

SOCIAL MEDIA CRACKDOWN

Over the last few days, Kashmiri social media users are increasingly being **surveilled, harassed, and detained** under draconian laws. This form of a crackdown is not new to Kashmiris, as the Indian state has always kept Kashmiri users on various social media platforms under surveillance and repeatedly booked users for expressing their perspectives, in particular related to expression of political and human rights.

- Over 300 accounts on Twitter are being actively monitored by the 'Cyber Cell' of the JK Police
- A number of social media users have been summoned and detained
- Users are being interrogated about their "links" and social media activity
- Phones have been confiscated
- Many have been threatened and beaten up by the armed forces
- Users have been asked to delete their social media accounts
- Those who are released have been made to sign bonds, a promise to not post anything "anti-India".
- Many users have deleted their old posts, and others have completely deactivated their accounts

This is a deeply worrying situation that raises serious concerns about an information blockade given the already existing curbs on press freedom. Social Media has been an important platform for Kashmiris to share their lived experiences with the world, and this militarization of the online space lays bare India's motivation to intimidate and stifle voices on the ground as it intensifies its settler-colonial policies in the region.

At this point it becomes all the more urgent to call the attention of the world to this unfolding crackdown on Kashmiris as young people are being **hounded for their right to expression.**

Photo: Dar Yasin