

Afghan Shia under Attack, another 70 Killed

Brutal massacre on civilians in the northern province of Sar-e Pol, Shia-majority village of Mirza-Walang, killed 70 and wounded tens.

According to local activists, several mosques are also burned and a number of villagers taken hostage. Local officials say a combination of Taliban and ISIS terrorists were involved in the attack.

1800 Shia families are under siege in Mirza Walang since last year and authorities have failed to help the residents.

Attack to Shia populated areas of Afghanistan has increased. On August 1, 2017, two suicide bombers attacked a Shia mosque in the western Afghan city of Herat killing as many as 29 individuals and wounding up to 64.

In the month of July, 30 Shia were killed and 42 wounded in a suicide car-bomb in heavily populated Shia district of Kabul.

According to UN, more than 1,700 civilians have been killed in attacks in Afghanistan so far this year, many of which belong to the minority Shia community.

As SRW condemns all killing and acts of violence, this NGO emphasizes the need for minority rights advocacy as most human rights violations in the world are inflicted upon minority groups.

We also urge the Afghan government to take immediate action to protect Shia populated areas to prevent further attacks.

Our heart goes out to families and community members of all victims of terror, and we invite international committees to stand up for minority rights.



[Saudi Arabia Update: Ongoing Siege of Al Awamiyah](#)

The end of last month saw a renewal in violence in the city of Al Awamiyah located in the eastern province of Qatif in Saudi Arabia. This area has been under extreme lock-down since July 26th, and 8 killed so far. The majority Shia population has been promised safe conduct of leave. Before, however, soldiers milled the streets firing at anyone walking by. Vehicles packed with luggage exited the city hanging white T-shirts as white flags with hopes that soldiers won't

fire upon said vehicle. A group of Asian migrants were forced to strip and lie on their stomachs in the middle of the street. Al-Musawarah, a neighborhood with structures dating back to the Ottoman Empire, is falling victim to Saudi bulldozers.

In February of 2011, this region was the source of Shia protests, calling for equality and democracy. The government cracked down on the protestors, and in 2014, Riyadh redefined an anti-terrorism law to target activism. Doing so allowed government activists and critics to be sentenced to death.

So far at least 66 people have been executed in Saudi Arabia since the start of 2017 as of July 24th and following 14 Shia waiting to be executed:

1. Hussain Muhammdal-Muslim
2. Muhammad Mansur al- Mansure
3. Mustafa Ahmad Darwish
4. Fazil Hussain Labbad
5. Saeed Mihammadal-Sakafi
6. Salman Amin al-Quraish
7. Mujtaba'a al-Sweikat
8. Muneer Abdulah al-Adam
9. Abdulah Salman al-Sarih
10. AbdulAziz Hassan al-sahwi
11. Ahmad al-Rabia
12. Ahmad Feisal al-Darwish
13. Hussain Hassan al-Rabia
14. Abdula Hani al-Tarif

On 10 May, 2017, masked Saudi special security forces and bulldozers surrounded the historic neighborhood with the intention of raiding the area, forcing out the inhabitants and bulldozing their homes. Roads were blocked, preventing evacuation, and snipers were deployed on building rooftops, firing either aimlessly or into family homes.

The Saudi government justified their actions by stating that the buildings of the district needed repair and were on the verge of collapsing. The inhabitants,

however, stated that restoration projects could have salvaged the situation, pointing out that the government had restored buildings in other neighborhoods without total demolition. Even the United Nations condemned Saudi demolition of historic buildings on 24 May, saying that “the work erased cultural heritage and violated human rights.”

Today, Saudi forces have renewed their offensive of the city, lobbing mortars and even artillery in order to destroy more homes, and they are brazenly and arbitrarily walking the streets shooting at civilians including women and children. Not only have homes been targeted but also essential infrastructure, limiting basic needs such as electricity. Just as Riyadh had done with the law, the government changed the rhetoric from “restoration” to “anti-terrorism” in order to justify the use of arms.

Shia Rights Watch calls an end to Saudi hostilities, and for the government to respect the human rights of the citizens it is supposed to protect. Al Awamiyah is an enclave of a Shia minority, but those minorities are still citizens to the Saudi government. In order to prevent a long-term conflict that could only hurt Saudi Arabia, the government must recognize that the solution is not violence.

Our Heart Goes out to Afghanistan

Our Heart Goes out to Afghanistan

We, at Shia Rights Watch, are deeply saddened by the ruthless targeting of Afghan Shia by two suicide bombers attacked a Shia mosque in the western Afghan city of Herat on August 1, 2017. The attack was reported to have killed as many as 29 individuals and wounded up to 64.

Afghan Shia have been attacked and killed for decades and such attacks have elevated since the beginning of 2017. In the month of July, 30 Shia were killed

and 42 wounded in a suicide car-bomb in heavily populated Shia district of Kabul. More than 1,700 civilians have been killed in attacks in Afghanistan so far this year, many of which belong to the minority Shia community.

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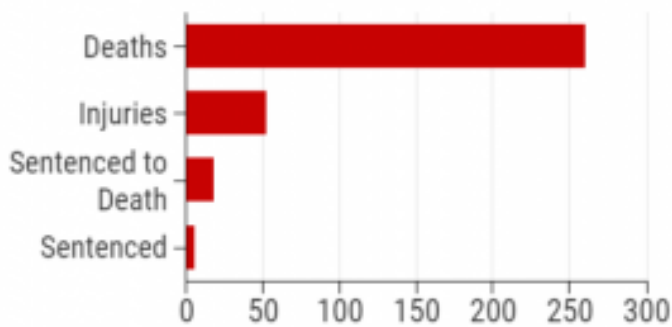
[Incidents of Anti-Shiism in July, 2017](#)

Monthly Analysis: July 2017

The 20 attacks that occurred in July left the Shia population in a position susceptible to human rights violations. Despite the overall decrease in casualties in July from June of 2017, 262 individuals were killed and 53 were wounded. These large numbers bare witness to the continued systematic targeting of the Shia Muslim population around the world. The violations of human rights range from arrest and detainment, to sexual abuse and torture in prisons, and as seen

this month, mass execution.

July 2017 Incidents



Shia Rights Watch (SRW) has compiled a list of the reported attacks that occurred in July, confirmed through extensive research and collaboration with Shia rights activists around the world. This report will detail the reported instances both physical and psychological, including deaths, injuries, sentencing, and tortures.

The cases detailed have occurred across several countries including: Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Syria. Further attacks and human rights violations may have occurred in other places, however, this list consists of the cases recorded by SRW researchers. Incidents often go unreported due high risks and fear of attack and/or further social discrimination.

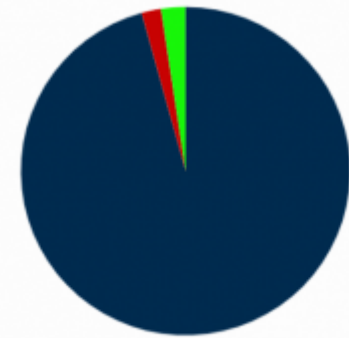
Iraq

Fewer numbers of attacks and casualties have been reported in the month of July in Iraq. However, the casualties are much larger due to isolated massacres conducted by ISIS in small pockets of power such as Tal Afar and Hawija. Tal Afar witnessed a systematic massacre of 200 civilians on July 5th. Such an attack can be explained as a way to reassert ISIS's dominance after their increasing losses in Mosul.

ISIS first declared Mosul its Islamic Caliphate in 2014, and Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi declared victory in the city on July 9 after the strenuous three-year battle for control on. The Iraqi army forced the group to retreat from the city, and has pushed ISIS into cities like Tal Afar. The Islamic State is now consolidating power in Tal Afar and it remains the closest ISIS-controlled urban area the so-called caliphate that can be used to launch terror operations back into

Mosul.

Type of Violence in Iraq



● Execution ● Gunfire ● Bombing

To the southeast, the capital city of Baghdad witnessed seven attacks in July. Improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and adhesive explosive devices (AEDs) remain a reality in the city. This is a sharp decline from the twelve attacks in June which specifically targeted busy Shia areas. The cooling down of attack efforts may be attributed to the end of Ramadan, which ISIS claims to be the “holy month of Jihad.”

The end of Ramadan, paired with the drastic decline in Islamic State power, may be the cause of the decreased number of attacks against the Shia population in July. However, the massacre at Tal Afar provides a grim portrayal of how ISIS might continue to operate as it loses control in areas throughout Iraq and maintains its control over its remaining footholds.

Bahrain

The ethnic and religious backgrounds of Bahrain intertwine the political, economic, and social realms of influence. Bahrain is neighbored by the Middle East’s most prominent Muslim nations: the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the west, the Islamic Republic of Iran to the north and east, and the State of Qatar to the southeast. The influence from these powerful neighbors, along with the unique history of the region, explicate the ethnic and religious composition of the country. While the exact religious demographics are still unknown and a highly contentious issue, it is estimated that of the Muslim population, roughly 70% are Shia and 30% Sunni. Despite this uneven divide, the government is ruled by a Sunni royal family, and a human rights dilemma has emerged out of this power dynamic. The cases reported in July displayed the continuation of human rights violations against Bahraini Shia Muslims and the relentless government pushback

against rising humanitarian concerns.

Prominent human rights activist Nabeel Rajab received a two-year sentence on July 10th after being accused of spreading 'fake news' about Bahraini authorities. This sentencing caused outrage by several human rights organizations, including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, and came shortly after the release of *Torture in Bahrain: A State Behavior & A Systematic Policy*, a report condemning the torture of prisoners by five human rights organizations within Bahrain.

Yousef Ali Riza reported sexual harassment by guards in his prison cell on July 3rd, the same day that Ebtisam al-Saegh was detained the second time for government criticism on social media. Al-Saegh was previously held in May where she reported torture and sexual assault. She started an open-ended hunger strike on July 11th, but by the 25th she was reported to have lost eleven kilos. Further diagnosis of her health showed a fracture in her right arm sustained from previous torture.

Continued reports of human rights infractions demonstrate the need for reform in Bahrain's treatment of prisoners and expose the need for global attention on this issue. The Bahraini authorities arrested Shia cleric Sheikh Hani al-Banaa' while he was visiting his detained son in Dry Dock Prison on July 3rd. Al-Banaa' was released after being held in the prison for nine days. Another prisoner, Hussein Mohamed Habib died on July 5th after being arrested and subjected to severe torture and abuse in prison in March 2011.

Unfortunately, mistreatment of Bahraini citizens extends from what has occurred in prisons. On July 20th in the northwestern coastal town of al-Budaiya, state troopers stormed the house of Sheikh Bashar al-Aali and arrested the cleric without providing any reasons. Another situation occurred in July 28th, where Bahraini authorities charged 60 Shia for forming a group against the king. These individuals were accused of "forming a terrorist group," and show the continued suppression of government opposition.

In addition to the reprehensible treatment of prisoners, many Bahrainis have lost their citizenship. By July 8th, 103 people had citizenship revoked or denied during 2017. On July 22, the wife of Sheikh Abdullah Al-Deqaq lost her citizenship after refusing to spy on her husband. The denial and revoking of citizenship has

seemingly become the way in which the Bahraini government suppresses their critics. Loss of citizenship in combination with the growing detention of human rights advocates and their ill-treatment while in prison reinforces the regime's systematic crackdown on minority populations and Shia Muslims in the country.

Pakistan

Although less casualties have been reported in Pakistan since the end of Ramadan, the Shia minority feel no more secure. More than 2,000 Shia have been killed in Pakistan since 2002, and the incidents in July show this number continuing to rise. Groups like Lashkar-e-Jhagvi, an extremist Sunni militant group, have pledged: "all Shias are worthy of killing and the intention is to make Pakistan their graveyard," according to an open letter they wrote to the Hazara people in Baluchistan.

Recently, two Shia brothers were arrested without declared charges, rendering the arrests illegal. There has yet to be a statement, but the two brothers are under "enforced disappearance," according to local activist.

Also, just 25 miles south of Quetta, in Baluchistan, a group of Hazara Shia were on their way to the port city of Karachi on July 19. A drive-by shooter pulled up and riddled their vehicle with bullets. Three men and one woman were killed.

The fear generated by attacks similar to this one have caused some Shia to avoid traveling alone. Even the government fears that people of the Islamic sect travel at their own peril. This July, around 1,000 Shia on their way back from pilgrimage from holy sites in Iran and Iraq found themselves unable to continue at the border between Iran and Pakistan in the border town of Taftan. The pilgrims found themselves with the option of having to continue through hostile territory that is extremely dangerous for Shia without protection. They refused, and the Pakistani government is currently rallying forces to send as escorts, but the effort is taking long. Conditions are breaking down, but the pilgrims would rather put up with the harsh environment than risk traveling through Pakistan unguarded.

Pakistan is growing increasingly dangerous to the livelihood of Shia Muslims. ISIS's growing influence in Afghanistan is emboldening Pakistani Deobandi groups to act in likeness with ISIS's cruelty. Their intention to annihilate the Shia population is daunting considering the Shia make up one third of Pakistan, but that's not discouraging some from picking them off little-by-little. The Pakistani

government needs to further engage this issue by implementing special protection in Shia-dominated towns like Quetta in Baluchistan. If neglected, the issue can easily find its footing on a slippery slope to sectarian violence.

Saudi Arabia

Al Awamiyah, in the Qatif region of eastern Saudi Arabia, remains a contentious town as Saudi forces maintain their siege. The town itself dates back to the Ottoman Empire 200 years ago, and the town's historic center is being demolished. The constant raids have injured large numbers of civilians, and Saudi forces have responded to protests with a tight crackdown against its opposition.

The Kingdom carried out four executions of Shia Muslims for their participation in protests in Al Awamiyah. This area has been under extreme lock-down since July 26th.

The Shia population has been promised safe conduct of leave. Before, however, soldiers milled the streets firing at anyone walking by. Vehicles packed with luggage exited the city hanging white T-shirts as white flags with hopes that soldiers won't fire upon said vehicle. A group of Asian migrants were forced to strip and lie on their stomachs in the middle of the street. Al-Musawarah, a neighborhood with structures dating back to the Ottoman Empire, is falling victim to Saudi bulldozers.

Saudi raids continue in the region, as just days later, two men were shot and wounded on 11 July. On July 13th, a court in Saudi Arabia has postponed the trial of Shia cleric Sheikh Hussein al-Radhi over his pro-democracy comments as Riyadh presses ahead with its heavy-handed crackdown on members of the Shia community. In another raid on July 15th, Hassan Abdullah, Ja'far Mubayrik and 'Saadiq Darvish were killed by Saudi forces.

Saudi troops, equipped with heavy weapons, attacked Al- Awamiyah town, damaging and destroying several homes, business and historical sites. Residents were asked to stay home while the government shut down their internet and phone lines. Two Shia reported killed during the attack on July 26th. Just four days later, three men were killed in a raid in a parking lot. On July 29th, Saudi snipers shot and killed Ali Mahdi al-Sobeiti and Hussain Abdullah al-Sobeiti on the road to an Awamiyah.

The Saudi Arabian Supreme Court upholds the death sentences of 14 Saudi Shia

after an unfair mass trial and it is a worrisome reminder of the country's lethal crackdown on dissent. Fourteen Shia waiting to be executed are following:

1. Hussain Muhammd al-Muslim
2. Muhammad Mansur al- Mansure
3. Mustafa Ahmad Darwish
4. Fazil Hussain Labbad
5. Saeed Mihammad al-Sakafi
6. Salman Amin al-Quraish
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The lack of proof of serious allegation is a serious development, as SRW, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International point out a sharp rise of death sentences for Shia Muslims carried out by the Kingdom.

Syria

The town of Hama was home to death of two Shia women and the injury of 11 others as a suicide bomber detonated his vest. Sources report the diffusion of two other bombs at the site. The bomb caused extensive damage to the Imam Muslim Mosque and a bus station nearby.

In 2017 alone, there have been over 240 deaths as a result of anti-Shiism. The attacks were propagated by anti-Shia extremists taking advantage of the social and political distress in the nation.

Nigeria

On Friday, 7 July, the Federal High Court in Nigeria rejected the suit of Shia cleric

Ibrahim Zakzaky. Zakzaky brought forth a suit through which he meant to sue the Nigerian government for \$5.6 million in damages over a December 2015 attack in

which the Nigerian government killed 347 Shia Muslims including Zakzaky's three children in the city of Zaria in the northern state of Kaduna. The dead were then buried in a mass grave.

The Shia population is a small minority of the Muslim population. The demographics of all Nigeria include 50% Christians and 50% Muslims.

Afghanistan

A car filled with explosives rammed into a bus and detonated killing 24 people and wounding 40. The attack occurred near a prominent Shia cleric's house, so it is unclear whether the bus was the actual target. June saw two other attacks targeting the Shia population.

The Hazara ethnic group make up a large portion of Afghanistan's Shia population. For decades, the Hazara have been under attack by extremist organization and have lived a marginalized life. Increased attention is needed on the case of Hazara's when addressing anti-Shiism in Afghanistan.

Kuwait

Late July, Kuwaiti officials suspended license for a locally operated Shia TV station, ceasing their operations. While Kuwait historically has displayed acceptance and inclusion for their Shia population, a recent increase in targeting of Shia media and scholars can be seen.

Shia Rights Watch is concerned of increasing actions limiting the freedom of speech in Kuwait.

Conclusion

The month of July stood witness to just over 260 deaths and with 53 injuries as a result of anti-Shiism. SRW estimates the death rate to increase as many of those injured were in critical condition and treated in areas with limited medical resources.

Shia Muslims continue to live in fear as they are ostracized in their home nations, and arrests of Shia activists and scholars continue in the Gulf states and the surrounding nations. The increased incidents of anti-Shiism are consistent with those estimated in previous reports. With arrests and ill-treatment of prominent

activists such as Ibtissam al-Saegh and Nabeel Rajab, anti-shiism remains as strong as ever.

Types of Sentences



In Saudi Arabia, the siege in al-Awamiya continues. Despite international efforts, the death count continues to rise. Many of those killed by government shootings are women, children, and immigrant workers. Activists and humanitarians are standing up to the injustice, but are facing the backlash from governments and other major actors. Shia Rights Watch calls for governments across the region to increase protections on Shia and other religious minorities, and to reverse and stop all ill-treatment of these populations. SRW urges the Saudi government to reverse their sentences condemning fourteen protesters of the al-Awamiya raids to death. Shia Rights Watch demands the release of all pro-democracy activists and religious scholars in the Gulf nations. Further, Shia Rights Watch condemns the siege on Awamiya and warns of the dangers of continued marginalization in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and across the region.

[Saudi Arabian Supreme Court upholds the death sentences of 14](#)

The Saudi Arabian Supreme Court upholds the death sentences of 14 Saudi Shia after an unfair mass trial and it is a worrisome reminder of the country's lethal

crackdown on dissent. Saudi Arabia has made it clear that freedom of any kind is not tolerated. Any sort of domestic dissent is managed in the worst of ways.

Saudi Arabia's authorities have displayed their commitment to the use of the executions as a weapon to crush dissent as at least 66 people have been executed in Saudi Arabia since the start of 2017 as of July 24th.

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Mujtaba'a al-Sweikat, was only 17 when he was sentenced to death. He had planned to visit and attend Western Michigan University but was detained by airport authorities in Saudi Arabia for allegedly attending a pro-democracy rally.

The exact date of the execution is not announced yet and there is a chance that it won't be until after the execution that the world will hear about it. Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr was quietly executed on January 2, 2016, as the world was busy celebrating New Year.

Once covered-up crackdown against Shia is now the largest military campaign in Saudi Arabia and the world is watching.

Not only does Saudi Arabia use its funds and influence to thwart dissent domestically, it also imposes its beliefs on Shia populations in the region: Saudi-backed forces in Bahrain, airstrikes in Yemen, and founding Wahhabi school around the world have resulted in mass violations toward this population in and outside this Kingdom.

"As human rights activists I believe it is time for the international committees and

world leaders to stand up for human rights and remind Saudis of our values,” says Mustafa Akhwan the director of Shia Rights Watch.

“We are responsible to take all actions to stop the execution of these 14 Shia men. Such action of Saudi kingdom is only another sign of weakness and incompetence” he continued.

Shia Rights Watch condemn the action of violence and Anti-Shiism carried by Saudi authorities demanding equal rights to Shia Muslims in Saudi Arabia.

Bi-Annual Anti-Shiism Report

Intro

The first half of 2017 has been a turbulent time for Shia Muslims all over the world. Anti-Shiism, or the active targeting of Shia Muslim to limit their visibility and expression, was prevalent in across the globe.

Shia Muslims, including their sub groups, make up approximately 50% of the total Muslim population. Although exact data of Shia demographic remain impossible to collect due to extreme marginalization, a study of current cases of anti-Shiism have been documented by Shia Rights Watch researchers and activist.

This report is a compilation and analysis of trends in anti-Shiism in the six months of January to June 2017. In this report, cases of anti-Shiism in the nations of Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, and Madagascar are examined. Violations include arrests, vandalism, deaths by unnatural means, and injuries. It is important to note that Shia rights abuses listed in this report are a summary of incidents that have reached SRW. Violations are not limited to those in this report. More information can be found on ShiaRightsWatch.org.

Gulf Nations

Anti-Shiism in Gulf nations has skyrocketed after the Arab Spring of 2011. In fears of an up rise, Gulf countries, specifically Bahrain and Saudi Arabia have increased limitations on their critics. Pro-rights protests in these nations are thwarted with the utmost violence.

Bahrain

982 ARRESTS



84 Minors



28 Women

©Shia Rights Watch

The Kingdom of Bahrain has been home to systemic suppression of human rights. Bahrain is a Shia majority nation headed by a non-Shia monarchy. Unlike democratic efforts of other Arab countries in the Middle East, efforts for rights and recognition have remained unnoticed for Bahraini citizens.

The six month period between January and June 30, 2017, a total of 982 people has been arrested. Arrests were with aims to suppress protests. Some were arrested in peaceful protest and others by night time raids. Bahrain has shown little mercy in suppression as 84 of those arrested are minors, and 28 are women.

Approximately 30% of the total arrests, 286, were in a single day in Diraz, Bahrain. On May 23, an armed attack on protesters killed five and wounded dozens. Protestors had arranged a sit in around the home of Sheikh Isa Qassim, who was sentenced to one year in prison and revoked of citizenship earlier that month. After Qassims arrest, the town of Diraz was blockaded, and residents were subject to checkpoints and travel restrictions. Phone and internet lines were cut off for significant hours in the day to limit media contact.

-Protest Met with Violence-

Although protests and demonstrations have been peaceful and demonstrators are unarmed, Bahraini forces meet them with the utmost violence. Bird shot pellets used by forces have led to the death and permanent injury of many protestors and bystanders. Travel restrictions and discrimination have left those injured without medical care as ambulances cannot enter the town and hospitals are ordered not to treat injured protestors. Those arrested report harsh torture and violence in detainment. Ebtissam al-Saegh, a prominent activist has testified sexual assault and coercion of false confessions. Human rights activists striving for democracy in Bahrain report verbal and physical assault as well as threats to their dignity and even family.

The government's unwillingness to engage in dialogue has created a rift between it and its citizens. Sources say, Bahraini citizens, do not trust the government. This mistrust, one can relate to the lack of sufficient representation in legislation and years in the suppression of rights by officials. Furthermore, sources report that the extent of Saudi involvement in Bahrain undermines the Bahraini government. Many feel as though dialogue with Bahraini officials are insignificant as officials are under the influence of Saudi policy.

-Future of Bahrain-

With many children and women under arrest, the future of Bahrain is widely destabilized. Children arrested are not able to attend school and in many cases, are not given the opportunity to make up missed work. The current lack of national stability because of direct violence creates an opportunity for foreign involvement in Bahrain. Mistrust and lack of cooperation among protestors and the government have also led to a shift in national identity. SRW predicts a decreased rate in Bahrain's educated population. Further, due to the increased detainment of women and the high rate of mortality for Shia men, SRW predicts a rise in single parent families and even orphan children. These predictions are further supported by the approximate 780 sentenced Bahraini citizens and the revocation of 92 others. To this point, over 60 people have been given life sentences. The numbers are expected to rise as Bahrain has issued death sentences for many activist despite a de facto moratorium on the death penalty.

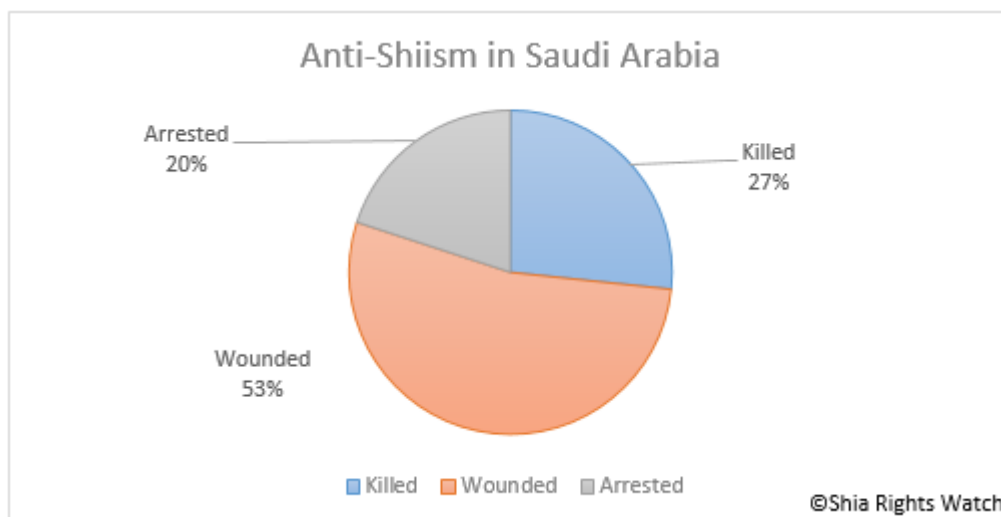
Saudi Arabia

Although Shia in Saudi Arabia have practiced their faith in hiding and have lived under marginalization for decades, the last six months note augmentation of violence against this population.

Shia in Saudi Arabia have lived under pressure to conform to the nation's extremist ideology and forgo their own identity. Since the origin of the kingdom, Shia Muslims have been marginalized; their towns provided the least government funds- lacking in infrastructure and maintenance. Despite their living quarters being home to one of Saudi's largest oil drills, Shia Muslims are left in the worst of the nation's conditions of life. Drilling has caused air, and noise pollution and the citizens of the Eastern province are allowed minimal say in policy. While they at least make up over 20% of the population, Shia Muslims lack adequate representation in the government.

-Sources of Anti-Shiism-

Anti-Shiism in Saudi Arabia is fueled by social and religious indoctrination. In numerous cases, Saudi clerics have announced Shia Muslims as outsiders and have deemed them unequal to the nation's majority Wahhabi population. These beliefs are furthered through educational books and lessons. Information on sources of anti-Shiism can be found on ShiaRightsWatch.org



-Continued Violence-

In the first six months of 2017, the nature of anti-Shiism in this nation shifted. What was once a structural and cultural discrimination becoming direct violence.

In mid-May, a siege in the town of Al-Awamiyah became a public attack on this religious sect. The siege began around 3 am. All entrances to the city were closed, and forces shot at buildings and automobiles. Residents were forced from their homes and business were closed.

The government's claim of aiming to "renew the district" is undermined by social media hashtags and trends used by Saudi forces calling for a "cleansing" of the kingdom from Shia.

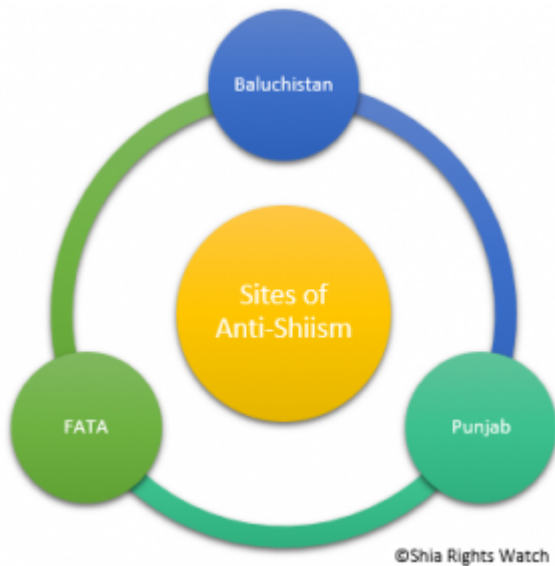
The government is threatening the identity of Shia Muslims by demolishing historical sites in Al-Awamiyah. With the demolition of the al-Baqee cemetery in 1925, Shia in Saudi Arabia lives in fear of not having a presence in their home nation. Further, the decision to "renew" was taken without any representation from the residence, thus adding to their unwillingness to trust the government's claims.

In attempted to maintain order, forces shot indiscriminately at civilians. The death toll in Saudi Arabia has reached 20. Javad al- Dagher of two years and his family were among those killed. Over 40 people have been wounded in the strife; 15 others have been arrested and face the harsh and unforgiving climate of Saudi prisons. Until now, 14 people have been sentenced to death.

-Regional Instability-

Anti-Shiism in Saudi Arabia has not only incited conflict in the nation; it has led to regional instability. Some state the source of anti-Shiism in Saudi Arabia is fear of Iranian expansion in the region. However, Shia in Saudi Arabia, as well as other nations in the region, have renounced such association. By pressuring their citizens and falsely associating them with a foreign power, Saudi Arabia is increasing insecurity in the Middle East.

Pakistan



Pakistan stood witness to the death of 193 and wounding 466 others. Incidents of anti-Shiism occurred mainly in the Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA), Punjab and Baluchistan.

Attacks were carried out by LeJ, TTO, and SeS. Regions of high incidents of anti-Shiism span Pakistan and are mainly cities with a semi-open border with Afghanistan. All attacks occurred in public locations. Both attacks in Parachinar, Kurram Region, occurred in densely populated regions of town.

The targeting of a single population by a number of the nation's biggest terror organizations points to an existing collective culture of anti-Shiism in which different groups compete to be the most successful. The willingness of these groups to put aside rivalry and work together in orchestrating attacks show the extent of cultural violence against Shia Muslims.

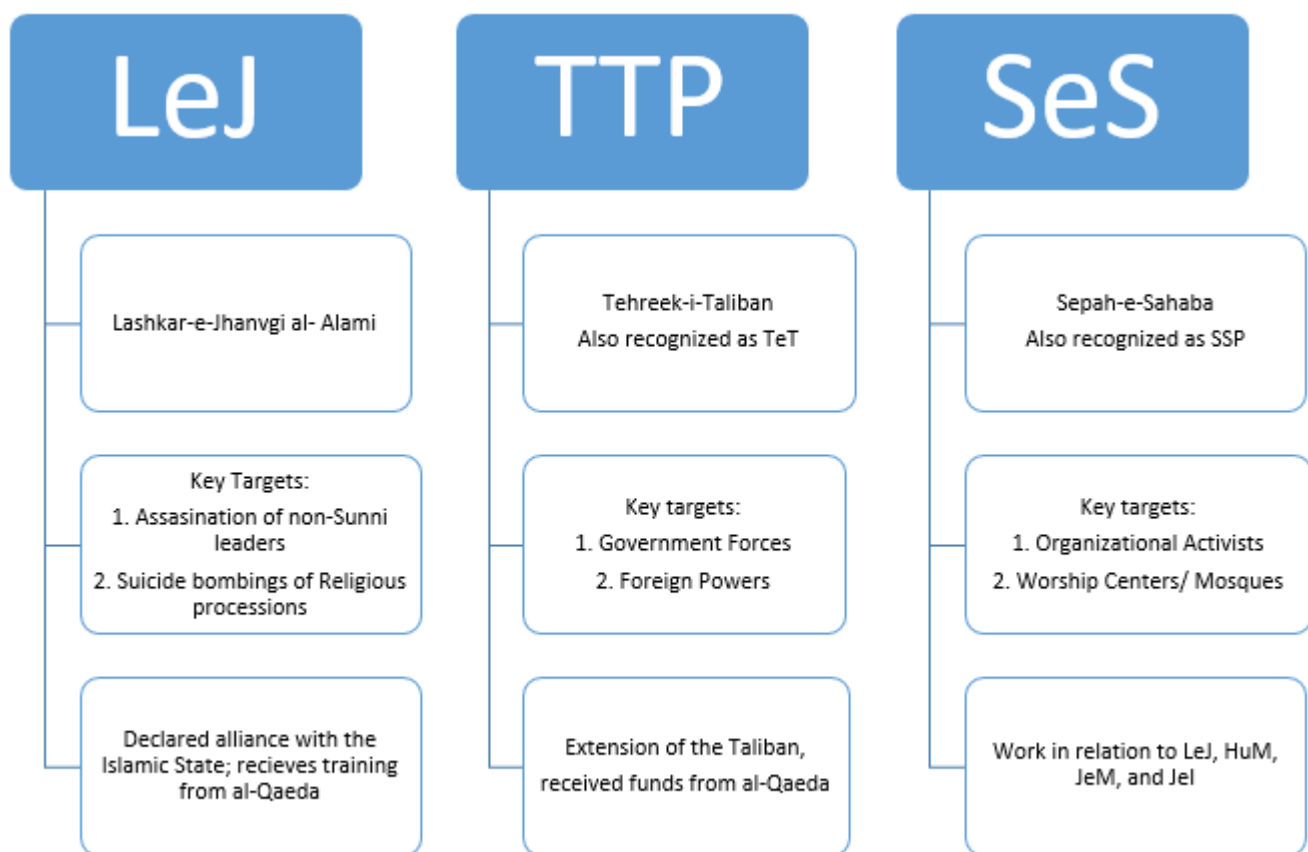
The lack of justice in cases against minority groups in Pakistan are due to existing discrimination within police forces. Many activists have reported a slow cases processing and lack of follow-up on incidents of anti-Shiism.

-Undiscovered Powers-

After the June 24 attacks in Parachinar, governor Iqbal Zafar, on behalf of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, distributed Rs 500,000 (appx \$5000) to those injured and Rs 1,000,000 (appx \$9000) to families of lost loved ones. Compensations came after cross-country protest. Shia Rights Watch estimates, at a minimum, \$780,000 was given out by Iqbal Zafar. The Pakistani government aims to compensate death of human life with money, not understanding that conflict cannot be

resolved by monetary means. The money handed out to victims of the Parachinar attacks was a means of suppressing protests. The government's actions display a lack of understanding of the Shia population as Shia in Pakistan are educated and in the position of power as lawyers, doctors and policy makers- money is not a limited resource for many.

Shia Muslims in Pakistan inhabit geopolitically significant areas. Baluchistan, for instance, is rich in natural resource reservoirs and is a key strategic region for Pakistan-Afghanistan diplomacy. Punjab is one of the most economically prosperous regions of Pakistan. Instability in any of those regions creates instability in the area, and thus with the pressures of neighboring countries, the government of Pakistan does the most to reinstate order.



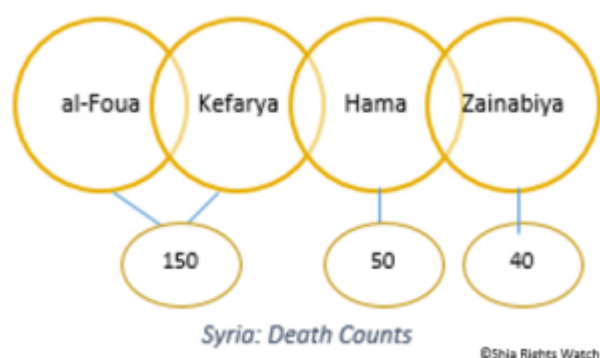
©Shia Rights Watch

However, counter terrorism effort is misplaced. On June 11, Taimoor Raza was sentenced to death over Facebook content in Okara, Punjab by a “Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act of 2016” which aims to restrict cybercrime offenses. Pakistan’s officials fail to provide effectual security and prevention of hate-crime against Shia communities. Officials are willing to provide monetary compensation to limit social unrest. Shia Rights Watch suggests increased efforts of crime

prevention and increased education. Thus, far, post-conflict compensation has been far more expensive than any peace-building effort, and until steps are taken to limit the growth of extremism, stability in Pakistan will continue.

Syria

Shia in Syria populate the cities of Deir al-Zour, Haoula, Khan al-Asad, Idlib, Nubul, al-Zahra, Hama, al-Foua, Keferya, Homs, and Zarzur. To this point, the conflict in Syria has led to the death of over 400,000 people, a significant portion of which are Shia Muslims in addition to political conflict, Shia in Syria suffers from targeted killing by active terror groups such as that of ISIS.



Discreet numbers of anti-Shia incidents are limited due to the turbulent status of the nation. However, despite limitations, SRW estimates continued targeting of Shia Muslims as per ground sources as well as the statistical prevalence of attacks on Shia towns and cities.

The largest reported incident of anti-Shiism was in the village of al-Foua, and Keferya in which a suicide bomber targeted a bus carrying children evacuated from the town- 150, 72 of which were children, were found dead because of the explosion.

Sources in Syria report an attack on the city of Hama as the next largest reported attack in Syria. Of the 50 killed, 24 were women and children. Medical personnel in nearby hospital report death by blunt force trauma by rocks and stones. Despite immense efforts, retrieval of bodies was not possible as many of the bodies were dismembered beyond recognition. The extent of damage to the deceased points to an ideology that views Shia as non-human.

Among incidents of anti-Shiism are double bombs killing 40 Iraqi pilgrims visiting the Zainabiya Shrine and wounding 120 others.

ISIS and their affiliates are fueled by anti-Shia sentiment taught by the Wahabi school of thought. The coordinated attacks which target pilgrims and evacuees point to an anti-Shia agenda consistent with the Wahhabi ideology.

Iraq

Iraq remains one of the most turbulent locations for Shia Muslims. ISIS infiltration and lack of government security create an opportunity for anti-Shiism. In the first six months of 2017, 260 people have lost their lives, and approximately 250 people have been injured as a result of anti-Shia sentiment.

Consistent with a five-year trend, Shia neighborhoods of Baghdad remain one of the most targeted areas. As early as January, suicide bombings claimed the life of 20 and injured more than 60 people in a marketplace in the district of Jamila. A week later, a car bombing killed 48 and left tens of others injured.

Karbala was also home to Shia Muslims killed in the past six months. In the Musayyib district, east of Karbala, a woman detonated her vest killing 34. On the same day, a bomb at the entrance of the city killed 4, and a failed explosive was cleared from the holy Shrine located in Karbala.

Same day bombings are signs of existing extremist networks that remain prosperous despite anti-ISIS efforts.

Iraq is home to many important Shia shrines and historical sights. These locations ensure a constant influx of Shia Muslims to the nation. Thus, Shia Rights Watch calls for a plan of security that is unique to this nations traveler entry.

Iran

In the first half of 2017, the world stood witness to an explicit expansion of ISIS forces. Early June, ISIS forces detonated explosives in two key political locations in Iran: the parliament and the Khomeini Mausoleum. The setting of the incident was highly symbolic to the Revolution of 1979.

Terrorists entered the administrative building as constituents, some women, and detonated explosive vests killing 12 and wounding 40 others. ISIS later released video accounting for their time within the parliament building inducing fear of increased ISIS activity in the nation.

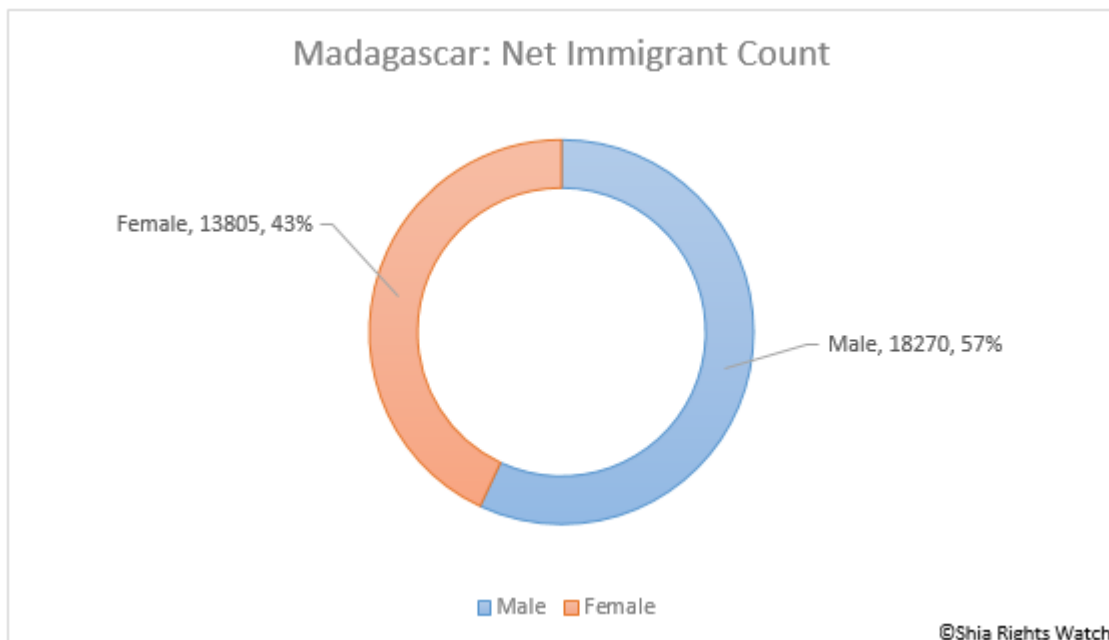
In addition to increased tensions in the region, this incident was a show of anti-Shiism as ISIS forces targeted one of the most Shia populated countries in the

Middle East. Attacks in Iran point to a definite shift an anti-Shiism.

Madagascar

Due to the islands vast resources, Madagascar has been home to increased Muslim immigration. Mid-May, Yanish Ismail, son of a prominent Shia businessman was kidnapped by 14 armed assailants as he was attending a funeral.

Ismail's case is the second incident of anti-Shiism in the past five years. SRW fears a wave of anti-Shiism in this nation. Roots of hate crimes, SRW predicts, spreads from existing anti-Shiism in other countries.



Afghanistan

From January to June 30, 17 lives were lost, and 23 were injured as a result of anti-Shiism. Of total incidents, 65% of attacks occurred in the month of June. Early June, a motorbike bomb detonated outside Jama Mosque of Herat, killing 7 and wounding 16. Later that month, a terrorist targeted a Shia mosque outside of Kabul. After exchanging fire with police, he entered the mosque kitchen and detonated his explosive vest. The incident led to the death of four and left seven others injured.

The Hazara ethnic group are frequently targeted as they are identified in features

and widely recognized as Shia Muslims. Structural anti-Shiism in Afghanistan has led to a lack of protection and prosecution of this ethnic community.

Mass exposure was guaranteed in both attacks as terrorists targeted Shia mosques, and that in the month of Ramadhan. Muslims regard Ramadhan as a holy month. However, anti-Shia organizations such that of ISIS and the Taliban do not consider Shia as Muslims. Previous to Ramadhan, in a speech, ISIS leaders renounced Shia, called for their cleansing and promoted the month of Ramadhan as the best month for anti-Shia action.

Global Trends of Anti-Shiism

A macro-scale analysis of cases of violence against Shia Muslims shows significant trends. Such patterns can be used to analyze Anti-Shiism and plan peace building endeavors.

Analysis of anti-Shia cases points to widespread cultural violence because of miseducation. For decades, the Wahhabi school of thought has promoted education dehumanizing Shia Muslims. Some historians have identified the political and economic basis of such education. More information on historical cases of anti-Shiism can be found on ShiaRightsWatch.org. Anti-Shia education can be found in the Middle East and North Africa, and such education has become a cultural feature. A culture that undermines Shia Muslims as human-beings with fundamental rights has allowed hate-crime by a violent group to prosper. In addition to ideological targeting, anti-Shiism occurs because of misrepresentation of Shia Muslims. For instance, sources report anti-Shiism in immigrant populations who see Shia Muslims as the source of insecurity in their jobs. Their lack of awareness of who the Shia are lead them to criminalize Shia and the Shia struggle for recognition.

In some cases, explosions are coordinated by time, date and location. Synchronization, analyst claim, tells tales of existing networks and communications among different terror organizations with a shared ideology. The fact that most the attacks were suicide bombers point to the extent at which attackers hold the anti-Shia ideology.

The setting of attacks is in confirmation that attacks reported in this report were

not random, but targeted towards mass Shia populations. Attacks are aimed at limiting Shia visibility and expression.

Anticipating the Next Six Months

Prosecution of agents of Anti-Shiism is practically non-existent in the aforementioned nations. In states in which the national government leads anti-Shia efforts, justice seems far-fetched for many. In Pakistan and Iraq, anti-terrorism efforts do not meet minority efforts thus endangering Shia constituents.

Shia Rights Watch anticipates a spread of anti-Shiism to other regions of the world. In both Europe and South Asia, incidents have been seen. Although these events were isolated, they did cause infrastructure damage, physical and psychological damage to Shia Muslims in those areas. Details on incidents in South Asia and Europe can be found on ShiaRightsWatch.org.

Incidents of anti-Shiism will continue to rise in the next six months unless efforts to decrease hate crimes are taken. Incidents of anti-Shiism tend to grow in holy months, especially in Moharram, a month many recognize as the corner-stone of the Shia identity. Moharram begins in September 2017, and with it, Shia processions will be in danger of violence unless measures to protect this population takes place.

-Suggestions-

- Dialogue between governments and constituents
 - Both activists and government officials must realize dialogue and cooperation are the only means of building understanding and coexistence in their nations. Common aims must be identified and used as the basis for building a prosperous nation.
- Increased activism of Shia Muslims in their communities
 - As the most powerful force against anti-Shiism, Shia Muslims must empower their communities for self-expression. Shia Muslims must build a presence in their nations by being ideal citizens in their countries in the international communities.
- Education on human rights for all minority populations
 - Minority communities must be aware of their rights as given by

the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and their nation's constitution. Minority populations must be able to recognize discrepancies in their rights and take peaceful steps in raising awareness.

- Raising accurate media coverage
 - The media is a major medium for raising awareness and education. Shia Rights Watch calls upon media outlets to check accuracy and provide un-biased coverage of Shia Muslims.
 - Shia Rights Watch further encourages active Shia communication with local and international news sources. Shia communities are the best first line defense against anti-Shiism, thus they must work with media outlets to raise awareness in regards to their communities and remove misconceptions.
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[A Worsening Prisoners' Dilemma](#)

On 18 July 2017, the Bahrain Center for Human Rights released another article calling out the country for its inhumane conditions for its prisoners, including many human rights advocates. These harsh conditions were documented by BCHR, also confirmed by SRW, and reported that they went against the *Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners*, set by the United Nations. These UN specifications include accommodation standards, separation of prisoners, personal hygiene, and many other rights to be guaranteed to prisoners. Following the January attack on Jau Prison, the largest male penitentiary in Bahrain, worsened conditions for prisoners were reported.

- Prisoners and their family members reported the excessive use of shackles, despite Rule 47 from the UN Standard prohibiting the use of restraints in a way that is either specifically degrading or painful.
- The reports also stated that prisoners were subject to bodily searches or shackling in order to receive any medical attention, which directly violates both Rules 27 and 31 of the Standard.
- Many prisoners, such as Dr. Abduljalil Al-Singace, did not seek medical

assistance due to the demands for excessive shackling to attend the appointment. Abdulwahab Hussain was not only denied access to medical facilities, but was mistreated and tortured during his prison sentence.

- The conditions that prisoners like Mr. Hussain were subject to repeatedly demanded the attention of the United Nations Universal Periodic Review, which issued 175 recommendations in relation to the Bahraini prison conditions.

Shia Rights Watch (SRW) urges the government of Bahrain to strengthen its resolve to uphold all rules set by the United Nations' *Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners*, and to increase protections on the rights of Bahraini citizens. SRW also calls upon humanitarian organizations to continue to advocate for more human rights protections in Bahrain.

[Rising Tide](#)

The ***Shia Rights Watch*** report entitled "Rising Tide" is 18 pages, detailing incidents of violence and intimidation against Pakistani Shia Muslims between 2012 and 2016. The report gives a detailed account of how this already oppressed group has been marginalized further in recent years through systematic violence and lack of protection. At least 914 attacks and 4,598 killing or wounding is reported. The report is based on interviews, site visits, articles, NGO reports, and other human rights reports. articles, NGO reports, and other human rights reports.

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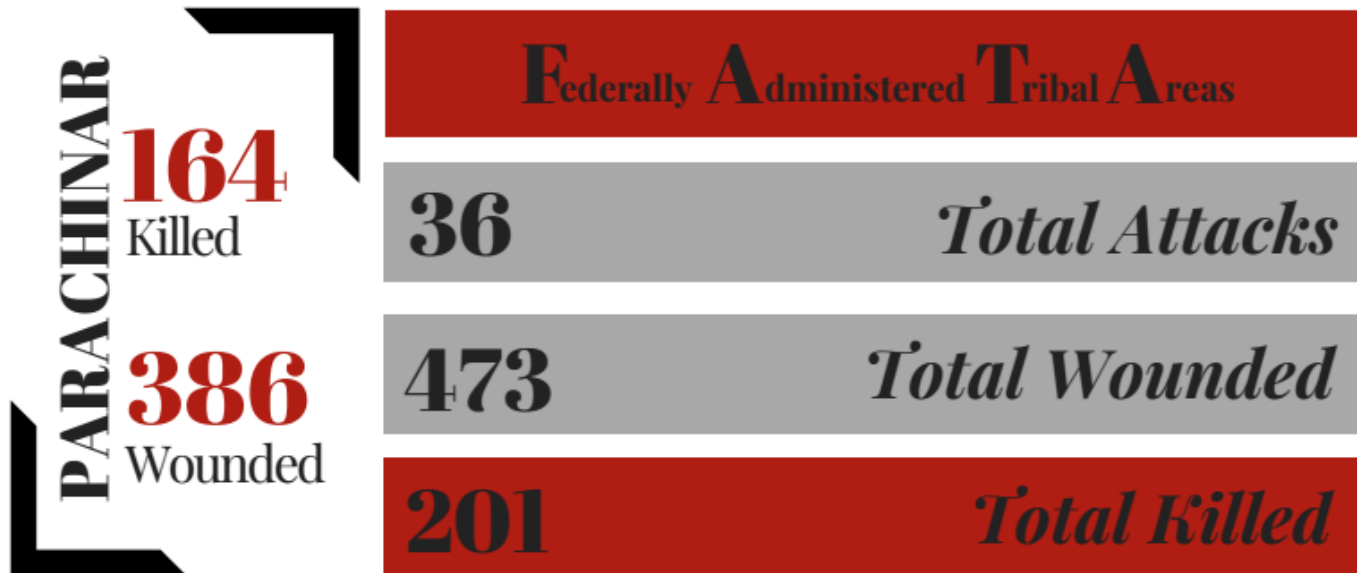
Pakistan

Pakistan, officially the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Islāmī Jumhūriya-ē Pākistān, is a country in South Asia. With a population exceeding 180 million people, it is the sixth most populous country in the world. Pakistan is a federal parliamentary republic consisting of four provinces and four federal territories. Pakistan is a federation of four provinces: Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan, as well as the Islamabad Capital Territory and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas in the northwest, which include the Frontier Regions. The government of Pakistan exercises de facto jurisdiction over the western parts of the disputed Kashmir region, organized into the separate political entities Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan (formerly Northern Areas). The Gilgit-Baltistan Empowerment and Self- Governance Order of 2009 assigned a province- like status to the latter, giving it self-government.

The state religion in Pakistan is Islam, which is practiced by about 95-98% of the 180 million people of the nation. The remaining 2-5% practice Christianity, Hinduism, and other religions. Muslims are divided into two major sects: the majority of them practice Sunni Islam, while the Shias are a minority who make up an estimated 5-20%.

Pakistan is suffering a major crisis, in which terrorist groups are continuously committing mass events of violence against Pakistani Shia Muslims.

Terrorist organizations mostly target Shia scholars, activists or those who have senior positions. This report aims to highlight some of the attacks and killings in the country and emphasize the urgent need for change in the Pakistan. Shia Rights Watch (SRW) urges the government of Pakistan should follow up on public denunciations of sectarian killings by securing Shia areas, controlling gun possession, and ordering the immediate arrest and prosecution of the leadership of the terrorist groups, their members, and affiliates responsible for planning systematic violence.



Casualties

Local Pakistani activists have recorded 914 attacks in different locations of Shia-populated areas of Pakistan between 2012 and 2016. Such attacks resulted in the death of at least 2,040 and injury of 2,558 Shia Muslims. The reporters were unable to follow up on the health status of the injured victims due to lack of resources and security limitations. There is also no report on damages due to explosions and targeted killings, but SRW expects significant damage to properties as a result of bombings and attacks. In other words, at least 4,598 people have been reported killed or wounded. Statistics suggest on average, three Shia are either killed or wounded daily due to Shia rights violations in Pakistan alone. In most cases of Pakistan attacks, those three happen to be Shia professionals.

It is important to highlight, this report only included cases that could be fact checked. SRW believes there are more cases that are not reported due to insecurities of Shia population.

Change in Social Structure

Explosions and bombings, in particular, are usually analyzed based on their casualty impacts. However, SRW believes more in-depth and holistic approaches are needed in order to be fair to victims of human rights violations. Explosions not only kill and wound, but they also damage homes, destroy businesses and shops, and destruct inventories, resulting in significant damages, affecting the economic structure of the society. In addition to economic effects, such incidents create a

sense of insecurity. Insecurity results in a lack of motivation to take economic risks, desire for growth, fear of social involvements and even isolation.

SRW is concerned about Pakistani Shia community as they face so much discrimination which results in not only loss of life, but social distractions. As this report, and most other reports on Pakistani Shia highlight, many attacks in Pakistan are in the form of targeted killings. The victims of targeted killings are professionals: doctors, professors, businessmen, and influential lawyers. Targeting the social and political elite allows terror organizations to instill fear into society. The lack of prosecution in Shia deaths empowers terror groups and reinforces their ability to isolate groups within the larger society.



Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Attacked	Killed	Injured
Abbottabad	3	3	2
Bannun	1	10	20
Charsadda	5	5	5
D.I.Khan	32	50	157
Hangu	15	55	46
Hari Pur	1	2	0
Kohat	7	23	22
Naran	1	25	0
Noshehra	1	1	0
Peshawar	48	98	165
Tank	2	2	0

Lasting Effects

Anti-Shiism in Pakistan is estimated to change social dynamics. Data reports the majority of Shia killed are male heads of families whose death leave children without fathers and households without income. SRW estimates a rise in populations in need of welfare in the near future as a result of anti-Shiism. Further, SRW hypothesizes a rise in women and children in the workforce to make up for the lack of income. Children will begin working at a younger age and the nation will have a reduction in education rates.

Terror Organizations

The South Asian Terrorism Portal reports 12 different terror groups operating in Pakistan. The largest and most influential of the organizations are Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, Sipah-e-Sahaba, and Tehreek-e-Taliban. United States' Bureau of Counterterrorism identified these three groups as foreign terrorist organization.

Tekree-e-Taliban, based in Western Pakistan, aims to establish an “Islamic Emirate.” Their specialties include IEDs, suicide attacks, mass casualty bombings, mortars, rockets, assassinations, kidnappings, executions, raids, assaults, and internet operations. Like Jundullah, Tehreek-e-Taliban is a subset of the Afghan Taliban and derives much of its resources from the Taliban.



Terrorism

Lashkare Jhangvi (LeJ) is one of the more active terrorist organizations in Pakistan. They're into IEDs, assassinations, suicide attacks, mortars, grenades, rockets, and raids. LeJ's ability to collaborate with larger radical organizations makes it highly influential. In an interview with Reuters, Ali bin Sufyan, LeJ al-Alami spokesperson said, "Wherever there are attacks taking place [in Pakistan] Lashkar-e-Jhangvi al-Alami is cooperating with [ISIS] either directly or indirectly." Significant funding flows from al-Qaeda and Arab states. Saudi Arabian money has been traced to organizations such as ISIS and al-Qaeda.

LeJ has joined much of its forces with IS-Khurasan, marginalizing not only Shias but their empathes. In the recent years, LeJ has refocused its demographics, now targeting youth in the early twenties with varying backgrounds but with the same supremacist ideology. Sources report recruitment is targeted to youth with technological fluency. LeJ recruits will frequently use social media to post their most recent kills, which adds to their marketing to gain funds from international extremist organizations.

Terror organizations have propaganda in the form magazines and websites that grant them excellent access to international funds. They roam free enough to openly issue death threats to Shias in local newspapers, describing them as

“deserving of death.”

Violation Types

This report examines attacks in the form of bombs, murders, suicide bombings and targeted killings. The majority of attacks on Shia were in the form of targeted killings, specifically, drive- by shootings. In the regions of Sindh, Balochistan, Khyber Pukhtunkhwa and Punjab, Shia individuals were identified, localized and targeted at their businesses or on-route. Specifically, the Shia targeted were individuals significant to their society. Educated doctors, lawyers, and more importantly, government officials were isolated and killed. Frequently targeted shootings that have little prosecution point to a structural and social violence against Shia Muslims.

Type/Method	No. of Attacks	Killed	Injured	Total Casualties
Attack on Shia procession	9	50	263	313
Attempt to Murder	11	1	65	66
Murder	38	54	8	62
Bomb Attack	58	380	948	1328
Suicide Bombing	20	480	859	1339
Target Killing	778	1075	415	1490
Total Attacks	914	2040	2558	4598

The majority of attacks occurred in the daytime which points to a lack of fear from authorities and the surrounding community. Violators do not think they will be prosecuted for their ill actions because there is a social consensus that the Shia are second- class members of their community because of their belief systems. The region of FATA remains unique in the data as 80% of attacks occurred in the form of a bomb.

Major Regions

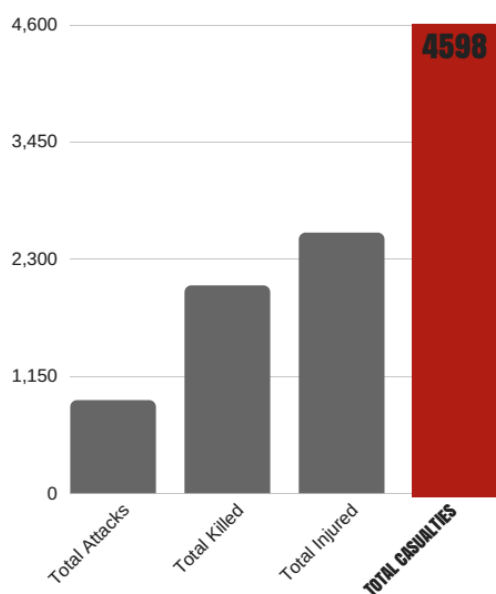
The aforementioned regions are areas of increased violence against Shia Muslims in descending order. It is important to note these regions have been isolated per acquired SRW data. Although each region has its own uniqueness in culture, similar anti- Shiism trends can be seen.

Anti-Shiism is made possible by regional instability. Lack of border security makes it easy for insurgents from other nations to flow into Pakistan and cause civil unrest. With them, insurgents bring education and anti-Shia propaganda that infiltrates Pakistani grassroots. That, in addition to money made by opioid and counterfeit trafficking, makes terrorism flourish.

Sindh

In recent years, the region of Sindh has been home to the most Shia deaths. Locally known as Mehran, Sindh is located in Southern Pakistan and is centralizes on Karachi. Once home to Muhajirs, migrants from neighboring nations, Sindh has developed a unique religious culture of its own, as a melting pot of the nation's largest Hindu population. This Hindu-Islamic mix has given rise to the Sufi religion, which shares aspects of each of the two religions.

From 2012 to 2016, Sindh has been home to over 58% of incidents of anti-Shiism. Of the 530 deaths, 481 of the deaths were the result of targeted killings. Despite the region's diversity in population, Shia Muslims are targeted. The nature of deaths points to a system of identification of Shia Muslims and their businesses/homes in a community. Further, the freedom for an individual to shoot another individual in a crowded area without fear of recognition and prosecution points to a social acceptance of anti-Shiism.



Baluchistan

In addition to sharing a border, Sindh and Baluchistan share high rates of Shia

targeting. Baluchistan is the home to the Hazara population of Pakistan. Originally, the Hazaras fled Afghanistan's persecution and sought refuge in Quetta, Baluchistan's capital city. Political unrest and lack of sufficient government action leave room for extremist groups to thrive.

Historically, the Hazaras have been in support of the federal government and have a positive track record in maintaining loyalty to the nation. That, in addition to the region's immense natural resource reservoirs, makes Baluchistan a location of significance. Located on the border of Afghanistan and Iran, Baluchistan is a key strategic region.

Mass targeting of the Shia population in Baluchistan has sparked a new wave of protests. However, despite the government's initial promises to address anti-Shiism in Pakistan, few long-term changes have been made. Terror organizations continue to thrive economically and socially. So why are so many Shias being targeted in Baluchistan? The lack of modern development in this region makes it a fertile ground for insurgents to prosper. Development is further limited as terror organizations target individuals rising to power in any sector. Baluchistan is the home to the second most incidents of anti-Shiism. In a five-year period, there have been 127 incidents of anti-Shiism. The majority of incidents have been in the form of targeted shooting.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Located in the northwestern region of Pakistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is home to 12% of Pakistan's population. The region makes up 10.5% of the nation's economy despite being one of the geographically smaller areas. Inhabitants of this region are mainly Pashtun, followed by Tajiks and Hazaras. While small communities of Hindus and Christians exist, Islam is prominent in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Shia Muslims consist of a minority population - some of them Ismaili.

War and regional instability have left this region as a hub for the militant insurgency. As the region borders Afghanistan, Taliban influence flows through the area. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is home to 13% of Pakistan's overall incidents of anti-Shiism, resulting in the death of 274.

F.A.T.A

In late 2001, the terror organization Tehreek-e- Taliban entered the FATA region,

creating an array of unrest. Gradually, the Taliban has increased its influence in the region. Adding to the instability of the region is poverty. Despite the area's reservoirs of marble, copper, limestone, and coal, increased mistrust among government/non-government organizations and regional leaders makes retrieval of resources very difficult. Economic hardships and the uncontrolled movement from the Afghan border has created a market for opioids and contraband trafficking.

There have been 36 Shia deaths in the past five years. In contrast to other regions of Pakistan, FATA has a high rate of bomb attacks targeted at Shia populated areas.

Punjab

Punjab is the second largest area and most populated region after Baluchistan. In comparison to Baluchistan, however, Punjab is one of Pakistan's most economically prosperous regions. Over 95% of Punjab is Muslim, the majority being Hanafi Sunni and a small minority of Shia Twelvers. Sufism is prominent in Punjab as well. Punjab

In the time period between 2012 and 2016, 158 Shia Muslims have lost their lives to targeted shootings, murder, and suicide bombing. In addition to Sindh, Punjab is home to the nation's higher rates of attacks on Shia processions.

Gilgit Baltistan

Gilgit-Baltistan is the northernmost region of Pakistan. For years, Pakistan and India have disputed over the region as it can be the perfect input into Kashmir because of its mountainous foray. With a population of more than 1.5 million, Gilgit-Baltistan is one of Pakistan's most heavily Shia populated areas. This area is of significant geopolitical interest as it allows a pathway to China, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and India.

This region is home to 23 total attacks on Shia Muslims. The majority of those attacks were targeted shootings.

Civil Divide

A Pew Research Center survey taken in 2012 reveals the environment in which religious divides grew in Pakistan. According to the study, which took a sample of

1,450 Pakistanis, 35% reported that they did not consider Shias to be Muslim. Of the 35% mentioned, 50% of Sunnis viewed Shia as non-Muslims. This staggering number is dangerous considering the fact that blasphemy is still illegal in Pakistan. Outward blasphemy may result in death by the mob, as happened in April 2017 when a student was beaten to death by a mob after he questioned the Quran's teachings on Adam and Eve. According to the Pew survey, 73% of Pakistanis believe in the Blasphemy Laws. Of those questioned, 5% believe that the Blasphemy Laws are geared toward singling out minorities. This 5% consists heavily of Shia and educated Sunnis.

The Pakistani government seems to avoid taking sides in the religious divide, and some politicians have even taken advantage of the conflict. According to the Center for Security Studies, due to these intolerant leaders being local enforcers, the politicians use them to rake in support from the leaders' respective region. However, in 2014, Taliban militants entered an army-run school, killing 141 people, 132 of which were children. This led to the National Action Plan (NAP), which was a 30-point strategy through which the government would crack down on religious violence including provisions such as special trial courts under the supervision of the army and the stopping of militant outfits and armed gangs within the country.

From 2014 to 2016, 430 people had been executed. This number may seem daunting, but it is undermined by the fact that 80% had no connection to terrorism, and hate speech and literature has not stopped flowing into the public. Even politicians remain unhindered. In 2016, the Pakistani Interior Minister was criticized for meeting officially with an intolerant leader. When questioned, he undermined the NAP and government efforts by stating that the intolerant leader was not a terrorist. Though there has been a drop in violence, the Pakistani government doesn't seem serious about total religious reconciliation. The Blasphemy Laws, fundamentalist groups, and general intolerance against Shia minorities will keep the religious violence in Pakistan a recurring issue.

Conclusion

As a result of the data obtained of cases of anti-Shiism in Pakistan in 2012-2016, Shia Rights Watch concludes that violations were with the goal of suppressing the power of the Shia community within the larger society by creating fear. While Shia Muslims strive to be a part of their society, extremist organizations aim to

limit their social and political involvement. Further, by targeting prominent members of the community, terror organizations create social anxiety, which they hope will suppress the growth of the community by forcing them into hiding. With their actions, terror groups aim to marginalize the Shia identity.

Shia Rights Watch condemns acts of violence against Shia Muslims and all other minority groups. SRW calls on Pakistani authority to hold violators of human rights accountable for their action through just and fair trials. Areas of Pakistan inhabited by Shia Muslims are rich in resources and are strategic openings to neighboring nations. The instability created by extremist organizations have made the retrieval of resources impossible. Increasing security and involving Shia individuals in community building would reduce instability and allow for use to resources in those areas.

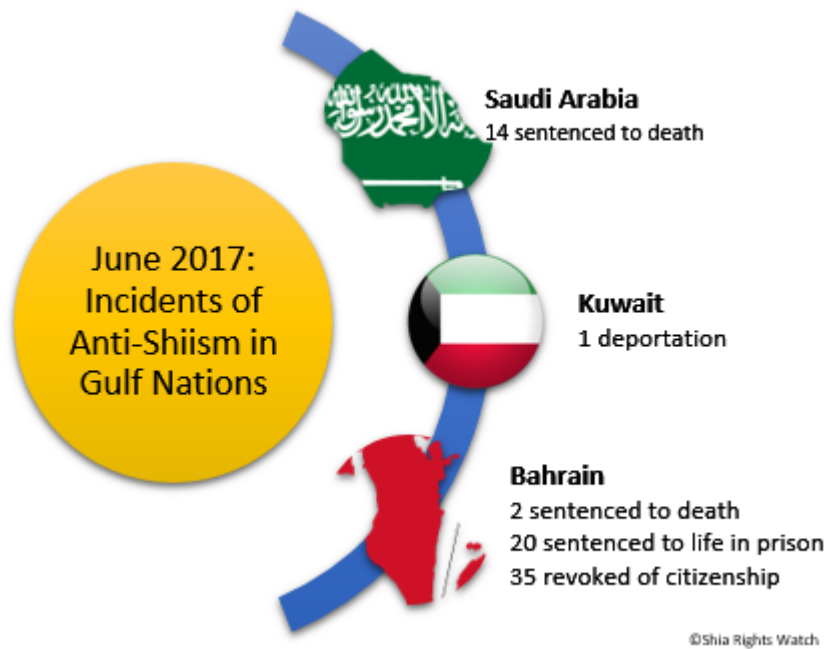
History of anti-Shiism in Pakistan has shown that the Shia population is resilient in nature. SRW hypothesizes not a reduction in the population of Shia in Pakistan, but an increase of Shia push for equal rights.

Incidents of Anti-Shiism in JUNE, 2017

June 2017

Anti-Shiism Across the Middle East

As anti-Shiism runs high, over 133 were killed in the month of June. New this month are attacks on Iranian soil and a death sentence given by social media posting in Pakistan. A compilation of news from on the grounds sources and major news agencies point to the prevalence of anti-Shiism at the heart of recent terror attacks. All cases reported in this report were proven authentic via research and corroboration with Shia rights activists in each country. This report will examine cases of Shia deaths, injuries, and arrests.



Anti-Shiism in June occurred in but were not limited to Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia. It is important to note that Shia rights violations listed in this report are a summary of incidents that have reached Shia Rights Watch (SRW). A lack of reporting by victims is mainly due to the systemic, cultural and

direct violence within the non-Shia States. Thus Shia Muslims fear to report crimes as it may lead to loss of life and social isolation. More information can be found on ShiaRightsWatch.org.

While all nations listed in this report are areas of concern for Shia Rights Watch, the following countries displayed a shift in anti-Shiism dynamics. In 2016, Pakistan announced a “Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act of 2016,” making online postings grounds for charges. This law has been deemed highly controversial as its punishments are “harsh” and its lack of-of concise language leaves room for misuse by authority figures. Now, this law has been the grounds for execution charges for a Shia individual. More information regarding this case can be seen later in the report or online at ShiaRightsWatch.org.

The second nation of concern in the month of June is Iran as this country has witnessed its first ISIS attack its soil. Iran is one of the most Shia populated nations in the world, and it has numerous announced patronage for the international Shia community. Attacks in Iran increase fear and tension within the region, making this nation a second point of concern for Shia Muslims. Saudi Arabia continues to be monitored for human rights violations as the conflict in Awamiya continues.

Iraq

June stood witness to the death of over 43 Shia civilians. **A-bomb** detonation in the east of Karbala, in the town of Musayyib, killed 30 and left 35 injured. The detonation was one of four explosions set to go off on that day. Hours after the first bomb, another explosion went off in the city center, wounding 34 others. Sources report that those wounded are in critical condition- the death toll is likely to rise. The third of the bombs was foiled previous to detonation at the shrine of Imam Hussain, a historical landmark central to the Shia faith. Explosions were focused on areas populated with civilians- Marketplace, a religious shrine,

city center, and lastly the city's central bus station.

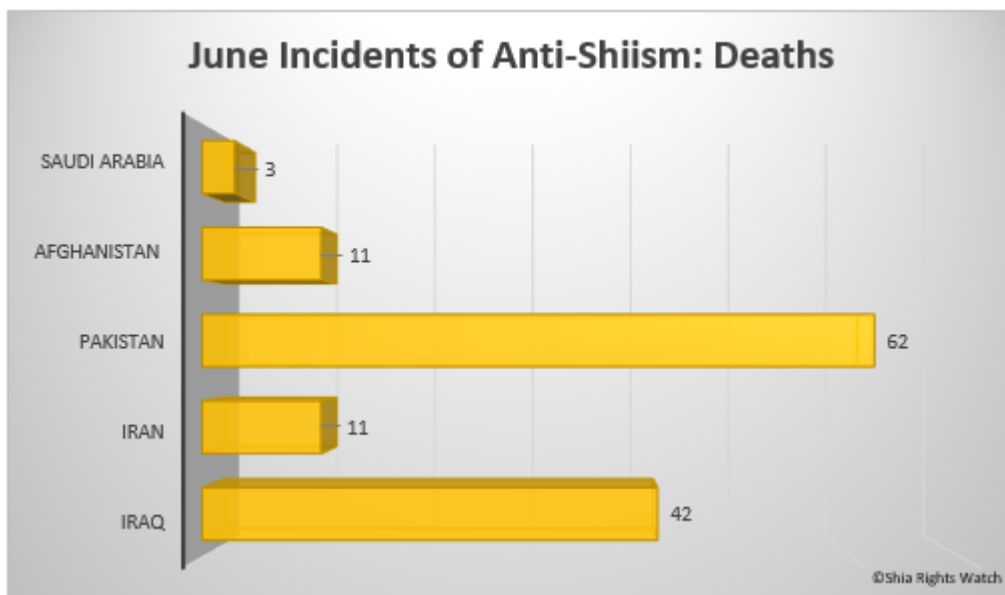
Despite claims of increased security measures in for the occasion of Ramadan, the city remains alerted. All attacks were claimed by ISIS jihadists. Some sources believe increased attacks on civilian life is in retaliation of lost battlegrounds in other regions of Iraq.

Iran

At 10:30 on June 7, six attackers launched a shooting and bomb attack simultaneously in the Iranian Parliament building and the mausoleum of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. In total, eleven people were killed at the Parliament building and people at the tomb. Forty-six people were wounded.

While ISIS claims responsibility, Iranian authorities view Saudi Arabia suspiciously. The idea of Saudi Arabian support for the terrorist group is a reality on the ground in the Shia-dominated state, and indirect hostilities between the two have been at an all-time high.

For years, Iran has claimed leadership of the global Shia population. The recent attack on Iranian soil points to an advancement of ISIS powers in the region and furthers claims of anti-Shiism by terror organizations. Shia Rights Watch anticipates further anti-ISIS developments in Iran.



Pakistan

Late June stood witness to the targeting of Shia Muslims preparing for Eid celebrations. Three separate explosions in Parachinar and Quetta left over 62 dead and 100 other injured. The incidents were claimed by Jamaat-ul-Ahrar, a splinter of the TeT terror organization. The blasts were coordinated and timed as they occurred on the same day and planned to target the most people. Anti-Shia sentiment is apparent in attacks in Pakistan as they took place in Shia majority locations of the main cities. The incidents stand in support of anti-Shia beliefs that Shia individuals are not Muslims and are seen as unworthy of basic human

rights.

Afghanistan

Two explosions occurred in Afghanistan during the month of June in 2017. Both explosions caused multiple casualties and amassed a total of eleven deaths. These attacks took place in the holy month of Ramadan and followed an insurgence of assaults aimed at the Shia minority population within Afghanistan.

The first bomb detonated in Kabul near the Great Mosque of Herat on the 6th of June. The bomb killed seven people and wounded 17. No group has taken credit for the bombing. Although the Taliban denies involvement, Afghan intelligence believes a Pakistani group aligned with the Taliban, called the Haqqani Network.

The second attack occurred on June 15th in Kabul. Four individuals were killed in the blast caused by a suicide bomber outside the al-Zahra mosque in the southwestern area of the city, *Dashte Barche*. One of the people killed was the leader of the Hazaras in Afghanistan, Hajji Ramazan Hussainzada. The Hazaras are an ethnic group within the Shia population. The attack wounded seven other people. The source of the blast has yet to be confirmed, though the spokesman for Afghanistan's Interior Ministry reported that the two attackers tried to enter the mosque before having a shoot-out with the police. One of the attackers made it to the kitchen, where the bomb was detonated. These two attacks continue the series of deadly attacks that have been targeting the minority Shia population in Afghanistan.

Bahrain

Since 2011, Bahraini authorities have been cracking down on protesters that the government fears undermine its position. The protesters are the Shia majority of Bahrain which is often excluded from power. Inspired by the Arab Spring, Bahrainis have taken to the streets. The banning of the Shia political group Al-Wefaq led to further uprisings, and the government responded. This month, Shia Rights Watch has monitored multiple arrests, life sentences, death sentences, and violence institutionalized by the government.

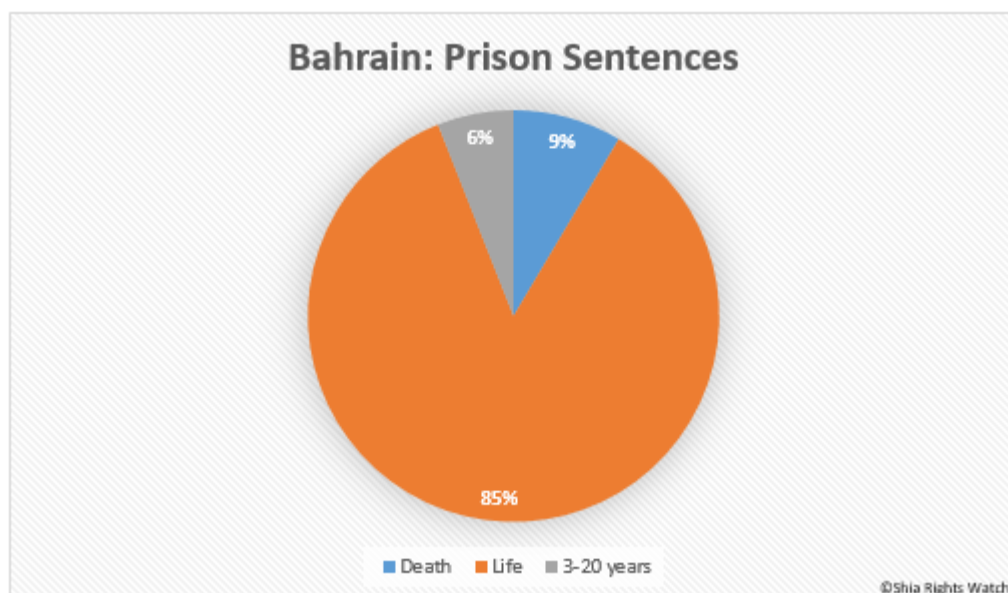
On June 6, Bahrain's 4th High Criminal Court delivered death sentences to both Sayed Ahmed Fouad al-Abar and Hussein Ali Mahdi after they were arrested during a pro-democracy protest. Two others received life sentences, and eight more received sentences for three to ten years. When appearing in court, the accused seemed physically exhausted which may hint at torture.

On June 15, in a large terrorist trial, 26 Shia Bahrainis were stripped of citizenship, 18 received life sentences, and eight received fifteen years in prison. The group arrested are all members of *Diraz Youth*, a Shia group based out of the neighborhood of Diraz that protest the monarchy as a community.

Leaders of the Shia community are not exempt from the crackdown. On June 16, Sheikh Hussein al-Sitri was arrested after interrogation even though no charges were announced. On the 19th, Sheikh Salman was sentenced to four years for promoting disobedience and insulting public institutions.

On the 20th, pro-democracy protester Nabeel Al-Samie was found dead after being kidnapped from his farm. Witness reports say that there were signs of extreme torture, and that may be the cause of death. Members of the Ministry of Interior are reported to have been involved, but when investigated, Bahraini authorities stated that the cause of death was by bombing.

Since the demand for democracy and equal rights for the Shia majority, the Bahraini monarchy has stifled any sign of resistance by force. The liberal handing out of life and death sentences proves that the al-Khalif monarchy has little interest in granting equal privileges to all its citizens.



Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia has laid siege to a village called Awamiyah located in the eastern province in the Al-Qatif region. Last month, the Saudi government surrounded the city and attempted to evict the Shia community, stating that the eviction was necessary for renovations. According to residents, cars, fire engines and ambulances are still not being allowed in or out of the area. The Saudi government is using excessive tactics and provoking violence throughout the neighborhood.

On June 7, 14 from the Qatif region were sentenced to death for protesting. They had been detained for two years previously, some in solitary confinement. Lynn Maalouf from Amnesty International stated that the death sentences were based on confessions that were extracted out of coercion. Those sentenced later rescinded their confession.

On June 12, the Saudi military targeted houses of the Shia residents in al-Deira, a neighborhood of

Awamiyah. The attack was an uncoordinated lobbying of mortar rockets, adding to the destruction of the community.

On June 14, the carnage continued as Saudi forces deployed snipers onto the rooftops. They commenced firing at civilians, wounding 31, many of whom were women and children. The next day, Saudi troops launched an offensive, to send forces with heavy weapons. Abdullah al-Faraj was shot and died of his wounds. Forty more were wounded.

On June 27, Saudi forces shot Amin Al Hani, head of the Quranic Council of Qatif near a military checkpoint. His vehicle caught fire and incinerated his body.

In the past two months, the Saudi regime has tightened its grip in the Al-Qatif region. The government is bulldozing houses and using conventional weapons to eliminate those trying to preserve their homes. Though a minority, the Shia are still Saudis, and the government has a responsibility to protect its citizens.

Conclusion

A large number of attacks against Shia majority areas took place in the month of June. These attacks occurred in the holy month of Ramadan, which began May 27 and ended on June 24. During this time, Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset, making the marketplaces and mosques an easy target at night. From the ISIS claimed bombing in Iran to the government led blockade in the Al-Awamiyah region of Saudi Arabia, the Shia population is facing extreme systematic discrimination and persecution.

These incidents demonstrate the continuing persecution of Shia populations around the world. Shia Rights Watch urges further protections for Shia majority areas and implores the countries where these incidences occur to add prevention measures to thwart future human rights infractions against Shia Muslims.

Suicide Bomber Strikes Near Shia Mosque in Kabul, 4 Killed

June 15th, 2017

Today, June 15th, there was an explosion in the al-Zahra mosque in the western outskirts of Kabul. The attack killed four, including the leader of Afghanistan's ethnic Hazaras, Hajji Ramazan Hussainzada and injured seven.

The attacker attempted to enter the mosque armed when police stopped him. An exchange of fire ensued between police and the attacker. The attacker took refuge in the mosque kitchen, and there he detonated his explosive device.

ISIS has claimed responsibility.

This is the third major attack in Afghanistan during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan. On May 31st, a truck bomb killed more than 150 people in the diplomatic quarter of the city. On June 6th, a motorbike, parked outside the historic Jama Masjid mosque detonated killing seven people and wounding 15.