
Invisible Citizens of Pakistan

Minorities in Focus
Report 2013-2014



“Of course, the aim of a constitutional democracy is to safeguard the rights of the minority and avoid the tyranny of the majority.”

- Cornel West



About the author

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Introduction



Peshawar: All Saints' bomb blasts killed 122 worshipers is the worst attack on the Christian minority in the living memory

On 14 August 1947, Pakistan became the first country in the history of the world to be founded in the name of religion. Nearly a century long rule of the British Empire began to fade in the early 20th century, and the two largest religious communities, Hindus and Muslims, began to focus on the differences between them and failed to forge a common ground, in spite of living together for centuries.

When the cup of tolerance began to run dry, the demand for a separate piece of land resonated throughout the British Empire in the sub-continent. The social injustices, conflicts, religious-driven riots and differences between Hindus and Muslims became more apparent, and the cries for separation started to grip the attention of those at the helm of affairs.

The religious tension between Hindus and Muslims escalated and reddened the subcontinent with blood. Social unrest, political upheaval, conspiracies, attacks and arsons became an everyday routine.



Political, educational and social movements for separation started to simmer, and thousands of people died during communal riots and conflicts in the pre-Partition undivided India. The ultimate solution, therefore, was to divide Hindus and Muslims into two countries: India and Pakistan.

Pakistan under the leadership of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, known in Pakistan as Quaid-e-Azam or Great Leader, became an independent state where Muslims could live their lives according to the teachings of Islam. Given the mistreatment of Muslims in British India, the founding fathers of Pakistan wanted it to be a free state where everyone has equal rights (including the right to freedom of expression) and religion will be honoured and respected by all people.

During a famous speech by Jinnah to the first constituent Assembly of Pakistan on 11 August 1947, he stated:

“You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place of worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed - that has nothing to do with the business of the State...We are starting with this fundamental principle that we are all citizens and equal citizens of one State...I think we should keep that in front of us as our ideal and you will find that in due course Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as citizens of the State.”

This message breathed a new hope into the country and a glimmer of life to the millions of people - minorities in particular - who had previously lived a fragile life. Being on the frontlines of persecution under their erstwhile masters, they envisioned a life free of violence and persecution in new Pakistan.

At the time of Partition, around 23% of Pakistan’s population was from a non-Muslim background. The hope of change and a new beginning warmed many hearts. A life free of violence, persecution, oppression and marginalization was a dream which inspired many in the early days of the newly minted Pakistan; however the future was far from this.

Soon after Independence, minorities in Pakistan felt the hatred, violence, alienation and discrimination blowing in the wind, and this ultimately began to determine their future. Members of minorities started to feel alienated in their newly born country; their hopes and dreams started to crumble and a new reality began to emerge.

Life for minorities in Pakistan started with a baptism of fire. The early years of Pakistan witnessed an unprecedented rise of attacks on minorities. Hindus who lived in Pakistan were attacked; their religious places were desecrated, houses were looted and people were raped. This led to the mass



migration of the Hindu minority to India; for example, in December 1949 around 30,000 Hindus fled after their homes were attacked and their religious places were desecrated in Khulna.¹

Similarly, in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), the Bengali Hindu minority was subject to violence and discrimination at the hands of Bengali Muslims, which ended up in the trans-migration of around 2.1 million people.

Minorities in modern Pakistan

Given the mass migrations, persecution, and mistreatment of minorities in Pakistan, the number of minorities began to diminish day by day. Today the percentage of minorities is roughly 5% of Pakistan's soaring 180,000 million population. This is a reduction of around 20% since Partition.

Minority groups in modern Pakistan include Christians, Hindus, Sikhs, Ahmadis, Parsis, Zoroastrians and Bahá'ís. Christians are the biggest minority group in Pakistan. According to the latest census data (from 1998), Christians make up around 1.69% of the population of Pakistan. Hindus are the second biggest minority with approximately 1.6% of the population, and Ahmadis make up 1.4%. The Baha'i community numbers 40,000, Sikhs number 20,000, and Parsis are roughly estimated to number 1,600.

¹ Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru: pt. 1. 15 November 1949-8 April 1950
http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=Fr61AAAAIAAJ&redir_esc=y

Islamization of Pakistan

Jinnah's vision of a free Pakistan was blurred from the outset by those who wanted to keep it 'pure' and 'Islamic' without the shadows of 'outsiders'. This gradual but the consistent move towards making Pakistan an Islamic state presented an underlying threat to the vulnerable minority groups of Pakistan.

The first Constituent Assembly of Pakistan stressed the need to make Pakistan into an Islamic state during the 1950s. Many Muslim scholars, politicians and religious leaders, from within and without Government, started to demand a strict state founded on the teachings of the Quran and the Sunnah (a way of living as proscribed by the teachings of Muhammad).

The leader and founder of the Islamic movement (Jamaat-e-Islami), Abu Ala Maududi, led people in the demand for a state where the sovereignty rests with Allah; where Sharia law (laws derived from the Quran and teachings of Muhammad) is the law of the land, which no man-made law could contravene.

On March 12 1949, the first Objective Resolution was passed. This was deeply influenced by Maududi's demand for an Islamic State and became the foundational principle for Pakistan's constitution in later days. Pakistan started to become a land designed for Muslims, where rights of the majority community were greater protected by the Constitution of Pakistan than non-Muslims. Minorities began to be socially, politically, and constitutionally denied, and the coming years saw an ever-increasing marginalization of minorities in Pakistan at almost every level.

General Zia-ul-Haq, the military dictator who ruled the country between 1977 and 1988, imposed state-led Islamization. He made amendments to the Constitution to bring it more into line with the teachings of Islam. He brought in discriminatory laws, including Pakistan's blasphemy laws, which were often used to target minorities in Pakistan.

As such, the preface of persecution against minorities was writ large during Zia's regime as he wanted to organise the whole nation under the banner of Islam, thus scapegoating minorities as 'others' within their own country.

The seed of discrimination sown in Zia's Pakistan fuelled the fire of religious tension, extremism and fundamentalism which Pakistan continues to struggle against after more than three decades. Minorities of Pakistan were therefore never secured, protected or recognised in the way envisioned by the founding fathers of Pakistan. The social injustice, discriminations and the institutionalized marginalization further compounded their rights as the citizens of Pakistan.

Blasphemy laws

Blasphemy laws were first introduced to the Indian Subcontinent by the British. The communal tension between different religious communities, as well as tensions from the political parties, ended up in riots and unrest before Partition. The 1920s was the bloodiest decade of communal riots and became the foundation for the creation of blasphemy laws, restricting activities which could be seen as blasphemous, to keep public order between the two major communities: Hindus and Muslims.

After Pakistan was carved out of India it inherited these colonial laws. However, after the ascendancy of military dictator General Zia-ul-Haq, these laws were reformed in a bid to please the General's Islamic supporters, although this further cornered and marginalized minorities in Pakistan.

Blasphemy laws are thought to be some of Pakistan's most controversial laws as they have claimed so many lives and divided communities. Critics of these laws believe that they have damaged interreligious relations, and have also been widely used by radicals to whip up religious sentiments of the people and target minorities. They are also used against members of religious minorities to settle personal scores such as land settlements and disputes.

"These laws are used as instruments of persecution in the hands of the strong to target the weak and the vulnerable," said Manassi Bernard, Chief Executive of Global Minorities Alliance, which is running a worldwide campaign to highlight the case of Aasia Bibi, a Christian farm hand who was given a death sentence in 2010 over the trivial matter of drinking water from the same cup as her Muslim colleagues.

During the British rule in the Subcontinent (1851-1947) there were only seven blasphemy-related cases. However, in Zia's 11-year rule (1977- 1988), around 80 blasphemy cases were reported – and, according to the Pakistani newspaper, *Express Tribune*, more than 1,000 people have been charged under blasphemy laws since the introduction of Zia's reforms.²

According to the report *Blasphemy laws in Pakistan* by the Center for Research and Security Studies (CRSS):

"The British government took seventy seven (77) years to introduce four blasphemy laws while General Zia- ul-Haq took only seven (7) years to introduce five blasphemy laws, PPC 295B, & C and PPC 298A, B, & C, two of which were specific to Ahmadi and Shia minority communities."

² <http://tribune.com.pk/story/89376/blasphemy-cases-false-accusers-escape-%20punishment/>

From 1953 to 2012 it is believed there have been 434 offenders of Pakistan blasphemy laws: 258 Muslims (including Shia/Sunni), 114 Christians, 57 Ahmadis, and 4 Hindus.

According to reports there have been 59 extra judicial killings over the years, where people took the law into their own hands and killed people either in police custody or in prisons. According to data from *Blasphemy laws in Pakistan - A Historical Overview*³ by the Center for Research and Security Studies (CRSS) the number of blasphemy cases has sharply escalated in the post-Zia Pakistan, which is a concern for the future of minority communities:

- 1713- 1851: One blasphemy case in almost 140 years.
- 1851- 1947: Six blasphemy cases in 95 years.
- 1947-1987: Eight blasphemy cases in 40 years.
- 1987- August 2012: 247 blasphemy cases in 35 years effecting nearly 328 persons.

According to the *United States Commission of International Religious Freedom Report 2011*:

“The religious freedom situation in Pakistan deteriorated greatly during the reporting period... Blasphemy laws are used against member of religious minority communities and dissenters within the majority Muslim community, and frequently result in imprisonment on account of religion or belief and or vigilante violence. Three individuals had death sentences imposed or upheld against them during the reporting period.... Anti- government elements espousing an intolerant interpretation of Islam continue to perpetrate acts of violence against other Muslims and religious minorities. The government response to religiously motivated extremism remains inadequate, despite increased military operations.”

Blasphemy cases

The recent escalation of the misuse of these laws continues to haunt members of minority religious communities. Some of these episodes have led to riots reminiscent of pre- and post-Partition communal violence. Below are the cases which were in the public eye at the time of writing this report in late 2013, plus key cases from previous years:

- In October, a Christian pastor, Adnan Masih (a Christian surname meaning ‘Christ’ in Urdu), along with his two brothers Irfan Masih and Mushtaq Masih, were accused of writing derogatory words against Islam in Lahore.⁴

³ <http://www.crss.pk/story/4376/blasphemy-laws-in-pakistan-a-historical-overview/>

⁴ <http://www.persecution.org/2013/10/18/3-christians-in-lahore-pakistan-accused-of-blasphemy/>

- In October, three Christian men from Lahore were accused of writing derogatory remarks about the prophet Muhammed. This was the first reported blasphemy case after the twin suicide attack on a church in Peshawar on 22 September 2013.
- In September, a Christian man, Boota Masih, was killed in Karachi over a professional dispute while police and guards watched.⁵
- In September, three men were charged with blasphemy during the country wide protests following the terrorist attack on a church in Peshawar. A Muslim man accused three Christian men of hitting the names of Caliphs with sticks, which is considered blasphemy.⁶
- In September, the head teacher of a Muslim school in Lahore was accused of circulating blasphemous literature.⁷
- In July, a Christian man, Sajjad Masih from Gojra in Punjab, was given life imprisonment for sending a blasphemous text. The prosecution failed to prove the case but the judge, Shahzad Raza, gave a verdict anyway.⁸
- In July, another Christian couple, Shafaqat Masih and his wife Shagufta Bibi, also from Gorja, were accused of blasphemy on charges of sending blasphemous texts.⁹
- In March, a Christian man, Sawan Masih from Joseph colony, was charged under blasphemy laws in Lahore. A mob also torched more than 178 Christian houses over rumours about blasphemy.¹⁰
- In March, a Muslim man, Ghulam Hussain, was accused of blasphemy for burning the pages of Quran.¹¹ He is said to be in poor mental health.
- In February, a blasphemy case was raised against Sherry Rehman, the former Pakistan Ambassador to the United States, for speaking against blasphemy laws on a television programme.¹²
- The former Governor of Punjab, Salman Taseer, a liberal and moderate Pakistani was gunned down by his own security detail, Mumtaz Qaderi, in Islamabad on 4 January 2011. Mr Taseer was outspoken against discriminatory laws, dubbing them 'Black laws'. He had also visited Asia Bibi, a blasphemy convict on death row¹³.
- Shahbaz Bhatti was a Christian who served as the Federal Minister for Minorities Affairs. He was a life-long critic of blasphemy laws and advocate for the rights of minorities in Pakistan. Mr



Shahbaz Bhatti was assassinated on 2 March 2011 for demanding the repeal of blasphemy laws

⁵ <http://www.christianpost.com/news/protestant-christian-pastor-laymen-charged-with-blasphemy-in-pakistan-for-derogatory-text-106865/>

⁶ <http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2013/09/28/city/karachi/three-christian-men-booked-for-blasphemy-in-karachi/>

⁷ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/600433/school-principal-blasphemy-accused-to-be-sent-for-mental-check-up/>

⁸ <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/pakistan-christian-man-gets-life-term-for-sending-blasphemous-smss/1141704/>

⁹ <http://shoebat.com/2013/07/22/christians-of-gojra-again-under-threat/>

¹⁰ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-21732448>

¹¹ http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-03-26/pakistan/38039961_1_blasphemy-law-christian-neighbourhood-angry-mob

¹² <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/02/21/us-pakistan-usa-idUSBRE91K0KE20130221>

¹³ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/314574/the-year-of-fear/%20=%20Saroop%20Ijaz/>

Bhatti received death threats from Muslims extremists because of his stance over blasphemy laws. He was gunned down on 2 January 2011 in Islamabad.¹⁴

- In July 2012 Ghulam Abbas, a 40-year-old Christian man in poor mental health, was accused of burning pages of the Quran in Bahawalpur, Sindh Pakistan. An angry mob stormed the police station and dragged him out of the prison, poured gasoline over him and burned him to death.
- According to the Asian Human Rights Commission a Hindu man, Jagdesh Kumar, was beaten to death by Muslim workers in April 2008. He was accused of blasphemy.¹⁵

Minorities in Pakistan often describe blasphemy laws as 'hanging swords' over their heads. Professional jealousies, personal interests and land grabs are often the reasons behind the misuse of blasphemy laws. This can sometimes inflame a mob mentality, lynching communities and/or individuals due to allegations of 'blasphemy'. In recent times, this has become increasingly the norm, as the above cases demonstrate.

¹⁴ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oBTBqUJomRE>

¹⁵ <http://www.humanrights.asia/news/ahrc-news/AHRC-STM-103-2008>

Persecution of Christian Community

Christians in Pakistan have long battled for equal, fundamental and constitutional rights. They face institutional discrimination in public and education sectors and are often reduced to taking menial jobs, making life difficult and further compounding their poor socio-economic situation.

During the British Raj, Christians were comparatively better off. The community had access to both public and governmental jobs and played a key role in the advancement of the country, with educational and medical progression as key fields of interest; for example, in 1972, the Government of Pakistan, under Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, laid the foundation of socialist economic reforms to help the Pakistan economy by nationalizing all the missionary-run educational institutions, schools and colleges, which at the time were leading in the field of education.

However, following the increasing Islamization of Pakistan, prejudice against minorities such as the Christian community now starts with the books taught in Pakistani schools and institutions. This discrimination taught by schools breeds a culture of intolerance and prejudice, both at primary and secondary level.

Text books in Pakistan frequently glorify Islam and its heroes, whereas other religions are rarely mentioned neglected or used negatively. The textbooks term Non-Muslims 'infidels', the subject material used in textbooks often inflames religious tensions even at young ages, and some of the religiously run schools - madrassas - provide fundamentalist teachings which look to incite religious motivated violence¹⁶.

Societal discrimination, hatred and violence aimed at Christians is widely observed and often leaves Christians steeped in poverty; for example, the government encourages non-Muslims into menial jobs, as demonstrated by a recent statement from the Chief Minister of Khyber Paktankhwa, Pervez Khattak, who said in July 2013 that only non-Muslims would be recruited as sweepers.¹⁷

Christians are also frequently victims of the misuse of blasphemy laws. Here are some recent key cases:

- A 14 year old Christian girl, Rimsha Masih, who potentially has learning difficulties, was accused of blasphemy by a Muslim cleric from the Meharabad slums of Islamabad, allegedly in a bid to oust the Christian community from the area. The cleric engineered the circumstances behind the accusations of blasphemy by planting burnt pages of the Quran in the Rimsha's bag. He was later found guilty and on 20 November 2012 the Islamabad High Court dropped the charges

¹⁶ <http://www.uscirf.gov/images/AR2009/final%20ar2009%20with%20cover.pdf>

¹⁷ <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/pakistans.christians.and.other.religious.minorities.should.take.sweeper.jobs.says.one.minister/33360.htm>

against Rimsha. She was later granted asylum in Canada through the intervention of Jason Kenny, Canadian Minister of Immigration and Citizenship.

- Aasia Bibi is believed to be the first woman in the history of Pakistan to have received a sentence of death by hanging. She was accused of using derogatory words against the Prophet Muhammed while working on a Muslim owned farm in Shekiupura District of Lahore, Punjab Pakistan. In 2013 Global Minorities Alliance launched a worldwide awareness-raising campaign calling for her release, and is currently gathering signatures in support of this¹⁸. In September, 2013 GMA has launched a song Free Aasia Bibi – see <https://itunes.apple.com/gb/album/free-aasia-bibi/id700915773?i=700916360> for more details.
- In March 2013 a Christian man, Sawan Masih from Joseph Colony, was accused of blasphemy following an apparently trivial matter. This eventually led to the torching of a whole Christian community by an angry Muslim mob of 2,000 people. Global Minorities Alliance demanded that the Government of Pakistan reconstructed the houses of the Christian community who had lost their homes in the fire, and also wrote letters to all Members of Parliament, Members of the Scottish Parliament, Members of the European Parliament and all G8 countries to raise awareness about the misuse of Pakistan blasphemy laws.¹⁹

¹⁸ <http://www.globalminorities.co.uk/FreeAasia>

¹⁹ <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/protest.against.pakistans.blasphemy.laws.at.scottish.parliament/32087.htm>

Persecution of Ahmadiyya Community

The Ahmadiyya religious sect, founded in 1889 by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and numbering 2-4 million in Pakistan, is subject to systematic and relentless persecution and organised attacks. In 1974, Ahmadis were declared ‘non-Muslims’ as they believe there was a Prophet after Muhammed. During Zia’s regime they were legally barred from proselytising as well identifying themselves as Muslims, and are now often the subject of hate campaigns launched by radical clerics.

The Pakistan Penal Code 298-C states:

“An Ahmadi who refers to his faith as Islam, or preaches or propagates his faith, or invites others to accept his faith, by words, either spoken or written, or by visible representations, or in any manner whatsoever outrages the religious feelings of Muslims will be punished with up to three years in prison and is liable to pay a fine.”

As such, blasphemy laws are often used against Ahmadis for using posing as Muslims for citing the Quran, performing Hajj, or calling their worship places ‘mosques’; for example, during the last Eid Festival, Ahmadis were stopped from carrying out ritual Islamic sacrifices by police in Lahore.²⁰

Sometimes those accused of blasphemy include children, and false claims of ‘blasphemy’ have often been levelled at the community by those wishing to settle scores. Here are some examples of recent cases against the community:

- Mr Masood Ahmad, a British-Pakistani doctor, was charged with blasphemy after a religious leader posing as a patient attended his homeopathy clinic in Lahore and secretly recorded him reading a verse from the Quran. Global Minorities Alliance helped to campaign for his release after he was refused bail. He has since been bailed and has returned to the UK.
- A First Investigation Report has previously been lodged against the residents of the entire town of Rabwah, which has the largest Ahmadiyya community in Pakistan.
- An Ahmadi man, Atiq Bajwa, was charged with blasphemy for using an Islamic way of greeting in November 1992. Mr Bajwa served five years of his sentence before he was murdered.
- Mr Muhammed Iqbal, a convert to Ahmadiyya, had an argument with a local Muslim cleric, Zulfiqar Ali, who accused him of blasphemy using two false witnesses. Mr Iqbal was given a life sentence.
- In 2012, Muhammad Asharaf, an Ahmadi, was charged with blasphemy for posing as a Muslim in Sargodha, Pakistan.²¹

²⁰ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/619038/no-qurbani-for-you-police-stop-ahmadis-from-ritual-sacrificing-in-lahore/>

²¹ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/418714/ahmadi-charged-with-blasphemy-for-second-time-in-sargodha/>

The anti-Ahmadiyya movements in Pakistan have repeatedly targeted the community. According to the 2012 *International Religious Freedom Report* by the US State Department, Ahmadis have become the target of rising sectarianism while Government is still unable to grant them equal rights.

As an example of this, in July 2012 the local police in Kharian, Punjab, demolished six minarets of an Ahmadiyya religious place. The walls of the mosque were removed and whitewashed as they had religious verses written on them. It is believed to be the first time an Ahmadiyya place of worship has been demolished by police since 1984.



Police demolished six minarets of Baitul Hamad in Kharian, Punjab 2012

Ahmadis are denied more than just their religious rights. The community is often denied access to education and public life, as well as the right to vote. For example, in 2011 in Hafizabad, Punjab Pakistan, around ten Ahmadi students and a teacher were banished from a school on the basis of their beliefs. In December 2012, 15 armed men attacked an Ahmadiyya graveyard and desecrated more than 120 graves.

Every year, there are conferences and seminars held across the country in remembrance of the 1974 enactment of 2nd Amendment to the Pakistan constitution which declared Ahmadis 'non-Muslims'. At these events, Muslim clerics preach hatred against the community and declare 'Jihad' (Holy War) against them, calling for their social and economic boycott. Businesses also shut down, and Muslims have been known to vow to chase Ahmadis to death.

This sort of hate speech is unconstitutional, as well as violating human rights. The Pakistan Penal Code declares hate speech to be a criminal offence, yet no charges are brought against those religious leaders who incite, excite and propagate hatred against Ahmadis. According to the section 153-A:

“Whoever by words, either spoken or written ... promotes or incites, or attempts to promote or incite, on grounds of religion ... disharmony or feelings of enmity, hatred or ill-will between different religious groupsshall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to five years and with fine.”

This section is, however, being overlooked, leading to the deaths of Ahmadis; for example, in September 2013, Ahmadi Ijaz Ahmad Kiyani and four other Ahmadis became victims of targeted killings in Karchi, Sindh Province, purely on religious grounds.

Persecution of Hindu community



Hindus are estimated to number around 8-10 million in Pakistan. Most Hindus live in the Sindh Province of Pakistan and, like other minority communities, are often subject to persecution at the hands of the majority community.

A particular problem facing the Hindu community is the kidnap and forced conversion of Hindu girls. The head of the Pakistan Hindu Council recently condemned the considerable rise of cases of forced conversion to

Islam, yet no substantial protection or safety is provided by the Government of Pakistan.

According to *United States Commission on International Religious Freedom Report 2011*:

“In March 2010, a Karachi-based Hindu attorney associated with the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan estimated that 20 to 25 young Hindu women are abducted and forcibly converted every month. The attorney claimed that the victims ‘families often fail to register cases with the police out of fear of violent retaliation’.²²”

Hindus are sometimes persecuted even after death. Bhuro Bheel, a low caste Hindu from Pingrio Badin District of Sindh Province, was exhumed by a Muslim mob less than 12 hours after his burial in October 2013.

Some of the local Muslim community objected to the burial of a Hindu in a Muslim graveyard, with many believing that there are already Hindu dead bodies buried there. Muslim religious leaders used this to incite religious tension between the two communities.²³

Given the mistreatment of Hindus and the deprivation of their fundamental rights in Pakistan, hundreds and thousands of Hindus continue to flee to neighbouring India under the pretexts of religious pilgrimages, or tracing family history.

Since 1971 more than 100,000 Hindus have migrated to the Indian state of Rajasthan. Around 13,000 Pakistani Hindus were granted citizenship by the Indian Government in 2005-2006, demonstrating the insecurity Hindus feel in Pakistan, and the inability of Pakistan Government to protect its own minority citizens.

²² <http://www.uscirf.gov/images/book%20with%20cover%20for%20web.pdf> (p 114-115)

²³ <http://tribune.com.pk/story/615028/final-unrest-badin-mob-digs-out-hindu-mans-grave/>

Here are some examples of the persecution facing Hindus:

- According to the Pakistan newspaper *Daily Times*, around 27 Hindu children were kidnapped for ransom in 2011 in Northern Sindh.²⁴
- In May 2011, *Pakistan Hindu Post* reported that around 15 Hindu people including women, children and men were burnt alive by unidentified men in Sibi, Baluchistan Province.²⁵

²⁴ http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2012%5C09%5C05%5Cstory_5-9-2012_pg7_25

²⁵ <http://pakistanhindupost.blogspot.co.uk/2011/05/muslims-put-bus-on-fire-15-hindus-burnt.html>

Persecution of minority women

In a male dominated society, women are often mistakenly considered second class citizens. If a woman happens to come from a minority background this means a double stigma, and an even lower status in society.

Commenting on the plight of Christian women in Pakistan, Fides, the official Vatican News Agency, stated:

“Christian girls are considered goods to be spoiled at leisure. Abusing them is a right. According to the community’s mentality it is not even a crime. Muslims regard them as spoils of wars.”

The ill-treatment of minority women in Pakistan has a long history. Incidents of violence, harassment, forcible conversions, killings, rape and abductions are reported almost every day. The legal system does not offer much help to the victims or families because of pressure from the local community (sometimes involving influential local politicians), victimization, and fear of retribution.

According to a report by Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC) which appeared in the *Daily Times*, around 2,000 minority women were forcibly converted to Islam through rape, torture and kidnappings alone in 2011.²⁶

Here are some examples of the ill treatment minority women in Pakistan face:

- Manisha Kumari, 14, and Rinkle Kumari, 19, were forcibly converted from Hinduism to Islam and married to Muslim men in 2012²⁷.
- Rebecca Masih, a young Christian health worker was kidnapped on her way to work in Sindh Province of Pakistan by three armed men on 2 October 2012. Rebecca Masih was later forcibly converted to Islam and married to a Muslim man, Manzar Deher. In spite of Rebecca’s father’s complaint to the police, the family is still seeking justice.
- Shumaila Bibi, another Christian girl, was reported as abducted and forcibly converted to Islam in September 2012.



A Hindu girl, Rinkle Kumari was forcibly converted to Islam

²⁶ http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2012%5C09%5C05%5Cstory_5-9-2012_pg7_25

²⁷ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-17272943>

Role of police and law enforcement infrastructure

A country's police force is one of the central institutions of a good law enforcement structure, alongside departments like the intelligence service and the judiciary, as well as a stable and democratic political apparatus.

Effective, targeted and result-oriented law enforcement is crucial to counter fundamentalism, extremism and terrorism. The importance of the rule of law and a transparent procedure to safeguard the rights of every citizen should be the prime responsibility of the courts, as supported by the police.

However, the underequipped and under resourced Pakistan Police Service is plagued with political manipulations, a lack of a modern forensic service, corruption, and bad governance. The number of terrorist attacks, targeted killings, acts of extremism, and sectarian violence is forever on the increase, which presents a formidable challenge for any law enforcement department attempting to counter this many-headed monster.

The malpractices of corruption, the abuse of power/authority and the manipulation of politics breed a culture of lawlessness; as such, the Pakistan Police Service has often been criticised for their inability to protect and/or safeguard the weak and the vulnerable – with it often being reported that they are involved in criminal practices themselves.

Role of police in blasphemy-related cases

The role of police in blasphemy-related cases is often considered to be questionable and biased, forming a part of the 'organised crime' network working against the accused. The role of the police is to stop violence, maintain calm and provide protection to victims; however, it is often observed that the police are unable or unwilling to protect the accused in blasphemy-related cases.

For example, Ghulam Abbas, 40, a blasphemy accused in Sindh prison, was burnt to death after an angry mob attacked the police station and dragged him out into the street. There were many questions to be asked in the aftermath - What did the police do at the scene? Why was Abbas not rescued during this extra-judicial attack and murder? Will there be an enquiry against the police personnel on the duty for their inability to protect a man in their custody? - but many of these questions remain unanswered.

The police allegedly work with criminals in some cases to teach blasphemy victims 'lessons':

- In March 2011 Qamar David, a blasphemy convict serving a life sentence, died mysteriously in prison. Mr David told his lawyer prior to his death that he'd received death threats from

police officials; however the police stated that Mr David died of natural causes. The family of Mr David is unconvinced of this, and believe the police were involved in his death.²⁸

- In 1992 Bantu Masih, 80, and Mukhtar Masih, 50, were arrested on allegations of blasphemy. Mr Bantu was stabbed eight times at a Lahore police station and at the hospital, the police convinced him not to file a case against the attacker and he died later of his injuries. Mr Mukhtar was also tortured to death in police custody.
- Tahir Iqbal, a Christian convert from Lahore, was poisoned in prison in July 1992.
- In 2003 Samuel Masih was arrested for allegedly spitting on the wall of the mosque. He contracted Tuberculosis and was taken to hospital in Lahore. One of the policemen escorting him used a hammer to kill Mr Masih in the presence of other police officers, stating that it was his duty to do this.

Police are often seen as ‘silent spectators’ during mob violence, hesitating to initiate any steps to stop the violence. This negligence, corruption and bad governance make minority members of the community more vulnerable to attack.

²⁸ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-12749349>

Attacks on religious places

The Constitution of Pakistan prohibits the desecration of holy places. The offender is meant to be liable for imprisonment for two years under Article 295 of Pakistan Penal Code; however, it has become the norm to attack, vandalize and desecrate religious places of minority faith communities, to the point where no Hindu temple, Christian church, Shia mosque, Ahmadi mosque or Sikh Gurdwara is safe from the mob violence or suicide attack.

During British Rule no holy places were desecrated, but since Partition it is estimated that around 84 holy places have been desecrated by extremist Muslim groups. Here are some examples:

- The most recent and deadly attack on a Christian religious place was on 22 September 2013 at All Saint's Church in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province of Pakistan. The twin suicide attack reportedly took place when final blessings were said in a church full of worshippers - approximately 400-600 people at the time the bombs were detonated.²⁹ Global Minorities Alliance met with the Church of Scotland Minister Reverend Aftab Gohar at Abbotsgrange Church in Grangemouth, Scotland in the aftermath of the attack. Rev Gohar, who is originally from Pakistan, lost his mother among other relatives in the attack. He told Global Minorities Alliance that around 122 Christians died and 168 were injured, many of whom were still looking for medical assistance when Rev Gohar flew to Pakistan after the tragedy.³⁰
- In May 2010 the Pakistan Taliban attacked an Ahmadiyya mosque in Lahore, killing 93 worshippers during Friday prayers.
- On 22 September 2013 two Ahmadiyya mosques in Sailkot, Punjab, were vandalized by the police. The Quranic verses on the walls of the mosques were later whitewashed.
- In 1992 the Babri mosque in Uttar Pradesh, India, was razed to the ground by Hindu militants. Scores of Hindu temples were stoned and vandalized by Muslims in retaliation, and the number of victims of revenge attacks continues to rise to the present day. According to an article in the *New York Times* the tension between the two countries escalated following the attack, which saw an unprecedented rise on attacks on religious places in Pakistan. More than 30 Hindu temples were attacked in Pakistan during the country wide riots.³¹
- In October 2012 another Hindu temple, Sri Krishna Ram Temple Sindh, Karachi, was attacked by Muslims extremists following the release of an anti-Islam film in the US. This left scores of

²⁹ <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/sep/23/pakistan-church-bombings-christian-minority>

³⁰ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-24513326>

³¹ <http://www.nytimes.com/1992/12/08/world/pakistanis-attack-30-hindu-temples.html>

people dead in Pakistan as Muslim protestors destroyed temple statues, desecrated Hindu Holy Books and beat caretakers of temples.³²

- According to an Asian Human Rights Commission report released in December 2012, the Pakistan military demolished a Hindu temple which they believed to be encroaching upon a commercial building. The temple was built seven years before the creation of Pakistan and the land belonged to the Evacuee Trust Board. The demolition of a Hindu temple is against the violation of UN International Covenant on Economics, Social and Cultural Rights.³³

³² http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-202_162-57523569/

³³ <http://www.humanrights.asia/news/urgent-appeals/AHRC-UAC-200-2012>

Sectarian violence

Since its inception Pakistan has been battling with non-state actors and extremist groups which continue to target different political, social and religious groups. In 1953, soon after Partition, sectarian riots and attacks in Punjab led to the killing of hundreds and thousands of innocent people. Sectarianism has been a problem in Pakistan ever since.

The ceaseless sectarian violence has impaired relationships between individuals from different communities and religions, and has damaged any steps made towards interfaith harmony in the country.

What fans the flame of sectarianism is the religious radical philosophy which eulogizes a certain sect and preaches hatred against the other. Dreams of 'paradise' are often used by radicals to lure followers who then attack innocent people in their religious places of worship in a bid to gain 'rewards'.

From October 2001 to 2011, no part of the country was safe from sectarian attack; the number of deaths due to sectarian violence across the country is reported to be around 1,843 during this period.

According to the Pakistan Security Report released in 2009³⁴, there were around 79 incidents of sectarian violence in 2008. This rose to 147 in 2009. These incidents killed 446 people and injured 587 in sectarian-related attacks and clashes that year. Moreover, seven suicide attacks were reportedly linked to sectarian strife targeting the Shia community specifically. The attacks caused 211 deaths and injured 603 more.

The Government of Pakistan does not seem able to curb these sectarian attacks, which fuel the fire of alienation to the detriment of interfaith harmony, hindering peace between different communities. According to Human Rights Watch in 2011-2012, Pakistani minority groups like Shia Muslims, Hindus, Christians and Ahmadis face 'unprecedented insecurity and persecution in the country'.

Extremists and fundamentalists have succeeded in furthering their nefarious acts to terrorize innocent Pakistani citizens on various fronts. Scores of militant organisations have spread hatred and violence against other sects, with the Shia-Sunni conflicts seeing the worst of the attacks; for example, the banned extremist organisation, Lashkar-e-Jangvi, was reportedly involved in targeting

³⁴https://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CC4QFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fsan-pips.com%2Fdownload.php%3Ff%3D29.pdf&ei=i4NmUr_CHeec0QWL1ICgDg&usg=AFQjCNGeJWh_2D-sb6cJbx0gfuJSmBmRDA&bvm=bv.55123115,d.d2k

the Shia community in Pakistan in collaboration with the Taliban. The group was banned by the Government in 2001 but has continued to operate anyway.

Shia Muslims follow an offshoot of Islam and roughly make up 15-25% of the Muslim population, whilst around 70-80% are Sunni Muslims. Between 2000 and 2010 it is reported that more than 2,000 members of the Shia Hazara community including were killed.



Shia community during a sit-in against a bomb attack in Quetta

These sectarian attacks are often thought to be funded by other Shia and Sunni states around the world, such as Iranian and Saudi Arabian communities, and revenge attacks are regrettably an every day routine in Pakistan. For example:

- According to the BBC around 247 people were killed in the sectarian attacks between April and the end of June alone in 2013.³⁵
- In January 2013 a bomb blast killed 130 people and injured more than 270 people in Quetta North West of Pakistan³⁶. There was a national day of mourning, while families refused to bury their dead and staged a sit-in in the city to call for safety and security for the Shia community.
- In February 2013 around 90 people died and more than 180 were wounded during a bombing in a majority Shia area of Quetta.
- In March 2013 a bomb blast killed more than 45 people and injured 150.³⁷
- In June 2013 a twin bomb blast killed 60 people and injured around 187.³⁸
- In September 2010 at least 35 Shia Muslims were killed and a further 160 people were injured during an attack.
- In February 2012, 18 Shia Muslims from Gilgit-Baltistan were killed by extremists dressed in military uniforms. The dead included three children.
- It is estimated that around 200 Shia Muslims have been killed since the start of 2013, and 400 died from targeted killing in 2012.
- In 2002, 12 Shia Hazara cadets were gunned down in Quetta.
- In 2003, 53 worshippers died after a Shia mosque was targeted.

³⁵ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-23319254>

³⁶ <https://dawn.com/news/778101/relatives-refuse-to-bury-blast-victims-hold-sit-in-with-coffins-desperate-hazaras-want-army-rule-in-quetta>

³⁷ <http://rt.com/news/karachi-blast-pakistan-shiite-759/>

³⁸ <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-07-26/pakistan-bombing-kills-40-wounds-60-official-says.html>

- In March, 2004 a Shia procession was attacked by a Sunni group, killing 42 people and leaving more than 100 wounded.
- On 7 October 2004 a car bomb killed 40 members of a Sunni extremist organisation in Multan, Punjab. A similar attack took place on August 2012 when four buses were stopped during Eid Holidays carrying Shia passengers. At least 25 Shia were killed on the spot.
- In 2009, the Christian villages of Gojra and Korian came under attack when a Muslim mob of thousands attacked them because of allegations of burning of the Quran. Around six members were burnt alive during the attack. The mob threw chemical bombs, drove the Christian community out of their homes and looted their property while the police stood by.³⁹
- The worst attack on a Christian community happened in a small village of Shanti Nagar, Punjab Pakistan.⁴⁰ In February 1997 a Muslim mob attacked a Christian village following blasphemy allegations. Four churches were burnt to ashes, at least 785 houses were destroyed and more than 2,500 Christians fled their homes. The angry mob used chemical bombs and had placards stating 'Kill Christians because they are blasphemers.'



Scene of violence in Joseph colony, Lahore

Violence against minority community members can lead to communal riots and attack on houses, community facilities, and even graveyards. Due to the lack of administration both in policing and judiciary, and the overall infrastructure of the country, many times perpetrators of such crimes either go unpunished or aren't even caught. This further encourages more attacks and violence directed towards minorities.

³⁹ http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/8196013.stm

⁴⁰ http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2007%5C06%5C23%5Cstory_23-6-2007_pg13_12

Recommendations

1. Members of minority communities should be given equal, fundamental and constitutional rights as citizens of Pakistan.
2. The right to vote should be granted to every citizen of Pakistan.
3. Access to education and public life should be the right of every citizen of Pakistan.
4. The Government of Pakistan should revise discriminatory school materials that glorify Islam and its heroes at the expense of other religions which are either neglected, undermined, overlooked or left completely absent from education altogether.
5. The culture of equality should be promoted from the classrooms to the public life.
6. Ethics and peace education should be promoted at grassroots level so children grow up learning to live in harmony with each other, understanding each other's backgrounds.
7. The Government should encourage interfaith and inter-religious programmes across the country to promote a culture of understanding, peace and tolerance.
8. The Government should reform the discriminatory laws which are used to target minorities.
9. Policing reforms should be made to better protect minorities.
10. All law enforcement agencies, the police and the judiciary should be held accountable if they are unwilling to discharge their duties to protect their citizens.
11. The Government should stop the proliferation of hate speech and literature which targets any religious groups/communities, and should also make sure those who commit such crimes are penalized by law.
12. The Government should adopt a national counter terrorism and extremism policy to curb violence in the country.
13. While blasphemy laws remain on the statute book, allegations of blasphemy should be thoroughly investigated by high ranking police officials, and those who abuse these laws should be punished accordingly.
14. Blasphemy-related cases should have speedy trials and justice should be served without any external pressures.
15. Minorities should have an increased and proportionate number of seats at provincial, national and senate level.
16. The rule of the law should be maintained for every citizen.

Conclusion

At the time of Partition, minorities in Pakistan made up 25% of the population. In today's Pakistan this number has shrunk to roughly 5% of an ever-increasing population of 180 million. This shows how marginalized minorities have become in post-Partition Pakistan.

Subsequent Governments have failed to protect and safeguard the rights of minorities; instead they have feasted upon the weaknesses and vulnerabilities of the smaller minority groups by introducing laws which further pushed them deep into a sea of despair, injustice and inequality.

Instead the Government should have recognised, acknowledged and included members of minorities in the progression of Pakistan so that they could better realise their role as citizens and work hard to make the country stronger and taller as a nation of the world.

Minorities are seen as non-entities and 'invisibles' in today's Pakistan with no equal, fundamental and constitutional rights. Where a governor, a judge or a minister is not safe, what hope does a vulnerable member of a minority community have?

Give the scale and magnitude of persecution in Pakistan, coupled with the entrenched bias and the discriminatory laws being used against the minorities, Global Minorities Alliance fears that minorities could be at the verge of extinction in Pakistan.

Before the remnants of the minority communities are destroyed, the need of the hour is for the Government to make changes to discriminatory laws and devise a strategy to ensure the security and protection of the fundamental rights of minorities.

It is the duty and responsibility of every state to provide the fundamentals of human life to all its citizens; protection, justice, equality, access to education and public life. It goes without saying that societies are recognised through the treatment of their minorities.

The 'invisible citizens' of Pakistan can only be made visible if Pakistan changes its current practice of attacking minorities rather than protecting them; then it will truly be the country originally envisioned by its founding father, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammed Ali Jinnah.



About Global Minorities Alliance

Global Minorities Alliance (GMA) is a non-profit, non-governmental human rights organisation.

We believe that all human beings, regardless of race, colour, religion or belief, faith or no faith, gender, or membership of another particular social group, should be treated as equals.

GMA works for global peace, interfaith harmony, equality in law and society, empowerment of women, access to education and justice for all. This is achieved through working with likeminded partner agencies, policy makers, NGOs, community/faith groups the world over to affect change for better.

GMA endeavours to achieve this through advocacy for groups or individuals, practical help in humanitarian crises, small business projects, education projects and awareness raising campaigns.

“Our vision is of a world free from persecution; a world where no-one will be disadvantaged because they belong to a certain group,” says GMA’s Chairperson, Manassi Bernard. “We believe that there is more that unites us than divides us, and that every human has inalienable rights that should not be curtailed because of who they are. We strive for justice, peace and equality.”

There have been significant improvements in relation to the treatment of minorities in some parts of the world in the last 3-4 decades, but minorities in many other parts of the world continue to receive rough treatment. They continue to suffer abuse of their human rights at the hands of state and non-state actors who inflict atrocities on them with impunity.

Growing injustice, inequality, discrimination, persecution, oppression, physical and domestic abuse of women and children, rising incidents of rape of women, torture, killings, extrajudicial killings, false imprisonment, denying the right of free assembly, freedom of speech and expression, curbs on the fundamental right to profess, propagate, worship and preach their religion, the abduction and subsequent forcible marriages of minority women – these are some of the issues facing minority communities around the world, and are some of the issues which GMA strives to tackle.

The absence of fairness, transparency, meritocracy and the rule of law in general in some countries leave minorities more vulnerable to abuse as the mighty and influential take it as their birth right to mistreat minorities as they choose. In some parts of the world the integration of minorities into mainstream society is restricted by design due to the subjugation forced upon them.

We call for an end to the institutional and systematic discrimination and persecution of minorities in any shape or form and urge the governments of such countries to push through reforms aimed at providing equal rights to the poor and the disadvantaged sections of their societies.

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Global Minorities Alliance is committed to achieve global peace, equality and justice through our aims and objectives:

- Poverty alleviation
- Interfaith harmony
- Education
- The empowerment of women
- Reform of discriminatory laws
- Peaceful co-existence

Global Minorities Alliance is currently undergoing the process of becoming a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO).