



# PAKISTAN REPORT

Sexual assault and murder of  
a 15-year- old student in  
Mandi Bahauddin



Pakistan's Constitution allows freedom of religion or belief for minority groups. In addition, the country is also bound by numerous international treaties that save guard the rights and religious liberty of minorities. Unfortunately, this is something that is only established on paper. In reality, the continuing attacks on minorities narrate a different story. The attacks are manifested in various forms of targeted violence, abduction, conversion to Islam, extrajudicial killings. In reality, Pakistan has a poor record of safeguarding its minorities' population, that even media groups in Pakistan have voiced concerns about hostility to religious minorities on social media and closing spaces for dissent online. "Since the lockdown began there have been over half a dozen concerted hashtag campaigns against the religious minorities, security agencies, human rights, gender, politics. Describing these groups as worthy of death, non- Muslims or traitors to Pakistan." [1]

Female Journalists have said "that they are increasingly targeted online, sometimes in gross sexualized attacks, including rape threats. In a country where many journalists face intimidation and violence against women is on the rise – including against female reporters – women say these social media attacks have dire offline consequences. From shying away from sharing their work to being forced out of jobs, to declining to pursue stories, they say they feel prevented from fully participating in the profession." [2] Another example of the growing religious intolerance is the fact that forced conversions have become a privileged tool against Christians and Hindus." [3] Girls belonging to the minority communities are routinely abducted, forcibly married, and converted into Islam by the Muslim fundamentalists. Non-compliance or resistance have often led to their murder." [4]

[1]  
<https://apnews.com/article/1daafaf0f6775813361081d3cb1f8257>

[2]<https://cpj.org/2020/09/as-ruling-party-fans-spew-online-abuse-pakistans-female-journalists-call-for-government-action/>

[3] <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2277788/minor-girl-molested-after-murder>

[4]  
<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Punjab,-Christian-mother-and-son,-killed-by-Muslim-neighbours-in-quarrel-51570.html>



Blasphemy is also used as an instrument to settle personal conflicts and target minorities. Christian and Hindu minorities in Pakistan live under a constant threat of being persecuted by the Muslim extremists in the country.”[5] Transgender women and men in Pakistan are also subjected to humiliation and violence by the conservative Pakistani community. Often disowned by their families, they resort to begging and work as wedding dancers. They often are sexually abused and end up as sex workers.”[6] Child abuse is a global problem and pervades all cultures. Pakistan cannot be excluded when we talk about child abuse. In the first half of the current year, at least 1,489 children were subjected to sexual assault. A report by Sahil, a non-governmental organization, revealed that at least eight children fell victim to sexual abuse daily on average in the country.”[7] This report is intended to raise awareness of the human rights violations happening in Pakistan, and the atrocities the minorities in this country are subjected to. GHRD calls upon the national and international bodies for a constructive policy change in Pakistan.

[5]<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Punjab,-Christian-mother-and-son,-killed-by-Muslim-neighbours-in-quarrel-51570.html>

[6][https://apnews.com/article/international-news-karachi-pakistan-south-asia-asia-f7dec23fd300282b3570420c01a5fac8?fbclid=IwAR1bCwnat\\_OQaL3r8sqpBQe\\_SUO7yRGNZeRT2LBPIUB2\\_Ydx-HgLYkzCWmA](https://apnews.com/article/international-news-karachi-pakistan-south-asia-asia-f7dec23fd300282b3570420c01a5fac8?fbclid=IwAR1bCwnat_OQaL3r8sqpBQe_SUO7yRGNZeRT2LBPIUB2_Ydx-HgLYkzCWmA)

[7]<https://www.samaa.tv/news/2020/11/15-year-old-boy-harassed-murdered-in-mandi-bahauddin-police/>

# Hate speech against minorities





## Online space for dissent and freedom of expression has shrunk in Pakistan

Online space for dissent and freedom of expression has shrunk in Pakistan, while hate speech and digital surveillance has increased, informed a press statement from the Freedom Network group on the 28th October 2020. In the statement, the group has noted a "regression" in Pakistan's cyber policies and said that online censorship and surveillance, breach of privacy, hate speech, misinformation, and disinformation have increased in the country during 2020, reported Dawn. The country faced 'several setbacks' in this year in terms of digital rights, freedom of expression as well as the right to online information, informed the group's annual report 'Closing Spaces: Coercive Cyber Regulations Impede Online Journalism and Free Speech', and the country has scored a meager 38 out of 100 in global internet freedom rankings. The group alleged that efforts had been made to muzzle media persons, members of opposition political parties, civil society members, and civilians. It also blamed the "aggressive federal government" for taking steps to "extend and expand its authority to overregulate the media sector and to redefine the boundaries of free speech". "The cybercrime law was repeatedly invoked against journalists and opinion makers for exercising freedom of expression and social media activism," Dawn quoted the press release. "Internet freedom declined during 2020 due to authorities' increased blocking of political, social, and cultural websites and undeclared policy of connectivity restrictions and increased disinformation. Several journalists and rights activists faced inquiries, abductions, investigations, arrests and criminal related to their online/social media activities and posts," said the press statement of Freedom Network. Additionally, several women journalists reported feeling vulnerable and unsafe due to online bullying and threats by various sections including supporters and members of the ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). Pakistan has for several years continued a poor track record on press freedom. The 2020 world press freedom index compiled by Reporters Without Borders has reported that Pakistan slipped six spots since 2017 to 145th place out of 180 countries.[8]

[8]<https://www.bignewsnetwork.com/news/266820147/pakistan-online-spaces-for-hate-speech-censorship-increase>



## Study highlights online harassment of Pakistani minorities

“Media groups in Pakistan have voiced concerns about hostility to religious minorities on social media and closing spaces for dissent online. The findings were shared in a report titled “Closing Spaces: Coercive Cyber Regulations Impede Online Journalism and Free Speech in Pakistan” issued by Freedom Network to mark International Internet Day on Oct. 29. The report said that online news media platforms reported facing hostility and organized targeting for their content related to religion, religious minorities, and human rights. They face threats, abuse, trolling, hacking, blocking, and charges of treason from various threat actors including individuals, political parties, religious groups, unknown organized groups, and even official sources. “Hate speech against religious minorities on social media and their online harassment were prevalent in 2020. Religious minorities, security agencies, human rights, gender, politics and development were identified as the main discussion themes online that elicited the most hostile reactions from detractors online,” the report stated. Concerns about misinformation, disinformation, and fake news grew as political polarization was encouraged by the ruling party and Prime Minister Imran Khan himself, it claimed. Misinformation complaints spread principally through social media platforms. Pakistan experienced several setbacks in the enforcement of freedom of expression and right to information online, the report stated.”[9]

[9] <https://www.ucanews.com/news/study-highlights-online-harassment-of-pakistani-minorities/90098>



# Transgender minorities



## Transgender rights defender physically assaulted and robbed at her home

“On 9 November 2020, transgender rights defender Nayyab Ali was physically assaulted and robbed at her home in Islamabad by two unidentified, armed men. The defender, after a struggle, was able to fend off the attackers but suffered serious injuries. Nayyab Ali had recently been vocal about the increased targeting of the transgender community in Pakistan through her social media pages and had since been receiving death threats. A First Information Report (FIR) was filed regarding the attack at the Golra police station on 10 November. Nayyab Ali is a transgender rights defender and Chairperson of the All Pakistan Transgender Election Network. She also manages the ‘Khawaja Sira Community Centre’ in Okara, which offers a basic literacy and numeracy program, vocational training, life skills education, and driving classes for the transgender community. In 2018, Nayyab was one of four transgender candidates who ran for Pakistan’s general elections. Nayyab has also been leading the advocacy efforts for the approval of Pakistan’s National Transgender Rights Protection Policy. She is a winner of the Galas Award in 2020, for her human rights work. The day before her attack, Nayyab was nominated for the APCOM Hero award for her work on transgender rights. Over the past several months, there have been increasing physical attacks on transgender persons and defenders in Pakistan, including in the national capital Islamabad.” [10] GHRD condemns this practice and calls upon the international community to address these systematic violations. It has to be guaranteed that in all circumstances all human rights defenders in Pakistan are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear or reprisals and free of all restrictions.

[10] <https://nayadaur.tv/2020/11/rights-watch-group-condemns-the-assault-on-transgender-rights-defender/>





## Transgender Pakistanis find solace in a church of their own

“Pakistan’s Christian transgender people, often mocked, abused, and bullied, say they have found peace and solace in a church of their own. Shunned by other churches, they can raise their voices high here. During a recent service, transgender women, flowing scarves lose over their long hair, conducted Bible readings and raucously sang hymns, accompanied by the rhythms of a drum played by a transgender elder in the church. The church, called the First Church of Eunuchs, is the only one for transgender Christians in Pakistan. “Eunuch” is a term often used for transgender women in South Asia, though some consider it derogatory. Themchurch’s pastor and co-founder Ghazala Shafique said she chose the name to make a point, citing at length verses from the Bible saying eunuchs are favored by God. Transgender Christians are a minority within a minority in the overwhelmingly Muslim country. Christians and other religious minorities often face discrimination and feel their place is tenuous. While the community can find support among themselves, transgender Christians are most often rejected. At churches, they are told to sit at the back and sometimes told not to dress as a woman. Arsoo, a transgender woman, said that in churches with separate women’s and men’s sections, she was bounced back and forth, told by the women to sit with the men and told by the men to sit with the women.”[11]

[11] [https://apnews.com/article/international-news-karachi-pakistan-south-asia-asia-f7dec23fd300282b3570420c01a5fac8?fbclid=IwAR1bCwnat\\_OQaL3r8sqpBQe\\_SUO7yRGNZeRT2LBPIUB2\\_Ydx-HgLYkzCWmA](https://apnews.com/article/international-news-karachi-pakistan-south-asia-asia-f7dec23fd300282b3570420c01a5fac8?fbclid=IwAR1bCwnat_OQaL3r8sqpBQe_SUO7yRGNZeRT2LBPIUB2_Ydx-HgLYkzCWmA)

# Systematic Child Abuse in Pakistan

## Sexual assault and murder of a 15-year-old student in Mandi Bahauddin



On the 15th of November the Shanana Lok, police confirmed the rape and murder of a 15-year-old boy. “The teenager left his house for school (Saturday morning the 14th, November) but never returned home after which his family lodged a missing person complaint with the police. “Late Saturday night we found his body from a canal near the Rasool Power House,” his father told the police. “There were no clothes on his body. Not even shoes,” he added. A post-mortem examination was conducted after which the victim’s body was sent back home for burial. “According to the school records, the teenager never reached school,” the investigation officer said, adding that the rape will only be confirmed after the medical reports come out. The 15-year-old was the only brother of five sisters. His family has demanded that the perpetrators be arrested immediately. On November 21, a seven-year-old girl’s body was dumped after her rape in Baghbanpura. A day earlier, a case of the gang rape of a minor was reported in the same area. Two suspects identified as Mubashir and Sheraz were booked in the case. On November 19, a case of sexual assault on an eight-year-old boy was reported in Faisalabad. On November 11, a girl was sexually assaulted in Noshera Virkan. On November 8, a student was murdered after a sexual assault in Mandi Bahauddin. A report by Sahil, a non-governmental organization, revealed that at least eight children fell victim to sexual abuse daily on average in the country. In the first half of the current year, at least 1,489 children were subjected to sexual assault.”[12][13]

[12] <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2277788/minor-girl-molested-after-murder>

[13] <https://www.samaa.tv/news/2020/11/15-year-old-boy-harassed-murdered-in-mandi-bahauddin-police/>



## Court Awards Death Sentence To Serial Child Rapist Sohail Ayaz

“On Wednesday 18th November 2020, the Rawalpindi trial court awarded a death sentence to a “habitual pedophile” , Sohail Ayaz for raping minor boys and recording the act. Sohail Ayaz, who is also a chartered accountant, was awarded a death sentence apart from three sentences of rigorous imprisonment by Additional Session and District Judge Jahangir Ali Gondal. The sentence was awarded to Ayaz and his accomplice Khurram under section 367-A of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) – for deceitfully taking the victims to his house, confining them, administering them with intoxicants such as ice (crystal methamphetamine), and then raping them. Ayaz was also ordered to pay Rs 500,000 to the families of his 3 victims. The court also ordered 3 sentences of 15 years of rigorous imprisonment to Ayaz under 337, 337-J, and 292-C of the PPC. Ayaz was also awarded 3 seven-year prison and Rs 300,000 for abducting the minors. Ayaz was also convicted for similar crimes in the United Kingdom and Italy.”[14]

[14] <https://nayadaur.tv/2020/11/court-awards-death-sentence-to-serial-child-rapist-sohail-ayaz/>



# Forced Conversion of Minority girls



## **Court approves the conversion and marriage of 13- year-old Arzoo Raja**

“The High Court of Sindh in Karachi has agreed with the kidnappers of Arzoo Raja, a 13-year-old girl who, after being kidnapped, was converted to Islam and forced into a forced marriage with a 44-year-old man. The court, to which the kidnappers had turned after being accused by the girl's family, agreed with them, stating that Arzoo had freely accepted Islam and freely married 44-year-old Ali Azhar. The court also ordered that no arrests be made. Yesterday, during the court proceedings, Arzoo's mother, Rita Masih, burst into tears (see video): "Let me see my daughter, she's in there but they [the kidnappers, the police and the court] won't allow me to see my innocent little daughter. Arzoo, my sweetheart, come to your mom and give me a big hug, my dear daughter. Your sister got sick from what happened to you; your brother no longer eats because they want you home. My daughter is only 13, she is innocent. They [the kidnappers] keep lying and won't let me meet my little girl. I want my daughter back! Please, please, help me!". Then Rita Masih passed out, but the court, the police and the kidnappers did not allow her to meet her daughter. In another room, Arzoo was crying (see photo 1) and spread her arms as if to hug her mother, but the police blocked her and kept her away. In recent days, demonstrations were held throughout the country to denounce the violence against minorities, forced marriages, and the specific case of Arzoo Raja. The National Commission for Justice and Peace (NCJP) has condemned this injustice, another example of the growing religious intolerance in Pakistan, where forced conversions have become a privileged tool of persecution against Christians and Hindus. In a joint statement by the president of the NCJP, Msgr. Joseph Arshad and the director Fr. Emmanuel Yousaf (Mani), say that intolerance towards religious minorities "has become an enormous challenge. At least the case of Arzoo has been recorded, but there are many other incidents of this type that are not reported. Arzoo's family showed her birth certificate, which proves that she is 13 and that her marriage to Azhar violates the Sindh Child Marriage Restraint Act. " The NCJP asks the government to intervene in this incident that has offended the entire Christian community in Pakistan.”[15]

[15][http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Karachi:-Court-approves-the-conversion-and-marriage-of-13-year-old-Arzoo-Raja.-The-mother's-desperation-\(VIDEO\)-51455.html?fbclid=IwAR37zdZTUvRgspIrLoLERw1REx8YB9CvcR3W9zIviag3gy0muywoekUCH4](http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Karachi:-Court-approves-the-conversion-and-marriage-of-13-year-old-Arzoo-Raja.-The-mother's-desperation-(VIDEO)-51455.html?fbclid=IwAR37zdZTUvRgspIrLoLERw1REx8YB9CvcR3W9zIviag3gy0muywoekUCH4)



## Pakistani cleric faces arrest for the marriage of Christian girl

A Pakistani court has ordered the arrest of an Islamist cleric accused of solemnizing the marriage of a minor Christian girl under pressure, coercion, and influence in the southern city of Karachi. Neha Pervaiz, 15, was sexually assaulted, forcibly converted to Islam, and then married off to a 45-year-old Muslim man last year. She filed a case against her purported husband Muhammad Imran, cleric Qazi Mufti Ahmed Jaan Raheemi, and four others for her abduction, rape, and forced marriage. Mufti Raheemi, who was declared an absconder by the court, is also behind the conversion and marriage of Arzoo Raja, another Christian child victim. During a Nov. 10 hearing, the court issued a non-bailable arrest warrant for the cleric and directed police to produce him on Nov. 16. In her statement before the judicial magistrate, Neha Pervaiz denied having embraced Islam. In an interview with UCA News last year, she shared her ordeal. “I was taken by my aunt, a Muslim convert, to her house on April 28 to help her look after her sick son. But there I was asked to marry a Muslim man named Imran. When I refused, they beat me up and threatened to kill my minor brother who was with me,” Neha said. “Later I was taken to a room where I was raped by Imran. They then pressurized me to convert to Islam and marry Imran. On April 29, I was taken to an Islamic cleric, who asked me to recite Quranic verses and gave me a new name, Fatima.” She was later forced to marry Imran in a court on April 30. On May 5 last year, Neha managed to escape with the help of Imran's daughter. Jamila Masih, mother of Neha, said her daughter had returned home barefoot and was very scared. “I was shocked to learn what had happened to my daughter as I was under the impression that she was at her aunt’s house to help her,” she said. According to Neha’s family, police were initially reluctant to register their complaint, but they were able to lodge a case on May 13 with the help of others including Pastor Ghazala Shafique of the Church of Pakistan.”[16]

[16] <https://www.ucanews.com/news/pakistani-cleric-faces-arrest-for-marriage-of-christian-girl/90255>



# Blasphemy cases



## Bank manager was shot dead by security guard over blasphemy allegations

“ On the 4th November 2020, a bank manager was shot dead by his security guard allegedly over blasphemy allegations Malik Imran Hanif, the manager of the National Bank of Pakistan branch in Quaidabad tehsil of Khushab, was shifted to a local hospital after he was shot by the guard with a rifle. Due to his critical injuries, he was taken to Lahore where he succumbed to his wounds at the Services Hospital. In a video of the suspect that was shared on social media, the guard could be heard saying that the deceased manager had "insulted the prophet". Speaking to Dawn, police expressed doubt over the guard's claim that he had killed the manager over blasphemy. They suggested that the guard had murdered the manager due to personal grievances. No first information report (FIR) of the incident has been registered as yet. Police said they would lodge the FIR upon receiving a complaint from the deceased's family, who were transporting his body back to Khushab from Lahore. A post-mortem was likely to take place in Khushab. Videos shared on Twitter showed the guard being greeted by a crowd of supporters after killing the manager. The security guard and the mob then raised slogans as they walked on the street. The suspect was then joined by the leaders of a religious group, all of whom raised slogans and addressed supporters from the rooftop of the Quaidabad Police Station. Police personnel could be seen standing nearby recording videos. In another video, a maternal uncle of the deceased manager stated that the security guard had shot dead Hanif due to a personal issue. He denied the suspect's claim that Hanif had insulted any prophet, saying they were Muslims and not Ahmadis. He demanded that the murder be investigated on merit and the suspect be brought to justice. Human rights groups say blasphemy laws are often misused to persecute minorities or even against Muslims to settle personal rivalries. Such accusations can end up in lynchings or street vigilantism. Up to 80 people are known to be imprisoned in the country on such charges — half of whom face life in prison or the death penalty — according to the US Commission on International Religious Freedom.[17]

[17] <https://www.dawn.com/news/1588614>





## **Christian mother and her son brutally lynched to death by an Islamist mob over blasphemy**

A Christian woman named Yasmin and her son Usman Masih were brutally killed by a Muslim mob led by Muhammad Hassan and others in Kathor Kalan village in Gujranwala, Pakistan. The gruesome lynching of the Christian mother-son duo reportedly took place in the name of blasphemy. According to activist Rahat Austin, Yasmin was shot dead by Mohammad Hassan. His son, severely injured, died minutes later as he desperately clung to his wife's hands while his two daughters saw their father dying. The activist further mentions that the crowd gathered at the spot watched the specter of violence unleashed against the Christian family, with none of them coming forward to help them.”[18]

[18] <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Punjab,-Christian-mother-and-son,-killed-by-Muslim-neighbours-in-quarrel-51570.html>



# Other Minority news



## Pakistan minorities demand a fair local government system

Minority rights activists in Pakistan have called for Sindh's government and political parties to introduce a fair local government system that benefits marginalized communities along with the Muslim majority. The demand came during a consultation meeting convened by the National Commission for Justice and Peace (NCJP), the human rights arm of the Catholic Church, in Karachi on the issue of Sindh's local government system and religious minorities. The meeting was attended by civil society organizations, parliamentarians and former members of the local government. Kashif Aslam, an NCJP national coordinator, urged respective governments and departments to include religious minorities in the local government system so that true and active leadership for the rights of religious minorities could emerge in Pakistan. "The last term of the Sindh local government ended in August 2020; hence, there is a need to call upon the current government and relevant authorities to start working on a local government system which has a true representation of minorities through a direct vote," Aslam said.[19]

[19]<https://www.ucanews.com/news/pakistan-minorities-demand-fair-local-government-system/90378?fbclid=IwAR35kyQw8fEdetCN-23RM35U-rh18NA0d33JIHy93IVE0mbfBSgqnKW9q0#>



## PTI Who Slapped Woman Official Appointed Coordinator Of Women Protection Authority



A local leader of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) who slapped a woman officer of Pakistan Post has been appointed as the district coordinator of Punjab Women Protection Authority (PPWA). The appointment of Naveed Aslam by the PPWA chairperson Kaneez Fatima has created an uproar with activists questioning as to how a man who mistreated a woman can be given such a post. Aslam on September 24 slapped the Senior Female Postmaster (SPM) Officer Sofia Qasim in the GPO. He was arrested by the police afterward on the same day. However, he was released on bail from the court the next day.[20]

[20]<https://nayadaur.tv/2020/11/pti-leader-who-slapped-woman-official-appointed-coordinator-of-women-protection-authority/>

# Referential

This report aims to highlight the various human rights violations in Pakistan during October (2020). In compiling this report, GHRD used information from various sources that covered these grave inhuman violations.

Therefore GHRD wants to pay their gratitude to the following sources:

## **Nayadaur**

Digital media platform covering news from Pakistan

## **Central news Asia**

English news channel based in Singapore, reports latest news Asia and around the world

## **Dawn News**

Pakistan's English- language paper, published by Pakistan Herald Publications

## **The persecution**

An online newspaper that highlights all the human rights violations against Christians

## **Timesnownews**

A 24- hour English news channel in India owned and operated by the times group

## **AsiaNews**

An online news platform

## **AP news**

News from The Associated Press, the definitive source for independent journalism from every corner of the globe.

## **Uca News**

is the most trusted independent Catholic news source from Asia. It reports news from, about, and of interest to the Church in Asia.