



PNA

STUDY GUIDE

AGENDA

**ADDRESSING THE GRIEVANCES UNDERLYING THE
2026 CIVIL UNREST IN AJ&K AND REVIEWING THE
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT RESPONSE**

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INTRODUCTION TO THE UN

The United Nations is an international organization founded in 1945. Currently made up of 193 Member States, the UN and its work are guided by the purposes and principles contained in its founding Charter. The UN has evolved over the years to keep pace with a rapidly changing world. But one thing has stayed the same: it remains the one place on Earth where all the world's nations can gather together, discuss common problems, and find shared solutions that benefit all of humanity.

The main purpose of the United Nations is to maintain international peace and security, develop friendly relations among nations, promote human rights, and encourage international cooperation in addressing global challenges. The organization serves as a global platform where countries can collaborate to address common challenges such as conflict, poverty, inequality, climate change, and humanitarian crises. It operates under the principle of sovereign equality, where every member state has equal representation in the General Assembly, regardless of its economic or political stature. Through its various organs, agencies, and offices located in New York, Geneva, Vienna, and Nairobi, the UN continues to play a central role in promoting peace, security, development, and human rights worldwide.

COMMITTEE OVERVIEW

The Pakistan National Assembly (PNA) is the lower house of Pakistan's bicameral Parliament and serves as the principal legislative body responsible for enacting laws, overseeing the executive, and representing the interests of the people. The ultimate objective of the committee is to negotiate party lines, form cross-bench coalitions, and draft legally binding Bills, Acts of Parliament, and Constitutional Amendments tailored to national interests and local constituency dynamics.

The mandate of the National Assembly of Pakistan is to exercise supreme public sovereignty through legislative lawmaking, exclusive constitutional control over the national budget, and direct representation of the electorate. Through debate, legislation, and parliamentary oversight, the National Assembly addresses issues of national importance, including governance, constitutional affairs, public policy, and national security.

INTRODUCTION TO THE AGENDA

In 2024, calls were raised for wheat and electricity subsidies by AJ&K Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC), with the former being accepted after a long march in Muzaffarabad, coupled with civilian casualties. Then, in November of 2025, JAAC presented a 38-demand list, which includes electricity subsidies, abolition of the 12 Legislative Assembly seats reserved for non-resident refugees, and less excessive expenditure by the elected government.

In the first week of June 2026, the government and JAAC held talks to reach a consensus; however, the government swiftly exited the talks and placed a ban on JAAC. JAAC declared 9th June as the day when they initiated strikes; however, after the negotiations fell apart, they pushed the date back and started early.

In response, state and federal authorities initiated a security-oriented crackdown, which included deploying paramilitary forces and imposing communication blackouts. What ensued was violent clashes, deaths on both sides (protesters and police). An estimated 42 civilians have died in the altercations.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

AJ&K is a self-governing territory within Pakistan, with its own prime minister, assembly, and courts. Post-1947, 12 of AJK's 53 assembly seats are reserved for Kashmiri refugees who live outside AJK, in other parts of Pakistan, e.g., Sindh, Punjab, and Balochistan. Electricity rates have always remained significantly lower than in Pakistan.

The ongoing 2026 civil unrest in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJ&K) represents a critical breakdown in regional governance, stemming from long-standing economic and political grievances. The dissatisfaction amongst the masses prompted the formation of Jammu Kashmir Joint Awami Action Committee (JKJAAC) in 2023, which largely consisted of traders and civilians.

CURRENT SITUATION

As of July 2026, large-scale protests in AJ&K have mostly ended, and normal daily activities have resumed in many areas. However, within certain districts (Rawalakot), protests are still proceeding, consisting of women, children, and the youth. AJ&K still remains a high-security territory, with the internet still suspended and security troops deployed in all areas since 5th June. Censorship remains high, even while major political figures such as Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Mian Nawaz Sharif and Maryam Nawaz visit Kashmir.

The Supreme Court has ruled that only the AJ&K Legislative Assembly can overrule the 12 reserved refugee seats via constitutional amendment, with the current government lending responsibility to the next government to abolish it. The ban on the Jammu Kashmir Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC) is still in place, and legal cases against several protest leaders and participants continue, with the government refusing any cooperation and negotiation with JAAC.

Importantly, preparations for the upcoming AJ&K Legislative Assembly elections (27th July - 10th August) are underway, utilizing a precautionary 3-tier format. Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaaf has decided to boycott after the Supreme Court didn't allot them a political symbol.

CAUSES

1. Structural Economic Grievances:

Despite AJ&K's significant contribution to Pakistan's hydropower generation through projects such as the Mangla Dam and the Neelum–Jhelum Hydropower Project, many residents believed that local communities did not receive a fair share of the economic benefits. Combined with rising electricity tariffs, inflation, and the increasing cost of living, these concerns created widespread dissatisfaction. Protesters also believe that they are entitled to subsidisation as AJ&K is smaller than the Rawalpindi District, making it easy to subsidize amongst a relatively minimal population.

2. Political Dissatisfaction:

Protesters firmly believe that AJ&K's executive and ruling power must be consolidated within AJ&K, not throughout Pakistan. The 12 refugee seat plan was formulated in accordance with migration patterns post the 1947-partition, deeming it outdated amongst many. Secondly, due to the lack of AJ&K population (because of international migration) and political education in these areas, voter turnout is small. This allows political parties to exploit the system and easily win the seat, regardless of whether or not the people desire them to be there.

STAKEHOLDERS

1. Government of Pakistan

- Financial Impact: Required allocating unexpected federal grants to cover flour and electricity subsidies.
- Political & Administrative Pressure: Faced heavy pressure to manage security, maintain national stability, and handle regional political tensions.

2. Government of AJ&K

- Governance Disruption: Experienced significant operational paralysis and administrative disruptions during regional strikes and shutdowns.
- Loss of Public Trust: Faced severe criticism over its initial delayed response, handling of public grievances, and reliance on security measures.

3. Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC)

- State Crackdowns & Legal Action: Leaders and members faced mass arrests, criminal cases, restrictions on assembly, and proscription under anti-terrorism laws.
- Casualties & Physical Risks: Activists suffered injuries, detentions, and fatalities during clashes with law enforcement.

4. Local Communities

- Economic & Daily Life Disruption: Faced severe hardship due to business shutdowns, transportation blockades, and region-wide mobile/internet blackouts.
- Safety & Casualties: Residents suffered direct harm, including physical injuries and deaths during clashes between demonstrators and security personnel.

5. 2026 AJ&K Legislative Assembly elections

- Impaired Campaigning: Military checkpoints, internet shutdowns, and overall political unrest have halted political campaigns.
- Political Boycott: Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaaf, to symbolize their sympathy with the masses, has decided to boycott this election cycle.

IMPACTS

1. Casualties and Human Cost

The unrest resulted in casualties, injuries, and arrests during clashes between protesters and law enforcement agencies. The loss of life and injuries affected families and communities across AJ&K, while reports of detentions and the use of force raised concerns regarding the protection of fundamental rights of people.

2. Economic Disruption and Daily Life

Protests, road blockades, and strikes interrupted transportation, trade, tourism, and other economic activities throughout the region. Many businesses suspended operations, while schools, government offices, and public services experienced disturbance. The unrest also affected daily commuting and the movement of goods, contributing to financial losses for local businesses and households.

3. Legal and Security Escalation

As protests expanded, additional security personnel were deployed to maintain public order. Authorities introduced legal and administrative measures to manage the situation, while some protesters faced arrests and legal proceedings.

4. Digital and Information Restrictions

Recently, after 49 days, the internet was reopened within AJ&K. However, the restrictions on internet and mobile communication services affected communication, access to information, business activities, and emergency coordination.

5. Trust Deficit and Political Polarization

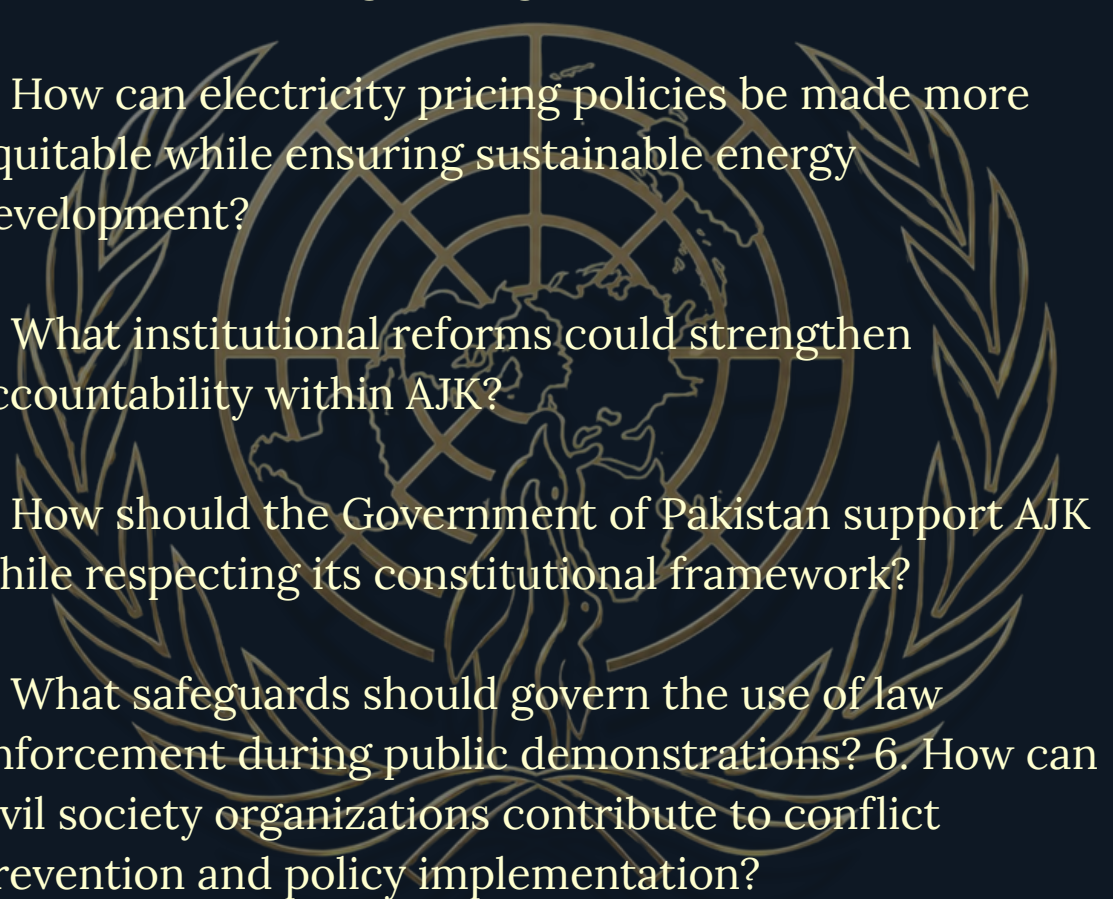
The unrest highlighted a growing gap in trust between sections of the public and government institutions. While authorities introduced relief measures and initiated discussion, many citizens continued to express concerns about governance, transparency, and the implementation of commitments. The events also contributed to increased political divisions, reinforcing calls for institutional reforms and more effective public engagement.

PAST SOLUTIONS

Negotiations with the Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC) (2026)

Following the escalation of protests, the federal government and the Government of AJ&K held negotiations with representatives of the Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC). These talks resulted in a package of economic relief measures, including commitments to reduce electricity tariffs, provide subsidies, and withdraw some protest-related cases. While the agreement helped reduce immediate tensions, many protesters argued that broader concerns regarding governance, political representation, and institutional accountability remained unresolved. This temporarily reduced tensions, but did not fully address the underlying grievances.

QUESTIONS A RESOLUTION MUST ANSWER

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1. To what extent should economic relief measures be prioritized over long-term governance reforms?
 2. How can electricity pricing policies be made more equitable while ensuring sustainable energy development?
 3. What institutional reforms could strengthen accountability within AJK?
 4. How should the Government of Pakistan support AJK while respecting its constitutional framework?
 5. What safeguards should govern the use of law enforcement during public demonstrations?
 6. How can civil society organizations contribute to conflict prevention and policy implementation?
 7. What role should hydropower revenues play in promoting local development?
 8. How can dialogue between governments and citizens become a permanent feature of policymaking?

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