



SITUATION OF RELIGIOUS MINORITIES PAKISTAN

JANUARY 2024 – DECEMBER 2025



INTERNATIONAL
RELIGIOUS FREEDOM
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SITUATION OF RELIGIOUS MINORITIES – PAKISTAN (JAN 2024–DEC 2025)



MESSAGE FROM ANILA ALI (CO-CHAIR)

When the state abdicates its duty to protect, it empowers the mob. We demand not just laws, but the political will to enforce them and end the impunity that allows persecution to thrive.

MESSAGE FROM KASHIF MIRZA (DIRECTOR)

We have bridged the legislative gap with the new Minority Commission Bill, but the 'Bureaucratic Gap' remains our greatest adversary. True protection requires not just passing laws, but the unflinching administrative will to enforce them on the ground.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Between January 2024 and December 2025, the state of religious freedom in Pakistan was characterized by a sharp contradiction between formal legislative progress and deteriorating institutional protections. While Parliament passed the long-awaited National Commission for Minority Rights Bill 2025 and federal child marriage restraints, these gains were undermined by constitutional amendments that weakened judicial independence and the Supreme Court's capitulation to clerical pressure in the Mubarak Sani case.

On the ground, religious minorities faced persistent insecurity. The period saw a failure to prosecute perpetrators of the 2023 Jaranwala attacks, emboldening further mob violence in Punjab and Sindh. This impunity directly facilitated the brutal lynching of a Christian elder in Sargodha in May 2024 and subsequent vigilante attacks. Forced conversions of Hindu and Christian girls continued with systemic impunity, while the 26th and 27th Constitutional Amendments restructured the judiciary in a manner widely assessed to reduce its capacity to resist majoritarian pressure in blasphemy and minority rights cases.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK UPDATES (2024–2025)

Constitutional Restructuring: In late 2024 and November 2025, Parliament adopted the 26th and 27th Constitutional Amendments, respectively. The 26th Amendment altered the Judicial Commission, increasing political influence over appointments, while the 27th established a Federal Constitutional Court (FCC) with exclusive jurisdiction over fundamental rights. Legal experts warn that transferring Article 20 (freedom of religion) adjudication to this new body, constituted under a politicized framework, risks subjecting minority protections to greater executive and majoritarian influence.

Judicial Precedent (The Mubarak Sani Case): The Supreme Court's handling of the Mubarak Sani blasphemy case illustrated the judiciary's vulnerability to religious pressure. In February 2024, the Court acquitted Sani, affirming Ahmadis' rights to practice faith within previously defined limits. However, following a campaign by the Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) and the Council of Islamic Ideology, the Court issued a revised judgment in July 2024 that narrowed these freedoms. In August 2024, responding to further clerical demands, the Court expunged sections of its own verdict regarding Ahmadis' right to preach, creating doctrinal uncertainty and signaling that street power can successfully extract concessions from the apex court.

Legislative Developments: On a positive trajectory, the National Assembly passed the National Commission for Minority Rights Bill 2025 in December 2025 to create a statutory monitoring body, though civil society remains concerned about its financial autonomy and investigative powers. Additionally, the federal Child Marriage Restraint Act 2025 set the minimum marriage age at 18, a crucial step for combating forced conversions, though complementary legislation remains pending in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan.

KEY INCIDENTS

The Sargodha Lynching (May 2024): On May 25, 2024, a mob in Mujahid Colony, Sargodha, incited by mosque loudspeakers over alleged Quran desecration, attacked the home and shoe factory of Nazir Masih, a 72-year-old Christian. While police managed to evacuate his family, they failed to protect Masih, who was beaten by the mob and succumbed to his injuries on June 3, 2024. Reports indicate the accusation stemmed from a personal dispute manipulated into a blasphemy charge. Despite the registration of FIRs against hundreds of unidentified assailants, the incident highlighted the police's inability to prevent lynching even when present at the scene.

Jaranwala Aftermath and Continued Impunity: Throughout the reporting period, the state failed to deliver justice for the August 2023 Jaranwala mob attacks. By late 2024, most accused individuals had been acquitted or bailed due to defective investigations and compromised identification parades, resulting in "near-total impunity." This lack of accountability emboldened further mob mobilization; in 2025, additional incidents of collective violence and lynching linked to blasphemy allegations were reported in Swat, Mirpurkhas, Quetta, and Karachi. Police response frequently involved delaying intervention and negotiating with mobs rather than enforcing the writ of the state.

Forced Conversions of Women and Girls: Data from 2024–2025 indicates a continuing pattern of abductions, forced conversions, and child marriages targeting Christian and Hindu girls, particularly in Sindh and Punjab. High-profile cases included the abduction of Christian minor Laiba Suhail in Faisalabad and the case of Alina in Islamabad, where age-falsification on marriage certificates was used to circumvent the law. HRCP reported that police often refused to register FIRs promptly or deferred to the abductors' claims that the victim had voluntarily converted, leaving families without legal recourse.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To the Federal Government:

- **Operationalize the Minority Commission:** Ensure the new National Commission for Minority Rights has independent budgetary control, rule-making autonomy, and robust investigative powers as per the 2014 Jillani judgment.
- **Harmonize Marriage Laws:** Enforce the Child Marriage Restraint Act 2025 and compel provinces to align their laws to set the minimum marriage age at 18 for both genders to mitigate forced conversions.
- **Inquiry Commission:** Constitute a high-powered Commission of Inquiry under the 2017 Act to investigate the systemic impunity regarding the "blasphemy business" and mob violence.

To Provincial Governments (Punjab, Sindh, KP, Balochistan):

- **Rehabilitation Support:** Expedite compensation and reconstruction for victims of the Jaranwala and Sargodha attacks, addressing the persistent displacement of Christian families.
- **Counter-Extremism Centers:** Actively utilize the newly established Centers of Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) to engage faith leaders and prevent incitement from mosque loudspeakers, as seen in the Sargodha incident.
- **Legislation:** Balochistan, Punjab, and KP must urgently pass legislation setting the minimum marriage age at 18 to close legal loopholes exploited in conversion cases.

To the Judiciary:

- **Magisterial Oversight:** Magistrates must rigorously verify the age and free will of conversion/marriage applicants in a safe environment, separate from abductors or pressure groups.

To Law Enforcement Agencies:

- **Rapid Response Protocols:** Implement rapid response protocols for blasphemy accusations to secure the accused immediately; failure to prevent lynching when police are present (as in Sargodha) must result in command-level accountability. Officers yielding to mob demands must face accountability.
- **Mandatory FIRs:** Ensure immediate registration of FIRs in cases of abduction of minority girls, discarding the practice of delaying cases based on claims of voluntary conversion.

To Civil Society:

- **Legal Aid:** Bar Councils must take disciplinary action against bar associations that pass resolutions refusing legal assistance to blasphemy defendants.

Monitoring: Continue rigorous documentation of the Mubarak Sani precedent's application to ensure it is not used to justify further persecution of the Ahmadiyya community.