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HOLDING INDIA ACCOUNTABLE: PAKISTAN'S LEGAL OPTIONS UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW TO ADDRESS COVERT KILLINGS BY INDIA

Executive Summary

The ongoing campaign of targeted covert killings conducted by India within Pakistan has escalated tensions in the region, with disturbing implications for Pakistan's sovereignty and regional security. Since 2021, several assassinations have been linked to India's intelligence agency, RAW. These killings targeted people connected to groups that India claims are involved in militancy. These actions, which include extrajudicial killings, violate numerous international laws and agreements and exemplify state-sponsored terrorism. These illegal actions by India call for an immediate response by the international community.

Policy Recommendations

Pakistan should file a formal complaint to the United Nations Human Rights Committee under Articles 6 and 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which protect the right to life and guarantee a fair trial.

Pakistan should bring this issue before the United Nations Security Council for a formal recognition of India's actions as a threat to international peace.

Pakistan can appeal to the United Nations General Assembly to advocate for international reproachment of India's actions.

Pakistan should seek action under Articles 7, 9, and 10 of the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, holding India accountable for financing covert operations leading to targeted killings and terrorism.

Pakistan should invoke its bilateral agreements with India, like the Simla Agreement, Tashkent Declaration and Lahore Declaration, to urge India to adhere to principles of non-interference, respect for sovereignty, and peaceful dispute resolution.

Pakistan should formally request the

Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Commonwealth of Nations to address India's extrajudicial killings as a violation of Pakistan's sovereignty and human rights.

Pakistan should seek intervention from the European Union to raise the issue of covert and extrajudicial killings by India.

Pakistan should engage with Financial Action Task Force to investigate India's potential role in financing covert operations.

Pakistan should demand cessation of India's wrongful acts, seek reparation through restitution or compensation and take proportional countermeasures under international law pursuant to the Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts 2001.

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Disclaimer

The views expressed in this Policy Brief are of the author(s) alone and do not necessarily reflect policy of the IPRI.

Introduction

India's recent campaign of targeted killings within Pakistan marks a troubling escalation in its ongoing covert operations.¹ Since 2021, Pakistan has witnessed a series of assassinations that bear the hallmarks of India's intelligence agency, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW). These actions have primarily targeted individuals allegedly associated with groups that India accuses of militancy, yet the methods and intent behind these killings reveal a blatant disregard for Pakistan's sovereignty and international law. The deliberate nature of these extrajudicial actions highlights an aggressive posture by India, undermining regional stability and escalating tensions in South Asia.

Background

The long-standing conflict between Pakistan and India has seen numerous phases of hostility, particularly over the Kashmir issue. However, India's recent shift towards direct and lethal covert operations within Pakistani territory represents an unprecedented breach of international norms. Employing non-Indian nationals as operatives to conceal its involvement, India's strategy not only violates Pakistan's sovereignty but also constitutes a form of state-sponsored terrorism.

By choosing the path of covert assassinations, India has not only exacerbated bilateral tensions but has also risked broader implications for peace and security in the region. Pakistan has condemned these actions as state-sponsored terrorism, emphasizing the breach of its sovereignty. Notably, Shahid Latif and Muhammad Riaz were among those targeted, with Latif being killed outside a mosque in Sialkot, Punjab, and Riaz during morning prayers in a mosque in Rawalakot, Kashmir.

These incidents are part of a broader pattern of targeted killings across Pakistan, reflecting an aggressive strategy pursued under the pretext of counter-terrorism. Among other victims was Paramjit Singh Panjwar, a Sikh community leader, who was assassinated in Lahore. Similarly, Saleem Rehmani was killed in January 2022. The use of such tactics, including a failed car bomb attack outside a Lahore compound housing Hafiz Saeed, underscores the calculated nature of these operations.²

Statements from Indian officials further exacerbate the situation. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath remarked that Pakistan is "frightened" because "they know that the new India ... storms into their country through airstrikes and kills terrorists."³ Indian Home Minister Amit Shah, identified by Canadian officials as the senior government official directing these covert efforts, expressed a dismissive stance, stating in a television interview, "Whoever did the killings, what's

the problem? The agency will do their jobs. Why should we interfere?"⁴ Such statements reveal an explicit acknowledgment and endorsement of these actions.

Covert Killings in Canada and the United States of America (USA) by India

It is pertinent to note that India's actions extend beyond South Asia. In May 2024, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police's Integrated Homicide Investigative Team and the Federal Policing Program Pacific Region announced the arrests of four individuals for their alleged involvement in the killing of Mr. Nijjar on Canadian soil.⁵ Similarly, on 17 October 2024, the U.S. Department of Justice⁶ unveiled a second indictment against an Indian government employee, Vikash Yadav,⁷ who was charged with murder-for-hire and money laundering. These charges were connected to an earlier indictment against Nikhil Gupta, an Indian national accused of plotting to carry out assassinations on USA soil.

The credible evidence gathered through these investigations provides a compelling case for holding India accountable on an international stage. This approach of focusing on thorough and credible evidence serves as a model for Pakistan. By systematically building its case and presenting irrefutable evidence, Pakistan can strengthen its position and seek international support to address the violations of its sovereignty and the breaches of international law committed by India.

International law violations by india

India's covert operations in Pakistan, including targeted killings and extrajudicial actions, constitute clear violations of multiple international legal instruments. These violations not only exacerbate regional instability but also provide a basis for legal and diplomatic actions to hold India accountable and seek justice for the affected individuals and Pakistan as a state.

International Legal Instruments

Charter of the United Nations (UN Charter)

India's covert operations in Pakistan directly contravene the UN Charter, particularly Articles 2.1, 2.3, and 2.4. Article 2.1 mandates respect for the sovereign equality of all states, and India's actions, which disregard Pakistan's territorial integrity and political independence, breach this principle. Articles 2.3 and 2.4, which emphasize the peaceful resolution of disputes and the prohibition of the use of force are also violated as India's covert operations exacerbate regional instability

and conflict.

Redressal Mechanism

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC), under Article 39, is authorized to determine whether India's actions pose a threat to international peace. If deemed a threat, the UNSC could impose non-military sanctions under Article 41, or even authorize military intervention under Article 42. In the event of UNSC inaction due to veto powers, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) may convene under Article 14 to discuss matters impacting international peace and security, potentially generating significant political pressure on India.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

UDHR, although not legally binding, carries significant moral and political weight, binding on all UN member states, including India. These killings in Pakistan contravene several core articles of the UDHR. Article 3 affirms the right to life, liberty, and security of the person, which these killings directly violate by depriving individuals of their lives without due legal process⁸. Additionally, Article 6 guarantees recognition before the law, which is denied when legal procedures are ignored, and victims are deprived of their legal identity. These actions also breach Article 7, which ensures equality before the law and protection from discrimination. The covert nature of the operations subjects the victims to unequal legal treatment. Furthermore, Article 10 upholds the right to a fair and public hearing, which is denied in the case of extrajudicial executions.

Redressal Mechanism

While the UDHR does not offer a formal complaint mechanism, it remains a vital tool in diplomatic advocacy and international human rights discourse. Pakistan can bring these violations to the attention of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), which hears complaints against all UN member states. Furthermore, Pakistan can present the issue to UNGA and the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), highlighting these operations as violations of the UDHR's principles.⁹ Through diplomatic efforts, engagement with non-governmental organizations, human rights defenders, and international media, Pakistan can amplify its call for independent investigations, transparency, and justice, thereby holding India accountable for its actions.

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)

India's ratification of ICCPR in 1979 reflects its commitment to safeguarding fundamental rights, particularly those pertaining to life and legal fairness. However, India's recent covert operations in Pakistan have undermined these obligations, particularly through the targeted killings. These actions directly violate Article 6 of the ICCPR, which protects the inherent right to life and explicitly prohibits arbitrary deprivation of life. The extrajudicial killings, carried out without legal process, represent a gross breach of this fundamental right.

Furthermore, these actions contravene Article 14 of the ICCPR, which guarantees the right to a fair and public hearing before an independent tribunal. By engaging in these extrajudicial killings, India bypasses legal procedures, denying the victims their right to a fair trial. Additionally, no one is to be subjected to torture pursuant to Article 7. The killings could be categorized as torture if they involve the infliction of severe pain or suffering with the intent to punish.

Redressal Mechanism

Given these violations, Pakistan may invoke the provisions of Articles 6 and 14 of the ICCPR. By filing a formal complaint, Pakistan can present credible evidence of India's involvement in extrajudicial killings and argue how these actions contravene the ICCPR. The Human Rights Committee would then assess the admissibility of the complaint, followed by an evaluation of the merits. A favorable outcome for Pakistan could exert international pressure on India, compelling it to comply with its ICCPR obligations and cease such operations.

International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism (ICFST)

By ratifying ICFST in 1999, India committed to preventing and prosecuting terrorism financing. Specifically, Article 2 criminalizes the provision of funds for acts that result in harm to civilians, including extrajudicial killings. The covert operations, organized and financed by Indian operatives, clearly breach this provision.

Article 2.1(b) criminalizes acts that are designed to harm civilians outside of active hostilities, implicating India's involvement in such activities. Furthermore, Article 2.5 extends liability to those who organize, direct, or contribute to the commission of such

offenses. The organized nature of these covert operations suggests the involvement of multiple actors, implicating India in the financing of terrorism¹⁰.

Redressal Mechanism

Pakistan may pursue action under Articles 7, 9, and 10, compelling India to investigate and prosecute those responsible for financing these extrajudicial killings, particularly those within Indian jurisdiction. Since the financiers and organizers of these acts are within Indian Territory, India bears the responsibility for their prosecution and punishment. Additionally, if extradition is not pursued, the case must be submitted to the competent authorities for prosecution in accordance with the state's laws.

General Principles of International Law

Customary International Law

Prohibition on Use of Force

The prohibition of the use of force is a cornerstone of customary international law¹¹. The principle is recognized as a jus cogens norm, meaning it is a peremptory rule from which no derogation is permitted, thus reinforcing its significance in international relations.¹² By conducting extrajudicial killings on Pakistani soil, India engages in acts of aggression that undermine Pakistan's sovereignty and escalate tensions in the region. Hence, these operations exemplify a blatant breach of the prohibition against the use of force, necessitating accountability and a unified response from the international community.

Respect for Sovereignty

Respect for sovereignty is a core tenet of customary international law, mandating that states acknowledge and uphold each other's territorial integrity and political independence. India's targeted killings contravene this principle by infringing upon Pakistan's sovereign rights. These covert operations are conducted without the consent or knowledge of the Pakistani government, thereby undermining its authority and control over its territory.

Principle of Non-Intervention

The principle of non-intervention prohibits states from interfering in the internal affairs of other states, particularly through coercive or violent means¹³. India's actions constitute direct interference in Pakistan's internal matters. By executing

individuals without due process and conducting military operations clandestinely, India disregards the established norm that mandates respect for a state's internal governance and legal processes

Right to Life

As a peremptory norm, customary international law protects the right to life¹⁴ and prohibits extrajudicial killings. India's actions in conducting targeted killings without legal proceedings are grave violations of this fundamental principle. These acts cannot be justified under any circumstances and constitute a breach of customary international law. India holds the responsibility to investigate and prosecute those involved in these unlawful acts, whether state agents or non-state actors operating with state support. Furthermore, international organizations, including the UN and regional human rights bodies, play a vital role in monitoring such breaches and applying pressure for compliance with international law.

Redressal Mechanism

Pakistan should raise the issue in international forums like the UNSC, portraying India's actions as threats to global peace and security. Furthermore, Pakistan may approach the UNGA to adopt a non-binding resolution, which, though not legally enforceable, would highlight India's violations and intensify diplomatic pressure.

Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts 200115

The principle of state responsibility for internationally wrongful acts holds states accountable for actions that breach their international obligations. These articles provide a legal framework for identifying and addressing violations of international law by states.

Article 1 asserts that any internationally wrongful act by a state incurs its international responsibility. India's covert operations, as unauthorized military actions, constitute such wrongful acts, thereby engaging India's international responsibility and breaching fundamental international norms. Article 2 defines an internationally wrongful act as conduct attributable to a state that breaches its international obligations. The targeted killings violate Pakistan's sovereignty and clearly falls under this definition.

Attribution of these actions to the Indian government is a critical aspect. These actions, attributed to state organs and entities under the control of the Indian

government, are not merely isolated incidents but indicative of a broader policy framework. This is evident from the recent allegations against India regarding covert assassinations in Canada and the U.S.¹⁶, which further corroborates the argument for state responsibility. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has accused the Indian government of orchestrating a campaign to intimidate and eliminate Sikh activists on Canadian soil¹⁷.

Article 4 establishes that the actions of any state organ, regardless of its role, are considered acts of the state under international law. The operations conducted by RAW, as state organs, are therefore attributable to India, making it liable for breaches of international law. Article 8 extends state responsibility to actions carried out by non-state actors if those acts are directed by the state. Should India's covert operations involve non-state actors under its control, it remains responsible for these acts, broadening its liability to include any proxy actors engaged in the operations.

Redressal Mechanisms

These Articles provide a comprehensive framework for addressing breaches of international law through cessation, reparation, and countermeasures.

Article 30 requires the responsible state to cease the wrongful act and offer guarantees of non-repetition. Pakistan can demand an immediate end to these actions and assurances that such violations will not recur. Following cessation, Article 31 obligates the responsible state to make full reparation for the injury caused. This reparation can be in the form of restitution, compensation, or satisfaction, depending on the nature and extent of the damage. Pakistan can pursue reparation to address both material and moral harm resulting from India's actions.

Article 35 focuses on restitution, aiming to restore the situation that existed before the wrongful act, if possible. Pakistan may request that India take steps to reinstate its sovereignty and undo the effects of the unauthorized operations. If restitution is not feasible, Article 36 provides for compensation, ensuring that Pakistan receives financial reparations for the losses incurred due to India's covert activities.

In instances where restitution or compensation does not fully address the harm, Article 37 allows for satisfaction. This could involve a formal acknowledgment of the breach, an expression of regret, or an apology from India. Such actions help restore the rights of the affected state and reaffirm the commitment to international law.

Should India fail to comply with its obligations,

Article 49 permits Pakistan to take countermeasures. These actions must aim to induce compliance and be proportional to the injury suffered. However, Article 50 sets limits on countermeasures, ensuring they do not violate peremptory norms, such as the prohibition of force or the protection of fundamental human rights. Some countermeasures include implementing trade restrictions against India to exert economic pressure and demanding India to cease such wrongful acts.

Bilateral Instruments

India's covert operations and extrajudicial actions on Pakistani soil represent violations of key bilateral agreements that were designed to promote peace, respect sovereignty, and facilitate dispute resolution. The Simla Agreement¹⁸ (1972) outlines the principles of peaceful dispute resolution, non-interference in internal affairs, and non-use of force, specifically through Article 1(ii), Article 1(iii), and Article 1(vi). The Tashkent Declaration¹⁹ (1966) also emphasizes non-interference in internal matters, as outlined in Article 3, and the resolution of disputes through dialogue in accordance with the UN Charter. Similarly, the Lahore Declaration (1999) stresses the commitment to refraining from interference in each other's internal affairs and promoting the dialogue process, which includes respecting human rights and sovereignty.

India has violated these key principles through its covert operations and extrajudicial actions on Pakistani soil. These operations undermine the spirit of peaceful dispute resolution and the commitment to non-use of force. By engaging in activities such as targeted killings, espionage, and sabotage within Pakistan, India has interfered in Pakistan's internal matters, directly contravening the core tenets of mutual respect and sovereignty established by these agreements. Furthermore, India's actions have obstructed the composite dialogue process, which the Lahore Declaration specifically encourages to resolve issues through peaceful means.

Redressal Mechanism

To address these violations, Pakistan has several redressal mechanisms available. In the absence of specific enforcement provisions in these agreements, Pakistan can seek to escalate the issue through international forums such as the UNSC, framing India's actions as threats to international peace and security. Additionally, Pakistan may seek support from UNGA to pass a non-binding resolution, which, while not legally enforceable, would draw global attention to India's violations and increase diplomatic

pressure. Bilateral negotiations remain another option, where Pakistan could call for discussions under the frameworks established by the Simla Agreement, Tashkent Declaration, and Lahore Declaration to address these breaches and reaffirm commitments to peaceful coexistence and dispute resolution.

International Commissions and International Organisations

Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)

The OIC has consistently upheld the principles of non-interference, respect for territorial integrity, and sovereignty of member states, making it a key forum for Pakistan to rally support against India's violations. Article 2 of the OIC Charter explicitly commits to the promotion of peace, security, and cooperation between member states, emphasizing the importance of safeguarding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each state.

Redressal Mechanism

Pakistan could formally request the OIC to take up the issue of India's extrajudicial killings as a violation of these principles. The OIC has previously played a role in advocating for human rights, and the extrajudicial killings committed by India could be framed as an attack on both Pakistan's sovereignty and the fundamental human rights of its citizens.

The OIC could issue a resolution condemning India's actions and calling for international accountability. The organization could also establish a special committee or commission to investigate and document the violations, mobilizing member states for collective action. Furthermore, the OIC could appeal to the United Nations (UN) and other international bodies to address this issue on the global stage, bringing together diplomatic efforts to put pressure on India.

Commonwealth of Nations

The Commonwealth of Nations is another potential avenue for Pakistan. The Commonwealth Charter, which underpins the values of the organization, emphasizes the promotion of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law (Article 1). These values are directly threatened by India's actions in Pakistan.

Redressal Mechanism

Pakistan can leverage the Commonwealth framework to bring attention to the issue. The Commonwealth's political and diplomatic influence could play a critical

role in exerting pressure on India to cease its covert operations. Through the Commonwealth's mechanisms, such as the biennial Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), Pakistan could formally raise the issue of India's extrajudicial killings.

European Union (EU)

While the EU does not have direct jurisdiction over matters of state sovereignty or extrajudicial killings, it could work to foster a broader international consensus on the need to address India's actions. The EU could take a proactive role in pressuring India through diplomatic channels, potentially leading to sanctions or other measures if India continues its covert operations against Pakistan.

Redressal Mechanism

The EU has historically played a key role in facilitating dialogue and conflict resolution in regions of tension. Given the gravity of the situation between India and Pakistan, the EU could take the initiative to mediate discussions between the two countries, offering diplomatic solutions to de-escalate the ongoing covert killings. The EU could also support Pakistan in raising the issue at the UN, ensuring that global attention is directed towards India's violations of international law.

Financial Action Task Force (FATF)

FATF plays a key role in preventing money laundering and the financing of terrorism, and it can be an essential body in addressing the issue. It sets international standards for combating financial crimes, requiring countries to adopt measures in their national legislation to prevent the financing of activities associated with terrorism or violence.

Redressal Mechanism

Should Pakistan raise concerns about India's involvement in funding such operations, FATF can assess whether India complies with its obligations under these international standards and examine any financial channels being used to facilitate such activities. Furthermore, FATF monitors the compliance of its member countries with its recommendations. If there is evidence suggesting that India is financing covert operations through illicit financial networks, FATF can evaluate whether India is adhering to its obligations on financial transparency and anti-terrorism financing.

Additionally, FATF conducts mutual evaluations of

member states to assess their adherence to anti-money laundering (AML) and counter-terrorist financing (CFT) standards. During these evaluations, concerns about financial activities, including funding for covert operations, can be raised. Pakistan must submit credible evidence regarding India's financial support for these operations. This would lead to discussions on placing India on FATF's "grey list" or "blacklist," which could lead to severe economic repercussions and greater international pressure.

Notes

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- ¹⁴ Ibid 7
- ¹⁵ International Law Commission, Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts, Report of the International Law Commission on the Work of its Fifty-third Session, 2001, Yearbook of the International Law Commission, 2001, Vol. II (Part Two)
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- ¹⁹ Tashkent Declaration, 1966
- ²⁰ Lahore Declaration, 1999

Action Matrix

Options for Pakistan

Option	Pathways to Solution	Implementation of Solution	Actors Responsible	Implementation Timelines
Invoke Articles 6 and 27 of the ICCPR before the Human Rights Commission	Pakistan needs to start putting together evidence of violations of the Articles mentioned.	Pakistan should bring a complaint to the Human Rights Commission on the basis of the evidence of violations collected. The Commission will then decide further action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Foreign Affairs • Office of the Attorney-General for Pakistan (AG Office) • Ministry of Law and Justice • Human Rights Commission 	<p>3 weeks to draft the legal document of violations</p> <p>1 year for the complaint to be resolved before the Human Rights Committee.</p>
Security Council Action	Pakistan should compile legal documents containing proof of violations of the United Nations Charter Article 2.4.	The resultant complaint has to be taken to the United Nations Security Council, which will then assess whether to impose soft or hard (military) sanctions accordingly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Foreign Affairs • AG Office • Ministry of Law and Justice • United Nations Security Council 	1-1.5 months for Security Council procedure.
Approach the United Nations General Assembly for violations of bilateral treaties	Since multiple bilateral treaties between Pakistan and India, including the Simla Agreement, Tashkent Declaration and Lahore Declaration have been violated by India, Pakistan should raise this issue before the United Nations General Assembly on an urgent basis.	Pakistan should urge the UNGA to pass a resolution highlighting the violations and calling for a halt to such activities. Although non-binding, a UNGA resolution would generate international attention and pressure on India.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Foreign Affairs • AG Office • Ministry of Law and Justice • United Nations General Assembly 	3-4 months for the UNGA to address this while its assembly is in session (from September to December and then from January until all pending items are resolved)
Bilateral Talks with India	Pakistan can initiate bilateral talks with India regarding the Simla Agreement, Tashkent Declaration or Lahore Declaration their violations.	Both Pakistan and India can work their way towards a consensus and a suitable solution that is acceptable to both countries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Foreign Affairs • AG Office • Ministry of Law and Justice 	1-6 month, depending on the timeline of the talks.
Seek action under Articles 7, 9, and 10 of the ICFST and raise the issue to FATF	These articles compel India to investigate and prosecute those responsible for financing these extrajudicial killings, particularly those within Indian jurisdiction. India bears the responsibility for their prosecution and punishment.	Pakistan can pursue action under Articles 7, 9, and 10. FATF can then examine whether India is complying with its anti-terrorism financing obligations and assess any financial networks facilitating such operations, potentially leading to severe economic consequences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Foreign Affairs • AG Office • Ministry of Law and Justice 	<p>1-2 months to gather evidence and submit to FATF</p> <p>6-9 months for FATF's findings and recommendations</p>

<p>Request support from OIC, EU and Commonwealth of Nations</p>	<p>OIC, EU and Commonwealth of Nation’s political and diplomatic influence could play a critical role in exerting pressure on India to cease its covert operations.</p>	<p>Pakistan should formally request the OIC, EU and the Commonwealth of Nations to address India’s extrajudicial killings as a violation of Pakistan’s sovereignty and human rights.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Foreign Affairs • AG Office • Ministry of Law and Justice 	<p>1-2 months to gather evidence</p> <p>3-6 months for diplomatic outreach and engagement</p>
<p>Relying on Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts 2001</p>	<p>The principle of state responsibility for internationally wrongful acts holds states accountable for actions that breach their international obligations.</p>	<p>Under Article 30, Pakistan can demand India’s cease its wrongful acts and provide assurances against recurrence. Article 31 requires full reparation for injury, through restitution, compensation, or satisfaction, addressing both material and moral harm. If restitution is not possible, Article 36 allows for compensation, while Article 37 permits satisfaction, such as an apology. Should India fail to comply, Article 49 allows Pakistan to take proportional countermeasures.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Foreign Affairs • AG Office • Ministry of Law and Justice 	<p>3-6 months to issue formal legal requests to India and claim reparation</p> <p>6-12 months to take legal measures and proportional countermeasures</p>