



Brief Pakistan Targets Sikhs, Gurdwara

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Key Takeaways

Escalation Timeline: Between 24 April and 7 May 2025 Pakistan shifted from sporadic small-arms to nightly barrages with 105 mm guns and 120 mm mortars across every LoC sector (Kupwara, Baramulla, Poonch, Rajouri, Naushera, Sunderbani and Akhnoor) shredding February 2021 cease-fire.

Civilian Toll Highest in Poonch: The May 7, Pakistani attacks on Balakote-Mendhar-Poonch areas killed *twelve* civilians including four children and several women and wounded roughly *fifty-seven* more, making it the deadliest single shelling incident in Kashmir since 2019.

Attack on Sikh Identity: Artillery attack by Pakistan on Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara confirms a pattern in which Pakistani fire is calibrated to terrorise one sacred Nishan Sahib at a time.

Turning it Religious: A direct hit on 19th-century Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara, alongside damage to a mosque and a Christian school, signals deliberate or reckless disregard for protected cultural property and plural worship.

Pattern to Shielding Terrorists: The artillery offensive coincided with India's *Operation Sindoor* against UN proscribed Lashkar-e-Taiba camps, reinforcing the long-standing assessment that Pakistan employs indirect fire to protect, resupply or divert attention from jihadist terrorists such as the Pahalgam attackers.

Red-Lines Crossed: Indiscriminate fire on civilian areas violates Common Article 3, Articles 51 & 85 of Additional Protocol I, the 1954 Hague Convention on Cultural Property and Pakistan's own pledge in the 2021 cease-fire communiqué.

Context

Pakistan's army began an unprecedented campaign of cross-border small arms and artillery bombardments into Jammu & Kashmir almost immediately after April 22, 2025 Pakistan backed terrorist attack in Pahalgam (which killed 25 Tourists, after ascertaining their Hindu faith)¹. By April 24, India had suspended the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty, and within hours Pakistan “resorted to unprovoked firing at various places along the LoC in J&K, starting from the Kashmir valley”².

Over next fortnight Pakistani Army positions opposite Kupwara, Baramulla, Poonch, Rajouri, Uri, Mendhar, Naushera, Sunderbani, and Akhnoor repeatedly raked Indian territory with small-arms bursts, mortar bombs, and artillery shells³—an open breach of the 2021 cease-fire understanding.^{4, 5}. Between 24 April and 7 May the firing became a nightly ritual, growing steadily heavier each evening. New Delhi logged every incident as a cease-fire violation; Islamabad, which has a long record of sheltering and sponsoring Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorists such as those behind the Pahalgam attack, offered only reflexive denials and made no attempt to restrain its forward batteries.



The worst-affected area was Poonch district, where Pakistani indiscriminate bombardments hit numerous villages (*Balakote, Mendhar, Mankote, Krishna Ghati, Gulpur, Kerni and Poonch town center*). In Poonch, school buildings, the town bus stand and multiple houses were struck by shells and mortar rounds⁶⁷. Officials reported *double-digit casualties*: At least 13 killed (including 4 children and 1 soldier) and 57 injured in Poonch on May 7⁸, while local police put the death toll at 12 (four of them children) with dozens hurt^{9, 10}. These figures included victims of the

¹ <https://www.reuters.com/world/india/india-launches-attack-9-sites-pakistan-pakistan-occupied-jammu-kashmir-2025-05-06/>

² <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/day-after-operation-sindoor-pakistan-continues-cross-border-firing-8359135>

³ <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/operation-sindoor-live-updates-jammu-and-kashmir-pahalgam-terror-attack-indian-army-military-strikes-pok-pakistan/liveblog/120950644.cms>

⁴ <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/pakistan-violates-loc-border-ceasefire-for-12th-day-army-retaliates-2720118-2025-05-06>

⁵ <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/day-after-operation-sindoor-pakistan-continues-cross-border-firing-8359135>

⁶ <https://www.rediff.com/news/report/civilians-killed-in-pakistan-shelling-in-j-k-post-op-sindoor/20250507.htm>

⁷ <https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/chandigarh-news/after-op-sindoor-12-civilians-killed-42-injured-in-pakistan-shelling-in-poonch-101746645291007.html>

⁸ <https://www.rediff.com/news/report/civilians-killed-in-pakistan-shelling-in-j-k-post-op-sindoor/20250507.htm#:~:text=At least 13 people, including,PoK, officials said on Wednesday>

⁹ <https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/chandigarh-news/after-op-sindoor-12-civilians-killed-42-injured-in-pakistan-shelling-in-poonch-101746645291007.html>

¹⁰ <https://www.rediff.com/news/report/civilians-killed-in-pakistan-shelling-in-j-k-post-op-sindoor/20250507.htm>

Gurdwara attack (below) and casualties in Uri (Baramulla) where 10 people were wounded¹¹. By late May 7 firing continued into night of May 7–8; Pakistan again shelled LoC sectors opposite Kupwara, Baramulla, Uri and Akhnoor¹² (using small arms, machine-guns, mortars and guns) though no further casualties were reported immediately.

¹¹ <https://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2025/May/07/ten-civilians-killed-40-injured-in-indiscriminate-firing-by-pakistan-army-across-loc-ib#>

¹² <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/day-after-operation-sindoor-pakistan-continues-cross-border-firing-8359135>

Shelling Poonch Sikh Gurdwara

In Poonch shelling on May 6–7, Pakistan’s Army targeted with artillery bombardments the Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha (*the Central Gurdwara” of the district*) late on May 7¹³. The shell detonated near the compound, smashing the door and shattering glass windows¹⁴. The attack when a group of Sikh worshippers and local residents were in the Gurdwara compound when the artillery shell hit. The resulting explosion killed at least three Sikh men instantly – later identified as Bhai Amreek Singh, Bhai Amarjeet Singh and Bhai Ranjit Singh¹⁵ and critically wounded others. In total, 15 people (*including four children*) were killed in the by Pakistan unprovoked artillery bombardments that day. Three of the dead were Sikh civilians from the Poonch Gurdwara Pakistani attack (a fourth Sikh, Ruby Kaur, a homemaker, was also killed). Numerous others – including bystanders from neighbouring Hindu and Muslim families – were wounded by shrapnel. Numerous houses, vehicles and buildings in the vicinity of the Gurdwara were likewise smashed by the shell blasts¹⁶



The Gurdwara struck in Poonch (Gurudwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha) is among the oldest Sikh temples in the region. It has served the local Sikh community for generations as a site of congregational worship and langar (free kitchen). According to local records, this Gurdwara dates to the era of the Sikh Empire (early 19th century) and is closely tied to Sikh pilgrim’s history in Kashmir. Sikh holy sites in Jammu & Kashmir, such as Nangali Sahib (Poonch), Gurudwara Tapiana Sahib (Anantnag) and Gurudwara Chatti Padshahi (Gurez), are revered as having been visited by Sikh Gurus or their followers. They form a small but historic minority presence (Sikhs comprise roughly 2–3% of J&K’s

¹³ <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/operation-sindoor-live-updates-jammu-and-kashmir-pahalgam-terror-attack-indian-army-military-strikes-pok-pakistan/liveblog/120950644.cms>

¹⁴ <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/operation-sindoor-live-updates-jammu-and-kashmir-pahalgam-terror-attack-indian-army-military-strikes-pok-pakistan/liveblog/120950644.cms#:~:text=The shell hit one corner,the region has been grim>

¹⁵ <https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/chandigarh/sikh-hymn-singer-tabla-player-shopkeeper-homemaker-killed-shelling-9989146/>

¹⁶ <https://www.rediff.com/news/report/civilians-killed-in-pakistan-shelling-in-j-k-post-op-sindoor/20250507.htm#:~:text=Hundreds of residents were forced,district and Rajouri in Jammu>

population). Pakistan attacking any such Gurdwara is thus laden with symbolic as well as material significance.

This attack on the Gurdwara prompted an outcry among Sikh community leaders. Shiromani Akali Dal chief Sukhbir Singh Badal condemned the shelling of the “sacred Central Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha Sahib in Poonch” as “inhuman”¹⁷. The mosque-seminary in Poonch town was also hit, as was a Christian school¹⁸, underscoring that Pakistan’s fire did not discriminate by faith. In response, the Indian Army said it was conducting proportionate retaliation on Pakistani firing points (and in fact reported counter-battery fire that destroyed several Pakistani posts)¹⁹.

¹⁷ <https://www.rediff.com/news/report/civilians-killed-in-pakistan-shelling-in-j-k-post-op-sindoor/20250507.htm>

¹⁸ <https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/chandigarh-news/after-op-sindoor-12-civilians-killed-42-injured-in-pakistan-shelling-in-poonch-101746645291007.html>

¹⁹ <https://www.rediff.com/news/report/civilians-killed-in-pakistan-shelling-in-j-k-post-op-sindoor/20250507.htm>

Casualties of Attack

The known civilian fatalities from this shelling are listed below (all were killed on May 7, 2025 in the Gurdwara Attacks):

| Name | Description |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Amreek (Amrik) Singh | 39-year-old raagi (Sikh hymn singer) and shopkeeper |
| Amarjeet Singh | 50-year-old ex-army soldier (granthi / tabla player at the Gurdwara) |
| Ranjit Singh | ~30-year-old shopkeeper (unmarried) |
| Ruby Kaur | Homemaker (married woman) killed near Gurdwara |

Each of these Sikh victims lost their life in Pakistan's cross-border bombardment of Poonch town. Officials and media reports confirm their names and identities. The deliberate shelling of a house of worship thus had a clear human cost to the community.



Cross-Border Shelling Timeline and Munitions

From late April 2025 to the present, highlighting dates, locations, targets and casualties. It shows a sharp escalation after Pahalgam terror attack and India's May 7 "Operation Sindoor". Pakistani forces primarily employed heavy mortar and artillery rounds along with automatic weapons fire, against forward villages and installations²⁰. **In most cases the targets were civilian homes, villages, local infrastructure with no declared military objectives.**

| Date (2025) | Sector / Location | Nature of Target | Civilian Casualties (Killed / Injured)† | Munitions Used |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| 24 – 30 Apr | Kupwara & Baramulla Valley fronts; parts of Poonch/Uri | Indian forward posts & border villages (night harassing fire) | 0 / 0 (structural damage only) | Repeating small-arms bursts; light 51 / 60 mm mortars |
| 5 – 6 May (night) | Kupwara, Baramulla, Poonch, Rajouri, Mendhar, Naushera, Sunderbani, Akhnoor | Border posts & scattered hamlets | 0 / 0 (no casualties reported) | 7.62 mm & 5.56 mm rifles, LMGs |
| 6 – 7 May (Post-OPSindoor) | Karnah sector, Kupwara | Forward civilian villages (shelled after midnight) | 0 / 0 (villagers evacuated) | 82 mm & 120 mm mortar bombs, sporadic artillery |
| 6 – 7 May | Uri sector (Baramulla) & Tangdhar | Villages & border posts | 0 / ≈10 inj. (5 children) | Medium mortars & field-gun shells |

²⁰ <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/civilians-killed-pakistan-artillery-fire-operation-sindoor-9987154/>

| | | | | |
|---------------------------------|--|---|---|--|
| 7 May (morning–noon) | Poonch district – Balakote, Mendhar, Mankote, Krishna Ghati, Gulpur, Kerni & Poonch- town (incl. Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha) | Thickly populated villages, a Gurdwara, mosque, school & bus stand | 12 killed / ≈57 injured • Balvinder “Ruby” Kour (33) • Mohd Zain Khan (10) • Zoya Khan (12) • Mohd Akram (40) • Amrik Singh (55) • Mohd Iqbal (45) • Ranjit Singh (48) • Shakeela Bi (40) • Amarjeet Singh (47) • Maryam Khatoon (7) • Vihaan Bhargav (13) • Mohd Rafi (40) | Heavy 105 mm artillery, 120 mm & 81 mm mortars |
| 7 May (concurrent) | Rajouri district (Mendhar sector villages) | Hamlet clusters | 0 / 3 injured | Mortar/artillery splinters |
| 7 May (overnight) | Uri–Baramulla rim, Kupwara & Akhnoor | Forward villages & outposts (sporadic follow-up fire) | 0 / 0 | Small-arms, intermittent gun- shells |

† Multiple attacks combined.

Each row above corresponds to one or more Pakistani artillery attacks documented in the press. The early violations (late April to May 4) featured mostly small-arms bursts and occasional mortar fire²¹.



By May 6–7, Pakistan escalated to sustained **artillery bombardments**. Press accounts explicitly note “one of the most intense artillery and mortar shelling in years” in forward J&K villages. Pakistani forces reportedly deployed medium artillery batteries (e.g. 105mm howitzers) and heavy mortars (82mm and 120mm bombs), plus heavy machine-gun fire, against civilian-populated areas²². (India’s armed forces responded with counter-battery fire on Pakistani positions.) By May 8, Pakistani posts remained active: Pakistan Army sources confirmed they continued “unprovoked fire using small arms and artillery guns” opposite Kupwara, Baramulla, Uri and Akhnoor²³.

The Pakistani shelling campaign has serious humanitarian and legal ramifications. As detailed above, numerous **civilians** were killed or injured (men, women and children), and hundreds more displaced. Border villagers fled to bunkers and safe zones²⁴. Schools, marketplaces and places of worship (mosques, a church and a Sikh Gurdwara) came under fire, undermining basic security of civilians. The Gurdwara in Poonch – a center of worship visited by congregants daily – had no military role, so the intentional artillery strike contravened the duty to distinguish civilian and military objects, the Gurdwara attack and the shelling of homes and religious schools violate the principle of distinction and the prohibition on indiscriminate force. The Pakistani attack has exacerbated fear among local civilians. Sikh leaders and Indian political figures have publicly noted that targeting a Gurdwara, especially with worshippers present – amounts to a grave violation of both human and religious rights.

Humanitarian consequences of this shelling are severe. Over a dozen civilians dead, dozens wounded, and many more traumatised and homeless. Gurdwaras and temples being shelled instills fear that no place is safe, chilling religious practice. Immediately after the attack, local authorities

²¹ <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/pakistan-violates-loc-border-ceasefire-for-12th-day-army-retaliates-2720118-2025-05-06>

²² <https://www.rediff.com/news/report/civilians-killed-in-pakistan-shelling-in-j-k-post-op-sindoor/20250507.htm>

²³ <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/day-after-operation-sindoor-pakistan-continues-cross-border-firing-8359135>

²⁴ <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/heavy-shelling-by-pakistan-on-loc-srinagar-airport-closed-101746573759455.html#>

evacuated villagers to safer zones and shut schools in border areas. *The Akal Takht (Sikh temporal authority) condemned the attack.*²⁵ *Politician Manjinder Sirsa criticizes the assault on the Gurudwara in Poonch by Pakistan, stating "Indian govt will take revenge for this wicked act"*²⁶

²⁵ <https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/chandigarh-news/akal-takht-condemns-pakistani-shelling-on-poonch-gurdwara-101746618580483.html>

²⁶ <https://www.aninews.in/news/national/general-news/indian-govt-will-take-revenge-for-this-wicked-act-manjinder-sirsa-condemns-poonch-gurudwara-attack-by-pak20250508103336/>

Concluding Observations

Pakistan's deliberate escalation, from sporadic rifle bursts to saturation barrages with 105 mm guns and 120 mm mortars, cannot be dismissed as routine "cease-fire violations." It is a systematic assault on civilians and on the very idea of plural worship along the LoC. The strike that shattered Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara, stilled a schoolyard, and ripped through homes in Balakote and Mendhar was not a battlefield mis-calculation; it was the foreseeable outcome of a command climate that for decades has sheltered and weaponised Lashkar-e-Taiba and its clones.

In targeting a centuries-old Gurdwara and killing Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs alike, Islamabad has breached every red line in the Geneva Conventions, the 1954 Hague cultural-property rules, and the February 2021 Indo-Pak cease-fire accord. New Delhi has responded with calibrated counter-battery fire; that is necessary but not sufficient. The international community must now treat Pakistan's artillery offensive for what it is: state-facilitated terror by indirect fire.

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