



**Statement by Head of Delegation during Review of Pakistan's  
Second Periodic Report on International Covenant on Civil &  
Political Rights (ICCPR) (17 October 2024)**

**Distinguished Chair, Honorable Members of the Human Rights Committee,**

I am privileged to address this distinguished Committee today.

My delegation approaches this review with a deep sense of commitment and purpose, ready to engage in a constructive dialogue on Pakistan's progress, challenges, and plans in fulfilling its obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

Pakistan's second periodic report on the ICCPR and response to the list of issues received from the honorable Committee are the outcomes of a transparent and inclusive process involving all national stakeholders, including relevant civil society organizations and NGOs.

**Distinguished Members of the Committee,**

Pakistan was founded on the principle that freedom and human dignity are inherent to everyone, regardless of background, faith, or ethnicity.

Since gaining independence in 1947, our nation has always been a vibrant tapestry of diverse cultures, languages, and religions, united by a shared belief in equality, justice, and the rule of law.

Our Constitution guarantees civil and political liberties, such as the right to life, liberty, freedom of speech, religion, assembly, and association. The right to a fair trial, protection from arbitrary detention, and access to justice are essential elements of our democratic society.

Furthermore, our Constitution is not just a legal document but a testament to our commitment to international human rights norms. It embeds the principles of equality and non-discrimination within its very fabric, aligning closely with global standards.

**Pakistan's legal system** is not just a collection of laws but a robust and comprehensive framework of constitutional rights, legislative protections, and judicial oversight designed to safeguard civil and political freedoms. This comprehensive nature of our legal system reflects our unwavering commitment to protecting its citizens' civil and political rights.

**The Supreme Court and Provincial High Courts** also exercise significant authority in civil and political rights matters. In addition, **specialized courts**, including those addressing gender-based violence and child protection, have further strengthened our legal infrastructure.

Pakistan is a party to several core **international human rights treaties**. Since ratifying the ICCPR in 2010, Pakistan has made notable progress in harmonizing its national legal framework with global human rights commitments.

Pakistan views its **engagement with international human rights mechanisms** as an integral part of its commitment to human rights. In 2023, Pakistan underwent its fourth UPR cycle, during which we accepted a wide range of recommendations, including those related to civil and political rights. In August this year (2024), Pakistan engaged the Committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination for review its latest report to the Committee.

We recognize that protecting civil and political rights is not merely a legal requirement but a moral duty that demands constant reflection, reform, and collaboration with all sectors of society.

Pakistan implements its obligations under ICCPR under unique social, economic and geopolitical conditions. We are a nation of 241 million people, with rich cultural diversity.

We periodically face economic headwinds for several factors some of which are beyond our control such as Climate Change. For us security is an imperative due to our regional location. These factors require appreciation while understanding our strengths and limitation.

### **Esteemed Members of the Committee,**

Since the esteemed **Committee's last review in 2017**, we have implemented significant measures that reflect our efforts to reinforce the alignment of our laws with our obligations under the ICCPR and implement observations made by the Committee during the last review. Your observations have contributed to our progress, and we look forward to your continued guidance in our human rights journey.

These measures include efforts to promote gender equality, protect minority rights, uphold judicial independence, conduct training and awareness-raising campaigns for law enforcement and judicial officers, and provide free legal aid to vulnerable groups.

In this regard, I would like to highlight a few key areas.

***First, our efforts to strengthen our legal architecture against discrimination have continued since the Committee's last review.***

- In all, in the years since Pakistan's first review, around 70 legislations have been enacted at the federal and provincial levels to further strengthen the legislative and institutional framework for the protection and promotion of all human rights.
- Several important legislations include the **Hindu Marriage Act 2017**, the **Enforcement of Women's Property Rights Act 2020**, the **Protection of Journalists and Media Professionals Act 2021**, the **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act 2018**, the **ICT Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2020**, the **Anti-Rape (Investigation and Trial) Act 2021**, the **Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act (2018)**, among others. A complete list would be provided in writing.

- In addition, the Legal Aid and Justice Authority, established under the **Legal Aid and Justice Authority Act (2020)**, provides free legal assistance to marginalized communities, including women, children, and persons with disabilities.
- *May I also update the honorable committee on some of the legislative initiatives undertaken after submitting our second report to the Committee.*
  - **Criminal Laws (Amendment) Act 2023** amended the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act 2016 and other laws, criminalizing child sexual abuse content and cyberbullying;
  - **Maternity and Paternity Leave Act 2023** provides paid leave for eligible employees to support families caring for newborns;
  - **Day Care Centers Act 2023**, which mandates the establishment of daycare centers in public and private institutions to support working parents, especially women;
  - **Peaceful Assembly and Public Order Act 2024**, was enacted to maintain peace and security in Islamabad while supporting peaceful assemblies; and
  - **Christian Marriage (Amendment) Act 2024** raised the minimum age for marriage for Christians to 18 years.
- After the **25<sup>th</sup> Constitutional amendment**, **Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) were merged into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province**. The region enjoys the uniform application of all laws and the Constitution.

***Second, Pakistan's human rights institutions are coming of age.***

- For instance, the **National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR)**, an autonomous entity that examines human rights violations and upholds accountability, has received 'A-status'

accreditation from the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI), demonstrating its commitment to the Paris Principles.

- Since its inception, NCHR has received **7,080 complaints, taken 1,271 suo moto cases**, and conducted proactive investigations and advocacy on human rights violations. NCHR's proactive initiatives, **such as 173 jail visits, 28 fact-finding missions, and the publication of 50 special reports**, demonstrate its commitment to actively identifying and addressing human rights concerns.
- The budget of the National Commission for Human Rights was substantially increased in the last financial year to enhance its ability to investigate human rights violations.
- Furthermore, dedicated bodies like the **National Commission on the Status of Women** and the **National Commission on the Rights of Child** actively tackle matters related to gender inequality and the rights of child. The **Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances** continued its critical work in probing cases of enforced disappearances and guaranteeing that the families of victims attain justice.

*Third, promoting gender equality, women empowerment, and combating Gender Based Violence remains an overarching priority.*

- **The National Gender Policy Framework (2022)** presents Pakistan's strategic plan to boost women's involvement in governance, education, and the economy, guaranteeing that women play a vital role in national development. **Provincial initiatives**, including the Sindh Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities Act 2018 and the Punjab Reproductive Health Rights and Family Planning Bill 2021, significantly enhance the safeguarding of women's rights.

- **Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace (Amendment) Act 2022** aims to create a safe and respectful atmosphere for women in diverse fields.
- Pakistan is making efforts to boost women's involvement in the labor market, improving healthcare accessibility. Today Pakistan's registered doctors include 47% women. Among dentists, women constitute 66% of all dentists. Women participation in technology and engineering sectors is also increasing significantly.
- Alongside we are strengthening safeguards against gender-based violence.
- Statistical data indicates a notable decline in honor-related crimes and gender-based violence across Pakistan, particularly in the provinces of Punjab and Sindh. *In Punjab, the number of honor-related murders dropped from 248 cases in 2016 to 150 in 2023, reflecting significant progress. Similarly, in Sindh, 349 cases of gender-based violence, including domestic violence, were registered and investigated in 2023, marking a decrease compared to the previous year. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), the number of reported honor-related incidents fell from 190 in 2016 to 96 in 2023. Meanwhile, Balochistan saw a reduction from 85 cases in 2016 to 50 in 2023. These figures suggest that ongoing efforts to address these issues, whether through legal reforms, awareness campaigns, or more effective law enforcement, are beginning to yield positive results nationwide.*

*Fourth, with an eye on the future, the Rights of Child figure prominently in our human rights work.*

- During the reporting cycle, we have enacted laws to protect **rights of the child**, such as the Juvenile Justice System Act (2018) and the Zainab Alert Response and Recovery Act (2020), which focus on child protection and the prevention of abduction and exploitation.
- A significant highlight is the launch of the ZARRA mobile app in November 2023. This app was developed to enhance child protection by allowing users to report and track child abuse and neglect cases. It was introduced during Universal Children’s Day, showcasing the government’s continued commitment to safeguarding vulnerable children.

*Fifth, we are zeroed in on countering hate speech directed at minorities. Combating hate speech remains an important and urgent priority.*

- The government has also taken a range of measures to combat hate speech and promote **interfaith harmony** and peaceful coexistence across the country.
- The State is fully committed to **preventing misuse or abuse of the blasphemy law**. Blasphemy law in Pakistan is non-discriminatory as it deals with offences against all religions and applies to Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Generally, the blasphemy law is misunderstood in that it only protects Muslims. The fact, however, remains that it equally protects all Pakistani communities regardless of their religious beliefs.
- In 2023, the Federal Investigation Agency registered 85 cases of hate speech. During the same year, the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) initiated 4047 requests to international social media companies to block hate content directed at minorities. Over

the past five years, 144 cases of hate speech have been registered by the provincial law enforcement authorities.

- In support of this, **Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA)** issued an advisory to all TV cable operators and media houses, urging them to remain vigilant and immediately report any content that promotes religious discrimination or incites violence.
- **District Vigilance and Interfaith Harmony Committees** have been established to monitor religious sites and foster peaceful coexistence involving religious leaders.
- The government takes serious note of such incidents of **violence against any minority group**. In the Punjab province alone, the government has deployed 364 security personnel permanently for the protection of places of worship of non-Muslims. During special minority religious festivals, temporary deployment of security personnel exceeds 11,000.

*Sixth, we are sensitive to the reports of enforced disappearances, and our institutional mechanisms remain active in response.*

- The Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances is playing a crucial role in protecting this fundamental right by actively investigating cases of enforced disappearances. The Commission has processed **10354** cases, including those transmitted by the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (UN-WGEID). A total of **8077** cases have been disposed of, representing 77.67 % of the cases received, while **2277** cases are still under investigation.
- The Superior Judiciary is also following this critical matter with ongoing hearings.



***Seventh, Freedom of Expression is ingrained in our democracy and is protected by the Constitution.***

- The media in Pakistan plays an indispensable role in fostering dialogue, holding authorities accountable, and amplifying the voices of marginalized communities.
- However, the rapid growth of digital platforms has brought new challenges, including concerns over misinformation, hate speech, and online harassment. To address these challenges, Pakistan has introduced legislative measures that balance freedom of expression with the need for responsible online behavior. The Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) was introduced to tackle cybercrimes, including online harassment, hate speech, and incitement to violence.

**Distinguished Members of the Committee,**

The government is also taking measures to improve implementation processes and programs to make our human rights work more effective.

In 2020, the government updated the **National Action Plan for Human Rights** to make it more comprehensive and to address any identified gaps.

Additionally, the government launched the **Human Rights Awareness Program (HRAP)** in 2020 to educate and sensitize the public and office bearers about our international human rights commitments and the follow-up actions being taken.

The government launched the **National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow-up** project to further enhance our reporting mechanisms in accordance with United Nations guidelines and best practices. This project complements the existing **Treaty Implementation Cells (TIC)** at the Federal and Provincial levels.

In 2021, the **Human Rights Management and Information System (HRIMS)** was established at the Federal and Provincial levels to collect data on human rights indicators regularly, support data-driven policy interventions, and strengthen our implementation framework.

In addition, Pakistan has initiated **reforms within the criminal justice system** to address issues of overcrowding in prisons, delays in legal proceedings, and allegations of police misconduct.

The government has introduced measures to improve police accountability and enhance the efficiency of the judicial process, particularly in cases involving human rights violations.

### **Honorable Members of the Committee,**

Over the last year, Pakistan has unfortunately been bracing for yet another tide of terrorist attacks.

Pakistan is dedicated to fighting terrorism while ensuring the protection of fundamental rights. The recent Supreme Court ruling in *Ghulam Hussain v. The State* refined the definition of terrorism under the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) 1997, confirming that only actions aimed at achieving ideological, political, or religious goals are considered terrorism.

**Pakistan remains dedicated to enforcing the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1373**, which encompasses actions like asset freezes, travel restrictions, and arms embargoes to address the financing of terrorism.

### **Honorable Committee members,**

The glass remains half full. More work needs to be done!

Despite our progress, **significant challenges** remain in fully realizing our human rights obligations.

Pakistan continues to face complex issues related to poverty, terrorism, and internal displacement, all of which have a direct impact on the protection of civil and political rights.

The **fight against terrorism** has necessitated a delicate balance between ensuring national security and protecting individual freedoms. The deteriorating security situation along a long, porous border with Afghanistan is impacting civic life in border areas in many ways. Cases of violence, disappearances, and terrorist attacks have increased.

**Gender-based violence** remains a persistent challenge, with cultural and societal barriers hindering women's full participation in public life.

Another area of concern is the **protection of religious and ethnic minorities**. Pakistan is home to a diverse population, and while our Constitution guarantees freedom of religion and equal rights for minorities, issues such as sectarian violence, forced conversions, and religious intolerance remain a challenge.

There have been several reports concerning **Afghan refugees** in Pakistan. Let me emphasize that no country can match the generosity, despite serious financial constraints, with which Pakistan has hosted over 4 million Afghan nationals in full honor and dignity for over four decades. Hosting such a large refugee population requires international cooperation, burden sharing, and responsibility sharing. We continue to seek international partnerships in this regard.

### **Distinguished Members of the Committee,**

As we move to the interactive part of our review, I would like to reaffirm Pakistan's unwavering commitment to upholding the ICCPR and all international human rights treaties to which we are a party.

We approach this review process with humility. Our government remains dedicated to protecting and promoting human rights, and we look forward to engaging in a productive dialogue with the Committee.

Today's session is an opportunity for reflection, dialogue, and collaboration. Our conversation over the next two meetings can offer a

crucial platform for learning, growth, and continuous improvement of our commitment to promoting and protecting human rights in Pakistan.

**Let me now introduce members of Pakistan's delegation:**

- Mr. Sohaib Ahmed Malik, Minister for Law & Parliamentary Affairs, Government of the Punjab;
- Mr. Allah Dino Khowaja, Secretary, Ministry of Human Rights;
- Amb. Bilal Ahmad, Permanent Representative;
- Amb. Zaman Mehdi, Deputy Permanent Representative;
- Mr. Muhammad Arshad Director General, Ministry of Human Rights;
- Officers of the Pakistan Mission.

I thank you and we look forward to a fruitful exchange of views.

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## Annex-I

### Provisions of the Constitution of Pakistan Corresponding with ICCPR Provisions

<b>Constitutional Provision</b>	<b>Corresponding ICCPR Provision</b>
<b>Article 3:</b> Elimination of Exploitation	<b>Article 2:</b> Non-Discrimination; <b>Article 3:</b> Equal Rights of Men and Women
<b>Article 4:</b> Equal Protection of Law	<b>Article 16:</b> Right to recognition before the law; <b>Article 26:</b> The right to equality before the law and equal protection
<b>Article 8:</b> Laws inconsistent with or in Derogation of Fundamental Rights to be void	<b>Article 4:</b> Provision for derogation and non-derogation
<b>Article 9:</b> The Right to Life Liberty and Security of Person	<b>Article 6:</b> Right to Life
<b>Article 10:</b> Safeguards as to Arrest and Detention	<b>Article 9:</b> Right to liberty and security of person; <b>Article 10:</b> Treatment of Accused
<b>Article 10A:</b> Right to Fair Trial	<b>Article 14:</b> Due process and fair trial guarantees
<b>Article 11:</b> Prohibition on slavery forced labour etc.	<b>Article 8:</b> Prohibition of slavery servitude and compulsory labour
<b>Article 12:</b> Protection against Retrospective Punishment	<b>Article 15:</b> Prohibition of retrospective punishment
<b>Article 13:</b> Protection against Double Punishment and Self-Incrimination	<b>Article 14:</b> Due process and fair trial guarantees
<b>Article 14:</b> Inviolability of Dignity of Man etc.	<b>Article 7:</b> Prohibition against torture cruel inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment
<b>Article 15:</b> Freedom of Movement	<b>Article 12:</b> Right to liberty of movement and choice of residence
<b>Article 16:</b> Freedom of Assembly	<b>Article 21:</b> Right of Peaceful Assembly
<b>Article 17:</b> Freedom of Association	<b>Article 22:</b> Freedom of Association
<b>Article 19:</b> Freedom of Speech	<b>Article 19:</b> Right to hold opinions/freedom of expression
<b>Article 19A:</b> Right to Information	<b>Related to Article 19:</b> Right to access information
<b>Article 20:</b> Freedom to Profess Religion <b>Article 21:</b> Safeguard against Taxation for Purpose of any Particular Religion <b>Article 22:</b> Safeguards as to Educational Institutions in Respect of Religion etc.	<b>Article 18:</b> Right to freedom of thought conscience and religion

<p><b>Article 25:</b> Equality of Citizens  <b>Article 26: Non-Discrimination in Respect of Access to Public Places</b></p>	<p><b>Article 26:</b> Non-Discrimination and Equal Protection of the Law</p>
<p><b>Article 28:</b> Preservation of Language Script and Culture</p>	<p><b>Article 27:</b> Minority rights to enjoy their culture profess and practice their religion and use their own language</p>
<p><b>Article 34:</b> Women Rights Full Participation of Women in National Life</p>	<p><b>Article 25:</b> Right to take part in conduct of public affairs/vote/serve</p>
<p><b>Article 35:</b> Protection of Family etc.</p>	<p><b>Article 23:</b> Family and Marital Rights;  <b>Article 24:</b> Child protection/registration and rights</p>
<p><b>Article 36:</b> Protection of Minorities</p>	<p><b>Article 27:</b> Minority rights to enjoy their culture profess and practice their religion and use their own language</p>

**Federal and Provincial Legislation adopted since last review by the Human Rights Committee in 2017**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Title</b>
<b>Federal Laws</b>		
1	Federal	The Hindu Marriage Act 2017
2		The Transgender Persons (Protection and Rights) Act 2018
3		The Prevention of Smuggling of Migrants Act 2018
4		The Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act 2018
5		The Criminal Laws (Amendment) Act 2018
6		The Islamabad Healthcare Regulation Act 2018
7		The Constitution (25th Amendment) Act 2018
8		The Juvenile Justice System Act 2018
9		The Islamabad Capital Territory Child Protection Act 2018
10		The West Pakistan Juvenile Smoking (Repeal) Act 2018
11		The National Commission on the Status of Women (Amendment) Act 2018
12		The Women in Distress and Detention Fund (Amendment) Act 2018
13		The Reproductive Healthcare Rights Act 2019
14		The Injured Persons Compulsory Medical Treatment (Amal Umer) Act 2019
15		The Zainab Alert Response and Recovery Act 2020
16		The Legal Aid and Justice Authority Act 2020
17		The Enforcement of Women's Property Rights Act 2020
18		The Medical Tribunal Act 2020
19		The ICT Rights of Persons with Disability Act 2020
20		The Anti-Rape (Investigation and Trial) Act 2021
21		The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2021
22		The Muslim Family Laws (Amendment) Act 2021
23		The International Court of Justice (Review and Re-consideration) Act 2021
24		The Protection of Journalists and Media Professionals Act 2021
25		The Islamabad Capital Territory Prohibition of Corporal Punishment Act 2021
26		The Islamabad Capital Territory Senior Citizens Act 2021
27		The Access to the Media (Deaf) Persons Act 2022
28		The Dyslexia Special Measures Act 2022
29		The Islamabad Capital Territory Domestic Workers Act 2022
30		The Children (Pledging of labour) (Amendment) Act 2022
31		The Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace (Amendment) Act 2022

32		The Day Care Centers Act 2023
33		The Maternity and Paternity Leave Act 2023
34		The Christian Marriage (Amendment) Act 2024
<b>Provincial Laws</b>		
<b>Sindh</b>		
1	Sindh	Sindh Student Union Act 2022
2		Sindh Social Protection Authority Act 2022
3		Sindh Productive Healthcare Rights (Amendment) Act 2022
4		Sindh Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Act 2022
5		Sindh Habitual Offenders Monitoring Act 2022
6		Sindh Lawyer's Welfare and Protection Act 2023
7		Sindh Senior Citizen Welfare (Amendment) Act 2023
8		Sindh Protection and Promotion of Breast Feeding and Young Child Nutrition Act 2023
9		Sindh Medico Legal Act 2023
10		Sindh Immunization and Epidemic Control Act 2023
<b>Punjab</b>		
1	Punjab	Punjab Skills Development Authority Act 2018
2		Punjab Domestic Workers Act 2018
3		Punjab Right to Public Services Act 2018
4		Punjab Occupational Safety and Health Act 2019
5		Punjab Village Panchayats and Neighbourhood Councils Act 2019
6		Punjab Local Government Bill 2019
<b>Khyber Pakhtunkhwa</b>		
1	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Child Protection and Welfare (Amendment) Act 2018
2		Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Youth Welfare Endowment Fund Act 2019
3		Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Local Government (Amendment) Act 2019
4		Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Youth Development Commission Act 2019
5		Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Promotion Protection and Enforcement of Human Rights (Amendment) Act 2019
6		Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Reproductive Health Care Rights Act 2020
7		Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Domestic Violence Against Women Act 2021
<b>Balochistan</b>		
1	Balochistan	The Balochistan Prohibition of Smoking in Cinema Houses (Balochistan Repeal) Act, 2018
2		The Balochistan Juvenile Smoking (Balochistan Repeal) Act 2018



3		Balochistan Protection of Communal Property of Minorities Act 2018
4		Balochistan Local Government (Amendment) Act 2019
5		Balochistan Food Fortification Act 2021
6		Balochistan Factories Act 2021
7		Balochistan Shops Establishment Act 2021
8		Balochistan Home Based Workers Act 2022
9		Balochistan Companies Profits (Workers Participation) Act 2022
10		Balochistan Occupational Safety and Health Act 2022
11		Balochistan Workers Compensation Act 2022
12		Balochistan Employee's Social Security Act 2022
13		Balochistan Maternity Benefit Act 2023

**Recent Caselaw Reflecting Implementation of Rights Enshrined in ICCPR**

<b>Case Name</b>	<b>Summary/Key Points</b>
Muhammad Yasin vs the State (2024 SCMR 128)	Reduction of death sentence to life imprisonment, <b>aligned with Article 6 of ICCPR</b> : mitigating factors can reduce punishment.
Abdul Jabbar Khan Bangash vs. Federation of Pakistan and Others (PLD 2023 Islamabad 209)	Emphasized state's duty to <b>establish daycare centers</b> , based on ICCPR Article 10, family rights and women's rights.
Khadim Hussain vs. Secretary Ministry of Human Rights (MoHR) and Others (PLD 2020 Islamabad 268)	<b>Rights of prisoners, including humane treatment</b> , affirmed with reference to ICCPR provisions on inhumane treatment.
<b>Protection of Minorities and Religious Freedom</b>	
Suo Motu Case No.1 of 2014 (PLD 2014 SC 699)	<b>Minority protection and religious tolerance</b> : ICCPR's emphasis on rights for religious minorities.
Mubarak Ali Babar vs. Punjab Public Service Commission (2023 SCMR 518)	Affirmation of <b>reserved seats for minorities and Persons with Disabilities</b> , emphasizing ICCPR's principles of equality and non-discrimination.
Human Rights Commission of Pakistan v. Federation of Pakistan (2022 SCMR 643)	<b>Protection and restoration of religious properties</b> in line with ICCPR's stipulations.
Tahir Naqash v. the State (PLD 2022 SC 385)	<b>Protection of religious freedom for Ahmadis</b> , referencing ICCPR rights on freedom of religion or belief.
Mst. Asia Bibi v. the State (PLD 2019 SC 64)	Acquittal based on <b>lack of credible evidence in blasphemy case</b> , emphasizing right to fair trial in ICCPR.
Safia Bano vs Home Department Punjab and Others (PLD 2021 SC 488)	Supreme Court <b>barred the use of the death penalty for inmates with serious mental illness</b> , referencing ICCPR's Article 6 and its safeguards for individuals with mental disabilities.
Enforced Disappearances Cases i. Mahera Sajid vs Station House Officer, Police Station Shalimar ii. Tariq Mehmood vs State	<b>Judicial cases on enforced disappearances</b> in Pakistan referencing ICCPR's right to life, liberty, and security of person (Article 6, 9). These cases acknowledged the complexity of the subject matter as well as the difficulties faced by the victims and their families.
<b>Independence of Judiciary</b>	

Suo Moto Case No. 1 of 2024	The Supreme Court of Pakistan initiated suo moto action on a letter written by six Judges of the Islamabad High Court to the Supreme Judicial Council. The case focuses on the <b>Supreme Court's responsibility under Article 184(3)</b> of the Constitution.
Hasnain Raza and another v. Lahore High Court Lahore and others (PLD 2022 SC 7)	The case highlighted the <b>critical role of the District Judiciary in managing significant caseloads</b> under challenging conditions. Errors in decision-making are natural, and higher courts provide regular reviews and corrections.
Justice Qazi Faez Isa and others v. President of Pakistan and others (PLD 2022 SC 119)	The Supreme Court emphasized that <b>judicial independence is tied to judicial accountability</b> . Any inquiries into judges must adhere strictly to legal processes, as any deviation could undermine judicial independence.
Justice Qazi Faez Isa and others v. President of Pakistan and others (PLD 2021 SC1)	This case stressed that an <b>impartial and independent judiciary</b> is a cornerstone of democracy. It is protected by international conventions and further guidance documents such as the UN Basic Principles on Judicial Independence.
Justice Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui and others v. Federation of Pakistan (PLD 2018 SC 538)	The Supreme Court reiterated the need to <b>protect judges from executive overreach and vested interests</b> , emphasizing the importance of secure tenure for Superior Court judges.
District Bar Association Rawalpindi and others v. Federation of Pakistan and others (PLD 2015 SC 401)	This case discussed the <b>role of the Parliamentary Committee</b> under Article 175A and concluded that it did not compromise the independence of the judiciary. Judicial appointments were reviewed under a framework including the Judicial Commission.
Nadeem Ahmed Advocate v. Federation of Pakistan (2013 SCMR 1062)	The Supreme Court ruled that <b>seniority among High Court Judges</b> elevated on the same day should be based on age, reinforcing the principle of seniority in judicial appointments to protect against arbitrary decisions.
Province of Sindh through Chief Secretary and another v. Rasheed A. Rizvi (PLD 2012 SC 923)	The case emphasized that the <b>process of appointing judges must follow constitutional principles</b> , with the independence of the judiciary closely linked to the security and tenure of judges.
Azka Wahid vs Province of Punjab (W.P No.32798 of 2023)	The judgement of the Lahore High Court has declared the arbitrary distinction in the legally prescribed minimum age of marriage in the Punjab Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929, 18

	years for men and 16 years for women, as unconstitutional.
Farooq Omar Bhoja vs. Federation (Shariah Petition 1/2020)	The Federal Shariat Court ruled that the prerogative to set the minimum age for marriage lies with the state and is not against Islamic Law.
Mumtaz Bibi v Qasim (W.P No. 4227 of 2021)	The Islamabad High Court ruled that the marriage of children under the age of 18 is unlawful and the marriage contract void ab initio. IHC also referred to the obligations of international human rights conventions while declaring minimum age of marriage.

**Important Statistical Data**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Data</b>
<b>Gender-Based Violence including against Transgender Persons</b>		
Violence Against Transgender Persons	2018-2023	Complaints: 424; Prosecutions: 357; Disposal: 61
Violence Against Transgender Persons	2023	Complaints: 131; Prosecutions: 90; Disposal: 38
Gender-Based Violence Cases Registered	2020	2,172 cases registered; 76 convictions
Gender-Based Violence Cases Registered	2021	2,692 cases registered; 100 convictions
Gender-Based Violence Cases Registered	2022	2,698 cases registered; 50 convictions
Gender-Based Violence Cases Registered	2023	2,442 cases registered; 25 convictions
Honor-related Crimes (Punjab)	2016	248 cases
Honor-related Crimes (Punjab)	2023	150 cases
<b>Death Penalty</b>		
Death Penalty Cases (Province Breakdown)	2018-2022	Balochistan: 73; Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: 151; Punjab: 2,477; Sindh: 518; Narcotics-related: 12 cases
<b>Enforced Disappearances</b>		
Cases reported to the Government of Pakistan, including those transmitted by the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (UN-WGEID)	2018-2023	Total cases received: 10,354; Cases Disposed: 8,077; Under investigation: 2,277
<b>Elimination of Slavery and Forced and Bonded Labor</b>		
Sex Trafficking	2021-22	Investigations: 986; Prosecutions: 548
Forced Labor	2021-22	Investigations: 1356; Prosecutions: 920
Trafficking in Persons	2021-22	Investigations: 34,637; Prosecutions: 15,722
<b>Blasphemy Cases</b>		
Seats in Federal and Provincial Legislature reserved for Minorities		

Total Seats for Non-Muslims	N/A	National Assembly: 10; Senate: 4; Sindh Assembly: 9; Punjab Assembly: 8; KP Assembly: 4; Balochistan: 3
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**Security Measures for Minorities in Punjab**

**Minorities' community residing in the province of Punjab have been provided security while performing their religious rituals.**

<i>Minority Worship Places</i>	<i>Permanent Deployment</i>	<i>Temporary Deployment</i>	<i>Total Deployment</i>
Churches	48	7147	7195
Gurdwaras	194	2469	2663
Temples	56	371	427
Bait ul Zikar	66	1116	1182
<b>Total</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>11103</b>	<b>11467</b>

**Security Measures for Minorities in Sindh**

**The Government of Sindh has undertaken several initiatives to protect minority communities, particularly focusing on the deployment of security forces to safeguard places of worship. Province of Sindh contains approximately 1483 sites of worship for minorities. The establishment of the Special Police Force is in accordance with directives issued by the Honorable Supreme Court of Pakistan in an order dated June 19, 2014 (PLD 2014 SC699). Following these directives, a stopgap arrangement is currently in place to secure the aforementioned minorities' place of worship, and district SSP are deploying their resources which are regarded as Special Police Force in accordance with the directives. Security measures include:**

- Allocation of Rs. 382.698 million for installation of CCTV cameras at 253 sensitive Mandirs and other religious places;
- The installation of the CCTV cameras has been completed at 85 sites in Karachi, Hyderabad, Sukkur, Badin, Sanghar, Jamshoro, Matiari and Tando Muhammad Khan;
- Adequate fool proof security to all the worship places & persons is proved by deployment of police personnel & patrolling on routine basis as well as on special events;
- On religious festivals or programs, special measures are being taken by issuing security plans in their respective surroundings/vicinity;
- Special Police Force Unit developed by Police Department has been tasked with protecting temples, churches and other minority places of worship. Special Police Force, works under the command of SSP rank; and
- Minorities Desk at every range/ zonal level of the police, having sufficient human & logistics resource have been established to address security and other issues of minorities.

The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony allocated Rs. 105 million for Minorities Welfare Fund for FY- 2023-2024. The fund was distributed across several heads of disbursement and utilization. A sum of Rs. 18 million was designated for financial assistance of minorities'. Additionally, a grant of Rs. 50,000 each was allocated for the marriage of orphan girls of minority widows. Rs. 42 million were allocated for Small Development Schemes for various projects for community improvement. Furthermore, scholarships amounting to Rs. 45 million were provided to support the education of minority students.

Furthermore, Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) is designed to be all-inclusive, encompassing minorities within its framework to uplift and support the most vulnerable sections of society. Additionally, the largest concentration of low income and poorest minorities in Sindh reside in District Badin, Tehsil Mithi and Tehsil Islamkot. The total number of BISP Kafalt beneficiaries (amounting to 2.27% of the total beneficiaries in Sindh) in these areas is as under:

<i>District / Tehsil</i>	<i>No of Beneficiaries</i>	<i>Amount Deposited in Account</i>
District Badin	151,287	1,266,402,500
Tehsil Mithi	25,261	213,290,500
Tehsil Islamkot	21,029	176,639,500

## **1. Provincial Governments**

### **a. Sindh**

In Sindh, 106,990 individuals from minority communities benefitted from government welfare schemes. These initiatives included providing financial assistance to 86,474 individuals, free medical treatment to 6,788 individuals, Jahez support for marriage cases to 5,203 individuals, and scholarships to 8,252 students from minority backgrounds. Furthermore, a provision of Rs.1.557 billion has been earmarked for Minorities Affairs for FY 2024-25. The funds will be utilized on payments towards financial assistance, medical and scholarships.

Furthermore, in the current fiscal year, Government of Sindh has allocated PKR/- 200 million funds with a further PKR/- 700 million fund through for construction and renovation of Hindu Temples (Mandirs), Masan and Dharam Shala in various districts of Sindh. The details are as under:

- PKR/- 600 million allocated for construction of Swami Narain Temple in Karachi
- PKR/- 19.3 million allocated for expansion of Dharam Shala in Larkana
- PKR/- 39.7 million allocated for expansion of Hindu Masan in Kandhkot
- PKR/- 26.7 million allocated for expansion of Hindu Masan in Naudero
- PKR/- 19.8 million allocated for renovation of SSD Dharam Shala in Sukkur



- PKR/- 14.9 million allocated for construction of Baba G Ram Das Mandir in Shikarpur
- PKR/- 20 million allocated for construction of Mandir in Ghotki

#### **b. Punjab**

In Punjab, a financial assistance package totaling Rs.60 million has been allocated under the Economic Package for Minorities, benefiting deserving families across the province to improve their living standards. Additionally, educational scholarships amounting to Rs.50 million have been awarded to bright and needy students belonging to minorities'. A Minority Development Fund of Rs 2.5 billion will be established for the welfare of minorities for FY 2024-25. Furthermore, Punjab has taken a pioneering step globally by implementing the Sikh Marriage Act, ensuring legal recognition and support for Sikh marriages within the province.

#### **c. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa**

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government approved Rs 513 million project to construct and rehabilitate 109 worships places of minorities across the province. KP government also offers special scholarships with financial assistance to students of minority communities for pursuing their higher studies in universities. Furthermore, Skill Development Scheme for Minorities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has also been initiated.

#### **d. Balochistan**

In Balochistan, Benazir Bhutto scholarships along with general scholarships have been approved for minorities. Government allocated Rs 50 million for the establishment of endowment fund for minorities to provide them financial assistance in case of any emergency. The provincial government had also provided financial assistance amounting to Rs. 89 million to 10,136 poor people of minority communities of the province. During the last three years, a total of 213 worship places of minority communities have been renovated at a cost of Rs. 240 million. The government also provided four well equipped ambulances worth Rs. 6 million each for minority community. 1,618 scholarships were also awarded to students from minority groups studying in various educational institutions with the cost of Rs. 89 million. Moreover, Rs. 105 million were spent to provide medical assistance to the poor and needy patients from minorities suffering from different chronic diseases.