Colonial Continuities:
Human Rights, Terrorism,
and Security Laws in India

The Committee on
International Human Rights

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ACRONYMS AND OTHER REFERENCES

ABCNY Association of the Bar of the City of New York
AFSPA Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958
BJP Bharatiya Janata Party
CBI Central Bureau of Investigation
CTC U.N. Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee
ICCPR International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
LTTE Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MDMK Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam
MISA Maintenance of Internal Security Act, 1971
NHRC National Human Rights Commission
NPC National Police Commission
NSA National Security Act, 1980
OHCHR U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PDA Preventive Detention Act, 1950
PHRA Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993
POTA Prevention of Terrorism Act, 2002
POTO Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance, 2001
SIMI Students Islamic Movement of India
TAAA Terrorist Affected Areas (Special Courts) Act, 1984
TADA Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act, 1985
TNM Tamil Nationalist Movement
UAPA Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967
UDHR Universal Declaration of Human Rights
SUMMARY

In 2004, India took a significant step forward for human rights by repealing the Prevention of Terrorism Act of 2002, which had established a permissive set of legal rules to prosecute acts of terrorism largely outside the ordinary rules of the regular criminal justice system. While POTA itself...
was enacted in the aftermath of the major terrorist attacks of 2001 in both the United States and India, the statute built upon a long tradition of antiterrorism and other security laws in India dating since well before independence. While India has faced serious threats from terrorism and other forms of politicized violence for decades, these special laws have not proven particularly effective in combating terrorism. Terrorism has persisted as a problem notwithstanding these laws, under which few of the individuals charged have been convicted.

Moreover, like antiterrorism laws in other countries, including the United States, aspects of India’s antiterrorism laws have raised significant human rights concerns. Some of those concerns have remained even in the aftermath of POTA’s repeal, since the government has preserved many of the law’s provisions in other statutes. Other, similar laws also remain in place at both the central and state levels, such as the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. Attentiveness to these human rights concerns is not simply a moral and legal imperative, but also a crucial strategic imperative. As the Supreme Court of India has recognized, “[t]errorism often thrives where human rights are violated,” and “[t]he lack of hope for justice provides breeding grounds for terrorism.” Since terrorists often deliberately seek “to provoke an over-reaction” and thereby drive a wedge between government and its citizens—or between ethnic, racial, or religious communities—protecting human rights when combating terrorism helps to ensure that advocates of violence do not win sympathy from the ranks of those harmed and alienated by the state.

This report comprehensively examines India’s recent antiterrorism and other security laws, situating those laws in historical and institutional context in order to (1) analyze the human rights concerns that arise from these laws and (2) understand the ways in which British colonial-era patterns and practices have evolved and been maintained after independence. The study is based on information learned during a visit to India by several members of the Committee on International Human Rights of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York. In 2005, at the invitation of colleagues in India, the project participants met over a two-week period with a broad range of individuals—lawyers, human rights advocates, scholars, prosecutors, judges, senior government officials, and individuals detained or charged under India’s antiterrorism laws and their family members—in Delhi, Hyderabad, Chennai, and Ahmedabad, in order to better understand the human rights implications of these laws and to identify lessons from the Indian experience for countries facing similar challenges, including the United States. The Committee has previously
conducted projects examining similar issues in other countries, which have facilitated efforts by members of the Association to build long-term relationships to promote mutual respect for the rule of law and fundamental rights. These visits also have helped to inform the Association’s extensive work examining the human rights issues arising from antiterrorism initiatives by the United States since 2001.

POTA and other Indian antiterrorism laws have raised a host of human rights issues, some of which are similar to those raised by antiterrorism laws in other countries, including the United States. Such concerns include:

- overly broad and ambiguous definitions of terrorism that fail to satisfy the principle of legality;
- pretrial investigation and detention procedures which infringe upon due process, personal liberty, and limits on the length of pretrial detention;
- special courts and procedural rules that infringe upon judicial independence and the right to a fair trial;
- provisions that require courts to draw adverse inferences against the accused in a manner that infringes upon the presumption of innocence;
- lack of sufficient oversight of police and prosecutorial decision-making to prevent arbitrary, discriminatory, and disuniform application; and
- broad immunities from prosecution for government officials which fail to ensure the right to effective remedies.

Enforcement has varied widely from state to state, facilitating arbitrary and selective enforcement on the basis of religion, caste, and tribal status; violations of protected speech and associational activities; prosecution of ordinary crimes as terrorism-related offenses; and severe police misconduct and abuse, including torture. In most states, prolonged detention without charge or trial appears to have been the norm, rather than the limited exception. As a result, to a considerable degree India’s antiterrorism laws have functioned more as preventive detention laws than as laws intended to obtain convictions for criminal violations— but without heeding even the limited protections required for preventive detention laws under the Indian Constitution, much less the more exacting standards of international law. At times, human rights defend-
ers who have challenged these violations or defended individuals accused under the antiterrorism laws have faced retaliatory threats and intimidation.

Continuing a pattern established by the British, India’s antiterrorism and other security laws have periodically been enacted, repealed, and reenacted in the years since independence. To some extent, this cycle derives from underlying weaknesses in India’s ordinary criminal justice institutions. Even when they create distinct mechanisms and procedural rules, India’s antiterrorism laws rely upon the same institutions—police, prosecution, judiciary—used in fighting any serious crimes, and to the extent these institutions fail to protect human rights when enforcing ordinary criminal laws, they are no more likely to do so in the high pressure context of fighting terrorism. At the same time, the impulse to enact special laws stems from real and perceived problems concerning the effectiveness of the regular criminal justice system itself, which create intense pressures to take particular offenses outside of that system. To break this cycle and fully address the human rights issues arising from India’s special antiterrorism laws, it is therefore necessary to improve and reform the police and criminal justice system more generally, both to protect human rights more adequately and to alleviate the pressures to enact special antiterrorism and security laws in the first place.

While debate in India over its antiterrorism laws has been shaped principally by a domestic political context which has evolved over several decades, in recent years that debate also has been shaped in part by the U.N. Security Council’s efforts to implement and enforce Resolution 1373, the mandatory resolution adopted after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks under Chapter VII of the U.N. Charter. As human rights advocates have noted, the Security Council and its Counter-Terrorism Committee have not been sufficiently attentive to human rights concerns in their efforts to monitor states’ compliance with Resolution 1373. In some instances, the Security Council and CTC appear to have directly enabled human rights violations by pushing states to demonstrate compliance with the resolution’s antiterrorism mandate without simultaneously making sufficient efforts to ensure adherence with applicable human rights standards. Aspects of that neglect can be seen in the role that Resolution 1373 has played domestically in Indian public discourse and in India’s reports to the CTC on its compliance with the resolution.

Independent India’s constitutional tradition is a proud one. In combating some of the most serious terrorist threats in the world, a durable, enduring, and ever-improving commitment by India to protect funda-
mental rights can serve as an international example. And in recent years, the Indian government has taken several positive steps to limit the use of its antiterrorism laws and to renew its efforts to transform its colonial-era police and criminal justice institutions. Following the July 2006 bomb blasts in Mumbai, the Indian government also wisely chose not to enact new draconian legislation to replace POTA, emphasizing instead the need to upgrade its intelligence and investigative capacity to prevent acts of terrorism and hold perpetrators accountable.

To protect human rights and advance both the rule of law and long-term security, we urge the Indian government to maintain and build upon these recent positive steps. Part of these efforts may require the central government to develop mechanisms that provide for greater administrative and judicial oversight of investigative and prosecutorial decision-making, and transparency in that decision-making, to ensure nationwide uniformity and adherence to fundamental rights. Mechanisms for citizens to seek redress and hold government officials accountable for abuses should be improved. While broader efforts to reform the police and judiciary have proven elusive, such reforms will be essential in seeking to eliminate the human rights concerns that arise under antiterrorism laws and, indeed, in many instances under India’s ordinary criminal laws. Finally, as we have also urged the U.S. government with respect to its antiterrorism laws and policies since 2001, we urge the Indian government to take a number of steps to cooperate more fully with international institutions responsible for monitoring and implementing compliance with human rights standards.

I. INTRODUCTION

India’s decades-long struggle to combat politicized violence has created what one observer has termed a “chronic crisis of national security” that has become part of the very “essence of [India’s] being.”¹ Thousands have been killed and injured in this violence, whether terrorist, insurgent, or communal, and in the subsequent responses of security forces. Terrorism, in particular, has affected India more than most countries. By some accounts, India has faced more significant terrorist incidents than any other country in recent years, and as the recent attacks on the Mumbai commuter rail system make clear, the threat of terrorism persists.

Like other countries, India has responded by enacting special antiter-

rorism laws, part of a broader array of emergency and security laws that periodically have been enacted in India since the British colonial period. Most recently, in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and the attacks soon thereafter on the Jammu & Kashmir Assembly and the Indian Parliament buildings, India enacted the sweeping Prevention of Terrorism Act of 2002. POTA incorporated many of the provisions found in an earlier law, the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act of 1985, which remained in effect until 1995. While POTA was prospectively repealed in 2004, cases pending at the time of repeal have proceeded, and the government has preserved some of POTA’s key provisions by reenacting them as amendments to the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act of 1967.

As human rights advocates have recognized, it is vital for governments to protect their citizens from terrorism, which endangers liberty in self-evident ways. At the same time, democratic societies committed to the rule of law must resist the pressures to “give short shrift” to fundamental rights in the name of fighting terrorism, and the sweeping antiterrorism initiatives of many countries raise serious human rights issues.2 In the United States, advocates have expressed concern that since 2001, the government has selectively targeted individuals (and especially recent immigrants) of Arab, Muslim, and South Asian descent, essentially using race, religion, and national origin as “prox[ies] for evidence of dangerousness.”3 In India, similar concerns have been raised that extraordinary laws such as TADA and POTA have been used to target political opponents, human rights defenders, religious minorities, Dalits (so-called “untouchables”) and other “lower caste” individuals, tribal communities, the landless, and other poor and disadvantaged people.

Protection of human rights—including freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention, freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment, freedom of religion, freedom of speech and association, and the right to a fair criminal trial—certainly constitutes a moral and legal imperative. As the Supreme Court of India has noted, “[i]f the law enforcing authority becomes a law breaker, it breeds contempt for law, it invites every man to become a law unto himself and ultimately it invites anarchy.”4 In the

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United States, the September 11 Commission has echoed this concern, noting that “if our liberties are curtailed, we lose the values that we are struggling to defend.”

But frequently neglected is that attention to human rights in the struggle against terrorism is also a crucial strategic imperative. As the Supreme Court of India has recognized, “terrorism often thrives where human rights are violated,” and “[t]he lack of hope for justice provides breeding grounds for terrorism.” Since terrorists often self-consciously seek “to provoke an over-reaction” and thereby drive a wedge between government and its citizens—or between ethnic, racial, or religious communities—adhering to human rights obligations when combating terrorism helps to ensure that advocates of violence do not win sympathy from the ranks of those harmed and alienated by the state. Alienated communities are also less likely to cooperate with law enforcement, depriving the police of information and resources that can be used to combat terrorism.

This strategic imperative demands caution before concluding that new, ever-tougher laws are always the most effective means of curbing terrorism. As Jaswant Singh—who later served in the cabinet of the government that enacted POTA and is now one of the opposition leaders in Parliament—commented in 1988 on the use of such laws in Punjab,

Unfortunately, [the Indian] government is a classic example of proliferating laws, none of which can be effectively applied because the moral authority of the Indian government has been extinguished, and because the needed clarity of purpose (and thought) is absent. Not surprisingly, therefore, [the government] falls back
to creating a new law for every new crime ... and a new security force for every new criminal. ... [But t]he primary error lies in seeking containerized, instant formulae; there is no such thing as the 'solution.'

As the Indian experience demonstrates, special antiterrorism laws have not always proven effective in preventing serious acts of terrorism. Indeed, the 2006 train blasts in Mumbai took place in a state, Maharashtra, that itself already had a comprehensive antiterrorism law in place for several years. Even at a purely strategic level, therefore, any effective effort to combat the extraordinarily complex problem of terrorism requires attention to a complex range of factors, not least being vigilant protection of human rights.

Given the complexity and importance of these issues in both India and the United States, the Committee on International Human Rights of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York conducted a visit to India in 2005 to better understand the human rights implications of India's antiterrorism laws and to identify lessons from the Indian experience for countries facing similar challenges, including the United States. For many years, the Committee has sponsored projects in other countries, including Northern Ireland and Hong Kong, examining similar issues. These visits have facilitated efforts by members of the Association to build long-term relationships with lawyers, advocates, and government officials to promote mutual respect for the rule of law and fundamental rights. The Committee's visits to these countries also have helped to inform the Association's extensive work examining the human rights issues arising from antiterrorism initiatives by the United States since 2001. Through these efforts, the Association has repeatedly encouraged the government

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9. Jaswant Singh, Beleaguered State, SEMINAR, May 1988, at 14, 19; see Lal, supra note 7 (since "[t]errorism and insurgency are complex phenomena imbued with political, social, economic, and psychological factors," they "call for a comprehensive strategy"); see also THE TERROR OF POTA AND OTHER SECURITY LEGISLATION: A REPORT ON THE PEOPLE’S TRIBUNAL ON THE PREVENTION OF TERRORISM ACT AND OTHER SECURITY LEGISLATION 21-22 (Preeti Verma ed., 2004) [hereinafter TERROR OF POTA] (distinguishing between different categories of terrorism within India, and noting that effective responses to these different categories may require different strategies, methods, and approaches).

of the United States to take care to protect fundamental rights under the U.S. Constitution and international law when taking steps to combat terrorism and ensure security.11

This particular visit to India emerged from dialogues in 2003 between Indian lawyers and members of the Association. In conducting this project, the Association has followed the same approach taken with its previous human rights projects. Following preliminary discussions with Indian colleagues, the project participants traveled to and spent approximately two weeks in India, and this study draws from the information learned during that visit. As with the Association’s other projects, the project participants met with a broad range of individuals—lawyers, bar association leaders, human rights advocates, scholars, prosecutors, judges, senior gov-

ernment officials, and individuals detained or charged under India’s antiterrorism laws and their family members—throughout the country, traveling to and spending several days in Delhi, Hyderabad, Chennai, and Ahmedabad. These conversations encompassed a range of issues concerning antiterrorism initiatives and human rights in both India and the United States, focusing largely on the most recent Indian antiterrorism laws enacted in recent years, but also considering the historical and institutional context within which these laws have been situated.

In India, bar associations and individual lawyers have long played an important role in challenging human rights violations that have occurred in the name of security. In 2004, after extensive efforts by Indian lawyers and human rights advocates to raise awareness about the human rights issues arising from POTA, that law was repealed, in part because of the newly-elected government’s recognition of those concerns. Even in the aftermath of repeal, however, several human rights concerns remain. First, as noted above, the repeal of POTA was not complete. The repeal did not apply retroactively to pending cases or other cases arising during the period in which the law was in effect. In addition, several of POTA’s provisions remain in effect even prospectively, since at the very moment that it repealed POTA, the government simultaneously reenacted those provisions as amendments to UAPA.

Second, lawyers and advocates in India described for the project participants a broader pattern concerning the enactment and repeal of emergency, antiterrorism, and other security laws that itself warrants examination. Because rights consciousness in India is high, the most visible and draconian laws—ostensibly enacted in most cases in response to particular crises—have often been repealed when faced with strong political opposition, concerns about fundamental rights violations, or a perception that the crisis moment has passed. However, the provisions of these laws have often not completely disappeared. Rather, in the immediate aftermath of repeal, the government has invariably been able to resort to other laws conferring similar, overlapping authority. While these other laws have not always garnered as much public attention, they frequently have raised

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12. For example, when human rights were undermined by the widespread misuse of detention, censorship, and other emergency powers between 1975 and 1977, lawyers and bar associations actively resisted these measures. See GRANVILLE AUSTIN, WORKING A DEMOCRATIC CONSTITUTION: THE INDIAN EXPERIENCE 335, 339 (1999); Ram Jethmalani, Commentary, The Indian Crisis, 23 WAYNE L. REV. 248, 249; see infra section III.C.

13. For example, when POTA was first proposed, other Indian laws conferred similar authority, a point that some advocates made in questioning the need for POTA in the first place.
similar concerns. In addition, over time—as a result of changes in government, the perceived need to respond to new crises, or other factors—new laws have been enacted along the same lines as those previously repealed, sometimes with heightened sensitivity to fundamental rights, but sometimes in more draconian form. The result, at times, has been a tendency towards the “routinising of the extraordinary,” through the institutionalization of emergency powers during non-emergency times and without formal derogation from human rights obligations.\(^{14}\)

The pattern itself is not necessarily one to which the United States or other countries will prove immune. Indeed, in India this pattern is intertwined with the legacy of colonial laws and institutions inherited from the British, and close examinations of other countries’ experiences might yield similar patterns. India’s experiences therefore are instructive for all democracies, including the United States, that face the challenge of developing effective responses to terrorism and other security threats while also developing the commitment and institutional capacity to protect human rights in an enduring way.

Our conversations in India suggested several possible ways to break this cycle and to place fundamental rights on a stronger, more lasting footing. In India, the cyclical pattern of enactment and repeal suggests that a broader set of structural issues might contribute to the concerns that have arisen from India’s antiterrorism laws. Such issues might effectively be addressed only over the long term, but might therefore lend themselves well to consideration by Indian lawyers in partnership and dialogue with members of the Association, whose previous projects have cultivated ongoing relationships over an extended period of time to promote institutional development and mutual respect for the rule of law.

In conducting this project, we have collaborated closely with our Indian colleagues, informing our analysis with the insights of individuals and organizations who work regularly and extensively on these issues in India. As with our previous studies, we recognize that different countries have distinct experiences with these issues, and that models that work in one legal system cannot simply be “transplanted” into another without sensitivity to context.\(^{15}\) We have accordingly kept India’s distinct his-

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\(^{15}\) See, e.g., Hiram E. Chodosh, *Reforming Judicial Reform Inspired by U.S. Models*, 52 DEPAUL L. REV. 351, 362 (2002) (noting that “[r]eform models are more likely to succeed if they...
history and experiences in mind when examining the issues arising from its antiterrorism initiatives.

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The report begins with an overview of the legal and institutional framework within which India’s security and antiterrorism laws are situated. While criminal law matters in India are governed by a post-independence constitutional and international legal framework which includes a strong commitment to fundamental rights, that framework has been layered on top of a set of colonial-era laws and institutions that were designed not to ensure democratic accountability, but to establish British control. Many of these laws and institutions have remained largely unchanged since independence, and as a result India has faced the challenge of reconciling these inherited institutions of colonialism with its strong post-independence commitment to democracy, fundamental rights, and the rule of law.

The report then traces India’s extensive history of using extraordinary laws to combat terrorism and other security threats, which long pre-dates independence from Britain. These laws include (1) constitutional provisions and statutes authorizing the declaration of formal states of emergency, (2) constitutional provisions and statutes authorizing preventive detention during non-emergency periods, and (3) substantive criminal laws defining terrorist- and other security-related offenses during non-emergency periods. While periodic efforts have been made to limit the use of these laws, the overall trajectory since independence has been to maintain the pattern established by the British, which blurred the lines between these categories by periodically seeking to extend the extraordinary powers into non-emergency periods. The result of this pattern has been a tendency to institutionalize or routinize the use of extraordinary powers during non-emergency periods. As new laws have been enacted in response to terrorism and other threats to security in recent years, they have shared a number of continuities with these earlier emergency and security laws,

are not merely copied or transplanted” into another legal system). Given space and resource constraints, we also do not purport to address every antiterrorism- or security-related issue that implicates human rights concerns in India. For example, we largely do not consider in this study the particular issues arising in Jammu & Kashmir or the states in the Northeast, where the extensive use of the armed forces and central paramilitary forces raise distinct concerns. For a recent discussion of human rights concerns arising in Jammu & Kashmir, see, for example, Human Rights Watch, “Everyone Lives in Fear”: Patterns of Impunity in Jammu and Kashmir (2006), http://hrw.org/campaigns/kashmir/2006/index.htm.
both before and after independence, and accordingly have raised a number of the same human rights concerns.

The report then analyzes in detail the principal antiterrorism laws that India has enacted during the last twenty-five years, drawing extensively from conversations between the project participants and lawyers, advocates, government officials, and citizens in India. Aspects of these laws have raised significant concerns under the fundamental rights provisions of the Indian Constitution and international human rights treaties. Continuing the pattern established by the British and maintained after independence for other emergency and security-related laws, these antiterrorism laws have been enacted and repealed in cyclical fashion over the past twenty-five years. While each subsequent law has incrementally improved upon its immediate predecessor, the human rights concerns raised by these laws have been significant and, under POTA and UAPA, persist today.

The report then discusses some specific human rights concerns raised by the application of these antiterrorism laws, drawing from the project participants’ meetings with Indian colleagues to learn about the experiences in several different Indian states. Administration of these antiterrorism laws has varied widely from state to state, facilitating arbitrary and selective enforcement against members of Dalit, other lower caste, tribal, and religious minority communities, violations of protected speech and associational activities, prosecution of ordinary crimes as terrorism-related offenses, and severe police misconduct and abuse, including torture. In each state, however, prolonged detention without charge or trial appears to have been the norm under these laws, rather than the limited exception. As a result, to a considerable degree these laws have functioned more as preventive detention laws than as laws intended to obtain convictions for criminal violations—but without heeding even the limited constitutional protections required for preventive detention laws, much less the more exacting standards under international law. Additionally, human rights defenders who have challenged these violations or defended individuals accused under these antiterrorism laws at times have faced retaliatory threats and intimidation.

Recognizing that these antiterrorism laws do not operate in a vacuum, the report also addresses the broader Indian legal and institutional context in which these laws are situated, and particularly the implications of such special legislation for the system as a whole. Even when they create a distinct set of mechanisms and procedural rules, antiterrorism laws draw upon the same institutions—police, prosecution, judiciary—used in fighting any serious crimes, and to the extent these institutions fail to sufficiently protect
human rights when enforcing ordinary criminal laws, they are no more likely to do so in the high pressure context of investigating and prosecuting terrorism-related crimes. At the same time, the very existence of these special laws stems from real and perceived problems concerning the effectiveness of the regular criminal justice system, which create intense pressures to take particular offenses outside of that system. To fully address the human rights issues arising from India’s special laws against terrorism, therefore, the report considers ways to improve and reform the police and criminal justice system more generally, both to ensure that human rights are better protected and remedied and to alleviate the pressures to enact special laws that result from the underlying weaknesses within the regular criminal justice system.

Finally, the report concludes by discussing the role of Resolution 1373, the mandatory antiterrorism resolution adopted after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks by the U.N. Security Council. While debate in India over its antiterrorism laws has been shaped principally by a domestic political context which has evolved over decades, Resolution 1373 has played a significant role in framing that debate. However, invocations of Resolution 1373 have tended to be selective, failing to distinguish carefully between those proposed antiterrorism provisions that may be required by the Security Council and those that are not, and have rarely, if ever, been accompanied by discussion of any countervailing human rights obligations under domestic or international law which also demand compliance. The Security Council and its Counter-Terrorism Committee themselves bear some responsibility for this neglect of human rights concerns, by failing to have been sufficiently attentive to human rights in either the drafting of Resolution 1373 or subsequent efforts to monitor and facilitate states’ compliance. In some instances, the CTC may be enabling human rights violations by pushing states to demonstrate compliance with the resolution without at the same time making any effort to ensure that these compliance efforts are consistent with applicable human rights standards.

II. BACKGROUND

Criminal law matters in India, including antiterrorism initiatives, are governed by a post-independence constitutional and international law framework which includes a strong commitment to fundamental rights. 16

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However, that framework has been layered on top of a set of colonial-era laws and institutions that were designed to establish British control and often facilitated infringements of basic rights. Many of these institutions remained largely intact after independence. While institutional continuity has served India well in some respects, in other respects India has struggled to fully reconcile the inherited institutions of colonialism with its post-independence commitment to democracy, fundamental rights, and the rule of law.

A. Police and Criminal Justice Framework

The legal and institutional framework that independent India inherited from the British to govern criminal law, criminal procedure, and policing largely remains in place today. Police matters are governed primarily by the Police Act of 1861, which self-consciously followed the paramilitary model of policing that the British had established in Ireland. Upon independence, the British “bequeathed” to India and Pakistan the laws, institutions, philosophy, and norms of the colonial police. The new government implemented no significant changes in policing, and the police remained principally an instrument of coercive state power and political intelligence. Despite reform proposals in the intervening years, the 1861 statute continues to govern policing throughout India today. 17 In the police institutions of contemporary India, notes a former senior police officer, “the Raj lives on.” 18

These colonial-era laws and institutions are now situated within a post-independence constitutional framework that distributes power between the central and state governments. Under the Indian Constitution, the states play the predominant day-to-day role in policing and criminal justice matters. 19 However, the central government retains an active, if circumscribed, role in these areas, operating a number of police, investigative, and paramilitary services with jurisdiction over specialized

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17. In Pakistan, the Police Act of 1861 similarly governed police matters until 2002, when a new Police Ordinance was promulgated to replace the 1861 statute.


19. Under the Constitution, the central government has exclusive authority over subjects of particular national importance or that require national uniformity, leaving the states with exclusive authority over matters with less national significance or where local variation may be desirable. The central and state governments have concurrent authority over subjects that do not clearly fall into either category. INDIA CONST. art. 246(1)-(3). Conflicts between state and central laws are subject to the central government’s overall supremacy. Unlike in the United States, residual powers rest with the central government, not the states. Compare U.S. Const. amend. X with INDIA CONST. art. 248.
areas. The central government has constitutional authority to deploy the army “in aid of the civil [police] power” and limited authority, under highly constrained circumstances, to investigate and enforce directly some criminal matters that otherwise fall within the ambit of state authority. In more extreme situations, the central government may exercise its emergency power to impose “President’s Rule” in a particular state, placing the entire state government under central control.

B. Fundamental Rights and Criminal Procedure

India is bound by legal obligations that protect fundamental rights under its own Constitution and statutes and under international treaties to which it is a party. The Constitution protects “equality before the law” and “equal protection of the laws” under provisions which embody a broad guarantee against arbitrary or irrational state action more generally. Indian citizens are guaranteed the rights to speech and expression, peaceable assembly, association, free movement, and residence, although Parliament may legislate “reasonable restrictions” on some of these rights in the interests of the “sovereignty and integrity of India,” “security of the state,” or “public order.” The Constitution also authorizes suspension of judicial enforcement of these rights during lawful, formally declared periods of emergency.

In the criminal justice context, the Constitution prohibits ex post facto laws, double jeopardy, and compelled self-incrimination. Individuals arrested and taken into custody must be provided the basis for arrest “as soon as may be” and produced before a magistrate within 24 hours.

20. INDA CONST., 7th sched., List I (Union List), § 2A; see also id. art. 355. This authority derives directly from powers granted under successive colonial-era laws to deploy the army to maintain internal security.

21. Id. art. 356. On President’s Rule, see infra section III.B.


23. INDIA CONST. art. 14; see also id. arts. 15-16 (prohibiting discrimination on the basis of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth and guaranteeing equality of opportunity in public employment; id. art. 17 (explicitly abolishing and forbidding “untouchability”).

24. Id. art. 19(1)(a)-(f); see id. art. 19(2) (qualifications on freedom of speech); id. art. 19(3)-(4) (qualifications on freedom of assembly and association).

25. Id. art. 359; see infra section III.B.

26. INDIA CONST. art. 20.
hours.\textsuperscript{27} The Constitution also guarantees the right to counsel of the defendant’s choice, and the Supreme Court has held that legal assistance must be provided to indigent defendants at government expense, a right that attaches at the first appearance before a magistrate.\textsuperscript{28} These guarantees do not apply to preventive detention laws, which the Constitution subjects to a more limited set of protections.\textsuperscript{29}

While the Constitution does not explicitly protect “due process of law,” it does prohibit deprivation of life or personal liberty from any person except according to “procedure established by law,” and the Supreme Court has broadly interpreted this guarantee to encompass a range of rights that approximate the concept of “due process.”\textsuperscript{30} The Court has held, based on its broad understanding of the right to life and liberty, that the Constitution guarantees freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment.\textsuperscript{31} The Court also has recognized the rights to a fair trial\textsuperscript{32} and a speedy trial.\textsuperscript{33}

The Constitution requires pretrial detention to be as short as possible, and a number of statutory provisions implement this principle. Detention in police custody beyond the constitutional limit of 24 hours must be authorized by a magistrate. When the accused is produced before the magistrate, the magistrate must release the accused on bail unless it “appears that the investigation cannot be completed” within 24 hours and the accusation is well-founded—in which case the accused may be remanded to police custody for up to 15 days, although in principle remand is disfavored.\textsuperscript{34} Bail is meant to be the rule and continued detention

\textsuperscript{27} Id. art. 22(1)-(2). In its landmark case of \textit{D.K. Basu v. State of West Bengal}, A.I.R. 1997 S.C. 610, 623, the Supreme Court extended the Constitution’s procedural guarantees further by requiring the police to follow detailed guidelines for arrest and interrogation.

\textsuperscript{28} \textit{India Const.} art. 22(2); see M.H. Hoskot v. State of Maharashtra, (1978) 3 S.C.C. 544; R.V. Kelkar’s Criminal Procedure 77 (K.N. Chandrasekharan Pillai ed., 2001) [hereinafter Kelkar’s Criminal Procedure].

\textsuperscript{29} On preventive detention, see infra section III.B.


\textsuperscript{31} Francis Coralie Mullin v. Union Territory of Delhi, A.I.R. 1981 S.C. 746. Torture is not, however, expressly criminalized under Indian law, and neither Parliament nor the Supreme Court has defined what constitutes “torture.”


\textsuperscript{34} \textit{India Code Crim. Proc.} §§ 57, 167. In practice, remand to police custody “is routine” except for individuals who can afford to pay for counsel to appear before the magistrate and for bail
the exception. Before ordering remand to police custody, the magistrate must record the reasons for continued detention. Upon finding “adequate grounds,” the magistrate may order detention beyond the fifteen day period for up to 60 days, or in a case involving a potential prison sentence of at least 10 years or the death penalty, for up to 90 days.\(^{35}\)

The police must file with the magistrate a “charge sheet” setting forth the particulars of their allegations “without unnecessary delay.”\(^{36}\) If the charge sheet is not filed upon expiration of the 60- or 90- day extended detention period, the individual must be released on bail, regardless of the seriousness of the offense alleged. However, if the charge sheet is filed before that period expires, and the magistrate decides to charge the accused, the decision to grant bail must be determined based on the contents of the charge sheet.\(^{37}\)

Indian law sharply limits the use of statements given to the police or while in police custody. Under the Indian Evidence Act, confessions made to police officers are inadmissible as substantive evidence against the accused, and confessions made to others while in police custody must be made in the immediate presence of a magistrate, and recorded in open court, to be admissible. These rules, which date to the colonial period, are intended to reduce the incentive for police to engage in torture and other coercive interrogation practices, in recognition that torture by the Indian police has been a longstanding problem. However, these limitations are not unqualified. If part of a confession or other statement given to the police leads to the discovery of admissible evidence, that portion of the statement may be admitted as corroborative evidence.\(^{38}\)

The Constitution provides, as a Directive Principle of State Policy, that the government “shall endeavour to foster respect for international law and treaty obligations in the dealings of organized people with one another,”\(^{39}\) itself. Human rights advocates have also documented periods of police custody beyond what is legally permissible.

35. This extended period of detention, however, must take place in judicial custody, rather than police custody.

36. Id. § 173(2).

37. The investigation may continue even after filing of the charge sheet, which may subsequently be amended. Once the accused actually has been charged by the court, the court may not drop the charges, but rather must either convict or acquit the accused.

38. Indian Evidence Act, No. 1 of 1872 (as amended), §§ 25-27; see also INDIAN CODE CRIM. PROC., § 164.

39. INDIAN CONST. arts. 51(c), 253. The Supreme Court of India has frequently emphasized that constitutional and statutory provisions should be interpreted in light of India’s international law obligations.
and India is a party or signatory to several international instruments protecting individuals from arbitrary or improper treatment. As a U.N. member state, India is bound by the U.N. Charter, which pledges member states to “promote[e] and encourag[e] respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion,” and by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which protects the rights to liberty, freedom of expression and opinion, peaceful assembly, an effective remedy for acts violating fundamental rights, and a “fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal.” India also is bound by customary international law norms, to the extent it has not persistently objected to those norms, and is absolutely bound by norms that have attained the status of *jus cogens*. Several non-binding sources of law further clarify the principles underlying these binding international obligations.

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights protects the rights to life, liberty and security of the person, and freedom from

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arbitrary arrest or detention. Individuals charged with criminal offenses must be presumed innocent until proven guilty, tried without undue delay, and not compelled to confess their guilt. Criminal offenses must be defined with sufficient precision to prevent arbitrary enforcement, and no one may be criminally punished for conduct not proscribed at the time committed. The ICCPR also protects freedom of opinion, expression, peaceful assembly, and association. Finally, when rights are violated, the ICCPR requires the availability of effective remedies.

States may derogate from some human rights guarantees under limited circumstances, and the threat of terrorism may, potentially, constitute a “public emergency” authorizing derogation. However, derogation must be “strictly required by the exigencies of the situation,” not “inconsistent with other obligations under international law,” not discriminatory on the basis of race, color, sex, language, religion or social origin, tailored to the particular circumstances, and limited in duration. In any event, India has never purported to derogate from any of the ICCPR’s provisions, and many of the ICCPR’s guarantees are nonderogable under any circumstances.

India has not signed the Optional Protocol to the ICCPR, which permits individuals to bring complaints of violations before the Human Rights Committee. While India signed the U.N. Convention Against Torture

43. ICCPR arts. 6, 9. To ensure freedom from arbitrary detention, the ICCPR guarantees the right of any arrested or detained individual to have a court promptly decide the lawfulness of detention and to be released if detention is not lawful. Id. art. 9.
44. Id. arts. 14(3)(c), 15.
45. Id. arts. 19, 21.
46. Id. art. 2; U.N. Basic Principles on the Right to a Remedy, supra note 42, ¶¶ 19-23.
48. ICCPR art. 4(1), (3); OHCHR, Digest of Jurisprudence, supra note 47, at 18.
49. The ICCPR explicitly provides that the rights to life, freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment, freedom from prosecution under retroactive legislation, and freedom of thought, conscience, and religion are nonderogable, and the Human Rights Committee has identified other nonderogable standards. See ICCPR art. 4(2); U.N. Human Rights Committee, General Comment 29: States of Emergency (Article 4), U.N. Doc. CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.11, ¶¶ 11-13 (2001).
and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment in 1997, it has not ratified CAT or taken steps to ensure that its domestic legislation complies with CAT’s requirements. However, the prohibition against torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment also is found in the ICCPR and is widely regarded as a customary international law norm and *jus cogens* norm from which no derogation is permitted.

In 1993, India established the National Human Rights Commission, an independent commission whose mandate is to protect and promote international human rights norms. The NHRC is empowered to receive individual complaints of human rights violations, initiate investigations, monitor and make non-binding recommendations to the government on implementation of international human rights norms, and promote public awareness of human rights standards. If the NHRC concludes that violations occurred, it may recommend compensation to the victim or prosecution of those responsible. The government must report any actions taken.

III. EMERGENCY AND SECURITY LAWS BEFORE 1980

The use of extraordinary laws in India to combat terrorism and other security threats long predates independence, part of the legacy that Britain bequeathed to India and other former colonies. These laws may be placed into three general categories: (1) constitutional provisions and statutes authorizing the declaration of formal states of emergency and the use of special powers during those declared periods, (2) constitutional provisions and statutes authorizing preventive detention during non-emergency periods, and (3) substantive criminal laws, such as TADA, POTA, and UAPA, which define terrorism- and other security-re-
lated offenses and establish special rules to adjudicate these offenses during non-emergency periods.

While periodic efforts have been made to limit the use of these laws, the overall trajectory since independence has been to maintain the pattern established by the British, which blurred the lines between these categories by maintaining the extraordinary powers initially exercised during periods of emergency during non-emergency periods. This “institutionalization” of emergency powers has become so established that one commentator, discussing preventive detention, has characterized the use of such laws as “a permanent part of India’s democratic experiment.” 55 As new laws have been enacted in response to terrorism and other threats to security in recent years, they have shared a number of continuities with these earlier emergency and security laws, adopted both before and after independence, and accordingly have also shared a number of their attendant human rights concerns.

A. British Colonial Emergency and Security Laws

Laws authorizing the use of extraordinary powers by the executive during formally declared periods of emergency have existed in India from the earliest days of direct British rule, under both the statutes establishing the overall governance framework for British India and special emergency legislation during the two world wars. But the British never limited use of such extraordinary powers in India to formally declared periods of emergency. During non-emergency periods, the British also relied extensively upon sweeping laws authorizing preventive detention and criminalizing substantive offenses against the state. For example, preventive detention was authorized as early as 1818, and sedition was criminalized as early as 1870. The British also sought to extend extraordinary powers initially justified on the basis of wartime emergency into non-emergency periods. Most notably, the Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act of 1919, also known as the “Rowlatt Act,” extended many of the government’s draconian wartime powers into peacetime. 56

Both the substantive provisions of the Rowlatt Act and the circumstances surrounding its enactment and ultimate lapse three years later foreshadowed issues that have arisen in recent years under TADA and POTA.


56. In addition to authorizing preventive detention and other restraints on free movement, the Rowlatt Act defined particular substantive offenses related to the promotion of anarchical movements and instituted special procedures and courts to adjudicate those offenses.
While the government soon tempered its policies and permitted the statute to lapse in 1922, after it became a focal point of the non-cooperation campaign led by Mahatma Gandhi, the government continued to exercise preventive detention authority throughout the 1920s under other laws and to rely on what one British Prime Minister termed “government by ordinance.” In implementing these measures, the British self-consciously intended to establish what D.A. Low has referred to as “civil martial law.”\textsuperscript{57}

The creation of elected, semiautonomous provincial governments under the Government of India Act of 1935 maintained the basic pattern established by the British. Taken together with the extraordinary powers already in place, the broad sweep of the emergency powers conferred by the 1935 Act famously led Winston Churchill to describe them as “likely ‘to rouse Mussolini’s envy.’”

\textbf{B. Emergency and Security Laws From 1947 to 1975}

From 1947 to 1975, independent India followed the same basic pattern established by the British in its use of emergency and security laws. The emergency and security provisions in India’s post-independence constitution incorporate a number of the same basic principles found in the Government of India Act of 1935: extraordinary powers that may be exercised during declared periods of emergency, but supplemented by several layers of preventive detention and other security laws that afford the government multiple options to exercise similar powers outside of formally declared periods of emergency.

First, the Constitution created several sources of formal emergency power similar to those used by the British. As originally written, the Constitution authorized the President to declare a national emergency in circumstances involving a grave threat to the security of India or any part of its territory on account of (1) war, (2) external aggression, or (3) internal disturbance or imminent danger of internal disturbance.\textsuperscript{58} Upon proclaiming an emergency, the central government could exercise a broad range of special powers. Some fundamental rights were automatically to be suspended by the declaration of emergency, and the executive had authority

\textsuperscript{57} D.A. Low, \textit{‘Civil Martial Law’: The Government of India and the Civil Disobedience Movements, 1930-34, in Congress and the Race Facets of the Indian Struggle}, 1917-47, at 165, 170 (D.A. Low ed., 1977). As described by the British home secretary, for example, the provisions in one ordinance were “a species of Martial Law administered by civil officers,” intended to avoid the more frontal imposition that would result from direct use of the military. \textit{Id}.

\textsuperscript{58} India Const. art. 352.
to suspend judicial enforcement of any others. 59 Between 1950 and 1975, the central government exercised this emergency authority twice—in 1962, when Chinese and Indian armed forces clashed along India's northern border, and in 1971, when war broke out between India and Pakistan. 60 While war and external aggression provided the grounds for invoking emergency authority in each instance, in each case the government maintained the state of emergency long after armed hostilities had ceased, echoing earlier efforts by the British to extend into peacetime the sweeping emergency powers authorized on account of war. 61

The Constitution also preserved a version of the power held by the British Governor-General to legislate by ordinance and supersede state governments. When both houses of Parliament are out of session, the cabinet may direct the President to promulgate an ordinance if satisfied “that circumstances exist which render it necessary ... to take immediate action.” Such ordinances have the force of law, but must be ratified by an act of Parliament within six weeks after the end of its recess, which constitutionally may not be longer than six months. 62 The central government also may supersede state government authority based on the “failure of constitutional machinery” within a state. Upon determining that the government of a state “cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions” of the Constitution, the central government may impose “President’s Rule” within that state. 63 Under such circumstances, the President may assume any or all of the non-legislative functions of the state government, declare that the state’s legislative powers shall be exercised by Parliament rather than the state legislature, or take other steps that might be necessary to deal with the emergency, including suspension of other constitutional provisions.

59. Id. art. 358-59.

60. Under each of the two wartime emergency proclamations, the government exercised sweeping preventive detention authority and other powers. The government also suspended judicial enforcement of rights that may have been violated under the emergency proclamation.

61. Although the conflict with China was over within days, the 1962 emergency proclamation remained in effect until 1968. Similarly, the 1971 war with Pakistan ended within weeks, yet the 1971 emergency proclamation remained in effect through 1977.

62. Id. arts. 123, 213; see id. art. 85(1). This authority has been used more often as a matter of executive convenience than on account of any genuine emergency. Many post-independence emergency and security laws, including TADA and POTA, have initially, and controversially, been promulgated as ordinances before being replaced by acts of Parliament.

63. Id. art. 356.
Second, like the colonial legal framework, the Constitution explicitly authorizes preventive detention during ordinary, non-emergency periods, subject to limited procedural safeguards. Preventive detention ordinarily may not extend beyond three months without approval of an “Advisory Board” consisting of current or former High Court judges (or individuals “qualified to be appointed” as High Court judges). The detainee must be told the basis for detention “as soon as can be” and have an opportunity to challenge the detention order. However, these procedural protections are qualified. Parliament may specify circumstances justifying extended detention without Advisory Board review, and the detaining authority may withhold any information if it deems disclosure against the “public interest.” Preventive detention laws also are explicitly excused from complying with other constitutional protections, such as the right to counsel, to be produced before a magistrate within 24 hours of being taken into custody, or to be informed promptly of the grounds for arrest.64

Within weeks after the Constitution went into force, Parliament enacted the Preventive Detention Act of 1950, which authorized detention for up to 12 months by both the central and state governments if necessary to prevent an individual from acting in a manner prejudicial to the defense or security of India, India’s relations with foreign powers, state security or maintenance of public order, or maintenance of essential supplies and services. The act also implemented the limited procedural protections required by the Constitution.65

The PDA was originally set to expire after one year. Indeed, the Home Minister explicitly stated that the bill was meant as a temporary expedient, intended only to address exigent circumstances in the aftermath of independence and partition, and that any decision to make it permanent demanded closer study. However, as with the use of formal emergency authority, this “temporary expedient” was routinely reenacted each year for almost 20 years. While it finally lapsed in 1969, preventive detention authority returned less than two years later under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act, which largely restored the provisions of the PDA.66

Finally, independent India has continued to define and punish substantive offenses involving crimes against the state and, in some cases, to establish special procedures to adjudicate those offenses. The Constitu-

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64. Id. art. 22(3)-(7).

65. For example, the Act required the detainee to be provided the grounds for detention within five days and required Advisory Board review of all detention orders.

tion explicitly authorizes Parliament to impose “reasonable restrictions” on freedom of speech, expression, peaceable assembly, and association in the “interests of the sovereignty and integrity of India.”

Pursuant to this authority, Parliament enacted the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act of 1967, which remains in effect today and affords the central government broad power to ban as “unlawful” any association involved with any action, “whether by committing an act or by words, either spoken or written, or by signs or by visible representation or otherwise,” that is intended to express or support any claim to secession or that “disclaims, questions, disrupts or is intended to disrupt the sovereignty and territorial integrity of India.”

When the central government declares an organization unlawful it must provide the grounds for the declaration but does not have to disclose any fact if it deems disclosure against the public interest. The central government’s notification ordinarily becomes effective only upon confirmation by a special judicial tribunal. The central government must refer its notification to the tribunal within 30 days, and after giving the organization notice and an opportunity to respond, the tribunal must either confirm or cancel the notification within six months of the notification’s issuance. If confirmed, the declaration remains in force for two years from the date the notification became effective. Once an organization has been banned as “unlawful,” UAPA provides the central government with broad powers to restrict its activities. The central government may, by written order, prohibit individuals from paying or delivering funds if they are being used for the purposes of an unlawful association. The statute also criminalizes several forms of individual involvement with banned associations and their activities.

C. The Emergency and Its Aftermath

From June 1975 until March 1977, India witnessed one of the darkest moments in the post-independence period, a period now referred to simply as “the Emergency.” The excesses of the Emergency have cast a long shadow on the use of extraordinary laws in the years since then. India’s democratic institutions themselves were suspended and rights were violated on a massive scale, as Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, facing opposition that had been simmering for years, recast those political threats as

67. These qualifications were adopted by Parliament in 1963 amidst anxiety over several movements for regional autonomy and secession.

68. Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, No. 37 of 1967 [hereinafter UAPA].
threats against the sovereignty of India itself, and on that basis assumed sweeping powers. Opponents were detained under MISA, and President’s Rule was declared in the two states not ruled by the Congress Party, placing all state governments within her effective control. Freedom of expression was sharply curtailed, if not eliminated altogether. MISA and other preventive detention laws were amended to permit longer periods of detention and to make it easier to exercise detention authority without procedural protections that ordinarily applied. Ultimately, over 111,000 people were detained under MISA and other laws during the Emergency. On such a large scale, these laws were not simply part of a coercive strategy against opposition political movements, although certainly that was a main function. Rather, the use of these laws extended much further, as John Dayal and Ajoy Bose noted soon after the Emergency had ended, to “[become] a way of everyday administration. There was neither criteria nor a basis for the detentions under MISA during the Emergency.”

Mass discontent had been percolating, however, and when Gandhi relaxed some of the Emergency’s political restrictions and called parliamentary elections for March 1977, the public repudiated the Emergency. The Janata Party won a majority of seats in the Lok Sabha, and opposition parties combined claimed more than two-thirds of the seats. In the wake of the Emergency, the Janata-led government amended the Constitution to rein in the government’s authority to exercise extraordinary powers, repealing some of the changes made during the Emergency and adding additional safeguards, including limits on preventive detention authority.

However, the aftermath of the Emergency did not fundamentally break from the pattern initially set by the British. The new limits on preventive detention never went into force, since the post-Emergency amendments conferred discretion upon the government to set their effective date, and neither the Janata government nor any subsequent government has ever set a date for these provisions to enter into force. And while the Janata-led government made an early commitment during the 1977 election campaign to repeal MISA, in light of the discredited use of that law during


70. The amendments reduced the maximum period of detention from three months to two months and made Advisory Board appointments subject to the recommendations of the Chief Justices of the High Courts. The amendments also required all Advisory Board members to be sitting or retired High Court judges (rather than simply individuals “qualified to be appointed” to the High Courts), and eliminated the ability of Parliament to permit the government to dispense with Advisory Board review of detention orders in particular cases.
the Emergency, repeal did not come easily. Upon taking office, the Janata government reversed course and decided that it needed some preventive detention authority to combat economic offences, “anti-social elements,” and threats to national security. In fact, in its first proposal to repeal MISA, the Janata government simultaneously proposed to amend the Code of Criminal Procedure to add a set of provisions permanently conferring similar preventive detention authority.

In the face of tremendous outcry, this proposal was withdrawn, and in 1978, over a year after taking office, the government finally repealed MISA. Despite its repeal, preventive detention authority soon returned. By the fall of 1979, the Janata-led government had issued an ordinance authorizing detention to prevent actions endangering essential supplies, and upon return to power of the Congress Party following elections in early 1980, this ordinance was replaced by an act of Parliament. Later that year, the Congress government issued a sweeping ordinance to replace MISA, which ultimately was replaced by an act of Parliament, the National Security Act of 1980. The NSA, which remains in effect today, restored many of the provisions found in the PDA and the pre-Emergency version of MISA and “presaged years of new repressive legislation,”\textsuperscript{71} including TADA and POTA.\textsuperscript{72} The NSA authorizes preventive detention for up to 12 months, and both the permissible grounds to order preventive detention and the procedural requirements under the NSA are essentially the same as under the PDA and MISA.

**IV. CONTEMPORARY ANTITERRORISM LAWS**

In the early 1980s, India began to face a crisis of politicized violence that prompted the government to enact sweeping criminal antiterrorism laws. Since then, the periodic enactment and repeal of these laws has replicated the pattern established by the British and maintained after independence for preventive detention and other security laws. The major antiterrorism laws that India has enacted since 1980 have raised concerns under the Indian Constitution and human rights treaties. While debate over these laws has been vigorous, and each subsequent law has tended to incrementally improve upon its immediate predecessor as a result,

\textsuperscript{71} Austin, supra note 12, at 508.

\textsuperscript{72} The stated purpose of the NSA is to combat “anti-social and anti-national elements including secessionist, communal and pro-caste elements’ and elements affecting ‘the services essential to the community.’” Id. at 509 (quoting bill’s Statement of Objects and Reasons).
the concerns raised by these laws have been significant, and a number persist today.

A. The Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act

Criminal laws explicitly designed to combat “terrorism” were enacted during the 1980s in response to an extended period of violence in Punjab. Political grievances between Sikhs in Punjab and the central government had accumulated for years without meaningful resolution. After Indira Gandhi and the Congress Party returned to power in 1980, extensive negotiations for several years between the central government and the Akali Dal, a leading Sikh political party, failed to resolve their differences. In the meantime, both civil disobedience and violence in Punjab escalated sharply, including attacks by militant Sikhs against Hindu and moderate Sikh politicians and civilians and communal violence between Hindus and Sikhs. After negotiations with the Akali Dal broke down, the government banned several Sikh organizations in 1982. Members of some of the banned militant groups soon sought refuge in Amritsar in the complex of Sikhism’s holiest site, the Harmandir Sahib (or “Golden Temple”), which quickly became the main base of operations for the heavily-armed militants.

In June 1984, the central government deployed the military throughout Punjab as part of “Operation Bluestar,” an operation involving a massive offensive against militants in the Harmandir Sahib complex. The overwhelming use of force caused tremendous death and destruction. Unofficial estimates place the numbers of civilians killed in the thousands, including priests, pilgrims, and temple employees and their family members. The offensive also caused extensive damage to the temple complex itself. Thousands more were detained throughout the state in the aftermath of the offensive. Journalists and advocates have extensively documented evidence of rights violations by the security forces, including many arbitrary killings of Sikh civilians. In October 1984, Indira Gandhi was assassinated by two Sikh bodyguards, and in the aftermath of her death, thousands of Sikhs were killed and tens of thousands displaced in targeted violence.73 In the aftermath of these events, many Sikhs were outraged, including many who had not previously supported the militants.

73. Investigations by advocates and government commissions have concluded that this violence was instigated by and carried out with the assistance of senior Congress Party officials and that the police failed to protect Sikhs from harm, particularly in Delhi. Recently, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh apologized on behalf of the government for that violence. Senior Congress officials accused of complicity have resigned, and the government is considering whether to reopen investigations of some of them.
Militant demands intensified, and both militant violence and draconian government responses escalated throughout the rest of the decade and into the early 1990s.

Even before Operation Bluestar, the government relied heavily on its emergency and preventive detention powers in Punjab. The government extensively used the NSA throughout the early 1980s, and in October 1983, the government dismissed the Punjab state government and imposed President's Rule. The government also amended the NSA in early 1984 to permit it to be used more aggressively in Punjab. The central government again imposed President's Rule in Punjab in 1987, and amended the Constitution to expand the grounds for declaring a national state of emergency to include “internal disturbance” in Punjab. Punjab remained under President's Rule until 1992.

In addition to using these emergency powers, the government also enacted new non-emergency laws that defined acts of terrorism as substantive criminal offenses. In 1984, Parliament enacted the Terrorist Affected Areas (Special Courts) Act, which established special courts to adjudicate “scheduled offenses” related to terrorism in areas designated by the central government, for specified time periods, as “terrorist affected.” The law instituted a stringent bail standard under which an individual accused of a scheduled offense could not be released if the prosecutor opposed release, absent reasonable grounds to believe the accused was not guilty, and extended the maximum period of detention pending investigation from 90 days to one year.

Most of these provisions were incorporated into the more sweeping Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act of 1985, which was enacted in the wake of Indira Gandhi's assassination. Unlike the TAAA,
which deemed certain existing substantive offenses terrorist-related only if they were committed in specific geographic areas designated for limited periods of time as “terrorist affected,” TADA explicitly defined a series of new, substantive terrorism-related offenses of general applicability, which could be prosecuted by state governments throughout the country without any central government designation that the area in which the offense took place was “terrorist affected.” Enactment of this powerful, nationwide antiterrorism law without sufficient safeguards to constrain its misuse and ensure national uniformity in its application led to disparate patterns of enforcement.

TADA’s principal provisions made it a crime to (1) commit a “terrorist act,” (2) conspire, attempt to commit, advocate, abet, advise or incite, or knowingly facilitate the commission of a terrorist act or “any act preparatory to a terrorist act,” (3) “harbor or conceal, or attempt to harbor or conceal any person knowing that such person is a terrorist,” or (4) hold property that has been “derived or obtained from commission of any terrorist act” or that “has been acquired through the terrorist funds.”

The statute also made it a crime to commit any “disruptive activity,” defined as any act, speech, or conduct that, “through any other media or in any other manner whatsoever,” either (1) “questions, disrupts, or is intended to disrupt, whether directly or indirectly, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of India,” or (2) “is intended to bring about or supports any claim, whether directly or indirectly, for the cession of any part of India or the secession of any part of India from the Union.”

Procedural rules under TADA departed from ordinary rules of evidence and criminal procedure. While ordinary law precludes admissibility of any confessions made to police officers, TADA provided instead that confessions to police officers could be admitted as substantive evidence as long as the officer’s rank was sufficiently high; the confession was recorded; and the confession was voluntary.

77. TADA defined “terrorist act” as one of several specifically enumerated acts of violence if committed “with intent to overawe the Government as by law established or to strike terror in the people or any section of the people or to alienate any section of the people or to adversely affect the harmony amongst different sections of the people.”

78. TADA also criminalized conspiracy or attempt to commit disruptive activities, abetting, advocating, advising, or knowingly facilitating the commission of any disruptive activities, and harboring, concealing, or attempting to harbor or conceal any “disruptionist.”

79. See supra section II.B.
Advocates sharply criticized the antiterrorism practices of the central and state governments throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s. In Punjab, much of this criticism focused on the many thousands of civilian deaths and extensive evidence that the security forces engaged in arbitrary arrests and detentions, extortion, torture, extrajudicial killings, and disappearances. As in other parts of India, extrajudicial killings in Punjab frequently took the form of “false encounters,” a longstanding, well-documented practice by which the police simply execute someone extrajudicially and then falsely claim that the killing took place in response to an attack.

However, laws such as TADA also have been a focal point of these criticisms, since they purported to provide both the legal and symbolic authority for many of these rights violations. Critics frequently noted the facial inconsistency of many of TADA’s provisions with human rights norms under international law and the Constitution. Considerable evidence suggests that in its application, TADA’s sweeping powers were predominantly used not to prosecute and punish actual terrorists, but rather as a tool that enabled pervasive use of preventive detention and a variety of abuses by the police, including extortion and torture.80

Human rights violations associated with TADA were not limited to Punjab. To the contrary, police often committed similar abuses even in states that lacked the acknowledged problem of violence found in Punjab. For example, of the 67,507 individuals detained under TADA as of August 1994, 19,263 of them were in Gujarat—more than in Punjab, and in a state without any significant terrorism problem. As in Punjab, advocates presented considerable evidence that in other states TADA was similarly used to facilitate extortion, illegal arrests and detentions, torture, and other human rights violations. While the precise contours of this pattern varied from state to state, depending on the local social and political context, TADA’s provisions consistently were used in an arbitrary and discriminatory manner to target political opponents, religious minorities, or Dalits and other lower caste groups, or to prosecute ordinary criminal offenses with no connection to terrorism.

80. In Punjab, advocates extensively documented evidence that thousands of individuals, virtually all Sikh, were arbitrarily arrested under TADA and detained for prolonged periods without being told the charges against them. The availability of TADA’s provisions as a means of coercion also helped facilitate many of the other well-documented human rights violations by the police. For example, the police frequently would eschew use of the ordinary criminal laws when TADA’s more powerful provisions also were available. The use of TADA as a substitute for ordinary criminal law become so widespread that the government eventually directed officials explicitly not to use TADA when regular criminal law provisions might apply.
Statistics documenting detention and conviction rates under TADA provided further evidence suggesting the law’s misuse. While precise numbers have varied, the overall picture is clear and consistent: large numbers of individuals were detained under TADA, but only a miniscule fraction of them were ultimately convicted of anything. Statistics reported by the government in October 1993 showed that only 0.81 percent of the 52,268 individual detained under TADA since its enactment had been convicted. In Punjab, the conviction rate was even lower: only 0.37 percent of the 14,557 individuals detained under TADA in Punjab were convicted. In August 1994 the Minister of State for Home Affairs reported that of the 67,059 individuals reported to have been detained under TADA since its enactment, only 8,000 individuals had been tried, of whom 725 individuals were convicted. For individuals arrested under ordinary criminal laws, by contrast, the conviction rate in 1991 was 47.8 percent.

Together with qualitative evidence concerning TADA’s application, these data suggest that TADA functioned more as a tool to enable preventive detention and police abuse than as a meaningful and effective criminal law. Indeed, in 1987 the Punjab director-general of police implicitly conceded that the police frequently used TADA primarily as a preventive detention law, describing a common practice by which the police would first detain at least some individuals for the maximum two years available under the NSA’s preventive detention authority before then charging and detaining the same individuals under TADA, in order to extend their overall period of custody. Even when the laws were not used sequentially, TADA’s onerous pretrial detention and bail provisions made it almost impossible for defendants to obtain release if the prosecution opposed bail.

The Supreme Court of India ultimately upheld the constitutionality of TADA in almost all respects, although it did seek to rein in its potential misuse by requiring relatively modest safeguards. However, political opposition to the law continued. By the early 1990s, the overall level of violence had declined sharply in Punjab, the state which originally had been the impetus for TADA’s enactment. TADA contained a sunset provision requiring Parliament to reconsider and renew the legislation every two years, and by the mid-1990s political pressure had mounted on Par-

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81. According to one estimate, of these approximately 76,000 individuals, 25 percent were released without ever being charged at all. Of the cases that proceeded to trial, trials were completed in only 35 percent of the cases, with 95 percent of those trials resulting in acquittals.

liament not to renew the Act when it expired.\textsuperscript{83} Lacking sufficient support when it came up for renewal in 1995, the Congress-led government ultimately permitted TADA to lapse.

Despite TADA’s lapse, the law has cast a long shadow. Cases initiated while TADA was in force were not automatically dismissed, and even today the central and state governments still have authority to institute new cases based on allegations arising from the period when TADA was in effect. As of 1996, over 14,000 TADA cases were pending, and by 1999, almost 5,000 trials under TADA remained to be completed and over 1,300 cases were still being investigated. While many of the accused were released on bail, many remained in detention for years. According to government statistics, in 1995 approximately 6,000 individuals were in detention under TADA, and as of 1997, the number of TADA detainees was approximately 1,500. Today, the number of TADA detainees appears to be fewer, but some cases instituted under the law are still pending before TADA’s special courts.\textsuperscript{84}

\textbf{B. The Prevention of Terrorism Act of 2002 and the Aftermath of Its Repeal}

Just as successive governments in the late 1970s had difficulty letting go of the extraordinary powers conferred by MISA, both the Congress-led government in 1995 and the Bharatiya Janata Party-led government elected in 1999 had difficulty relinquishing the authority conferred by TADA. In 1995, almost immediately after permitting TADA to lapse, the Congress-led government introduced the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, which would have reenacted many of the same provisions found in TADA. No action ultimately was taken on the bill. In 2000, the Law Commission of India proposed a new Prevention of Terrorism Bill based largely on the Criminal Law Amendment Bill of 1995, following a request by the new BJP-led government to determine whether new antiterrorism legislation was necessary. Throughout 2000 and 2001, the government sought to enact a new antiterrorism law based on this proposal. These efforts were met with vigorous resistance not only from Indian human rights advocates, but also from the NHRC, opposition parties including the Congress Party,

\textsuperscript{83} In February 1995, the chairperson of the NHRC urged members of Parliament not to renew TADA. Even the Supreme Court, in \textit{upholding} TADA’s constitutionality, noted with concern the “sheer misuse and abuse of the Act by the police.” \textit{Id.} (1994) 2 S.C.R. 375, 1994 Indlaw SC 525, ¶ 352.

\textsuperscript{84} Evidence suggests that in some instances wholly new proceedings under TADA have been instituted through fraudulent backdating of factual allegations.
and even some of the BJP’s coalition partners. Opponents cited the abuses that occurred under TADA, fearing that the new proposal’s virtually identical provisions would cause similar abuses and would be similarly ineffective in combating terrorism.

As in other countries, however, the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, affected the political dynamics in India. Within days, the Prime Minister asserted that India needed to review its “hobbled laws” and “dilatory procedures.” Within weeks, the government ushered its preexisting proposal into law as an ordinance, temporarily deferring full parliamentary consideration of the proposal. In the midst of the debate over the proposed bill, the government’s proposal gained further momentum from two significant terrorist attacks—an attack on the legislative assembly complex in the state of Jammu & Kashmir in October 2001 and an assault on the Indian Parliament building in Delhi in December 2001. The debate over the proposed legislation was highly charged. Soon after the Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance was promulgated, the Home Minister asserted that POTO’s opponents “would be wittingly or unwittingly pleasing the terrorists by blocking it in Parliament.” Despite vigorous opposition, Parliament ultimately affirmed the government’s ordinance, enacting the Prevention of Terrorism Act into law in March 2002.

POTA quickly became highly controversial for many of the same reasons that made TADA controversial years earlier, and as a result, the law became a significant political issue during the election campaign in 2004. When the Congress-led coalition won that election, it proceeded to fulfill its pledge to repeal POTA, given its “gross misuse[,]” and to ensure instead that “existing laws are enforced strictly.” While human rights advocates have commended the new government for repealing POTA and thereby eliminating several of the statute’s more troubling features, several important concerns remain even in the aftermath of POTA’s formal repeal.

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85. Ironically, the BJP and some of its allies previously had been strongly critical of the Congress’s use of TADA, which differed very little from the BJP’s own proposed law.
87. Prevention of Terrorism Act, No. 15 of 2002 [hereinafter POTA].
First, POTA continues to apply to many individuals notwithstanding its formal repeal. Like both the Rowlatt Act, which preserved orders issued under the lapsed Defence of India Act of 1915, and TADA, which continued to be applied throughout the country long after its formal repeal, the repeal of POTA was not made fully retroactive. In contrast to the experience under TADA, however, the government sought to cabin the extent to which POTA would continue to apply after repeal by (1) prohibiting any court from taking jurisdiction of new POTA cases any later than one year following repeal, and (2) requiring each case to be reviewed by a central “review committee” before permitting any pending POTA investigation or prosecution to proceed. The review committees were required to complete their review within one year.

Second, when the new government repealed POTA, it simultaneously reenacted and thereby preserved several of its provisions as amendments to the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act of 1967. These provisions continue to raise some of the same human rights issues that arose under POTA. Moreover, several states already have laws conferring authority similar to that available under POTA, and some state governments have suggested that they will enact new laws to provide additional antiterrorism authority. While laws on the same subject by the central government, such as UAPA and its 2004 amendments, have supremacy under the Indian Constitution, the existence of these state laws nevertheless means that the same human rights concerns arising under POTA might well arise in those particular states.

Third, the issue of special, national antiterrorism legislation has remained a controversial issue. Opposition parties continue to criticize the government for repealing POTA and periodically propose that it be reenacted, often most sharply in the immediate aftermath of significant terrorist incidents. Indeed, not long before POTA’s repeal, a government

89. Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Ordinance, No. 2 of 2004 (promulgated Sep. 21, 2004); Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Act, No. 29 of 2004 (enacted Dec. 21, 2004) [hereinafter UAPA Amendment Act]; see supra section III.B.

commission considering broader reforms to the criminal justice system proposed that many of POTA's provisions be extended to all criminal cases. Just as MISA's provisions were reenacted in the form of the NSA, and TADA's provisions were reenacted in the form of POTA, serious proposals may yet emerge to reenact POTA's repealed provisions in some future law.

The discussion that follows therefore considers the issues arising under both POTA and the amendments to UAPA, since the provisions in POTA that have been incorporated into UAPA continue to apply prospectively to all Indian citizens and the provisions in POTA that have been repealed continue to apply directly to many individuals under POTA's savings clause.

1. Definitions of “Terrorist Acts” and “Terrorist Organizations”

While governments and the United Nations have extensively legislated against “terrorism” and “terrorist acts,” defining these terms precisely has been a major challenge. Most governments, including the United States, have found workable and consistent definitions of “terrorism” elusive, and with POTA the Indian government has continued to struggle with the same issues. The result is a set of open-ended definitions that fail to give sufficient notice of what conduct is being criminalized and are susceptible to arbitrary and discriminatory application.

POTA’s substantive provisions expand upon the similar provisions in TADA and may be placed into three broad categories. First, POTA directly criminalizes (1) commission of a “terrorist act,” (2) conspiring, attempting to commit, advocating, abetting, advising or inciting, or knowingly facilitating the commission of a terrorist act or “any act preparatory to a terrorist act,” (3) “voluntarily harbor[ing] or conceal[ing], or attempt[ing] to harbor or conceal any person knowing that such person is a terrorist,” (4) “possession of any proceeds of terrorism,” and (5) knowingly holding any property that has been “derived or obtained from commission of any terrorist act” or that “has been acquired through the terrorist funds.” Like TADA, the statute defines “terrorist act” to include (a) any one of several enumerated acts of violence if committed “with intent to strike terror in the people or any section of the people” or with intent to “threaten the unity, integrity, security and sovereignty of India” or (b) commission of any act “resulting in loss of human life or grievous injury to any per-

91. See infra section VI.B.
son,” or causing “significant damage to any property,” if the defendant is a member of, or voluntarily aids or promotes the objects, of an association declared unlawful under UAPA and in possession of unlicensed firearms, ammunition, explosives, or other instruments or substances “capable of causing mass destruction.”

Many of these core offenses in POTA duplicate provisions found in TADA and, as such, raise the same concerns. While human rights advocates praised the government for excluding TADA’s vague provisions criminalizing “disruptive activities,” POTA’s definition of “terrorist act” remains vague and overly broad. The definition broadly encompasses many ordinary criminal law offenses with little relationship to terrorist activity, creating tremendous potential for arbitrary or selective application. Several provisions fail to specify the mental state required for conviction, raising the same concerns of adequate notice identified by the Supreme Court in its review of similar provisions under TADA. As such, POTA’s definition may run afoul of the principle of legality, a nonderogable obligation under the ICCPR that requires the law to define criminal offenses before they are committed and with “sufficient precision” to prevent arbitrary enforcement. As discussed below, the open-ended nature of these provisions has enabled violations of the rights to equality and to freedom of association and expression by facilitating selective enforcement on the basis of religion, caste, tribal status, and political opinion, and prosecution for activities solely involving speech and association.

Second, POTA goes beyond TADA’s original provisions to target several forms of association with terrorism. The law authorizes the government to ban any “terrorist organisation” and criminalizes a host of actions associated with these banned entities, including:

- “belong[ing] or profess[ing] to belong to a terrorist organization,” unless the defendant can prove (a) “that the organization was not declared as a terrorist organization at the time

93. POTA § 3.
94. ICCPR arts. 4, 15; OHCHR, Digest of Jurisprudence, supra note 47, at 63-65.
95. ICCPR arts. 19, 21; OHCHR, Digest of Jurisprudence, supra note 47, at 70-74; see infra Part V.
96. While TADA did not originally include any provisions addressing “terrorist gangs” and “terrorist organizations,” Parliament amended TADA in 1993 to criminalize membership in a “terrorists gang or a terrorist organisation, which is involved in terrorist acts”—although in doing so it did not define either term. Act No. 43 of 1993, § 4 (amending TADA § 3).
97. POTA § 18.
when he became or began to profess to be a member” and (b) “that he has not taken part in the activities of the organization at any time” since its having been banned by the government,

- “invit[ing] support” for a terrorist organization, not limited to the provision of money or other property,
- arranging or managing, or assisting in arranging or managing, a meeting that the defendant knows is (a) to support or further a terrorist organization’s activities or (b) to be addressed by a person who belongs to a terrorist organization,
- raising, receiving, or providing money or other property when either intending or having “reasonable cause to suspect” it will be used “for the purposes of terrorism.”

The statute does not define “terrorist organisation” in substantive terms, providing instead that (1) the central government may designate and ban a “terrorist organisation” if it believes that entity is “involved in terrorism,” and (2) an organization shall be deemed to be “involved in terrorism” if it commits or participates in acts of terrorism, prepares for terrorism, promotes or encourages terrorism, or is otherwise involved in terrorism. While the definition of “terrorist act” provides some interpretive guidance, the statute defines no additional substantive criteria to guide the government’s determinations, and does not provide for judicial review of those decisions. The statute confuses matters further by defining a separate criminal offense, for membership in a “terrorist gang or a terrorist organisation, which is involved in terrorist acts,” which relies upon a completely different definition of “terrorist organisation”—namely, any “organisation which is concerned or involved with terrorism,” apparently without regard to whether the organization has been officially banned by the government.

To the extent that these provisions fail to specify the requisite intent to establish criminality or define any criteria for designating an association to be a “terrorist organisation”—much less to define those criteria with clarity—they, too, fail to satisfy the principle of legality. As written, these provisions criminalize mere “membership,” “belonging,” or “professing” to belong to an association deemed to be involved in terrorism without either defining those terms substantively or requiring the accused to have knowledge of the organization’s activities. The provisions directly

98. *Id.* §§ 20-22.
99. *Id.* §§ 3(5), 18.
target protected speech and associational activities, and their application has in fact infringed upon these rights under the Constitution and the ICCPR.100

Third, POTA defines a handful of other offenses deemed terrorism-related. The statute criminalizes violent threats, wrongful restraints or confinements, or “any other unlawful act with the said intent” against any person who is a witness or “in whom such witness may be interested,” although by failing to define what the “said intent” in this provision actually means, this vague provision also is susceptible to arbitrary application. In addition, POTA criminalizes unauthorized possession of certain categories of arms and ammunition in a “notified area”—defined as any area that the state government so designates, without any substantive criteria to guide that determination—and unauthorized possession of a broad range of other specifically identified weapons and hazardous substances in any area, whether “notified” or not. Finally, POTA enhances the penalties for several other criminal law offenses if committed “with intent to aid any terrorist.”101

The UAPA amendments retain most of POTA’s substantive terrorism-related offenses without significant modification. The law continues to provide limited substantive criteria to guide the government’s designations of “terrorist organizations” and no opportunity for judicial review—which is particularly anomalous given that under the existing provisions of UAPA, designations of “unlawful associations” are guided by statutory definitions and are subject to full review by a tribunal which has the powers of a civil court.102

2. Pretrial Investigation and Detention Procedures

Like TADA, POTA relaxes many of the ordinary procedural rules that otherwise would apply during pretrial investigations and, at the same time, establishes substantive and procedural requirements for bail that are much more stringent than the standards under ordinary law.103 After

100. OHCHR, Digest of Jurisprudence, supra note 47, at 70-74; ICCPR art. 21.
101. POTA §§ 3(7), 4, 5.
102. Compare UAPA §§ 2(1)(o)-(p), 3-5 (defining “unlawful activity” and “unlawful association” and providing for judicial review of designations of unlawful associations) with UAPA §§ 35-40 (incorporating “terrorist organisation” provisions from POTA).
103. POTA also added provisions not present in TADA that authorize senior police officers to intercept wire, electronic, or oral communications evidence through a relatively detailed administrative authorization and review scheme. POTA §§ 36-48. While the amendments to UAPA continue authorize interception and admission of such evidence, the amendments eliminate altogether the oversight and review mechanisms found in POTA.
the police initially produce an accused individual before a magistrate, the
magistrate may then remand the individual to police custody for up to 30
days, rather than fifteen days, and thereafter may order judicial custody
for up to 90 days. The POTA special court may order additional detention
in judicial custody for up to 180 days if the prosecutor informs the court
that the additional time is necessary to complete the investigation.104 The
availability of this extended period of detention thereby extends the pe-
riod within which the police must file a charge sheet to as long as 180
days. While POTA requires the police to inform individuals of their right
to counsel upon arrest and to permit the accused to meet with counsel
during the course of the interrogation, the law provides explicitly that
the accused is not entitled to have counsel present “throughout the pe-
riod of interrogation.” This failure to ensure access to counsel through-
out the period of detention is inconsistent with the ICCPR.105

As under TADA, the substantive bail standard under POTA presents a
nearly insurmountable burden. If the prosecutor opposes bail, then for
one year the court only may release the accused if there are reasonable
grounds to believe that the accused is not guilty of the alleged offense
and not likely to commit any offense while on bail.106 But since the charge
sheet itself need not be filed for up to 180 days after the accused has been
detained, the two provisions together effectively permit the prosecutor,
rather than the court, to determine whether an individual will remain in
detention. If the prosecutor opposes bail before the charge sheet is filed,
the accused will have trouble showing grounds supporting their inno-
cence since they will know neither the allegations against them nor the
basis for the prosecutor’s opposition. Even after the accused receives no-
tice of the prosecution’s allegations when the charge sheet is filed, the
standard for bail under POTA remains exceedingly high, in effect requir-
ing the defendant to show that the prosecution lacks any substantial
basis for its charges.

These provisions are among the most severe in POTA and the most clearly

104. POTA § 49(2)(a)-(b).
105. Id. § 52(4). According to the Human Rights Committee, antiterrorism regimes that fail to
ensure access to counsel during pretrial and administrative detention raise concerns under
articles 9 and 14 of the ICCPR. OHCHR, Digest of Jurisprudence, supra note 47, at 66-68
(discussing conclusions by U.N. Human Rights Committee); see also U.N. Basic Principles
on the Role of Lawyers, supra note 42, ¶¶ 1, 5-8, 22.
106. POTA § 49(6)-(7). The Supreme Court upheld these provisions. People’s Union for Civil
Liberties v. Union of India, A.I.R. 2004 S.C. 456, 478-79; State of Tamil Nadu v. R.R. Gopal,
inconsistent with the ICCPR. 107 According to the Supreme Court, POTA affords the prosecution greater latitude in pretrial investigation and detention because POTA offenses “are more complex” than ordinary criminal offenses and therefore demand greater time to fully investigate. 108 However, the possibility that continued detention might be necessary in a complex investigation does not justify a blanket rule making bail a virtual impossibility, since the normal, case-by-case bail standard fully accounts for that possibility when circumstances warrant. By contrast, POTA's bail provisions permit prosecutors—at their discretion, and without any evidentiary showing—to reverse the general rule that accused individuals awaiting trial should not be detained pending trial unless necessary to ensure their appearance. 109

Taken together with the provisions providing the government with up to six months to file a charge sheet, POTA's bail provisions fail to ensure that individuals are given prompt notice of the charges against them or that they be tried within a reasonable period of time or released from custody. The bail standard deprives accused individuals of meaningful judicial review of their custody, and undermines the presumption of innocence guaranteed by the ICCPR, since it requires the accused to provide reasonable grounds to establish their innocence—before any trial has taken place, and in many cases before a charge sheet even has been filed—in order to obtain bail. 110

The UAPA amendments temper these human rights concerns by eliminating POTA's stringent bail standard and extended time limits for pretrial investigations. 111 While the restoration of the normal bail standard constitutes a step forward, the period of time before an individual must be charged under ordinary law—90 days—remains quite lengthy. Still, the repeal of POTA's bail and detention provisions eliminates a key incentive for the government to charge individuals under POTA for offenses that more appropriately should be charged under ordinary criminal laws and restores to the court, rather than the prosecutor, ultimate responsibility to determine whether an accused individual should remain in custody.

109. ICCPR art. 9(3).
110. Id. art. 14.
111. Thus, rather than the 180 day period that was available under POTA, the maximum period of time that an accused person may remain in custody before a charge sheet is filed is 90 days, and even before that charging deadline, the accused may apply for bail under the normal standard that applies in any ordinary criminal case. See supra section II.B.
3. Admissibility of Confessions to Police Officers

Like TADA, POTA makes confessions to police officers admissible as substantive evidence, reversing the normal rule that confessions to police officers are flatly inadmissible.112 This provision is of tremendous importance, especially since the Supreme Court has made clear that a voluntary and truthful confession—which, in ordinary criminal cases, must be given before a magistrate—can be sufficient to sustain conviction without any further corroboration. For confessions to police officers to be admissible under POTA, several statutory criteria must be satisfied, most of which codify the procedural requirements imposed by the Supreme Court in upholding the analogous provisions in TADA.113

As with TADA, the Supreme Court upheld POTA’s provisions authorizing confessions to police officers against constitutional challenge.114 While POTA is silent on whether confessions obtained under these provisions may be used to prosecute non-POTA offenses, whether charged together with the POTA violation or in a separate prosecution, the Supreme Court resolved a similar ambiguity under TADA in favor of permitting such confessions to be admitted in non-TADA offenses.115 As commentators have noted, permitting such confessions to be admitted in ordinary criminal cases creates a risk that the police might circumvent the ordinary law prohibition on the admissibility of confessions to the police by initially investigating an individual for an alleged violation of POTA, obtaining a confession under its provisions, and then using that confession to obtain a conviction for a non-POTA offense for which such confessions ordinarily cannot be used.116

112. POTA § 32; see supra section II.B.
113. POTA § 32; see People’s Union for Civil Liberties v. Union of India, A.I.R. 2004 S.C. 456, 478. While POTA, unlike TADA, does not explicitly require the confession to be voluntary, the Supreme Court has clarified that a non-voluntary confession would be a “nullity.” People’s Union for Civil Liberties, A.I.R. 2004 S.C. at 478.
The UAPA amendments eliminate POTA’s rules authorizing confessions to police officers, which, along with the rules governing bail and pretrial investigations, were among the provisions in POTA that most troubled advocates as facilitating violations of the rights to be free from torture, cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment, and compelled self-incrimination.\textsuperscript{117} While neither the Constitution nor international law per se requires the preclusion of \textit{voluntary} confessions to the police, advocates have raised concerns that given the extensive, longstanding, and widely acknowledged problems in India with police torture and other violations of fundamental rights, relaxing the traditional rule increases the likelihood of torture, coerced confessions, and other abuses in violation of international human rights norms.

4. Special Courts and Procedural Rules

Like TADA, POTA authorizes the central and state governments to establish “special courts” to adjudicate offenses punishable under the statute. These courts may be established by either the central or state governments to adjudicate a single case, a category or group of cases, or cases arising from particular geographic areas, and are presided over by sitting sessions judges appointed by the central government or, if applicable, the state governments with concurrence of the Chief Justice of that state’s High Court.\textsuperscript{118}

The modified procedural rules governing cases before the special courts are essentially the same that applied before TADA’s “designated courts.” POTA affords the special courts discretion to conduct proceedings wherever they deem “expedient or desirable,” including potentially prejudicial or intimidating locations such as the prison facility where the accused is detained. Upon an application by the prosecutor or a witness, or on its own motion, the court may conduct its proceedings \textit{in camera} or take other steps to keep the witnesses’ identities secret so long as it records its reasons in writing. The court also may try the accused in absentia and record the evidence of witnesses, subject to the right of the accused to recall witnesses for cross-examination.\textsuperscript{119} While the Supreme Court has sustained these witness identity procedures in both TADA and POTA against

\textsuperscript{117} ICCPR arts. 7, 14(3)(g); see U.N. Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials, \textit{supra} note 42, ¶¶ 2-3.

\textsuperscript{118} POTA § 23(4). When trying an offense arising under POTA, a special court may also try any “connected” offenses, and the central government, rather than the court itself, has “final” authority to determine the court’s jurisdiction. \textit{Id.} §§ 23(3), 26(1).

\textsuperscript{119} \textit{Id.} §§ 24, 29(5), 30.
constitutional attack, it also has expressed concern that accused persons may be "put to disadvantage to effective cross-examining and exposing the previous conduct and character of the witnesses."\textsuperscript{120}

The use of special courts, and the procedural rules that apply in their proceedings, infringes upon judicial independence and violates the right to a fair trial guaranteed by both the Constitution and the ICCPR.\textsuperscript{121} Structurally, the very use of special courts in this context might be inherently prejudicial to anyone charged, at least absent mechanisms to minimize the potential prejudice. Permitting the executive to constitute and appoint judges to the special courts and to determine their jurisdiction creates the risk of political influence over particular cases and violates the principles of judicial independence and separation of powers guaranteed by both the Constitution and international law.\textsuperscript{122} This encroachment upon judicial independence is particularly pernicious in antiterrorism cases, which are more likely to be politically charged than others. As one Indian lawyer has argued based on his experiences representing individuals accused under POTA, "a Judge of the Special Court firmly believes that he is a one-man army against terrorism. … The Special Judge convinces himself so much that he is on an anti-terrorist mission that he refuses to see anything else."\textsuperscript{123} While an equally prejudicial sense of being on an antiterrorism mission certainly could develop with a generalist judge presiding over a single terrorism-related case, the manner in which the POTA special courts are constituted exacerbates the risk.

The rules available in the special courts are in tension with the rights


\textsuperscript{121} ICCPR art. 14; see OHCHR, Digest of Jurisprudence, supra note 47, at 54-61; Jayanth K. Krishnan, India’s Patriot Act: POTA and the Impact on Civil Liberties in the World’s Largest Democracy, 22 LAW & INFD. 265, 281-82, 286-87 (2004). In the United States, analogous issues have arisen in slightly different contexts concerning the use of special tribunals or special procedural rules when adjudicating terrorism and national security-based cases. See Hamdan v. Rumsfeld, 126 S. Ct. 2749 (2006); see also Charles Lane, In Terror War, 2nd Track for Suspects, WASH. POST, Dec. 1, 2002, at A1 (noting criticisms of “parallel legal system” established for terrorism suspects).

\textsuperscript{122} INDIA CONST. art. 50; ICCPR art. 14(1); U.N. Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary, supra note 42, ¶¶ 3, 5, 14.

\textsuperscript{123} TERROR OF POTA, supra note 9, at 63 (statement by K. Chandru); see also id. at 113 (statement by Nitya Ramakrishnan) (discussing “crusading spirit that institutions adopt” and “halo of patriotic warriors” with which “officers are clothed” when prosecuting antiterrorism cases, which causes “a slow but sure closing of the Indian mind on issues of investigative accountability”); infra notes 219-220 and accompanying text (discussing prejudicial climate associated with Parliament attack prosecution under POTA).
to be tried in a public hearing before an impartial tribunal, to be present
during one’s trial, and to examine the state’s witnesses against the ac-
cused. Moreover, the procedures for the protection of witnesses are not
evenhanded. While the prosecution or its witnesses may seek protection
of their identities from the court, the defendant does not have the right
to seek protection of its witnesses—even though defense witnesses them-
selves might be just as likely to fear intimidation or coercion by the police
as prosecution witnesses might be to fear intimidation by the defendant.

The UAPA amendments temper the potential infringement of these
provisions upon judicial independence by eliminating the special courts
altogether, providing instead that alleged violations of the terrorism-re-
lated offenses in UAPA shall be tried in the same courts as any other crimi-
nal offenses, without any special executive control over jurisdiction or
judicial administration. The amendments also eliminate the ability of
the courts to try defendants in absentia. However, the amendments retain
for the regular courts the discretion to hold in camera proceedings, poten-
tially in prejudicial settings, or take other steps to protect the identity of
prosecution witnesses, but not defense witnesses. To this extent, the UAPA
amendments raise the same concerns as POTA itself about potential viola-
tions of the right to fair trial.

5. Adverse Inferences and Presumptions of Guilt

POTA also permits the court to draw adverse inferences against the
accused, and in some circumstances affords state governments broad, uni-
lateral power to create presumptions of involvement with terrorist activi-
ties. The statute authorizes the police to request an order from a magis-
trate to obtain bodily samples from anyone accused under POTA, but
without explicitly requiring the police to establish that they have ob-
tained informed consent from the accused. Rather, for the sample to be
admissible, the police need only testify that the individual provided it
voluntarily, and if the individual refuses to provide it, POTA requires the
special court to draw an adverse inference.125 POTA also requires the court
to draw an adverse inference in prosecutions for commission of “terrorist
acts” if (1) arms, explosives, or other specified substances are recovered
from the accused, and there is reason to believe similar items were used in
the offense, or (2) the accused’s fingerprints are found at the site of the
offense or on anything used in connection with the offense. In prosecu-

124. ICCPR art. 14(1), (3)(d).
125. POTA § 27.
tions for conspiring or attempting to commit a terrorist act, or for advocating, abetting, advising, inciting, or knowingly facilitating the commission of a terrorist act, the court must draw an adverse inference if the prosecution proves that the accused provided financial assistance to a person with knowledge that they are accused or reasonably suspected of an offense under POTA.  

Two of POTA's criminal provisions permit state governments to presume involvement in terrorist activity in the absence of any individualized basis. First, if a state government designates a particular region as a “notified area,” then any offense in that area involving unauthorized possession of arms or ammunition in violation of the Arms Act of 1959 will, irrefutably, constitute a violation of POTA as well. While this provision does not technically reverse the burden of proof, it confers sweeping power upon state governments to arbitrarily charge alleged violators of the Arms Act as “terrorists” instead, without any criteria to guide the state government’s decision either to designate notified areas or to prosecute offenses under POTA rather than the Arms Act. Indeed, the government of Tamil Nadu went so far as to designate the entire state a notified area, and since the statute does not require the government’s designation to be supported with any reasons, it offered none. While the Supreme Court reversed this determination on the ground that the state government had failed actually to exercise any discretion by “applying its mind” to the decision, the court did not disturb the state’s underlying authority to designate notified areas at whim.

Second, POTA’s provision criminalizing an individual’s knowing, active membership in an entity designated as a “terrorist organisation” similarly presumes mere membership in such an organization is sufficient to constitute a terrorist offense unless the individual proves that (1) the organization was not banned at the time he became a member and (2) he has not taken part in the organization’s activities since it had been banned.

The UAPA amendments retain this burden-shifting aspect of the offense for membership in a designated “terrorist organization,” but repeal the rest of these provisions, which undermine the presumption of innocence protected by the Constitution and the ICCPR. Accused individu-

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126. Id. § 53.
128. POTA § 20.
129. UAPA § 38.
als might refuse to give a bodily sample for any number of innocent reasons. Moreover, given widespread concerns in India about the police, arms and other items might be found in the possession of accused individuals, or their fingerprints discovered at the scene of a crime, for reasons that are either (1) completely innocent, or (2) completely nefarious, but not their doing.130

6. Judicial and Administrative Oversight

Actions taken under POTA are subject to limited judicial and administrative scrutiny. Final judgments, sentences, and orders of the special courts may be appealed to the High Courts on issues of both fact and law, and while most interlocutory orders are not appealable, orders granting or denying bail may be appealed to the High Courts.131 Most other decisions under POTA, however, are not subject to judicial review. Instead, POTA authorizes the central and state governments to establish administrative “review committees” appointed by the central or state governments themselves.132

As originally enacted, POTA formally defined only two responsibilities for the review committees—review of the central government’s designations of entities as “terrorist organizations” and review of orders authorizing interception of electronic communication.133 Neither function is directly related to individual prosecutions, and POTA did not specify other functions for the committees to perform. However, after concerns emerged about misuse of POTA, the central government constituted a review committee in 2003 to assess how the law was being applied in particular states and make findings and recommendations for improvement.134

In the aftermath of that evaluation, the government attempted to

130. See Krishnan, supra note 121, at 283.
131. POTA § 34.
132. The chairs of these review committees must be current or former High Court judges. Id. § 60. The review committees trace their origin to the directions of the Supreme Court when adjudicating the constitutionality of TADA. Without specifying precisely the form that these entities should take, the court directed both the central and state governments to establish review committees to oversee, evaluate, and make recommendations concerning the implementation and application of TADA, in order to ensure that its provisions were not being misused. Kartar Singh v. State of Punjab, (1994) 2 S.C.R. 375, 1994 Indlaw SC 525, ¶ 265.
133. POTA §§ 19, 40.
134. The decision to initiate this review process came in the aftermath of widespread public attention to an extensive study of misuse of the law in Jharkhand and the use of the law by several state government bodies to target political opponents. See infra section V.A.
strengthen oversight of POTA’s implementation in late 2003 by amending the law to permit any “aggrieved party” to seek review by a central or state review committee of whether a prima facie case exists for a particular prosecution.\(^{135}\) If the review committee was to determine that no prima facie case exists, then the proceedings would be deemed withdrawn. These decisions were binding. The amendment provided no further criteria for the exercise of this review authority, no procedural rules, and no time limits for decisions.

Prominent Indian lawyers dismissed this iteration of the administrative review mechanism as a “gimmick,” arguing that the review committees had not been conferred with enough power to exercise meaningful oversight over the states and that the fundamental problem was permitting the states to arrest and charge individuals under POTA at all.\(^{136}\) Perhaps confirming these criticisms, very few POTA accused—by one count, only 39 out of 514, or 7 percent—actually filed complaints with the review committees before the law’s repeal.\(^{137}\) Moreover, states have consistently resisted efforts to constrain their discretion.\(^{138}\) In the months immediately after POTA’s enactment, some states lagged even in merely coordinating with and reporting to the central government on how the law was being implemented. After the central government strengthened the power of the central POTA review committee, several states resisted central authority even more vigorously.

While the repeal of POTA does not apply retroactively, as noted above the repeal statute strengthened the review committee mechanism to mandate central review of all investigations and prosecutions pending at the time of POTA’s repeal. Under this scheme, a central government review committee was required to review each pending prosecution under POTA—regardless of whether the accused had affirmatively sought review—to independently determine whether a prima facie case for prosecution exists and, if not, to automatically deem the case withdrawn and any investigation closed.\(^{139}\) The review committees themselves have afforded defen-


\(^{137}\) Krishnan, supra note 121, at 289-90.


\(^{139}\) According to government statistics, as of May 2005 investigations were pending in 216 POTA cases involving 2,492 accused persons, of whom 566 individuals had been arrested.
dants great latitude in their proceedings, permitting representation by
counsel (appointed counsel, if necessary) and submission of whatever infor-
mation they deem appropriate, without regard to formal rules of evidence, to
refute the government’s claim that a prima case exists for prosecution.

Conceptually, the use of this administrative review mechanism is a
promising innovation insofar as it attempts to interpose an independent
check on the highly politicized prosecutorial discretion exercised by state
governments. Such a mechanism permits the central government to avoid
the extreme option of imposing President’s Rule, which has proven highly
susceptible to misuse for many years and frequently would be disproportio-
nately intrusive, since it displaces state governance altogether, rather
than merely exercising control over a particular prosecution.140 However,
states have continued to vigorously resist and challenge the legality of
this review mechanism, and the ultimate validity and effectiveness of the
central review committees remains unclear. While the review committees
themselves have moved aggressively and seriously to consider whether
pending prosecutions under POTA should go forward, in some instances
the central government has hesitated to implement recommendations by
the committees as a result of the legal and political uncertainty caused by
the states’ resistance.141

Moreover, these sorts of review mechanisms may place an onerous
burden upon defendants and their lawyers to seek withdrawal of cases
that never should have been instituted at all. Many detainees are not
aware of their right to seek administrative review, especially given their
limited access to counsel. And because counsel themselves have limited
resources, administrative review might not be vigorously pursued even if
the detainee does have meaningful access to counsel.142 Indeed, the Rowlatt
Act provided even greater judicial oversight of prosecutorial decisions, since—

and 341 had been released on bail. Raja Sabha Debate, May 11, 2005, http://rajyasabha.nic.in/
rsdebate/deb_nds/204/11052005/11to12.htm (statement of Home Minister Shivraj V. Patil).
As noted above, the repeal statute required the review committees to complete their review of
pending cases within one year and permitted the central government to constitute more than
one review committee to complete this process. POTA Repeal Act § 3.

140. See supra section III.B.
141. See Manan Kumar, Godhra Poser for Centre, The Telegraph (Kolkata), June 22, 2005, http://
142. Krishnan, supra note 121, at 289; see Gautam Navlakha, POTA: Freedom to Terrorise,
ECON. & POL. Wkly., July 19, 2002 (“In POTA trials family and friends of the accused spend
enormous amount of time and resources (to the point where some become insolvent) in
inhospitable and forbidding circumstances to organise legal defence.”).
before a special court even was constituted, rather than after the accused was arrested and charged—the Chief Justice of the High Court was required to review the government’s allegations, and could request further information, before deciding whether to constitute a special court.\textsuperscript{143} While it may be desirable, in the interests of justice and nationwide uniformity, to create mechanisms short of President’s Rule for the central government to monitor and oversee specific prosecutorial decisions, it may be appropriate to consider more efficient and effective means of doing so before (or very soon after) individuals are subject to the coercive power of arrest, detention, and prosecution.

7. Official Immunity

Unlike TADA, POTA authorizes prosecution of police officers for actions taken under POTA “corruptly or maliciously, knowing that there are no reasonable grounds for proceeding.” Such officers may be punished with two years’ imprisonment or a fine.\textsuperscript{144} As advocates noted at the time, the provisions were never particularly consequential, since malicious prosecution already may be prosecuted under the Indian Penal Code. Perhaps realizing these provisions added little, the government dropped them in its amendments to UAPA.

At the same time, however, POTA confers broad immunity upon government officials for actions taken under the statute “in good faith” or “purported to be done in pursuance of the Act,” a provision almost identical to a similar provision contained in TADA and other security laws and one now maintained in the amendments to UAPA.\textsuperscript{145} This provision effectively precludes the ability to hold officials accountable for rights violations in the investigation or prosecution of terrorism-related offenses and thereby violates the right under the ICCPR to effective remedies.\textsuperscript{146} Individuals whose rights have been violated typically will find it difficult to prove lack of good faith, particularly given the time and effort necessary to bring claims to court or persuade government officials to prosecute their colleagues criminally. In any event, fundamental rights are

\textsuperscript{143} See supra section III.A.

\textsuperscript{144} POTA § 58(1). POTA also authorizes the special courts to order compensation, to be paid in the court’s discretion either by the government or the offending police officers in their individual capacity, to any individual who the court concludes has been corruptly or maliciously subjected to prosecution or detention under the act. \textit{id.} § 58(2).

\textsuperscript{145} POTA § 57; TADA § 26; UAPA § 49(a).

\textsuperscript{146} ICCPR art. 2(3).
not only violated by actions taken in bad faith, and to deny individuals whose rights have been violated avenues to remedy those violations fails to comply with the requirements of international law.

V. HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF POTA

The human rights concerns arising from POTA go beyond the problems apparent on the face of the statutory text itself. Rather, the application and enforcement of those statutory provisions have facilitated a host of rights violations. Administration of POTA has varied widely across the country, resulting in arbitrary and selective enforcement against members of Dalit, other lower caste, tribal, and religious minority communities, violations of protected speech and associational activities, prosecution of ordinary crimes as terrorism-related offenses, and police misconduct and abuse, including torture. To a considerable degree, POTA, like TADA before it, has functioned more as a preventive detention law than as a law intended to obtain convictions for criminal violations—but without heeding even the limited constitutional protections required for preventive detention laws, much less the exacting standards of international law. And at times, human rights defenders who have challenged these violations or defended individuals targeted under POTA have faced retaliatory threats and intimidation.

A. Arbitrary, Selective, and Non-Uniform Enforcement By State Governments

While TADA and POTA have been central government statutes that apply nationwide, the states have played the leading role in the application and use of their provisions given their leading role under the Constitution in matters involving public order and policing.\(^\text{147}\) As with TADA, the states have accordingly exercised broad discretion to implement POTA and similar laws as they have seen fit. While the Supreme Court has held that a state government must obtain the central government’s permission before withdrawing criminal charges filed under a central government law, state governments do not need such permission before instituting criminal proceedings in the first place.\(^\text{148}\) The resulting pattern of implementation has been disuniform. In many states, including some with signifi-

\(^{147}\) See supra section II.A.

\(^{148}\) The amendments to UAPA appear to preserve state autonomy to prosecute terrorism-related offenses unless the terrorist activities are directed against a foreign government. UAPA § 45(ii).
cant levels of political violence, POTA was never implemented at all, owing to the opposition of those particular state governments to the legislation.\textsuperscript{149} At the same time, the states in which POTA has been used most aggressively have not necessarily been those facing the most grievous threats within India of politicized, anti-national violence.\textsuperscript{150} At least one state government ceased enforcing POTA when elections brought new political parties to power.\textsuperscript{151}

The states, therefore, bear considerable responsibility for many of the human rights concerns that have arisen from POTA’s implementation. It was therefore particularly useful for the project participants to visit several Indian states and to learn from Indian colleagues in some detail about the different ways in which POTA has been applied throughout the country. Perhaps not surprisingly, given POTA’s open-ended definition of its terrorism-related offenses and the broad constitutional latitude that state governments have in policing and criminal justice matters, these discussions revealed significant diversity in the specific issues that have arisen in different states. The diversity of examples in the four locations to which the project participants visited—Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, and Delhi—reflects a broader lack of national uniformity in the application of laws such as POTA and TADA.

1. Discrimination Against Dalit, “Lower Caste,” and Tribal Communities

In at least two states, Jharkhand and Andhra Pradesh, POTA has been widely used against individuals from Dalit, other lower caste, and tribal communities who ostensibly have been suspected of involvement with suspected insurgents, but who in fact appear to have been innocent of any terrorist involvement or, in many cases, even of any criminal wrongdoing at all.\textsuperscript{152} Like many Indian states, both states suffer from severe in-


\textsuperscript{150}. For example, the state with the highest number of POTA arrests before the law’s repeal was Jharkhand, a state that had not traditionally been understood to face a significant or sustained problem with terrorism or insurgent violence. See George Iype & Ehtasham Khan, \textit{Caught in the POTA Trap}, \textsc{Rediff}, Mar. 11, 2004, http://in.rediff.com/news/2004/mar/11spec1.htm.

\textsuperscript{151}. See Cherian, supra note 149 (discussing 2003 decision by government of Jammu & Kashmir no longer to invoke POTA within the state).

\textsuperscript{152}. POTA similarly has been used against lower caste and tribal communities in other states, such as Uttar Pradesh. See \textsc{Terror of POTA}, supra note 9, at 275-312.
equality between semi-feudal “upper caste” interests and Dalit, other lower caste, and tribal communities. As a result, activists in both states have advocated intensely, but peacefully, for land reform and greater equality more generally. At the same time, so-called “Naxalite” groups who also advocate land reform have engaged in violent insurgencies against upper caste interests, who themselves have resorted to using private militias and violence against Dalit, other lower caste, and tribal communities in response.153

Amidst this intense conflict, government responses often have been discriminatory and disproportionate. Police and other security forces have frequently violated the human rights of people from Dalit, other lower caste, and tribal communities in the name of their efforts to combat the Naxalites, raiding villages and engaging in extortion, looting, and arrests of individuals falsely accused of harboring Naxalites. The police also have frequently staged “false encounter” killings, shooting unnamed prisoners and sometimes photographing the corpses alongside planted weapons. At the same time, police and other officials not only have failed to prosecute the private militias of upper caste landlords, leaving them to engage in violence with impunity, but also at times have directly colluded with them—for example, by disrupting peasant organizing, training private militias, and accompanying militias during their raids on Dalit, other lower caste, and tribal villages.

In this context, POTA has served as a potent additional tool for the police to deploy in this social conflict. The use of POTA in Jharkhand was the object of sustained examination in early 2003 by a factfinding team of advocates from across the country and the news media. The team found that approximately 3,200 individuals had been accused under POTA within the state as of February 2003—far more than in any other state in the country, including states with much higher incidences of terrorism such as Jammu and Kashmir.154 Approximately 202 individuals had been arrested, including approximately ten minors; most of those arrested were farmers, students, or day laborers.155 As a result of these reports, formal concerns about


the use of POTA in Jharkhand were raised by the NHRC and in Parliament, and upon further review by senior state officials in the wake of the outcry, 83 of the pending cases were withdrawn for lack of sufficient evidence.156

In Andhra Pradesh, POTA was not invoked at all in the first year after its enactment, but after that, approximately 50 cases were initiated, allegedly involving between 300 and 400 individuals as of March 2004. Many of the individuals charged appear not to have been involved in any criminal activity at all, but rather have been targeted simply for their caste or tribal status alone. In other cases, the allegations against these Dalit, other lower caste, and tribal individuals under POTA appear to bear little relationship to terrorist or insurgent violence. Indeed, in Andhra Pradesh, the sheer number of individuals killed in police “encounters”—approximately 1,200 individuals between 1996 and 2004—casts doubt on the notion that the police have resorted to legal mechanisms, rather than counterinsurgency operations and encounter killings, to any significant degree at all when targeting suspected Naxalites.157 While Naxalite insurgents have engaged in violence against civilians and security forces, there are few indications that POTA has played a significant role in apprehending individuals who legitimately have been suspected of involvement in Naxalite violence, much less in actually curbing that violence.

2. Discrimination Against Religious Minorities

A similar pattern can be seen in the discriminatory use of POTA by particular state governments against religious minorities, particularly Muslims. This pattern, which also was found in the application of TADA, has taken on increased significance given rising communalism in India throughout the past several decades, especially since the 1990s and in states, such as Gujarat, where Hindu nationalist organizations have been ascendant. The more extreme and militant among these organizations have sought to reconstitute post-independence Indian politics and society on the basis of a narrowly defined “Hindutva” identity and, in certain circumstances, have used violence against religious minorities in a highly organized and systematic manner.158 Perhaps unsurprisingly, in some states these commu-

156. See, e.g., Freedom for 83 Terror Law Accused, The Telegraph (Kolkata), Apr. 2, 2003, http://www.telegraphindia.com/1030402/asp/jamshedpur/story_1831252.asp; see also Terror of POTA, supra note 9, at 301-03 (statement by Ramesh) (discussing similar instance in which state of Uttar Pradesh withdrew POTA cases against 28 poor Dalits and tribals after public attention was drawn to their cases).

157. Id. at 66-70 (statement by K. Balagopal).

158. Christophe Jaffrelot, The Hindu Nationalist Movement and Indian Politics, 1925 to 1990s, at
In this context, POTA has been wielded as a communalist instrument in several states. Project participants learned about this dynamic most vividly in Gujarat, a state that has witnessed some of India’s most extensive episodes of communal violence in recent years. In 2002, a train carrying a large number of Hindutva activists returning from the city of Ayodhya caught fire at the train station in the city of Godhra. At least 59 people were killed, including 15 children. Gujarat had not previously been considered a major center of terrorist activity, and despite several detailed investigations, to this day it remains unclear whether the Godhra fire was an intentional act or an accident. However, almost immediately, before any significant investigation had taken place, leading Hindu nationalists, including the state’s chief minister, incited Hindutva groups within the community, spreading the theory that the fire had been an act of terrorism. In the violence that followed throughout the entire state, thousands of Muslims were killed and tens of thousands of others displaced. Human rights advocates, the media, and the NHRC have extensively documented the organized and systematic nature of the violence, the complicity of police and other officials, the failure to protect Muslims, and the unwillingness or inability to hold perpetrators of that violence accountable.159

Hundreds of Muslims have been formally arrested or illegally detained for extensive periods in connection with cases pending under POTA. In the immediate aftermath of the violence, the state government filed POTO charges against as many as 62 Muslims, including at least seven boys below the age of sixteen, who it accused of involvement with the Godhra

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160. By official counts approximately 98,000 individuals, the overwhelming majority of them Muslim, were living in over relief camps throughout Gujarat in the wake of the violence.
fire, and illegally detained as many as 400 others without charge. While the POTO charges were quickly withdrawn in the face of sharp public criticism, ordinary criminal charges remained in place against these individuals, and approximately one year later the government retroactively filed charges under POTA against 121 individuals suspected of involvement in the Godhra incident. Subsequently, the Gujarat police initiated as many as nine additional POTA cases alleging wide-ranging conspiracies by Muslims against Hindus in explicit retaliation for the post-Godhra violence. These conspiracy prosecutions typically have been vague and open-ended, permitting the police to add charges against additional persons over time and thereby to subject them to POTA’s severe provisions for pretrial investigation and detention. Despite the disproportionately high number of Muslim victims in the post-Godhra violence, no Hindus responsible for the post-Godhra violence have been charged under POTA at all—even though POTA’s broad and malleable definition of terrorism could have been applied to much of that anti-Muslim violence—and few have been charged under ordinary criminal laws.

Gujarat presents some of the most extreme examples of human rights concerns arising from POTA. Evidence suggests that in initiating cases under POTA, the Gujarat police often have not simply applied POTA selectively against Muslims, but also have used the law to intimidate Muslim citizens from coming forward with evidence of police complicity in the organized post-Godhra violence. It has been reported that the police have unlawfully detained hundreds of young Muslims and threatened them with false charges under POTA if they did come forward. Indeed, after one key witness to a post-Godhra massacre came forward, not only did the state fail to bring charges against the perpetrators of that massacre, but they charged the witness himself under POTA. In this context, as one community leader put it, POTA became “a sword hanging over every Muslim in Gujarat.”

163. The practice of filing open-ended POTA cases, to which more individuals may be added over an extended period of time, has not been limited to Gujarat. See id. at 66 (statement by K. Balagopal) (discussing use of POTA in Andhra Pradesh).
By March 2004, over 280 individuals had been charged under POTA in Gujarat, all but one of whom were Muslim. These charges resulted in the detention of at least 189 individuals, the vast majority of whom were denied bail. Muslims accused under POTA in Gujarat have tended to be young men, below the age of thirty, without any prior criminal history either individually or among their family members. Most are from relatively modest income backgrounds and are employed, for example, as electricians, radio/TV repairpersons, drivers, and religious teachers. Several had been active community members and had performed extensive service to victims of the Gujarat earthquake in 2001, without regard to the victims’ religious backgrounds. As a result of being formally or illegally arrested for allegations involving terrorism, many have had difficulty obtaining work upon release, as even their own communities have hesitated to associate with them for fear of guilt by association. Family members of POTA detainees also have suffered. Wives of men detained under POTA have experienced not only the emotional trauma of not knowing when their spouses might be released, but also the stigma of being associated with men accused of terrorism, the practical demands associated with sudden single parenthood, and the need to assume responsibility for their husbands’ businesses or find other sources of income.

The communalized use of POTA has not been limited to Gujarat. POTA also has been used in Andhra Pradesh to target Muslims accused of terrorism in Gujarat and other parts of the country. While the Andhra Pradesh police, based on their own investigations, have questioned the extent to which local residents have been involved in terrorism, at least 30 people from Andhra Pradesh have been arrested and transferred to Gujarat in connection with some of the POTA conspiracies alleged in that state. Individuals taken into custody in Andhra Pradesh have generally feared transfer to Gujarat, given the perception that the degree of com-

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165. TERROR OF POTA, supra note 9, at 189-90 (statement by Zakia Jowher).
166. Id. at 172, 184-85 (statements by family members of individuals accused under POTA). Family business of individuals detained under POTA have suffered not only from the lack of business skills of those family members suddenly forced to take over the business, but also from the hesitance of many patrons to return to the store, for fear that they might taint their own reputations and encounter trouble with the police as a result, and even in some cases on account of organized boycotts by Hindutva groups. In one instance, the wife of an individual accused under POTA lost their home, as the landlord evicted her after police ransacked her apartment at the time of her husband’s arrest.
167. TERROR OF POTA, supra note 9, at 66-72 (statement by K. Balagopal).
168. Id. at 70 (statement by K. Balagopal).
munalism in Gujarat causes courts and officials to turn a blind eye to allegations of mistreatment.

3. Violations of Political Speech and Associational Rights

POTA has also been used to target political speech and associational activities protected by the Indian Constitution and international law. Indeed, in some instances, the bases for prosecution have involved no conduct other than the disfavored speech and associational activities themselves—even though then-Attorney General Soli Sorabjee issued a written opinion in January 2003 (with which the Supreme Court of India ultimately agreed) concluding that “[m]ere expression of opinion or expression of moral support per se does not tantamount to a breach of Section 21 of POTA.”169 Several of these cases have garnered considerable attention, since they have involved high-profile journalists and leaders of opposition political parties:

- In 2002, the government of Tamil Nadu detained several leaders of the Tamil Nationalist Movement, an officially-recognized opposition political party, in connection with their participation at a public meeting near Madurai. As widely reported in the media, several speakers at the meeting, including members of Parliament and senior members of various political parties, including the TNM and the Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, expressed support for a cease fire and proposed peace talks between the government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, which is banned in India as a terrorist organization. None of the participants advocated support for terrorism by the LTTE or anyone else, and when the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, J. Jayalalithaa, was publicly asked about the meeting soon thereafter, she stated that nothing improper had occurred. Nevertheless, four months after the meeting, the speakers and others were detained under POTA on grounds that they had expressed support for the LTTE.170

- In Tamil Nadu, Vaiko, a member of Parliament and leader of


170. TERROR OF POTA, supra note 9, at 41-45 (statement by individual accused under POTA); id. at 49-50 (statement by K. Chandru).
the MDMK—which was part of the BJP-led coalition in the central government but in the opposition in Tamil Nadu—was charged under POTA for remarks he made concerning the LTTE at a public gathering of his party’s members in 2002. In his speech, Vaiko described his participation in recent debates in Parliament concerning the LTTE and Sri Lanka, in which he expressed support for the banned organization. Ironically, although he enjoyed immunity for his statements before Parliament, Vaiko’s repetition of those remarks at the constituent gathering prompted the charges under POTA.  

- In 2003, Jayalalithaa publicly called for the Prime Minister to dismiss one of the cabinet ministers from the MDMK, M. Kannappan, for public remarks about the LTTE. Jayalalithaa asserted that these remarks violated POTA and threatened to prosecute Kannappan if he were not dismissed from the cabinet—raising the unprecedented prospect of state prosecution of a central government minister for alleged violations of a central statute concerning national security. Jayalalithaa made this demand in the face of the written opinion by the Attorney General, which specifically concluded that similar public statements by Kannappan the previous year were not actionable.  

- R.R. Gopal, the editor of Nakkheeran, a weekly magazine with a history of conflict with the ruling party in Tamil Nadu, was charged under POTA in 2003. Gopal later was granted bail by the Madras High Court, which noted that the police had given three contradictory descriptions of the firearm he allegedly possessed and concluded that the weapon might not have been in Gopal’s possession at all.  

- In 2002, Nagendra Sharma, a reporter for Hindustan, a Hindi-

173. Nambath, supra note 169.  
language daily newspaper, was arrested under POTA in Jharkhand because of his regular coverage of the activities of certain banned organizations.  

POTA also has been used to target less prominent individuals holding disfavored political and ideological viewpoints:

- In February 2003, Valeti Aravind Kumar, a member of the Revolutionary Writers Association who wrote under the pen name “Rivera,” was arrested by Andhra Pradesh police under POTA and kept in solitary confinement while the police raided his parents’ house. The police did not inform them of his arrest or the reasons for the raid, and Kumar was forced to sign a confession stating he was a member of and had recruited people into the Naxalite insurgency. The police cited cassettes, compact discs, and banned revolutionary material found in his personal library as the basis for the charges under POTA.

- In Delhi, police detained and charged under POTA a 56-year-old man who previously had been associated with Students Islamic Movement of India, an organization banned as a terrorist organization, on the ground that he had pasado political posters along a city street. The man was arrested at his home, not at the scene; while the police claimed they received information about the man after reaching the scene, a prosecution witness later admitted to having picked up the same posters during a raid of SIMI itself.

- In Jharkhand, a police official openly acknowledged that the police identified suspected Naxalites based on whether they possessed certain political publications. 

175. Terror of POTA, supra note 9, at 206 (excerpt from Preliminary Report of All India Fact Finding Team on POTA Cases in Jharkhand).

176. Id. at 74 (statements by M.A. Vanaja and M.A. Shakeel). Rivera spent eight months in jail, where he was assaulted by police and prevented from attending a court hearing after threatening to inform the court of the police’s actions. He was finally released on bail in 2003 after his family’s second petition, as the court determined that contrary to the prosecution’s assertions, no charge sheet had ever been filed in the case. Id. at 77.

177. Id. at 118 (statement by R.M. Tufail).


176. Id. at 74 (statements by M.A. Vanaja and M.A. Shakeel). Rivera spent eight months in jail, where he was assaulted by police and prevented from attending a court hearing after threatening to inform the court of the police’s actions. He was finally released on bail in 2003 after his family’s second petition, as the court determined that contrary to the prosecution’s assertions, no charge sheet had ever been filed in the case. Id. at 77.

177. Id. at 118 (statement by R.M. Tufail).

4. Malicious Prosecution and Prosecution of Ordinary Crimes

As with TADA, the police have been able to stretch POTA’s broad definitions of terrorism-related offenses to prosecute ordinary criminal cases with little, if any, connection to terrorism and, more simply, to engage in intimidation and extortion. Similar concerns have arisen since 2001 in the United States, where many of the prosecutions initially touted by the government as victories in the war on terrorism have, upon closer inspection, involved garden-variety offenses with no apparent connection to terrorism. The use of POTA in this fashion has intersected with the discriminatory use of the law against disfavored social groups—for example, as noted above, in Gujarat, the police have threatened Muslims with charges under POTA in some instances simply to intimidate them from coming forward with information concerning police complicity with the post-Godhra violence. In other instances, POTA provides a powerful weapon for the police to wield when enlisted to intervene on behalf of particular parties in private disputes or to engage in extortion or other forms of corruption. For example:

- In Gujarat, one of the POTA cases involves allegations of a conspiracy by Muslim men to kill a Hindu doctor. Beyond alleging that the conspiracy was hatched in retaliation for the post-Godhra violence, which appears verbatim as boilerplate language in each POTA conspiracy charge sheet in Gujarat, nothing supports the characterization of this alleged conspiracy as terrorism-related.

- In Tamil Nadu, 26 individuals, including at least two minors and several young women, were detained under POTA soon after the murder of an individual who had come forward as a witness to a police encounter killing. The murder occurred under suspicious circumstances that may have involved the police themselves, and while the 26 individuals purportedly were detained for connections to Naxalite groups and holding an ille-

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180. See K.S. Subramanian, Response: The Crisis of the IPS, Frontline, Feb. 2-15, 2002, http://www.frontline.com/fl1903/19031100.htm (noting, outside antiterrorism context, that the “power to arrest has become a major source of corruption” for the police, and that approximately 60 percent of all arrests “have been found to be unnecessary and unjustifiable”).

181. Terror of POTA, supra note 9, at 155 (statement by Mukul Sinha).
In Jharkhand, a case was initiated under POTA against a 30-year-old tribal man after a complaint was filed against him in connection with a private land dispute. While this case, like others in Jharkhand, was premised on the accused’s alleged support for Naxalite groups, neither the accused nor his family had knowledge of these groups.\(^{183}\)

• Also in Jharkhand, POTA charges were brought against a 17-year-old young woman, Ropni Kharia, the only woman in her village to pass matriculation. The charges were brought in apparent retaliation for her resistance to patriarchal norms in her village and her work educating and encouraging others to do the same; complaints were brought to the police about her supposed involvement with a banned organization by men in the community who were “worried about her knowledge and activities.” Despite no evidence linking her to the organization, the police intimidated and beat her father and other family members and ultimately filed POTA charges against her.\(^{184}\)

In several states, POTA charges have been filed against other youths below age eighteen, including some as young as ten. In some cases, these charges were brought to intimidate or retaliate against parents who were the real subjects of interest.\(^{185}\) In others, the charges have involved arbitrary police action that intersects with efforts to intimidate particular social groups. Since another statutory regime exclusively governs offenses by minors, the Madras High Court ultimately held that POTA charges could not be brought against minors and ordered two youths in Tamil Nadu to be released. The stigma of having been charged under POTA remains for these youths, however, and in other states several of the cases against youths have proceeded.\(^{186}\)

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182. *Id.* at 53-54 (statement by K. Chandru).
183. *Id.* at 204 (excerpt from the Preliminary Report of the All India Fact Finding Team on POTA Cases in Jharkhand).
184. *Id.*
185. See infra section V.B.
186. Many of these youths have come from lower caste, tribal, and religious minority commu-
Special laws like POTA create tremendous incentives and opportunities for overreaching, owing to both the relaxed procedural rules available and the police's understandable desire to be perceived as actively responding to terrorism. To the credit of each of them, the BJP-led government recognized and attempted to respond to this problem in its initial efforts to strengthen the review committee mechanism in 2003, and the current Congress-led government openly acknowledged this problem when it decided to repeal POTA altogether. While POTA's repeal eliminates this problem for now, it appears likely that any legislative scheme conferring extraordinary powers and relaxing the normal procedural rules in particular categories of cases will risk being misused in the absence of prompt, effective, and transparent mechanisms to exercise meaningful oversight of investigative and prosecutorial decisions.

B. Police Misconduct and Abuse

Human rights advocates have documented significant evidence of police misconduct in connection with the application of POTA, including violations of procedural rights, corruption, intimidation and extortion, torture, and staged encounter killings. These allegations are consistent with well-documented patterns of police misconduct and abuse outside the antiterrorism context, deriving from structural problems with the police more generally, and the abuses themselves intersect with the selective and discriminatory applications of the law discussed above.

Despite the extensive procedural protections available to accused individuals under the Indian Constitution and Code of Criminal Procedure, POTA, supra note 9, at 20; see also id. at 33-39 (statement by individuals accused under POTA); id. at 40 (statement by K. Chandru); id. at 202-04 (statement by G.N. Saibaba); Kanhaiah Bhelri, Catch ‘Em Young, The Week, Mar. 16, 2003, http://www.the-week.com/23mar16/events9.htm; Mukul, supra note 178; see Asian Centre for Human Rights, The Status of Children in India 62-69 (Oct. 2003), http://www.achrweb.org/reports/india/crc-rpt.pdf.

187. Charu Sudan Kasturi, Under the Shadow of a Dead Act, THE TELEGRAPH (Kolkata), July 13, 2005, http://www.telegraphindia.com/1050713/asp/ateisure/story_4981971.asp (noting suggestion that number of accused in Gujarat and Maharashtra is disproportionately high because police are “keen to be seen at the forefront of the fight against terror [and] often failed to distinguish between conspirators and normal criminals”).


dure, and the detailed guidelines for police conduct articulated by the Supreme Court of India and the NHRC, human rights groups have reported widespread disregard of the procedural rights afforded to individuals subjected to criminal investigation and prosecution. For example, the rights guaranteed at the time of arrest routinely have been violated for individuals being investigated under POTA. In Gujarat, the police have detained and taken many individuals into custody—in some cases for days or weeks—in connection with pending POTA investigations without formally arresting them, disclosing the basis for detention, or even documenting their custody or interrogation. In fact, the Gujarat police have implicitly acknowledged this practice, noting that they “do not arrest a person as soon as he is detained. We first question him and after we have established his *prima facie* involvement in the crime, he is arrested.”

Individuals frequently have been taken into custody from their homes at night, with overwhelming force and large numbers of officers, and these detentions often have been accompanied by the ransacking of detainees’ homes and intimidation of their family members. When the individuals sought by the police have not been available, the police have instead often taken family members (including minor children and elderly parents) into custody essentially as “hostages,” to induce the individuals of interest to submit to police custody. This practice appears to have been particularly common in Gujarat, but individuals have been detained on similar bases in other states.

Even when individuals have been formally arrested, the rights and guidelines for arrest required by law have routinely been violated. With some frequency, custody memos and other documents recording the arrest have not been prepared, detainees have not been produced before

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190. TERROR OF POTA, supra note 9, at 33, 36-38, 79-83, 169, 171, 182-83, 200 (statements by individuals accused under POTA and family members of accused individuals); id. at 75 (statement by M.A. Vanaja and M.A. Shakeel); id. at 157-66 (statement by Bharat Jhala); id. at 189-90 (statement by Zakia Jowher).


192. AMNESTY INT’L., ABUSE OF THE LAW, supra note 191, at 7. While the police claim to have power under the Code of Criminal Procedure to engage in this practice, no such authority exists. Id. at 7-8.

193. I.e., TERROR OF POTA, supra note 9, at 20; id. at 33-40 (statements by individuals accused under POTA), 159-66 (statement by Bharat Jhala), 188-91 (statement by Zakia Jowher).
magistrates within 24 hours, and family members or friends of the detainees have not been informed of the fact and location of detention, in some cases, for many days. Detainees also have not been given access to counsel or medical examinations—even in the face of court orders requiring such access.194

Considerable evidence also suggests that individuals detained under POTA have been tortured and subjected to cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment while in custody. These reports are consistent with the longstanding and well-documented concern that even in cases unrelated to allegations of terrorism, police in India routinely resort to torture, which has been described as the “principal forensic tool” of the Indian police.195 Reports of torture have been documented throughout India, and have been particularly severe in connection with the POTA cases pending in Gujarat.196 Although individuals have feared retaliation for coming forward with allegations against the police, examples of torture and cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment have been extensively documented, including severe beatings, use of narcoanalysis or “truth serum,” use of electric shocks to the genitals and other parts of the body, and various forms of psychological abuse.

These forms of abuse appear to have been intended in many instances to coerce detainees into confessing or implicating others. In every state which the project participants visited, evidence suggests that the police have often coerced detainees (or in some cases their family members) to sign blank sheets of paper, which later could be filled by the police with a statement confessing or implicating someone else. Some have been forced to read statements while being audiorecorded or to memorize false statements to be recited later before a magistrate. Detainees also have been

194. E.g., Amnesty Int’l, Abuse of the Law, supra note 191, at 13-14; Terror of POTA, supra note 9, at 172, 175 (statements by individuals accused under POTA and family members of accused individuals).


196. Amnesty Int’l, Abuse of the Law, supra note 191, at 11-13; Terror of POTA, supra note 9, at 134 (statement by Mukul Sinha); id. at 159-66 (statement by Bharat Jhala).
forced to cooperate in the creation of fabricated evidence, such as videos of the accused holding weapons in poses directed by the police. If detainees refused to cooperate, the police have threatened further detention or mistreatment of the detainees or their family members—and even have threatened that the detainees or their family members might be killed in staged encounters.197

Oversight by magistrates of police detention and interrogation practices under POTA appears to have been ineffectual in many cases. When detainees have appeared before magistrates, the magistrates have not always scrutinized the circumstances of the individuals’ arrest and detention closely.198 In one instance, a magistrate ordered the police to take a detainee who had been severely tortured to the hospital, but the police ignored that order and returned him to the jail without consequence.199 In other instances, magistrates have been complicit in the mistreatment, either directly intimidating detainees into confessing or, in at least one case, all but explicitly giving the police the green light to torture detainees further to obtain their confession.200

These reports of human rights violations in cases under POTA are consistent with violations that long have been documented by advocates, journalists, and government institutions outside the antiterrorism context. Government institutions have extensively documented torture and other human rights violations by the police, and both the Supreme Court of India and the NHRC have noted with concern the frequency of encounter killings by the police and the evidence that many of these killings have been staged or the result of other police misconduct. In response, both the Court and the NHRC have issued guidelines to be followed by the police to document and properly investigate all such deaths.


198. TERROR OF POTA, supra note 9, at 34, 37 (statements by individuals accused under POTA); id. at 88 (statement by R. Mahadevan); Haksar & Singh, supra note 197 (discussing prosecution of A.R. Geelani, which ultimately led to acquittal by Delhi High Court and Supreme Court of India, for conspiracy in 2001 Parliament attack case).

199. TERROR OF POTA, supra note 9, at 172 (statement by family member of individual accused under POTA).

200. Id. at 178-79 (statement by individual accused under POTA); id. at 190 (statement by Zakia Jowher); Azim Khan, Gujarat: Four Years After the Genocide, COUNTERCURRENTS.ORG, Feb. 25, 2006, http://www.countercurrents.org/comm-azimkhan250206.htm.
C. “Back Door” Preventive Detention

While India has several different laws explicitly and directly authorizing preventive detention, in some respects both TADA and POTA, too, have functioned primarily as preventive detention laws. In each state visited by the project participants, prolonged detention without charge or trial appeared to be the norm, rather than the carefully limited exception. Indeed, as discussed above, both TADA and POTA explicitly facilitated this pattern with their exceedingly stringent standards for obtaining bail, on the one hand, and their relaxed procedural rules and time limits governing pretrial police investigations, on the other. Accordingly, many individuals have been detained under POTA throughout the six month period within which the police may conduct its investigation and then simply released without charge upon the deadline for filing a charge sheet.201 For individuals who ultimately have been charged, examples of prolonged detention without bail beyond the six month period have been found throughout the country.

- In the Tamil Nadu cases involving leaders of the TNM, each defendant was detained without bail for at least 16 months. Although arrested in Chennai, and despite a judge’s order to the contrary, some defendants were separately jailed in other cities. The defendants eventually were granted bail on the condition that they surrender their passports and not leave Chennai, speak to the media, or address public meetings.202

- Vaiko, the MDMK member of Parliament charged in Tamil Nadu, was detained without bail for approximately 19 months. His appeals for bail, which were opposed by the state prosecutor, were finally granted by the Madras High Court in 2004.203

- Among those individuals formally arrested in Gujarat under POTA, a large number have been refused bail, even after becoming eligible for the normal bail standard after one year in jail.

201. For example, approximately 25 percent of the 76,000 individuals arrested under TADA were released by the police without ever being charged. See supra note 81.

202. TERROR OF POTA, supra note 9, at 51 (statement by K. Chandru); see supra subsections V.A.3. Ironically, the bail conditions were more stringent than the circumstances of their detention, which permitted them to give interviews while in transit to and from court and to write letters from jail. TERROR OF POTA, supra note 9, at 51.

203. Id. at 42-45 (statement by individual accused under POTA). During his detention, Vaiko, who actually had voted in Parliament to enact POTA, was denied a request for an adjournment by the trial and appellate courts to travel to Delhi to participate in parliamentary debates on amending POTA. Id.
As of August 2004, 172 individuals charged under POTA were in jail, while only 17 had been released on bail.\textsuperscript{204} Detention for close to two years appears to have been routine.

\begin{itemize}
    \item In other states, the percentages of POTA defendants released on bail also have been low. For example, as of August 2004, only 11 of the 88 POTA accused in Maharashtra, 5 of the 36 POTA accused in Andhra Pradesh, 1 of the 29 POTA accused in Uttar Pradesh, and none of the 48 POTA accused in Delhi had been released on bail.\textsuperscript{205}
\end{itemize}

The use of criminal antiterrorism laws in this fashion is simultaneously troubling and counterintuitive. Over forty years ago, David Bayley noted that the availability of preventive detention under Indian law was a tempting potential source of government abuse, since at least conceptually, it usually would be easier to obtain a preventive detention order, with its lower evidentiary standard and burden of proof, than a criminal conviction, which requires a full-blown trial and proof of guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. “Preventive detention is sure,” noted Bayley, while “conviction is uncertain and time-consuming.”\textsuperscript{206}

In practice, however, the experience under both TADA and POTA show that if the police are not primarily concerned with obtaining convictions—and in the absence of meaningful oversight and scrutiny at the outset of an investigation and throughout its duration—pretrial detention under criminal antiterrorism laws can serve as a “back door,” functional equivalent to preventive detention, but without even the limited procedural protections that the Constitution requires for preventive detention laws. The limited statistics available concerning POTA’s use suggest a pattern similar to the patterns that prevailed under TADA. Conviction rates under POTA have been very low, and the number of cases withdrawn for lack of evidence has been quite high.\textsuperscript{207}

\textsuperscript{204} Tikku, \textit{supra} note 188; see also TERROR OF POTA, \textit{supra} note 9, at 151 (statement by Mukul Sinha) (noting that only one of the 75 accused in Godhra case was released on bail, while most of those accused of post-Godhra anti-Muslim violence were released on bail).

\textsuperscript{205} Tikku, \textit{supra} note 188.


\textsuperscript{207} See Kasturi, \textit{supra} note 187 (noting high rate of withdrawal of POTA cases for lack of evidence and low numbers of cases that actually have gone to trial). There are indications that
Indeed, some officials have candidly acknowledged the role played by TADA and POTA in enabling preventive detention. As noted above, one senior police official openly described the police’s sequential use of the NSA and TADA in Punjab during the 1980s, which effectively extended the overall period of preventive detention beyond what the law authorized. More recently, R.K. Raghavan, a former senior police officer, has argued that the impact of laws such as TADA is more on prevention than on detection. It will be unfair to go merely by statistics of failures in court. We will never know, even in a setting of high terrorist crime, how many offences have in fact been deterred by the greater discretion and freedom of field operations that the police enjoy under enactments such as POTO.

In Gujarat, where very few individuals accused under POTA have been released, a police official admitted that POTA in part had been used against the Godhra accused “to forestall the possibility of more of the accused obtaining bail,” as would have been possible under ordinary criminal laws.

The near-certainty of pretrial detention under TADA and POTA has been aided by what one Indian lawyer terms the “fear psychosis” surrounding antiterrorism legislation. The stigma associated with “terrorism”-related charges often is enough to intimidate some judges from sufficiently protecting the rights of the accused, particularly when it comes to release from detention. This phenomenon may be particularly pronounced in bail applications presented to the special courts, whose independence is compromised by the manner in which they are constituted. But as this same lawyer has suggested, even bail applications before the High Courts have been prejudiced in this fashion:

Today the judiciary is under extreme tension to deal with any

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208. See supra section IV.A.


POTA case. In fact, our bail applications went before at least three Division Benches [of the Madras High Court]. Each Division Bench excused itself from hearing the case. They thought hearing the case also amounted to supporting POTA or POTA detenues. We have put in a great deal of effort to persuade the High Court judges to hear the case. It took six months to hear ordinary bail applications. With every case of POTA, there is greater amount of reluctance on the part of the members of the judiciary even to hear them. ... So while the Act must be repealed we have to deal with the fear psychosis surrounding such legislation.211

Given the susceptibility of laws like TADA and POTA to misuse, Fali Nariman, a prominent Indian lawyer and member of Parliament, has gone so far as to suggest that even the limited safeguards available under Indian preventive detention laws might be “better” than criminal laws like POTA, at least if the post-Emergency constitutional amendments concerning preventive detention are implemented. Nariman argues that with preventive detention, the police have fewer incentives to torture detainees than in criminal investigations, since they need not “secure a confession to be proved at a trial,” and that because the post-Emergency amendments require Advisory Board members to be current High Court judges, “[t]he confidence of the public in the established courts [would be] a safeguard against abuse.”212

Nariman’s comments are striking, since India’s preventive detention laws have been widely abused—most obviously during the Emergency, but also during non-emergency periods—and have continued to be criticized as inconsistent with international human rights norms.213 Absent proper

211. Terror of POTA, supra note 9, at 56-57, 63 (statement by K. Chandru).

212. Nariman, supra note 206. On the post-Emergency constitutional amendments concerning preventive detention, see supra section III.C.

derogation from applicable treaties and sufficient procedural protections, India’s use of preventive detention may not be appropriate or consistent with human rights norms. As discussed earlier, India neither has purported to derogate from its obligations under the ICCPR nor explained its failure to do so, and a number of fundamental rights implicated by preventive detention are nonderogable in any event. However, as Nariman’s comments suggest, and as the documented experience in India confirms, the conventional view favoring criminal antiterrorism laws over preventive detention laws may not be warranted unless there are sufficient safeguards against prolonged—and effectively preventive—pretrial detention pending trial. As with TADA, for the vast majority of people detained under POTA no conviction may be necessary for the objectives of the police to be realized. In the words of Rajeev Dhavan, “[t]he process is the punishment.”

The restoration with POTA’s repeal of the normal bail standard under ordinary law is an important step in limiting the potential for pretrial detention under the criminal laws from being used as an end run around the constitutional limits on preventive detention. However, several central and state laws, including the NSA, continue to authorize preventive detention, and these laws should be scrutinized closely to assess whether reforms might be necessary to address the human rights concerns that critics have identified.

**D. Threats and Intimidation Against Lawyers**

There also has been evidence of threats and intimidation against lawyers and human rights defenders who have sought to document human rights violations under POTA and defend individuals who have been detained or charged under the law. Under the U.N. Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, states have an obligation to ensure lawyers are able to perform their professional roles free from intimidation or other improper interference and to “adequately safeguard[]” them when their security is threatened. While lawyers with whom the project participants met disagreed on the extent to which they or their colleagues have been threatened or abused, in Gujarat, in particular, several lawyers agreed with the assessment of one human rights organization that “harassment and intimidation of human rights defenders working with members of the Muslim

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214. SAHRDC, Preventive Detention, supra note 213, at 7-14; see supra section II.B.
216. U.N. Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, supra note 42, ¶¶ 16-17.
community in the state appears to be widespread.” 217 Lawyers representing Muslims accused in the Godhra case have faced threats and intimidation for doing so, and Muslim lawyers in Gujarat have largely withdrawn altogether from representing individuals accused under POTA because of these threats. Intimidation and pressure also has come from other lawyers. In Gujarat, a resolution considered by one of the lower court bar associations strongly discouraged attorneys from representing any Muslims charged in the Godhra case. As a result of these formal and informal pressures, the same small handful of lawyers—including lawyers from outside the state altogether—have tended to represent almost all of individuals accused under POTA in Gujarat. 218

Similarly, in the prosecution under POTA of four individuals charged with involvement in the 2001 attack on the Indian Parliament building—the first major prosecution under POTA—many lawyers were initially reluctant to represent the defendants at all, out of an unwillingness to be associated with the case. 219 While an All-India Defense Committee to support one defendant, S.A.R. Geelani, ultimately drew support from many prominent Indian citizens, the level of intimidation and prejudicial media coverage associated with the case was very high. Indeed, Geelani, who was acquitted by the Delhi High Court, was shot and seriously injured in February 2005 outside his lawyer’s home and office, as he arrived to meet with her to discuss the government’s then-pending appeal of his acquittal to the Supreme Court of India. 220

These accounts are consistent with reports documenting similar and

217. AMNESTY INT’L, ABUSE OF THE LAW, supra note 191, at 3 & n.6.


219. Haksar & Singh, supra note 197. While all four defendants were convicted by the POTA special court, two were acquitted by the Delhi High Court. The Supreme Court sustained those acquittals and reduced the death sentence of a third defendant to 10 years’ imprisonment. See generally 13 DECEMBER: THE STRANGE CASE OF THE ATTACK ON THE INDIAN PARLIAMENT—A READER (Penguin Books ed. 2006).

worse incidents. While human rights defenders generally operate freely in India, there also have regularly been serious incidents in which particular human rights defenders have been threatened, intimidated, and in some cases even killed for their work, particularly in areas where social conflict has been intense. However, as it has with other special representatives and rapporteurs within the U.N. system, India has tended to avoid international engagement on the subject of human rights defenders, repeatedly declining to invite the U.N. Secretary General’s Special Representative on Human Rights Defenders to visit the country or to respond to most of her inquiries for information about alleged incidents involving human rights defenders.

VI. STRUCTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

As in any country, full protection of human rights in India’s campaign against terrorism cannot be realized by focusing exclusively on “special” laws, like TADA and POTA, without attention to the broader legal and institutional context in which those laws are situated. Even when special laws create a distinct set of mechanisms and procedural rules, those regimes typically do not operate in a complete vacuum, but rather draw upon the same institutions—police, prosecution, judiciary—used to fight any serious crimes. Accordingly, to the extent that these institutions fail to sufficiently protect human rights when enforcing the ordinary criminal laws, they are certainly no more likely to protect those rights in the


Moreover, the very existence of these special laws stems from real and perceived problems concerning the effectiveness of the regular criminal justice system itself, which create intense pressures to take particular offenses outside of that system. At one level, these pressures are understandable, for there is no question that India faces challenges in its criminal justice system that, in the words of one observer, rise to a “crisis of legitimacy.” By removing offenses deemed “too important” to relegate to the regular criminal justice system—including, but not limited to, terrorism-related offenses—special laws seek to ensure that these offenses will be investigated, prosecuted, and adjudicated more effectively and attempt to restore a sense of legitimacy in their adjudication. For terrorism-related offenses, in particular, the use of special courts and procedural rules ostensibly bypasses the inefficiencies and backlogs in the regular judiciary and provides a set of procedural rules designed specifically to deal with the distinctive problems presumed to exist in terrorism-related cases. In the process, the use of special laws also conveys a social and political message about the importance of those offenses.

At the same time, however, these special laws have invariably constituted an incomplete response to this crisis of legitimacy, focusing exclusively on procedural efficiency, in the form of relaxed rules for the government, without also ensuring that human rights are adequately protected and violations meaningfully remedied—which also are vital to restoring and maintaining the legitimacy of criminal law adjudication. As both the low conviction rates under TADA and POTA and the persistence of terrorism suggest, the relaxation of procedural rules in the government’s favor has not necessarily ensured that the system operate more effectively in prosecuting and bringing individuals involved with terrorism to justice.

223. See, e.g., TERROR OF POTA, supra note 9, at 113 (statement by Nitya Ramakrishnan) (noting the “crusading spirit that institutions adopt” when prosecuting antiterrorism cases, which causes “a slow but sure closing of the Indian mind on issues of investigative accountability”).


225. See Ramanathan, supra note 224; Krishnan, supra note 121, at 280-81. As the Law Commission noted when proposing POTA, the sole reason for the creation of special courts was the “anxiety to have these cases disposed of expeditiously.” LAW COMM’N OF INDIA, 173RD REPORT ON PREVENTION OF TERRORISM BILL, 2000, ch. 6 (2000).

226. See supra notes 4-5.
The use of special laws in India, therefore, presents a dilemma. Without efforts to reform the police and criminal justice system more generally, the pressures to bypass the regular system of justice through the enactment of special laws will persist in any category of cases deemed sufficiently “important.” At the same time, the use of special laws may itself reduce the political will to engage in the arduous, long-term effort to realize broader reforms, which are necessary to increase both the effectiveness of the criminal justice system and the overall level of human rights protection. Moreover, in most instances these special laws have replicated or intensified the human rights concerns that are present within the regular system, thereby compromising the system’s legitimacy. To fully address the human rights issues arising from India’s special laws against terrorism, therefore, it is essential also to consider ways to improve and reform the police and criminal justice system more generally, both to ensure that human rights are more adequately protected and remedied and to alleviate the pressures to enact special laws that result from the underlying weaknesses within the regular criminal justice system.

**A. Police Reform**

Individuals and organizations across a broad spectrum—including citizens groups, members of the public, nongovernmental organizations, government commissions, police officials themselves, and even senior members of both the BJP and the Congress Party—have recognized the need to reform the Indian police, which is still governed by the 145-year-old framework established by the British. Indeed, while the need for reform has only become more acute, as the police have become more powerful, more politicized, and less accountable, meaningful reform has proven complicated and elusive. Although central and state police commissions were established soon after independence to study possible changes to the inherited colonial institutions, the work of these commissions did not lead to meaningful reforms. Only in the aftermath of the Emergency did police reform enter the political agenda in any serious way, as two government commissions, the Shah Commission and National Police Commission, documented and examined abuses by the police in some detail. Though its deliberations took place largely in private, the NPC issued eight reports between 1979 and 1981 proposing an extensive array of reforms.

The NPC’s work quickly was brought to an end after the return of Indira Gandhi to power in 1980, and more recent reform efforts have

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moved haltingly. Because police matters are a state subject, the ability of
the central government to realize meaningful reform invariably faces sig-
nificant structural and political challenges. Nevertheless, during the past
year the central government has initiated what appears to be a serious
effort to replace the Police Act of 1861 and implement significant reform
to the police in India.228 Despite the failure as yet of many recent reform
efforts to take hold, the work of these many government commissions
and of various NGOs has generated some consensus on the ways in which
policing in India today falls short of sufficiently embodying democratic
principles.

1. Arbitrary, Politicized, and Discriminatory Police Decision-Making

Police decision-making in India has long been arbitrary and politi-
cized and has become more deeply so since independence. Under the 1861
act, the state executive is responsible for “superintendence” of the police.
The director of the state police serves at the pleasure of the chief minister
and rank and file officers are subject to extensive political pressure. Through
this politicized superintendence, political actors have frequently inter-
fered with the police’s functional operations, including basic investiga-
tive decisions. For example, politicians frequently have pressured the po-
lice to target political opponents in their investigations while simulta-
neously protecting their friends and allies. In other instances, politicians
have pressured the police to make functional decisions designed to ma-
nipulate crime statistics in favorable ways. Police officials who resist these
political pressures routinely face arbitrary and punitive transfers, disci-
plinary actions, or even fabricated legal proceedings.229

Observers have long regarded this politicization of decision-making
as the fundamental issue to be addressed in seeking to reform the police.
Accordingly, the most widely invoked of the NPC’s proposals in the years
since they were first proposed have tended to be those elements intended
to eliminate this improper political interference. These proposals include

228. See Madhav Godbole, Police Reforms: Pandora’s Box No One Wants to Open, ECON. &

229. MA JARAWALA, ET AL., COMMONWEALTH HUMAN RIGHTS INITIATIVE, POLICE ACT, 1861: WHY WE NEED TO
(discussing problem of illegitimate political interference with police decision-making); R.K.
fl1825/18251060.htm (arguing that the “enormous discretion [of] the political executive . . .
in planning an IPS officer’s career progression” contributes to “lack of courage and a readiness
to buckle under political pressure”). As discussed earlier, corruption and communalism are
significant problems within the police forces as well. See supra Part V.
the establishment of a statutory, state security commission in each state to exercise superintendence over the police and the establishment of a fixed, four-year tenure of office for the state director-general of police, who would be selected from a panel of three senior police officials from within the state police force. Eliminating political interference in functional decision-making is indeed a critically important objective. In implementing measures to advance that goal, however, it will be important to ensure that democratic accountability of the police is preserved—that the police bureaucracy does not become so insulated and autonomous that it is able to act with impunity.230

In addition to political interference, the police also suffer from the distinct, longstanding problem of corruption at both the subordinate and senior levels.231 While corruption is a problem that plagues many institutions in India, research by one NGO has concluded that the Indian public regards the police as the most corrupt institution in the country.232 At the lower and intermediate levels of the police hierarchy, officers frequently abuse their power by extorting money from complainants, witnesses, defendants, and other members of the public. While corruption traditionally has been less prevalent at more senior levels, bribery and extortion among senior officers nevertheless remains an increasing problem. As one former senior police official has suggested, the widespread acceptance within the Indian police of the notion that significant personal “perks” may legitimately be conferred upon senior police officials at public expense. This legacy of the colonial period has institutionally embedded and reinforced corruption as part of the organizational culture and supervision practices of the Indian police.233

In many contexts, Dalit, other lower caste, tribal, and religious minority communities disproportionately suffer the effects of this politi-


cized and corrupt police decision-making. As advocates have long noted, police institutions frequently embody the same religious and caste-based inequalities found in society at-large, failing to protect vulnerable communities from abuses at the hands of private actors, failing to investigate or prosecute those private actors, and in some cases directly perpetrating abuses against those communities. To help overcome this increasingly institutionalized communalism and casteism, further steps may be necessary to end discrimination and increase diversity within the police forces, as the NPC recommended.234

2. Accountability for Human Rights Violations

Few effective mechanisms exist to ensure police accountability for human rights violations and other misconduct. Internal oversight and accountability mechanisms tend not to be effective. Under state and central police laws, senior officers may dismiss, suspend, or reduce the rank of lower-ranked police officers who are negligent or unfit in the exercise of their duties or have committed one of several enumerated offenses.235 However, the offenses that subject officers to discipline tend to involve violations of superior officers’ command authority, rather than violations of human rights standards.236 Disciplinary procedures are complicated, time-consuming, and subject to political interference. Moreover, police are often loath to investigate vigorously allegations of misconduct by their colleagues, seeking to avoid drawing negative attention to the police as an institution.237

External remedies are also difficult to pursue. Human rights violations often are not actionable under the criminal law, and in any event, the Code of Criminal Procedure requires prior government authorization, which is rarely forthcoming, before criminal proceedings may be initiated against any government official. In the few instances in which criminal


236. See Police Act of 1861, § 33; Joshi, supra note 235, at 11. This command authority-oriented approach to internal discipline derives in part from the colonial decision to make police officers accountable to local district magistrates, who in turn were accountable to the British. Verma, supra note 18.

237. Joshi, supra note 235, at 12.
charges have been brought, convictions have been few and sentences short.238 Individuals whose fundamental rights under the Constitution have been violated may seek compensation and prospective relief from the Supreme Court or a High Court by filing a writ petition.239 While the Supreme Court and the High Courts have ordered compensation in many cases and repeatedly criticized law enforcement officials for failing to take appropriate steps to curb human rights abuses by the government, these remedies have proven largely ineffectual.240 When the Supreme Court and High Courts have ordered investigations of alleged abuses arising in cases already before them, investigators and prosecutors have frequently disregarded those orders.241 This reluctance to investigate and prosecute appears to result in part from embedded conflicts of interest, since police and prosecutors in effect are expected to investigate and prosecute their colleagues, and in part from an attitude among law enforcement and security officials that torture, illegal detention, and related practices are tolerable and indeed necessary tools in combating crime and terrorism.242

The process of seeking remedies from the Supreme Court and High Courts is also beyond the means of many victims. Even with the assistance of counsel, the time and travel necessary limit the ability to seek recourse from the higher judiciary. When combined with the prevalence of attacks on and violent intimidation of victims, witnesses, and human rights attorneys and activists, many victims are unable or unwilling to pursue these remedies.243

Finally, the NHRC and state human rights commissions offer limited recourse for victims of human rights abuses.244 While the NHRC has lob-
bied the government and suggested reforms to end torture by police and security forces, ensure accountability for violations, and encourage reparation and compensation for victims in individual cases, its recommendations often have been disregarded, particularly when it has recommended prosecution of government officials. Moreover, the NHRC and state human rights commissions have many competing human rights responsibilities other than police oversight.

The NPC’s recommendations did not directly address the issue of accountability—the state security commissions proposed by the NPC instead emphasized oversight of police functioning and performance. Any current reform proposals should seek to upgrade the full range of mechanisms by which the police and other government officials may be held accountable, in order to fulfill the obligation under the ICCPR to provide meaningful and effective remedies for rights violations.

B. Effectiveness and Professional Capacity of the Criminal Justice System

Structural reform efforts also must seek to upgrade the overall capacity of the criminal justice system. Conviction rates for individuals arrested by the state police forces have been consistently and dramatically falling since independence. While the conviction rate in ordinary cases under the Indian Penal Code was 64.8 percent in 1961, it has subsequently fallen to 62.0 percent in 1971, 52.5 percent in 1981, 47.8 percent in 1991, and 42.5 percent in 2004. Certainly, reforms should seek to improve these conviction rates, since the government should not prosecute individuals without sufficient evidence to support a conviction. At the same time, simply increasing conviction rates will not ensure the overall effectiveness of reform. Rather, reformers must also seek to improve the reliability of the criminal process, so that the public may be confident that individuals who are investigated, prosecuted, and convicted are, in fact, guilty of the offenses with which they have been charged.

245. REDRESS TRUST, supra note 243, at 5.
246. ICCPR art. 2; see U.N. Basic Principles on the Right to a Remedy, supra note 42, ¶¶ 19-23.
247. MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS, NATIONAL CRIME RECORDS BUREAU, CRIME IN INDIA 2004, at 192 (2005). As noted above, the conviction rates under special antiterrorism laws such as TADA and POTA have been considerably lower. See supra sections IV.A. & V.C.
248. C italic Shantonu Sen, A System In Need of Change, SEMINAR, June 1995, at 35 (while police are “results-oriented” and therefore focused on obtaining convictions, “police chiefs have a greater responsibility to scrutinize the way results are achieved”). In the United States, these
As the NHRC and others frequently have noted, improving the overall effectiveness of the criminal justice system to prosecute terrorism and other serious crimes requires attention to all three stages of the criminal justice process: investigation, prosecution, and adjudication. First, improving the effectiveness of police investigation requires a serious investment and commitment to strengthen their overall professionalism and capacity to do their jobs. Especially when fighting serious crime, the police endure tremendous burdens and serious dangers in their work, and are not particularly well compensated. At the same time, as discussed above, the police are frequently hindered in their work by political interference. As a result, morale among the police is low, and this low morale is exacerbated by the wide mistrust of the police within the Indian public at large.

Investigative procedures and mechanisms under Indian law have not significantly changed since the 19th century. With limited ability to collect, preserve, and analyze physical evidence, investigations proceed very slowly. The police rely disproportionately on witness statements, which increases the incentive to engage in coercive interrogation practices. As Indian observers have noted, attention needs to be devoted to training, the development of advanced forensic skills and facilities, and the separation within the police of responsibility for conducting investigations from the day-to-day responsibilities for maintaining law and order.

Second, the quality and independence of the prosecution needs to be enhanced. The NHRC has expressed concern that for terrorism cases, in particular, more experienced prosecutors need to be appointed in order to ensure that cases are prosecuted more effectively, and the quality of the prosecution may indeed be one factor contributing to the failure to successfully obtain convictions in many cases. There also are indications principles are advanced in part through guidelines for federal prosecutors providing that, “as a matter of fundamental fairness and in the interest of the efficient administration of justice, no prosecution should be initiated against any person unless the government believes that the person probably will be found guilty by an unbiased trier of fact,” based on a reasonable belief that admissible evidence “sufficient to obtain and sustain a conviction” is available.


that the numbers of prosecutors are insufficient to handle the large volume of pending cases. But the need to reform the prosecution extends much further, requiring more effective guarantees of prosecutorial independence from the police and politicians in all criminal cases.\(^{252}\) During the colonial period and for many years after independence, criminal cases generally were prosecuted by the police, not an independent cadre of lawyers. As Arvind Verma, a professor and former senior police official, has noted, this lack of prosecutorial independence is itself a vestige of colonialism, under which most prosecuting attorneys, who were Indian, were subordinate to senior police officers, who were British.\(^{253}\)

Since independence, the Law Commission and Supreme Court have repeatedly emphasized the importance of ensuring prosecutorial independence from the police. However, in many states this separation does not exist, at least in practice if not formally.\(^{254}\) Recent amendments to the Code of Criminal Procedure now formally authorize the states to establish separate Directorates of Prosecution within their home departments. However, the states are not required to do so, and the new provisions do not specify any guidelines to ensure the independence of these directorates. Indeed, some Indian observers have raised concerns that by placing the prosecution under the aegis of the home departments, the amendments might further compromise, rather than enhance, prosecutorial independence from the police.\(^{255}\) Especially given the vital potential role that prosecutors can play in either resisting or exacerbating police abuses, further reforms likely will be necessary to ensure both meaningful independence and accountability for prosecutors.\(^{256}\)

251. NHRC, Opinion Regarding Prevention of Terrorism Bill, supra note 250. In cases involving terrorism and other serious crimes, the inability to protect witnesses from intimidation may be another factor.


254. Id. at 268 ("[T]he decision to send any case for trial is . . . that of the superintendent [of police] and prosecutors have little control over the cases sent for trial.").


256. E.g., Sen, supra note 248, at 35; see generally Bikram Jeet Batra, Public Prosecution – In
Finally, reform efforts must seek to improve the capacity of the Indian judiciary itself. Without question, the Indian judiciary has played a critical role since independence in advancing and defending India’s commitment to the rule of law and its constitutional values. However, it has done so under tremendous pressures and resource constraints, particularly at the subordinate court levels. In 1986, Justice P.N. Bhagwati of the Supreme Court of India declared that the Indian judiciary was “on the verge of collapse,” crushed by a backlog of cases that was undermining the legitimacy of the justice system. Twenty years later, the situation has only become more severe.

One dimension of the problem involves basic numbers. The Indian judiciary has only 10.5 judges per million citizens, compared to 41.6 per million in Australia, 50.9 per million in the United Kingdom, 75.2 per million in Canada, and 107.0 per million in the United States. Case load statistics reflect these disparities. At the end of 2005, the subordinate courts had over 25 million pending cases, of which approximately 18 million were criminal cases. Large backlogs contribute to extensive delays in adjudication, increases in litigation costs, loss or diminished reliability of evidence by the time of trial, unevenness and inconsistency in the verdicts that ultimately are reached at trial, and an attendant reduction of faith in the justice system among members of the public. The consequences are particularly severe for the large numbers of “undertrials” who languish in prolonged periods of detention while awaiting trial—in some
cases, even beyond the maximum periods to which they could be sentenced if convicted.262

Perhaps to an even greater extent than with police reform, both the government and the Supreme Court have been active in recent years in raising the profile of judicial reform as an issue.263 Meaningful reform will require significant investments to increase the numbers of judges, upgrade and expand courtrooms and other facilities, and implement methods to improve judicial efficiency and productivity through, for example, increased use of technology and improved case management techniques.

Some initiatives already are being implemented. For example, recent legislation has provided for the potential release of thousands of individuals who have subject to prolonged detention pending trial and, for the first time, has introduced the concept of plea bargaining into the Indian criminal justice system for certain offenses carrying maximum potential sentences of less than seven years.264 Other proposals would expand the use of “fast track” courts and alternative tribunals for certain offenses, hire ad hoc judges and establish “double shifts” for sitting judges, and implement various procedural mechanisms to reduce delays, such as limits on interlocutory appeals and the use of pretrial hearings to narrow issues to be litigated. Senior government officials and members of the higher judiciary also have recognized the need to address the problem of corruption and to improve training for judges and judicial staff and the quality of adjudication, particularly in the subordinate courts—in part by considering the establishment of an all-India judicial service to staff the subordinate courts.265

These efforts to find ways to promote greater efficiency in adjudication are entirely appropriate given the challenges faced by the Indian

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265. Sabharwal, supra note 260; Singh, Sep. 18, 2004 Speech, supra note 263.
judicial system. At the same time, the challenge of managing this burgeoning caseload simultaneously heightens the need for caution and attentiveness to procedural protections. As we have witnessed in the United States, in the context of the Justice Department’s recent efforts to clear heavy backlogs in administrative adjudication of immigration cases, streamlined justice can compromise the quality of adjudication and create opportunities for improper political influence—indeed, one prominent federal judge has criticized the quality of adjudication as having “fallen below the minimum standards of legal justice.”

Similar risks appear present in India’s initiatives to streamline the administration of justice. While plea bargaining can help to reduce delays by facilitating earlier disposition of criminal cases in which the defendants do not contest their guilt and, in some instances, cooperation against more culpable defendants, it is important that any system of plea bargaining be regulated and subject to procedural safeguards.

Past efforts to use alternative or informal adjudication in India also have not been entirely successful either in ensuring efficiency or fully protecting the legal rights of Indian citizens, and it will be important to understand the limitations of those efforts when more broadly seeking to rely upon institutions such as “fast track” courts to adjudicate criminal cases.


267. See, e.g., Human Rights Documentation Centre, In the Name of Malimath: Bill On Plea-Bargaining Seeks to Subvert Justice, HUMAN RIGHTS FEATURES, HRF/88/03, http://www.hrdc.net/sahrdc/hrfeatures/HRF88.htm (Nov. 30, 2003) [hereinafter HRF, In the Name of Malimath]. Under federal law in the United States, acceptance of guilty pleas is regulated by the Constitution’s due process guarantees and by provisions of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure which require the judge to ensure that the plea is voluntary and has a sufficient factual basis and confers broad discretion upon the judge to accept or reject the plea. See FED. R. CRIM. P. 11.

While some prominent proposals—most notably those suggested by the committee chaired by Justice V.S. Malimath—would seek to streamline the administration of criminal justice simply by making it easier for the police and prosecution to obtain convictions, such an approach would be mistaken. \(^{269}\) It fails to recognize that the limitations in the current system stem from a comprehensive set of challenges involve the very capacity of India's institutions to investigate, prosecute and adjudicate criminal cases effectively. As such, real progress likely will come not through procedural “short cuts” designed to help the police obtain more convictions in the short term, but rather through a comprehensive approach to institutional capacity-building. While this approach may take an extended period of time to realize, it is an approach to which many Indian officials and other citizens appear sincerely committed.

**VII. ROLE OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY**

While recent debate over India's antiterrorism laws has been shaped principally by a domestic political context which has evolved over many decades, that debate has not taken place in an international vacuum. Rather, especially in the aftermath of the September 2001 terrorist attacks, the debate in India has been influenced significantly by the antiterrorism initiatives of other countries, including the United States, and the U.N. Security Council, for which the United States and United Kingdom have been driving forces.

**A. Resolution 1373 and the Counter-Terrorism Committee**

Within weeks after the September 2001 terrorist attacks, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1373 pursuant to Chapter VII of the U.N. Charter, which authorizes the Council to take measures “to maintain or restore international peace and security” in response to any “threat[s] to the peace, breach[es] of the peace, or act[s] of aggression”—and to mandate, rather than simply to call for, compliance by member states. \(^{270}\) Resolution 1373, which was sponsored by the United States, represents a sweeping use of the Council's

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269. See [Malimath Committee Report, supra note 255](background_papers/galanter%20krishnan.pdf) (discussing informal adjudication mechanisms for civil disputes).


Finding that the September 2001 terrorist attacks constituted “a threat to international peace and security,” Resolution 1373 requires member states, among other things, to prevent and criminalize the financing or collection of funds for “terrorist acts,” to freeze assets or resources of persons who commit or are involved in the commission of terrorist acts, to prohibit the making of any assets, resources, or services available to persons who commit or are involved in the commission of terrorist acts, to bring to justice any persons who commit or are involved in financing, planning, preparing, or supporting “terrorist acts,” and to legislate separate, “serious criminal offenses” proscribing “terrorist acts” under domestic law.\footnote{272}{Resolution 1373 also “calls upon” states to become parties to the twelve existing international conventions and protocols concerning terrorism, to fully implement those agreements and previous Security Council resolutions addressing terrorism, to improve border security, and to exchange information with and provide judicial assistance to other member states in terrorism-related criminal proceedings.}


To monitor states’ implementation and compliance, Resolution 1373 established the Counter-Terrorism Committee, a standing committee composed of all fifteen Council members. The resolution called upon states to report their progress towards implementation to the CTC within 90 days and periodically thereafter. The resolution did not elaborate further upon the CTC’s mandate, leaving the CTC itself to define its agenda and approach to implementation.\footnote{274}{To date, the CTC has emphasized cooperation with states to build their capacity and infrastructure to combat terrorism, rather than singling out countries for non-compliance. Rosand, supra note 271, at 335.}
resolution seriously. Compliance with the resolution’s reporting requirements has been higher than with previous Security Council mandates, and states also have responded positively to the CTC’s effort to encourage ratification of existing international antiterrorism conventions and protocols.\[275\]

B. Indian Antiterrorism Laws and Resolution 1373

Since its adoption, Resolution 1373 has played a significant role in helping to frame the debate over antiterrorism laws in India. In the earliest debates in 2001 and 2002 over the bill that ultimately became POTA, proponents repeatedly invoked the resolution to argue that the bill was not simply justified, but required under international law. After POTO was promulgated in 2001, for example, the Home Secretary publicly stated that the ordinance “implements in part the obligation on member states imposed” by Resolution 1373.\[276\]

News reports and commentary also were attuned to the obligatory nature of Resolution 1373’s Chapter VII requirements, at times incorrectly suggesting that all of POTA’s provisions were necessary to comply with the Security Council’s mandate. Some media reports stated that because the resolution “makes it mandatory” for member states to help combat terrorism, enactment of comprehensive antiterrorism legislation would be “vital for the government to fulfill its international commitments.”\[277\] Editorial commentators asserted this imperative even more strongly. A retired army officer, for example, asserted that because all states are “required by ... Resolution 1373 to promulgate anti-terrorism laws within 90 days and report completion to the secretary general[,] POTO need not ... be made such a big political issue.”\[278\]

275. All 191 U.N. member states submitted initial reports documenting their efforts to comply with the resolution, with 160 states doing so within nine months of the resolution’s adoption. States have responded positively to the CTC’s requests for follow-up reports, submitting a total of well over 600 reports as of 2006.


Resolution 1373 also played a prominent role in parliamentary debates leading to the enactment of POTA. Upon introducing the bill in Parliament, the Home Minister, L.K. Advani, asserted that the Council’s adoption of the resolution prompted the government to conclude it was India’s “duty to the international community ... to pass [POTA].” Similarly, former Law Minister Ram Jethmalani—who later repudiated his support of POTA altogether—suggested that the government had been obliged to promulgate POTO in order to comply with the Security Council’s mandate to enact “suitable legislation” to combat terrorism. If Parliament failed to enact POTA, Jethmalani continued, India “would stand exposed before the comity of Nations” and would be “guilty of breach of [its] international obligations.”

Other members of Parliament made similar suggestions. Indeed, at least one of the bill’s opponents accepted the contention that POTA was required by Resolution 1373, arguing that the bill should be rejected in spite of any such obligation. The NHRC also has been acutely aware of India’s obligation to comply with the resolution, noting the “complexity


281. Rajya Sabha Debate, Mar. 21, 2002, http://rajyasabha.nic.in/rsdebate/deb_ndx/195/ 21032002/4to5.htm (statement of Ram Jethmalani) (“[W]hen [POTO] was issued it was in compliance with our obligations under international law and ... our obligations as a Member of the [United Nations]”); see also Lok Sabha Debate, Mar. 18, 2002 (statement of L.K. Advani), supra note 279 (“When the Security Council passed this Resolution in September 2001, shortly after that, the Government thought it proper to bring an Ordinance, which we call POTO.”).

282. Rajya Sabha Debate, Mar. 21, 2002, supra note 281 (statement of Ram Jethmalani). Indeed, even after renouncing his prior support for POTA, Jethmalani attributed his support almost entirely to his perception that POTA was necessary for India to comply with Resolution 1373. Jethmalani, supra note 280.


of protecting human rights in the new international climate prevailing since 11 September 2001 and the adoption of [Resolution 1373].”

This public discourse within India about the significance of Resolution 1373 also affected the later adjudication of POTA’s legality before the courts. In upholding POTA against challenges under the Indian Constitution and applicable international human rights treaties, the Supreme Court of India noted, almost in passing, that because of the resolution, “it has become [India’s] international obligation ... to pass necessary laws to fight terrorism.” The Court did not elaborate on this assertion or identify any specific provisions in POTA it deemed necessary to fulfill this obligation.

Resolution 1373 even cast a shadow over the debates in 2004 over POTA’s repeal. In Parliament, supporters of POTA asserted that the statute had been enacted because India “had committed to the enactment of an anti-terror law” upon the Security Council’s adoption of Resolution 1373, and suggested that repeal might violate the resolution. Similarly suggested that POTA’s repeal might “compromise India’s obligation under [Resolution 1373] to take special measures against terrorism in the wake of [the September 2001 attacks],” and that it was “very doubtful” that the repealed POTA provisions that were simultaneously reenacted as amendments to UAPA would sufficiently comply with the resolution. At the same time, some government officials have stated that these amendments to UAPA, including the provisions defining “terrorism,” self-consciously were designed in part to ensure that India fulfilled its obligations under the resolution.

These invocations of Resolution 1373 have tended to be selective or opportunistic. They fail to distinguish carefully between those legal pro-

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289. See Tikku, supra note 188.
visions that are required by the Council and those that are not, suggest-
ing instead that POTA or other omnibus antiterrorism measures are re-
quired in their entirety to comply with the Security Council’s dictates. 
Advocates of POTA have rarely, if ever, noted any countervailing human 
rights obligations, whether under domestic or international law, that also 
demand compliance.290

C. Human Rights Concerns

The CTC’s own legal expert has acknowledged that inevitably, as-
pects of the antiterrorism laws enacted by states to comply with Resolution 
1373 would “not be fully compatible with human rights concerns.”291 
However, the Security Council and CTC have not been sufficiently atten-
tive to these inevitable human rights concerns, in either the initial draft-
ing of the resolution or subsequent efforts to monitor and facilitate states’ 
compliance. At best, the CTC has failed to make consistency with human 
rights norms a sufficient priority, essentially disclaiming responsibility to 
be attentive to human rights standards when monitoring and facilitating 
states’ efforts to implement Resolution 1373’s antiterrorism requirements. 
At worst, the CTC may in some instances be enabling human rights vi-
lations by “push[ing] governments to show results without at the same 
time explicitly raising relevant and empirically well-founded human rights 
concerns.”292 

Perhaps in part because Resolution 1373 does not affirmatively refer 
to any international human rights, humanitarian, or refugee law obliga-
tions to be heeded when implementing its antiterrorism requirements, 
the CTC initially took the position that its mandate did not encompass 
any human rights concerns at all. Soon after the CTC was established, its 
first chair, Jeremy Greenstock, explicitly disclaimed any obligation to en-

timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/88343000.cms (noting criticism by NHRC chair-
person that POTO represented “misapplication of U.N. Resolution 1373” and failed to heed 
fundamental rights guarantees under Indian Constitution).

291. United Nations, Human Rights Committee Briefed on Work of Counter-Terrorism 
by Curtis Ward).

292. HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH, HEAR NO EVIL, SEE NO EVIL: THE U.N. SECURITY COUNCIL’S APPROACH TO 
backgrounder/un/2004/un0804/index.htm [hereinafter HRW, HEAR NO EVIL]; INT’L B AR ASS’N, 
sure that states implemented Resolution 1373 in a manner consistent with human rights norms. While pledging to “remain aware of the interaction with human rights concerns,” Greenstock stated that “[m]onitoring performance against other international conventions, including human rights law, is outside the scope of the [CTC’s] mandate,” and that instead, “[i]t is ... open to other organizations to study States’ reports and take up their content in other forums.”

These statements reflect a cramped view of Resolution 1373’s mandate and, more generally, the importance of adhering to human rights norms when fighting terrorism. Far from falling outside the scope of the resolution, human rights considerations are well within the CTC’s mandate, as the Secretary General has noted in recent years. Terrorism is highly correlated with the presence of human rights abuses, weaknesses in the rule of law, and major political grievances. When governments violate human rights in their efforts to combat terrorism, they effectively “cede to [terrorists] the moral high ground” and “provok[e] tension, hatred and mistrust of government among precisely those parts of the population where [terrorists are] most likely to find recruits.” In this context, respect for human rights is not merely an independent moral or legal obligation, to be compartmentalized and relegated to institutions dedicated exclusively to “human rights” as a freestanding set of concerns. Rather, respect for human rights is itself a strategic imperative, an integral element of any “comprehensive strategy” to combat terrorism.


296. Secretary-General, Global Strategy, supra note 294, at 5; see HRW, HEAR NO EVIL, supra note 292, at 2.

297. High Level Panel Report, supra note 295, ¶¶ 147-48; see Secretary-General, In Larger Freedom, supra note 294, ¶ 144.
Despite the centrality of human rights to any successful antiterrorism campaign, the CTC has not sufficiently incorporated human rights norms into its operations. In its general guidance to states preparing their compliance reports, the CTC does not request any information concerning states’ efforts to protect human rights when implementing antiterrorism initiatives. Nor has the CTC appeared to identify and consider human rights concerns when reviewing states’ reports. As one organization has concluded, the CTC has typically failed to question or respond to states’ descriptions of antiterrorism laws or other actions that manifestly implicate human rights concerns, either on their face or as applied in states with known human rights problems, or to scrutinize assertions by states that are “demonstrably inaccurate.”

In some instances, these human rights concerns have been foreseeable and apparent. For example, because the resolution requires states to take a series of actions targeting “terrorism” and “terrorist acts” without defining those terms, states have exercised tremendous discretion to rely on their own definitions without any guidance on how to ensure that those definitions do not sweep in activities protected under international human rights law. Absent such standards, no consensus definition has emerged from the many definitions of “terrorism” that states have promulgated. While the CTC has required states to report their definitions of “terrorism,” and has facilitated technical assistance to states in drafting new antiterrorism laws, the CTC has failed to scrutinize or inquire about those aspects of these definitions that may be problematic from a human rights perspective. India’s definition of terrorism in POTA and UAPA illustrates the problem. As discussed above, the open-endedness of that definition has facilitated a wide range of abuses. Yet, while India reported its enactment of this definition to demonstrate its compliance with Resolution 1373, the CTC appears not to have raised any rights-based concerns about this definition with the Indian government.

The CTC also appears not to have “regularly raise[d] human rights


299. HRW, Hear No Evil, supra note 292, at 3.


301. See supra subsection IV.B.1. and part V.
on its own initiative or ... consistently use[d] information coming from human rights treaty bodies or U.N. monitoring mechanisms in its follow-up questions to member states."\footnote{302} For example, in each of the reports that India has submitted to the CTC, it has implied that its antiterrorism laws are required by Resolution 1373. The first two reports characterize and extensively discuss POTO and POTA as fundamental pieces of legislation implementing India’s obligations under the resolution to criminalize and suppress acts of terrorism. Neither report, however, makes any effort to distinguish between those provisions in POTO and POTA that are required by Resolution 1373 and those that are not. India’s second report extensively discusses many of POTA’s provisions, including those governing the definition of “terrorist acts,” establishment of special courts, admissibility of confessions to police officers and other evidence, and requirements for bail, as if all were required by Resolution 1373, but without explaining why it considered any of those provisions obligatory. Nor do these reports discuss in any comparable detail India’s domestic or international human rights obligations, or any measures that India may have taken to ensure that its antiterrorism laws comply with those obligations.

Similarly, when inquiring about the training programs that India has in place to ensure the effectiveness of the “executive machinery” to prevent and suppress the financing of terrorist acts, the CTC seem not to have shown interest in whether such training programs also address the need to monitor and ensure compliance by these entities with human rights norms. In providing this information to the CTC in its fourth report, India accordingly offered no details about the steps it takes to train its personnel to protect human rights in the use of this “executive machinery.”

More recently, the Security Council has clarified, in Resolutions 1456, 1566, and 1624, that attention to human rights must indeed play a central role in the antiterrorism initiatives required by Resolution 1373.\footnote{303} To its credit, the CTC has made a sustained effort since its creation to engage in dialogue with OHCHR and other international institutions charged with ensuring compliance with human rights obligations. Successive High Commissioners for Human Rights and others with expertise in human rights issues have met with the CTC to convey their perspectives on how the CTC should increase its attentiveness to human rights issues. In addi-

\footnote{302. HRW, Human Rights Watch, supra note 292, at 8.}

tion, the U.N. Human Rights Committee has been briefed by the CTC’s legal expert and has been afforded an opportunity to convey its perspectives directly to the CTC. Since its earliest days the CTC also has made efforts to ensure that its work is sufficiently transparent to permit outside institutions both to monitor and critique the compliance reports submitted by member states as well as to evaluate the work processes of the CTC itself.

The CTC also has taken additional measures to incorporate the human rights mandate of Resolution 1456 into its work more directly than it had previously. Letters sent by the CTC to states since May 2003 have incorporated the language in Resolution 1456 reminding states that they must ensure that their antiterrorism measures comply with international human rights, refugee, and humanitarian law. And the CTC has committed to establish a regular liaison between the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate, which was newly established by Resolution 1566, and OHCHR.

At least to date, however, these efforts have failed to address the fundamental barrier to sufficient incorporation of human rights considerations into the CTC’s work—namely, the CTC’s own failure to take sufficient ownership of international human rights obligations as an integral part of its mandate under Resolution 1373. As the Secretary General and others have frequently noted, “[u]pholding human rights is not merely compatible with a successful counterterrorism strategy,” but rather is an “essential element” in any successful effort to combat terrorism.304 As it continues to monitor states’ compliance with Resolution 1373, and the Council’s subsequent clarifications of that resolution in Resolutions 1456, 1566, and 1624, the CTC should ensure not simply that those efforts do not interfere with fundamental rights, but rather that they affirmatively integrate human rights standards as a central element necessary to ensure success in the campaign against terrorism.

VIII. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Terrorism, which itself represents an attack on human rights that governments have an obligation to combat, is a complicated, serious, and difficult problem to address. When responding to terrorism, however, democratic governments must fully protect human rights to advance both the rule of law and long-term security itself, since violations of human rights often plant the seeds for future acts of terrorist violence. Unfortunately, in much of the former British empire, including India,

304. Secretary-General, Global Strategy, supra note 294, at 5; see also Secretary-General, In Larger Freedom, supra note 294, ¶ 140.
The postcolonial governments have all too often instead maintained and built upon the more authoritarian aspects of the colonial legacy in their emergency, antiterrorism, and other security laws. Especially in recent years, the U.N. Security Council has to some extent facilitated this disregard for human rights by failing to require states to take their international human rights obligations seriously when implementing their antiterrorism obligations under Resolution 1373.

In recent years, however, India has taken several positive steps, repealing POTA and seeking to transform the police and criminal justice institutions that it inherited from the British. Following the recent bomb blasts in Mumbai, the Indian government wisely chose not to reenact new draconian legislation to replace POTA. We welcome and urge the Indian government to maintain this position, even as it seeks to upgrade its intelligence and investigative capacity to more effectively prevent acts of terrorism and hold perpetrators accountable. Independent India’s constitutional tradition is a proud one, and in combating a threat of terrorism that is among the most serious in the world, a durable, enduring, and ever-improving commitment by India to protecting fundamental rights can serve as an important international example. In order to protect human rights and advance both the rule of law and long-term security even more effectively, we offer a number of recommendations as the basis for ongoing, continued dialogue.

A. To the Government of India

1. Repeal all provisions in UAPA raising human rights concerns, and ensure that all antiterrorism and other security laws contain provisions for tighter administrative and judicial oversight of investigative and prosecutorial decision-making, and transparency in that decision-making, to ensure nationwide uniformity and adherence to fundamental rights:

- Fully implement and enforce all decisions by the central POTA review committees that pending POTA cases which lack prima facie evidence for prosecution should be deemed withdrawn.
- Establish central government review committees similar to those established upon repeal of POTA to review and dispose of all pending TADA prosecutions, and with a comparable, one-year deadline to dispose of those cases.
- Establish mandatory nationwide guidelines and standards for investigative and prosecutorial decisions under central security laws by both the central and state governments.
Consider eliminating or restricting the authority of state governments to independently investigate and prosecute violations of central government security laws, limiting enforcement of those laws to the central government or to state government institutions subject to central government oversight and control.

If state authority to enforce central security laws remains, ensure greater central government oversight and review of state prosecution decision-making under those laws, through requirements such as central government authorization before investigations or prosecutions are initiated and authority for the central government to terminate or take over state investigations and prosecutions that are not proceeding in a manner consistent with central government guidelines and standards.

Narrow the definitions of substantive terrorism-related offenses under UAPA to eliminate vagueness and ensure adequate notice of the conduct being criminalized.

Ensure full judicial review of all executive decisions, including the decision to designate “terrorist organisations” under UAPA.

Compile, maintain, and publicly disclose statistics concerning prosecution and detention under all central and state security laws that are disaggregated by religion, caste, and tribal status, in order to facilitate accountability and oversight for arbitrary and selective enforcement.

2. Improve the mechanisms available for citizens to seek redress and hold government officials accountable for human rights abuses:

- Protect and provide security to lawyers and other human rights defenders from threats and intimidation, and prosecute all officials and other individuals making such threats or harm to human rights defenders.
- Eliminate provisions for official immunity in UAPA and other security laws, and eliminate the requirement of prior government consent before prosecution of government officials.
- Remove the restrictions upon the NHRC’s authority to investigate directly complaints of human rights violations by the armed forces and complaints of violations that arise prior to the current one-year limitations period.
- Encourage full implementation of the Protection of Human Rights Act of 1993 with the establishment of state-level hu-
man rights commissions and district-level human rights courts in all states.

3. Work with state governments, international institutions, and civil society to develop and implement reforms to the state police forces, including as appropriate the recommendations of the National Police Commission, and immediately implement such reforms in the centrally-controlled police forces of Delhi and other union territories:

- Ensure independence of the police in their functional decision-making from improper political influence.
- Ensure that effective mechanisms are in place to hold police accountable for corruption and violations of fundamental rights.
- Work to eliminate discrimination within the police on the basis of religion, caste, or tribal status and to increase diversity within the police forces.
- Establish independent review mechanisms involving judges, lawyers and other citizens to monitor and fully implement the guidelines for arrest and detention articulated by the NHRC and required by the Supreme Court in *D.K. Basu v. State of West Bengal*, A.I.R. 1997 S.C. 610, 623:
  
  - Police officers who arrest and interrogate suspects should wear clear identification;
  - Arresting officers should prepare an arrest memo signed by the suspect and a witness providing the time and date of arrest;
  - Since arrested individuals are entitled to have a friend or relative informed of the place of detention as soon as practicable, arrested persons should be informed of this right immediately;
  - Details of the arrest, including the arresting officers, should be kept in a diary at the place of detention;
  - The arrested person should be examined for injuries at the time of the arrest on request and have the injuries recorded;
  - The arrested person should be examined by a doctor every 48 hours during detention;
  - Copies of all arrest memos and inspection memos should be sent to the magistrate;
  - The arrested person should be permitted to meet with his or her lawyer during interrogation; and
A police control room should be established at all headquarters with a display showing the details of all arrested persons and their place of detention.

Establish independent review mechanisms involving civilians or judge and lawyers to monitor and fully implement the NHRC’s guidelines for investigating encounter killings by the police, and ensure that officials are prosecuted for encounter killings that are not committed in self-defense.

4. Work with state governments, international institutions, and civil society to develop and implement appropriate reforms to the criminal justice system:

- Improve the investigative capacity of the police, including training to improve the collection and analysis of physical evidence and investments in more effective facilities to analyze that evidence.
- Separate the prosecutorial function from the police, to ensure the independence and functional autonomy of prosecutorial decision-making.
- Expand the subordinate judiciary to include more judges.
- Implement administrative reforms to improve case management.
- Upgrade the capacity and experience levels of the subordinate judiciary.

5. Establish a commission, modeled on the National Police Commission, to review and recommend reforms to central and state preventive detention laws and the constitutional provisions governing preventive detention to ensure consistency with human rights standards.

6. Cooperate more fully with institutions responsible for monitoring and implementing compliance with international human rights standards:

- Ratify and withdraw reservations to the U.N. Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment, ratify the First Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and ensure that domestic legislation fully implements these and other international law obligations.
- Invite and encourage U.N. human rights bodies and experts to visit India and make recommendations to improve the com-
pliance of India’s antiterrorism laws and institutions with international human rights norms, including:

- Working Group on Arbitrary Detention,
- Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment,
- Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance
- Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary, and Arbitrary Executions, and
- Special Rapporteur on the Independence of the Judiciary.

Include information on the practical application of India’s antiterrorism and security laws and institutions and their compliance with international human rights standards in India’s future reports to:

- the Human Rights Committee, on compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (fourth report overdue as of December 31, 2001),
- the U.N. Human Rights Council, as part of its universal periodic review process, and
- the Counter-Terrorism Committee of the U.N. Security Council, on compliance with Resolution 1373.

B. To the State Governments in India

1. Fully implement the central government legislation repealing POTA:

- Comply promptly and fully with all decisions by the central POTA review committees that pending POTA cases lack of prima facie evidence to prosecute and should be deemed withdrawn.
- Dismiss all remaining POTA charges, and if there is prima facie evidence against any defendants under ordinary criminal law, prosecute those individuals under ordinary criminal law instead of POTA.

2. Fully investigate and, as appropriate, prosecute or take disciplinary action against all state government officials who may be responsible for fundamental rights abuses, including:

- Torture, cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment, arbitrary or
false arrest, and arbitrary or illegal detention by law enforce-
ment officials, and

- Encounter killings by the police and other security forces and
  prosecute officials for any killings not justified by self-defense.

3. Repeal all state laws conferring extraordinary powers akin to those
in TADA and POTA in violation of domestic and international human
rights standards.

4. Work with central government, international institutions, and civil
society to develop and implement reforms to the state police forces,
including as appropriate the recommendations of the National Police
Commission, as discussed above.

5. Work with central government, international institutions, and civil
society to develop and implement appropriate reforms to the criminal
justice system, as discussed above.

C. To the United Nations

1. To the Security Council, Counter-Terrorism Committee, and Counter-
Terrorism Executive Directorate:

- Incorporate human rights considerations more openly and
directly into the process of monitoring member states’ compli-
ance with Resolutions 1373 and 1456:

  o Issue human rights-based detailed guidelines for states to
    follow when attempting to comply with Resolutions 1373
    and 1456.

  o Explicitly require states to submit information concerning
    the practical application of the antiterrorism laws and insti-
    tutions covered by Resolution 1373 and their compliance with
    international human rights law obligations.

  o Recruit specialized personnel with human rights expertise
    and coordinate with OHCHR to evaluate states’ reports to
    the CTC to determine whether their laws and institutions
    comply with international human rights law obligations.

  o Incorporate human rights considerations into the process
    of facilitating technical assistance for states implementing
    the requirements of Resolution 1373.

- Build upon the CTC’s existing efforts to promote transpar-
ency concerning states’ compliance with Resolutions 1373 and 1456 by making public the CTC’s substantive follow-up communications and inquiries to states about their reports to the CTC.

2. To the Office of the High Commission for Human Rights
   • Coordinate with the CTC to incorporate human rights considerations into the CTC’s efforts to monitor states’ compliance with the requirements of Resolutions 1373 and 1456.

3. To the Human Rights Council
   • As part of the universal periodic review process, evaluate the consistency of states’ antiterrorism laws and institutions with international human rights law obligations.

September 2006
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND CHRONOLOGY OF MEETINGS

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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2003

New York

• Colin Gonsalves, Senior Advocate and Convenor, Human Rights Law Network

• Jean Berman, International Senior Lawyers Project

THURSDAY, JANUARY 22, 2004

Delhi

• Colin Gonsalves, Senior Advocate and Convenor, Human Rights Law Network

• Preeti Verma, Advocate and Director, Human Rights Law Network

THURSDAY, MARCH 31, 2004

Delhi

• Colin Gonsalves, Senior Advocate and Convenor, Human Rights Law Network
Monday, January 17, 2005
Delhi
• Colin Gonsalves, Senior Advocate and Convenor, Human Rights Law Network
• Amarjit Singh Chandhiok, Senior Advocate and President, Delhi High Court Bar Association
• Members of the Delhi High Court Bar Association

Tuesday, January 18, 2005
Hyderabad
• Jeevan Kumar, Human Rights Forum
• Members of the Hyderabad Criminal Court Bar Association
• K.G. Kannabiran, Senior Advocate and President, People’s Union for Civil Liberties
• K. Balagopal, Senior Advocate and Member of Human Rights Forum
• Members of Human Rights Forum

Wednesday, January 19, 2005
Hyderabad
• G. Haragopal, Professor and Coordinator, Human Rights Programme, Department of Political Science, University of Hyderabad

Thursday, January 20, 2005
Chennai
• John Vincent, Advocate and State Law Officer, People’s Watch Tamil Nadu
• D. Geetha, Advocate, Human Rights Law Network–Chennai
• R. Diwakaran, Advocate, Human Rights Law Network–Chennai
• K. Chandru, Senior Advocate

Delhi
• Sushil Kumar, Senior Advocate
• Nitya Ramakrishnan, Senior Advocate
• S. Muralidhar, Senior Advocate and Member, Bar Council of India
Friday, January 21, 2005
Chennai
• P.T. Perumal, Advocate
• S. Jayakumar, Special Public Prosecutor for POTA Cases, Government of Tamil Nadu
• V. Suresh, Advocate, People’s Union for Civil Liberties
• D. Nagasaila, Advocate, People’s Union for Civil Liberties

Delhi
• Indira Jaising, Senior Advocate and Director, Women’s Rights Initiative, Lawyer’s Collective

Saturday, January 22, 2005
Ahmedabad
• Mukul Sinha, Senior Advocate and Founder of Jan Sangharsh Manch
• Zakia Jowher, Senior Fellow, Action Aid International-India
• Members of Jan Sangharsh Manch
• Members of Jan Andolan

Monday, January 24, 2005
Delhi
• Ashok Chand, Deputy Commissioner, Special Cell, Delhi Police
• Rajindar Sachar, Chief Justice (retired), Delhi High Court, and former President, People’s Union for Civil Liberties
• Gopal Subramanium, Senior Advocate and Special Public Prosecutor
• Shanti Bhushan, Senior Advocate and Former Law Minister of India
• Ram Jethmalani, Senior Advocate, Member of Parliament, and former Law Minister of India

Tuesday, January 25, 2005
Delhi
• Usha Mehra, Chief Justice (retired), Delhi High Court, and Chair, POTA Review Committee
• Ravi Nair, Executive Director, South Asia Human Rights Documentation Centre (with his colleagues, Ateesh Chanda, Rineeta Naik, Adam Smith, and Gareth Sweeney)
Thursday, January 27, 2005
Delhi
• P.C. Sharma, Member, National Human Rights Commission, and former Director, Central Bureau of Investigation
• Ajit Bharihoke, Registrar (Law), National Human Rights Commission
• Soli Sorabjee, Senior Advocate and former Attorney General of India

Friday, January 28, 2005
Delhi
• Shivraj Patil, Home Minister of India
• H.R. Bharadwaj, Law Minister of India
• Y. K. Sabharwal, Justice, Supreme Court of India

Tuesday, February 1, 2005
Delhi
• Nitya Ramakrishnan, Senior Advocate

Friday, June 10, 2005
New York
• V. Suresh, Advocate, People’s Union for Civil Liberties