



India-Pakistan Tensions Key Developments & Future Risk

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About the ICfS

The ICfS is a London-based independent Research and Advisory organisation committed to fostering deeper alliances between the United Kingdom, the United States, India, and other global stakeholders.

For us this means to strengthen people to people ties on the basis of a shared vision and shared values, to deliver better governance through institutionalisation of combined best ideas of governance and economic architecture. We want to forge a partnerial ecosystem for a collective sustainable future to protect all sentient beings on our planet, underpinned by a robust ability to defend our collective and mutual interests.

We work with government officials, political leaders, policy influencers, and businesses to build trust, cooperation, and market architecture.

We do this as a platform that brings together experts to provide the latest research and insights for our clients and members. We work with them to turn their vision into reality.

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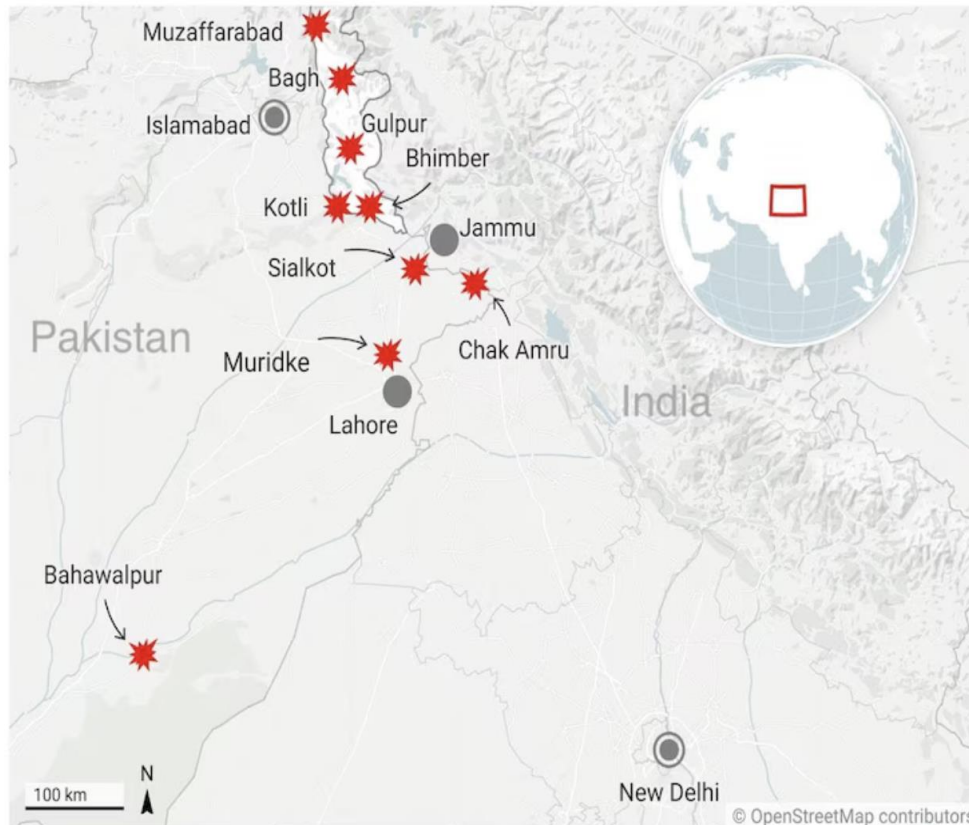
Zoe Neiman

Overview of Operation Sindoor

In response to the Pahalgam attack, the Government of India launched **Operation Sindoor** on May 7, 2025. This operation targeted nine terrorist camps linked to Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammed, and Hizbul Mujahideen in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Jammu & Kashmir. These groups have, over the past decades, planned, trained, and carried out attacks on Indian soil, including the Mumbai attacks of 2008, the Pulwama attack of 2019, and the recent Pahalgam terror attack.

The strikes were described by the Government of India as "measured, focused, and non-escalatory" — a calculated response to the killing of 26 civilians and injury of 17 others in the Pahalgam attack by terrorists.

Operation Sindoor represents India's most extensive cross-border strike since the Balakot operation, marking a significant evolution in strategic capability and doctrine. According to official statements, the targeted sites were identified as hubs for sleeper cell coordination, logistical operations, arms storage, and ideological indoctrination. Indian intelligence assets, including Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), conducted sustained surveillance in the days leading up to the operation. This monitoring reportedly verified consistent movement patterns and logistical activities indicative of active terror cell operations.



Map: Dipu Rai • Source: Media Reports



Fig 1: Locations struck as part of Operation Sindoor .



Reported Casualties and Conflicting Claims

India reports that over 70 militants were neutralized across Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Jammu & Kashmir as a result of the operation. In contrast, Pakistani authorities allege that civilian populations were targeted. Jaish-e-Mohammed leader Maulana Masood Azhar has publicly stated that a missile strike on the group's headquarters in Bahawalpur resulted in the deaths of ten family members and four senior associates. These conflicting narratives highlight ongoing disputes regarding the nature and impact of the operation.

India's Position

Strategic Diplomatic Outreach Post-Operation

Following the strikes, the Government of India initiated a coordinated diplomatic campaign to engage key international partners. Senior Indian officials conducted direct briefings with counterparts in the United States, United Kingdom, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, providing detailed accounts of the operation's objectives, execution, and outcomes. India has also briefed all permanent and non-permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), except Pakistan. This engagement aimed to ensure transparency, maintain strategic trust, and proactively manage geopolitical implications.

The Ministry of Defence of India further emphasised that India's response aligns with its declared commitment to hold accountable those responsible for cross-border terrorism.



Civil Defence Preparedness Measures

These exercises, conducted in accordance with the Civil Defence Rules (1968), are designed to enhance readiness by familiarising authorities and the public with emergency response protocols. The Indian government has launched this initiative to strengthen civil defence infrastructure and community resilience amid rising tensions with Pakistan. This is the first large-scale mock drill since India-Pakistan war of 1971.

As part of broader security measures following Operation Sindoor, commercial operations at 27 airports across India have been suspended until May 10.

India's Operation Sindoor represents a shift from its previous doctrine, as it has targeted terror camps not only in Pakistan-occupied Jammu & Kashmir but also deep within Pakistan's Punjab province.

Indian military sources emphasise that the operation deliberately avoided critical infrastructure and military assets within Pakistan, underscoring that the objective was not to inflict harm on the Pakistani state or civilian population. Instead, the strikes focused exclusively on terrorist networks exploiting these locations for indoctrination, training, and operational staging. Airstrikes were concentrated on Muridke and Bahawalpur, identified as the headquarters of Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed, respectively.

Readiness and Contingency Planning

Indian defence analysts indicate that India's response strategy remains contingent on Pakistan's subsequent actions, with all operational options under active consideration. Security forces have been placed on heightened alert and are fully prepared for potential escalation. Official sources note that the next 48–72 hours will be critical in assessing the evolving security landscape and determining India's next steps.



Pakistan's response and likely scenarios

In the lead-up to 7 May, there were 13 consecutive nights of cross-border firing by Pakistani forces in Jammu and Kashmir, following the Pahalgam attack. In the aftermath of Operation Sindoor, the Pakistan army intensified shelling along the Line of Control (LoC), resulting in 12 reported civilian fatalities and over 50 injuries. Significant property damage was recorded, including homes and commercial establishments in Rajouri and Poonch in Jammu division, and Kupwara and Baramulla districts in Kashmir valley. Pakistan continued cross-border shelling along the LoC in Jammu & Kashmir for a second consecutive day.

Pakistan claims that 26 people were killed and 46 injured in the strikes, and alleges it shot down five Indian aircraft—claims not confirmed by India. Pakistani officials, including the Defence and Foreign Ministers, have condemned Operation Sindoor as a violation of sovereignty and an act of war, asserting Pakistan's right to respond under Article 51 of the UN Charter. The Indian Charge d'Affaires was formally summoned in Islamabad. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and the Pakistan army have reiterated their intent to respond, though Defence Minister Khawaja Asif has since indicated a willingness to de-escalate if India refrains from further action.

While large-scale retaliation is assessed as unlikely, there remains a credible risk of targeted strikes on Indian military positions in Jammu and Kashmir. Escalation beyond this is considered low probability but remains a concern, particularly if domestic pressures on the Pakistan military intensify.

International Reactions: Diplomatic Landscape

- **United Kingdom:** Positioned as a potential mediator. Foreign Secretary David Lammy has engaged both India and Pakistan, offering UK support for de-escalation. PM Keir Starmer reaffirmed the UK's commitment to regional stability and civilian protection.
- **United States:** Adopted a reserved stance. President Trump called the rising tensions 'a shame'; Secretary of State Rubio is monitoring closely and engaging both governments to encourage de-escalation.

Key Allies & Partners:

- *France, Germany, UAE, Japan, Iran:* Urged restraint, dialogue, and civilian protection. Japan warned against retaliation risks.
- *Israel:* Backed India's right to self-defence, focusing on counterterrorism.
- *Russia:* Actively engaged both nations; called for adherence to the Simla Agreement and offered mediation.

Pro-Pak alliance

- *China:* Called India's operation 'regrettable'; urged peace and stability.
- *Turkey, Azerbaijan:* Strongly condemned India's strikes, supporting Pakistan's stance and calling for international investigation.



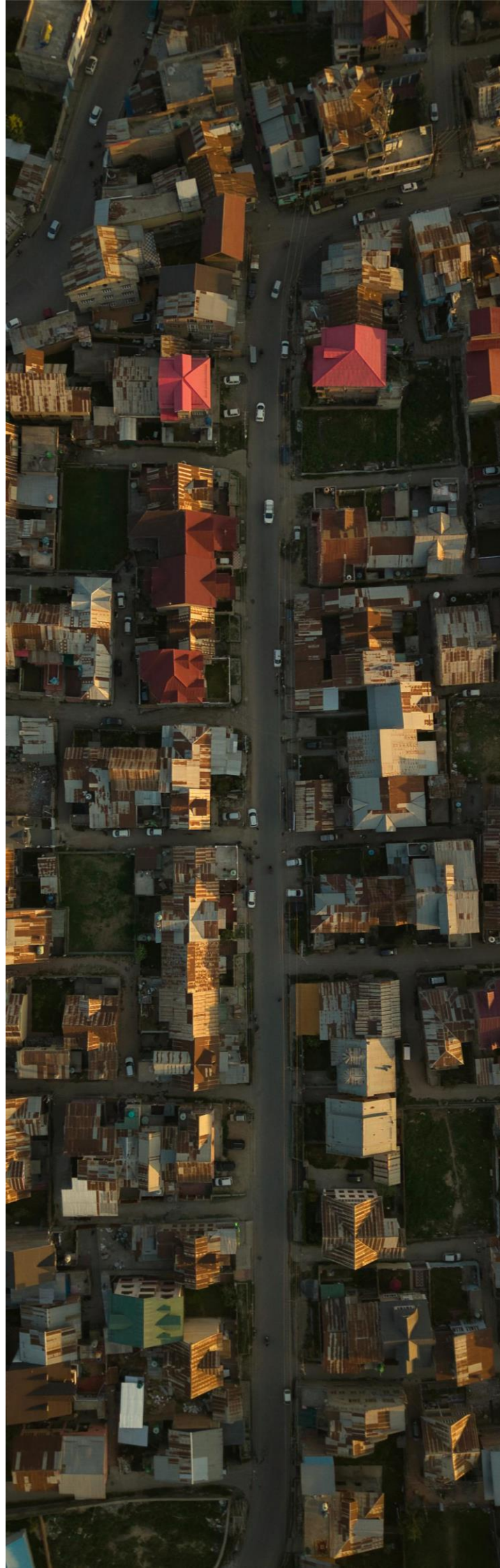
Domestic Implications for the United Kingdom

Our (ICfS) [recent briefing](#) warned of risks to UK community cohesion stemming from heightened India-Pakistan tensions. A key concern is the conflation of Kashmir-related issues with the Israel-Palestine conflict, which could inflame domestic narratives.

Post-strike commentary on 7 May 2025 from British Muslim platforms, notably [5 Pillars](#), framed India's actions as adopting an "Israeli approach" toward Pakistan, predicting further civilian targeting.

Prominent influencers—including [Mohammed Hijab](#), [Dilly Hussain](#), and [Muzzammil Ayyub Thakur](#)—have drawn explicit parallels between Hindutva and Zionism, linking religious loyalty and geopolitical alignment. Hussain framed support for Pakistan as a faith obligation, while Hijab's rhetoric connected Gaza casualties to [martyrdom](#), reinforcing religious mobilisation themes. These narratives risk amplifying public activism and spreading unverified claims, such as the unconfirmed shooting down of five Indian aircraft.

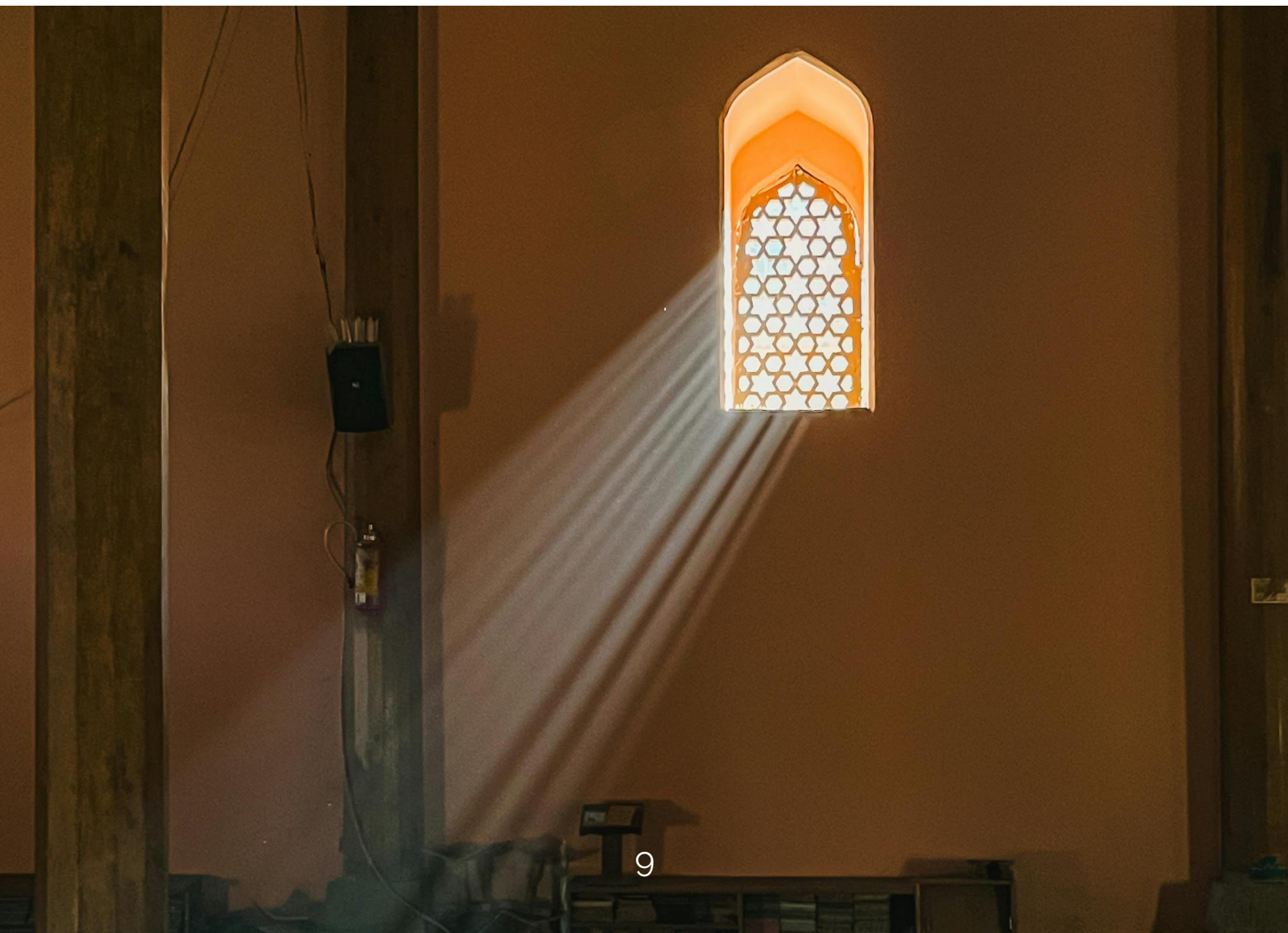
None of the UK's major Hindu organisations have publicly commented on operations carried out by India.





Recommendations for International and Domestic Action

- **Regional Stability:** The international community must adopt a unified stance in holding Pakistan accountable for cross-border terrorism, which continues to destabilise Indian Jammu and Kashmir. The ICfS noted significant economic and political progress in the region as of June 2024, now jeopardized by Pakistan's actions, notably the Pahalgam attack.
- **Counterterrorism Framing:** Operation Sindoor's nine targeted sites should be recognised as strikes against UN-designated terrorist organisations, addressing the infrastructure underpinning cross-border militancy.
- **De-escalation Imperative:** International actors should continue urging Pakistan to exercise restraint to avoid further escalation, which risks triggering aggressive Indian responses and wider regional conflict with global repercussions.
- **UK Domestic Monitoring:** The Home Office should maintain vigilant monitoring for signs of threats to community cohesion, including any glorification of terrorism or incitement to violence. Future protests require robust police oversight to safeguard lawful assemblies and prevent disorder.



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