

Within the last year, several actions have been taken by the Indian government, both at Central and State levels, that have specifically impacted Muslims and resulted in a significant section of the public supporting the idea of Indian Muslims as invaders and threats to the nation. This report describes some of the major instances of these actions that have taken place within the last year.

In December 2019, the [Citizenship \(Amendment\) Act, 2019](#) was passed by the Indian Parliament, which aims to provide citizenship to migrants entering India after 2014, who had entered India from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan. This applied to Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians, conspicuously absent from which were Muslims. This led to large protests across India, some of which turned violent. The legislation was criticized for discriminating against Muslims, to which the [government responded](#) by stating that Muslims could seek refuge in Islamic Nations. Protestors were dealt with violence by the police, with a [video](#) surfacing in February showing the police, allegedly in pursuit of violent protesters, storming into the library of Jamia Millia Islamia University in New Delhi and assaulting students studying inside. A [Muslim school principal](#) was arrested on charges of sedition for organising a play in the school which criticised the new legislation. In addition to such incidents, a riot broke out in Northeast-Delhi between Hindus and Muslims in February. This started as a two-sided conflict between a Hindu group trying to eject Muslim protesters from a neighbourhood but soon escalated into large mobs of Hindus chanting Hindu nationalist slogans and hunting the streets for Muslims, leaving at least [46 dead](#), a majority of which were Muslims. Amidst this a [video](#) surfaced which showed policemen beating a group of Muslim men – one of whom died later due to injuries – and forcing them to sing the national anthem. The New York Times has reported that the Union Minister defended the police and called the violence in North-East Delhi part of a conspiracy which was linked to the Islamic State. Meanwhile, it reports that many Muslims in the neighbourhood continue to live in fear, as groups of Hindu men forcefully evict them.

Following the breakout of the COVID-19 pandemic, several cases of violence and discrimination were reported against Muslims in India over a conspiracy labelled '[corona jihad](#)'. This conspiracy was floated after a missionary Muslim group called [Tablighi Jamaat](#) held a large [congregation](#) of Indian and Malay Muslims in Delhi in March. This congregation is reported to have significantly impacted the spread of COVID-19 in India, according to the [Health Ministry](#), according to which it was responsible for nearly doubling the spread of the virus across Indian States. While there were controversies about the group having violated [coronavirus protocols](#), a large conspiracy grew out, accusing Muslims of deliberately spreading the virus to use it as a tool against non-Muslims. A wave of [fake videos](#) flooded social media alleging that Muslims in general were being advised to not wear masks and depicting a [Tablighi member coughing on a policeman](#). The TIME reported that hashtags such as #CoronaJihad and #TabhligiJamaatVirus became popular on Twitter, with the media

propagating ideas of #coronajihad to people. Indian Muslims were [stigmatised](#) with residents refusing to buy products from Muslims for the reason that it would be infected with the virus, along with Muslims being publicly assaulted and abused while also filming them, reported the New York Times. While this was exacerbated by certain members of the Jamaat who persistently refused to follow social distancing, the stigma against all Indian Muslims heightened to an extent that the [Supreme Court directed the Centre and Press Council of India](#) to produce a report on the mechanisms used to tackle the fake news and ensure that the incident does not get [communalised](#). The Health Ministry has additionally issued a [statement recognising the prejudice](#) against ‘certain communities and areas’ and the need to counter it.

Recently, another alleged method of jihad has gained traction in India called ‘love jihad.’ [A 2019 study](#) states that since at least 2009, certain activists and members of certain religious and political groups have vehemently pursued the notion that Muslim men seduce, convert and marry Hindu women for the sake of propagating Islam. The study revealed that the momentum for this has been steadily developing throughout the last decade. In January 2020, a Christian group, the [Syro-Malabar Church](#) in Kerala, also alleged that love jihad is taking place in ‘a planned manner targeting Christian girls’ and even recruiting them into Islamic terrorist groups. [4,000](#) such instances are alleged between 2005 and 2012. This conspiracy continues to be propagated by far-right Hindu groups even though the Central government, as recently as February 2020, clarified that there is [no legal definition of “love jihad”](#) and that no such cases have been officially reported by any Central agencies. Recently, the issue has gathered additional emphasis, to the extent that laws are being proposed and drafted against forceful conversions. The emphasis on love jihad has increased after an incident in September where a young woman in Haryana was murdered by a Muslim man who had allegedly forcefully attempted to begin a relationship with her. The deceased’s family alleged that the man [forced her to convert](#) to Islam. The Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister announced that anti-love jihad laws will be made, and the government has cleared [a draft ordinance](#) that checks ‘unlawful religious conversion’ and ‘inter-faith marriages with the sole intention of changing a girl’s religion.’ It has made the act punishable with an imprisonment of up to 10 years and declaring a marriage in contradiction of this law as null and void. It has also made all inter-faith marriages subject to seeking government approval before two days of the marriage. This has been urged to be in pursuance of ensuring justice for women and members of Scheduled Castes and Tribes. Other State governments such as [Haryana](#), [Madhya Pradesh](#) and [Karnataka](#) have also expressed an urgent need to pass such laws.