures of Primary Health Centres (PHCs), tertiary hospitals, schools, and *anganwadis*.³³

III. EDUCATION

Children in the valley have suffered due to two prolonged lockdowns. The first lockdown was enforced after 5 August 2019. The Government, as a corollary to the lockdown, clamped down on internet access and mobile phone connectivity. Schools and universities remained closed for around six months. Two weeks after schools reopened, the second lockdown was promulgated due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to lack of internet access the option of attending school online, was not afforded to most children in Kashmir.³⁴ Even after restoration of the internet, more than 150 villages in Kashmir have remained without access to the same due to lack of connectivity. This has forced students to climb mountains in a bid to obtain the ever-elusive signal bars on their mobile phones.³⁵

As per Ministry of Education (MoE) data, Jammu and Kashmir had a nearly 17 percent dropout rate amongst students at the secondary level. Teachers attribute this alarming number to lack of access and unaffordability to provide their children with amenities to access digitally delivered education.³⁶ There has also been a significant decline in the enrolment ratio from the primary to the upper primary level in government schools indicating that a large proportion of enrolled students drop out after Class Five. There are reportedly a number of schools in Jammu and Kashmir where teachers outnumber the students.³⁷ Other worrisome indicators show that the dropout rates of girl students in secondary and elementary education levels have risen to 16.6 and 3.7 percent in 2019-20, from 1.6 and 2.5 respectively in 2017-19.³⁸ The same indicators for India in 2019-20 are 15.1 and 2.1 percent.³⁹

The dropout rate is even higher amongst children belonging to tribal communities in J&K. Dropout rates in J&K at the primary level have increased from 6.41% in 2014-15 to 10.96% in 2018-19. The dropout rates at the secondary stages are alarming, going from 20.85% to 29.03% over the same period.⁴⁰

RECOMMENDATIONS

I. Juvenile Justice

1. There is an urgent need to ensure transparency regarding the actual number of children under detention. Principal Magistrates working in JJBs and the Juvenile Justice Committee of the High Court of J&K must create Inspection Committees which would conduct regular visits to detention centres and ensure that children are not being held there. The National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has in the past carried out similar exercises in identifying juveniles at Tihar Jail in New Delhi and presenting them before JJBs under the directions of the High Court of Delhi.⁴¹
2. Security personnel have absolute impunity when it comes to their role in arbitrary detentions. There is at present no action taken against errant police officers who do not produce children before JJBs or take them under illegal custody. A disciplinary mechanism must be evolved to ensure that there is no *lacunae* in reportage or adherence to the Juvenile Justice Act.
3. The State Government must issue a notice directing medical boards not to conduct age-determination tests in the absence of orders from JJBs. Such practice should only be kept as a last resort when school documents or other records prove insufficient.
4. To ensure greater proliferation and availability of legal aid to children, JJBs must mandatorily inform the District Legal Services Authority about all their cases.
5. The limited number of observation homes in J&K has an adverse impact upon juvenile justice. Juveniles suffer as their parents are unable to traverse long distances to visit them. The police is hesitant to remand children to observation homes as the vast distance hinders their investigation. The State Government must set up such homes on a priority basis, particularly in South Kashmir, North Kashmir, the Pir Panjal region and the Chenab area.
6. The widely prevalent police practice of confiscating phones from minors must end. It constitutes a deliberate intrusion of their privacy.
7. The Police and the CRPF must conduct regular sensitization and training programs for their officers. Certain officers designated as Child Welfare Police Officers must be provided a greater background and understanding of the juvenile justice framework. Such training can be done at a district level in all districts instead of conducting it through a central institute.

II. Health

1. There must be a broad campaign towards the prevention of drug addiction amongst children in J&K.
2. The State Government must provide for and create spaces for children to engage in play and sports. Such spaces can vary in size so as to be more dispersed across towns and

villages. To facilitate such play, volunteers can be engaged through Community Services or NCC/NSS programs supervised by local colleges.

3. The State Government must on priority invest in creating children's guidance and well-being centres on the lines of IMHANS in Srinagar. They could be made part of the recently created medical colleges in Anantnag, Baramulla, Kupwara, Rajouri, Doda, and Kathua to ensure greater availability for children in all parts of Kashmir. The centres must be programmed in a manner where greater emphasis is placed on non-clinical modalities instead of promoting in-clinic treatment.
4. These services ought to be supplemented by a School Mental Health Program to promote mental wellbeing.
5. For children left orphaned by Covid-19 or other reasons, the State Government must ensure strict compliance towards the standards of care in child-care institutions registered under the Juvenile Justice Act. A strong gate-keeping mechanism must also be evolved to check unnecessary admissions in such institutions.
6. The present sponsorship program of the State Government to provide family-based care as an alternative to institutional care is extremely limited. Only 58 children are covered in each district who are provided cash assistance of Rs. 2000 per month over a maximum of three years. The Government must take more proactive steps to identify children in need and increase the quota of sponsorship. This support can be sourced from willing corporate or institutional donors, and can be extended until the child reaches 18 years of age.
7. The State Government must facilitate adoption of children who are eligible and provide for the necessary mechanism in each district. There is at present a great scarcity of any specialised adoption agency in any district.
8. The Government must establish an after-care program for children who leave institutional care and return to their communities. Such children could be extended skill programs or other higher education scholarships.

III. Education

1. As there remains a great willingness within families to send children to school, the Government must ensure a greater coverage of scholarships and extend them to higher education as well. Such scholarships must be especially be extended to girl students.

CONCLUSION

Children born into the conflict-ridden complex state of Kashmir are powerless in determining their own circumstances and cannot be punished for a situation they did not create. They are not militants by birth, but may grow into militancy due to the paucity of options available to them. It is imperative that they are no longer forced to bear the brunt of the police and the armed forces or the militants. The State has an obligation to extricate children from such vulnerabilities and harm and guarantee their constitutional rights.

In this context, the State should seek solutions that work from its initiatives and local actions. It should go beyond seeking justification for such devastation by invoking history and finger pointing. The government has to rise above its own political compulsions, reach out to children with care and compassion, and take responsibility to correct the harm done. Children should be encouraged to come together in public spaces and take part in games, theatre, music, art, and sports. Children's centres, libraries, and spaces for recreation should be established through partnerships with NGOs, women's groups, and youth associations. Stories of local heroes who campaigned for humanistic values should be rediscovered, told, and celebrated. The exercise should be guided by ethics, moral consciousness, and leadership. The State certainly has the resources to initiate processes of healing and to keep children protected and safe. This is doable.

REFERENCES

¹ See August 2019-July 2020 Report at <https://indianculturalforum.in/2020/07/23/jammu-and-kashmir-the-impact-of-lockdowns-on-human-rights/>, the August 2020 – January 2021 report at <https://indianculturalforum.in/2021/02/15/a-landscape-of-intimidation-media-in-jammu-and-kashmir/>, and the August 2021 report at <https://indianculturalforum.in/2021/08/04/two-years-of-lockdown-human-rights-in-jammu-and-kashmir-2021/>.

² Testimonies before Forum members during their visit to Srinagar in August 2021.

³ Gafira Qadir, *Kashmiri minors illegally detained, beaten: JJ Board says rampant abuse of rights*, The Kashmir Walla, 31 August 2021. Available at: <https://thekashmirwalla.com/kashmiri-minors-illegally-detained-beaten-jj-board-says-rampant-abuse-of-rights/>.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ Jammu and Kashmir Public Safety Act, 1978 allows for administrative detention in the interest of public safety.

⁶ Section 8(3)(f) of the Jammu and Kashmir Public Safety Act, 1978 provides that a “person” shall not include a citizen of India who has not attained the age of eighteen years.

⁷ Safwat Zargar, *In Kashmir, boys aged 14 and 16 held under the dreaded Public Safety Act and sent to Uttar Pradesh Jails*, Scroll.in, 9 October 2019. Available at: <https://scroll.in/article/939516/in-kashmir-boys-aged-14-and-16-held-under-dreaded-public-safety-act-and-sent-to-uttar-pradesh-jails>. See also *Nine-year-old among nearly 150 children briefly held in Kashmir: Court probe*, Reuters, 1 October 2019, available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/india-kashmir-children/nine-year-old-among-nearly-150-children-briefly-held-in-kashmir-court-probe-idINKBN1WG472?edition-redirect=in>, and Rouf Dar, *Kashmir’s children are being brutalized*, TRT World, 4 May 2019, available at: <https://www.trtworld.com/opinion/kashmir-s-children-are-being-brutalised-17207>; Salman’s case is recounted as per documents received by members of the Forum on 30 May 2022.

⁸ Findings based on conversations with locals during a visit to Kashmir by members of the Forum in August 2021.

⁹ Ipsita Chakravarty and Safwat Zargar, *When even a 12-year old buying bread in Kashmir gets detained in a police sweep*, Scroll.in, 28 August 2019. Available at: <https://scroll.in/article/935411/ground-report-when-even-a-12-year-old-buying-bread-in-kashmir-gets-detained-in-police-sweep>.

¹⁰ United Nations Security Council Report on Children and Armed Conflict, 6 May 2021, page 30. Available at: https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2021/437&Lang=E&Area=UNDOC. The corresponding Report of 9 June 2020 noted 8 killings and 7 such incidents of maiming amongst children, *inter alia* caused by pellet guns – See United Nations Security Council Report on Children and Armed Conflict, 9 June 2020, page 27. Available at: https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S_2020_525_E.pdf. See also Ibtisam Fayaz Khan, *No Pellets Please*, Kashmir Life, 9 July 2021. Available at: <https://kashmirlife.net/no-pellets-please-vol-13-issue-14-271964/>.

¹¹ Shefali Rafiq, *Life inside a 40-hour long Cordon and Search Operation in Kashmir*, The Kashmir Walla, 12 December 2020. Available at: <https://thekashmirwalla.com/life-inside-a-40-hour-long-cordon-and-search-operation-in-kashmir/>.

¹² For an example of such an initiative, see *Jammu and Kashmir police initiative to wean away local youths from militancy*, Indian Express, 14 February 2017. Available at: <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/jammu-kashmir-police-initiative-to-wean-away-local-youths-from-militancy/>. On similar lines, see Manish Shukla, *Indian Army takes children of Jammu and Kashmir village for Rajasthan tour*, DNA, 23 August 2019. Available at: <https://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-indian-army-takes-children-of-jammu-and-kashmir-village-for-rajasthan-tour-2784063>. Also see Krishn Kaushik, *CDS Bipin Rawat: Children being radicalized in J-K, isolate them gradually*, The Indian Express, 17 January 2020. Available at: <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/children-being-radicalised-in-jk-isolate-them-gradually-says-rawat-6220643/>.

¹³ *Id.* Note: not all recruits may have been minors at the time. See also reports of recruitment and use of children as child soldiers by the Jaish-e-Mohammed and Hizbul Mujahideen by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Update of the Situation of Human Rights in Indian-Administered Kashmir and Pakistan-Administered Kashmir from May 2018 to April 2019, 8 July 2019, page 31. Available at: https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/IN/KashmirUpdateReport_8July2019.pdf, and *Children as young as 14 are recruited by armed groups against government in Jammu and Kashmir: US report*, The Economic Times, 26 June 2020. Available at: <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/children-as-young-as-14-are-recruited-by-armed-groups-against-government-in-jammu-and-kashmir-us-report/articleshow/76644363.cms>.

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