India's Counterterrorism Effort - Discussed at the 60th UNHRC



Collected picture

At the 60th UNHRC, India highlighted its victim-centered counterterrorism approach, stressing the human cost of cross-border terrorism, especially from Pakistan-based groups like LeT and JeM. Exhibitions in Geneva showcased survivors' resilience, while India emphasized accountability for perpetrators, disruption of terror financing, and international cooperation. From the 2008 Mumbai attacks to Pulwama in 2019, New Delhi has combined memorializing victims with legal, diplomatic, financial, and military measures, aiming to deter future violence and ensure justice for survivors.

At the 60th UNHRC, civil society organization and NGOs have been making efforts to generate awareness and bring to the notice of the UN, the devastating cost of cross-border terrorism supported by Pakistan and India's efforts in countering it. On 19th September and 23rd September, two photo exhibitions at the iconic Broken Chair displayed the human cost of terrorism through the eyes of victims who have borne the brunt of cross border terrorism. The exhibition on 19th displayed the community resilience and courage in fighting the scourge of terrorism. Community led programs supported by an empathetic state forms a formidable human-centered challenge to communalism and terrorism. The message from Geneva was clear, the world must take note of the human cost of such violence and use its mechanism to hold sponsors and financiers of such repeated carnage accountable through a multi-pronged toolkit.

For more than three decades, India has been one of the world's most targeted democracies, repeatedly struck by mass-casualty attacks and cross-border violence. In response, New Delhi has framed a victim-first counterterrorism posture that blends support to survivors with accountability for perpetrators and their enablers especially when plots are traced to groups long reported by international media as operating from Pakistani soil, such as Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM). India's approach is to protect citizens, help victims rebuild, disrupt the financing and logistics of terror, and, when required, impose costs on those who shelter or direct militants. Pakistan routinely denies involvement; India's case relies on the record of specific attacks and designations recognized internationally.

India's emphasis on victims is visible after every major attack, none more so than the 2008 Mumbai assault that killed 166 people, including foreign nationals. A decade later, national leaders publicly led tributes and memorial observances for the victims and first responders, keeping survivors at the Centre of remembrance. Support also means pursuing accountability beyond India's borders when the accused are overseas. New Delhi's long campaign to bring suspects in the Mumbai case before Indian courts culminated this year in the U.S. extraditing Tahawwur Hussain Rana to India, after years of litigation, an outcome widely reported by the international press as a step toward redress for victims. Earlier, India executed the lone surviving gunman from the 2008 attacks, underscoring its commitment to closure for families shattered by terrorism.

India's position that key attacks stem from Pakistan-based groups is extensively reflected in international reporting. JeM publicly claimed the 2019 Pulwama suicide bombing in Kashmir that killed 40 Indian paramilitary personnel, an attack that precipitated one of the gravest crises in South Asia in recent years. LeT, for its part, has long been linked by global media and governments to the 2008 Mumbai carnage. While Pakistan disputes operational responsibility, sustained pressure has still produced some movement: Hafiz Saeed, accused by the United States of masterminding Mumbai, was convicted by a Pakistani court on terrorism-financing charges in 2020. In 2019, after years of lobbying by India and others, the UN Security Council listed JeM chief Masood Azhar as a "global terrorist." Each of these developments mattered to victims seeking acknowledgement and justice.

India's victim-centered approach coexists with a willingness to impose costs on terrorist infrastructure. Following attacks blamed on Pakistan-based militants, India has publicly acknowledged cross-border operations: the 2016 "surgical strikes" against alleged launch

pads after the Uri attack; the 2019 Balakot airstrikes following Pulwama; and in May 2025, strikes India said targeted nine sites inside Pakistan associated with LeT and JeM after the killing of 26 civilians in Kashmir. Pakistan has regularly denied responsibility for attacks and issued its own casualty claims. Even so, the international record shows India has shifted the deterrence equation, making clear it will not absorb mass-casualty attacks without response.

Victims' groups often stress that justice requires choking off the finances and pipelines that make attacks possible. India has pressed this case in multilateral forums, including efforts related to the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). Pakistan was removed from the FATF "grey list" in October 2022 after increased monitoring; Indian officials subsequently argued again in international media coverage for tougher financial scrutiny, citing ongoing concerns about facilitation networks across the border.

India has tightened laws and expanded investigative powers to pre-empt plots and prosecute offenders. Amendments to the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) in 2019 enabled authorities to designate individuals not just organizations as terrorists, a move by the government as necessary to stop operatives from simply rebranding. India has increasingly used diplomacy to keep victims at the Centre of counterterrorism conversations. Beyond bilateral pressure on Pakistan to act against proscribed actors, New Delhi has cultivated partnerships on intelligence, terror-finance tracking and online radicalization. In June 2025, for example, the United Kingdom and India discussed deeper counter-terrorism cooperation in the immediate aftermath of another India-Pakistan flareup, emphasizing joint work on finance, law enforcement and judicial coordination areas that directly affect whether victims see progress.

None of this unfolds in a vacuum. Pakistan denies state support for militants and contests India's claims around specific attacks and reprisals. International coverage of crises from Pulwama–Balakot in 2019 to the 2025 strikes shows competing narratives about targets, casualties and who fired first. For India, however, the through-line has been consistent: act to prevent the next attack, memorialize the dead, care for survivors, and keep international attention on the organizations and facilitators that repeatedly appear in investigations. For Indian victims, that mix of remembrance, justice and prevention is not optional, it is the minimal obligation of a state facing cross-border extremism.

India's record since Mumbai, and especially since Pulwama, shows a country that has placed victims of terrorism at the Centre of policy while broadening the toolkit legal, diplomatic, financial and, when necessary, military to confront an ecosystem of violence reported by international media to be anchored in Pakistan-based groups. Terror networks adapt, financing mutates, and political narratives collide. Yet by sustaining pressure on perpetrators and their sponsors, building coalitions on finance and technology, and ensuring that survivors are seen and supported, India has tried to move the arc of counterterrorism toward justice and deterrence so that fewer families, on either side of a border, ever have to become "victims" in the first place.

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