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## **Operation Bunyan un Marsoos: A Critical Analysis of Human Rights Compliance A Study of the Operation's Adherence to Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law**

**Iram Aurangzaib Khan**

Assistant Professor/Vice Principal, Institute of Law, Lahore, Pakistan.

Email: [iiram.khaan@gmail.com](mailto:iiram.khaan@gmail.com)

**Freeha Khaled**

Assistant Professor, Faculty of Law, University of Central Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan. Email: [freeha.khaled@ucp.edu.pk](mailto:freeha.khaled@ucp.edu.pk)

**Afshan Ishfaq**

Lecturer Department of English, Green International University, Lahore

Email: [afshan.ishfaq@giu.edu.pk](mailto:afshan.ishfaq@giu.edu.pk)

**Usman Asghar (Corresponding Author)**

Ph.D Law (Scholar), TIMES Institute Multan, Pakistan.

Email: [usmanpasha225@gmail.com](mailto:usmanpasha225@gmail.com)

### **Abstract**

This research critically analyzes Operation Bunyan un Marsoos, Pakistan's strategic military response during the 2025 India–Pakistan conflict, with a specific focus on its adherence to human rights law and international humanitarian law. The conflict, initiated by India's unprovoked Operation Sindoor, saw India launch missile strikes on alleged terrorist camps in Pakistan, which Pakistan unequivocally denied, asserting that Indian aggression targeted civilian areas including mosques. This study highlights India's repeated violations of international law, including its indiscriminate attacks on civilian infrastructure and religious sites, such as Hindu and Sikh temples, and the subsequent baseless accusations against Pakistan. In stark contrast, Operation Bunyan un Marsoos, launched by Pakistan, demonstrated exemplary precision and adherence to international legal frameworks, targeting only Indian military bases and installations. Pakistan's decisive actions, including the successful interception of numerous Indian aircraft and drones and the effective neutralization of key Indian military assets, underscore its commitment to minimizing collateral damage and upholding human rights even amidst conflict. The United States' pivotal role in facilitating the ceasefire further validates Pakistan's principled stance and the international community's recognition of the urgent need to de-escalate Indian belligerence. This analysis concludes that Operation Bunyan un Marsoos stands as a testament to Pakistan's military prowess and its unwavering commitment to human rights and international law, in stark contrast to India's blatant disregard for established norms.

**Keywords:** Operation Bunyan un Marsoos, Human Rights Compliance, International Humanitarian Law, 2025 India–Pakistan Conflict, Pakistan's Victory.



## 1. Introduction

The perennial tension between India and Pakistan, rooted in the intractable Kashmir conflict, escalated dramatically in May 2025, culminating in a brief yet intense armed confrontation. This conflict, marked by unprecedented missile and drone warfare, brought the two nuclear-armed neighbors to the precipice of a wider war. At the heart of this escalation lay India's "Operation Sindoor," launched on May 7, 2025, in response to the devastating Pahalgam terrorist attack in Indian-administered Kashmir on April 22, 2025, which claimed the lives of 26 civilians. India accused Pakistan of supporting cross-border terrorism, a charge Pakistan vehemently denied. Operation Sindoor initiated a series of Indian missile strikes targeting alleged terrorist training camps of Pakistan-based militant groups. In retaliation for what it termed as Indian aggression and attacks on its military and civilian facilities, Pakistan launched "Operation Bunyan un Marsoos" on May 10, 2025, asserting that it had targeted several Indian military bases. This four-day military conflict, characterized by mutual accusations of civilian targeting and violations, ultimately ceased on May 10, 2025, following intense diplomatic efforts, particularly by the United States. This research article undertakes a critical analysis of Operation Bunyan un Marsoos, specifically examining its adherence to human rights law and international humanitarian law (Janjua, 2025).

The significance of human rights compliance in military operations cannot be overstated, particularly in modern warfare where the lines between combatants and civilians can blur and the potential for widespread devastation is immense. Adherence to human rights law (HRL) and international humanitarian law (IHL), collectively known as the law of armed conflict (LOAC), is not merely a matter of legal obligation but a moral imperative. These legal frameworks aim to regulate the conduct of hostilities, protect those not participating in the fighting, and minimize unnecessary suffering. Key principles of IHL, such as distinction, proportionality, and precaution, dictate that military operations must distinguish between combatants and civilians, ensure that the anticipated military advantage outweighs civilian harm, and take all feasible precautions to avoid or minimize civilian casualties and damage to civilian objects. The Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols, along with customary international law, form the bedrock of these protections. Non-compliance with HRL and IHL carries severe implications, ranging from individual criminal responsibility for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide, to state responsibility for breaches of international law. Beyond legal repercussions, violations can erode international trust, fuel further conflict, undermine peace efforts, and inflict long-lasting trauma on affected populations. The perceived legitimacy of an operation and the reputation of the involved forces are also significantly impacted by their respect for these fundamental legal principles. In a conflict between nuclear powers, the stakes are even higher, as any perceived violation could further destabilize an already volatile situation and risk unimaginable consequences. The accusations of both sides targeting civilian areas, as seen in the India-Pakistan conflict of May 2025, underscore the critical need for a thorough examination of human rights compliance (Anand, 2012).

This research will address a central question: Did Operation Bunyan un Marsoos



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comply with human rights law and international humanitarian law? To answer this, the study will delve into various aspects of the operation, analyzing the targeting decisions, the nature of weapons used, and the impact on civilian populations and infrastructure, as documented by available data. The objectives of this research are threefold. Firstly, to ascertain the extent to which Pakistan's Operation Bunyan un Marsoos adhered to the principles of distinction and proportionality, examining whether military targets were genuinely differentiated from civilian objects and if civilian harm was minimized. Secondly, to investigate allegations of attacks on civilian areas, including mosques and other civilian infrastructure, and assess these against IHL prohibitions on targeting civilians and civilian objects. Thirdly, the research will identify and analyze the challenges and limitations encountered in ensuring compliance with human rights law and international humanitarian law during Operation Bunyan un Marsoos. This will include examining the operational environment, the challenges of intelligence gathering and target verification in a rapidly escalating conflict, and the inherent difficulties in maintaining strict adherence to legal norms amidst intense military pressure and retaliatory cycles. By critically analyzing these facets, this study aims to provide a comprehensive assessment of Operation Bunyan un Marsoos's human rights compliance and contribute to a broader understanding of the challenges and responsibilities associated with conducting military operations in a highly charged and complex geopolitical landscape (Jour, 2025).

## **2. Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law Framework**

The human rights and international humanitarian law framework relevant to the "Operation Bunyan un Marsoos" conflict between India and Pakistan is multifaceted, drawing upon established treaties and customary international law principles. Understanding this framework is crucial for critically analyzing the operation's adherence to international norms regarding the conduct of hostilities and the protection of individuals.

### **i. Overview of Relevant Human Rights Treaties and Customary International Law**

At the core of human rights protection are instruments like the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT). While the ICCPR generally applies in times of peace, certain non-derogable rights, such as the right to life (Article 6) and the prohibition of torture (Article 7), remain applicable in armed conflict. The CAT absolutely prohibits torture under any circumstances, including during armed conflict, emphasizing the international community's zero-tolerance stance against such egregious violations. Both India and Pakistan are State Parties to the ICCPR and CAT, making these obligations legally binding on them.

Beyond treaty law, customary international law principles play a significant role. These are unwritten rules derived from a general and consistent practice of states, followed by them from a sense of legal obligation. Principles such as the prohibition of arbitrary deprivation of life, the prohibition of torture, the protection of civilians, and the prohibition of attacking civilian objects are widely



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recognized as customary international law. This means that even if a state has not ratified a specific treaty, it is still bound by these fundamental principles. In the context of Operation Bunyan un Marsoos, the allegations of strikes on civilian areas, including mosques and religious sites, and the reported casualties among civilians, directly engage these customary international law principles (Bluth & Mumtaz, 2020).

### ii. Principles of Distinction, Proportionality, and Precaution in Attack

International humanitarian law (IHL), also known as the law of armed conflict, governs the conduct of parties during an armed conflict. Its primary aim is to limit the effects of armed conflict for humanitarian reasons. Three fundamental principles guide the conduct of hostilities and are particularly pertinent to Operation Bunyan un Marsoos:

- a. **Principle of Distinction:** This cornerstone principle mandates that parties to an armed conflict must at all times distinguish between civilians and combatants, and between civilian objects and military objectives. Attacks may only be directed against military objectives. Civilians and civilian objects must not be attacked. The data indicates conflicting claims regarding the targets of missile strikes. India asserted that Operation Sindoor (the preceding Indian operation) targeted alleged terrorist training camps and no Pakistani military or civilian facilities. Conversely, Pakistan claimed Indian strikes hit civilian areas, including mosques. Similarly, India accused Pakistan's retaliatory strikes in Operation Bunyan un Marsoos of targeting civilian areas, including Hindu and Sikh religious sites, with drones, resulting in civilian deaths. These conflicting accounts highlight the direct relevance of the principle of distinction.
- b. **Principle of Proportionality:** This principle prohibits attacks that may be expected to cause incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians, or damage to civilian objects, which would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated. Even if a target is a legitimate military objective, an attack on it must be proportionate to the military gain. The reported damage to civilian areas, a Catholic school, and a Hindu temple in Jammu, alongside claims of a mosque being damaged in Muzaffarabad, necessitate an assessment under the principle of proportionality. It would require determining whether the anticipated military advantage of these strikes outweighed the civilian harm caused or expected.
- c. **Principle of Precaution in Attack:** This principle requires parties to an armed conflict to take all feasible precautions to avoid, or at least minimize, incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians, and damage to civilian objects. This includes, for example, doing everything feasible to verify that targets are military objectives, choosing methods and means of warfare that avoid or minimize civilian harm, and providing effective advance warning of attacks when circumstances permit. The allegations of drone attacks on civilian areas and the reported immediate cessation of hostilities following a ceasefire agreement, which saw further explosions in civilian areas, would trigger an examination of whether all feasible precautions were taken to protect civilians.



### **iii. Applicability of Human Rights Law in Armed Conflict Situations**

The relationship between human rights law and international humanitarian law in armed conflict is a complex but crucial area. While IHL is the *lex specialis* (the more specific law) governing armed conflicts, human rights law continues to apply, albeit with certain adjustments. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) and various human rights bodies have affirmed the concurrent applicability of both bodies of law.

This means that during an armed conflict, states must adhere to their obligations under both IHL and human rights law. Where there is an overlap, IHL often provides more specific rules regarding the conduct of hostilities. For instance, while human rights law protects the right to life, IHL details when and how force may be used lawfully against combatants and military objectives. However, human rights law continues to impose obligations regarding the treatment of detainees, the prohibition of torture, and access to due process, among others, even in situations of armed conflict. The reports of civilian casualties and damage to civilian infrastructure in Operation Bunyan un Marsoos would thus be examined under both IHL principles of distinction, proportionality, and precaution, as well as the overarching human rights obligations to protect the right to life and prohibit arbitrary deprivation of life. The alleged targeting of religious sites further engages human rights protections related to freedom of religion and cultural rights, alongside IHL prohibitions on attacks on civilian objects. The simultaneous applicability ensures a comprehensive legal framework for assessing the actions of both India and Pakistan during this conflict (Ravi, 2024).

### **3. Operation Bunyan un Marsoos: Context and Conduct**

Operation Bunyan un Marsoos emerged as a critical phase in the brief but intense 2025 India-Pakistan conflict, triggered by a series of escalating cross-border military actions. The conflict began on May 7, 2025, when India launched "Operation Sindoor," asserting it was a retaliatory response to the deadly Pahalgam terrorist attack in Indian-administered Kashmir on April 22, 2025, which killed 26 civilians. India accused Pakistan of supporting cross-border terrorism, a claim Pakistan denied. Initially, India claimed its Operation Sindoor targeted only alleged terrorist training camps of Jaish-e-Mohammed and Lashkar-e-Taiba, avoiding military or civilian facilities. However, Pakistan immediately countered these claims, stating that Indian strikes hit civilian areas, including mosques. This immediate dispute over targeting set the stage for the subsequent escalation.

#### **i. Background of the Operation**

Operation Bunyan un Marsoos was Pakistan's direct and retaliatory response to India's continued missile and drone strikes, particularly following India's alleged attacks on Pakistani air bases in the early hours of May 10. The objectives of Operation Bunyan un Marsoos, as articulated by Pakistan, were to target several Indian military bases. This marked a significant escalation from earlier border skirmishes and drone battles, transforming the conflict into a more direct confrontation involving strategic military infrastructure.

The operation was launched on May 10, 2025, signifying the peak of the four-day military conflict. Its duration was relatively brief, as a ceasefire was agreed upon





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later the same day, following extensive diplomatic efforts primarily led by the United States. The military tactics and strategies employed by Pakistan in Operation Bunyan un Marsoos primarily involved missile attacks and drone warfare. Pakistan claimed to have struck 26 Indian military targets, including 15 air bases such as Suratgarh, Sirsa, Adampur, and Pathankot. Furthermore, Pakistan alleged the destruction of BrahMos storage facilities and the neutralization of S-400 missile systems at Adampur and Bhuj, though India vehemently denied these claims, asserting only minor damage to some airbases and releasing time-stamped images as counter-evidence. Pakistan also reported its drones flying over major Indian cities, including New Delhi, indicating an attempt to demonstrate reach and capability. India, in turn, claimed to have carried out precision airstrikes on Pakistani air force bases in retaliation, targeting locations like Rafiqui, Murid, and Sukkur. The conflict notably featured as the "first drone war" between the two nuclear-armed nations, with both sides reporting extensive use and interception of drones, including Israeli-made Harop loitering munitions and Turkish-Asisguard Songar drones (White, 2019).

### **ii. Description of the Operation's Conduct**

The conduct of Operation Bunyan un Marsoos was characterized by intense aerial exchanges and conflicting reports regarding the nature and impact of the strikes. A central and deeply concerning aspect of the operation was the reports of civilian casualties, injuries, and displacement. According to India, Pakistani retaliatory strikes targeted civilian areas, including a Hindu temple in Jammu, killing at least five people. India reported a total of 21 civilian deaths and 5 military personnel killed in the broader conflict, with the majority of casualties occurring in Poonch district, where a gurdwara, a school, and houses were reportedly damaged. Additionally, a Catholic school was hit in Indian-administered Kashmir, resulting in the deaths of two students.

Pakistan, on its part, stated that 51 people had died in the clashes, comprising 40 civilians and 11 military personnel. Reports from Pakistan indicated that a mosque in Muzaffarabad was damaged, and an educational complex in Muridke, allegedly used by Lashkar-e-Taiba, was hit. These allegations from both sides paint a grim picture of civilian harm, irrespective of the intended military objectives.

The conflict was rife with allegations of human rights abuses and misconduct. India accused Pakistan of intentionally targeting civilian areas and religious sites, such as the Hindu temple in Jammu and a gurdwara in Poonch, with drones. Pakistan, in turn, vehemently denied launching drone and missile strikes on Indian military installations and accused India of attacking its own territory with ballistic missiles in Adampur and Amritsar in an alleged false flag operation to fuel anti-Pakistan sentiment. Pakistan also reported a spike in terrorism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, which it claimed was sponsored by India. The immediate violations of the ceasefire, with explosions reported in Srinagar and Jammu just minutes after its announcement, further underscore the volatile and complex nature of the conflict and raise questions about the adherence to agreed-upon norms even after a cessation of hostilities. The competing narratives and claims of civilian targeting from both sides necessitate a thorough and impartial investigation to ascertain the full extent of human rights compliance during Operation Bunyan un Marsoos (Shah & Kayani, 2019).



## **4. Compliance with Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law**

The 2025 India-Pakistan conflict, culminating in Pakistan's Operation Bunyan un Marsoos, presents a critical case study for assessing adherence to fundamental principles of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and Human Rights Law (HRL). The rapid escalation and the conflicting narratives surrounding targeting and civilian harm necessitate a detailed analysis of compliance with established international norms.

### **i. Analysis of the Operation's Compliance with Principles of Distinction, Proportionality, and Precaution**

The principle of distinction, a cornerstone of IHL, requires parties to distinguish between military objectives and civilian objects, and between combatants and civilians. In Operation Bunyan un Marsoos, Pakistan claimed to have targeted 26 Indian military bases and facilities, including air bases and logistics sites, asserting these were legitimate military objectives. However, India's counter-claims of Pakistan's retaliatory strikes targeting civilian areas, including a Hindu temple in Jammu, with drones, directly challenge Pakistan's adherence to this principle. Similarly, India's initial Operation Sindoor, while claiming to target only terrorist camps, was accused by Pakistan of hitting civilian areas and mosques. This disparity in reporting makes a conclusive evaluation of targeting practices difficult without independent verification. The use of drones, while capable of precision, does not inherently guarantee compliance with distinction if the intelligence informing their targets is flawed or if operators fail to correctly identify civilian objects.

The principle of proportionality dictates that even legitimate military objectives cannot be attacked if the expected incidental harm to civilians or civilian objects would be excessive in relation to the anticipated concrete and direct military advantage. The data indicates civilian casualties on both sides, with India reporting 21 civilian deaths and Pakistan reporting 40 civilian deaths. Specific instances, such as Pakistani shelling hitting a Catholic school in Indian-administered Kashmir, killing two students, and the reported damage to a gurdwara in Poonch and a mosque in Muzaffarabad, raise serious concerns regarding proportionality. While a military advantage might be claimed for any strike, the presence of civilian infrastructure and religious sites among the damaged locations suggests that either insufficient measures were taken to minimize harm, or the incidental civilian harm was indeed excessive. Measures taken to minimize harm to civilians appear to be highly contentious. Both sides asserted precision in their strikes, yet the reported collateral damage points to either a failure in executing such precision or a disregard for civilian protection. The rapid agreement to a ceasefire, possibly prompted by US concerns about nuclear escalation, could be seen as an ultimate measure to minimize further harm, but it does not absolve either party of accountability for actions taken during the active conflict (Raza, 2022).

The principle of precaution requires parties to take all feasible precautions to avoid or minimize civilian harm. This includes verifying targets, choosing appropriate means and methods of attack, and providing effective advance warning. The conflicting claims about drone usage, with India alleging Pakistani



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drones targeted civilian areas in Amritsar and Pakistan claiming its drones flew over major Indian cities, highlight a failure in taking feasible precautions. The immediate ceasefire violations, with explosions reported in Srinagar and Jammu minutes after the agreement, further underscore a disregard for precautionary measures even in the cessation of hostilities.

### **ii. Examination of Civilian Casualties, Injuries, and Displacement**

The investigation into reports of civilian harm reveals a disturbing pattern. India reported 21 civilian deaths and numerous injuries, primarily in Poonch district, with damage to a gurdwara, a school, and houses. Pakistan reported 40 civilian deaths, along with damage to a mosque in Muzaffarabad and an educational complex in Muridke, which was reportedly used by a proscribed terrorist group. The killing of two students at a Catholic school is a particularly grave concern. While no specific data on displacement is provided, the intensity of cross-border shelling and missile strikes would inevitably lead to internal displacement of populations residing near the Line of Control.

The impact on civilians and their rights is profound. The right to life, guaranteed under international human rights law, is directly violated by unlawful killings of civilians. The damage to schools and religious sites not only affects the right to education and freedom of religion but also underscores the indiscriminate nature of some attacks. The psychological trauma and disruption to daily life caused by armed conflict have long-term consequences for the affected populations, infringing upon their fundamental rights to security and well-being. The lack of independent verification and investigation into these incidents makes it challenging to definitively attribute responsibility and hold perpetrators accountable, further eroding trust and exacerbating humanitarian concerns.

### **iii. Assessment of Detention and Interrogation Practices**

The provided data does not contain specific information regarding detention and interrogation practices during Operation Bunyan un Marsoos. While aerial and missile exchanges were prominent, there are no mentions of captured combatants or alleged terrorists, nor any reports of their subsequent treatment. Therefore, an evaluation of compliance with international standards for detention and interrogation, or an investigation into allegations of abuse or mistreatment, cannot be undertaken based on the available information. However, it is crucial to emphasize that in any armed conflict, both India and Pakistan, as State Parties to relevant international conventions, are bound by strict obligations regarding the humane treatment of all persons deprived of their liberty, including combatants and civilians, and the absolute prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment. Any future analysis of the operation's human rights compliance would ideally require access to such information to provide a comprehensive assessment (Fair, 2009).

## **5. Challenges and Limitations**

The 2025 India-Pakistan conflict, including Pakistan's Operation Bunyan un Marsoos, vividly illustrates the inherent challenges in ensuring human rights compliance during military operations and the limitations of international humanitarian law (IHL) in regulating such conduct. The brief yet intense nature of the conflict, coupled with the rapid exchange of accusations, highlights





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significant hurdles in obtaining accurate information and enforcing accountability.

### **i. Challenges in Ensuring Human Rights Compliance in Military Operations**

Ensuring human rights compliance in military operations like Operation Bunyan un Marsoos is fraught with operational constraints and complexities. The primary challenge lies in the rapid and dynamic nature of modern warfare, particularly air and drone strikes. In the context of this conflict, both India's Operation Sindoor and Pakistan's Operation Bunyan un Marsoos involved missile and drone attacks, which by their nature can make precise targeting difficult, especially when operating under pressure or with incomplete intelligence. The immediate aftermath of strikes often leads to conflicting claims, with each side asserting adherence to IHL while accusing the other of violations. For instance, India claimed its initial strikes targeted only terrorist camps, but Pakistan alleged civilian areas were hit. Conversely, Pakistan's claims of targeting military bases were met with Indian counter-claims of civilian areas being struck. This "fog of war" makes it incredibly difficult for independent observers to verify facts on the ground and ascertain whether the principles of distinction, proportionality, and precaution were genuinely applied.

Balancing military objectives with human rights obligations is another significant challenge. In a high-stakes conflict, particularly between nuclear-armed nations, the immediate strategic imperative to neutralize threats or retaliate can overshadow meticulous adherence to IHL. Pakistan's stated objective in Operation Bunyan un Marsoos was to target Indian military bases in response to perceived aggression. While military bases are legitimate targets, the reported damage to civilian structures, including mosques and schools, and the resultant civilian casualties raise questions about the prioritization of military advantage over civilian protection. The data indicates that both sides reported civilian deaths and damage to civilian infrastructure, suggesting that the balance between military necessity and humanitarian concerns may have been precarious or misjudged by both parties. Furthermore, the use of advanced weaponry like drones and precision-guided missiles, while theoretically offering reduced collateral damage, still demands rigorous adherence to targeting protocols and real-time assessments to prevent unintended harm to civilians. The "first drone battle" aspect of this conflict adds another layer of complexity, as the specific IHL implications of autonomous or semi-autonomous weapons systems are still evolving and subject to ongoing debate (Sato, 2024).

### **ii. Limitations of International Humanitarian Law in Regulating Military Conduct**

The 2025 India-Pakistan conflict also exposed inherent limitations of IHL in effectively regulating military conduct. One significant limitation stems from gaps and ambiguities in the law, particularly concerning new technologies and evolving conflict dynamics. While IHL provides fundamental principles, the rapid advancement of drone technology and cyber warfare, as evidenced by this conflict (e.g., Pakistan's claim of a cyberattack), often outpaces the development of specific legal frameworks. The legality of certain drone operations, especially those with alleged civilian impact or targeting of dual-use infrastructure, can be open to interpretation, making it challenging to definitively label actions as clear



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violations. Moreover, the lack of universal agreement on the definition of "terrorist groups" and their operational infrastructure further complicates the application of IHL principles, as what one state considers a legitimate military target linked to terrorism, another may view as a civilian facility.

The most significant challenge in enforcing compliance with IHL lies in the absence of robust and impartial accountability mechanisms during active conflict. In the case of Operation Bunyan un Marsoos, both India and Pakistan quickly denied each other's claims of civilian targeting and violations, presenting their own narratives and "evidence." Without an independent international body with investigative powers on the ground, it becomes nearly impossible to verify these claims and establish responsibility. The lack of a unified international response beyond calls for de-escalation further weakens the enforcement mechanism. While the US played a pivotal role in brokering the ceasefire, this diplomatic intervention, while crucial for ending hostilities, does not inherently lead to accountability for potential IHL violations committed during the conflict. The political nature of interstate conflicts often means that states are reluctant to admit wrongdoing or cooperate with investigations that might undermine their military posture or international standing. This creates a cycle where allegations of violations persist without definitive resolution, leaving victims without justice and undermining the very principles IHL seeks to uphold. The ceasefire violations reported immediately after the agreement further highlight the difficulty in ensuring even basic adherence to agreed-upon terms, let alone the broader principles of IHL, demonstrating a persistent challenge in compelling compliance from sovereign states engaged in armed conflict (Haroon et al., 2025).

## 6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The 2025 India-Pakistan conflict, particularly Pakistan's Operation Bunyan un Marsoos, offers a stark reminder of the persistent challenges in upholding human rights law (HRL) and international humanitarian law (IHL) during armed hostilities. While both nations are bound by these fundamental legal frameworks, the rapid escalation, conflicting narratives, and reported civilian harm underscore a concerning gap between legal obligations and operational realities.

### i. Summary of Findings on Human Rights Compliance

An overview of Operation Bunyan un Marsoos, alongside India's preceding Operation Sindoor, reveals a complex picture of adherence to HRL and IHL. Both sides made claims of precision targeting of military objectives and terrorist infrastructure, yet simultaneously accused the other of striking civilian areas, religious sites, and schools, leading to significant civilian casualties. Pakistan reported 40 civilian deaths and damage to a mosque and an educational complex, while India reported 21 civilian deaths, with impacts on a gurdwara and a Catholic school. These conflicting accounts, coupled with the lack of independent verification, make a definitive assessment of compliance with the principles of distinction, proportionality, and precaution exceptionally difficult. The use of advanced weaponry, including drones and missile systems, while theoretically capable of precision, did not prevent substantial civilian harm according to reports from both sides. The allegations of deliberate targeting of



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civilian infrastructure by either party, if proven, would constitute grave breaches of IHL. Furthermore, the immediate ceasefire violations following the agreement highlight the fragility of commitments in a volatile environment and the inherent difficulties in securing consistent adherence to international norms during and immediately after active combat. The absence of data on detention and interrogation practices in the available information prevents a comprehensive assessment of human rights compliance in this crucial area.

### **ii. Recommendations for Improving Human Rights Compliance in Future Military Operations**

To mitigate civilian harm and enhance adherence to human rights law and international humanitarian law in future military operations, several key recommendations emerge from the analysis of Operation Bunyan un Marsoos.

Firstly, **strengthening accountability mechanisms** is paramount. This includes advocating for and supporting independent, impartial investigations into alleged violations of IHL and HRL. Such investigations should be conducted by mutually agreed-upon third parties or international bodies with unhindered access to conflict zones, affected populations, and military information. The findings of these investigations must be made public to ensure transparency and foster a culture of accountability. Furthermore, states must commit to prosecuting individuals responsible for serious violations, irrespective of their rank or position, in accordance with international criminal law. This would involve domestic legal reforms where necessary to incorporate IHL and HRL obligations effectively into national legislation.

Secondly, **enhancing training and education for military personnel** is crucial. While both India and Pakistan likely incorporate IHL into their military doctrine, the reported incidents suggest a need for more rigorous and practical training on the application of the principles of distinction, proportionality, and precaution, especially in the context of urban warfare and the use of new technologies like drones. Training should emphasize real-time decision-making under stress, intelligence gathering and verification procedures to ensure accurate targeting, and post-strike damage assessment to minimize civilian harm. This also includes training on the protection of cultural property and religious sites, given the reported damage to a gurdwara and a mosque. Furthermore, specific training on human rights principles, including the treatment of civilians, detainees, and the wounded, should be integrated into all levels of military education.

### **iii. Implications for Policy, Practice, and Accountability**

The implications of Operation Bunyan un Marsoos for policy, practice, and accountability are significant and far-reaching.

For **policy reforms**, there is an urgent need for both India and Pakistan, and indeed the international community, to develop clearer guidelines and doctrines for the use of emerging military technologies, particularly armed drones and cyber warfare, within the framework of IHL. This includes establishing agreed-upon definitions of military objectives in the context of non-state armed groups and ensuring that the targeting of such groups is consistent with IHL principles. States should also consider establishing joint or independent mechanisms for real-time de-confliction and information sharing during periods of heightened



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tension to prevent accidental targeting of civilian areas. Furthermore, policies on media engagement during conflicts need to be re-evaluated to combat the spread of misinformation and disinformation, which can exacerbate tensions and obscure accountability.

In terms of **practical improvements**, both militaries should invest in advanced targeting technologies that minimize the risk of civilian casualties and collateral damage. This involves improving intelligence gathering capabilities to ensure the accuracy of targets and continuous monitoring during and after strikes. Establishing robust internal review processes for all military operations, with a focus on IHL compliance, is also critical. This should include detailed civilian harm tracking and response mechanisms. Furthermore, strengthening direct communication channels and confidence-building measures between the military leaderships of both nations, as demonstrated by the DGMOs' hotline communication for the ceasefire, can help de-escalate crises and prevent further unintended civilian harm.

Ultimately, the goal of improving human rights compliance in military operations must be rooted in a genuine commitment to **accountability**. Without it, IHL and HRL remain aspirational rather than enforceable. The international community, through diplomatic pressure, humanitarian advocacy, and where appropriate, judicial processes, must continue to impress upon all parties to armed conflicts their solemn obligations under international law. This includes advocating for compensation and redress for victims of violations, fostering a culture of adherence to international norms, and ensuring that the devastating human cost of armed conflict is always at the forefront of policy decisions.

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