

In May 2019 Islamic State for the first time declared a new province in India as per the information published by Islamic State media agency Amaq News agency declared it as [“Wilayah of Hind “\(Indian state or province\).](#)

The Islamic State has made its presence in the Indian soil way back in 2015, however, due to the inclusive nature of the Indian Muslims in the Indian Society Islamic State is finding it tough to penetrate and carry out European style attacks on the Indian soil. However, after the CAA and NRC protest, it became clear that Islamic State is adopting different out of the box methods to infiltrate Indian society one way is by using media as an element for radicalizing youths they have started a version of magazine called [“Voice of Hind”](#) to raise their voice against CAA and NRC with all this going in one end the thing that draws the attention most is the strategy they are adopting against India.



### **Inside the hinterland**

It was in 2014 after the arrest of Mehdi Biswas from Bengaluru it was made clear that Islamic State had made its presence in the hinterland of India as well through online radicalization, however, with time to increase the possibility of launching an attack against India, Islamic State started forming groups with many radical homegrown groups which specifically runs their operations in the hinterland of India like the Student Islamic

## Movement of India and Indian Mujahidin.

Indian Mujahidin, unlike any other group, is not a well hierarchical group rather it is an offshoot of many organizations like Student Islamic Movement of India (SIMI), Harkat ul-Jihad-e-Islam, etc. In the initial phase Indian Mujahidin never expressed their alliance with any of the global jihadist group (Islamic State or Al-Qaeda), however, in 2014 things changed when Ansar al-Tawhid di' Bilad al-Hind an offshoot of IM had pledged its alliance with the Islamic State. Ansar al-Tawhid Bilad is the newest addition of the terrorist group in India. The former leader of this group [Abdul Khadir Sultan Armer](#) was a fugitive leaving in Pakistan he was part of Bhatkal lead IM he broke away from the Karachi backed IM and form the Islamic State aligned IM group Ansar al- Tauhid through his propaganda he manages to influence many individuals and many of his Jihadist even went to fight on the behalf of Islamic State later the group name was changed to Ansar al-Tawhid di' Bilad. Sultan Armer was killed in 2015 and his younger brother [Shafi Armer](#) took the leadership after he was personally endorsed by ISIS chief Abu Bakr-Al Baghdadi to lead the Indian IM faction of Ansar al-Tawhid di' Bilad. After the formation of this alliance, many important IM names started to appear in the Islamic State abroad operations one of the names was Baba Sajid. Baba Sajid was known as Turab al-Hind in the Islamic State he was a highly rated member of the Indian Mujahidin as he was involved with the deadly 2008 Delhi and Jaipur bomb blast. After the 2008 crackdown, he fled the country and went to Pakistan after that to Syria, and from there, he along with Shafi Armar had radicalized many youths through the internet in 2015 Sajid was killed.

The seriousness of the issue is it is not only Ansar al-Tawhid Bilad that is involved in Islamic State activity rather many close allies of Indian Mujahidin former founder Riyaz Bhatkal in 2016 NIA filed a charge sheet against a man named [Adnam Hassan](#) who a close of Riyaz Bhatkal and was radicalizing youths for Islamic State from 2013 NIA in its charge sheet even mentioned that Hassan was in close contact with Indian Mujahidin from Pakistan, even [Yasin Bhatkal](#) allegiance with the Islamic State became public after his phone call with her wife was intercepted in Hyderabad jail in 2015.

As the leader of Ansar al-Tawhid Bilad was killed and IM is declining Islamic State will surely look for a way to revive the IM faction under the Bhatkal as IM previously had carried out a lot of deadly attack on the Indian soil.



Image source: The Times

## Kashmir and Pakistan

Kashmir has always served as a great place for breeding militancy and insurgency, historically Kashmir has been home to many radical Islamic groups that are mostly funded and backed by Pakistani state groups like Jaesh-e-Muhammad, Lashkar-e-Taiba, Hizbul Mujahidin are just few names who had carry out many deadly attacks in Kashmir as well as in the other parts of India, because of the presence of so many groups in Kashmir the Islamic State ideology was finding it tough to enter the valley as all this groups agenda was to bleed India with thousand cuts but Islamic State believes in establishing a caliphate in India after analyzing their failure in the valley Islamic State had revived its strategy of attacking alone to establish a collaborative option with the Kashmiri militant groups initially government always denied the chances of a collaborative work in the Kashmir however this myth was busted after February 2020 [NH 4 encounter](#) where three militants were killed as per the IGP all of them belongs to different groups, Zia ur Rehman was affiliated with Lashkar-e-Taiba, Khateeb belong to Hizbul and the third one Fayaz Umar belong to the Islamic State of Jammu and Kashmir probably this was seen as an alarming possibility of collaboration between the Islamic State and other groups in Kashmir.

The credit of the initial alliance between Islamic State and other groups can be given to the

former leader of Hizbul Mujahidin and founder of Al-Qaeda based group Ansar Ghazwat-Ul-Hind Zakir Musa.

[Zakir Musa](#) was the prodigy and successor of former Hizbul commander Burhan Wani. Musa was seen as a youth icon and a revolutionary figure in the valley. Being a Hizbul leader he was the first leader to vow in forming an Islamic Caliphate in the valley he in 2017 even lead a group of possession carrying a body of a slain Hizbul militant in Islamic State flag. He first bought the idea of having a pan Islamic movement rather than aligning with a Pakistani funded group that's why he left Hizbul and formed his group based on the Al Qaeda ideology Ansar Ghazwat -Ul- Hind. Zakir Musa bought a unique twist in the valley despite of difference he first started the idea of Pan Islamic movement with a combined ideology of Islamic State and Al-Qaeda he tried to unite the Kashmiri militancy under one umbrella and it became very clear after Zakir Musa released 5.40 minute long clip warning other separatist leaders not to meddle the setup of Islamic Caliphate in Jammu and Kashmir along the lines of Islamic State to make more stronger statements of having a united Pan-Islamic ideology in Kashmir he started leading group of individuals in the support of slain militants and wrapping those militants in the flag of Islamic State in spite of their allegiance with different groups for example in 2017 a Jaesh- e-Muhammad affiliated member [Mukhtar Ahmad Lone](#) was killed by security forces in Tral during his possession his body was also wrapped in Islamic State flag and Pro-Islamic slogans were also raised not only this even the slogan of 'Musa Musa Zakir Musa' was also chanted during the possession even after death of Zakir Musa this trend continuous in the valley after the abrogation of article 370 crowd was seen carrying flag of banned militant organization Jaesh-e-Muhammad but along with that they were also carrying the image of Islamic State slain militant [Sayar Ahmad](#) who was killed by security forces and the chanting of Musa's name can also be heard during the possession that is the level of unity they have formed in the valley and moreover in the Kashmir now it has become a way of survival and acting on the name of Islamic State .

The link between Lashkar-e-Taiba and Islamic State is very unique, interesting, and alarming to watch. It was after the arrest of [Aslam Farooqi](#) by the Afghan National Directorate of Security that a link between Pakistani ISI, LeT, and ISKP was established it Aslam Farooqi himself who with the support of Pakistani intelligence recruited, trained, and fought for the Islamic State.

In [2004 Aslam Farooqi joins Lashkar-e-Taiba](#) and later he moved to Afghanistan he was in close contact with Pakistani ISI in 2014 with the support of ISI he took a batch of 167 Lashkar-e-Taiba fighters with him and flew to Syria to fight along with the Islamic State in



2016 he joined the ranks of Islamic State along with his hundred LeT soldiers and it is strongly believing that it was due to ISI's connection Farooqi was able to replace Mawlawi and took the leadership than on ISI started to maintain a close link with the IS-KP by providing them funds and other amenities in return for conducting attacks against ISI's rival and that includes India as well. ISI through Lashkar -e-Taiba and Haqqani Network is trying to coordinate with IS-KP to carry out attacks on Indian interests as many Indians are joining the ranks of IS-KP it will become easy for ISI and its proxies to wage an attack on India especially Indian interest abroad.



### **The threat in the Eastern front**

The eastern front of India is also turning out to be a great challenge for the Indian security from the Islamic militancy especially from the group like Jamat-Ul-Mujahidin.

Jamat-Ul-Mujahidin is one of the lethal homegrown terror in Bangladesh. This is the same group that has also been involved in the 2014 Burdwan blast as well as the 2018 Bodh Gaya blast. This group had maintained a long presence in the Indian soil especially in West Bengal. The offshoot of this group Neo-Jamat-Ul -Mujahidin had pledged its alliance with the Islamic State this alliance had been mentioned in the [Islamic State online journal Dabiq#12](#).

Even many of their sympathizers had also carried out attacks in foreign soils one of the examples is of [2018 knife attack in Melbourne, Australia](#) when two sisters linked with neo-JMB carried out knife attack in Australia . The attack was inspired by the Islamic State ideology.

Jamat- Ul-Mujahidin had a long presence on Indian soil specifically in West Bengal so far so on June 25th, 2019 West Bengal police STF had raided a major terror module linked with Neo Jamat ul mujahidin the same group that is linked with Islamic State ideology even the home ministry of India had raised the concern of [youths getting radicalized in the madrassas of Murshidabad and Burdwan](#) carry out attacks in the name of the Islamic caliphate. After the arrest of four members it became clear that Islamic State had made its presence in West Bengal through the cover of JMB.

The second kind of threat in the Eastern front is from the alliance between the Rohingyas and Islamic State. In 2014 [Khalid Mohammad](#) was arrested by NIA he was carrying Islamic State Jihadist literature and was running camps on Myanmar- Bangladesh border. As per NIA officials, this arrest gave up a possible link of Bangladeshi and Mynamar group operating in the Indian state of West Bengal.

There has a significant possible link between IS influenced group of Neo Jamat-ul-Mujahidin and Rohingya refugees for example in [2017 Rapid Action Battalion](#) reveal that Mizanur Rahman the ameer of Neo-Jamat-Ul-Mujahidin married Rohingya women with a motive of spreading militancy among the displaced Myanmar nationals. If Islamic State makes its heavy presence in Rohingya camps it will matter of time when their target horizon will not only remain to Myanmar rather shift to neighboring India as well. As India holds one of the holiest sites for the Buddhist in Bodh Gaya and Rohingya's holds a grudge against the Buddhists it will be a matter of time when Rohingyas will link up with a Bangladeshi group of neo-Jamat ul-Mujahidin and launch an attack in the shadow of Rohingya crisis against the Indian state as they did in 2013.



Image source: Express Photos

## Ideological Groups

The left lenient group of Naxalites or Maoist are notorious for linking up with other anti-Indian groups as we have seen in the case of Maoists linking with other Northeast outfits however Maoist link with Islamic radical group is not new phenomena. Previously Maoists had maintained some significant relations with Lashkar-e-Taiba in 2009 a key commander of Lashkar-e-Taiba in Nepal operation [Mohammad Umar Madani](#) was arrested his arrest revealed the information about the friendly link between the Maoist and Lashkar-e-Taiba. Maoist have even raised their voices in support of the Kashmir insurgency. 'my enemy's enemy is my friend' is what Maoist's believe and in that way a link between Islamic State and Maoist will not be amusing to notice. In 2018 [Mohammad Azar](#) an individual pledged alliance with ISIS was arrested his arrest reveals this possible unholy alliance between the Maoist and Islamic State, he revealed the crooked idea behind the possible linking with the Maoists his main motive was to understand the jungle warfare and also as to look for a possible hideout though he failed to contact the Maoist twice despite its failure it is an alarming issue that India had to address knowing the history of the relation between the Maoist and Islamic radical groups.

## Conclusion

So far Islamic State has not been able to penetrate the Indian society properly and with a massive improvement in the Indian security structure other anti-Indian groups had failed to carry out 26/11 style attacks on the Indian soil however by looking at the current scenario of both Al Qaeda and Islamic State there is a high possibility that to achieve their goals they might link up together against the Indian state or form a united group as we have seen in during the time of Zakir Musa.



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