

# ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN

**Area** 796,095 sq km

**Population** 201,995,540 (July 2016 est.) Demographic information is based on estimates from the Central Intelligence Agency World Factbook at <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/pk.html>.

**Religions** Islam (official) 96.4% (Sunni 85-90%, Shia 10-15%), other (includes Christians, Hindus<sup>153</sup> and Sikhs) 3.6% (2010 est.)

**Ethnic Groups** Punjabi 44.68%, Pashtun (Pathan) 15.42%, Sindhi 14.1%, Saraiki 8.38%, Muhajirs (immigrants from India at the time of Partition and their descendants) 7.57%, Balochi 3.57%, other 6.28%

**Languages** Punjabi 48%, Sindhi 12%, Saraiki (a Punjabi variant) 10%, Pashto (alternate name, Pash-tu) 8%, Urdu (official) 8%, Balochi 3%, Hindko 2%, Brahui 1%, English (official; lingua franca of Pakistani elite and most government ministries), Burushaski, and other 8%

**Location** Southern Asia, bordering the Arabian Sea, between India on the east and Iran and Afghanistan on the west and China in the north

## INTRODUCTION

Human rights and religious freedom conditions continued to deteriorate at an unprecedented rate in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in 2016. Pakistan's widespread violation of human rights and its tolerance of human rights violations by non-state actors demonstrate a blatant disregard for international human rights norms and its obligations under human rights treaties and conventions.

The blasphemy laws, restrictions on the Ahmadiyya Muslim faith, and ongoing forced conversions of Hindu and Christian girls continued to plague religious minorities. Moreover, the constitutional preference for Islam, religious identification laws, and negative depiction of non-Muslims in school textbooks institutionalized discrimination and the



second-class status of minorities.

Similarly, Hindus and other minorities have been subjected to the bonded labor system, attacks on religious sites, and other acts of intolerance at the hands of non-state actors with the complicit or implicit support of government officials (or failure to act).

In a rare positive step, the Hindu Marriage Bill was passed in Pakistan's National Assembly and promulgated into law by the President in March 2017, legally recognizing Hindu marriages for the first time in the country's history. The law has not yet been implemented nationwide at the time of the writing of this report, however.

The country was also plagued by large-scale sectarian violence as militant groups operated freely and targeted minorities with impunity. A bomb attack targeting Christians celebrating Easter in Lahore on March 27, 2016 carried out by Jamaat-ul-Ahrar, an offshoot of Tehreek-e-Taliban, resulted in the

<sup>153</sup> There are no clear statistics on the number of Hindus, but estimates put them anywhere from 1.6% to 5.5%, according to Hindu community groups.

deaths of 72 people and over 300 injured, including both Christians and Muslims.<sup>154</sup>

Commenting on the situation facing religious minorities in Pakistan, analyst and author, Farhanaz Ispahani, recently stated: “Officially mandated textbooks reject pluralism and represent minorities, especially Hindus, in an extremely negative light. In recent years Pakistan has witnessed some of the worst organized violence against religious minorities since Partition. From January 2012 until now, at least 450 incidents of sectarian violence have been reported. These incidents led to 3755 casualties, including 1551 deaths.”<sup>155</sup>

Beyond religious freedom violations, the government’s suppression of the civil and human rights of ethnic minorities continued unabated. A recent report from the Federal Human Rights Ministry, for instance, found that close to 1,000 dead bodies of Baloch activists and separatists have been recovered in Balochistan province over the past six years, pointing to a pattern of extrajudicial killings and abuses by security forces.<sup>156</sup>

Moreover, in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir, the interim constitution places legal restrictions on political rights and freedom of expression by banning parties that do not explicitly endorse Kashmir’s accession to Pakistan. Similarly, government employees are required to express their support for accession.<sup>157</sup>

## HISTORY/BACKGROUND

The modern Pakistani state was created through the partitioning of the subcontinent in 1947, following the British withdrawal from India. Partition and the accompanying violence forced millions of Hindus

and Sikhs to flee Pakistan for the safety of India. As a result, the number of Hindus declined from 15% in West Pakistan (not including Bangladesh, or the former East Pakistan) at the time of partition to approximately 2% by 1951. In contrast, although many Muslims left India for Pakistan at the time of partition, the percentage of Muslims has continued to increase in post-independence India. According to India’s 1951 census, Muslims accounted for 9.8% of the population, while the 2011 census put them at 14.2%.<sup>158</sup>

Similarly, in the city of Karachi, the Hindu population decreased from 51% in 1947 to only 2% in 1951, while the Muslim population in the city went from 42% to 96% during that same period.<sup>159</sup> Notwithstanding its recent decline, Hindu civilization and culture flourished in Pakistan for thousands of years.

There are conflicting figures on the current number of Hindus residing in Pakistan, and the government has not conducted a census since 1998. The 1998 census places the number at 1.6%,<sup>160</sup> although Hindu organizations, such as the Pakistan Hindu Council (PHC), estimates that the Hindu population is actually higher.<sup>161</sup>

At independence, Pakistan proclaimed itself an Islamic Republic. Since then, Islam has become a central part of the country’s national ideology and legal framework. In the 1980s, the country became increasingly Islamized under Zia-ul-Haq. There has also been a recent proliferation of Islamic schools, or madrasas, in the past 50 years. Current estimates show that there are over 10,000 madrasas in Pakistan, whereas in 1956, there were only 244. Many of these schools teach extreme and intolerant interpretations of Islam to children as young as five years

154 “Timeline of Major Attacks on Minorities in Pakistan,” March 28, 2016, The Express Tribune <http://tribune.com.pk/story/721785/timeline-attacks-on-minorities/>.

155 “Hindu American Foundation Hosts Leading Diplomats, Civil Rights Advocates at Inaugural Policy Conference & 13th Annual DC Advocacy Day,” June 28, 2016, HAF, <https://www.hafsite.org/whats-new/haf-hosts-leading-diplomats-civil-rights-advocates-inaugural-policy-conference-13th-annual>.

156 “Balochistan War: Pakistan Accused Over 1,000 Dumped Bodies,” December 28, 2016, BBC <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-38454483>.

157 Pakistani Kashmir, Freedom in the World 2016 Report, Freedom House, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2016/pakistani-kashmir>.

158 Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, <http://censusindia.gov.in/>.

159 A. Hasan, A. Zaidi, M. Younus, “Understanding Karachi: Planning and Reform for the Future,” (1999), City Press.

160 “Census of Pakistan,” Government of Pakistan, [http://www.statpak.gov.pk/depts/pco/statistics/other\\_tables/pop\\_by\\_religion.pdf](http://www.statpak.gov.pk/depts/pco/statistics/other_tables/pop_by_religion.pdf).

161 “Hindu Population,” Pakistan Hindu Council, <http://www.pakistanhinducouncil.org/hindupopulation.asp>.

old.<sup>162</sup> This process of indoctrination has not been limited to madrasas, however, as the public school system similarly teaches hatred for minorities, particularly Hindus, and glorifies violent jihad.

During the last several years, the rights of Pakistani minorities have deteriorated at an alarming rate. I.A. Rehman, Director of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), associated this erosion with the continued Islamization of the country initiated by former President General Zia-ul-Haq in the 1980s.<sup>163</sup>

Despite rampant human rights violations and war crimes committed by numerous Pakistani regimes, historically, Pakistan's actions have been tolerated by the international community due to the country's strategic location and perceived importance in the region.

## STATUS OF HUMAN RIGHTS, 2016

### Religious Freedom

In Pakistan, the freedom of religion continued to elude religious minorities and members of minority Muslim sects. Although the Constitution guarantees religious freedom to its citizens under Articles 20-22,<sup>164</sup> minorities have been unable to freely practice their faith without fear of attacks or persecution. For example, Article 20 which states, "Every citizen shall have the right to profess, practice and propagate his religion; and every religious denomination and every sect thereof shall have the right to establish, maintain and manage its religious institutions," has proven meaningless.<sup>165</sup>

Furthermore, many of the rights theoretically provided for in the Constitution are subordinated to government regulations and constitutional injunc-

tions shaped by Islamic law, thereby denying equal protection and religious freedom to non-Muslims.

The absence of specific laws protecting the equal rights of all Pakistani citizens is similarly problematic. For instance, until March 2017 there was no law to officially recognize Hindu marriages, resulting in widespread discrimination against Hindu women. The new law still has to be implemented nationwide and without registered marriages, Hindu women face numerous obstacles obtaining identification cards as well as other documents, lack property and divorce rights, and are subject to kidnappings and forced conversions.<sup>166</sup>

Moreover, according to Pakistani American comparative law expert, Waris Husain, Pakistan currently lacks effective legislation that clearly defines discrimination, and it fails to provide adequate legal redress to victims of discriminatory acts or violent hate crimes.<sup>167</sup>

### Discriminatory Provisions in the Legal System

Islam has been institutionalized in the Constitution and pervades all aspects of the legal system. Article 2 of the Constitution proclaims that Islam is "the State religion of Pakistan" and recognizes the Koran and Sunnah as the highest sources of law, not to be contradicted by secular laws, while Article 31 protects and promotes the Islamic way of life and moral standards, among many other provisions.<sup>168</sup>

Additionally, Article 203A - J establishes the power and jurisdiction of the Federal Shariat Courts, while Articles 227 - 231 provide that all laws must be in conformity with Islamic injunctions and create an Islamic Council to advise Parliament and Provincial

162 Haqqani, Husain, "Islam's Medieval Outposts," November/December 2002, Foreign Policy, <http://www.husainhaqqani.com/reforming/journal%20articles/1/1.htm>.

163 Baabar, Mariana & Mir, Amir, "Many Hindus are Leaving Pakistan," January 23, 2006, Outlook India, <http://www.outlookindia.com/fullprint.asp?choice=2&fodname=20060123&fname=Cover+Story&sid=1>.

164 "The Constitution of Pakistan and Fundamental Rights," Sustainable Development Policy Institute, [http://www.sdpi.org/know\\_your\\_rights/know%20you%20rights/The%20Constitution%20of%20Pakistan.htm](http://www.sdpi.org/know_your_rights/know%20you%20rights/The%20Constitution%20of%20Pakistan.htm).

165 The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, <http://www.pakistani.org/pakistan/constitution/>.

166 Based on information received from Ramesh Jaipal, Chairman of the Hare Rama Foundation.

167 Husain, Waris, "A Decree to Counter Discrimination," June 2, 2012, Dawn, <http://dawn.com/2012/06/02/a-decree-to-counter-discrimination/>.

168 The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, <http://www.pakistani.org/pakistan/constitution/>; "Pakistan: The Land of Religious Apartheid and Jackboot Justice," A Report to the UN Committee Against Racial Discrimination, (August 2007), Asian Centre for Human Rights, <http://www.achrweb.org/reports/cerd/Pakistan-CERD2007.pdf>.

Assemblies on whether laws contradict Islamic injunctions.<sup>169</sup>

The Pakistani Constitution also lays out explicit restrictions on non-Muslims, such as Article 41(2), which provides that an individual must be Muslim in order to hold the office of President of Pakistan.<sup>170</sup> Similarly, it requires that high office holders must take the oath of office by invoking an Islamic prayer, regardless of whether they are Muslim. The oath starts with, “In the name of Allah, the most Beneficent, the most Merciful,” and ends with “May Allah Almighty help and guide me, (A’meen).”<sup>171</sup>

Furthermore, freedom of religion is severely limited and “subject to law, public order and morality.”<sup>172</sup> Consequently, actions or speech deemed derogatory to Islam or the Prophet Mohammed are not protected. Moreover, the Constitution requires that laws be consistent with Islam and imposes elements of Koranic law on both Muslims and non-Muslims alike.<sup>173</sup>

And freedom of speech under Article 19 of the Constitution is “subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interest of the glory of Islam or the integrity, security or defense of Pakistan.”<sup>174</sup> This constitutional clause provides in part the justification for criminalizing blasphemy under the penal code.

The blasphemy laws codified by Pakistan’s Penal Code (Sections 295B and C, and 298A-C), impose severe punishments for perceived insults to the Prophet Mohammed or desecration of the Koran,<sup>175</sup>

and prohibit Ahmadiyyas from using Islamic terminology and symbols and from “preaching their faith or pos[ing] as Muslims.”<sup>176</sup> Punishments range from imprisonment for three years and a fine to life imprisonment and the death penalty.<sup>177</sup>

The blasphemy laws have received widespread support from both radical Islamist organizations and purportedly mainstream political parties,<sup>178</sup> and a large majority of the Pakistani people.<sup>179</sup> These archaic laws have harmed all sections of Pakistani society, but have had a disproportionate impact on religious minorities. The laws have emboldened Muslim extremists and in many instances, the mere allegation of blasphemy is used as a pretext to attack and kill minorities.<sup>180</sup>

Other statutory provisions, such as religious identification laws, discriminate against minorities, by requiring an individual to identify their religion on legal documents, including in passports and computerized national identity cards.<sup>181</sup> These laws have “otherized” religious minorities and left them vulnerable to the denial of government services and jobs.

According to HRCP, discriminatory laws and constitutional injunctions in Pakistan have led to social discrimination and have reduced “religious minorities to second-class citizens whose rights and welfare are easily ignored and violated both by the majority community and the state.”<sup>182</sup>

169 The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, <http://www.pakistani.org/pakistan/constitution/>.

170 Id.

171 Id.

172 Id.

173 Id.

174 Id.

175 Pakistan Penal Code, <http://www.pakistani.org/pakistan/legislation/1860/actXLVof1860.html>.

176 Id.

177 Id.

178 “PML-Q will protest changes in blasphemy laws: Shujaat,” September 20, 2009, Daily Times, [http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009%5C09%5C20%5Cstory\\_20-9-2009\\_pg7\\_18](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009%5C09%5C20%5Cstory_20-9-2009_pg7_18).

179 “Q&A: Pakistan’s Controversial Blasphemy Laws,” November 20, 2012, BBC News, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-12621225>.

180 Ahmad, Naveed, “Pakistan Faces Criticism for Harsh Blasphemy Law,” February 19, 2014, Religion News Service, <http://www.religionnews.com/2014/02/19/pakistan-faces-criticism-harsh-blasphemy-law/>.

181 “Religion column in MRPs restored: Rashid,” March 22, 2005, Pak Tribune, <http://www.paktribune.com/news/index.shtml?98755>

182 “Freedom of Religion 2007,” HRCP, <http://www.hrcp-web.org/pdf/Archives%20Reports/AR2007.pdf>.

## Temples/Religious Sites

Pakistan is home to several ancient Hindu temples and pilgrimage sites, but there has been a drastic decline in the number and condition of Hindu temples since the country's partition in 1947. Thousands of temples have been destroyed or converted into mosques in the years since then, particularly in the period following the demolition of the Babri Masjid in India in 1992.

In subsequent years, there have been a number of attacks on temples, pilgrimage sites, and religious leaders. Government authorities and law enforcement have failed to protect temples, and a Sindh provincial government plan to hire 2,000 Hindu and Christian police officers to protect temples and churches has not been implemented.<sup>183</sup>

Many of the existing temples in Pakistan also suffer from decay and neglect and are subject to illegal encroachments or government sanctioned demolition.<sup>184</sup> The problem largely stems from the inability of Hindus to independently control many of their places of worship. Currently, the Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB), a government body, is responsible for managing a large number of Hindu and Sikh properties,<sup>185</sup> including temples and crematoriums, left behind by Hindus and Sikhs who fled for India at the time of Partition in 1947.<sup>186</sup> The ETPB lacks Hindu representation and has consistently

failed to consult Hindu organizations.<sup>187</sup> Pakistan Hindu Seva Welfare Trust, a leading NGO for the Hindu community in Sindh, asserts that there are only 20 operational Hindu temples remaining out of 428 in the country, with the remaining leased for commercial or residential purposes.<sup>188</sup>

The ETPB's illegal sale of Hindu and Sikh properties has further caused problems in conducting cremations, (cremation is an integral last rite in Hinduism and Sikhism) and many Hindus and Sikhs have been forced to bury their dead.<sup>189</sup>

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, for example, only a handful of the approximately 1,250 Hindu families are able to arrange for cremation rites for deceased family members. Haroon Sarbdiyal, Chairman of the All Pakistan Hindu Rights Movement, recently noted that there are not enough shamshan ghats (cremation grounds) for Hindus in the province and most are too far to travel, forcing many Hindus to bury their dead in graveyards.<sup>190</sup>

## Islamic Extremism

According to a recent US Department of Defense briefing, approximately 20 percent of the 98 US designated terrorist organizations in the world are based in the AfPak region.<sup>191</sup> And data from the South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP) indicates that there were 1,803 terrorism related deaths in Pakistan in

183 Latif, Aamir, "Pakistani to Recruit 2,000 Christian, Hindu Policemen," March 25, 2015, <http://www.aa.com.tr/en/world/483830--pakistan-to-recruit-2-000-christian-hindu-policemen>.

184 Ali, Tahir, "Pak's Hindu temples turned into picnic spots, hotels," February 24, 2011, Rediff India Abroad, <http://www.rediff.com/news/slide---show/slide---show---1---paks---hindu---temples---turned---into---picnic--spots---hotels/20110224.htm>; Qaswar, Abbas, "Soft Target in Pakistan," May 30, 2011, India Today, <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/site/story/hindus-in-pakistan-victims-of-abduction-forced-conversions-and-oppression/1/138751.html>; Thomas, Antony, "Hindu and Sikh Temples Targeted in Pakistan," April 9, 2010, The Chakra, <http://www.chakranews.com/hindu-and-sikh-temples-targeted-in-pakistan/710>.

185 The ETPB also controls 135,000 acres of land belonging to Hindu farmers, of which 125,000 acres are fertile land suitable for cultivation.

186 "Life at Risk: Report of HRCP Working Group on Communities Vulnerable because of their Beliefs," Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, <http://www.hrcp-web.org/pdf/Life%20at%20risk.pdf>; Ali, Tahir, "Pak's Hindu temples turned into picnic spots, hotels," February 24, 2011, Rediff India Abroad, <http://www.rediff.com/news/slide---show/slide---show---1---paks---hindu---temples---turned---into---picnic--spots---hotels/20110224.htm>.

187 Rana, Yudhvir, "100-Yr-old Temple in Pak Being Used as Auto Workshop," May 7, 2008, Times of India, [http://www1.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/100-yr-old\\_temple\\_in\\_Pak\\_being\\_used\\_as\\_auto\\_workshop/articleshow/3016680.cms](http://www1.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/100-yr-old_temple_in_Pak_being_used_as_auto_workshop/articleshow/3016680.cms); Ali, Tahir, "Pak's Hindu temples turned into picnic spots, hotels," February 24, 2011, Rediff India Abroad, <http://www.rediff.com/news/slide---show/slide---show---1---paks---hindu---temples---turned---into---picnic--spots---hotels/20110224.htm>.

188 Based on information received directly from Pakistan Hindu Seva Welfare Trust.

189 Shinwari, Sher Alam, "Many Sacred Buildings Lost to Mafias: Hindus, Sikhs in KP Without Cremation Sites," December 2, 2012, Dawn, <http://dawn.com/2012/12/02/many-sacred-buildings-lost-to-mafias-hindus-sikhs-in-kp-without-cremation-sites/>.

190 "Hindus Forced to Bury Their Dead with Fe and Far Crematoriums," Rani, Saba, February 27, 2016, The Express Tribune, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1055169/not-a-place-to-die-hindus-forced-to-bury-their-dead-with-few-and-far-crematoriums/>.

191 "Department of Defense Press Briefing by General Nicholson in the Pentagon Briefing Room," December 2, 2016, News Transcript, US Department of Defense <https://www.defense.gov/News/Transcripts/Transcript-View/Article/1019029/department-of-defense-press-briefing-by-general-nicholson-in-the-pentagon-brief>.

2016, including 612 civilians, 293 security personnel, and 898 terrorists/militants.<sup>192</sup>

The Pakistani military establishment has long utilized many of these terrorist/militant groups to pursue its perceived foreign policy interests vis-à-vis India and Afghanistan, as well as in support of its domestic priorities.<sup>193</sup> Pakistan's ISI, for instance, has engaged in a proxy war in India's state of Jammu and Kashmir since the late 1980s by supporting terrorist groups there. In addition, it has supported Khalistan militants seeking to create an independent Sikh nation in the Indian state of Punjab.<sup>194</sup>

Moreover, there are a number of groups operating freely throughout the country, who promote Islamic rule, violent jihad (holy war), and hatred towards non-Muslims. These include the Sunni sectarian Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), which carried out the Mumbai terrorist attacks. Other major groups include the Lashkar-e-Omar (a loose coalition of several militant groups), Tehreek-e-Nafaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi, Muslim United Army (an umbrella organization consisting of several extremist groups), Hizb-ul-Mujahideen and Jaish-e-Mohammed (anti-Indian groups operating in Kashmir), and Afghan Taliban groups (ex: Quetta Shura and the Haqqani Network).<sup>195</sup>

These organizations have enjoyed a varying degree of support from the military and ISI, even though some, such as Tehreek-e-Taliban (Pakistani Taliban), have launched attacks on the Pakistani state. Al Qaeda also maintains several bases in Pakistan and functions with the tacit assistance of the Pakistani military establishment.<sup>196</sup> ISIS has similarly been

significantly expanding its reach in Pakistan, due in part to the recruitment of former Pakistani Taliban members. Other militant groups, such as Jundallah and Tehreek-e-Khilafat, have pledged allegiance to the Islamic State.<sup>197</sup>

In 2016, ISIS claimed responsibility for a number of attacks, including the August 8 suicide attack on the Quetta Civil Hospital that killed over 97 people. The attack was a joint operation between ISIS and Jamaat-ul-Ahrar, a splinter group of the Pakistani Taliban. According to Pakistani author and analyst, Mehwish Rani, "ISIS has spread in a manner similar to a corporate franchise: drawing weaker local players under its 'brand' and into a loosely constituted network of radical actors."<sup>198</sup>

Beyond the military and ISI's connections to extremist groups, civilian government officials, including Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party have enjoyed extensive links with radical groups, particularly in their home base of Punjab. Sharif's brother, Shahbaz who is the Chief Minister of Punjab province, has distributed state funds to organizations such as Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD), the charitable front for LeT.<sup>199</sup>

Islamists have also increasingly created an intolerant and repressive atmosphere, and exerted extensive influence over government officials and policies. Furthermore, Islamist radical groups have imposed Islamic law in areas under their control, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the tribal areas. Militants in the tribal areas, including Khyber Agency, have forced Hindus and Sikhs to pay a punitive tax known as jizya (a tax historically imposed on

192 "Fatalities in Terrorist Violence in Pakistan, 2003-2017, SATP, <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/Pakistan/database/casualties.htm>.

193 "Pakistan's New Generation of Terrorists," Laub, Zachary, November 18, 2013, CFR Backgrounder, <http://www.cfr.org/pakistan/pakistan-new-generation-terrorists/p15422>.

194 "Pro-Khalistani Terrorists Residing in Pakistan," SATP, [http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/document/papers/pakistan\\_report/anex\\_h.htm](http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/document/papers/pakistan_report/anex_h.htm).

195 SATP, <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/pakistan/terroristoutfits/index.html>.

196 Id.

197 "Taliban Splinter Group in Pakistan Vows Allegiance to ISIS," November 18, 2014, Al Akhbar, <http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/taliban-splinter-group-pakistan-vows-allegiance-isis>; Zavadski, Katie, "ISIS now has Military Allies in 11 Countries Around the World," November 23, 2014, NY Mag, <http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2014/11/isis-now-has-military-allies-in-11-countries.html>.

198 Rani, Mehwish, "The Marketplace of Terrorist Ideas," Foreign Affairs, [https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/pakistan/2016-08-31/marketplace-terrorist-ideas?cid=nlc-fatoday-20160901&sp\\_mid=52208868&sp\\_rid=c2FtaXJAaGFmc2I0ZS5vcmcS1&spMailingID=52208868&spUseRID=MjE5MDA4NDI0MDMzS0&spJobID=1000335585&spReportId=MTAwMDMzNTU4NQs2](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/pakistan/2016-08-31/marketplace-terrorist-ideas?cid=nlc-fatoday-20160901&sp_mid=52208868&sp_rid=c2FtaXJAaGFmc2I0ZS5vcmcS1&spMailingID=52208868&spUseRID=MjE5MDA4NDI0MDMzS0&spJobID=1000335585&spReportId=MTAwMDMzNTU4NQs2).

199 Sharma, Vidya S., "Pakistan's New Prime Minister Shows Extremism Wins Elections," June 28, 2013, East Asia Forum, <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2013/06/28/pakistans-new-prime-minister-shows-extremism-wins-elections/>.

non-Muslims living under Islamic rule) in return for their protection.<sup>200</sup>

In Karachi, the Taliban has firmly established roots and created a “lucrative criminal enterprise.”<sup>201</sup> With its expanding influence on the peripheries of the city, the Taliban has started implementing Sharia law in areas under its control. For instance, it has started hearing complaints and administering Sharia based punishments for a range of crimes, including public lashes for an alleged theft.<sup>202</sup> Moreover, the South Asia Terrorism Portal indicates that LeT and JuD founder, Hafiz Muhammad Saeed, had reportedly created a extrajudicial Islamic law court in Lahore to adjudicate claims and force citizens to comply with its summons.<sup>203</sup> Saeed was placed under house arrest at the beginning of 2017.

## Religiously Motivated Violence

There were multiple attacks on religious minorities in 2016, including the Easter bombing targeting Christians in March and a mob attack by 2,000 Islamist radicals on an Ahmadiyya mosque in Chakwal, Punjab in December.<sup>204</sup>

Beyond high-profile attacks by militants, minorities were harassed, threatened, intimidated, and attacked on a routine basis throughout the year. Hindus were particularly vulnerable to violence, and police and local government officials did little to protect the community or investigate specific incidents.

In June, an elderly Hindu man, Gokal Das, was brutally assaulted by a police official, Ali Hassan Haidrani, and his brother in a village in Ghotki,

Sindh for publicly eating during the Muslim fast of Ramazan. The eighty-year old Das was eating food he received through a charity. Although Haidrani was initially arrested, local police reportedly helped him escape police custody.<sup>205</sup>

The following month, two young Hindu boys were shot by members of a mob at a tea stall in Mirpur Mathelo, in the Ghotki district of Pakistan’s Sindh province. Kumar Satish Dewan, age 17, succumbed to his injuries, while his friend Avinash (full name not disclosed) was in critical condition following the attack. The incident occurred shortly after Amar Lal, a Hindu male from the area, who is said to have converted to Islam a few months prior, was handed over to authorities by a mob for allegedly burning pages of the Quran. His mental condition was described to local media outlets by locals as “unstable.” Police failed to stop mobs throughout the district from ransacking Hindu-owned businesses and shops, as well as destroying public property in the area.<sup>206</sup>

And in August, at least four Hindus were killed in individual incidents in what were described as religiously motivated attacks.

The frequent abductions of Hindus for ransom or forced conversions was also an ongoing concern for the Hindu community, which remained in a continuous state of insecurity. The failure of government authorities to protect Hindus has forced many to pay local gangs “protection money” to avoid being kidnapped for ransom. Often times, however, a family is unable to pay “protection money” and cannot afford the demanded ransom, resulting in

200 “FIDH-HRCF Workshop Seeks Urgent Steps to End Faith-Based Violence,” January 29, 2014, HRCF, <http://hrcf-web.org/hrcfweb/fidh-hrcf-workshop-seeks-urgent-steps-to-end-faith-based-violence/>; “Advani airs concern at jizya on Hindus, Sikhs in Pakistan,” July 1, 2009, The Daily Pioneer, <http://www.dailypioneer.com/186316/Advani-airs-concern-at-jizya-on-Hindus-Sikhs-in-Pakistan.html>.

201 “Pakistan’s New Generation of Terrorists,” Laub, Zachary, November 18, 2013, CFR Backgrounder, <http://www.cfr.org/pakistan/pakistan-new-generation-terrorists/p15422>.

202 “At Least Three Taliban Militants Shot Dead in Karachi,” November 13, 2013, BBC News, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-24922932>; “How the Taliban Gripped Karachi,” March 20, 2013, BBC News, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-21343397>.

203 Pakistan Assessment 2016,” SATP, <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/pakistan/index.htm>.

204 Shams, Shamil, “The Persecution of Ahmadis in Pakistan and Beyond,” December 13, 2016, DW, <http://www.dw.com/en/the-persecution-of-ahmadis-in-pakistan-and-beyond/a-36748924>.

205 “Hindu Man Beaten for Eating in Ramazan,” June 12, 2016, The Express Tribune, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1121012/hindu-man-beaten-eating-ramazan/>.

206 “Blasphemy Law Leaves Hindu Boy Shot Dead, Another in Critical Condition,” July 27, 2016, Hindu American Foundation, <https://www.hafsite.org/pakistan%E2%80%99s-blasphemy-law-leaves-hindu-boy-shot-dead-another-critical-condition>.

the abducted victim being murdered.<sup>207</sup> Moreover, those that have resisted kidnapping attempts have been killed.<sup>208</sup> Hindu community leaders claim that kidnappings have become common and that “highwaymen and kidnappers” have been given a “free hand.” They further allege that police and other law enforcement agencies are patronizing the kidnappers.<sup>209</sup>

## Kidnapping/Forced Conversions

Minority women in Pakistan are particularly vulnerable to violence and have been subject to discrimination, harassment, and sexual assaults. Abductions and forced conversions, in particular, are the most serious problem facing Hindu and Christian women and girls. Often, after being abducted, these girls are forcibly married to unknown men, raped, sold off, or forced into prostitution.

Several Islamic seminaries in Sindh incite their Muslim students to convert Hindu girls, telling them that it is the equivalent of Haj-e-Akbari, or the greatest religious duty for Muslims.<sup>210</sup> These seminaries, or madrasas, hold the kidnapped Hindu girls against their will, convert them to Islam, and subsequently force them to marry Muslims.<sup>211</sup> Threatened into silence and fearful for the safety of their families, the girls are then taken to a local court by their abductors, where the judge usually sanctions the legality of the marriage and conversion.<sup>212</sup> Furthermore, many of the girls are between the ages of 12 and 18, well below the legal age for marriage (16 years for girls) and unable to comprehend the process. In some cases, courts order the girls to be sent to

Darul Amans (Islamic women’s shelters), where they have been further threatened and harassed and are unable to meet their parents.<sup>213</sup>

Although there are no definitive statistics on the number of incidents, many NGOs and human rights groups, including Global Human Rights Defence (GHRD) and the Movement for Solidarity and Peace, have estimated that more than 1,000 Hindu and Christian girls are kidnapped and forced to convert to Islam annually.<sup>214</sup> Similarly, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) has asserted that as many as 20 to 25 girls from the Hindu community in Pakistan are abducted every month and converted forcibly to Islam.<sup>215</sup> The actual numbers are likely much higher as many incidents have not been publicized or reported due to fear or other factors.<sup>216</sup> Hindu community groups indicate that poor Hindu girls in rural communities are the most vulnerable to abductions and conversions, as powerful landlords are able to exert their will without consequences.

Reports received from Hindu human rights activists and NGOs in Pakistan, as well as from community organizations working with Pakistani Hindu refugees in India have confirmed the extensive nature of this trend to HAF.

Moreover, a recent documentary film, *Thrust into Heaven*, details the process often utilized to convert Hindu girls in Sindh and identifies Mian Mithoo of Ghotki and Pir Sarhandi of Umerkot as two of the most powerful clerics that have been responsible for facilitating the conversions of hundreds of Hindu girls. The film looks at both forced conversions and

207 “Pakistan: The Land of Religious Apartheid and Jackboot Justice,” A Report to the UN Committee Against Racial Discrimination, August 2007, Asian Centre for Human Rights, <http://www.achrweb.org/reports/cerd/Pakistan-CERD2007.pdf>.

208 “Balochistan: Blinkered slide into chaos,” June, 2011, HRCP, [https://docs.google.com/viewer?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.hrcpweb.org%2Fpdf%2Fbalochistan\\_report\\_2011.pdf](https://docs.google.com/viewer?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.hrcpweb.org%2Fpdf%2Fbalochistan_report_2011.pdf).

209 Press Trust of India, “Hindu spiritual leader kidnapped; protests across Balochistan,” December 26, 2010, Deccan Herald, <http://www.deccanherald.com/content/123065/hindu-spiritual-leader-kidnapped-protests.html>.

210 “Pakistan: Another Hindu Girl Forcibly Converted to Islam After Being Abducted,” January 9, 2007, Asian Human Rights Commission, <http://www.ahrchk.net/ua/mainfile.php/2007/2158/>.

211 “Minority Rights: Hindu Members Suggest Interfaith Marriage Body,” May 22, 2012, The Express Tribune with The International New York Times, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/382232/minority-rights-hindu-members-suggest-interfaith-marriage-body/>.

212 Rodriguez, Alex, “Hindus in Pakistan Accuse Muslims of Kidnappings Teens as Wives,” April 22, 2012, Los Angeles Times, <http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-pakistan-hindu-conversions-20120423,0,4186272.story>.

213 Based on information received from International Sindhi Women’s Organization.

214 Global Human Rights Defence, <http://www.ghrd.org/home/>; Javaid, Maham, “Forced Conversions Torment Pakistan’s Hindus,” August 18, 2014, Al Jazeera, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2014/08/forced-conversions-torment-pakistan-hindus-201481795524630505.html>.

215 Javaid, Maham, “Forced Conversions Torment Pakistan’s Hindus,” August 18, 2014, Al Jazeera, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2014/08/forced-conversions-torment-pakistan-hindus-201481795524630505.html>.

216 Id.



conversions that prey on poor Hindu girls and offer them money to convert.<sup>217</sup> Sarhandi claimed that converted girls are free to go home if they changed their minds, but acknowledged that anyone that left Islam would be considered an apostate under Islamic law, which accords the death penalty for apostasy.<sup>218</sup>

As in previous years, there were a number of incidents in 2016, including the following examples.

14 year-old Jeevti, the daughter of Hindu bonded laborers, was abducted in the middle of the night by the family's landlord. The landlord took Jeevti, converted her to Islam and made her his second wife, because he claimed the family owed him \$1,000. Jeevti's mother, Ameri Kashi Kohli, said the police and local court failed to take any action against the landowner.<sup>219</sup>

Similarly, on April 9, three teenage Hindu girls, Pirma Bheel, Kiran Meghwar, and Leelan Jogi, disappeared from their villages in Sindh. Hindu community leaders, including Rameksh Kumar Vankwani, head of the Pakistan Hindu Council and Member of Pakistan's National Assembly, alleges that the three girls were kidnapped and forcibly converted to Islam by powerful local Muslims. One of the abductors was reportedly supported by Faqir Sher Mohammad, a member of Pakistan's Lower House. The girls remain missing.<sup>220</sup>

### *Special Focus: Harya*

*Harya, a young Hindu girl and the oldest of five children, went missing from her village in Umerkot, Sindh in early 2016, after going out to retrieve water from a nearby well. Harya's family followed her footsteps to the home of a powerful villager. After being told she was not there, the family contacted the police, but to no avail.*

*The following week, Harya's family found out from*

*other villagers that Harya had been in fact abducted, forcibly converted to Islam, married off, and was being kept at the home of that powerful villager. She was subsequently taken to court where the judge said she was now a Muslim and legally married to the man that abducted her.*

*False documents and statements are often produced and accepted in court in such cases, showing that the girl was legally married and converted voluntarily. Judges routinely ignore the girl's age and whether force, threats, or coercion was used.*

*Harya's family challenged the court's decision, exhausting all of their money and possessions to bring her home, and was eventually successful when a higher court reversed the decision and ordered her returned to her family. Favorable decisions are rare in these types of cases and in most instances the girls never return home.*

*Fortunately, Harya was released after spending more than a month with her abductors and alleged that she had been beaten and assaulted by her husband/ abductor. She also alleged that, "A female police officer gave me some kind of an injection. Both the judge and the police were bribed..They told me I was married. They also told me I was now a Muslim."*

*In order to protect themselves, Harya and her family fled to another village and sheltered Harya inside the home. They had been only one of two Hindu families in their old village.<sup>221</sup>*

In an attempt to address the issue, the Sindh provincial legislature adopted the Sindh Criminal Law (Protection of Minorities) Bill in November to criminalize forced conversions. The bill makes it a punishable offense for anyone to force a child under 18 years of age to change their religion and enter into a marriage. The Protection of Minorities Bill is designed to protect the rights of vulnerable girls

217 Thrust into Heaven, 2016, Being in the World Productions, <http://www.beingintheworld.eu/?q=trust>.

218 Tanzeem, Ayesha, "Pakistani Hindus Complain of Forced Conversion of Teenage Girls," March 18, 2016, Voice of America, <http://www.voanews.com/a/pakistani-hindus-complain-of-forced-conversion-of-teenage-girls/3243234.html>.

219 "They Always Choose the Prettiest': How Girls are Enslaved for Debt Payment in Pakistan," December 23, 2016, Times of India, [http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/pakistan/they-always-choose-the-prettiest-how-girls-are-enslaved-for-debt-payment-in-pakistan/articleshow/56137395.cms?utm\\_source=toimobile&utm\\_medium=Twitter&utm\\_campaign=referral](http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/pakistan/they-always-choose-the-prettiest-how-girls-are-enslaved-for-debt-payment-in-pakistan/articleshow/56137395.cms?utm_source=toimobile&utm_medium=Twitter&utm_campaign=referral).

220 "Anger Over Kidnappings, Forced Conversions of Hindus in Pakistan," April 25, 2016, India Today, <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/pakistan-kidnaps-forcibly-converts-teenage-girls-of-hindu-minority-in-sindh/1/650629.html>.

221 Tanzeem, Ayesha, "Pakistani Hindus Complain of Forced Conversion of Teenage Girls," March 18, 2016, Voice of America, <http://www.voanews.com/a/pakistani-hindus-complain-of-forced-conversion-of-teenage-girls/3243234.html>.

by prosecuting those that use threats, violence, or duress to forcibly convert girls and force them into marriage.<sup>222</sup>

HRCF, along with many other human rights and minority rights groups welcomed the legislation stating: “In adopting Sindh Criminal Law (Protection of Minorities) Bill the Sindh Assembly has responded to an oft-voiced concern of members of religious minority communities, especially Hindus, against forced conversion, mainly of girls and young women in the province.”<sup>223</sup>

Soon after it was passed, however, the legislation came under attack from religious extremist parties, who demanded its reversal. By January 2017, the Sindh Governor returned the Bill to the Sindh Assembly without ratifying it and asked them to reconsider a new version of it, due to pressure from Islamist parties.

HAF, along with a coalition of international and Pakistan-based human rights groups, and religious freedom advocates, wrote to Pakistani government officials in support of the bill and called on the government not to make any amendments that would undermine its original intention and protections for minority girls.

## Institutional Discrimination & Social Prejudice

Hindus, along with other religious and ethnic minorities, face systemic economic, political, and educational discrimination in Pakistan. Discrimination and societal prejudice has impacted Hindus across the country and regardless of socioeconomic status, though poor landless Hindus have been particularly vulnerable to persecution.

In a positive move, the Hindu Marriage Bill was passed in Pakistan’s National Assembly and promulgated into law by the President in March 2017. The bill, which officially recognizes Hindu marriages for the first time in the country’s history, was tabled by the country’s Human Rights Minister, Mr. Kamran Michael, and agreed upon by all political parties after several months of deliberation, along with consultation with civil society groups.<sup>224</sup>

The Hindu Marriage Act is viewed as an attempt to bring legitimacy to marriages occurring within the Hindu population, which had previously not been officially recognized. There were reportedly some concerns about specific provisions in the bill that allow the annulment of Hindu marriages by either husband or wife, which may result in forced conversions of women to Islam.<sup>225</sup>

Religious minorities are also politically disenfranchised, have been intentionally excluded from voter lists, and are severely underrepresented in the federal and provincial legislatures. At the federal level, there are only ten reserved seats for minorities out of 342 total seats in the National Assembly and political parties make decisions on who to nominate for those positions, leaving non-Muslim voters with little say in who represents them.<sup>226</sup>

Similarly, minorities are underrepresented in government services according to a recent census of federal civil servants. Hindus, for instance, held only 0.21% of available civil service positions, well below their population of 1.6%.<sup>227</sup> Hindus were not even allowed to join the armed forces until the year 2000 and remain severely underrepresented.<sup>228</sup>

Beyond political discrimination, most Hindus in Pakistan are poor and economically marginalized, with large

222 “Pakistan: Sindh Provincial Assembly Passes New Law Prohibiting Forced Religious Conversion,” December 22, 2016, Global Legal Monitor, The Law Library of Congress, <http://www.loc.gov/law/foreign-news/article/pakistan-sindh-provincial-assembly-passes-new-law-prohibiting-forced-religious-conversion/>.

223 “HRCF Praises Law on Conversions, Urges Enforcement,” November 30, 2016, Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, <http://hrfp-web.org/hrfpweb/hrfp-praises-law-on-conversions-urges-enforcement/>.

224 “President Mamnoon Promulgates Hindu Marriage Bill into Law,” March 19, 2017, Dawn, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1321498>.

225 “Hindu Americans Laud Passage of Pakistan National Assembly’s Hindu Marriage Act,” September 27, 2016, Hindu American Foundation, <https://www.hafsite.org/hindu-americans-laud-passage-pakistan-national-assembly%E2%80%99s-hindu-marriage-act>.

226 Pakistan, Freedom in the World 2015, Freedom House, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2015/pakistan#.VZSkqfm6fIU>.

227 “Pakistan: The Land of Religious Apartheid and Jackboot Justice,” A Report to the UN Committee Against Racial Discrimination, August 2007, Asian Centre for Human Rights, <http://www.achrweb.org/reports/cerd/Pakistan-CERD2007.pdf>.

228 “I am a Hindu—and a Proud Pakistani,” Quartz India, <http://qz.com/435699/i-am-a-hindu-and-a-proud-pakistani/>.

numbers enslaved by the debt bonded labor system.

HRCP estimates that there are between three and eight million bonded laborers across the country, primarily in Sindh and Punjab provinces.<sup>229</sup> Hindu bonded laborers work in a number of sectors, such as agriculture, brick kilns, mining, and domestic households, according to Pakistani Hindu refugees in India.<sup>230</sup> Hindu bonded laborers have also reportedly been induced into converting to Islam by mosques and Islamic organizations who pay off their debt in return for their conversion.<sup>231</sup> Federal laws and provincial legislation have been ineffective in addressing the issue, while local police and government authorities have perpetuated the problem by refusing to register complaints against abusive landowners.

Furthermore, the education system continues to teach hatred towards religious minorities and promote violent jihad. Despite recent promises by federal and provincial government officials to improve the educational system, Pakistan's public school and madrasa textbooks indoctrinate students with prejudicial and intolerant views. A 2016 study conducted by the Pakistan-based NGO Peace and Education Foundation (PEF), *Teaching Intolerance in Pakistan: Religious Bias in Public School Textbooks*, notes that religious minorities are consistently described as "untrustworthy, religiously inferior, and ideologically scheming" across textbooks.<sup>232</sup>

The following extracts from textbooks provide a few specific examples of the inflammatory content taught in Pakistani public schools:<sup>233</sup>

- "Because the Muslim religion, culture and social system are different from non-Muslims, it is impossible to cooperate with Hindus." (Sindh/

Punjab Province Tenth Grade Urdu Textbook)

- "There were two enemies of Muslims, the Englishmen and Hindus. Both of these were against the formation of Pakistan. On one hand, the Englishmen renounced the division plan of Hindustan, while on the other hand, Hindus were planning to occupy the entire Hindustan and enslave Muslims..." (Sindh Province Seventh grade Urdu Textbook)
- "Christians learned tolerance and kind heartedness from Muslims. The fair treatment and good governance of Muslims improved the living standard of the region. They started to live prosperous and peaceful lives under the patronage of Muslims." (Punjab Province Sixth Grade Islamic Studies Textbook)
- "Prophet (PBUH) said that 'Jihad will continue till the end of times'. Jihad is going on in different parts of the world. Many Mujahidins of Islam are participating in Jihad for sake of Allah, for protection of their religion, to help their oppressed brothers, and to get freedom from tyranny," it read. "As a student if you cannot practically participate in Jihad you can at least financially help in preparation of Jihad." (KP Eighth Grade Islamic Studies Textbook)

Non-Muslims have also been forced to take Islamiyat classes for years without any options for studying their own religion in schools. In January 2016, however, the Sindh Textbook Board finally took steps to introduce an ethics course book for all seventh grade classes in government schools that provides information about all religions and is aimed at preventing non-Muslim students from being forced to take Islamiyat classes.<sup>234</sup>

Equally troubling is the societal intolerance and prejudice towards religious minorities and attempts by religious groups to erase all aspects of non-Mus-

229 "Three to Eight Million People Work as Bonded Labour in Pakistan," January 2, 2012, The Express Tribune with The International New York Times, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/315246/debt-bondage-three-to-eight-million-people-work-as-bonded-labour-in-pakistan/>.

230 Based on several interviews of Pakistani Hindu Refugees in Jodhpur, India, January 15 – 17, 2013.

231 Mandhro, Sameer, "Mass conversions: For Matli's poor Hindus, 'lakshmi' lies in another religion," January 21, 2012, The Express Tribune, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/324799/mass-conversions-for-matli-s-poor-hindus-lakshmi-lies-in-another-religion/>.

232 Brown, Laretta, "Study: Public School Textbooks in Pakistan Teach Intolerance of Non-Muslims," April 14, 2016, CSN News, <http://www.csn-news.com/news/article/laretta-brown/study-public-school-textbooks-pakistan-teach-intolerance-non-muslims>.

233 Id.; Andrei, Mihai, "Study: Pakistan's public school textbooks portray non-Muslim citizens as 'religiously inferior, scheming and intolerant'" April 18, 2016, ZME Science, <http://www.zmescience.com/science/news-science/pakistan-religion-17042016/>

234 Salim, Yusra, "Multifaceted Learning: Non-Muslim Students Across Sindh to Study 'Ethics' from April 1," January 26, 2017, The Express Tribune, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1034710/multifaceted-learning-non-muslim-students-across-sindh-to-study-ethics-from-april-1/>.

lim culture from Pakistani life. This includes shared Indian and Pakistani cultural festivals, such as the spring festival of Basant, recently banned by the Punjab provincial government due to its Hindu roots. Even seemingly mainstream groups and institutions have resisted the public recognition of Hindu culture and religious festivals, as exemplified by organized opposition to an announcement by the Sindh government to declare Holi as a public holiday.

The Chairman of the Pakistan Schools Management Association, Sharafuz Zaman, for instance, stated, "Today we are announcing a public holiday for Holi, tomorrow we will be telling everyone to read Ramayana!" Zaman added that he believed having a holiday for Holi will have "a negative impact on the young and innocent children" and further noted, "What do we tell them? Do we tell them it's a festival where people throw colours, drink bhang, and dance? If someone wants to go play holi, they can go ahead...But by declaring it a public holiday, we have advertised it in every home."<sup>235</sup>

There has also been a burgeoning popularity of Islamic themed television shows and "Islamic TV evangelist[s]" that preach religious intolerance.<sup>236</sup> Private TV channels have similarly featured derogatory content targeting minorities. A recent performer, for instance, referred to Hindus as dogs and was greeted with laughter from the audience, thereby normalizing the dehumanization and inferiority of Hindus.<sup>237</sup>

## Refugees

Over the past several years, there has been a significant upsurge in the migration of Pakistani Hindus

to India, in an attempt to escape rampant economic and social discrimination and escalating violence. Between 2009 and 2012, an estimated 11,000 refugees fled from Balochistan province to India,<sup>238</sup> in addition to thousands of others from Sindh and southern Punjab province.

And in May 2014, a Hindu politician from the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz claimed that approximately 5,000 Hindus flee Pakistan annually to escape discrimination and forced conversions.<sup>239</sup> Similarly, community organizations working with the refugees in India have confirmed the large scale migration.<sup>240</sup>

In India, the majority of refugees have settled in Rajasthan<sup>241</sup> in approximately 400 camps, with an estimated 1,500–2,000 Pakistani Hindus settling there annually, based on information received from Universal Just Action Society, the primary NGO working with the refugees in Jodhpur, Rajasthan. Additionally, there are significant numbers in Punjab, Haryana, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and the capital of New Delhi.<sup>242</sup> In Madhya Pradesh, for instance, there are 35,000 Pakistani Hindus according to the All India Sindhi-Hindu Society.

There are now an estimated 200,000 refugees from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan living in India, the majority of whom are Hindus and Sikhs.<sup>243</sup>

Starting in 2014, the Indian government began taking several steps to address the influx of Pakistani Hindu refugees, including relaxing citizenship requirements and providing long-term visas. Statistics from 2015 show that nearly 19,000 Pakistani Hindus had been given long-term visas in Madhya Pradesh, 11,000 in

235 Khatri, Sadia, "How the Public Holiday on Holi Underscores Bigotry in Pakistan," May 12, 2016, Dawn, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1247663/how-the-public-holiday-on-holi-underscores-bigotry-in-pakistan>.

236 Azhar, Mobeen, "The Rise of Pakistan's Televangelists," July 13, 2012, BBC News, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-18729683>.

237 "Don't Target Hindus Says Pakistani Daily," April 17, 2016, Business Standard, [http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/don-t-target-hindus-says-pakistani-daily-116041700388\\_1.html#](http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/don-t-target-hindus-says-pakistani-daily-116041700388_1.html#).

238 Gannon, Kathy, "Pakistan's Minorities Have no Faith in Democracy," May 7, 2013, Boston.com, <http://www.boston.com/2013/05/07/entry-cont/QMAoh8LOT0FCmZ1k4nZyFI/story.html>.

239 Pakistan, Freedom in the World 2015, Freedom House, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2015/pakistan#.VZSkqfm6fIU>.

240 Based on discussions with Hindu Singh Sodha and other SLS volunteers in Jodhpur, January 15-17, 2013.

241 Id.

242 Jha, Bhagish K., "1,000 Pak Hindus Migrate to Indore," December 13, 2012, The Times of India, [http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-12-13/indore/35796154\\_1\\_pakistani-hindus-bjp-citizenship](http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-12-13/indore/35796154_1_pakistani-hindus-bjp-citizenship).

243 "Pakistan Assessment 2016, SATP, <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/pakistan/index.htm>.

Rajasthan, and 4,000 in Gujarat.<sup>244</sup>

In July of 2016, the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016 was introduced in the Lok Sabha (Lower House of Parliament) to ease citizenship requirements for Hindus, Christians, Sikhs, Jains, and Parsis fleeing religious persecution in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. Specifically, it would allow these religious refugees to be eligible for citizenship, regardless of whether they were in India illegally and would reduce the Indian residency requirements from 11 years to six years, among other provisions.<sup>245</sup>

Despite these positive developments, information received from the refugee camps and NGOs in India indicate that Pakistani Hindu refugees are still struggling with health issues and socio-economic conditions, and many of the camps lack rudimentary facilities.

In addition to Pakistani minorities fleeing to India in large numbers, approximately 11,500 Pakistanis (mainly Christians) have pending asylum claims in Thailand and are starting to receive identity cards from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.<sup>246</sup> And an estimated 10,000 Ahmadiyyas have sought asylum in Germany, UK, and the US over the past year, and have accounted for the largest group of Pakistani filing for asylum in the US.<sup>247</sup>

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Religious minorities continued to suffer at an alarming rate in 2016, with several high-profile targeted bombings of minority communities and attacks on places of worship. Much of this extremist violence can be traced back to the education system and textbooks that promote religious intolerance and glorify violent jihad.

Women of minority faiths, in particular, endured violence and discrimination on account of both

their gender and religious identity. Hindu and Christian girls, for instance, were systematically kidnapped, forcibly converted to Islam, and married to Muslim men. Furthermore, while the passage of the Hindu Marriage Act is a positive step, until it is implemented throughout the country Hindu women will continue to be denied their basic right to vote, obtain property and family rights, and access government services.

The blasphemy laws, restrictions on Ahmadiyyas' religious practices, and government interference with Hindu and Sikh places of worship, also posed significant challenges for religious minorities.

The subsequent sections, therefore, put forth recommendations for both the Government of Pakistan and the international community to improve religious freedom and human rights conditions in the country.

## Recommendations to the Government of Pakistan

- The ETPB should transfer control over Hindu temples and crematoriums to representatives of the Hindu community or alternatively, Hindus should be appointed to lead the ETPB to prevent the illegal sales and encroachment of Hindu religious sites.
- Provide adequate security to places of worship, including full implementation of the plan to hire 2,000 Hindu and Christian policemen to guard religious sites.
- The number of reserved seats for religious minorities in both federal and provincial legislatures should be increased to afford them adequate political representation.
- Closely monitor schools to ensure that non-Muslims are not forced to take Islamiyat classes and strictly enforce the provision of

244 Tripathi, Rahul, "Steep Rise in Citizenship to Hindus and Sikhs from Pakistan and Afghanistan Under PM-Modi Led Government," May 21, 2015, The Economic Times, [http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2015-05-21/news/62459829\\_1\\_indian-citizenship-citizenship-requests-citizenship-act](http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2015-05-21/news/62459829_1_indian-citizenship-citizenship-requests-citizenship-act).

245 "The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016, PRS Legislative Research, <http://www.prsindia.org/billtrack/the-citizenship-amendment-bill-2016-4348/>.

246 "Pakistan Assessment 2016, SATP, <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/pakistan/index.htm>.

247 "Thousands of Ahmadi Fleeing Persecution in Pakistan and Seeking Asylum Overseas," September 4, 2016, Rabwah Times, <https://www.rabwah.net/thousands-of-ahmadi-fleeing-persecution-in-pakistan-and-seeking-asylum-overseas/>.

separate ethics courses for minorities.

- Enforce current laws prohibiting bonded labor and provide increased training and funding to police at the local level to combat the practice.
- Hindu marriage laws should be enforced in all provinces across the country.
- Repeal and/or revise discriminatory and inequitable laws and constitutional provisions. Furthermore, create an administrative agency to adjudicate claims of discrimination by state actors and provide legal redress to victims of hate violence.
- Train local law enforcement to better deal with vigilante justice and mob attacks on individuals accused of committing blasphemy.
- Train local law enforcement on how to deal with kidnappings, forced conversions, and involuntary marriages of Hindu and Christian girls. Police must also crack down on mosques that promote such activities and ensure the safety of girls and their families.
- Pass the Sindh Criminal Law (Protection of Minorities) Bill to criminalize forced conversions and protect the rights of Hindu (and other non-Muslim) girls, without making amendments or watering down its provisions.

## Recommendations to the International Community

- The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) and General Assembly should censure Pakistan for its human rights record through resolutions. While these resolutions are non-binding, they would keep attention focused on Pakistan's human rights record.
- The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank should apply economic pressure on Pakistan by placing preconditions on future loans requiring the government to meet certain democratic and human rights indices.
- Those fleeing or those that have fled Pakistan on account of religious persecution and who meet the requirements of the Geneva Convention should be accorded "refugee" status by UNHCR in accordance with international law.

- India should take all necessary steps to provide long-term legal status and ease citizenship requirements for Pakistani Hindus that have fled religious persecution. Accordingly, the government should adopt and implement the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016 to assist refugees from Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh.
- The central Indian government and relevant state governments should address the basic socio-economic needs of newly arriving refugees.

## Recommendations to the US Government

- The US Department of State should classify Pakistan as a Country of Particular Concern (CPC) due to its blatant disregard for human rights and religious freedom. This would place international attention on Pakistan's human rights record and enable the US to leverage sanctions on Pakistan, if necessary.
- The US should designate and block the assets of any Pakistani entities, political parties, or individuals that commit or pose a risk of committing terrorist acts, or provide material and financial support to terrorist organizations under Executive Order 13224.
- The US should shift its relationship from a military centric one to one based on supporting civil society, democracy, and human rights. Moreover, military aid should be limited and require strict accounting for every dollar Pakistan receives to prevent funds from being diverted to destabilize India or Afghanistan.
- Civilian assistance should be focused on meaningful constitutional and legal reform to provide equality and religious freedom for minorities. Alternatively, humanitarian and economic assistance should be provided for the benefit of the country's marginalized minorities.
- Current USAID teacher training programs should incorporate sensitivity training to address discriminatory attitudes towards religious minorities and support for violent extremism among many teachers.