

REPORT 2025

HATE SPEECH EVENTS IN INDIA





The India Hate Lab (IHL) is a project of the Center for the Study of Organized Hate (CSOH), nonprofit, nonpartisan think tank based in Washington, D.C. CSOH advances evidence-driven research and develops policy pathways to counter hate, violence, extremism, radicalism, and online harms.

Our work is rooted in the vision of building inclusive, resilient, and strengthening collective responses to organized hate and online harms through research, strategic partnerships, and community engagement.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The year 2025 inaugurated a profoundly disturbing phase in the trajectory of anti-minority rhetoric in India, reflecting a new baseline of permissiveness for the public expression of hate. This report documents and analyzes verified instances of in-person hate speech events across the country in 2025, including political rallies, religious processions, protest marches, and nationalist gatherings. Following the unprecedented surge in hate speech observed in 2024, the total volume of hate speech events in 2025 climbed further, indicating the deep entrenchment of sectarian rhetoric as a routine feature of India's political and social landscape. The number of recorded hate speech incidents targeting religious minorities in 2025 surpassed the 1,165 instances documented in 2024. This increase signals a significant shift in India's political landscape, in which inflammatory rhetoric has evolved from a campaign-specific tactic into a normalized and continuously deployed mechanism of political governance. Such rhetoric now functions as a round-the-clock instrument for Hindu far-right mobilization on the ground.

The sustained intensity of hate speech in 2025 was anchored in the majoritarian ideological project of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its allied Hindu nationalist organizations. Our 2024 report highlighted that top-level national BJP leaders had increasingly moved to the forefront of hate speech propagation. The year 2025 saw the consolidation and cementing of this trend, establishing a top-down sanction for engendering communal hostility that flowed all the way down to the level of grassroots organizing and politics. The high-stakes Delhi and Bihar state elections and local body polls were key catalysts for this shift, serving as new theaters for the repeated deployment of exclusionary and fear-mongering narratives. Concomitantly, the enactment of new local legislative measures, such as the proposed Karnataka Hate Speech and Hate Crimes (Prevention) Bill, 2025, underscored a growing, if fragmented, state-level recognition of the severity of the issue, even as the rhetoric continued unabated at the national level.

Hate speech in 2025 can be understood as evolving within a political and social environment shaped by a decade of intensifying Hindu nationalist mobilization. State and national leaders of political parties and affiliated Hindu nationalist groups, religious figures, and local influencers drew on well-entrenched fear-mongering and scapegoating narratives that depicted Muslims and Christians as disloyal, anti-national, dangerous, or demographically threatening. These narratives, once confined to the margins, have now become central to public discourse, shaping electoral strategies, community organizing, and national debates on national identity and security.

The content of hate speech at in-person events in 2025 continued to reflect core Hindu nationalist tropes — centrally, the idea of Muslims as perpetual outsiders and an existential threat to the Hindu-majority nation. This core ideological proposition was kept on the boil by a host of conspiracy theories, including allegations of assorted projects of Jihad undertaken by Muslim Indians. These narratives were designed to paint minorities as organized aggressors intent on eviscerating Hindu culture, demographic dominance, and wealth. The narratives psychologically reinforce the content of conspiracy theories as the self-evident truth within the majority consciousness. This rhetoric is then almost immediately translated into policy initiatives, legitimizing aggressive measures to counter “love jihad” by Muslims and mass forced conversions of Hindus by Christians. The rebranding of baseless theories and conspiracies as fact has already provided the BJP with the political leverage necessary for the passage of highly restrictive anti-conversion laws in several Indian states where it holds power. These laws, unsurprisingly, have been instantly weaponized to target and harass members of Indian minority religious communities. Similarly, the large-scale dissemination of conspiracies of “halal jihad” and “thook jihad” (spit Jihad, the allegation that Muslims deliberately spit in food that Hindus will consume) is a deliberate strategy to manufacture an environment of perpetual Hindu victimhood and to enable the passage of anti-minority laws to ostensibly address these imagined threats. This entire rhetorical apparatus is strategically designed to provide the political and social justification necessary to institutionalize the systemic persecution of Muslim and Christian minorities through policy changes, legislative action, and state power.

Patterns of inflammatory rhetoric in 2025, benchmarked against earlier years, revealed a steady progression toward more overt incitement. The report notes the persistent prevalence of dangerous speech (defined as speech that elevates the risk of violence) with political leaders and far-right figures openly using dehumanizing language, urging economic boycotts, calling for the destruction of minority-owned properties and places of worship, and issuing explicit appeals for Hindus to arm themselves given the threat of Muslims.

The ecosystem of hate maintained its highly organized character in 2025. As in the preceding year, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) affiliates such as the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and the Bajrang Dal were central drivers of in-person hate speech events. Complementing these organizations, other far-right groups, including the Antarrashtriya Hindu Parishad, Rashtriya Bajrang Dal, Sakal Hindu Samaj, and the Hindu Janajagruti Samiti (HJS), also played a significant role as architects and facilitators of hate-speech mobilization.

Speeches by members of these organizations were disseminated widely via social media, enabling the proceedings of hyper-local events to be viewed nationally within minutes. The result was a dense, interconnected, and highly mediated ecosystem of hate dissemination in which national leaders set the overarching narrative frames of hate while local actors adapted and amplified them for consumption by local audiences and communities.

Social media platforms, especially Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and X (formerly Twitter), played a critical role in enabling the smooth functioning of this ecosystem of hate. The majority of the hate speech events documented in 2025 were captured in videos that originated or circulated widely online. Live streams of such speeches facilitated their nationwide dissemination, squarely contradicting social media platform policies that purport to prohibit hate speech. The documented failure of the platforms to enforce anti-hate policies created an environment of digital impunity, ensuring the rapid and widespread circulation of the most extreme anti-minority content.

Overall, the patterns identified in this report signify a new and perilous era of entrenchment and institutional normalization of hate speech in India. The political project of Hindu nationalism has fully absorbed hate speech into its operational machinery, legitimizing it as a necessary and intrinsic part of political discourse and public life. The relentless escalation of this trend from the already grave baseline levels documented in the 2023 and 2024 reporting periods marks a significant debasement of the national societal and political climate.

In this transformed environment in India, increasingly egregious expressions of anti-minority animosity are actively sanctioned and endorsed by the nation's most powerful political figures and top offices. Such sentiments are further amplified across digital platforms due to the conspicuous lack of institutional will on the part of social media companies to enforce their own community standards, which routinely substitute meaningful action with empty rhetoric and cosmetic interventions.

The strategic deployment of hate speech functions to systematically polarize the electorate, consolidate the Hindu majoritarian base, and manufacture consent for further exclusionary policies. This state of affairs renders India's Muslim and Christian minority communities increasingly vulnerable to systemic harassment, discrimination, hostility, and acts of physical violence.

2. KEY FINDINGS

- India Hate Lab (IHL) documented 1,318 hate speech events targeting religious minorities, particularly Muslims and Christians, in 2025 across 21 states, one union territory, and the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi. On average, four hate speech events occurred per day. This marks a 13% increase from 2024, and 97% increase from 2023, when 668 such incidents were recorded.
- A total of 1,289 speeches, or 98 percent, targeted Muslims, either explicitly in 1,156 cases or alongside Christians in 133 cases. This represents an increase of nearly 12 percent from the 1,147 instances recorded in 2024.
- Hate speech targeting Christians was recorded in 162 incidents, accounting for 12 percent of all events, either explicitly in 29 cases or alongside Muslims in 133 cases. This represents a nearly 41 percent increase from the 115 anti-Christian hate speech incidents documented in 2024.
- Uttar Pradesh (266), Maharashtra (193), Madhya Pradesh (172), Uttarakhand (155), and Delhi (76) recorded the highest number of hate speech events. Across the 23 states and Union Territories analyzed, the BJP held power, either independently or as part of a coalition, in 16 jurisdictions for most of the year.
- 1,164 hate speech incidents (88 percent) occurred in states governed by the BJP, either directly or with coalition partners, as well as in BJP-administered Union Territories, reflecting a 25 percent increase from the 931 incidents recorded in 2024.
- Seven opposition-ruled states recorded 154 hate speech events in 2025, a 34 percent decrease from the 234 incidents documented in these states in 2024.
- April recorded the highest monthly spike, with 158 hate speech events coinciding with Ram Navami processions and hate rallies organized in response to the Pahalgam terror attack.
- In the 16-day period between April 22 and May 7, following the Pahalgam attack and preceding active hostilities between India and Pakistan, 98 in-person hate speech events were documented, indicating rapid and nationwide anti-Muslim mobilization.
- 656 hate speeches (nearly 50 percent) referenced conspiracy theories, including “love jihad,” “land jihad,” “population jihad,” “thook (spit) jihad,” “education jihad,” “drug jihad,” and “vote jihad,” representing a 13 percent increase from the previous year.
- 308 speeches (23 percent) contained explicit calls for violence, while 136 speeches included direct calls to arms. Calls for violence increased by 19 percent, and calls for social or economic boycotts rose by 8 percent from 2024.

- Maharashtra recorded the highest number of dangerous speeches, with 78 incidents, up from 64 in 2024. Nearly 40 percent of the state's 193 hate speech events involved explicit calls for violence, the highest proportion recorded for any state.
- Among individuals delivering the most dangerous speeches, Maharashtra minister Nitesh Rane ranked among the top five actors issuing calls to violence.
- 120 hate speeches explicitly called for social or economic boycotts of minority communities, primarily Muslims, reflecting an 8 percent increase from 2024.
- 276 speeches called for the removal or destruction of places of worship, including mosques, shrines, and churches. The most frequently targeted sites in 2025 were the Gyanvapi Mosque and the Shahi Idgah Mosque in Uttar Pradesh.
- Dehumanizing language appeared in 141 speeches, with minorities described using terms such as "termites," "parasites," "insects," "pigs," "mad dogs," "snakelings," "green snakes," and "bloodthirsty zombies."
- Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and Bajrang Dal emerged as the most frequent organizers, linked to 289 hate speech events (22 percent), followed by Antarrashtriya Hindu Parishad (138 events). More than 160 organizations and informal groups were identified as organizers or co-organizers in 2025.
- Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami emerged as the most prolific hate-speech actor in 2025, with 71 speeches, followed by Antarrashtriya Hindu Parishad chief Pravin Togadia (46) and BJP leader Ashwini Upadhyay (35).
- Hindu monks and religious leaders were involved in 145 hate speech incidents, a 27 percent increase from 2024, continuing to provide religious legitimacy to anti-minority rhetoric.
- 69 hate speech events targeted Rohingya refugees, while 192 speeches invoked the "Bangladeshi infiltrator" trope, frequently used to stigmatize Bengali-origin Muslims as foreigners.
- Videos from 1,278 of the 1,318 hate speech events were first shared or live-streamed on social media platforms. Facebook accounted for 942 of first uploads, followed by YouTube (246), Instagram (67), and X (23), highlighting the central role of social media in amplifying hate speech.

3. METHODOLOGY

To classify any speech at an event or rally as hate speech, we used the United Nations framework¹, which characterizes hate speech as:

“Any kind of communication in speech, writing, or behaviour, that attacks or uses pejorative or discriminatory language with reference to a person or a group on the basis of who they are, in other words, based on their religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, colour, descent, gender or other identity factor.”

This definition, widely used by organizations and scholars² to study hate speech, provides a foundational framework for our analysis. We classify dangerous speech as a distinct subset of hate speech. Drawing from the Dangerous Speech Project (DSP), which defines³ dangerous speech as communication that "can increase the risk that its audience will condone or participate in violence against members of another group," we emphasize its role in the proliferation of narratives that justify and promote violence as an essential and critical action.

At the heart of our typology is the understanding that hate speech should never be misunderstood as merely the outpouring of outrage from sections of an aggrieved community. This “myth of spontaneous rage⁴” often masks the strategic planning and intent employed by entrepreneurial merchants of hate who effectively harvest outrage and indignation through narratives of victimhood to mobilize and justify the vilification and victimization of targeted minority groups. We thus argue that, in order to truly comprehend the depth and impact of hate speech in India, one needs to understand how narratives of victimhood and victimization can be employed to incite fear and hate toward minority communities.

Within the Indian context, hate speech manifests in multiple forms, including the use of discriminatory and dehumanizing language directed at minorities—particularly Muslims, Christians, and other marginalized groups. It also includes the propagation of "jihad"-based and other conspiracy theories (see below), direct calls for violence, calls to seize, remove, or destroy places of worship, calls to arms, and advocacy for economic or social boycotts. The bogey of large-scale "Bangladeshi infiltration" and "Rohingya infiltration" is frequently invoked to question the citizenship and legitimacy of national belonging of India's Muslim citizens.

To ensure methodological rigor in our analysis of hate speech events in India, we also adopt the Rabat Plan of Action's six-part threshold test, articulated⁵ by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN Human Rights Office) and derived from Article 20(2) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to determine

whether hate speech meets the legal threshold for incitement to discrimination, hostility, or violence.⁷

The six factors include:

- 1. Context:** Assessing the broader social and political environment at the time the speech was delivered, including how these contextual factors influenced the speech's impact and intent.
- 2. Speaker:** Considering the speaker's history and role in society, particularly their relationship to the audience and their capacity towards mobilization and influence in society.
- 3. Intent:** Determining whether the speech was deliberately employed to incite fear, hate, and harm. Discerning intent ensures that negligence and recklessness do not meet the threshold for hate speech, requiring instead a thread of resolve linking speech, audience, and the targeted community.
- 4. Content and Form:** Evaluating the provocative content of the speech, its calls towards fear and hate, including the employment of conspiracy theories, as well as its rhetorical style and arguments to determine whether it constitutes incitement.
- 5. Extent of the Speech:** Analyzing the reach and diffusion of the speech, including the size of the audience, the platforms used, and the frequency of communication. This helps evaluate the potency of hate speech incidents.
- 6. Likelihood and Imminence:** Determining the probability that the speech would lead to acts of violence, with a focus on the immediacy of the risk of harm towards targeted communities.

We adopt the Rabat threshold to ensure methodological rigor and to analyze hate speech events within India in a structured and systematic manner. To achieve this, we employ a wide range of methods to track, document, and verify hate speech events and gatherings.

Our approach includes monitoring and tracking Hindu far-right groups and affiliated political actors and leaders at both national and local levels by observing their daily activities on various social media platforms. We collect data on hate speech incidents reported by local, regional, and national newspapers, websites, and channels. Furthermore, we rely on a well-established network of activists and journalists across India who collate and report hate speech incidents with supporting evidence, ensuring a comprehensive and verifiable documentation process.

We utilize data scraping techniques, leveraging keywords in multiple regional languages across platforms such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), YouTube, Instagram, and Telegram to extract videos and live streams of hate speech events and rallies.

Once collected, each video undergoes a rigorous authentication and verification process, during which we confirm the precise location of the hate speech event and the recording date while cross-referencing the event with at least two independent sources, including news reports. The verified data is then compiled into a comprehensive database of hate speech events, systematically mapped by state, involved organizations, speaker identity, and speaker affiliation. Finally, we conduct a detailed narrative analysis, categorizing the content into distinct yet overlapping classifications to ensure a structured, methodical approach to analyzing key themes and narratives of hate speech (refer to the box below).

These categories include the use of “jihad”-based conspiracy theories, calls for violence, calls to arms, calls for social or economic boycott, calls to seize, remove, or destroy places of worship, dehumanizing references, speeches targeting Rohingya refugees living in India, and speeches invoking the “Bangladeshi infiltrator” bogey.

The "jihad"-based conspiracy theories represent some of the most prevalent hateful narratives within the Indian Hindu nationalist ecosystem. These include:

Love Jihad: A baseless conspiracy theory claiming that Muslim men deliberately deceive Hindu women into marriage in order to forcibly convert them to Islam and advance Muslim demographic or political dominance in India.

Land Jihad: A baseless conspiracy theory claiming that Muslims systematically encroach upon public, forest, or government land by constructing religious structures or organizing mass prayers as part of a coordinated territorial expansion strategy.

Vote Jihad: Promoted by Prime Minister Modi⁶, this baseless conspiracy theory claims that Muslims in India strategically vote as a block to manipulate elections, increase their political influence, and weaken Hindu dominance.

Population Jihad: A baseless conspiracy theory claiming that Muslims are engaged in a coordinated effort to outnumber Hindus demographically, often linked to “Great Replacement” narratives, despite Muslims constituting roughly 14 percent of India’s population.

Education Jihad: A baseless conspiracy theory claiming that Muslims are systematically infiltrating schools, colleges, and universities to alter curricula, indoctrinate students with Islamic perspectives, and marginalize Hindu history and identity.

UPSC Jihad: A baseless conspiracy theory claiming that Muslims manipulate civil service examinations to disproportionately infiltrate India's bureaucracy and capture state institutions.

Rail Jihad: A baseless conspiracy theory falsely accusing Muslims of deliberately sabotaging railway infrastructure by placing objects on tracks in order to cause train accidents and mass casualties.

Economic Jihad: A baseless conspiracy theory claiming that Muslim traders, businesses, or consumers collectively conspire to economically weaken Hindus through boycotts, monopolies, or coordinated market manipulation.

Halal Jihad: A baseless conspiracy theory that halal certification is a covert scheme to undermine Hindus, damage the Indian economy, and funnel money toward extremist activities or terrorism.

Mazar Jihad: A baseless conspiracy theory that Muslims deliberately construct shrines (mazars) on public or protected land as part of a strategy of territorial expansion and religious domination.

Thook Jihad: A baseless conspiracy theory that Muslims intentionally spit in food served to Hindus in order to contaminate it or spread disease.

Fertilizer Jihad: A baseless conspiracy theory that Muslim farmers intentionally use excessive chemical fertilizers to degrade soil quality and harm agricultural sustainability.

Drug Jihad: A baseless conspiracy theory that Muslim men deliberately distribute drugs to Hindu youth to addict, corrupt, or weaken Hindu society as part of a broader plot.

These narratives continue to evolve as far-right groups and the ruling BJP increasingly frame any expression of Muslim faith or activity as part of a larger, systematic effort aimed at undermining Hindu interests.

Despite the comprehensive methods employed, challenges persist in detecting and analyzing hate speech, and we acknowledge that our dataset is not exhaustive nor a complete account of hate speech events in India in 2025. Many hate speech events and incidents lack a digital imprint or involve unverifiable content. Furthermore, implicit messaging and indirect provocations through dog whistling is commonplace in many speech events but are difficult to identify, verify, and authenticate with certainty. The dynamic nature of hate speech and its constantly evolving rhetoric also necessitates the continuous adaptation of methods and categories.

Together, these challenges contribute to the inevitability of data gaps. As such, while we are convinced that this report provides valuable and critical insights into the patterns and proliferation of hate speech in India in 2025, we also acknowledge its limitations. We will continue to strive to further evolve our research methods, ensuring that our work remains rigorous, comprehensive, and relevant.

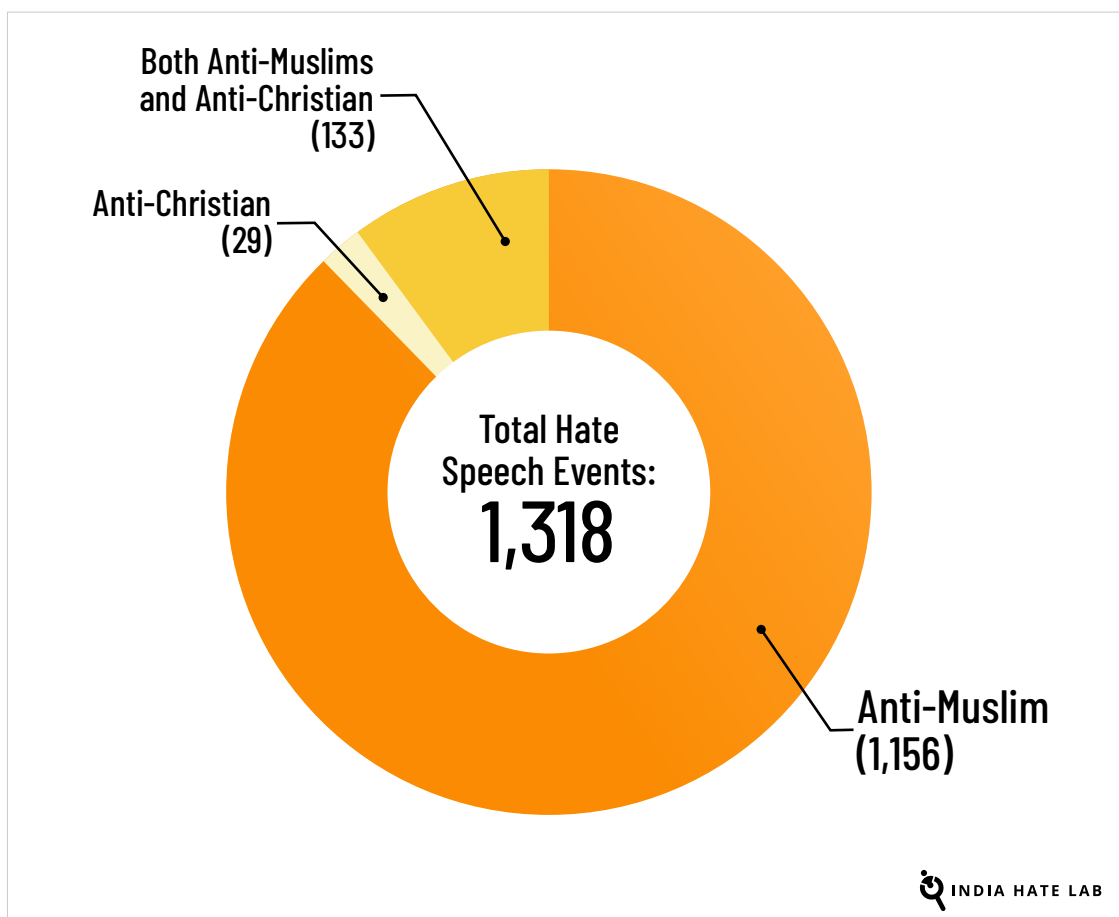
4. HATE SPEECH TRENDS IN 2025

4.1 TARGETS OF HATE SPEECH

In 2025, the India Hate Lab (IHL) documented 1,318 instances of hate speech delivered at in-person events. Religious minorities were the primary targets of these speeches, with 1,289 incidents, or 98 percent, targeting Muslims, either explicitly in 1,156 cases or alongside Christians in 133 cases. Hate speech targeting Christians was recorded in 162 incidents, or 12 percent, either explicitly in 29 cases or alongside Muslims in 133 cases.

As these figures indicate, there is overlap, as many events and gatherings featured hate speech directed at both Muslims and Christians.

FIGURE 1: BREAKDOWN OF HATE SPEECH BY TARGETED COMMUNITIES



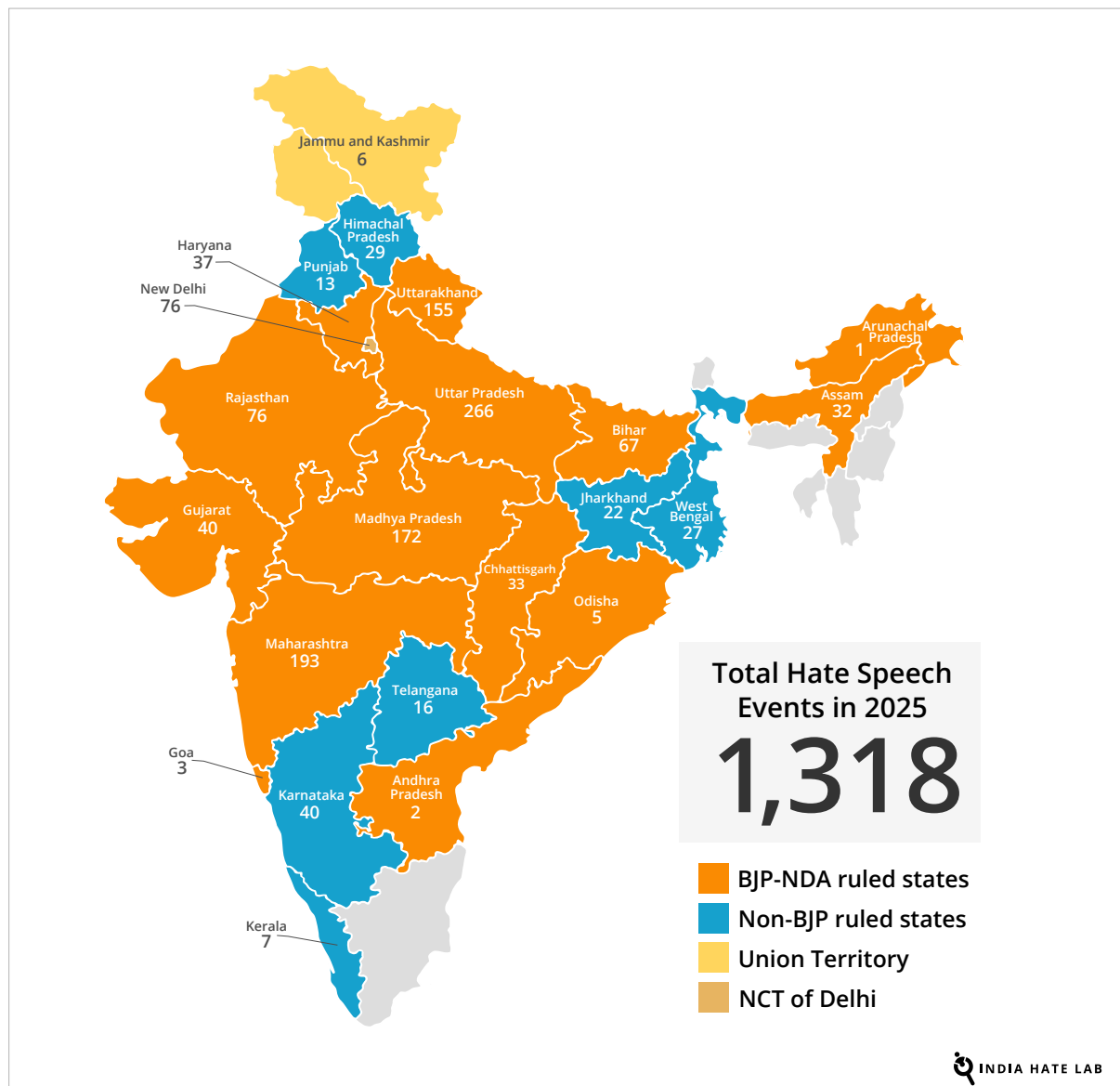
Additionally, 69 hate speech events targeted Rohingya refugees, while 192 speeches invoked the “Bangladeshi infiltrator” bogey. In the Indian context, the term “Bangladeshi” has been transformed into a slur and is frequently deployed by Hindu far-right leaders, groups, and ruling-Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) politicians as a dog whistle to refer to

Indian Muslims, particularly those of Bengali-origin from West Bengal or Assam, falsely labelling them as foreigners “illegally” residing in India.

Like in the previous years, the hate speech events and gatherings in 2025 remained geographically dispersed across India, even as most incidents remained concentrated in the country's northern, central, and western regions.

Overall, 1,318 documented instances of hate speech at in-person events occurred across 21 states, one union territory, and the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi.

FIGURE 2: HATE SPEECH TRENDS ACROSS STATES AND UNION TERRITORIES



The top-ranking states in 2025 largely mirrored the trends observed in 2024, though several states recorded notable spikes. Among the 21 states analyzed, Uttar Pradesh, India’s most populous state recorded the highest number of hate speech events, with 266

incidents, accounting for 20 percent of the total. This represents an increase of nearly 10 percent from the 242 events recorded in 2024 and a 156 percent increase from the 104 events documented in 2023. This escalation is particularly significant given that 2025 was not an election year in Uttar Pradesh, unlike 2024, when the state voted in the general elections. The prevalence of hate speech in Uttar Pradesh is not unexpected, given that the state is governed by Yogi Adityanath, who ranked first among all political and far-right leaders in delivering hate speeches in 2024 and continued to deliver multiple hate speeches in 2025, both within the state and elsewhere in the country. Out of 266 hate speeches in Uttar Pradesh, 227 were explicitly anti-Muslim, 34 targeted both Christians and Muslims, and five were explicitly anti-Christian.

Monthly data from Uttar Pradesh reveals a sustained baseline of hate speech throughout 2025, with incidents ranging between 11 and 35 events per month, indicating continuous mobilization. Two significant surges were observed during the year. The first spike occurred in August, coinciding with a series of Akhand Bharat Sankalp Diwas (Pledge Day for an Undivided India) events organized by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad-Bajrang Dal (VHP-Bajrang Dal). Akhand Bharat Sankalp Diwas is an ideological mobilization linked to the concept of Akhand Bharat, which promotes a Hindu-majoritarian vision of an undivided polity extending beyond India's current borders.

The second spike was recorded in October, when far-right religious leaders Madhuram Sharan Shiva, who leads a militant monk group called Shiv Shakti Akhada⁷ and militant priest Yati Narsinghanand Saraswati⁸ organized rallies and addressed multiple gatherings, contributing to a sharp rise in hate speech incidents during that period.

Maharashtra, India's second most populous state, recorded the second-highest number of hate speech incidents in 2025, with 193 documented events, accounting for approximately 15 percent of the total dataset. This figure represents only a marginal decline from 2024, when 210 incidents were recorded during an election year that included both general elections earlier in the year and state elections in November 2024.

The persistence of such high levels of hate speech in a non-election year marks a concerning shift. Rather than receding after the electoral cycle, hate speech in Maharashtra remained elevated, indicating the normalization of anti-minority hate speech and incitement to violence beyond campaign periods. When compared to 2023, also a non-election year, during which 118 incidents were recorded, the 2025 data reflects a 64 percent increase in hate speech events. This sustained escalation in the absence of electoral pressure points to a dangerous trend in which organized hate speech has become entrenched as a routine feature of the state's political and social landscape.

Out of 193 hate speeches, 169 were explicitly anti-Muslim, and 22 targeted both Christians and Muslims, while two were explicitly anti-Christian.

Monthly data from Maharashtra reveals distinct spikes in February, March, and April, each corresponding to specific mobilizing events and episodes of communal tension.

Hate speech incidents first peaked in February, with 23 recorded events, largely linked to mobilizations such as the Hindu Jan Akrosh Morcha and Hindu Dharma Sabha events organized by Sakal Hindu Samaj, a far-right coalition of Hindu far-right groups. The number of incidents rose further in March, reaching 29 events, following communal riots in Nagpur triggered by a campaign led by VHP–Bajrang Dal demanding the removal of the tomb of the 17th-century Mughal ruler Aurangzeb⁹. The controversy around the grave’s excavation and removal sparked statewide protests and rallies, many of which featured inflammatory anti-Muslim speeches.

Hate speech escalated again in April, peaking at 33 events, primarily during protests organized in response to the Pahalgam terror attack, a pattern that was observed nationally and is discussed in greater detail in a separate section of this report.

Following April, hate speech incidents in Maharashtra stabilized but remained elevated, fluctuating between 5 and 22 events per month, indicating a sustained baseline of communal mobilization.

Madhya Pradesh ranked third, with 172 hate speech events in 2025, representing a sharp increase of 75 percent from 98 hate speech incidents in 2024 and a 165 percent increase from 65 incidents in 2023. Uttarakhand ranked fourth, with 155 hate speech events, representing a staggering increase of 138 percent from the 65 incidents recorded in 2024 and a 278 percent increase from the 41 incidents documented in 2023. Over the past several years, the state has emerged as a hub¹⁰ for anti-Muslim hate speech, bigotry, and incitement to violence, including campaigns that human rights groups have described as resembling ethnic cleansing¹¹.

The highest monthly concentration of 27 incidents was recorded in January, coinciding with statewide municipal elections. The hate campaign in Uttarakhand has been led prominently by Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami, who has become known for delivering anti-Muslim speeches¹² and for mainstreaming conspiracy theories such as “love jihad,” “land jihad,” and “spit jihad.”

Under his administration, Uttarakhand has also witnessed punitive demolitions of Muslim-owned properties under the pretext of removing “illegal encroachments,”¹³ alongside broader patterns of state violence¹⁴ and discriminatory governance¹⁵.

Rajasthan and the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi jointly ranked fifth, with 76 hate speech events each. Delhi, which underwent Assembly elections during the year, witnessed a notable spike in hate speech during the electoral period. This represented a

69 percent increase from the 45 events recorded in 2024. Rajasthan saw marginal increase from 74 events recorded in 2024. The state had reported 64 incidents in 2023, indicating a steady upward trend over the past three years.

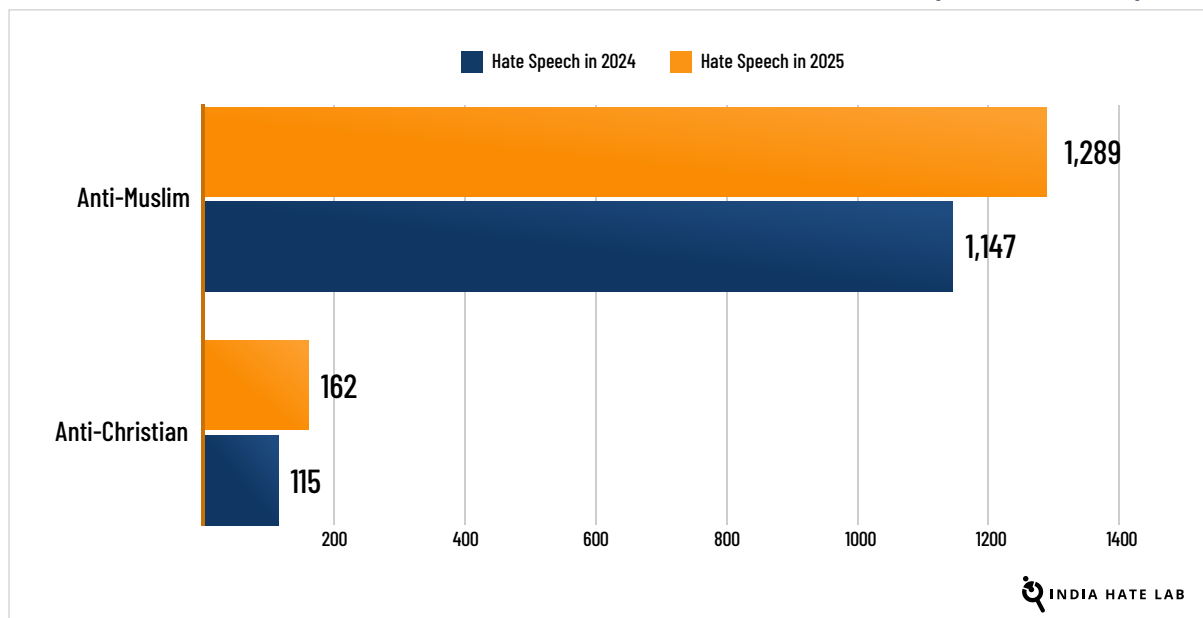
Bihar, which also held Assembly elections, ranked seventh with 67 hate speech events. This marked a 29 percent increase from the 52 events recorded in 2024. In comparison, only 18 hate speech events were documented in 2023, underscoring a sharp escalation over the past three years.

Beyond the top-ranking states and Union Territories, India Hate Lab recorded hate speech events across 15 additional states with varying frequencies. These included Gujarat (40), Karnataka (40), Chhattisgarh (33), Assam (32), Haryana (37), Himachal Pradesh (29), West Bengal (27), Jharkhand (22), Telangana (16), Punjab (13), Kerala (7), Goa (3), Odisha (5), Andhra Pradesh (2) and Arunachal Pradesh (1). The Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir recorded six hate speech incidents during the year.

4.2 COMPARATIVE TRENDS IN HATE SPEECH EVENTS (2023-2025)

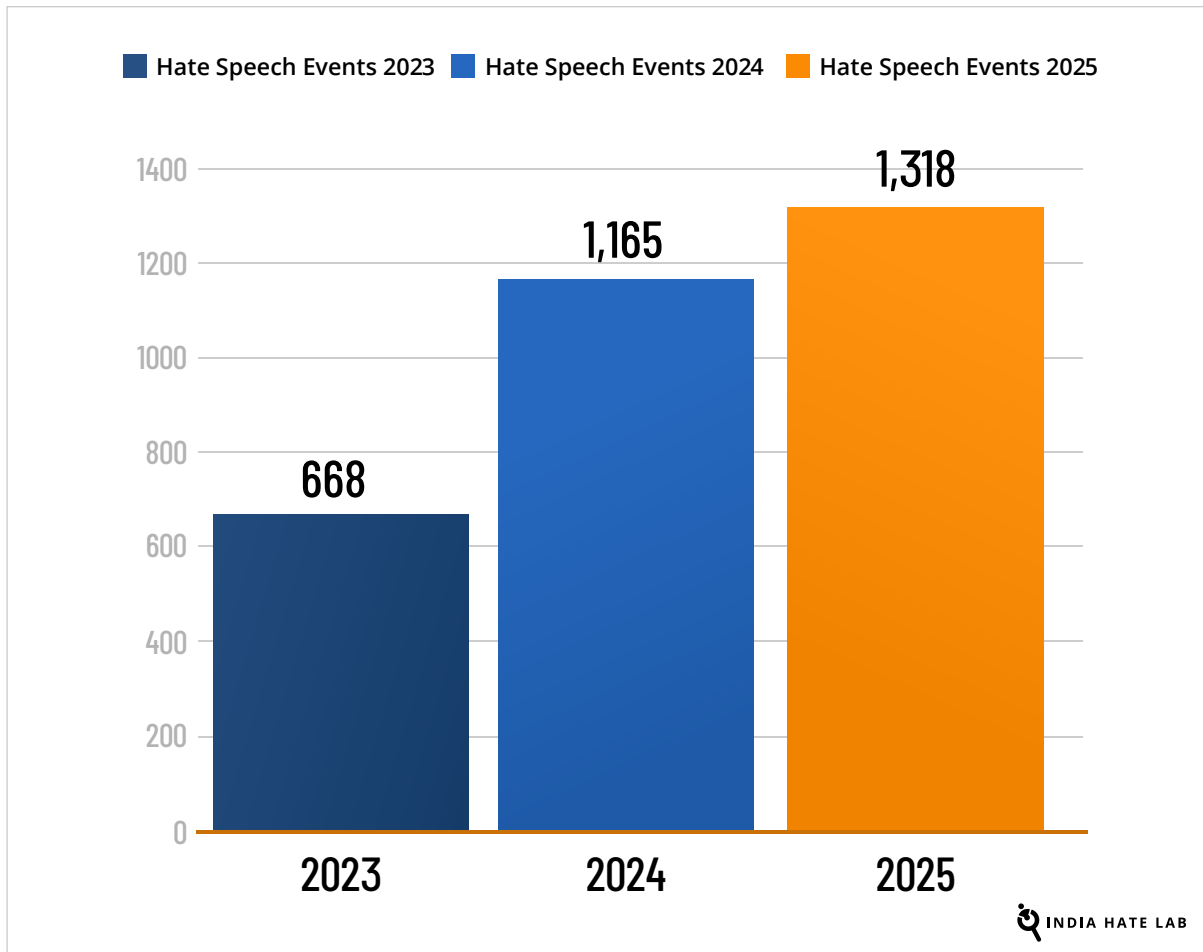
Compared to 2024, hate speeches targeting Muslims increased by nearly 12 percent, rising from 1,147 recorded instances to 1,289.

FIGURE 3: TARGETS OF HATE SPEECH AT IN-PERSON EVENTS (2024 VS. 2025)



Hate speech targeting Christians rose even more sharply, increasing by nearly 41 percent, from 115 recorded anti-Christian hate speech events to 162.

FIGURE 4: HATE SPEECH EVENTS RECORDED OVER TIME (2023–2025)

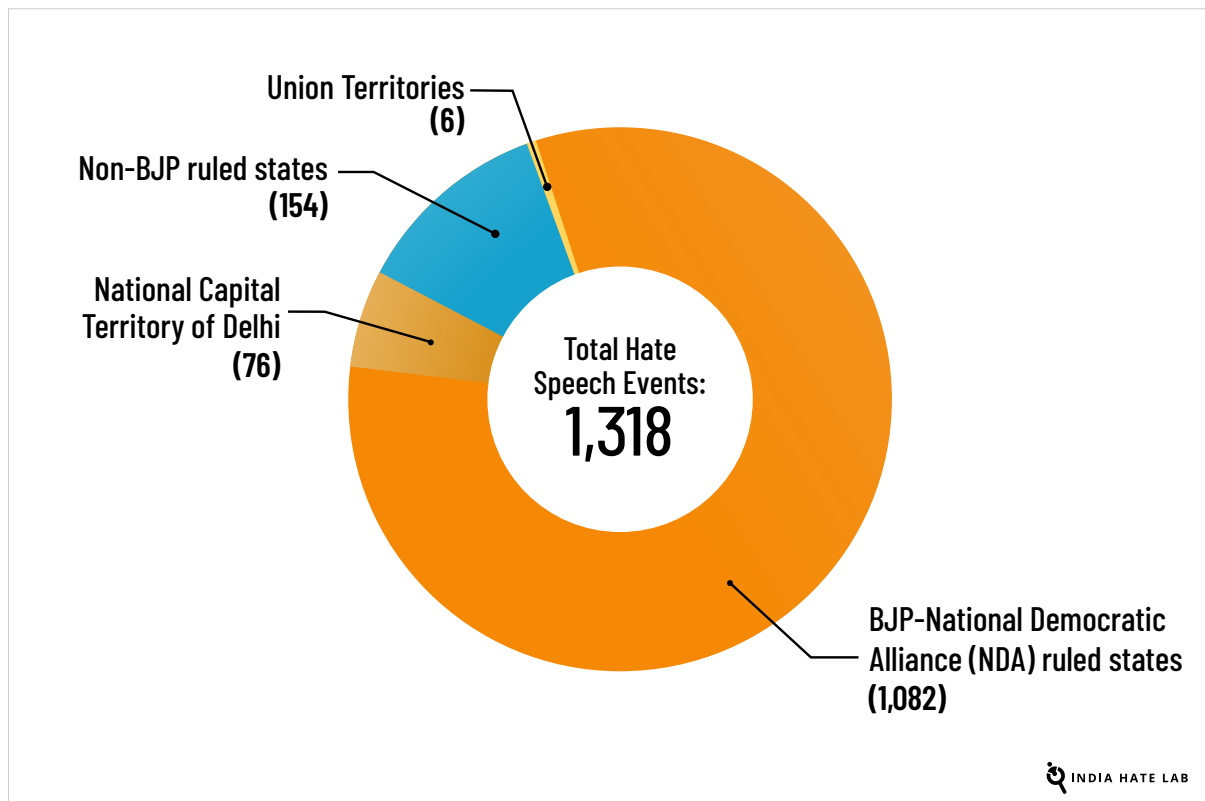


As shown in Figure 4, this increase is part of a longer-term upward trajectory. Overall, 1,318 instances of hate speech were documented in 2025, representing a 13 percent increase from the 1,165 events recorded in 2024 and a striking 97 percent increase from the 668 events documented in 2023. The data points to a sustained expansion in the scale and geographic spread of hate speech, with Muslims and Christians remaining the primary and persistent targets.

4.3 HATE SPEECH EVENTS RANKED BY PARTY IN POWER

The decisive factor determining whether hate speech events are allowed to take place is the political dispensation in power at the state level. In India, the responsibility for maintaining law and order rests primarily with state governments, which are tasked with enforcing existing criminal provisions related to incitement to violence, public disorder, and promoting enmity between groups. The selective or lax application of these laws by state authorities, therefore, plays a central role in enabling, normalizing, or curbing hate speech and incitement to violence in practice.

FIGURE 5: HATE SPEECH EVENTS BY PARTY IN POWER



Among the top ten states and Union Territories with the highest number of hate speech events, the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) governed directly or ruled in coalition in nine for all or most of the year. Across all 23 states and Union Territories analyzed, the BJP held power, either independently or as part of a coalition, in 16 for most of the year. This included the National Capital Territory of Delhi, where the BJP came to power in February 2025 following the Assembly elections.

While BJP-ruled states remained the primary hotspots, the data also indicates that Hindu nationalist groups and BJP leaders, as in previous years, actively mobilized and amplified anti-minority hatred in states governed by the opposition parties.

Congress-ruled Karnataka was the only non-BJP-governed state to feature among the top ten, with 40 documented hate speech events. This represents an increase from 32 incidents recorded in 2024 and matches the 40 incidents recorded in 2023. Notably, the majority of these hate speeches were delivered by leaders and members of the BJP and affiliated Hindu nationalist organizations, including the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), Bajrang Dal, Hindu Jagarana Vedike, Shri Ram Sena, and Hindu Rashtra Sena.

States directly governed by the BJP including NCT of Delhi recorded 896 hate speech events, accounting for 68 percent of all incidents documented in 2025. This represents a 48 percent increase from the 604 incidents recorded in BJP-ruled states in 2024.

States governed by the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) — a coalition led by the BJP in partnership with regional parties including the Janata Dal (United), Shiv Sena (Eknath Shinde faction), Nationalist Congress Party (Ajit Pawar faction), United People’s Party Liberal (UPPL), Asom Gana Parishad (AGP), the Bodoland People’s Front (BPF), and others — recorded 262 hate speech events, accounting for almost 20 percent of the total dataset.

In addition, six hate speech incidents were recorded in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, where policing and law enforcement fall under the jurisdiction of the BJP-led central government.

Taken together, 1,164 hate speech incidents, accounting for 88 percent of the total, occurred in BJP-ruled states, NDA-governed coalition states, and BJP-administered Union Territories. This represents a 25 percent increase from the 931 incidents recorded across these jurisdictions in 2024, underscoring the overwhelming concentration of anti-minority hate speech in regions under BJP control.

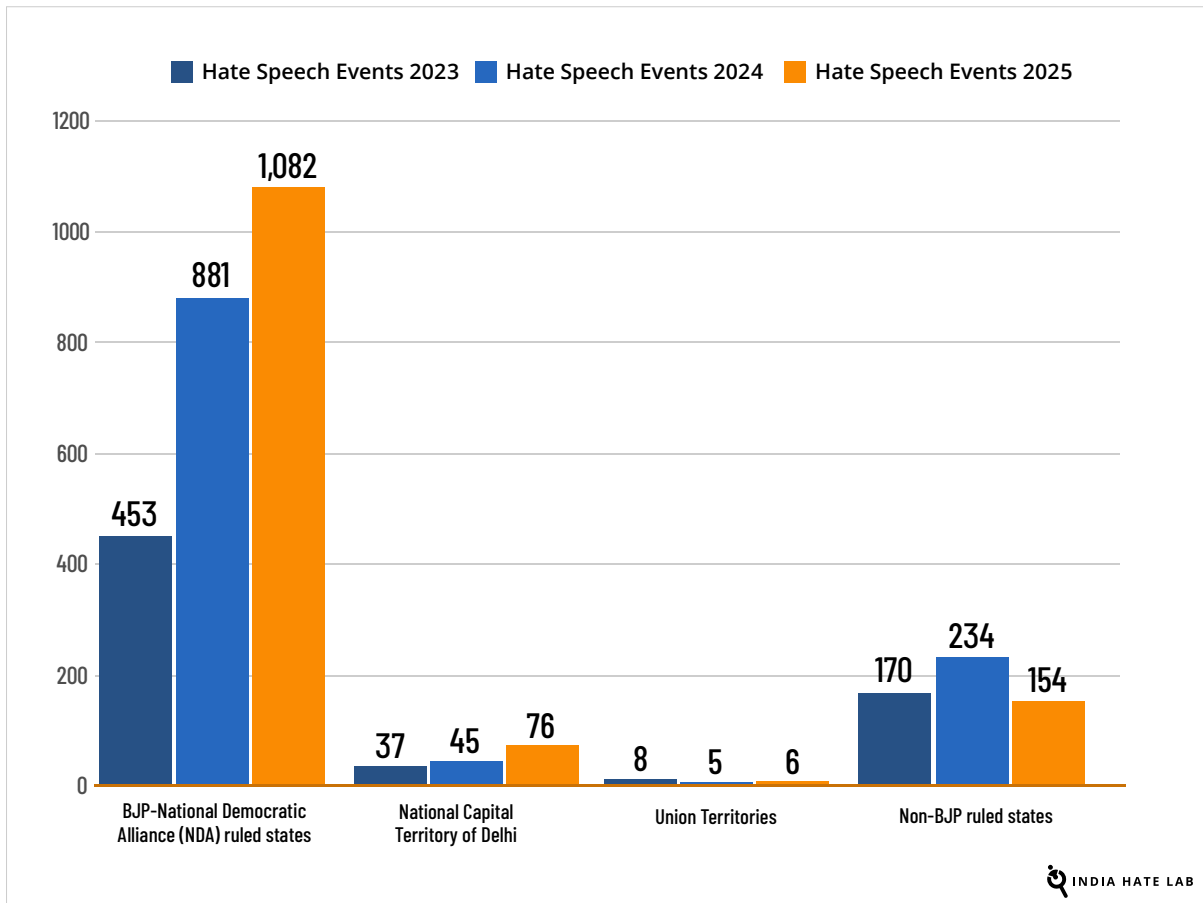
By contrast, the seven states governed by opposition coalitions and parties, including the All India Trinamool Congress (AITC), Indian National Congress, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM), Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), and the Left Democratic Front (LDF), recorded 154 hate speech events in 2025, marking a 34 percent decrease from the 234 incidents documented in these states in 2024.

4.3.1 COMPARATIVE TRENDS IN HATE SPEECH ACROSS PARTY-CONTROLLED STATES (2023-2025)

Hate speech incidents surged sharply across BJP- and NDA-governed regions between 2023 and 2025, while opposition-ruled states witnessed an overall decline during the same period.

In 2023, BJP- and NDA-led states recorded 453 hate speech events, accounting for 68% of all documented incidents. This figure nearly doubled in 2024 to 881 incidents amid the general election cycle. In 2025, despite the absence of nationwide parliamentary elections, hate speech incidents in BJP- and NDA-ruled states and centrally administered territories rose further to 1,164 events, reflecting a sustained and deepening entrenchment of organized hate speech ecosystems in BJP-controlled regions.

FIGURE 6: HATE SPEECH EVENTS BY PARTY IN POWER (2023-2025)



By contrast, opposition-ruled states recorded 170 hate speech events in 2023, which increased to 234 incidents in 2024, largely driven by election-related mobilization, but declined to 154 incidents in 2025. This decline corresponds with the absence of a general election cycle, which had significantly intensified political mobilization and communal rhetoric nationwide in the previous year, as well as a modest increase in political will reflected in greater police enforcement against hate speech and incitement to violence.

Trends in some states further underscore the relationship between electoral context and hate speech escalation. Jharkhand, governed by a Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM)-Congress coalition, recorded 85 hate speech incidents in 2024 amid a high-intensity electoral contest with the BJP, before declining to 22 incidents in 2025 following the coalition’s electoral victory. Similarly, Congress-ruled Himachal Pradesh saw hate speech decline from 48 incidents in 2024 (largely driven by anti-mosque campaigns¹⁶ and Hindu nationalist mobilizations) to 28 incidents in 2025. Telangana also recorded a decrease from 25 incidents in 2024 to 16 in 2025.

West Bengal, which is scheduled for state elections in 2026 and remains a key BJP target state, exhibited a near-stagnant pattern, recording 30 hate speech incidents in 2024 and 27 in 2025, indicating sustained mobilization ahead of the forthcoming electoral cycle.

Notably, two opposition-ruled states diverged from the broader downward trend. Congress-ruled Karnataka saw an increase from 32 hate speech incidents in 2024 to 40 in 2025, while Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)-ruled Punjab recorded a rise from 7 to 13 incidents over the same period, underscoring that Hindu nationalist mobilization remains active even outside BJP-governed states.

The data illustrates that while election cycles act as accelerants, hate speech has become structurally embedded in BJP- and NDA-ruled regions, persisting and expanding even in non-election years, marking a significant shift to sustained mobilization.

4.4 MONTHLY BREAKDOWN OF HATE SPEECH EVENTS

In 2025, an average of four hate speech events were documented per day across India, up from three per day in 2024. While multiple factors contributed to this alarming surge, several key drivers stood out.

A significant spike followed rallies and public mobilizations featuring hateful and inciting speeches against Muslims in the aftermath of the April 2025 Pahalgam terror attack¹⁷, in which 26 civilians were killed. Electoral mobilization also played a central role, particularly during the Assembly elections in Delhi and Bihar, where hateful rhetoric intensified as part of campaign strategies, mirroring patterns observed during the 2024 general elections.

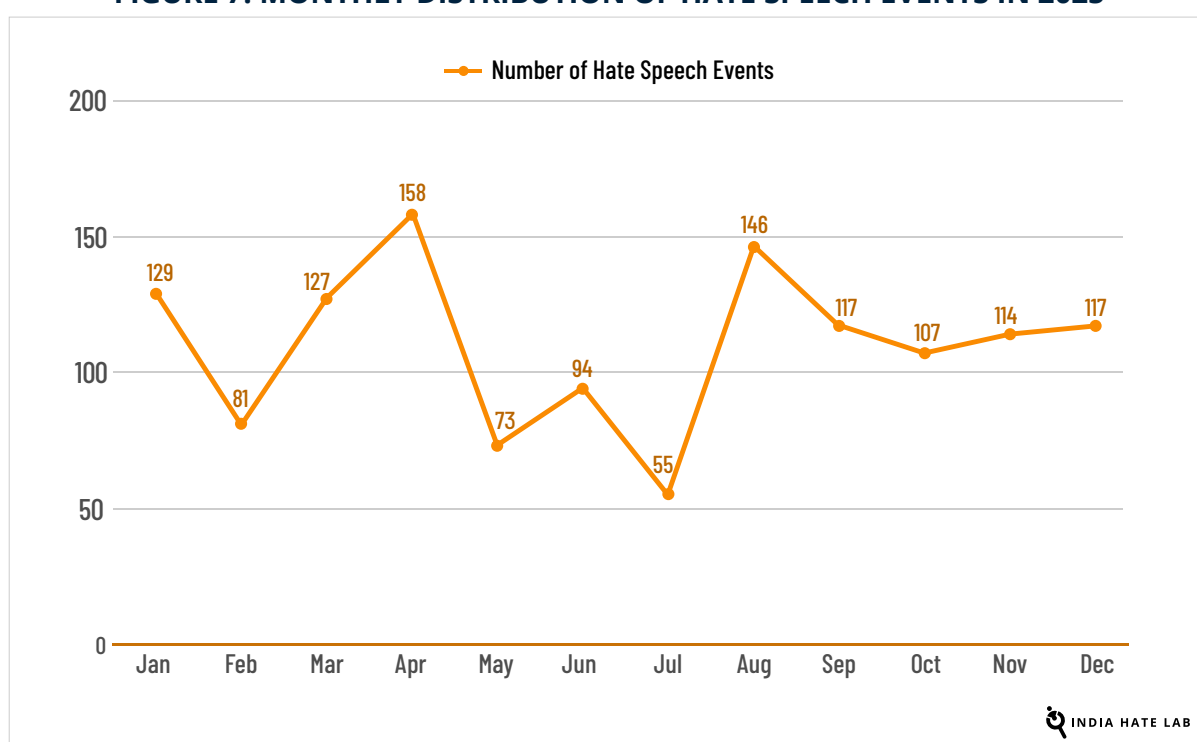
The year also saw heightened and sustained mobilization by Hindu nationalist organizations such as the VHP-Bajrang Dal, and groups led by former VHP leader Pravin Togadia, including the Antarrashtriya Hindu Parishad and Rashtriya Bajrang Dal (AHP-RBD). These groups organized frequent rallies, marches, religious processions, Trishul Deeksha ceremonies, Akhand Bharat Sankalp Diwas events, and Shaurya Diwas (Day of Valor) programs, which repeatedly served as platforms for hate speech. Shaurya Diwas is an annual observance organized by the VHP on December 6, marking the anniversary of the 1992 demolition of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh.

Trishul Deeksha ceremonies¹⁸ are gatherings primarily organized by the VHP-Bajrang Dal throughout the year, during which participants are distributed tridents (trishuls) and administered hateful oaths.

Additional surges were observed following the lynching¹⁹ of a Hindu garment worker in Bangladesh in December 2025, an incident that was instrumentalized by far-right groups and leaders in India to mobilize street protests marked by anti-Muslim rhetoric.

Hate speech was further amplified through the intensification of the “Rohingya and Bangladeshi infiltrator” bogey in Delhi and Bihar as well as Assam and West Bengal, both of which are scheduled to go to the polls in 2026.

FIGURE 7: MONTHLY DISTRIBUTION OF HATE SPEECH EVENTS IN 2025



Hate speech levels were elevated from the very beginning of the year. January recorded 129 hate speech events, coinciding with municipal elections in Uttarakhand, where campaigning was heavily marked by anti-Muslim hate and bigotry, as well as with the campaign period for the Delhi Assembly elections, which went to the polls in early February.

March witnessed another sharp rise, with 127 recorded events. Maharashtra accounted for the highest share that month, registering 30 incidents following communal riots in Nagpur²⁰. The violence was triggered by a campaign led by the VHP-Bajrang Dal state unit demanding the removal of the tomb of the 17th-century Mughal ruler Aurangzeb²¹. The controversy surrounding the removal of the grave sparked statewide protests and rallies, many of which featured hate speeches against Muslims.

April recorded the highest monthly spike of the year, with 158 hate speech events. The first half of the month saw a surge linked to Ram Navami (Hindu festival celebrating the birth of Lord Rama) processions and associated rallies, which have increasingly become flashpoints for communal mobilization, hate speeches and violence²². The latter half of April was marked by a wave of hate speeches at rallies organized by Hindu nationalist groups in response to the Pahalgam terror attack, in which 26 civilians were killed.

Another significant spike was observed in August, with 146 hate speech events. This coincided with the nationwide observance of Akhand Bharat Sankalp Diwas, organized by the VHP and Bajrang Dal. The month also witnessed a series of hate rallies targeting Bengali-origin Muslims in Assam.

From September through December, IHL documented between 107 and 117 hate speech events each month. This sustained high baseline was driven largely by the Bihar Assembly elections, during which the Muslim “infiltrator” trope was repeatedly invoked, alongside a steady stream of nationwide events, including Shaurya Jagran Yatras, or rallies organized by Hindu nationalist groups to “awaken” Hindus.

December saw another notable escalation. The early part of the month coincided with a series of Shaurya Diwas events organized by the VHP and Bajrang Dal to mark the anniversary of the Babri Masjid demolition in 1992. Toward the end of the month, hate speech surged again following the lynching of Hindu garment worker Dipu Chandra Das in Mymensingh, Bangladesh, on December 18 over false allegations of blasphemy, which had a ripple effect in India. In its aftermath, Hindu far-right groups mobilized rapidly, organizing street protests during which inflammatory and anti-Muslim speeches were delivered.

This pattern mirrored earlier developments following August 2024, when Sheikh Hasina was forced out of power amid mass student protests in Bangladesh. In the weeks that followed, misinformation and exaggerated claims of a “Hindu genocide” in Bangladesh circulated widely across social media platforms²³ in India, providing fertile ground for the amplification of anti-Muslim rhetoric. August 2024 consequently witnessed a huge spike in hate speech events targeting Muslims.

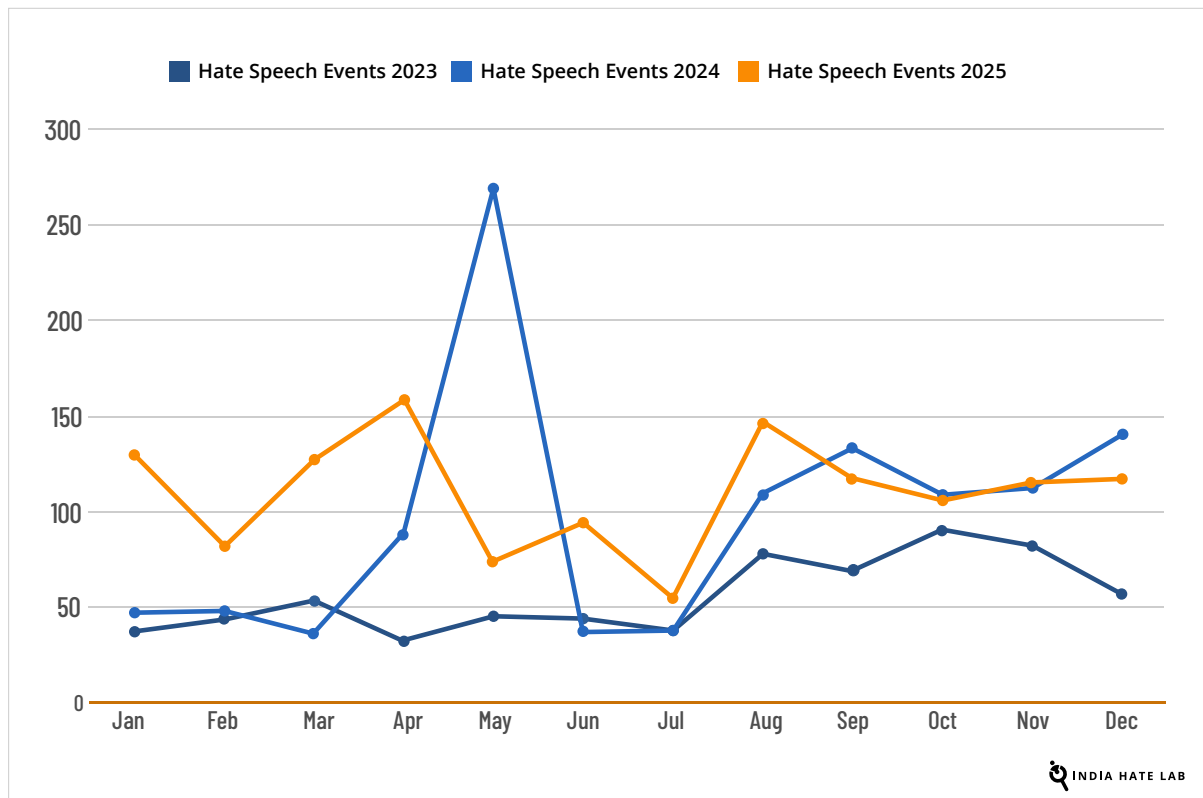
The Mymensingh incident was again leveraged to activate similar mobilization dynamics, underscoring how cross-border events are repeatedly reframed within Hindu nationalist discourse to legitimize domestic hate campaigns against vulnerable minorities in India.

4.4.1 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF HATE SPEECH EVENTS (2023-2025)

A month-by-month comparison of hate speech events from 2023 to 2025 reveals a sustained and accelerating upward trend, with distinct political, socio-religious, and

transnational triggers driving major spikes each year. Rather than reflecting isolated surges, the data points to an increasingly normalized and persistent hate-speech ecosystem, punctuated by periods of intensified mobilization linked to elections, communal flashpoints, and regional and international developments.

FIGURE 8: MONTHLY DISTRIBUTION OF HATE SPEECH EVENTS (2023-2025)



In 2023, hate speech peaked notably in August following the outbreak of communal violence in Nuh, Haryana. This was followed by additional spikes in October and November, coinciding with legislative assembly elections in several states and the VHP’s nationwide Shaurya Jagran rallies.

In 2024, similar patterns emerged but at a heightened scale. Hate speech escalated sharply in the run-up to the general elections, as communal polarization became a central campaign strategy. A major spike was also observed in August 2024 following the misinformation and exaggerated claims of a “Hindu genocide” in Bangladesh and resulting hate rallies in India.

In 2025, the data shows that while both domestic and international events continued to trigger episodic spikes in hate speech, the more striking trend was the persistence of an elevated baseline throughout the year. Unlike previous years, where hate speech tapered off outside election cycles, 2025 exhibited sustained levels of mobilization even during non-election periods. This continuity suggests a strategic shift rather than reactive mobilization alone.

One factor contributing to the persistence of a high baseline of hate speech appears to be the political realignment that followed the 2024 general elections. The inability of the ruling BJP to secure an outright parliamentary majority, and its subsequent dependence on coalition partners within the National Democratic Alliance, altered the incentives and constraints shaping political mobilization. The election-period strategy of overt communal polarization did not deliver the decisive mandate anticipated, prompting a shift in approach rather than a retreat from the earlier strategy altogether.

In 2025, this shift manifested as a move toward sustained, decentralized, and ground-level mobilization led largely by affiliated Hindu nationalist organizations operating within the broader Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS)-led Sangh Parivar ecosystem²⁴. The BJP functions as the political arm of the RSS. The data suggest a deliberate effort to maintain a constant level of communal polarization through rallies, religious events, processions, and local mobilizations that keep anti-Muslim hatred and fear-based narratives active in everyday political life.

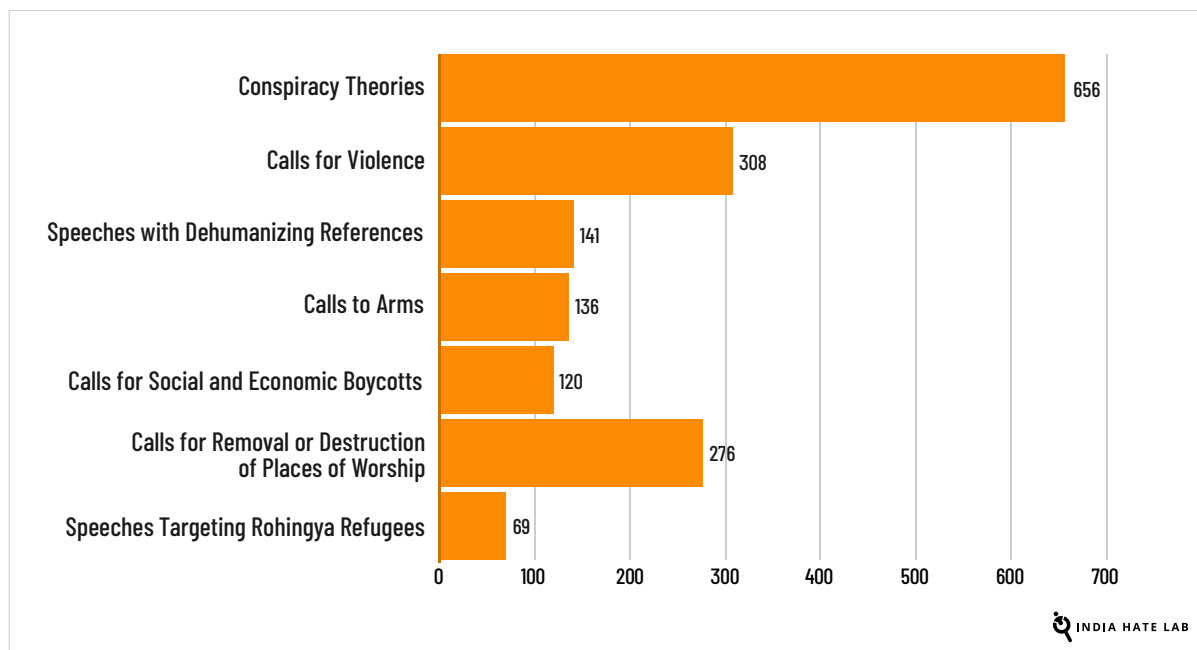
This pattern points to a longer-term strategic orientation, indicating that the approach is likely aimed at shaping the political terrain ahead of critical upcoming elections, including the 2026 assembly elections in Assam and West Bengal, the 2027–2028 electoral cycle in key states such as Uttar Pradesh, and ultimately the 2029 general elections.

4.5 DECODING HATE SPEECH

To examine the nature and dominant themes underlying hate speech in India in 2025, we conducted a comprehensive narrative and thematic analysis of all documented speeches. The analysis assessed whether speeches propagated conspiracy theories; contained calls for violence, economic or social boycotts, removing or destroying places of worship, calls to arms, dehumanizing references, or targeted Rohingya refugees and invoked the “Bangladeshi infiltrator” trope.

As detailed in the methodology section, these analytical categories are not mutually exclusive. Many speeches simultaneously deployed multiple forms of harmful rhetoric. For example, combining anti-Muslim conspiracy theories with explicit incitement to violence or calls for economic boycott.

FIGURE 9: KEY NARRATIVES AND THEMES IN 2025



In 2025, 656 hate speeches, accounting for nearly 50 percent of the total, referenced conspiracy theories. The most frequently invoked tropes included “love jihad,” “land jihad,” “population jihad,” “thook (spit) jihad,” “education jihad,” “drug jihad,” and “vote jihad.”

Our analysis also revealed a troubling prevalence of direct calls to violence. In total, 308 speeches, or 23 percent of all recorded hate speech events, contained explicit calls for violence.

Additionally, 120 hate speeches explicitly called for the social or economic boycott of minority communities, primarily Muslims, while 136 speeches contained direct calls to arms. A further 276 speeches included calls for the removal or destruction of places of worship, including mosques, shrines, and churches.

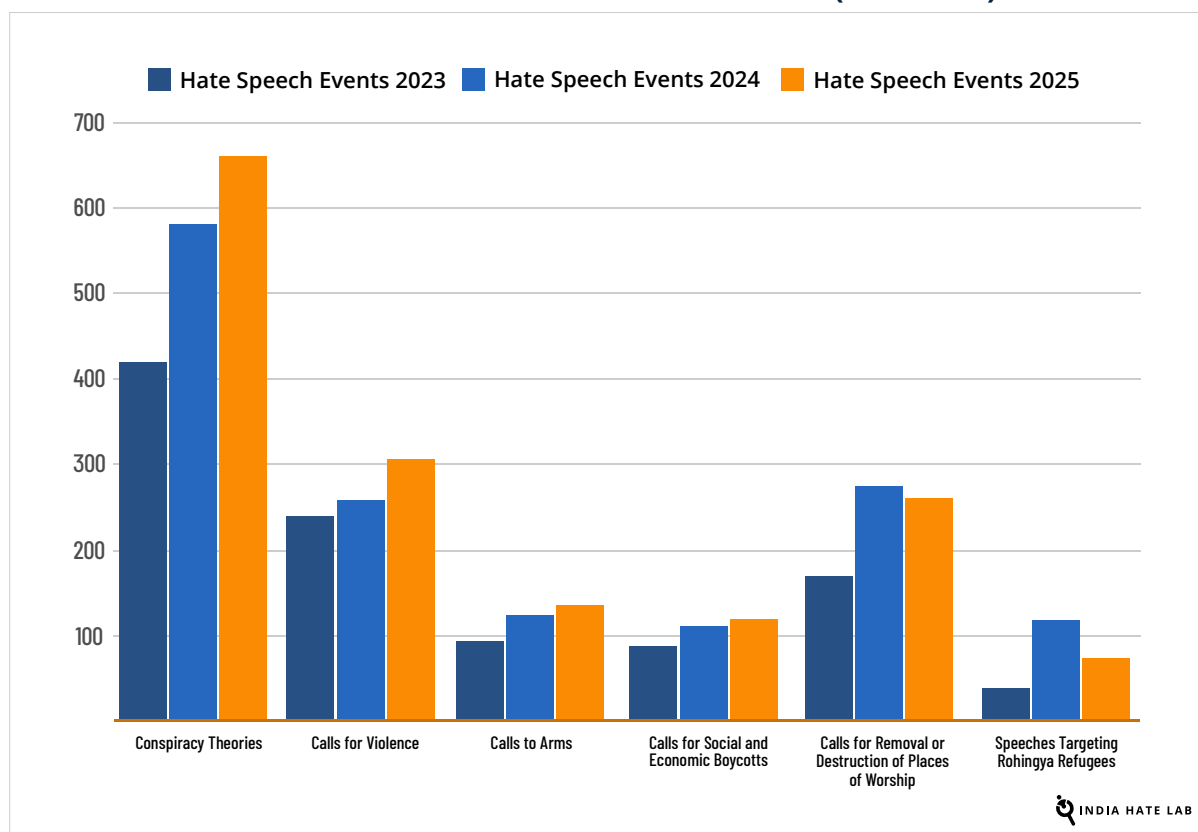
Dehumanizing language appeared in 141 speeches, and 69 hate speech events specifically targeted Rohingya Muslim refugees residing in India.

4.5.1 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF NARRATIVES AND THEMES (2023-2025)

A comparative review of hate speech narratives from 2023 to 2025, both an increase in volume and marked intensification in content and intent. Speeches invoking conspiracy theories increased by 13 percent from the previous year and direct calls to violence rose by 19 percent.

Calls for social or economic boycotts also grew by 8 percent, while explicit calls to arms surged by 11 percent.

FIGURE 10: KEY NARRATIVES AND THEMES (2023-2025)



4.6 ORGANIZERS OF HATE SPEECH EVENTS

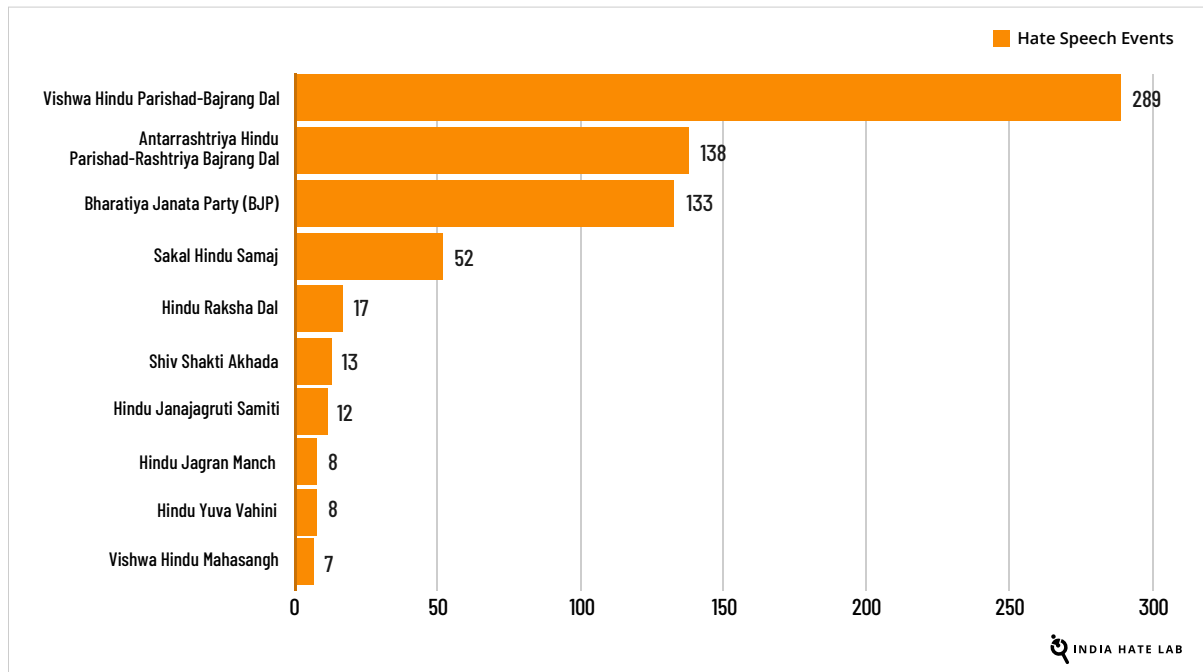
In 2025, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and its youth wing, the Bajrang Dal, emerged as the most frequent organizers of hate speech events, directly sponsoring or facilitating 289 gatherings, accounting for 22 percent of all documented incidents.

The VHP and Bajrang Dal are militant Hindu nationalist organizations²⁵ with a long and well-documented history of anti-minority mobilization and violence. Both groups played a central role in facilitating hate speech across India in 2023 and 2024 and continued to do so at scale in 2025. They have been linked to some of the most notorious episodes of communal violence²⁶ in India, including attacks on Christian communities and the 2002 anti-Muslim pogrom in Gujarat state. As the Bajrang Dal functions as the VHP's youth arm, the two organizations frequently worked in tandem, co-hosting rallies and events that featured hate speech and dangerous speech targeting Muslims and Christians. Importantly, both the VHP and Bajrang Dal are constituent organizations of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh-led Sangh Parivar.

Antarrashtriya Hindu Parishad (AHP) and its youth wing, the Rashtriya Bajrang Dal (RBD), led by former VHP president Pravin Togadia, ranked second among the most active organizers in 2025, with 138 hate speech events documented nationwide.

While the ruling BJP was the single most frequent organizer of hate speech events in 2024, directly organizing 340 events. In 2025, the BJP organized 133 hate speech events, ranking third among organizers.

FIGURE 11: KEY ORGANIZERS OF HATE SPEECH EVENTS IN 2025



Historically, the RSS and the BJP have relied on organizations such as the VHP, the Bajrang Dal, and other Sangh Parivar affiliates to function as frontline mobilizers of anti-minority hatred and violence. These groups have played a critical role in translating ideological narratives into street-level action. This division of labor allows the BJP to benefit politically while maintaining formal distance from overt incitement, thereby preserving plausible deniability.

Another key Sangh-affiliated formation, the Sakal Hindu Samaj (SHS), played a prominent role in 2025, particularly in Maharashtra. This state-level coalition of diverse Hindu nationalist and Sangh Parivar organizations was responsible for 52 hate speech events during the year. SHS events regularly featured prominent Hindu nationalist speakers, including far-right digital influencers Kajal Hindustani and Harsha Thakur; BJP legislator and cabinet minister Nitesh Rane; Maharashtra BJP MLAs Gopichand Padalkar and Mahesh Landge; Nationalist Congress Party (Ajit Pawar) legislator Sangram Jagtap; and far-right preacher Sangram Bapu Bhandare, among others.

Given Maharashtra's intense electoral polarization in 2024 and SHS's role in mobilizing communal sentiment during that period, the group's continued activity in 2025 suggests an effort to sustain long-term ideological consolidation and normalize communal division beyond election cycles.

Among other notable organizers in 2025 were the Hindu Raksha Dal (HRD), Shiv Shakti Akhada, and the Hindu Janajagruti Samiti (HJS). The HRD organized 17 hate speech events, primarily in Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh. The organization is led by far-right leader Bhupinder Tomar alias Pinky Chaudhary, who has a documented history of inciting and participating in anti-Muslim violence. In 2024, Chaudhary was arrested for assaulting Muslim migrant workers²⁷. In December 2025, dozens of HRD members were arrested in Ghaziabad for openly distributing swords²⁸ to households, following the circulation of videos on social media that forced police intervention.

The Shiv Shakti Akhada, a militant group of monks based in Uttar Pradesh and led by former VHP leader Madhuram Sharan Shiva, organized 13 hate speech events in 2025. While the number of documented speeches was limited, the group was involved in organizing over 100 armed marches, featuring monks brandishing swords and marching through public streets accompanied by Hindu nationalist music, representing a broader atmosphere of intimidation and militarized symbolism. This pattern of mobilization is examined in greater detail in a separate section below.

Beyond these major organizers, a wide array of far-right and religious groups continued to host hate speech events throughout 2025. These included the Antarrashtriya Bajrang Dal (led by Dinesh Patil), Arya Samaj, Devbhoomi Sangharsh Samiti (Uttarakhand), Gau Raksha Dal, Kali Sena, Karni Sena, Rashtriya Hindu Sher Sena, Rudrasena (Uttarakhand), Shiv Pratishthan Hindustan, Hindu Jagran Manch, Hindu Yuva Vahini, Hindu Janajagruti Samiti and Vishva Hindu Mahasangh. Additional organizing bodies included foundations and trusts such as the Adi Shankaracharya Sanatan Sewa Sansthanam Foundation, Love for Cow Foundation, Sankalp Siddhi Foundation, and Yogi Youth Brigade Dharm Raksha Trust.

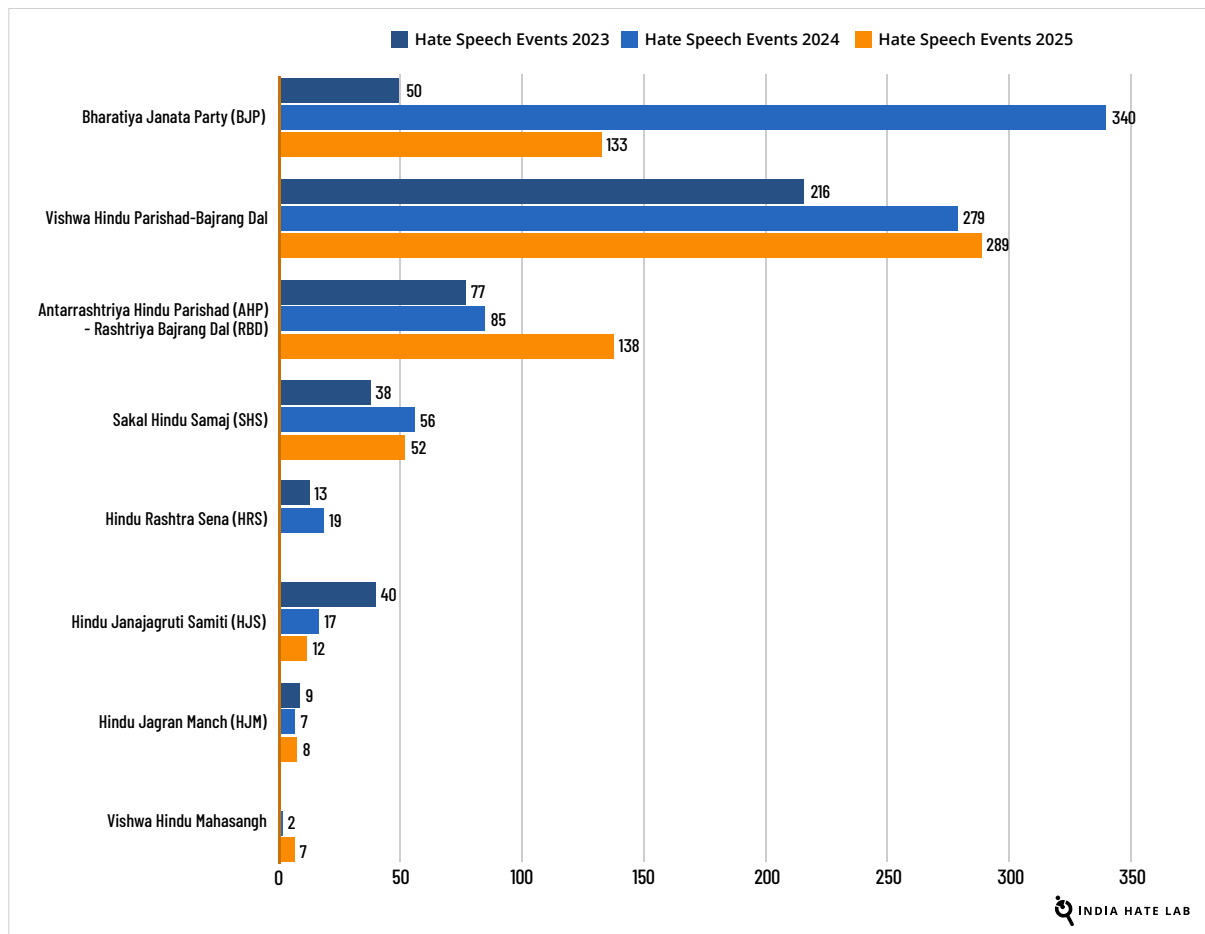
In total, more than 160 organizations and informal groups were identified as organizers or co-organizers of hate speech events in 2025. This reflects a dense constellation of networks operating across states. However, the data makes clear that the foundational momentum continues to be driven by Sangh Parivar-linked organizations, which benefit from sustained impunity, access to resources, and political patronage, particularly in BJP-ruled states, allowing hate speech mobilization to persist as a normalized and durable feature of India's public sphere.

4.6.1 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF KEY ORGANIZERS (2023-2025)

In 2025, hate speech events continued to be driven by a core set of recurring organizers, with several groups expanding both the scale and intensity of their activities, reinforcing the consolidation of an organized offline hate ecosystem.

The VHP-Bajrang Dal remained the most dominant organizer of hate speech events. Their activities show a steady and sustained increase over time — from 216 events in 2023, to 279 events in 2024, and rising further to 289 events in 2025.

FIGURE 12: KEY ORGANIZERS OF HATE SPEECH EVENTS (2023-2025)



The AHP–RBD led by former VHP president Pravin Togadia, recorded a notable increase in activity. After organizing 77 events in 2023 and 85 in 2024, the group organized 138 hate speech events in 2025. The continued prominence of Togadia-led organizations highlights how former Sangh Parivar leaders operate parallel mobilization structures that reinforce and amplify the broader Hindu nationalist ecosystem, often functioning as more overtly militant complements to mainstream actors.

This upward trajectory underscores the growing centrality of VHP-Bajrang Dal and AHP-RBD in normalizing and sustaining offline hate mobilization across the country.

The BJP also emerged as a major organizer, reflecting the normalization of direct political participation in hate speech mobilization. The party organized 50 hate speech events in 2023, a sharp spike to 340 events in 2024 coinciding with the general elections, and continued to organize 133 events in 2025. Although lower than the election-year peak, the 2025 figure remains significantly higher than pre-election levels, indicating that such mobilization has become embedded in the party's broader political strategy.

Sakal Hindu Samaj (SHS), the Maharashtra-based coalition of Sangh Parivar-aligned groups, remained a significant state-level organizer. SHS was responsible for 38 hate speech events in 2023, increased its activities to 56 events in 2024, and organized 52 events in 2025. Although slightly lower than the previous year, this sustained level indicates that SHS has continued to entrench predominantly anti-Muslim, and to a lesser extent anti-Christian, mobilization as a recurring feature of Maharashtra's political and social landscape, even outside a major election year.

The Hindu Janajagruti Samiti (HJS), while not among the highest-volume organizers in 2025, continued to play a critical role within the hate ecosystem. As a key constituent of Sakal Hindu Samaj, HJS functions as an ideological and organizational backbone for many mobilizations. Notably, HJS has demonstrated adaptive strategies to reduce public visibility when scrutiny increases. After India Hate Lab documented its role in organizing 40 hate speech events in 2023²⁹, the group significantly curtailed public broadcasting and social media amplification of its activities, suggesting a strategic retreat into lower-visibility forms of mobilization rather than a withdrawal from the ecosystem.

These patterns indicate that a relatively stable constellation of organizations, anchored by Sangh Parivar groups and reinforced by political actors, breakaway Sangh factions, regional coalitions, and informal groups, continues to drive and institutionalize offline hate speech in India.

4.7 KEY FIGURES DRIVING HATE SPEECH IN 2025


Hate speech at in-person events in 2025 was driven by a wide and interconnected ecosystem of actors, including national political figures, state chief ministers, cabinet ministers, legislators, lawyers, poets, social media influencers, and prominent religious leaders, many of whom repeatedly appeared across multiple events and states.

Religious leaders and self-styled monks played a particularly influential role, using kathas (religious sermons), padyatras (procession marches), and other religious gatherings to legitimize exclusionary and violent rhetoric through spiritual framing. Their speeches frequently blended conspiracy theories, historical revisionism, and calls for social or economic boycotts, lending moral authority to dangerous speech.

Among the top ten individuals responsible for delivering the highest number of hate speeches, a diverse set of actors stood out, including senior BJP leaders, two chief ministers, a cabinet minister, the owner of a far-right news outlet, a lawyer, a social media influencer, heads of two far-right organizations, and a monk.

FIGURE 13: KEY ACTORS DRIVING HATE SPEECH IN 2025

	Name	Position/Affiliation	Hate Speech
1	Pushkar Singh Dhama	Chief Minister of Uttarakhand State	71
2	Pravin Togadia	Chief of Antarrashtriya Hindu Parishad	46
3	Ashwini Upadhyay	BJP Leader and Lawyer	35
4	Nitesh Rane	Minister of Ports Development, Maharashtra	28
5	T Raja Singh	Former BJP leader and Legislator, Telangana	27
6	Amit Shah	Home Minister of India	27
7	Manoj Kumar	President of Rashtriya Bajrang Dal	26
8	Kajal Hindustani	Far-right Digital Influencer	23
9	Yogi Adityanath	Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh	22
10	Yati Narsinghanand Saraswati	Head of Dasna Devi Temple, Uttar Pradesh	20



As Figure 12 illustrates, six of the ten most frequent purveyors of hate speech in 2025 were elected politicians. These included Chief Ministers Pushkar Singh Dhama and Yogi Adityanath, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Delhi BJP leader and lawyer Ashwini Upadhyay, Maharashtra state minister Nitish Rane, and Telangana legislator T. Raja Singh.

Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama emerged as the most prolific hate speech actor in 2025, delivering 71 hate speeches both within his home state of Uttarakhand and across multiple other states. His speeches were frequently delivered during election campaigns in states such as Delhi and Bihar, where he was appointed as a BJP star campaigner. Dhama routinely propagated anti-Muslim conspiracy theories, including “love jihad,” “land jihad,” and “thook jihad,” framing Muslims as demographic, cultural, and moral threats.

Ranking second was Pravin Togadia, chief of the AHP-RBD, who delivered 46 hate speeches in 2025, up from 31 in 2024 and 32 in 2023. Togadia, a former leader of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), had previously fallen out with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the broader Sangh Parivar³⁰, prompting him to establish parallel organizations

mirroring the VHP and Bajrang Dal under the AHP and Rashtriya Bajrang Dal banners. A significant thaw in relations occurred in 2024, when Togadia visited the RSS headquarters in Nagpur after a six-year gap and publicly signaled renewed cooperation with RSS leadership³¹. This rapprochement appears to have coincided with a marked expansion of AHP-RBD activities in 2025. Although based primarily in Gujarat, Togadia traveled extensively across states, including Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan, Haryana, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh, delivering hate speeches at public mobilization events.

Ashwini Upadhyay, a BJP leader associated with the party's Delhi unit, ranked third with 35 hate speeches in 2025. Upadhyay, who was arrested in 2021³² for delivering anti-Muslim hate speech, remained a highly active figure, delivering speeches across Haryana, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Uttarakhand, and Uttar Pradesh.

Nitish Rane, BJP legislator and Maharashtra's Minister for Ports Development, delivered 28 hate speeches in 2025, one fewer than in 2024. All of Rane's speeches were delivered within Maharashtra, underscoring his role in sustaining localized anti-Muslim mobilization within the state.

T. Raja Singh, a Telangana legislator long notorious for hate speech³³ and incitement to violence against Muslims and Christians, delivered 27 hate speeches in 2025 across multiple states, including Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, and Delhi. In June 2025, Singh submitted his resignation to the BJP leadership after being denied the opportunity to file his nomination for the post of Telangana BJP state president. His resignation was formally accepted³⁴ the following month.

Other figures in the top ten included Amit Shah, India's Union Home Minister (27 hate speeches); Manoj Kumar, president of the Rashtriya Bajrang Dal (26); far-right digital influencer Kajal Shingala alias Kajal Hindustani (23); Yogi Adityanath, Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh (22) and Yati Narsinghanand Saraswati, Head of Dasna Devi Temple in Uttar Pradesh (20).

Beyond the top ten, a broader ecosystem of political leaders, religious figures, and far-right activists remained highly active. These included Madhuram Sharan Shiva, head of the militant monk group Shiv Shakti Akhada in Uttar Pradesh (19); Suresh Chavhanke, owner of Sudarshan News (19), Mahant Raju Das, priest of Ayodhya's Hanuman Garhi temple (19); Rakesh "Uttarakhandi" Tomar, founder of Rudrasena (18); Bajrang Dal leader Vikas Verma from Dehradun (18); Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma (16); Prime Minister Narendra Modi (14); Bajrang Dal leader Tannu Sharma from Indore (13); religious preacher Dharendra Shastri (13); Bajrang Dal chief Neeraj Doneria (13); BJP legislator

Gopichand Padalkar from Maharashtra (11); Sangram Jagtap, Maharashtra legislator from the Nationalist Congress Party (Ajit Pawar faction) (10); far-right influencer Harsha Thakur (10); far-right preacher Sangram Bapu Bhandare (10) and Rajni Thukral, President of Rashtriya Mahila Parishad, the women wing of Antarrashtriya Hindu Parishad (10) and Gaurav Raghav, AHP-RBD leader from Uttar Pradesh (10).

Additional frequent hate speech actors included Bhupendra Chaudhary alias “Pinki,” chief of the Hindu Raksha Dal in Uttar Pradesh (9); Munish Bharadwaj, AHP-RBD leader from Haryana (8); Madan Joshi, BJP leader from Uttarakhand (8); Dinesh Patil, president of the Antarrashtriya Bajrang Dal (8); Sagar Beg, national president of the Rashtriya Shri Ram Sangh (7); Pushpendra Kulshrestha, far-right influencer (7); BJP leader Nazia Elahi Khan (7); Ravinder Singh Negi, Delhi BJP legislator (7); Vishwa Hindu Parishad leader Sadhvi Prachi (6); Delhi BJP leader Jai Bhagwan Goyal (6); Pramod Muthalik, chief of the Sri Ram Sena (6); BJP legislator Balmukund Acharya from Rajasthan (6); religious preacher Devkinandan Thakur (5); Milind Parande, international general secretary of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (5) and religious preacher Sadhvi Saraswati (5).

5. HATE SPEECH EVENTS POST PAHALGAM TERROR ATTACK

The deadly terror attack in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir, which killed 26 people, functioned as a strategically instrumentalized “trigger incident” that catalyzed nationwide mobilization. The aftermath of the attack demonstrated how acts of violence or terrorism are rapidly repurposed by Hindu far-right networks to generate spikes in hate speech, incitement, and real-world violence against Muslims and Kashmiris. As documented in this report, such episodic surges reflect coordinated responses by Hindu far-right actors who exploit moments of shock, fear, and collective grief to advance broader ideological and political agendas centered on the scapegoating of minority communities.

In the 16-day period between April 22, the day of the terror attack, and May 7, when India and Pakistan entered four days of active hostilities, India Hate Lab documented 98 in-person hate speech events across the country, indicating rapid and nationwide mobilization in the immediate aftermath of the attack.

Our data and analysis demonstrates that trigger incidents such as terror attacks, communal violence, or alleged crimes by Muslims do not create hate speech ecosystems, rather they activate pre-existing networks, narratives, and infrastructures that are already primed for mobilization. The Pahalgam attack followed this established pattern. Far-right Hindu organizations swiftly framed the incident to demonize Muslims as an inherent threat to national security and to Hindu society. This narrative framing facilitated an immediate shift from outrage to organized mobilization, legitimizing calls for retaliation, and collective punishment including boycotts and violence against Muslims.

This pattern mirrors what we documented in our 2024 report³⁵, where unverified allegations of violence against Hindus and exaggerated claims of a “Hindu genocide” in Bangladesh were weaponized by Hindu nationalist groups in India. In both cases, geographically distant or contextually unrelated events were reframed as evidence of a unified and existential Muslim threat. The result is a form of narrative contagion, where a single incident becomes a symbolic stand-in for an imagined, omnipresent enemy.

The immediacy with which hate speech events proliferated following the Pahalgam attack is notable. Within hours, far-right leaders, influencers, and organizations began

circulating calls for rallies, protests, and “mourning” events that quickly transformed into platforms for incitement. Most of the rallies documented during this period were organized by VHP, Bajrang Dal, Antarrashtriya Hindu Parishad (AHP), Rashtriya Bajrang Dal (RBD), Hindu Janajagruti Samiti, Sakal Hindu Samaj, Hindu Rashtra Sena, and Hindu Raksha Dal. These organizations possess longstanding mobilization infrastructures, including local cadres, religious networks, and social media amplification channels, enabling them to convert any incident into synchronized offline action across multiple states.

Speakers at these events routinely used dehumanizing language, referring to Muslims as “green snakes,” “piglets,” “keede” (insects), and “mad dogs.” In many instances, they called for violence and threatened to expel Muslims from localities. At an event in Kondagaon, Chhattisgarh, on April 22, far-right influencer Pushpendra Kulshrestha delivered an incendiary³⁶ speech, declaring, “Don’t talk to the mad jihadis in your city; they can’t be spoken to, they have to be shot in the head.”

On April 23, at an event in Samath Nagar, Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh, Madhura Sharan Shiva of Shiv Shakti Akhada incited violence against Muslims, stating, “You have to finish these adharmis (referring to Muslims)³⁷.” He urged Hindus to prepare for war, called for an economic boycott, and told attendees, “You all need to have weapons.”

On April 24, at a rally organized by AHP-RBD in Ambala, Haryana, a far-right monk called for a complete boycott of Muslim vendors and businesses, urging attendees to ask vendors their religion before making purchases. The monk used derogatory anti-Muslim slurs such as “katua” and “kathmulla” and threatened that if the government failed to act, Hindus would pick up weapons and “send them to Pakistan.”³⁸

At a candlelight rally held in Madhepura, Bihar on April 25, a speaker similarly called for the economic boycott³⁹ of Muslim vendors, urging Hindus to inquire about the religion of shopkeepers before buying anything. In Loni, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, on April 26, state BJP legislator Nandkishor Gurjar administered an oath⁴⁰ to protest attendees, urging them to identify and expel all those who “support Pakistan,” referring to them as “topiwallas,” “jihadis,” and “Rohingya Bangladeshis.”

In Sarahan, Shimla, Himachal Pradesh, on April 28, a speaker at a rally demanded the eviction of Muslim tenants⁴¹, warning property owners that they would be the first to face expulsion if they failed to comply. Protesters also chanted slogans such as “Mullah-Maulavis won’t be allowed.”

On April 29, at a rally organized by Hindu Rashtra Sena and Sakal Hindu Samaj in Kamshet, Pune, Maharashtra, multiple far-right leaders delivered incendiary anti-Muslim speeches⁴². One speaker abused local Muslims by calling them “Pakistanis” and claimed

that “Bangladeshis and Pakistanis are earning from this city.” He demanded strict Aadhaar verification (national ID cards) and pushed the conspiracy theory that Muslims could “attack Hindus anytime,” while calling for an economic boycott. Another speaker escalated the rhetoric, saying, “I request the government to give the police a month’s vacation, then watch how we disappear these Pakistani landas [anti-Muslim slur] not just from Maharashtra but from India.”⁴³

At another protest rally on May 6 in Kiwale village, Pimpri Chinchwad, Maharashtra, VHP leader Dhananjay Gawade delivered an anti-Muslim speech urging an economic boycott of Muslims⁴⁴.

The aftermath of the Pahalgam terror attack demonstrates how moments of crisis are rapidly instrumentalized by Hindu far-right networks to generate nationwide waves of hate speech, incitement, and violence against Muslims.

6. TWIN PILLARS OF MAJORITARIAN MOBILIZATION

In 2025, “love jihad” and “land jihad” remained two of the most frequently invoked conspiracy theories in in-person hate speech events documented by India Hate Lab. While other conspiracy narratives, including “population jihad,” “mazar jihad,” “thook jihad,” “education jihad,” “drug jihad,” “halal jihad,” and “conversion jihad,” also surfaced across multiple events, “love jihad,” followed closely by “land jihad,” consistently emerged as the most dominant and recurrent frames. In some instances, “love jihad” was invoked as a standalone allegation; in others, it appeared in combination with “land jihad” or alongside a broader constellation of conspiracies, reinforcing a cumulative narrative of threat. These narratives, which were once confined to the peripheral fringes of Hindu nationalist discourse, have migrated into the heart of on ground mobilization, electoral strategy, and state policy.

At their core, these theories function as structural myths designed to generate a permanent state of existential anxiety among the Hindu majority, casting it as a vulnerable community under siege, while simultaneously portraying the Muslim minority as an existential threat to Hindu women, land, and demographic continuity. This construction of majoritarian victimhood has emerged as a powerful political and ideological tool.

These conspiracies function as a paired ideological script and together, they translate Hindu nationalist political goals into everyday social suspicion on who can love whom, who can own land, who can rent where, who can trade in a market, who can live in a neighborhood, and which places of worship are allowed to exist. This is what makes these conspiracies so operationally powerful because they turn prejudice into systematized and organized harassment, discrimination, vigilantism, and state action.

The “love jihad” conspiracy theory, which alleges a systematic plot by Muslim men to lure Hindu women into marriage, conversion and demographic takeover, serves as the primary tool for the patriarchal control of women’s bodies and the policing of interfaith relationships.

Over the past decade, this theory has evolved into a sophisticated mechanism of surveillance that mirrors the “Black Peril” moral panics of the Jim Crow-era United States or colonial Africa. According to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), between 1882 and 1968 at least 3,446 African Americans were lynched

in the United States, with accusations of sexual transgressions against white women frequently invoked as justification⁴⁵. These allegations were rarely substantiated and lacked evidence, yet they functioned as a powerful social myth to legitimize racial terror.

In contemporary India, the government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and affiliated Hindu nationalist groups have similarly invoked the “protection of Hindu women and their honor” as a pretext for the violent suppression and criminalization of Muslim men. Just as the myth of the “Black rapist” was deployed in the American South to rationalize lynchings and the enforcement of segregation, the “love jihad” conspiracy operates to stereotype Muslim men as hypersexual, deceptive, and predatory and effectively sanitizes violence, rebranding it as a defensive and religious duty to protect the honor of Hindu women.

The legal institutionalization of “love jihad” through anti-conversion laws has further entrenched this dynamic. Just as the Jim Crow South enforced anti-miscegenation laws to preserve “racial purity,” several Indian states ruled by the BJP have enacted stringent “anti-conversion” laws that effectively criminalize interfaith marriage. These laws are repeatedly used to justify arrests and prolonged incarceration of Muslim men based on minimal evidence, unverified family complaints, or pressure from Hindu nationalist groups. Even in cases where women publicly affirmed their consent, their statements were frequently dismissed or reframed as evidence of manipulation.

Parallel to the regulation of interfaith relationships, the “land jihad” conspiracy theory functions as a mechanism for regulating space. This theory alleges that Muslims are systematically claiming public lands through the construction of mazars (shrines) and mosques as a covert project of territorial capture and to eventually outnumber and displace Hindus. In 2025, this myth was repeatedly used to portray Muslim land ownership and religious sites as illegal and dangerous.

Speakers frequently alleged that Muslims encroach upon land by placing green cloths, erecting shrines overnight, or falsely claiming religious significance to assert ownership. Such claims were rarely substantiated but were effective in generating moral panic and legitimizing demands for demolition. The rhetoric of “land jihad” has increasingly been adopted by state officials to justify bulldozer demolitions, a phenomenon where Muslim-owned properties and religious sites are demolished under the guise of removing “illegal encroachments.”

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami emerged as one of the most prominent political figures deploying this narrative in 2025, repeatedly boasting about “freeing” thousands of acres of land from so-called “land jihad.” Similar to how urban renewal projects in the United States in the mid-20th century were used to displace Black communities under the language of modernization, order, and public interest, the

punitive bulldozer demolitions in India have functioned as tools of collective punishment, disproportionately impacting Muslim neighborhoods.

Both “love jihad” and “land jihad” function as the core twin pillars of the aggressive Hindu nationalist mobilization. Historically, the mobilization of sexual panic and territorial fear has consistently preceded more organized and systemic forms of violence, segregation, and authoritarian control. In contemporary India, the normalization of these conspiracy theories signals the consolidation of an ideological infrastructure capable of sustaining long-term repression against Muslim minorities, entrenching parallel systems of social segregation and fundamentally reshaping the country’s social fabric.

7. HATE SPEECH DURING LOCAL AND STATE ELECTIONS

For the most part, rampant electoral hate speech in India has been concentrated around major state or general elections and only sporadically during local electoral contests. In 2025, however, India Hate Lab observed a notable shift: the systematic use of hate speech as a primary electoral tool for municipal and local body elections, which is traditionally fought on hyper-local issues of development, infrastructure, and civic amenities.

During the run-up to the municipal elections in Uttarakhand (held January 23, 2025), IHL documented 24 distinct hate speech events led by high-ranking BJP figures, including Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami, state legislators, and local candidates. In these speeches, the discourse of local governance was almost entirely supplanted by a "triple threat" narrative. CM Dhami and his colleagues frequently invoked the anti-Muslim conspiracies of "love jihad," "land jihad," and "spit jihad"⁴⁶ alongside fearmongering about demographic change.

A more intensified and coordinated pattern emerged during the assembly elections in the National Capital Territory of Delhi (held on February 5, 2025 and results declared on February 8) and Bihar (held between November 6-11, 2025 and results declared on November 14).

India Hate Lab documented 27 hate speech events in Delhi between January 1 and February 6, accounting for 35% of the city's total 76 hate speech incidents recorded in 2025. Similarly, in Bihar, 63% of all hate speech events documented during the year (42 out of 67) occurred between October 1 and November 11, coinciding directly with the peak election period.

In both elections, anti-Muslim hate speech escalated into a central feature of campaign strategy. The rhetoric deployed by high-ranking BJP leaders and affiliated far-right organizations consistently employed the "infiltrator" or "intruder" trope, fearmongering about demographic change, and the usurpation of citizen rights. This strategy demonstrates the continuing and foundational role of communal mobilization in the electoral machinery.

Hate speech during the Delhi elections primarily focused on Muslim-majority neighborhoods, centered on false allegations that the then Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government was facilitating the settlement of "Bangladeshi and Rohingya refugees." The

core campaign themes included fearmongering about the growth of the Muslim population, invoking conspiracy theories like 'love jihad,' 'land jihad,' 'spit jihad' and inflammatory tropes of Muslim men marrying multiple wives. This rhetoric was further punctuated by the use of outright anti-Muslim slurs like "Mulla."

On January 5, 2025, in Rohini, Delhi, BJP leader Nazia Elahi Khan (also known as Nazia Sanatani) delivered a hate-filled speech at an event, where she accused Muslims of "love jihad."⁴⁷ On January 6, in Patparganj, during an election campaign speech, BJP Councilor Ravinder Singh Negi targeted Muslims, referring to them as "descendants of the Mughals" and asserting that only "Jai Shree Ram" would be chanted in the country, while fearmongering about the Muslim population and emphasizing the necessity of Hindus voting for the BJP.⁴⁸

On January 23, in Karol Bagh, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath boasted about using state force against the community, stating, "In Okhla and Delhi, in all important areas, they have settled Bangladeshi infiltrators... I opposed it as the land belonged to the Government of Uttar Pradesh, but they didn't listen. So, I sent a bulldozer! We cleared the land and barricaded it. We will never give land to foreign infiltrators."⁴⁹

On January 25 in Badarpur, BJP leader Narayan Dutt Sharma's campaign speech boasted about the Babri Mosque demolition⁵⁰ and called for voting along religious lines. On January 27, in Transit Camp, Govindpuri, former Member of Parliament and BJP leader Ramesh Bidhuri invoked the trope of polygamy, claiming, "There will be no more talaq, talaq, talaq. They can't keep four wives anymore. Those who used to have six wives are now agitated and want to remove Modi."⁵¹

On January 28, in Vikaspuri, Adityanath spread false allegations of institutional support for migrants, saying, "The opposition and AAP have spent the last ten years doing one thing: issuing Aadhaar cards to Bangladeshi and Rohingya Muslims to 'usurp' the rights of Delhi citizens."⁵²

On January 30 at Chandni Chowk, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma used the anti-Muslim slur "Mulla" while campaigning, asking, "Kejriwal (AAP chief) has announced he will give salaries to Hindu priests, but for the last ten years, he has been giving money to mullahs! Now, ten years later, he remembers our pujaris. Should the mullah be given money first or the Hindu?"⁵³

On January 30, in Badli, Rohini, BJP candidate Ahir Deepak Chaudhary advocated for expulsion, stating, "In all my gatherings, such as in Jahangirpuri, I told the Bangladeshis and Rohingyas to leave because I don't want votes from people who make our children and women unsafe."⁵⁴

On February 1 in Vinod Nagar, BJP candidate Negi threatened action against the community, saying, "This is a message for the jihadis: pack up your stuff and leave. When I win, I will throw out all these jihadis. I will shut down all illegal meat stores."⁵⁵

On February 1 in Shakurpur Colony, Shakurpur, VHP leader Jagjit Singh Goldy spread the conspiracy of 'love jihad' and urged attendees at an event to vote for the BJP to "protect Hindu women."⁵⁶ On February 4 at Brahmapuri, Shahdara, Bajrang Dal leader at a BJP-affiliated event delivered a speech targeting Muslims, saying, "The Muslim will never vote on civic issues. We know how to deal with the deshdrohi (traitors)."⁵⁷ Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami also repeatedly invoked anti-Muslim conspiracy theories of "land jihad," "love jihad," and "thook jihad" in multiple rallies.

The deployment of communal rhetoric observed in Delhi served as a tactical precursor to the sustained and explicit anti-Muslim mobilization witnessed in Bihar, where the hate speech environment intensified significantly during the months preceding the November polls. Multiple hateful narratives were cemented by both senior politicians, Hindu nationalist groups and influential far-right religious leaders who used large-scale events to demonise the minorities.

On March 10 at a Katha event in Banka, Bihar, far-right monk Dharendra Shastri spread the conspiracies of 'love jihad' and 'land jihad', warning, "If Hindus remain divided, we will have to leave Banka, but if we unite, deshdrohis will have to leave India."⁵⁸ On April 6 in Banka, Sadhvi Saraswati used slurs like "malechaa" and spread the conspiracy of "love jihad"⁵⁹ to provoke communal hostility.

On July 6, at Sanatan Mahakumbh in Patna, Dharendra Shastri claimed that certain forces are trying to turn India into an Islamic state⁶⁰. On July 18 in Begusarai, monk Raju Das demonized Muslims, claiming they are taught only to kill non-believers⁶¹.

The political campaign officially began after the Election Commission of India announced the schedule on October 6, but the narrative was set much earlier by Prime Minister Modi. On August 22, 2025, in Gaya, Bihar, Modi targeted those he referred to as "ghuspaithiya" (infiltrators), asserting they would not be allowed to steal livelihoods and resources, and announcing a "demography mission" to deport each one⁶².

On August 25 in Purnia, Union Minister and BJP Member of Parliament Giriraj Singh referred to alleged Bangladeshi migrants as "demons" and urged attendees to buy only from Hindu vendors⁶³. On September 15 in Purnia, Modi again invoked "ghuspaith" (intruders) myth, calling them a demographic threat and claiming that people are concerned about women's safety from them⁶⁴.

On September 18, Home Minister Amit Shah delivered speeches in Bihar targeting "ghuspethiya" (intruders), questioning their rights to voting and resources⁶⁵, and alleging that the opposition prioritizes them as vote banks. He delivered similar speeches at Dehri,

Rohtas on the same day.⁶⁶ On October 16 in Saharsa, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Adityanath invoked tropes of "Muslim intruders" and the "burqa" to claim opposition parties were encouraging electoral fraud, stating, "They want the 'burqa' to cast fake votes and rob the poor, Dalits, and citizens of Bihar... they want to rob the rights of the poor by concealing their faces and casting fake votes."⁶⁷

As in the Delhi elections, Uttarakhand Chief Minister Dharam Singh repeatedly invoked anti-Muslim conspiracy narratives such as "love jihad," "land jihad," and "thook jihad" (spit jihad)⁶⁸.

This pattern confirms the continuation of the trend observed in state and general elections throughout 2023 and 2024, demonstrating that anti-Muslim hate speech and communal mobilization have become a central weapon for electoral gain.

8. WEAPONIZING DEMOGRAPHIC FEAR DURING ELECTIONS AND BEYOND

The year 2025 further entrenched the strategic use of hate speech within the electoral machinery, with the “infiltrator” or “intruder” trope, already central to campaign rhetoric in 2024, being intensified and deployed even more aggressively ahead of key state elections in Delhi and Bihar, and in preparation for the 2026 polls in Assam and West Bengal. This narrative was first deployed at a large scale by the BJP during the 2024 general elections⁶⁹ and multiple state elections, and its continued use demonstrates its foundational role in the party's communal mobilization strategy.

At its core, this strategy functions as a localized version of the Great Replacement theory, alleging a deliberate and conspiratorial effort to alter the country's religious composition.

The BJP's 2025 electoral strategy continued to rely on baseless claims of large-scale “infiltration” by Rohingya refugees and Bangladeshi migrants, weaponizing fears that these populations pose a demographic threat to the Hindu majority, which constitutes roughly 80 percent of India's 1.46 billion people. A 2017 Indian Ministry of Home Affairs report⁷⁰ estimated that India hosted 40,000 Rohingya refugees, a number which has subsequently gone down to 22,500 in 2024, as per the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees⁷¹.

It is important to note that BJP leaders and Hindu nationalist groups often use “Rohingya infiltrator” and “Bangladeshi infiltrator” as dog whistles to target India's Muslim citizens, particularly those of Bengali origin from states like West Bengal and Assam, falsely portraying them as “infiltrators” or undocumented foreigners “illegally” residing in India.

This exclusionary narrative was consistently raised during the 2025 Delhi and Bihar Assembly elections, demonstrating a calculated national application of the communal strategy. In an election rally in VIKASPURI, Delhi on January 28, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath accused opposition parties of issuing ID cards to “Bangladeshi and Rohingya Muslims to usurp the rights of locals.”⁷²

The next day, at a rally in Rajendra Nagar on January 29, Adityanath alleged the then-ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government was “encouraging Bangladeshi infiltrators and Rohingya to settle illegally.”⁷³ Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami, at a campaign rally in Najafgarh, Delhi on the same day, targeted the opposition by saying, “These people become the protectors of Rohingya and Bangladeshi infiltrators and hate our brothers from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.”⁷⁴

On January 30 at a rally in Badarpur, BJP leader Anurag Thakur claimed that the opposition "made Aadhaar cards, ration cards, and voter IDs for Rohingya Muslims in Delhi; gave refuge to illegal Bangladeshi infiltrators," asking the crowd, "Should Rohingya Muslims and illegal Bangladeshi infiltrators be given your rights?"⁷⁵

On the same day in Badli, Rohini, BJP candidate Ahir Deepak Chaudhary explicitly targeted Muslim voters, stating, "I told the Bangladeshis and Rohingyas to leave because I don't want votes from people who make our children and women unsafe... If any of those parties win, they will turn our home into Bangladesh, and some places have already become like Bangladesh."⁷⁶

This rhetoric was further formalized by Prime Minister Modi during his Independence Day address on August 15 at the Red Fort in Delhi, where he alleged that "infiltrators" were taking away jobs, land, and targeting women under a deliberate plan. "Today I want to alert the country about a concern, a challenge. Under a well-thought-out conspiracy, the demography of the country is being changed. Seeds of a new crisis are being sown. These 'ghuspaithiya' (intruders) are snatching the livelihood of the youth of my country, these 'ghuspaithiya' are targeting the sisters and daughters of my country, this will not be tolerated. These 'ghuspaithiya' are misleading the innocent tribals and grabbing their land. This country will not tolerate this," he said⁷⁷.

Similar messaging defined the Bihar campaign. On October 22, in Hayaghat, Darbhanga, Bihar, Minister of State for Home Affairs, Nityanand Rai, accused the opposition of attempting to include "Bangladeshi and Rohingya infiltrators" in voter rolls to "destroy Bihar's demography."⁷⁸ Union Home Minister Amit Shah repeatedly invoked the infiltration fear, promising at a rally in Lakhisarai, Bihar on October 30 that "we will expel each and every individual ghuspaithiya (intruder) from Bihar."⁷⁹

Shah reiterated this in Jale, Darbhanga, Bihar on November 4, stating, "we will identify every ghuspaithiya (infiltrator) one by one and remove them from the nation,"⁸⁰ and again in Benipatti, Madhubani on November 6, where he said "These ghuspaithiya (infiltrators) are taking our youth's jobs, eating the rations meant for our poor, and making the country insecure. I promise today that from the place of the Goddess Bhagwati, we will identify every Bangladeshi ghuspaithiya (infiltrator) and remove them one by one from the country."⁸¹

The same narrative is actively being set for states due to go for elections in 2026, including Assam and West Bengal. This aggressive rhetoric has had devastating real-world consequences for people of Bengali origin, particularly Muslims, in various states. Following the April 2025 Pahalgam terrorist attack in Kashmir⁸², which was used to intensify anti-Muslim sentiment, Muslims of Bengali origin across various BJP-ruled states were targeted and accused of being Bangladeshi.⁸³

Since April, there has been a sharp rise in the detention and forced removal of Bengali-origin Muslims from various BJP-ruled states like Assam, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Odisha, and Rajasthan. A Human Rights Watch report⁸⁴ from July 2025 detailed that Indian authorities had unlawfully expelled hundreds of ethnic Bengali Muslims to Bangladesh, claiming they were "illegal immigrants," with many of the deportees being Indian citizens.

The report cited Border Guard Bangladesh data indicating over 1,500 expulsions between May and June 2025, including Indian nationals and approximately 100 Rohingya refugees. Victims reported being detained without due process, having their identity documents and phones seized, and being threatened and beaten by Indian Border Security Force (BSF) officials to force them across the border, with one Indian citizen recounting being tied up, gagged, and pushed into Bangladesh at gunpoint.

The Calcutta High Court in West Bengal state delivered an important judgment in September 2025, quashing the arbitrary deportation orders for two families, who were residents of West Bengal state, but had been arrested by the Delhi Police and unlawfully deported to Bangladesh.⁸⁵

The court strongly criticized the Delhi Police and the Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO) for violating constitutional rights. The ruling established that executive arbitrariness, such as ignoring valid identity documents and relying on coerced "confessions," is unconstitutional, and it mandated the Indian government to bring the Indian citizens, including a pregnant woman and minors, back from Bangladesh within four weeks.

In Assam, the government led by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, a senior BJP figure known for incendiary anti-Muslim rhetoric⁸⁶, has initiated a widespread, targeted crackdown against Bengali-origin Muslims, who are falsely labeled as "Bangladeshi infiltrators." This campaign explicitly links political incitement with state-sanctioned violence and dispossession.

India Hate Lab has documented a sharp escalation in hate speech, targeted harassment, and violent state-led evictions.⁸⁷ Chief Minister Sarma has actively fueled this environment, publicly claiming that "newly arrived"⁸⁸ Muslims "weaponize" practices like beef consumption and the call to prayer to drive out local Hindus. He further dismissed calls for communal harmony and referred to the community as "suspected Bangladeshis" whose land, once "reclaimed," is put to "better use."⁸⁹

In July alone, five major eviction drives displaced thousands of families: over 1,600 families were evicted in Dhubri⁹⁰, and in Goalpara, the razing of over 1,000 homes and a mosque⁹¹ was followed by police firing on protesters, resulting in one death. We also

documented 18 rallies and protests across 14 districts, many supported by BJP leaders, where demonstrators glorified state violence with symbolic bulldozers and amplified hate-filled calls for further demolitions. Many of the rallies, assaults, and demolition drives were livestreamed or uploaded to Facebook, Instagram, and X, rapidly amplifying hateful rhetoric and reinforcing the false narrative of a state under siege by “illegal infiltrators.”

In August, at an event organized by AHP-Rashtriya Bajrang Dal in Rangia, Kamrup, Assam, state president Dinesh Kalita called for strengthening their organisation to stop the “intimidation of Bangladeshi-Miyas” and “kill those” who shelter them in villages.⁹¹

In November, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, speaking at the Border Security Force’s Diamond Jubilee celebrations in Bhuj, Gujarat, said the government would expel “ghuspaithiye” (intruders) and accused opposition parties of resisting the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise to keep them on electoral rolls, describing the process as the “purification” of the voters list.⁹³

The rollout of the SIR by the Election Commission of India in 2025 became immediately and intrinsically tied to the ruling party’s “infiltrator” narrative, transforming what should have been a routine bureaucratic exercise into a tool of political mobilization and public anxiety, particularly in states that went to the polls in 2025 and those like West Bengal and Assam headed for elections in 2026.

In Bihar, the SIR process led to the deletion of nearly 6.8 million voters⁹⁴, raising serious concerns about the scale and fairness of the revisions. Although the stated objective of SIR is to ensure that all eligible Indian citizens are included in the electoral rolls and that no ineligible names remain, BJP leaders, most prominently Home Minister Shah, consistently framed it as a necessary measure to “detect, delete, and deport illegal immigrants,”⁹⁵ specifically accusing opposition parties of protecting these “infiltrators” to secure their vote bank.

This narrative has resulted in a pervasive climate of fear among minority and marginalized communities, especially Muslims, who view SIR as a backdoor implementation of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and National Register of Citizens (NRC).⁹⁶ Consequently, the exercise led to reports of mass self-disenfranchisement, with activists alleging that the onerous documentation requirements were intended to disproportionately exclude poor and vulnerable citizens from the electoral roll.⁹⁷

The consequences of this sustained campaign have culminated in lethal street violence. On December 17, a migrant Dalit man, Ram Narayan, from Chhattisgarh, was lynched in Kerala’s Palakkad district on suspicion of theft and of being a Bangladeshi national.⁹⁸

On December 24, a Muslim migrant worker, Jewel Sheikh, from West Bengal's Murshidabad district was lynched⁹⁹ in Sambalpur, Odisha, after being accused of being an undocumented immigrant from Bangladesh. That the victims included both a Muslim and a Hindu underscores how this rhetoric places all Bengali-origin individuals at risk of harassment and violence, regardless of religion.

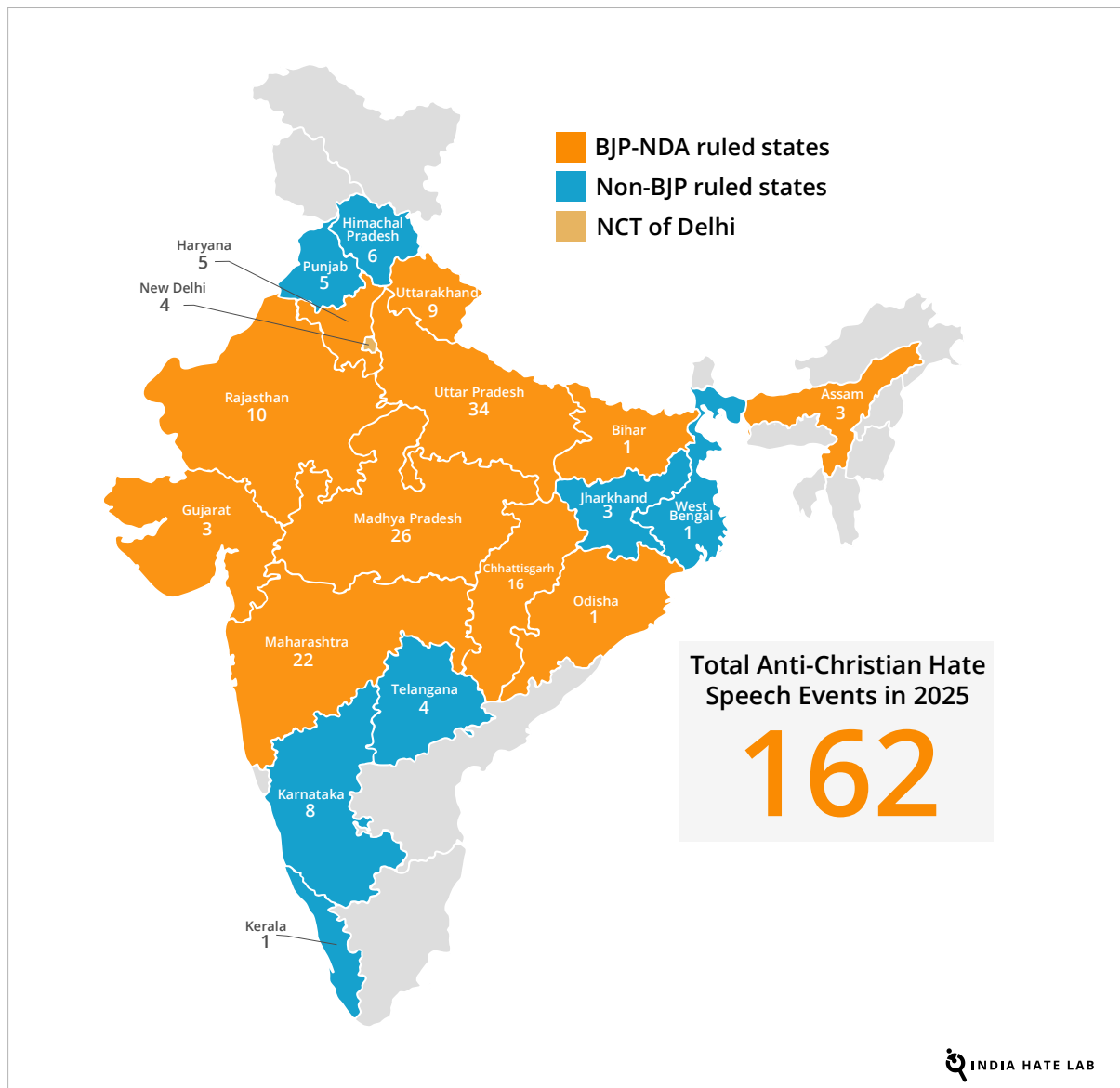
These killings represent the most extreme manifestations of the climate produced by sustained political incitement, but they are not aberrations. Rather, they reflect the predictable outcome of a political ecosystem in which hate speech from positions of power signals legitimacy and impunity, placing millions of Indian citizens, particularly Bengali Muslims, at continual risk of harassment, discrimination, and violence.

9. ANTI-CHRISTIAN HATE SPEECH

Like Muslims, Christians are a recurring target of Hindu nationalist hate mobilization. In 2025, India Hate Lab documented a further escalation in hate speech targeting Christians, recording more than 162 distinct events, representing a 41 percent increase from the 115 events documented in 2024.

The increase reflects a sharper normalization of explicit threats, calls for organized action, and a widening ecosystem of actors including religious preachers, far-right groups, and elected representatives, converging around an increasingly militant anti-Christian narrative.

FIGURE 14: STATE-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF ANTI-CHRISTIAN HATE SPEECH IN 2025



Among event organizers, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad–Bajrang Dal (VHP-Bajrang Dal) and the Antarrashtriya Hindu Parishad–Rashtriya Bajrang Dal (AHP-RBD) organized 50 and 16 events, respectively, at which anti-Christian hate speeches were delivered. States ruled by the BJP directly or in coalition recorded 134 events and opposition states recorded 28 events.

Multiple speeches invoked a “dual-threat” frame, in which Christianity is routinely paired with Islam as a foreign, “demonic” force, often described through the umbrella label of “vidharmis” allegedly bent on harming Hindus and dismantling Hindu civilization. In Hindu nationalist discourse, the term “vidharmi” is pejoratively used to label people who are seen as followers of “alien” or “false” religions, most commonly Muslims and Christians.

Across events, Christian presence is repeatedly cast as a threat that warrants economic boycotts, vigilantism, and the physical destruction of churches and other community infrastructure.

Central to this escalation is the weaponization of the “forced conversion” narrative, which portrays every act of Christian charity, education, or healthcare as a deceptive tool for converting Hindus to Christianity. Like previous years, the most pervasive theme across 2025 incidents is the allegation that Christian missionaries are converting Hindus through inducement. Speakers repeatedly claimed that Christians offer jobs, medical aid, financial support, or marriage assistance to “trap” or “buy” converts, often reinforcing this claim through the “rice bag” trope.¹⁰⁰ A derogatory slur, the trope is used by Hindu nationalists to claim that Christians convert Hindus, especially poor or Adivasi communities, by offering material inducements like food, money, or aid. This narrative is used to justify violent vigilante actions, with leaders urging mobs to bypass the police and “fix” Christians or Christian missionaries using physical violence.

Several events throughout the year illustrate this trend. On January 1 in Jhabua, Madhya Pradesh, at a Shaurya Yatra organized by the VHP-Bajrang Dal, Bajrang Dal leader Azad Prem Singh declared the village “Hindu land,” dismissed police intervention, and called for immediate action, accusing Christians of conversions and “illegal” church construction while vowing to demolish churches¹⁰¹ and explicitly invoking the Babri Masjid demolition as a model for what should be done to Christian sites.

At another event on January 29 in Kokawad, Jhabua, Singh boasted about shutting down seven churches and securing jail terms and fines for priests, while threatening violence and describing conversion as a “trick” plotted by “vidharmis” that he knows how to “fix” using sticks and weapons.

“These conversions are a trick plotted by vidharmis. Don’t worry, I know how to ‘fix them.’ I know how to use a stick and weapons as well,” he said.¹⁰²

In Narsinghpur, Madhya Pradesh on January 22, VHP-Bajrang Dal members held a campaign against members of Christian community, repeating the inducement narrative and urging the public to report conversions while issuing threats of physical violence.¹⁰³

In Patiala, Punjab on March 4, monk Rajendra Puri claimed conversions were proliferating in Punjab, opposed the construction of a church in Jalandhar, and urged weapon-carrying alongside religious practice.¹⁰⁴

In Silchar, Assam on March 29, an AHP–RBD meeting included an oath demanding five swords in every household and threatening to cut off the hands of Muslims and Christians¹⁰⁵ allegedly involved in harming Hindu women, an example of how anti-Christian hate is repeatedly embedded within broader gendered incitement ecosystems.

On August 6 in Kanker, Chhattisgarh, a protest against alleged conversions included rhetoric implying that Christians should not be allowed in villages.¹⁰⁷

Maharashtra emerged as a notable site of escalation, including dangerous anti-Christian speeches delivered by elected representatives.

On June 17 in Sangli, Maharashtra, at a Sakal Hindu Samaj (SHS) event, BJP legislator Gopichand Padalkar called for violence against pastors and promised monetary rewards to those who attack them, urging, “Beat up pastors who come to your village.”¹⁰⁷

Two days later, in Akkalkot, Solapur, he again incited violence against pastors.¹⁰⁸ The rhetoric spread further within the same mobilizing network: on June 28 in Ambegaon, Pune, at a Nished Andolan organized by SHS, BJP MLA Mahesh Landge echoed Padalkar’s calls and reportedly pledged to demolish a church within a fixed timeframe while encouraging attacks on pastors.¹⁰⁹

Later in the year, on October 6 in Baglan, Nashik, far-right preacher Sangram Bapu Bhandare framed conversions as “deceptive” religious warfare and amplified the idea that pastors should be “answered” through violence.¹¹⁰

In Bengaluru, Karnataka, far-right monk Atmananda Saraswati Swami declared that “Muslims and Christians must be eliminated using modern weapons.”¹¹¹

Another alarming development is the systematic targeting of Christian educational and religious institutions. Missionary schools, traditionally prestigious in the Indian context, are now being labeled as centers of “illness”¹¹² that manipulate children into abandoning Hindu values. Simultaneously, there is an increasing demand for the demolition of “churches,”¹¹³ often drawing direct inspiration from the 1992 demolition of the Babri Masjid.

In Jhabua, Madhya Pradesh on August 4, during a Kanwar Yatra event by VHP, a speaker declared that every church in the villages would be demolished, labeling them illegal.¹¹⁴

This rhetoric is often accompanied by Trishul Deekshas (pitchfork distribution ceremonies), where participants take oaths to use weapons to protect “Sanatan Dharma” from the perceived Christian threat.

The 2025 data also highlights a shift toward xenophobic nativism, where Christians are framed as “British colonizers”¹¹⁵ whose loyalty lies with the Vatican rather than India. Using Hindu nationalist ideologue VD Savarkar’s “holy land” theory, Hindu nationalist leaders like Dhananjay Desai argue that those whose sacred sites are outside India cannot be considered true citizens.¹¹⁶ This has led to the mainstreaming of derogatory slurs such as “Chadar-Father”¹¹⁷ (referring to the Muslim prayer mat and Christian priests) to link both minorities as a singular enemy.

On March 3 in Amleshwar, Raipur, VHP, Bajrang Dal, and Matru Shakti members protested outside a Christian-owned house, accusing residents of conversions and chanting “Chadar-Father free India.”¹¹⁸

On March 24 in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, Bajrang Dal chief Neeraj Doneria accused Christians of orchestrating separatist movements in the Northeast and inciting violence in Manipur,¹¹⁹ reinforcing a pattern in which Christians are associated with “anti-national” conspiracy claims.

Political figures, including BJP legislators and ministers, reinforced this ecosystem by framing Christian converts as outsiders “usurping rights,”¹²⁰ particularly in the context of Adivasi communities.

At an Adivasi conference in Alirajpur, Madhya Pradesh on March 6, BJP leader and state minister Nagarsingh Chouhan targeted Christians and alleged that conversions were intended to create major conflict in society.¹²¹

The cumulative effect of these 162 incidents has been the consolidation of a permission structure for violence and exclusion. Anti-Christian rhetoric has become normalized to the extent that Hindu nationalist groups increasingly barge into private prayer meetings and churches, harass congregants, vandalize property, and physically assault pastors and worshippers. Anti-conversion laws are frequently invoked to criminalize routine religious activity, leading to arrests, intimidation, and prolonged legal harassment of Christian community members.

Data from civil-society organizations underscores the scale of harm. The Evangelical Fellowship of India's Religious Liberty Commission documented a rise in targeted violence against Christians from 601 incidents in 2023 to at least 830 in 2024.¹²² As of November 2025, the United Christian Forum reported 706 incidents targeting Christians.¹²³ In November 2025, the National Christian Convention reported that incidents of violence against Christians increased from 139 in 2014 to 834 in 2024, a nearly 500 percent increase over a decade.¹²⁴

Violence further escalated during the Christmas period, with widespread harassment of Christians and disruptions of prayer services. The Quint documented at least 10 such incidents across multiple states around Christmas.¹²⁵

These developments signal a clear structural convergence in how religious minorities are targeted. Overall, the 2025 data demonstrates that anti-Christian hate speech is increasingly embedded within the same dangerous speech ecosystem that targets Muslims. Both are driven by shared conspiracy frameworks, overlapping vocabularies and common mobilizing organizations. This convergence has translated into sustained offline harm and placing Christian communities at continued risk of violence, exclusion, and legal persecution.

10. DANGEROUS SPEECH AND CALL TO ARMS

The analysis of hate speeches delivered in 2025 reveals a systematic and interlocking set of themes designed to demonize religious minorities, justify violence, and mobilize militant action. The rhetoric frequently crossed the threshold into direct incitement, normalizing extreme violence as a legitimate act of religious or national self-defense and, in some cases, as a patriotic duty.

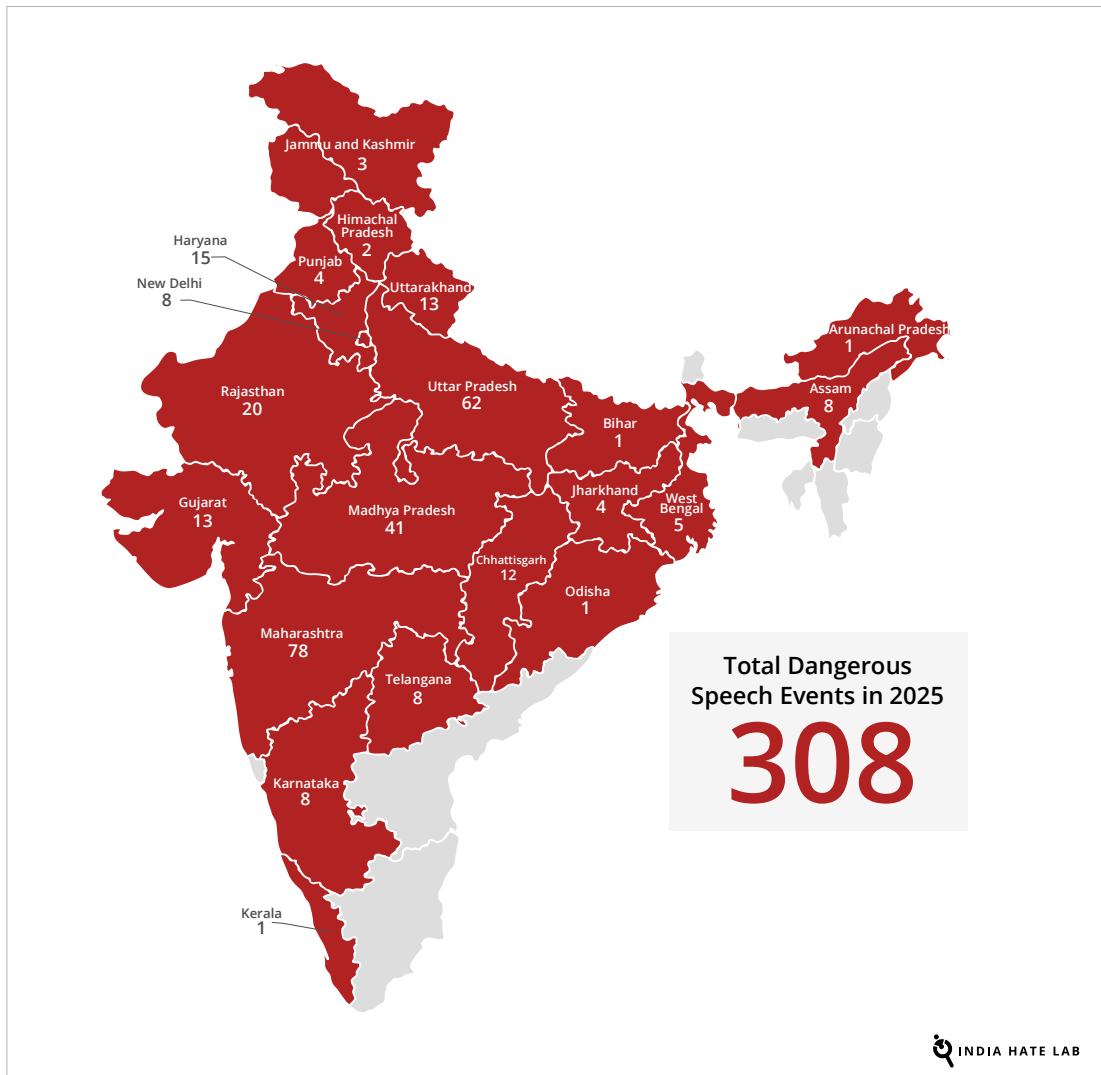
Prominent figures delivering such speeches included elected BJP leaders, senior figures from far-right Hindu nationalist organizations, and influential religious preachers. India Hate Lab documented 308 incidents of dangerous speech or explicit calls to violence during the year. Of these, 247 speeches directly called for violence against Muslims, 50 called for violence against both Muslims and Christians, and 11 explicitly called for violence against Christians.

BJP-ruled states accounted for 272 of these incidents, while 36 incidents were recorded in states governed by opposition parties. A monthly breakdown shows that March (37 dangerous speeches), April (47), September (31) and December (49) recorded the highest concentrations of dangerous speech. The April spike was driven by the weaponization of the Pahalgam terror attack by far-right groups to collectively target Muslim Indians. During this period, far-right organizations organized hundreds of rallies across India, systematically using these gatherings as platforms to disseminate hate-filled speeches.

The December spike, the highest recorded during the year, coincided with Shaurya Yatra rallies that featured dangerous speeches, as well as protest events organized in response to the lynching of a Hindu garment worker in Bangladesh, which also included such violent rhetoric.

At the state level, Maharashtra recorded the highest number of dangerous speech events, with 78 incidents, up from 64 in 2024. When examined alongside the 193 hate speech events recorded in the state during the year, this indicates that nearly 40 percent involved explicit calls for violence, the highest proportion recorded for any state.

FIGURE 15: DANGEROUS SPEECH HOTSPOTS ACROSS INDIA IN 2025



Uttar Pradesh (62) and Madhya Pradesh (41) ranked second and third, respectively, both reflecting significant increases from 2024, when Uttar Pradesh recorded 42 incidents and Madhya Pradesh 35. Together, these three BJP-ruled states accounted for 59 percent of all dangerous speech incidents documented in 2025.


Opposition-ruled states recorded markedly fewer incidents. Congress-ruled Karnataka and Telangana each recorded 8 dangerous speech events, West Bengal (ruled by the All India Trinamool Congress) recorded 5, and Punjab (ruled by the Aam Aadmi Party) recorded 4. In total, opposition-ruled states accounted for 32 incidents.

As in 2024, a small set of far-right organizations remained the primary organizers of events where dangerous speeches were delivered. These included the Vishwa Hindu Parishad–Bajrang Dal (72 events), Antarrashtriya Hindu Parishad-Rashtriya Bajrang Dal (AHP-RBD) (49), and Sakal Hindu Samaj (23), underscoring the coordinated role of Hindu nationalist networks in mobilizing hate and violence against minorities. Other groups linked to dangerous speech events included Shiv Shakti Akhada (6), Sri Ram Sena (3), Karni

Sena (3), Hindu Jagran Manch (3), Shiv Pratishtan Hindustan (2), Hindu Yuva Vahini (2), Hindu Raksha Dal (2), and Yuva Shakti Manch (2).

FIGURE 16: KEY ACTORS DRIVING DANGEROUS SPEECH IN 2025

	Name	Position/Affiliation	Dangerous Speech
1	Pravin Togadia	Chief of Antarrashtriya Hindu Parishad	26
2	T Raja Singh	Former BJP leader and Legislator, Telangana	20
3	Manoj Kumar	President of Rashtriya Bajrang Dal	13
4	Nitish Rane	Minister of Ports Development, Maharashtra	9
5	Madhuram Sharan Shiva	Chief of Shiv Shakti Akhada	9
6	Sangram Bapu Bhandare	Religious Preacher from Maharashtra	9
7	Tannu Sharma	Bajrang Dal Leader (Indore, Madhya Pradesh)	7
8	Kajal Hindustani	Far-right Digital Influencer	7
9	Aadesh Soni	Gau Raksha Dal Leader from Chhattisgarh	5
10	Gopichand Padalkar	BJP leader and Legislator in Maharashtra	5

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Among individual actors, Pravin Togadia, chief of the AHP-RBD, and T. Raja Singh, a former BJP leader and legislator from Telangana, topped the list, delivering 26 and 20 dangerous speeches, respectively. They were followed by Manoj Kumar, national president of the Rashtriya Bajrang Dal (13), and Nitish Rane, a BJP legislator and Maharashtra state minister (9).

Other prominent figures included Madhuram Sharan Shiva, chief of the Shiv Shakti Akhada (9); Sangram Bapu Bhandare, a religious preacher from Maharashtra (9); Tannu Sharma, a Bajrang Dal leader from Indore (7); Kajal Hindustani, a far-right digital influencer (7); Gopichand Padalkar, a BJP legislator from Maharashtra (5); Gautam Ravriya, a Bajrang Dal leader from Mumbai (5); Aadesh Soni, a Gau Raksha Dal leader from Chhattisgarh (5); Harsha Thakur, a far-right digital influencer (5); Suresh Chavhanke, editor-in-chief of Sudarshan News (3); Sangram Jagtap, a Nationalist Congress Party (Ajit Pawar faction) legislator from Maharashtra (3); Neeraj Doneria, Bajrang Dal chief (2); and Nand Kishor Gurjar, a BJP legislator from Uttar Pradesh (2).

In addition to these high-profile figures, numerous dangerous speeches were delivered by local-level cadres of Hindu nationalist organizations, highlighting the depth and decentralization of violence-enabling rhetoric across the country.

Speakers repeatedly issued death threats and calls for execution, promoting extrajudicial violence, such as one monk urging, “kill them yourselves”¹²⁶ while others explicitly encouraged the use of weapons, with one leader declaring that arms are “not for chopping wood; they are for chopping necks.”¹²⁷ This is further reinforced by the glorification of extrajudicial actions like demolishing minority properties or places of worship using bulldozers and “police encounters.”

The speeches documented by India Hate Lab demonstrate a patterned use of language that constructs violence as a rational and defensive response to an alleged existential threat. Speakers framed the use of force as a religious obligation, a patriotic duty, or an unavoidable necessity imposed by the perceived actions of minorities. This positioning absolves audiences of moral responsibility by recasting acts of harm as legitimate self-defense rather than criminal violence, thereby lowering social and psychological barriers to participation.

On January 6, at the VHP-Bajrang Dal’s Shaurya Sanchalan event in Nimbahera, Chittorgarh, Rajasthan, a far-right leader propagated conspiracies of “love jihad” and “land jihad” and called on attendees to prepare for war, declaring, “We have to be ready for a civil war; soon, in 15-20 years, we will be in a direct war with them.”¹²⁸ On the same day in Kakkinje, Dakshin Kannada, Karnataka, VHP leader Puneet Attawara praised jailed gangster Lawrence Bishnoi¹²⁹ and warned that Muslims would face severe consequences if thousands of Bajrang Dal members followed his example. He framed the conflict as a “holy war” between cow-worshippers and cow-eaters,¹³⁰ invoking religious justification for violence.

On February 19, at a Shiv Jayanti rally in Parbhani, Maharashtra, organized by Shivpratishtan Hindustan, legislator T. Raja Singh delivered a speech that incited extreme violence against Muslims. Invoking local Hindu nationalist icons, Singh declared that Muslims, whom he referred to using dehumanizing and derogatory language, should not be allowed to live in the region.

“This is the land of Bal Thackeray and Anand Dighe! We will not allow the illegitimate children of Afzal Khan and Aurangzeb to live here.....We will kill the wombs that say ‘Afzal will be born in every house.’ We will rip their tongues out.....We will kill all those traitorous Afzals,” Raja Singh said.¹³¹

Singh further urged his supporters to carry out extrajudicial “street encounters” against at least ten to twelve individuals accused of “love jihad,” explicitly citing Uttar Pradesh’s encounter policy under Adityanath as a model to emulate. In addition, he called for the killing of individuals involved in cow slaughter, reinforcing a pattern of rhetoric that legitimizes vigilante violence and collective punishment.

On March 16, at the Gau Hatya Mukh Hindustan event organized by the VHP-Bajrang Dal in Bhosari, Pune, Maharashtra, Singh while glorifying violence against Muslims said: “Shivaji (a Maratha king) cut off a butcher’s hand. Today, our youth are ready to chop off their heads.”¹³²

A week later, on March 23, at a Shaheed Diwas meeting organized by AHP-RBD in Kasganj, Uttar Pradesh, RBD President Manoj Kumar cited “love jihad” and “land jihad” conspiracies and announced plans to build an “army” that would kill “love jihadis” and beat “land jihadis.”¹³³

On April 21, at a protest meeting organized by the VHP in response to communal violence in Murshidabad, West Bengal, VHP leader Narsimha Mani justified the 2002 anti-Muslim pogrom in Gujarat, in which more than 2,000 Muslims were killed.

“The entire Muslim-dominated area was sealed off, and from night till morning, they were burned. The Godhra massacre was carried out properly...this is the power of the Hindu community. This should be repeated across the entire country,”¹³⁴ said VHP leader Mani.

Along similar lines, BJP leader Rajeshwar Singh threatened comparable violence during a speech in Kushinagar, Uttar Pradesh, stating:

“If banned animals are slaughtered, we will slaughter Muslims in the same way, and blood will flow in Kushinagar.”¹³⁵

Calls to violence were frequently framed as moral or even non-violent acts. During a VHP-Bajrang Dal Trishul Deeksha event in Bahraich, Uttar Pradesh, on May 27, speaker Mahesh Tiwari claimed that killing those he labeled “anti-nationals,” terrorists, and attackers constituted a form of non-violence.¹³⁶

On June 18, at a religious gathering in Bengaluru, Karnataka, far-right monk Atmananda Saraswati Swami of the Samartha Sridharashrama Trust called for the killing of Muslims and Christians.¹³⁷ He declared that one Hindu should kill a thousand members of non-Sanatan religions and asserted that doing so would not be a sin, framing mass violence as spiritually permissible.

On October 16, Raghvendra Pratap Singh, a Hindu Yuva Vahini leader and former BJP legislator, delivered a speech at a BJP public meeting in which he incited retaliatory violence and coercion against Muslim women.¹³⁸ Referring to the alleged marriage of two Hindu women to Muslim men in a nearby village, Singh urged Hindu men to “bring in” at least ten Muslim women, forcibly convert them, and marry them as an act of revenge. Addressing the crowd, he asked how many were prepared to do so, prompting numerous men to raise their hands. He further stated that he would personally facilitate the marriages and arrange employment for those who participated.

At the Virat Hindu Dharma Sabha in Mangrulnath, Washim, Maharashtra on November 1, T. Raja Singh urged attendees to join the Bajrang Dal in order to “kill love jihadis, cow killers, and people involved in religious conversions.”¹³⁹

On December 21 in Rudrapur, Udham Singh Nagar district, Uttarakhand, during a Gau Raksha Dal Sammelan, a speaker delivered a dangerous speech, declaring, “Until a few are beheaded, this will continue in the country,” while targeting Muslims by claiming they slaughter cattle and consume beef.¹⁴⁰

10.1 CALLS TO ARMS

Calls to arms were similarly explicit and recurring throughout 2025. India Hate Lab recorded 136 hate speeches containing explicit calls to arms, marking a further increase from the 123 incidents documented in 2024. The majority of these speeches were delivered at events organized by Hindu nationalist groups, most notably the VHP-Bajrang Dal, which accounted for 55 such incidents, and the AHP-RBD, which accounted for 25.

Geographically, 116 of the calls to arms were recorded in states governed by the BJP or its National Democratic Alliance partners, while only 20 occurred in opposition-ruled states. Hindu nationalist leaders urged attendees to purchase weapons, train their

children in combat, and prepare for imminent conflict. Weapons were repeatedly framed as essential instruments of survival and religious defense.

On April 14, in Gokulpuri, Delhi, BJP leader Jai Bhagwan Goyal invoked Hindu deities and kings to urge supporters to move beyond social media activism and take up arms.¹⁴¹ At a rally in Dharmatala, Kolkata, on April 23, a Hindu nationalist leader declared that every household should keep weapons, stating that women should be prepared to kill “jihadis” if they entered their homes, while threatening to mutilate and behead anyone who opposed Hinduism.¹⁴²

On April 29 in Kasaragod, Kerala, RSS leader Kalladka Prabhakar Bhat urged Hindus to keep swords at home and, while referring to Hindu-Muslim riots, framed them as Muslims killing and Hindus fleeing before asserting that Hindus must also kill.¹⁴³

On August 27, at an event organized by the AHP-RBD in Kutch, Gujarat, its chief Pravin Togadia boasted about forming organizations trained in military combat, distributing over 400,000 trishuls (pitchforks), and recruiting retired commandos to run a military academy. He declared, “All I said was ‘kill.’ If you can kill, then cases can be handled,”¹⁴⁴ openly dismissing legal accountability.

This incitement was further reinforced through the glorification of extrajudicial practices such as punitive bulldozer demolitions and “encounter killings.”¹⁴⁵ Hindu far-right leaders routinely cited demolitions of Muslim homes and businesses as successful models of governance and justice, celebrating them as efficient, righteous, and replicable. In doing so, they validated collective punishment and encouraged audiences to support or replicate such actions.

Throughout 2025, far-right leaders also invoked Israel’s military actions in Gaza as a model to emulate. On May 25, at an event organized by the Savarkar Vichar Manch in Navi Mumbai, Pushpendra Kulshrestha praised the destruction in Gaza, framing it as justified revenge and urging similar action in India.¹⁴⁶

On August 19, in Amreli, Gujarat, Pravin Togadia called for Hindu dominance “lawfully, or if need be, with sticks,” demanded the expulsion of millions of Muslims, and praised Israel’s actions as an example of how a smaller population could defeat its enemies.¹⁴⁷ Similar rhetoric was repeated on September 13 in Mehsana¹⁴⁸ and on September 22 in Sambhajnagar,¹⁴⁹ where Togadia glorified the Babri Masjid demolition, promoted economic boycotts, and again urged Hindus to emulate Israel in targeting Muslims.

The primary ideological justification for this violence is a cluster of conspiracy theories, collectively branded as various forms of "Jihad," which function as the primary justificatory mechanism for violence, presenting minorities as engaged in a covert, coordinated campaign to undermine Hindu society.

Importantly, the data shows that most calls to violence were framed around allegations of Muslims consuming beef or invoking the 'love jihad' conspiracy, with speakers deliberately manufacturing moral panic by portraying Hindu women as being under imminent threat. These conspiracy narratives were often layered together, constructing a comprehensive worldview framing minorities as part of an ongoing civilizational war. This cumulative framing is significant because it transforms isolated incidents into proof of systemic threat, thereby lowering the threshold for violence in the minds of audiences.

Beyond ideological justification, the speeches in 2025 also displayed a pronounced emphasis on mobilization and preparedness. Religious leaders repeatedly urged audiences to organize, train, and remain vigilant. Calls to form militias, join armed religious groups, or participate in rallies and marches were common. Children and youth were frequently addressed directly,¹⁵⁰ with speakers urging parents to raise their sons as warriors and to inculcate readiness for conflict from an early age. This focus on intergenerational transmission of militant ideology indicates an intent not merely to incite immediate violence but to cultivate a durable base for future mobilization.

11. DEHUMANIZATION

Dehumanization is a process through which a specific group, most often people or communities constructed as an “out-group,” is stripped of its human qualities, moving from being perceived as “people” to being categorized as “pests,” “predators,” or “biological threats.” This shift is a critical precursor to mass violence because it erodes the moral and ethical restraints that ordinarily prevent one group from inflicting harm on another. When hate actors compare a community to animals or inanimate threats, it signals to their followers that the target community is not entitled to the same rights, safety, or dignity as the majority, effectively priming the social environment for physical conflict, social apartheid or mass violence.

In 2025, India Hate Lab documented a sustained pattern of dehumanizing language in hate speech events targeting religious minorities, particularly Muslims and, in some cases, Christians, with 141 documented incidents containing explicit dehumanizing references.

FIGURE 17: KEY ACTORS USING DEHUMANIZING LANGUAGE

	Name	Position/Affiliation	Dehumanizing Speech
1	Nitesh Rane	Minister of Ports Development, Maharashtra	15
2	Pravin Togadia	Chief of Antarrashtriya Hindu Parishad	8
3	Tannu Sharma	Bajrang Dal Leader (Indore, Madhya Pradesh)	7
4	Madhuram Sharan Shiva	Chief of Shiv Shakti Akhada	6
5	Yati Narsinghanand	Head of Dasna Devi Temple	6
6	Harsha Thakur	Far-right Digital Influencer	4
7	Kajal Hindustani	Far-right Digital Influencer	4
8	Vikas Verma	Bajrang Dal leader (Dehradun, Uttarakhand)	4

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Across the year’s incidents, speakers drew heavily on a familiar “infestation” and “vermin” vocabulary. Muslims were described as “termites,” “parasites,” and “insects.”¹⁵¹ On January 14 in Dehradun, Uttarakhand, Bajrang Dal leader Vikas Verma, speaking at a weekly Hanuman Chalisa event, referred to Muslims as “termites” and suggested that “strong chemicals” were needed to deal with them,¹⁵² explicitly borrowing the logic of extermination.

On March 12 in Ghazipur, Delhi Hindu far-right leader Mohit Bajrangi referred to Muslims as “gali ke keede (street insects)”¹⁵³ and issued calls for violence.

On April 24 in Hisar, Haryana, a Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) leader referred to Muslims as “ek dharam ke keede (insects from one particular religion)” and urged people to “squish these insects under your shoes.” The repeated use of “insects” language is significant because it collapses individuals into a subhuman mass, something to be crushed.¹⁵⁴ Multiple speakers relied on animalization, frequently mixing slurs with calls for violence. Multiple speakers compared Muslims to “pigs,” “piglets,” “children of pigs,”¹⁵⁵ and “mad dogs,”¹⁵⁶ while others used phrases like “jihadi dogs”¹⁵⁷ to present Muslim men as inherently predatory and violent.

At the Virat Sant Sammelan in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh on January 26, a monk compared Muslims to flies and mosquitoes, placing them alongside nuisances that must be eliminated. At another event, speakers used the language of jackals and cowards,¹⁵⁸ pairing animal metaphors with insinuations of disloyalty. In the most overtly eliminationist versions, “dog” metaphors were coupled with explicit incitement, such as calls to shoot people “in the head,” “chop necks,” or “behead and crush” those labeled as threats.

On April 22 in Kondagaon, Chhattisgarh, far-right influencer and political commentator Pushendra Kulshrestha delivered an anti-Muslim hate speech where he stated that “mad jihadis” and “mad dogs” cannot be spoken to and must be “shot in the head.”¹⁵⁹ At an event in Vasai, Palghar district, Maharashtra, Bajrang Dal Konkan Province co-convenor Gautam Ravariya engaged in fear-mongering and referred to Christians as “termites.”¹⁶⁰

Reptilian imagery, particularly the use of the term “snakelings”¹⁶² or “green snakes”¹⁶² has been championed largely by BJP legislator and Maharashtra Cabinet Minister Nitesh Rane, who ranked among the most prolific purveyors of dehumanizing speech. In numerous speeches across Maharashtra, Rane repeatedly described Muslims as “green snakes who live among us”¹⁶³ and “snakes who betray after being fed.”¹⁶⁴ On November 3 in Dahanu, Palghar, Maharashtra, Rane again delivered a hate speech referring to Muslims as “green snakes.”¹⁶⁵

This specific metaphor targets the perceived “treachery” of the minority community, suggesting they are a hidden, lethal threat that hides within the nation to strike at Hindus. Furthermore, the participation of a Cabinet Minister in this dehumanization process provides a form of sovereign legitimacy to acts of violence. When an elected representative refers to a segment of their own citizenry as a “snake,” it signals to both law enforcement and the public that these individuals are no longer entitled to

protection. Other speakers, such as those from the VHP-Bajrang Dal, expanded this to include the need to "crush" these snakes before they "ruin future generations."¹⁶⁶

The year also saw the use of supernatural and mythological forms of dehumanization, in which minorities were equated with "demons" or "beasts." Monk Madharam Sharan Shiva of the Shiv Shakti Akhada, while speaking at an event in Kannauj, Uttar Pradesh on February 28, compared Muslims and Christians to demons from Hindu mythology, claiming that while God resides in Hindus, only "demons" reside in those wearing "black clothes" or "vidharmis."¹⁶⁷

On March 17 in Loni, Uttar Pradesh, BJP MLA Nandkishore Gurjar echoed this by referring to Muslims as "demons" and "beasts" while glorifying the demolition of Babri mosque.¹⁶⁸ At a Ram Navami Utsav organized by Sakal Hindu Samaj in Ulwe, Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra, on April 6, far-right influencer Kajal Hindustani labeled Muslims "bloodthirsty zombies."¹⁶⁹

The dehumanizing language was also tightly woven into conspiracy narratives that portray minorities as an internal enemy, such as "love jihad," "land jihad," and demographic panic. Speakers repeatedly fused dehumanizing labels with allegations of infiltration by alleged Bangladeshi migrants and Rohingya refugees, describing them as "cannibals" and framing their presence as an existential threat.¹⁷⁰

This language of dehumanization functions as a psychological bypass that enables ordinary citizens to witness or participate in economic boycotts, social ostracization, and physical violence without the burden of moral guilt. The trajectory of this rhetoric follows a well-documented historical pattern observed in major communal and genocidal conflicts globally. Dehumanization often serves as a foundational phase that prepares the ground for more severe and systematic forms of persecution.

12. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BOYCOTT OF MINORITIES

Over the years, the open calls for the social and economic boycott of religious minorities, particularly Muslims and Christians, has solidified into a central method of majoritarian mobilization.

India Hate Lab recorded 120 incidents in which speakers explicitly urged audiences to cut minorities out of markets, workplaces, housing, and social life.

Maharashtra recorded the highest number of hate speeches calling for the social and economic boycott of Muslims, with 31 such speeches, accounting for 26 percent of all boycott-related hate speeches recorded nationwide.

Uttar Pradesh ranked second with 28 speeches, followed by Madhya Pradesh with 13. Other states where calls for social or economic boycott were recorded included Rajasthan (7), Delhi (6), Uttarakhand (6), Haryana (5), Himachal Pradesh (5), Punjab (4), Chhattisgarh (3), Gujarat (3), Assam (2), Jammu and Kashmir (2), Bihar (1), Goa (1), Jharkhand (1), Karnataka (1), and West Bengal (1).

These calls were delivered as organized and repeatable instructions designed to restructure everyday relations; who a community buys from, employs, rents to, travels with, and socializes with which turns discrimination into routine everyday practice.

A significant share of these boycott appeals came from a familiar ecosystem of political leaders, far-right monks, and leaders affiliated with Hindu nationalist organizations. Their speeches repeatedly framed boycott as a civic duty, an expression of Hindu unity, discipline, and self-defense, while providing audiences with concrete cues for implementation.

The boycott rhetoric functions as a sustained mechanism of exclusion because it translates ideology into everyday governance. It operationalizes discrimination through consumer choices, employment and labor exclusion, housing segregation, and social shunning, often framed in the language of protection. In practice, these campaigns produce an informal but highly coercive regime of economic punishment and social

segregation, with minorities pressured to withdraw from public commerce, lose access to livelihoods, or face heightened vulnerability to harassment and violence.

Across the speeches, the most consistent frame is the portrayal of minorities as an internal enemy whose very economic presence is depicted as dangerous. Speakers repeatedly urged audiences to treat routine interactions including buying groceries, hiring workers, taking rickshaws or renting property as matters of security and survival. This framing drew heavily on conspiratorial vocabulary that has become central to Hindu nationalist propaganda, including “love jihad,” “land jihad,” demographic panic and “infiltration” narratives.

A recurring sub-theme within this framing is the mainstreaming of “contamination” narratives. Several speakers promoted the “thook jihad” conspiracy, alleging that Muslim vendors deliberately contaminate food with spit or urine to defile Hindus. Such claims weaponize everyday consumption and attempt to convert market exchange into a biological and religious risk.

Closely tied to this is a pattern of surveillance-based boycott enforcement. Multiple speeches instructed audiences to verify identities before purchasing goods, ask vendors their names, “scan and check” names during digital payments, check Aadhaar cards, and avoid minority service providers such as rickshaw drivers and domestic workers. The demand for “nameplates” and Aadhaar-based identification has become a standardized mobilization cue, especially in the BJP ruled states, where speakers have called for vendors to disclose identities on signboards so Hindus do not “accidentally” buy from Muslims.

At the Hindu Mahotsav event in Alandi, Pune, Maharashtra, on January 22, BJP legislator and Maharashtra’s Minister of Ports Development, Nitesh Rane, articulated this profiling logic as a set of practical instructions. He warned the crowd to be cautious about where they shop, alleged that some vendors display slogans like “Jai Shri Ram” but “turn out to be Abduls (anti Muslim slur),” and urged attendees to “check their Aadhaar cards.”

“You feed them milk, and they conspire to create an Islamic country in India,” he said.¹⁷¹

This speech offers a blueprint for identity-based monitoring and exclusion. Another common narrative is the construction of boycott as a form of “Hindu-to-Hindu economy,” presented as a moral obligation. Speakers regularly framed the act of purchasing from Muslims as enabling “jihad,” funding conspiracies, or strengthening enemies. Nitesh Rane again illustrates this frame through his claim that Hindus should avoid Muslim shops because money allegedly becomes fuel for “love jihad” and “land jihad.”

Oaths play a decisive role in advancing this exclusivist economic project. At multiple events, leaders administered pledges to boycott minorities and build exclusively Hindu economic circuits.

On February 12, at Shivaji High School in Navapur, in Maharashtra's Nandurbar district, far-right digital influencer Gautam Khattar similarly extended a boycott from commerce into social life. He urged that "Sanatanis should only buy goods and interact with other Sanatanis."¹⁷²

On April 14 in Baltana, Zirakpur, Punjab, Antarrashtriya Hindu Parishad-Rashtriya Bajrang Dal (AHP-RBD) chief Pravin Togadia delivered a speech claiming that Hindus are in danger and would become a minority by 2045 by administering an oath that called on attendees to "only buy from and employ Hindus."¹⁷³

These oath-taking ceremonies serve as public mechanisms meant to convert sentiment into enforceable behavior, embedding discrimination into community identity.

Boycott enforcement cues were also prominent in youth and cadre-building spaces. Training camps organized by groups such as AHP-RBD repeatedly blended boycott instruction with weapons training and violent rhetoric. This convergence is especially concerning because it positions boycott as one component in an escalation pathway where exclusion, intimidation, and violence are treated as interchangeable tools and tactics.

Food and consumption economies were repeatedly targeted as entry points for boycott mobilization. Speeches demanded boycotts of halal products, framed halal certification as a terror-financing pipeline, and portrayed eating at Muslim-owned eateries as dangerous.

On May 20 in Gaighata, North 24 Parganas district of West Bengal state, BJP leader and former Member of Parliament Arjun Singh, speaking at a protest against the state government, called for a complete boycott of Muslim-owned businesses and insinuated that consumers eating at biryani shops with Muslim names might be unknowingly fed beef.¹⁷⁴

On August 9 in Ahilyanagar, Maharashtra, during a Raksha Bandhan event organized by the Sakal Hindu Samaj, multiple far-right leaders, including a legislator, called for the economic and social boycott of Muslims, falsely alleged that Muslim fruit sellers lace produce with impotence-inducing substances, and urged women to avoid Muslim midwives.¹⁷⁵

Gendered control is another defining feature of the calls for boycott. The “love jihad” conspiracy repeatedly appeared as the emotional engine that legitimized boycott demands, positioning the interactions between Muslim men and Hindu women as the central danger. The boycott of Muslim businesses was framed as a method to prevent interfaith relationships,¹⁷⁶ and in multiple cases, boycott instructions were paired with demands to remove Muslim workers or service providers, especially those who might interact with Hindu women in everyday settings.

This indoctrination is also being transmitted intergenerationally. On September 28 in Indore, Madhya Pradesh, Bajrang Dal leader Tannu Sharma at a Kanya Pujan (a Hindu ritual where young girls are worshipped as living goddesses), promoted the conspiracy of “love jihad,” made the minor girls repeat that “demons” belong to the Muslim community, and instructed them never to befriend Muslims or buy from Muslim vendors.¹⁷⁷

The boycott speeches documented in 2025 reflect a strategic and increasingly normalized campaign to impose economic and social segregation on minorities. These calls construct permission structures for collective discrimination that can enable or accompany physical violence by isolating minorities, reducing interdependence, and eroding the informal protections that shared markets and workplaces can provide. The participation of elected officials in normalizing this rhetoric lends institutional legitimacy to what is effectively a call for communal apartheid.

13. CALLS FOR DESTRUCTION OF PLACES OF WORSHIP

Throughout 2025, hate speech targeting minority places of worship intensified in scale, frequency, and explicitness, evolving into a sustained and openly articulated campaign calling for the seizure, demolition, or “liberation” of Muslim and Christian religious sites.

India Hate Lab documented over 276 hate speech incidents in which speakers explicitly targeted mosques, churches, and other places of worship, often invoking violence, bulldozer demolitions, or mass mobilization modeled on the demolition of the Babri Mosque in 1992.

Uttar Pradesh recorded the highest number of such incidents, with 59 speeches, followed closely by Uttarakhand (46) and Maharashtra (45). Madhya Pradesh also emerged as a major hotspot with 31 incidents, while significant concentrations were documented in Delhi (18), Rajasthan (20), and Gujarat (12). Other states, including Chhattisgarh (9), Haryana (8), Karnataka (7), Himachal Pradesh (6), Bihar (4), Jharkhand (4), and Punjab (3), also recorded multiple instances, alongside lower but notable occurrences in Assam, Goa, Telangana, and West Bengal.

Unlike earlier years, when such rhetoric was often framed as aspirational, 2025 saw direct incitement to physical action, including calls for kar seva (voluntary religious service) and the use of weapons to “free” primarily mosques, which speakers claimed had been built on temples. These calls were repeatedly accompanied by glorification of past violence, particularly the demolition of the Babri Masjid, which was routinely cited as a precedent and blueprint.

The most prominent targets for this planned destruction in 2025 are the two mosques based in Uttar Pradesh state: Gyanvapi Mosque in Varanasi often referred as Kashi and the Shahi Idgah Mosque in Mathura. The rhetoric surrounding these sites has shifted to an ultimatum of “liberation”¹⁷⁸ or “Kar Seva,” a term synonymous with the voluntary labor that led to the Babri demolition. Speakers claimed that Hindu deities were imprisoned within the mosque and that legal processes were unnecessary obstacles to civilizational justice.

Both the mosques were almost invariably mentioned alongside each other. Speakers frequently declared that the Ram temple movement remained incomplete until Kashi (reference for Gyanvapi Mosque in Varanasi) and Mathura were “freed,”¹⁷⁹ with some

announcing specific timelines¹⁸⁰ or tying the demolition of the mosque to upcoming elections.

Although already destroyed, the Babri Masjid continued to occupy a central symbolic role in 2025 hate speech, often invoked as an operational model. Speakers glorified the demolition, praised those involved as heroes, and used Babri to normalize the idea that mosques can and should be removed through force. The repeated celebration of Babri served to desensitize audiences to violence and reinforced the notion that legal or constitutional constraints are irrelevant when confronting Muslim religious structures.

On January 22, in Chinchoti, Palghar district, Maharashtra, Antarrashtriya Bajrang Dal National President, Dinesh Patil called for the demolition of the mosques in Varanasi and Mathura. Using anti-Muslim slurs, he declared that “our gods are inside Gyanvapi and Shahi Idgah Mosque”¹⁸¹ and vowed to replicate the Babri Masjid demolition.

RSS affiliates, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad-Bajrang Dal (VHP-Bajrang Dal), have been among the most prominent organizations leading this mobilization campaign.¹⁸² VHP President Alok Kumar has repeatedly made his organization’s position explicit, openly calling for the replacement of mosques in both Kashi and Mathura with Hindu temples. Speaking at the Mahakumbh Margdarshan event in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, on January 24, Kumar stated that “Kashi and Mathura still have to be freed, and temples must be built,”¹⁸³ adding that the construction of the Ram Mandir does not mark the end of the movement but merely its continuation.

On March 19 in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh, former BJP legislator Sangeet Som, speaking at a Holi celebration, announced that mosques in Kashi and Mathura would be demolished without legal proceedings, explicitly invoking the Babri Masjid demolition as precedent.¹⁸⁴ He urged those present to take an oath to carry out similar actions. On October 2, at a Trishul Deeksha event organized by the Antarrashtriya Hindu Parishad in Surat, Gujarat, its chief Pravin Togadia declared, “It is on your chests that we built the Ram Mandir. That was just the beginning; Kashi and Mathura are waiting to be built on your chests.”¹⁸⁵

Furthermore, the scope of targeting has expanded to include iconic national monuments. The Taj Mahal is routinely referred to as “Tejo Mahalaya”¹⁸⁶ in these speeches, accompanied by oaths to reclaim it as a Hindu temple. Similarly, local “mazars” (shrines) and smaller mosques are frequently labeled as “illegal encroachments” or “fake mazars” built on government land, providing a pretext for bulldozer demolitions.

The targeting of Christian places of worship has also surged, primarily through the lens of countering “illegal conversions.” Leaders of the VHP-Bajrang Dal have been documented vowing to demolish churches. This rhetoric often equates church construction with an attack on “Hindu land,” framing the presence of Christian structures

in rural or tribal areas as a conspiratorial attempt to "break Hindu society."¹⁸⁷ The language used is overtly militant; speakers often boast about the number of churches they have already forcibly closed.¹⁸⁸

On January 1, during a Shaurya Yatra in Jhabua, Madhya Pradesh, organized by the VHP and Bajrang Dal, Bajrang Dal leader Azad Prem Singh glorified the Babri Masjid demolition and threatened to demolish churches in the area.¹⁸⁹

Beyond high-profile sites, everyday religious infrastructure was also systematically targeted. Local mosques, mazars, dargahs, and graveyards were frequently labeled as illegal encroachments¹⁹⁰ or instruments of so-called "land jihad." Speakers alleged that such sites were deliberately constructed to seize territory, alter demographics, or undermine Hindu dominance. These accusations were often used to incite protests, pressure local administrations, and legitimize demolitions or sealing orders.

On June 5 in Pilkhua, Hapur district, Uttar Pradesh, at a Rashtriya Bajrang Dal training camp, National President Manoj Kumar called for replacing the mosques in Varanasi and Mathura with temples and claimed that Hindu groups had their sights on "30,000" additional Muslim places of worship.¹⁹¹ Similar rhetoric was repeated on June 15 in Sironj, Vidisha district, Madhya Pradesh, at a Trishul Deeksha event organized by the VHP and Bajrang Dal, where a speaker declared, "We will take back all our 30,000 temples, not just Kashi and Mathura," while urging Hindus to stockpile weapons in their homes.¹⁹²

Across these incidents, several interconnected narratives consistently drove the targeting of places of worship. Historical revisionism played a central role, with speakers asserting that mosques and churches are illegitimate remnants of foreign domination. Conspiracy theories, including claims of "land jihad" and Waqf conspiracies were repeatedly deployed to frame religious sites as tools of demographic warfare. This rhetoric transformed places of worship into perceived security threats, thereby justifying calls for their removal.

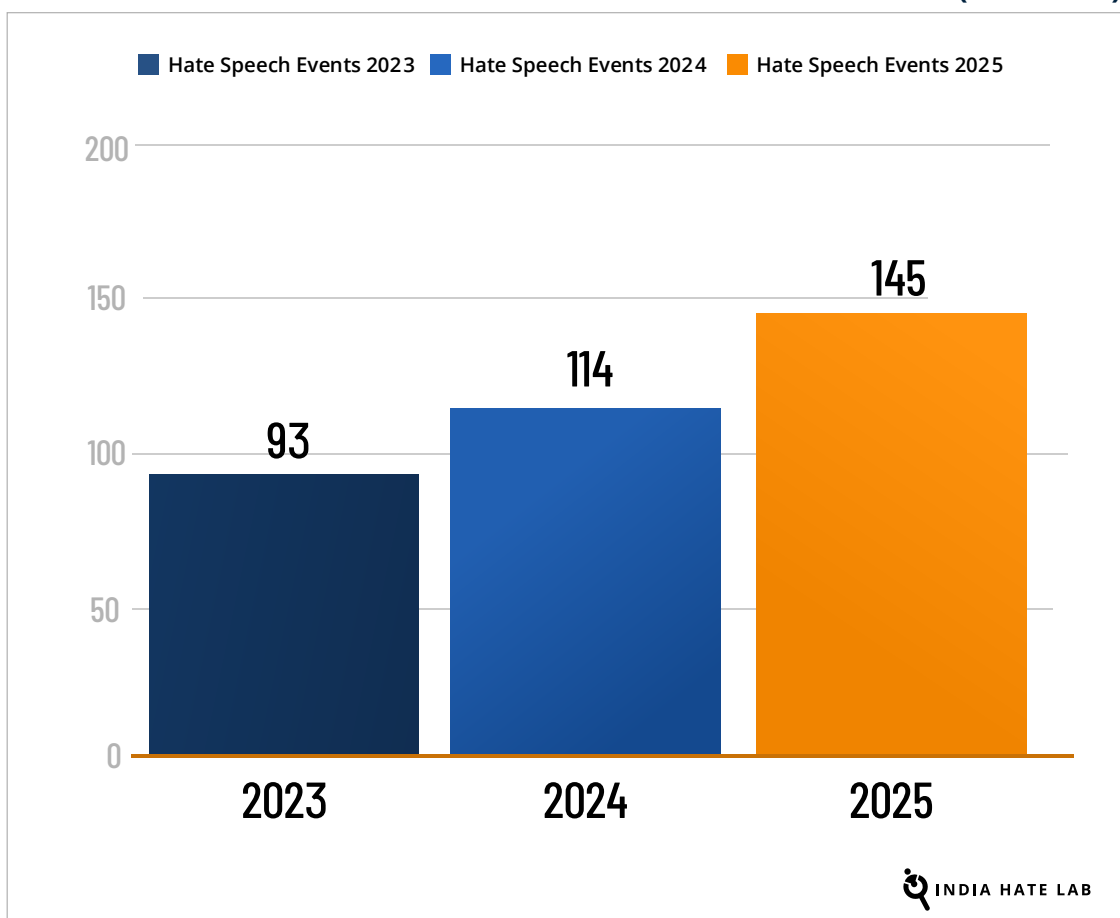
The building momentum surrounding the Gyanvapi Mosque in Varanasi and the Shahi Idgah Mosque in Mathura suggests that these sites are being prepared as the definitive communal flashpoints for the upcoming electoral cycle. Speeches delivered across political rallies, religious gatherings, and far-right mobilizations repeatedly frame these sites as the "next" targets following the construction of the Ram temple in Ayodhya. This calculated acceleration, occurring in the shadow of the 2027 state elections in Uttar Pradesh and the next general election, points toward a strategic effort by the BJP and its ideological affiliates to instrumentalize these religious sites as tools of extreme polarization.

14. HINDU RELIGIOUS LEADERS AND HATE SPEECH

Hindu monks and religious leaders continued to serve as key propagators of anti-minority hate speech, lending a religious veneer of legitimacy to the normalization of bigotry. India Hate Lab documented 145 hate speech incidents involving Hindu religious leaders and monks, representing a 27 percent increase from the 114 incidents recorded in 2024.

This trajectory reflects a sustained and accelerating pattern in which religious figures have become systematic drivers of communal mobilization. The scale of escalation is significant. Compared to 2023, hate speech incidents by religious leaders have increased by nearly 56 percent over two years, underscoring how religious leaders and their platforms have become critical sites for the production and dissemination of anti-minority sentiment and incitement to violence.

FIGURE 18: RISING ROLE OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS IN HATE SPEECH (2023-2025)




Our data reveals a sustained activity throughout the year, with notable concentrations in January and a sharp escalation in the latter half, particularly in October, November and December. Geographically, incidents were heavily concentrated in BJP-ruled states, with Uttar Pradesh alone accounting for 59 recorded incidents. Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, Delhi, and Haryana also emerged as key sites, reinforcing the strong correlation between political power held by Modi-led BJP and the permissive environment in which hate speech by religious leaders flourishes.

These speeches were frequently delivered at events organized by an interconnected ecosystem of Hindu nationalist groups, including the VHP-Bajrang Dal and coalitions such as Sakal Hindu Samaj and Vishwa Hindu Mahasangh, alongside other new militant formations like the Shiv Shakti Akhada and far-right alliances convening so-called “sansads,” “sabhas,” and protest marches. A significant number of these speeches were also delivered during religious kathas (spiritual storytelling sessions).

FIGURE 19: RELIGIOUS LEADERS DRIVING HATE SPEECH IN 2025

	Name	Position/Affiliation	Hate Speech
1	Yati Narsinghanand Saraswati	Head of Dasna Devi Temple	20
2	Madhuram Sharan Shiva	Chief of Shiv Shakti Akhada	19
3	Raju Das	Priest at Hanuman Garhi Temple	19
4	Dhirendra Shastri	Leader of Bageshwar Dham	13
5	Sangram Bapu Bhandare	Religious Preacher from Maharashtra	10
6	Devkinandan Thakur	Spiritual Leader	5
7	Kalicharan Maharaj	Religious Preacher from Maharashtra	5
8	Sadhvi Saraswati	Religious Preacher from Madhya Pradesh	5
9	Sadhvi Samahita	Religious Leader from Delhi	3
10	Bal Vidushi Laxmi	Religious Storyteller from Uttar Pradesh	2

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Overall, we identified 54 monks and religious figures who delivered hate speech during the year. Prominent among them were Yati Narsinghanand Saraswati, head of the Dasna Devi Temple in Uttar Pradesh, who delivered 20 hate speeches; Madhuram Sharan Shiva, founder of the Uttar Pradesh-based Shiv Shakti Akhada, a militant group of armed monks known for publicly parading swords, firearms, and other weapons, who delivered 19 hate speeches; and Mahant Raju Das, a priest at the Hanuman Garhi Temple in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh, who also delivered 19 hate speeches.

Other highly active religious figures included Dharendra Shastri, leader of Bageshwar Dham in Madhya Pradesh (13 speeches); Sangram Bapu Bhandare, a religious preacher from Maharashtra (10 speeches); Devkinandan Thakur, spiritual preacher (5 speeches); Sadhvi Saraswati, head of the Sanatan Dharma Prachar Seva Samiti in Chhindwara, Madhya Pradesh (5); Kalicharan Maharaj, religious preacher from Maharashtra (5); Sadhvi Samahita, religious leader from Delhi (3); Swami Sachidanand, Arya Samaj religious preacher (2); Bal Vidushi Laxmi, religious storyteller from Uttar Pradesh (2), Swami Darshan Bharti, founder of the Devbhoomi Raksha Abhiyan Sangathan in Uttarakhand (2); Swami Dipankar (2); Sadhvi Ranjana (2) and Anupamanand Giri (2).

Muslims were the primary targets of hate speech delivered by religious leaders, with 104 speeches targeting Muslims alone. An additional 37 speeches targeted both Muslims and Christians, while Christians alone were targeted in four speeches.

A defining characteristic of religious hate speech in 2025 was its routine escalation into dangerous speech. Of the speeches delivered by religious leaders, 47 included explicit calls for violence, while 33 contained exhortations to take up arms. Many others relied on conspiracy theories such as “love jihad,” “land jihad,” “spit jihad,” “urine jihad,” “food jihad,” “education jihad,” “population jihad,” and “Ghazwa-e-Hind,” as well as historical grievance narratives, to justify violence or boycotts.

These speeches consistently framed violence as defensive, necessary, and divinely sanctioned. Dehumanizing language, portrayals of Muslims as invaders or traitors, and invocations of religious war were common features across these speeches.

Alongside direct incitement, they repeatedly endorsed collective punishment and social exclusion. References to bulldozer demolitions appeared frequently, framing the demolition of Muslim homes and businesses as righteous and replicable nationwide. Economic boycotts were promoted as moral obligations, urging Hindus to sever all commercial and social ties with Muslims. These messages, even when not paired with immediate calls to violence, functioned to institutionalize discrimination and legitimize everyday harm.

This pattern was visible from the beginning of the year. On January 10, 2025, at a protest rally in Sehore, Madhya Pradesh, organized by multiple far-right Hindu groups, monk Pandit Mohitram Phatak used anti-Muslim slurs, called for violence and an economic boycott of Muslims, and urged the crowd, “We have to show these Mullas (anti-Muslim slur) their place. Don’t buy anything from them.”¹⁹³ He further invoked the “love jihad” conspiracy, declaring, “Become Durga or Kali, but never a burkewali (Become Hindu goddess Durga or Kali, but never a woman in a burqa).”

On January 12, at a Bhagwa Yatra organized by the Hindu Jagran Manch in Sidhi, Madhya Pradesh, religious preacher Sadhvi Saraswati propagated “land jihad” and “love jihad” conspiracies and urged attendees to buy weapons. She stated, “Forget jewellery, buy a 1,000-rupee sword to defend against love jihad,” adding that “it will be a sin not to use a weapon when you are being attacked.”¹⁹⁴

On January 25, during the Virat Sant Sammelan organized by VHP-Bajrang Dal in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, monk Yashveer Maharaj declared that Muslims should have left India after 1947 and asserted that “all problems have one solution....Islam and Muslims must be eliminated.”¹⁹⁵

At the Hindu Jan Akrosh Morcha organized by Sakal Hindu Samaj in Chaklamba, Georai, Beed district of Maharashtra state, on February 5, far-right preacher Sangram Bapu Bhandare praised cow vigilantism, claiming vigilantes were emulating Shivaji (Hindu king). He openly incited violence against Muslims, declaring, “You cut the cow, we will kill you.”¹⁹⁶

On February 19, at a Shiv Jayanti celebration organized by Sri Ram Sena in Seoni, Madhya Pradesh, far-right preacher Kalicharan Maharaj demonized Muslims and Christians, urged the audience to take up arms, and invoked Hindu gods as warriors, declaring, “Those weapons are not for chopping wood; they are for chopping necks.” He described Muslims as traitors and dehumanized them as “mad dogs.”¹⁹⁷

The latter half of the year saw a sharp intensification in both frequency and severity. On October 14 at the Akhil Bhartiya Kavya Samaroh in Rajepur, Farrukhabad, Uttar Pradesh, far-right monk Mahant Raju Das openly incited violence against those opposing Sanatan Dharma (Hinduism), threatening mutilation and death, while simultaneously fear-mongering about Muslim population growth and portraying Hindus as under existential threat.

“That is why we keep rifles behind us; we will shove them into the chest... whoever raises such a voice will have their tongue cut out, whoever raises a finger will have their finger cut off, whoever looks up will have their eye gouged out. Only then will we be safe,” Das said.¹⁹⁸

On November 5, at a monks’ convention at Dudheshwar Nath Math in Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, far-right monk Yati Narsinghanand vowed to eliminate Islam entirely, declaring that “no Islam, no Muhammad, and no one invoking Muhammad will survive,”¹⁹⁹ and that only Sanatan Dharma would remain.

On December 11 in Nalasopara, Palghar district, Maharashtra, far-right monk Kalicharan Maharaj encouraged violence against Muslims, framing it as necessary to “save Hinduism.”²⁰⁰

14.1 SANATAN HINDU EKTA PADYATRA

In November 2025, a ten-day foot march titled the Sanatan Hindu Ekta Padyatra, led by self-styled spiritual leader Dharendra Shastri (popularly known as Bageshwar Baba) evolved into a high-decibel platform for hateful and exclusionary anti-Muslim and anti-Christian rhetoric.²⁰¹ Although publicly framed as an initiative to promote “Hindu unity,” the march was marked throughout by speeches that fearmongered about demographic change and peddled anti-Muslim and anti-Christian conspiracy theories.

Across multiple states, the foot march brought together influential Hindu monks, preachers, and far-right influencers who repeatedly invoked narratives of existential threat, demographic replacement, and civilisational conflict. These messages were accompanied by calls for social and economic exclusion of minorities.

The rally commenced on November 7 from Chhatarpur Shakti Peeth in Delhi, reportedly drawing over 300,000 attendees.²⁰² Addressing the gathering, Shastri described the event as a “spiritual” movement aimed at advancing cow protection and promoting Hindu unity by eliminating casteism, regionalism, and linguistic divisions. From Delhi, participants marched through Haryana before entering Uttar Pradesh, concluding the procession in Mathura on November 16. Over the course of the approximately 150-kilometre (93 miles) march, Shastri was joined at various points by prominent religious leaders, senior political figures, and celebrities from sports and entertainment.

From its opening ceremony in Delhi on November 7, the march was framed as a civilisational struggle. Shastri described the demand for a Hindu Rashtra (Hindu nation) as a “vaicharik kranti” (ideological revolution), explicitly arguing that if Pakistan could exist as an Islamic state, India should become a Hindu one.²⁰³ He praised the demolition of the Babri Mosque and repeatedly invoked slogans positioning Hindus in direct opposition to Muslims, including calls to respond to “Ghazwa-e-Hind” with “Bhagwa-e-Hind.”²⁰⁴ The term Ghazwa-e-Hind (roughly translated: battle for India, conquest of India, or campaign on India) is an anti-Muslim trope used by Hindu nationalist groups to accuse Indian Muslims of waging a covert war against the country, portraying them as disloyal citizens engaged in a broader conspiracy to take over India.

During the same event, Durga Vahini founder Sadhvi Ritambhara, while advocating for the establishment of a “Hindu nation,” used dehumanising language, declaring that it was time to crush “global challenges and the snakes hidden in our own sleeves who threaten the nation from within.”²⁰⁵

In Faridabad, Haryana, on November 8, Shastri raised the slogan “tel lagao Dabur ka, naam mita do Babur ka” (“Apply Dabur’s oil, erase Babur’s name”)²⁰⁶. The phrase functions

as a metaphorical call for the symbolic and ideological erasure of Muslims, who are routinely portrayed by Hindu nationalist groups as descendants of the Mughal ruler Babur and, by extension, as outsiders and foreigners.

On November 10 in Palwal, Haryana, Shastri administered an oath to attendees to work toward making India a “Hindu Rashtra” and to stand united against “love jihad” and religious conversions.²⁰⁷ He also urged Hindu girls to “be like Durga and Kali and never be a Burqewali (Be like Durga and Kali (Hindu goddesses), and never be a burqa-wearing woman),” deploying gendered Islamophobic rhetoric that stigmatized Muslim women’s religious identity.

A central theme throughout the padyatra was fearmongering around demographic change. Shastri and other speakers repeatedly claimed that Hindus would soon become minorities²⁰⁸, warning that within decades they would be forced to “fight for their existence.”²⁰⁹ These claims were accompanied by violent imagery and language. Shastri invoked bulldozer action²¹⁰ against alleged offenders, warned of “civil war” if Hindus failed to unite, and repeatedly compared the imagined future of Hindus to the displacement of Kashmiri Pandits. In multiple speeches, he referenced gruesome violence, claiming Hindu daughters could be “found in 35 pieces.”²¹¹

Far-right influencer Kajal Hindustani urged attendees to “buy from Hindus and employ only Hindus,”²¹² calling for the creation of an “Akhand Hindu Rashtra (undivided Hindu nation)” and framing minorities as “forces of evil” to be confronted. In contemporary Hindu nationalist discourse, the terms “Akhand Hindu Rashtra” or “Akhand Bharat” refer to an ideological vision of a Hindu-majoritarian state that extends beyond the current borders of India and is commonly understood to encompass present-day India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, and in some articulations, Nepal, Sri Lanka, or Afghanistan.

VHP leader Sadhvi Prachi urged Hindus to become kattar (radical), warning that failure to do so would result in ultimatums to convert to Islam or face beheading.²¹³ Monk Raju Das, speaking at the march on November 16 in Mathura, Uttar Pradesh, warned that the foot march would not stop until the names of those who “believe in chaddar and father (a derogatory reference to Muslims and Christians) were erased.)”

Other speakers heavily focused on claims that idols lay beneath multiple mosques,²¹⁴ while others openly stated that those who hold shastra (scriptures) could also take up shastra (weapons)²¹⁵ if Sanatan Dharma were threatened.

Adding a veneer of mainstream legitimacy to this dangerous rhetoric, several public figures participated in the procession, including former cricketers Shikhar Dhawan and Umesh Yadav, wrestler The Great Khali, Bollywood actors Shilpa Shetty, Rajpal Yadav, and Ekta Kapoor, and musicians Jubin Nautiyal and B Praak. Political participation included

senior leaders from the Bharatiya Janata Party, including Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, BJP MP Alok Sharma, and former Madhya Pradesh minister Narottam Mishra.²¹⁶

The danger of religious leaders serving as central amplifiers of hate speech lies in their ability to weaponize spiritual authority to legitimize violence and systemic discrimination, transcending mere political rhetoric. The way these religious figures frame calls for collective punishment, economic boycotts, and even explicit murder as divinely sanctioned acts of religious self-defense allows them to bypass individual moral conscience and promote a climate where prejudice is normalized into sacred duty.

This influence is highly effective due to the deep trust religious leaders command, enabling them to present extremist conspiracy theories as undeniable truth and mobilize a coordinated ecosystem of far-right groups, particularly in politically permissive, BJP-ruled states, thus institutionalizing hate and resulting violence.

14.2 MONK NETWORK MOBILIZING FOR VIOLENCE

Since October 2024, the Uttar Pradesh state has witnessed the rapid emergence of an armed militant-monk movement led by Madhuram Sharan Shiva, who presents himself as a former full-time worker (pracharak) of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)²¹⁷ and former Prantiya Sangathan Mantri (Provincial Organization Minister) of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP).²¹⁸

Drawing on this background, Shiva has rebranded himself as a militant ascetic using religious authority to legitimize calls for mass mobilization, communal hatred, and armed vigilantism.

On October 22, 2024, he formally declared his monkhood²¹⁹ and launched the “Shiv Shakti Akhada,” a group of armed monks who openly parade swords²²⁰, guns²²¹, and other weapons. Since then, he has organized at least 173 rallies across 11 districts of Uttar Pradesh, featuring repeated calls for violence, displays of firearms, communal incitement, and the public administering of hateful oaths, including to children and students,²²² to take up arms against Muslims and Christians, whom he labels “vidharmis” and “adharmis.” Both vidharmi and adharmi are derogatory communal slurs used to dehumanize minorities as outsiders and enemies of Hindus.



At several of these rallies, speeches promote anti-Muslim and anti-Christian hate, and in numerous instances escalate into direct incitement to violence and calls to take up arms.

Shiva often moves with dozens of armed monks, drawing crowds ranging from several hundred to thousands. His speeches rely heavily on inflammatory anecdotes designed to portray Hindus as endangered by Muslims. Citing a story about a doctor's children allegedly running inside at the sight of Muslim men wearing skull caps, he argues that Hindus have "no option but to arm themselves,"²²³ framing weapons as essential for survival and for the establishment of a Hindu nation. His rhetoric often combines fear-mongering with explicit instructions to boycott Muslims, purchase weapons,²²⁴ and prepare for large-scale conflict.

His speeches frequently cross the threshold of incitement. His May 3 rally in Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh targeted Hindus renting to or doing business with Muslims, calling them "enemies of their religion and nation."²²⁵ On July 27 in Kanpur, he again branded as "traitors"²²⁶ those sending children to Christian schools. In Hamirpur on August 8, he led chants for a Hindu nation and warned that "blood will spill on the roads"²²⁷ if Hindu interests were challenged.

He consistently opposes slogans of communal harmony such as "Jai Bhim-Jai Meem," portraying Dalit-Muslim solidarity as an existential threat²²⁸ and falsely claiming that Muslims seek to establish an Islamic State in India. He frequently asserts that "one who eats cow and one who rears a cow can never be brothers," coupling dehumanizing language with calls for armed defense.

Alarming, these rallies often occur in the presence, sometimes under the protection of police.²²⁹ On September 6, in Kanpur, he was openly felicitated by two police officers.²³⁰

On October 2, 25, and 29, at multiple events in Kanpur, Umaran village,²³¹ and Tirwaganj²³² in Kannauj district, Shiva repeatedly urged Hindus to arm themselves, train their sons in weapons, and “kill jihadis,” framing violence as essential for protecting dharma (religion) and the Hindu nation. Jihadi is used pejoratively as an anti-Muslim slur, intended to pigeonhole Muslims as inherently violent or extremist.

The speech in Umaran village, Kannauj, was delivered in the presence of the Station House Officer of Tathiya Police Station, Jai Prakash Sharma, who was observed standing on stage.²³³ The presence and participation of law enforcement officials at such events signal institutional complicity and effectively normalize calls for violence.

These developments represent a clear, escalating pattern of armed mobilization, vigilante training, and coordinated hate speech targeting Muslims and Christians. The frequency of rallies, the systematic administration of violent oaths, the public display of weapons, and the presence of minors signal an effort to cultivate a mass base for the near future violence. The presence and apparent endorsement of police officials further heighten the risk by signaling protection and impunity for those involved.

15. JUDICIAL AND LEGISLATIVE DEVELOPMENTS ON HATE SPEECH

The year 2025 witnessed a critical phase in the Indian state's engagement with escalating hate speech, characterized by significant, yet ultimately contradictory, developments across the judicial and legislative spheres. These dynamics underscore a widening fissure between the constitutional and moral imperative to curb organized communal hostility and the prevailing institutional will required for effective enforcement.

The Union Government maintained a posture of institutional evasion. In the Lok Sabha in March, when questioned by a Samajwadi Party Member of Parliament Daroga, Prasad Saroj, about the surge in hate speech by politicians and the need for new laws, Union Minister Kiren Rijiju declined to provide any data, strategically deferring all accountability²³⁴ to State governments by citing that 'Public Order' and 'Police' are State subjects.

This central deflection was compounded by events at the state level where anti-minority hostility was visibly normalized within legislative and executive institutions, such as the Rajasthan Assembly in March where BJP MLA Gopal Sharma repeatedly referred to Muslim legislator Rafeek Khan as a "Pakistani" during floor debate.²³⁵ Similarly, in the Gujarat Legislative Assembly, BJP members made openly hateful remarks against the Muslim community.²³⁶ This legislative incitement was directly complemented by institutional inaction: the Bombay High Court was informed in March 2025 that the BJP-led Maharashtra government had refused to grant sanction²³⁷ to prosecute former BJP State Vice President Vikram Pawaskar in two hate speech cases.

The judicial response to the crisis was characterized by both a systemic retreat from direct intervention and pointed acknowledgment of the rhetoric's targeted nature. The Supreme Court of India, having previously demonstrated judicial activism, exhibited a noticeable shift toward judicial restraint in 2025. In November, a Supreme Court bench stated it was "not inclined to monitor every incident of hate speech"²³⁸ nationwide, directing petitioners to the High Courts and local police.

Conversely, a different Supreme Court bench earlier in May had affirmed that hate speech cannot be misconstrued as a fundamental right²³⁹ while issuing notices to a group of comedians for allegedly making insensitive jokes targeting people with disabilities on their YouTube show India's Got Latent.

This judicial fluidity was contrasted by a critical observation made shortly before his retirement by Supreme Court Justice A. S. Oka in April, who asserted that the vast majority of hate speech cases are directed against “the religious minorities or castes which are in minority, [and] oppressed classes like Scheduled Castes,”²⁴⁰ and expressed profound concern over deliberate attempts “to provoke members of the majority to attack a religious minority,” thereby validating the rhetoric’s function as a politically charged incitement mechanism.

This political sanction of anti-minority rhetoric extends even into the judiciary’s internal conduct. Allahabad High Court Justice Shekhar Kumar Yadav’s December 2024 anti-Muslim remarks at a VHP event, where he used the derogatory term *kathmulla* and asserted the country “will run according to the majority,”²⁴¹ served to institutionalize Hindu nationalist narratives.

Though over fifty Rajya Sabha MPs signed a motion for his removal²⁴² in June 2025, the decision to admit the impeachment notice remained pending before the Lok Sabha Speaker throughout the year. This sustained inaction on the part of the legislative oversight mechanism effectively signals a tacit political tolerance for the injection of majoritarian communalism into the judiciary. Further judicial inconsistency was seen in the systemic delays regarding the 2020 Delhi riot hate speech petitions, where the Delhi High Court in November advised petitioners to approach the Supreme Court,²⁴³ creating a back-and-forth judicial loop despite earlier calls by the Supreme Court for “expeditious” disposal.

Moreover, an alarming acquittal occurred in April when a local court in Haridwar acquitted Jitendra Tyagi in the 2021 Haridwar Dharam Sansad case (where calls for Muslim genocide were made), with the Chief Judicial Magistrate bizarrely ruling that, “it is essential that such words be uttered in the hearing or presence of the person allegedly offended.”²⁴⁴

Throughout the year, the police consistently failed in their duty to act, often failing to file complaints or pursue follow-up investigations in cases where First Information Reports (FIRs) were registered, a pattern of non-enforcement highlighted in November when a Mumbai lawyer sent a legal notice²⁴⁵ to the Mumbai Police Commissioner over the failure to act against anti-Muslim hate speech delivered by a BJP legislator. The legislative and judicial developments in 2025 thus present a fractured and often counterproductive response to the escalation of hate speech.

In this fractured environment, the Karnataka Hate Speech and Hate Crimes (Prevention) Bill, 2025,²⁴⁶ introduced and passed in December, stands as a defining legislative moment, marking the first comprehensive state-level effort in India to systematically define and penalize hate speech. India currently lacks a dedicated national hate speech

law, instead relying on the general criminal code, the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). Authorities frequently deploy BNS Section 196 (penalizing the promotion of enmity between groups, formerly IPC Section 153A) and BNS Section 299 (covering deliberate acts intended to outrage religious feelings, formerly IPC Section 295A).

The Bill defines hate speech as "includes any expression which is made, published, or circulated, in words either spoken or written or by signs or by visible representations or through electronic communication or otherwise, in public view, with an intention to cause injury, disharmony or feelings of enmity or hatred or ill-will against person alive or dead, class or group of persons or community, to meet any prejudicial interest." While it claims to make exceptions for categories like artistic expression, academic inquiry, and reporting, the definition is widely viewed as vague and loosely defined, making it highly susceptible to misuse.

The bill proposes severe penalties. A first offense warrants 1 to 7 years imprisonment and a fine of 50,000 rupees, escalating to 2 to 10 years and a 100,000 rupees fine for repeat offenses. The crimes are classified as cognizable (allowing police to arrest without a warrant) and non-bailable. The Bill also grants Executive Magistrates and senior police officers preventive powers against potential offenders.

This broad hate speech definition could be weaponized to target the very communities it is intended to protect, silencing dissent and creating a chilling effect on legitimate and constitutionally protected speech. Furthermore, a future government could exploit the law to target and punish political rivals who originally passed the legislation. The Bill also introduces several stringent features, including organizational liability, where persons in charge are deemed guilty unless they prove due diligence, and empowering officials to order the removal or blocking of hate content online.

Therefore, to safeguard fundamental democratic freedoms, the Bill must be refined by strictly adhering to the viewpoint neutrality principle, which prevents the state from suppressing or favoring speech based on its content or perspective, and by elevating the standard of restriction to the emergency principle, ensuring that speech is curtailed only when it directly causes or threatens specific, imminent, and serious unlawful harm, consistent with global best practices for protecting free expression.

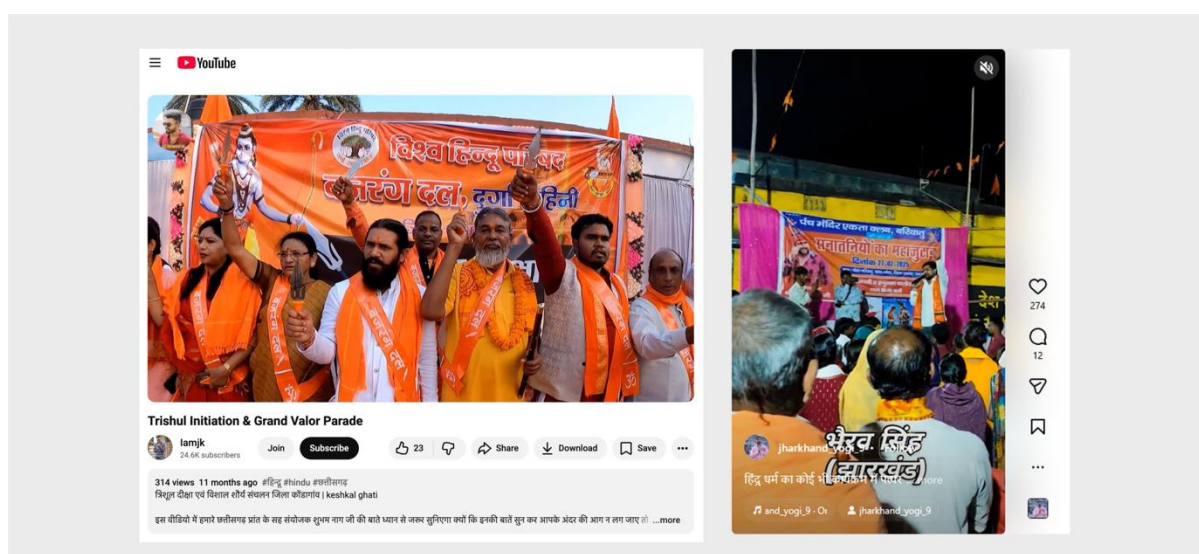
While the Karnataka Bill represents a crucial, forward-looking legislative attempt whose ultimate effectiveness hinges on careful refinement and strict adherence to international best practices for protecting free expression, the countervailing factors are overwhelming. The Supreme Court's decision to step back from monitoring, combined with systemic executive shielding and police inaction, severely undermines the enforcement mechanism nationwide, creating a regulatory duality where institutional failure and political tolerance allow hate speech to thrive.

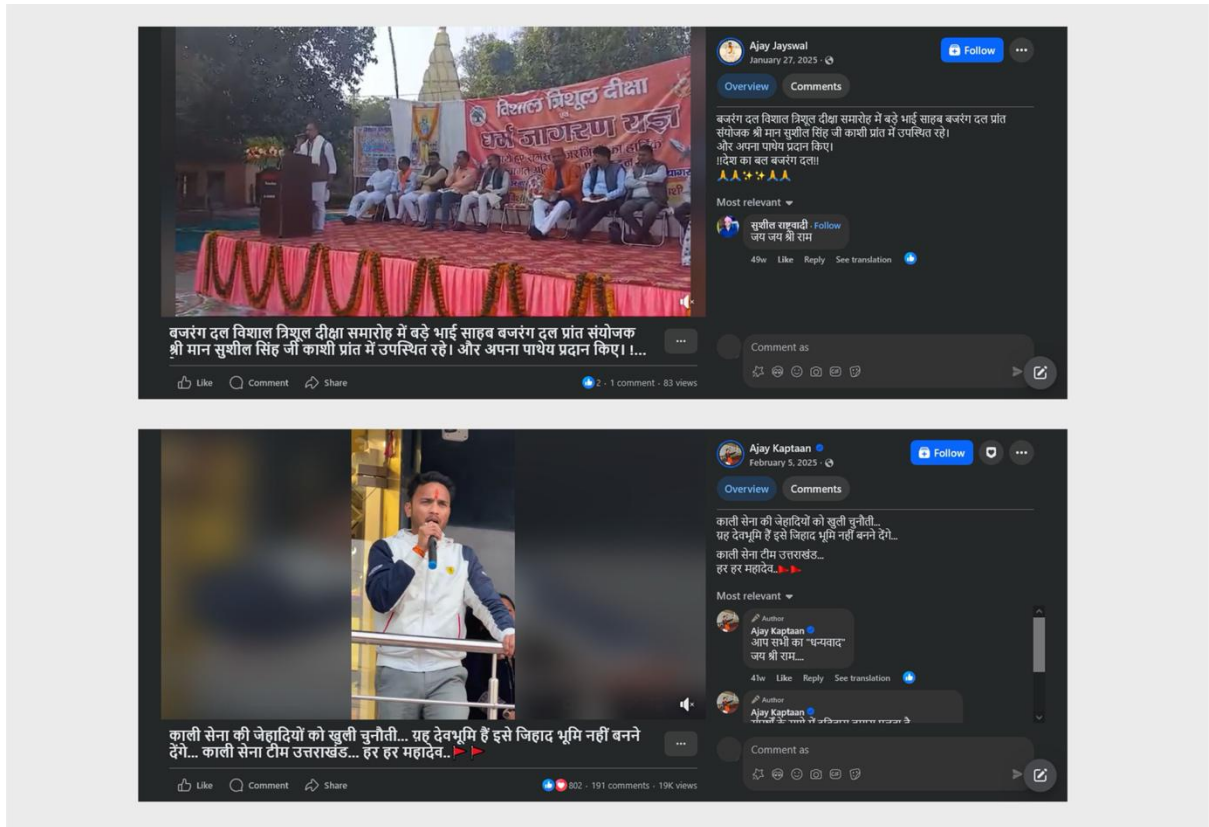
16. SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS AND HATE SPEECH

In 2025, social media platforms continued to serve as the central infrastructure for the dissemination, amplification, and normalization of anti-minority hate speech in India. As in previous years, platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and X (formerly Twitter) were routinely used to broadcast and circulate videos of in-person hate speech events, including religious assemblies, political rallies, protest marches, training camps, and oath-taking ceremonies. Rather than diminishing following heightened scrutiny in early 2025, the digital ecosystem enabling hate speech has become more entrenched, decentralized, and technologically adaptive.

The near-total convergence between offline hate mobilization and online amplification has become a central feature of the far-right in India. Hate speech delivered at physical gatherings is now almost always designed with digital circulation in mind, which points to centrality of digital virality to contemporary hate mobilization.

As documented in the 2024 report, Meta-owned platforms, particularly Facebook and Instagram, remain the primary vectors for amplifying hate speech in India. This trend persisted throughout 2025. Hate speech videos were routinely first uploaded or live streamed on Facebook, then rapidly repackaged into shorter clips for Instagram reels. In some cases, videos were either first uploaded or live streamed directly on Instagram, while others initially appeared on YouTube or X before being cross-posted across multiple platforms.





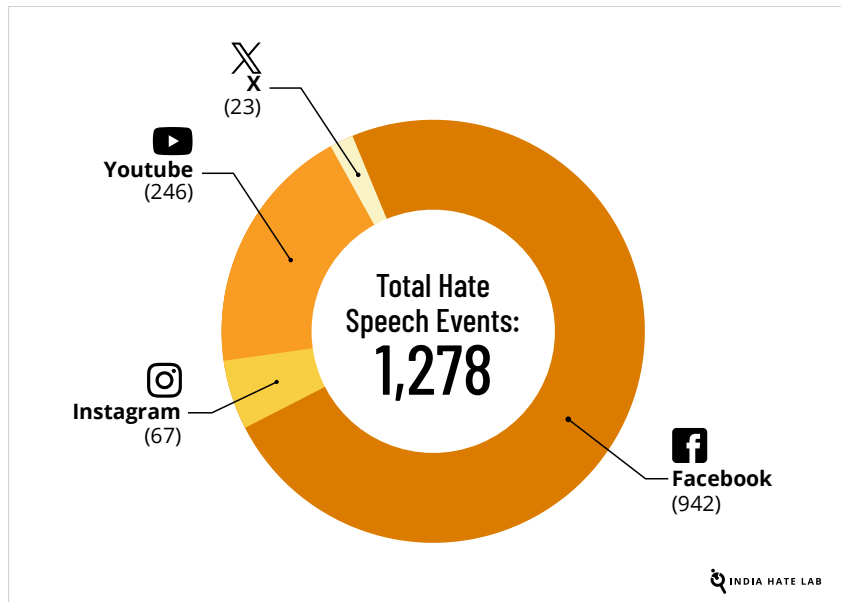
Despite repeated public and private commitments by social media companies to address hate speech and incitement, the overwhelming majority of accounts, pages, and groups responsible for amplifying in-person hate speech in 2024 remained active in 2025.

Far-right influencers, religious figures, and organizational leaders continued to operate with minimal disruption, often retaining verified badges.

16.1 HATE SPEECH TRENDS ON SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

Out of the 1,318 in-person hate speech events targeting Muslim and Christian minorities documented in 2025, IHL traced 1,278 of these events back to their original sources on social media platforms, where they were first shared or live streamed by far-right organizations, leaders, individual hate actors or participants.

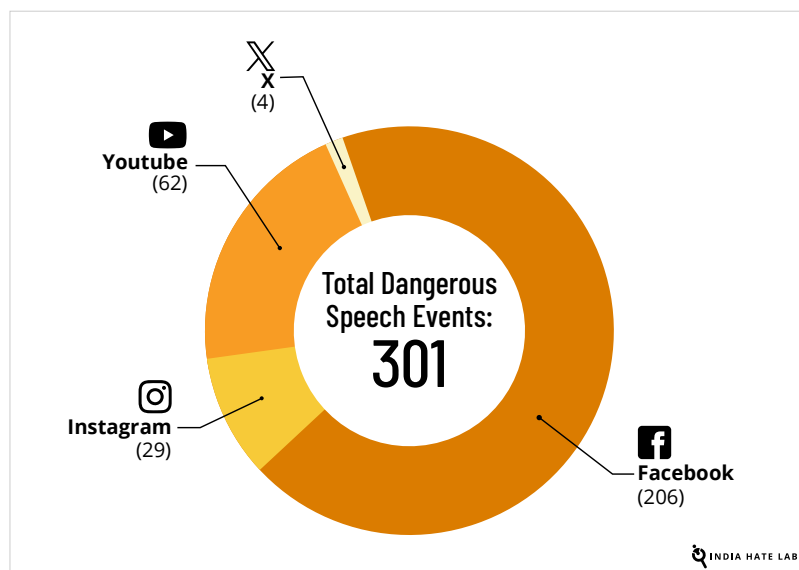
FIGURE 20: HATE SPEECH ACROSS SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS



Among these, a substantial majority of hate speech events, 942 incidents or 71 percent, were first shared on Facebook, underscoring the platform’s dominant role in the dissemination and platforming of hate speech videos. Videos from 246 events, or 19 percent, were shared on YouTube, while videos from 67 events were first shared on Instagram. Only 23 hate speech videos were shared on X.

Facebook’s outsized role reflects its widespread reach in India, where it has over 400 million users.²⁴⁷ Instagram similarly has more than 480 million users,²⁴⁸ while YouTube, despite having an estimated 500 million users,²⁴⁹ is more commonly used for content consumption than for uploading original videos. X, by contrast, has a significantly smaller user base in India, with approximately 22 million users,²⁵⁰ which helps explain its comparatively limited role in the initial circulation of hate speech videos.

FIGURE 21: DANGEROUS SPEECH ACROSS SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS



Of the 308 recorded instances of dangerous speech, 301 were first shared or live streamed on social media platforms. Among these, a significant majority, 206 speeches or 68 percent, were initially shared on Facebook, while 62 speeches, or 21 percent, were first posted on YouTube. A further 29 speeches were first shared on Instagram, and four on X.

We conducted an analysis of the ten individuals who delivered the highest number of dangerous speeches containing explicit calls for violence in 2025. The analysis found that all ten maintain extensive and active social media presences, with follower counts ranging from tens of thousands to several hundred thousand across Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and X. Notably, multiple accounts across these platforms carried blue badges.. Many of these individuals routinely live-streamed or directly shared videos of their dangerous speeches through these verified and high-reach profiles. Several of these individuals were also identified in India Hate Lab's 2024 report and have continued to retain, and in some cases expand, their digital reach despite repeated involvement in hate speech and calls to violence.

16.2 THE CASE OF T. RAJA SINGH

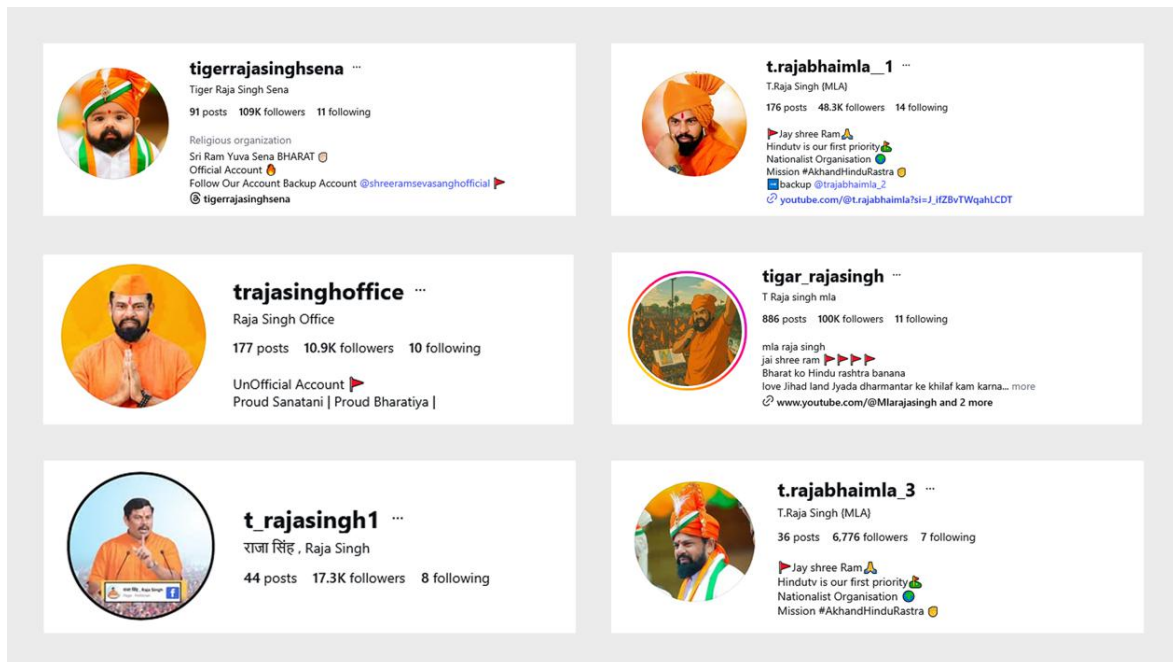
One of the clearest illustrations of platform enforcement failure in 2025 is the continued digital presence of Telangana legislator T. Raja Singh. Singh has been officially banned from Facebook and Instagram since 2020 under Meta's Dangerous Organizations and Individuals (DOI) policy for repeated hate speech violations. In the 2024 Hate Speech report, we documented how Singh had circumvented this ban through an extensive network of Facebook groups and Instagram profiles operating in his name, collectively reaching over one million users.²⁵¹

Following the publication of that report, Meta quietly removed²⁵² several of these networks, including three Facebook groups with a combined membership exceeding one million users and four Instagram profiles that functioned as de facto official accounts. Singh currently has no verified personal accounts on Facebook or Instagram.

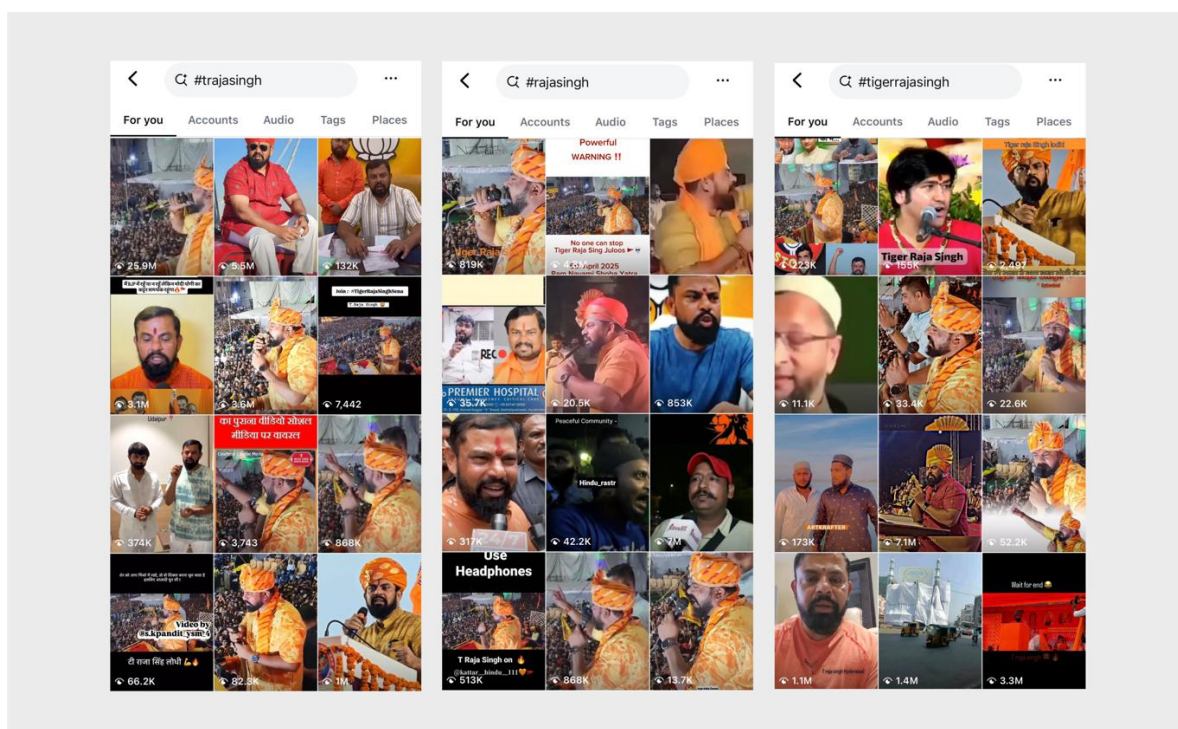
However, our 2025 analysis shows that this enforcement action has not meaningfully disrupted Singh's digital reach. Instead, Singh and his supporters have reconstructed a new constellation of pages, groups, and proxy accounts that continue to disseminate his speeches, announce his appearances, and amplify his calls for violence and discrimination. These accounts frequently frame themselves as "supporters," "fans," or "Hindu youth" collectives.

On Instagram, accounts associated with Singh collectively reach more than 280,000 followers, including @tigerrajasinghsena (107,000 followers), @Tigar_rajasingh (96,000

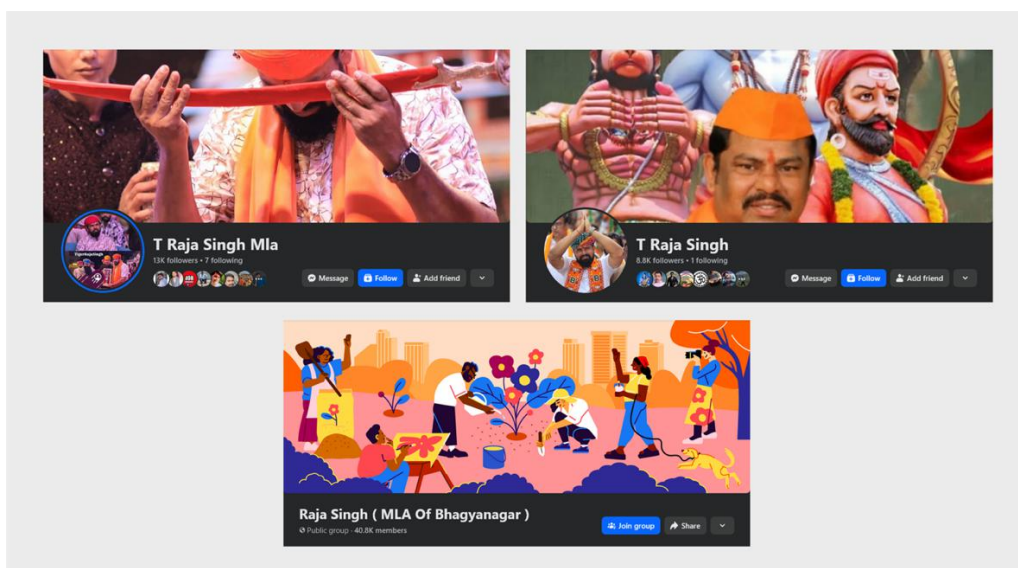
followers), @t.rajabhaimla_1 (44,000 followers), @t_rajasingh1 (16,000 followers), @trajasinghoffice (10,800 followers), and @t.rajabhaimla_3 (6,200 followers).



Hashtags associated with Singh, including #TrajaSingh, #RajaSingh, #RajaSinghMLA, and #TigerRajaSingh, collectively generated over 60,000 posts on Instagram. Many of these consisted of short video clips and reels featuring excerpts from his dangerous speeches, including the use of slurs and abusive language, conspiracy narratives, and explicit incitement to violence against Muslims.



On Facebook, two profiles operating under Singh's name together have more than 22,000 followers, while one associated group has 40,800 members.



This pattern of temporary takedowns followed by rapid reconstitution highlights a structural weakness in platform moderation approaches that rely on individual account bans without continuous scrutiny or mechanisms to address coordinated, network-based enforcement evasion.

16.3 EXPANSION OF FAR-RIGHT NETWORKS ON INSTAGRAM

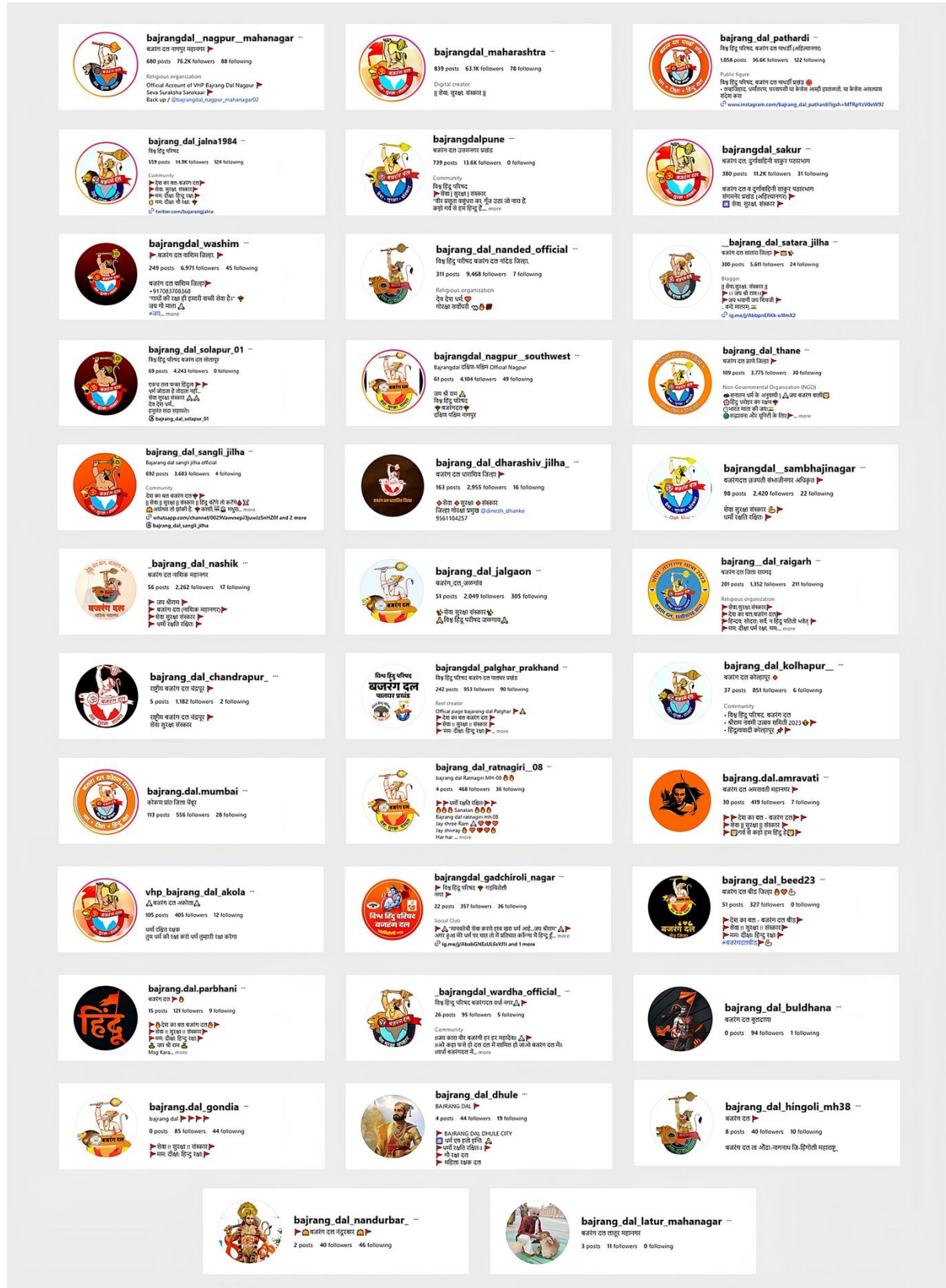
The expansion of far-right organizations like the Bajrang Dal, Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), Antarrashtriya Hindu Parishad (AHP), and Rashtriya Bajrang Dal (RBD) on Meta platforms has reached a peak in 2025.

These groups have moved well beyond a handful of centralized, state-level pages and now operate highly granular digital infrastructures that closely mirror both India's administrative divisions and the internal organizational hierarchies of these groups.

Our analysis identified a dense lattice of accounts operating at the national, state, district, block (tehsil), and even village levels, enabling sustained, localized mobilization and rapid dissemination of hate narratives.

The scale and depth of this ecosystem make it one of the most expansive and organized far-right networks operating on social media globally.

For example, Maharashtra alone has 36 administrative districts, and our research found Instagram accounts corresponding to nearly every Bajrang Dal district unit, which further branch into block-level and, in several cases, village-level accounts. Similar patterns were observed for almost every other Indian state.



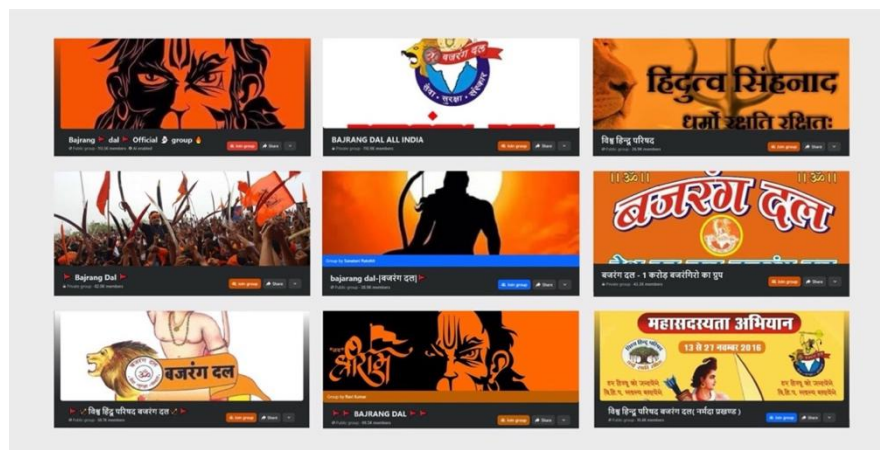
Content flows horizontally across these units, allowing videos of hate speeches delivered in small towns to reach national audiences instantly. Instagram has emerged as a particularly critical platform in 2025. Its emphasis on short-form video, algorithmic discovery, and visual storytelling, combined with its strong uptake among younger users, has made it especially conducive to the circulation of hate speech clips, violent rhetoric, and footage depicting assaults on members of minority communities.

On Instagram, these groups use "Collab" posts to ensure that content from a local unit is shared with state and national followers, creating a firehose of hateful content. These local accounts are particularly dangerous as they are used to coordinate spot-reporting of alleged religious conversions or cattle transportation or inter-faith relationships, often leading to violence. These accounts are increasingly used to share "trophy videos" recordings of assaults on members of minority communities, which are then celebrated through comments and re-shares, further normalizing the spectacle of violence in the digital public square.

16.4 FACEBOOK GROUPS AND LIVE-STREAMING

Facebook groups have also emerged as primary online hotbeds for expansive Hindu nationalist communities where shared ideological interests facilitate the rapid circulation of harmful and inflammatory content. These groups often operate around shared ideological interests and are frequently named after or aligned with militant Hindu nationalist groups such as the Bajrang Dal and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad. These groups form part of a dense and interconnected ecosystem that sustains harmful far-right narratives beyond individual accounts or pages.

We identified hundreds of such groups on Facebook with membership counts ranging from tens of thousands to several hundreds of thousands of individuals. The scale of these groups allows content to circulate rapidly and repeatedly, enabling narratives, slogans, videos, and calls for action to reach large audiences with minimal friction. Some of these groups are publicly accessible, while many others operate as private or closed groups.



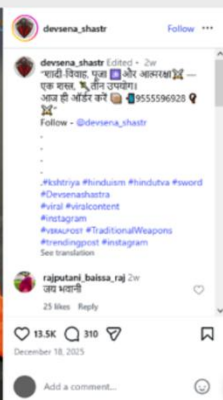
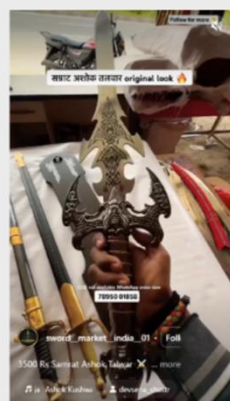
The weaponization of live streaming has become a standard operating procedure for hate actors in 2025. Hate rallies, processions and events, Trishul Deeksha ceremonies (Ceremonial oath-taking with tridents/pitchforks), and protest rallies are routinely broadcast in real time on Facebook Live, YouTube Live, and Instagram Live. It provides a strategic advantage to hate entrepreneurs because it allows them to bypass traditional content moderation cycles. By the time a live stream is reported and if ever, reviewed by a platform's trust and safety team, the event has usually concluded, and the message has already been consumed by tens of thousands of real-time viewers or in some cases hundreds of thousands of viewers.

Earlier in 2025, Meta announced a revised policy governing Facebook Live.²⁵³ Under the new rules, effective February 19, 2025, live broadcasts can be replayed, downloaded, or shared from Facebook Pages and profiles for up to 30 days, after which they are automatically removed. This policy change does little to address the core harm posed by live-streamed hate and incitement to violence, as the most consequential impact occurs during the live transmission itself and in the immediate aftermath, often within hours, and in some cases days, by which point the content has already reached large audiences and served its mobilizing purpose.

Another deeply disturbing and long-standing trend evident in 2025 is the widespread circulation of videos showing harassment, intimidation, and physical assaults against individuals from religious minority communities, particularly on Meta platforms. These videos are often disseminated by the same far-right networks that circulate and amplify recordings of in-person hate speeches. This is not a new phenomenon but a systemic failure that has persisted for years and remains largely unaddressed by platforms despite repeated documentation and warnings.

These videos are circulated by perpetrators and their supporters as tools to celebrate and glorify violence and normalize the collective humiliation of minority communities. Their widespread sharing also propels imitation, inspiring copycat tactics and reinforcing a cycle of performative and escalating violence.

Thousands of videos reviewed as part of this research depict a wide range of violent abuses against religious minorities. These include Muslims being assaulted by cow vigilante groups over allegations of consuming beef or transporting cattle; individuals being forcibly fed cow dung; Muslim street vendors and migrant workers being beaten; Christian prayer meetings being disrupted or churches attacked; and people accused of "love jihad" or "religious conversion" being publicly assaulted, among other forms of violence. We also documented far-right social media accounts openly selling swords and other bladed weapons.



In several instances, videos also documented the demolition or vandalism of minority places of worship. Such content is frequently shared by far-right accounts as proof of “action” having been taken.

The continued availability and circulation of this content point to a systemic failure by social media platforms to enforce their own policies on violence, incitement, and harassment. Even the minimal enforcement actions taken by platforms following the 2024 report, most notably Meta’s removal of some Raja Singh-linked accounts, have not produced meaningful deterrence. Instead, they appear to have encouraged organizational adaptation.

A new and emerging risk is the adoption of generative AI tools by Hindu nationalist networks.²⁵⁴ These tools are being used to produce hate content at scale with minimal resources. AI-generated posters, voiceovers, synthetic videos, and stylized graphics are increasingly visible on Hindu nationalist accounts.

This development significantly lowers the cost of entry for hate production while increasing its volume and sophistication. It also complicates content moderation, as AI-generated material can evade detection systems trained on earlier forms of speech and imagery.

16.5 THE NEED FOR TIER-1 DOI DESIGNATION

The systemic failure of platforms to contain networked enforcement evasion, exemplified by the rapid reconstitution of banned actors and the granular expansion of far-right organizations down to the village level, suggests that current moderation frameworks are fundamentally ill-equipped for the Indian context.

Given the documented role of these organizations in organizing hate rallies, issuing calls for violence, distributing weapons, and publicly celebrating assaults and demolitions, incremental content moderation measures are insufficient. The only effective intervention is the designation of the violent Hindu nationalist groups under Meta’s Dangerous Organizations and Individuals (DOI) policy,²⁵⁵ specifically under Tier 1, which covers hate organizations engaged in serious offline harms.

Meta’s DOI policy states that it does not allow “organizations or individuals that proclaim a violent mission or are engaged in violence to have a presence on our platforms,” and that designation decisions are based on both online and offline behavior, particularly ties to violence. Tier 1 explicitly includes entities that engage in or advocate violence against civilians, repeatedly dehumanize groups based on protected characteristics, or participate in systematic criminal activity.

Based on the documented evidence on these organization and role in online hate and offline violence organizations including the Bajrang Dal, Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Rashtriya Bajrang Dal, Antarrashtriya Hindu Parishad, Gau Raksha Dal, Sakal Hindu Samaj, Hindu Jagran Manch, Hindu Rashtra Sena, Shiv Shakti Akhada, Shri Ram Sena, Hindu Janajagruti Samiti, Hindu Yuva Vahini, Rashtriya Hindu Sher Sena, Rudra Sena Uttarakhand, Shiv Pratishthan Hindustan, Durga Vahini, Hindu Jagarana Vedike, Veer Lachit Sena meet these criteria. Their continued presence on Meta platforms enables real-world harm and facilitates coordinated violence against religious minorities. This designation must be accompanied by strict enforcement and continuous vigilance, unlike the case of T. Raja Singh, where the platform has demonstrably failed to enforce even its own DOI ban.

Without Tier 1 designation and comprehensive enforcement, Meta's platforms will continue to function as force multipliers for organized hate, allowing these networks to entrench themselves digitally while enabling the scaling and normalization of offline violence.

17. CONCLUSION

The findings of this report point to a deeply troubling shift in the trajectory of hate speech in India. The year 2025 marked the emergence of a new and highly worrisome phase in the normalization, routinization, and strategic deployment of anti-minority hate and incitement to violence. This report reveals the evolution of this new baseline for the public expression of hate and violence in the Indian context.

Following its unprecedented surge in 2024, hate speech did not taper off in 2025, climbing further instead. The volume of hate speech in 2025 reached 1,318 incidents, surpassing the 1,165 incidents recorded in 2024. This increase confirms that the pervasive weaponization of hate speech during the 2024 general election was not an exception or aberration limited to the electoral cycle. Rather, hate speech has evolved into a central instrument of political governance that is deployed non-stop for mobilization on the ground. It serves the purpose of consolidating the Hindu majoritarian base through fear-mongering narratives of victimhood and the construction of Muslims and Christians as ever-present internal threats to the Indian nation and state.

A key driver of this new modality in the use of hate speech as a political constant appears to be the altered political context in India following the results of the 2024 general elections, in which the ruling PM Modi led Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) failed to secure a parliamentary majority and needed its National Democratic Alliance (NDA) partners to form a coalition government. The strategy of communal mobilization deployed by the BJP in 2024 did not deliver the decisive mandate anticipated by the party that would have given it a parliamentary majority on its own without requiring seats won by its coalition partners.

The escalation of hate speech in 2025 appears to be a strategic response to the Indian election results of 2024. It signifies recalibration toward continuous, ground-level mobilization driven largely by a range of Hindu nationalist organizations within the broader Sangh Parivar ecosystem, of which the BJP functions as the political wing. Data and analysis, presented in the report, strongly suggest that this sustained mobilization is designed to keep communal polarization continuously simmering in order to shape the political terrain ahead of critically important upcoming electoral contests, including the 2026 assembly elections in Assam and West Bengal, the 2027-2028 electoral cycle in key states such as Uttar Pradesh, and, ultimately, the 2029 general elections.

Hate speech in 2025 must thus be understood within a political and social environment shaped by more than a decade of intensifying Hindu nationalist mobilization and the near complete institutional capture of state and public organs by the BJP.

The narratives underpinning in-person hate speech events in 2025 continued to be informed by core Hindu nationalist tropes and conspiracy theories. A constellation of conspiracy theories centered on various kinds of “jihad” were deployed to depict minorities as aggressive and treasonous actors engaged in coordinated campaigns intent on undermining Hindu culture, demographic dominance, and the very character of Indian social and economic life.

As is the case with such narratives in any context, Hindu nationalist tropes and conspiracy theories are explicitly designed to be psychologically internalized as unquestionable truths and obvious within the majority consciousness. Their translation into policy is already evident in the passage and weaponization of anti-conversion laws in several BJP-ruled states that disproportionately target minority Muslim and Christian communities. Similarly, the ubiquity of conspiracies such as “halal jihad” and “thook jihad” contributes to entrenching a permanent sense of Hindu victimhood and siege at the hands of Muslims, laying the social and political groundwork for additional discriminatory legislations and administrative actions.

Dangerous speech, defined as speech that elevates the risk of violence, remained pervasive in 2025. In their speeches, political leaders, as well as far-right and religious figures, routinely used dehumanizing language, called for economic boycotts of Muslims, urged the destruction of minority-owned properties and places of worship, and issued explicit appeals for Hindus to arm themselves against the threat posed by Muslims.

The patterns documented in 2025 and the preceding years represent a classic manifestation of stochastic terrorism, which according to the Encyclopedia Britannica, is defined as “the repeated use of hate speech or other vilifying, dehumanizing rhetoric by a political leader or other public figure that inspires one or more of the figure’s supporters to commit hate crimes or other acts of violence against a targeted person, group, or community.”²⁵⁶

The constancy and evolution of hate speech in India have already resulted in tangible and deadly consequences. Years of sustained incitement and dehumanizing rhetoric aimed at minorities have coincided with, and contributed to, lynchings, targeted hate crimes, episodes of communal rioting, mob assaults, destruction of homes and places of worship, and other forms of vigilante violence directed primarily at Muslim and Christian communities. In such an environment, acts of violence become statistically predictable outcomes of the prevailing discourse, even when no single speech act can be conclusively linked to a specific incident.

The ecosystem generating this rhetoric and the ensuing violence continued to reflect a highly sophisticated degree of organization in 2025. As in previous years, organizations

affiliated with the broad Sangh Parivar, that is, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and the constellation of Hindu nationalist groups under its umbrella and affiliated with it, remained central to the organization and coordination of in-person hate speech events.

Social media platforms continued to play a decisive role in this state of affairs. The majority of hate speech events documented in 2025 were recorded on video and circulated widely online, often through live streams. The persistent failure of platforms to enforce their own policies against hate speech and incitement to violence contributed significantly to creating an environment of digital impunity. For instance, despite extensive evidence linking prominent Hindu nationalist groups and figures to systematic online hate and offline violence, Meta has largely failed to apply the Dangerous Organizations and Individuals (DOI) frameworks to these actors.

The findings of this report signify a perilous era of the institutional normalization of hate. Hindu nationalism has fully absorbed hate speech into its operational machinery, rendering it an integral and, indeed, unavoidable part of public life. Within this lax environment, ever more egregious expressions of anti-minority animosity are both implicitly and explicitly sanctioned by the nation's most powerful political figures and radically amplified through social media platforms. This climate has left India's Muslim and Christian communities acutely vulnerable to systemic harassment and discrimination, and a heightened risk of routinized physical violence, including large-scale violent incidents precipitated by specific trigger or flashpoint events.

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