Pakistan; Untold Stories

2012

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Shia Rights Watch (SRW) is the world’s first independent organization dedicated to define and protect the rights of Shia Muslims around the world. SRW is a non-governmental, not-for-profit research entity and advocacy group headquartered in Washington D.C., U.S.A. Shia Rights Watch aims to draw the international attention where Shia rights are violated; the aim is to give a voice to the oppressed and hold oppressors accountable for their crimes. S.R.W. Achieves its objectives through strategic investigations supported by targeted advocacy in order to bring about informed action.

**Vision**

*Freedom of religion for all*

Shia Rights Watch envisions the world with peace for all humans, regardless of their religion, gender, race and origin. There should be regulations in every country to support every religion. We believe Shia Muslim as religion should be recognized in every country and any discrimination should be brought to light. God has given us all the freedom of religion and the rights to live in peace.

**Mission**

*No Shia above the law and no Shia Below the law*

Shia Rights Watch is dedicated to protect the rights of Shia Muslims worldwide. We investigate violations against Shia communities in order to raise awareness against injustice. We promote the change through research and publications. Our reports and articles are submitted to the governments and international organizations, and we continually monitor media outlets to ensure coverage of Shia rights violations. Shia Rights Watch stands for victims of prejudice, and supports activism in order to prevent discrimination, support political freedom, and protect people from inhumane conduct. We enlist the local public and international communities to support the cause of human rights for all.

**The Purpose of SRW**

Shia Muslims face constant oppression throughout the world solely based on their faith. In some countries, Shia Muslims have been the target of repeated persecution for centuries as evidenced in the well-documented expansion of extremism of the Wahhabi movement. We believe the underrepresented Shia Muslim population need a human rights organization that highlights the violations against them, while giving their call for help a louder voice.

**Staff Organization**

The organization began with the collaborative efforts of volunteers with a common interest in advocating international human rights. The momentum created by the increasing number of volunteer and activism allowed for a formal development of the foundation of Shia Rights Watch. Currently the organization has more than 100 active members working in various locations worldwide. The responsibilities of members range from gathering news and information to publishing reports and articles in order to advocate change. We are proud of the religiously and ethnically diverse group of activists who are working together towards a common goal.
Methodology of SRW

We believe that information is the most valuable resource in the investigative process. From the organization’s inception, we have focused on gathering information through various media: interviewing witnesses, family members of the victims and victims themselves; on-site collection of resources; analyzing reports from various national and international organizations; meeting with non-governmental and religious organizations, leaders, and journalists; and creating information networks in a wide range of social sectors.

Based on the information collected from the above sources, different types of human rights violation have been identified. These violations include but are certainly not limited to:

- **Violation of right of living;**
- **Arbitrary arrest, unfair trial, and illegal detention;**
- **Psychical & psychological abuse: torture, rape, and sexual assault;**
- **Illegal confiscation of private property;**
- **Demolition of Religions centres;**
- **Employment discrimination;**
- **Education discrimination;**

Reports, Publications, and Distribution

Whether it is terrorist bombings of sacred shrines, torture and unjust detention of people, discriminative legislation or intimidation of school children for their sectarian beliefs, Shia have been victimized in most the world. In countries where the press is tightly controlled, most of these cases go unnoticed. Shia Rights Watch tells the stories of injustices and atrocities in order to give a voice to the marginalized Shia victims.

Journalists investigating topics regarding the Middle East will benefit from SRW’s focus on the Shia communities since they are crucially important sectors in Middle Eastern society. For instance, In order to fully examine the ongoing atrocities committed against protesters of the Arab spring, it is necessary to know about the embedded Shia struggle. In areas where Shia have been formerly discriminated against more subtly, the Arab Spring opened a door for more blunt persecution. Cases reported in other parts of the world, such as in South Asia, describe violence and intimidation which reflect fluctuating trends in sectarian hostilities, fueled by various political issues, including terrorism. SRW’s aim is to be able to report the crimes affecting Shia in every part of the globe.

SRW has investigators on the forefront who communicate directly with the victims and monitor multilingual news media outlets. SRW networks with national committees, international human rights organizations, as well as religious scholars of Shia communities. SRW’s members comprise of people with diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds united to defend the of human rights. This international network provides invaluable information to commentators and journalists of the media who are seeking to explore the impact of events on the Shia communities worldwide.
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Shia Rights Watch relies on support of individuals and organizations to improve our advocacy. All suggestions and donations received contribute directly to our researches and projects with Shia Muslims. There are many ways to support to further our work.

One way to support us is to subscribe to our website. Subscribers receive regular SRW reports and most up to date news. Our one of a kind researches and reports cover accurate information of oppressed Shia Muslims with new perspectives and news analysis.

To learn more about our work, access our reports, or to subscribe to our news updates, and donation please visit our web site www.ShiaRightsWatch.org

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Pakistan

Background

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan is a sovereign country in Southeast Asia. Pakistan is bordered by the Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Oman to the south, India to the east, Afghanistan to the west and north, Iran to the southwest, and China to the far northeast. Its strategic location at the intersection of Central, West, and South Asia makes Pakistan an important political and economic player in world affairs.

The population of Pakistan is over 187 million making it the world’s sixth most populous country. It has seven cities even with a population of 1 million or more, and its capital is Islamabad.

Pakistan is a democratic parliamentary federal republic. The elected president, Asif Ali Zardari, is the chief of state and the director of the armed forces. The Prime Minister, Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, is the leader of the largest party in the National Assembly.
The population of Pakistan consists of 96.4% Muslim, with 3.6% Christian and Hindu. Approximately 20% of population are Shia according to World Factbook, making about 37,400,000 Shia. Pakistan was founded in 1947 after carving out the Muslim majority parts of India. It was created on the principle of Two-Nation theory which proclaimed Muslims as distinct from non-Muslims and unable to co-exist. The article of Objective Resolution in the constitution of Pakistan declares the country as an Islamic state governed on the principles of Quran and Sunnah. Islamic governmental institutions such as the Federal Shariat Court and the Council of Islamic Ideology advise government officials on policy and laws.

The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom includes Pakistan on its list of Countries of Particular Concern. Blasphemy and anti-Shia laws in Pakistan, which target religious minorities, have created friction among religious groups. Shia targeted killings have a long history in this country. The government has done little to prevent or bring justice to the culprits of violent outbreaks in response to these laws.
Shia Muslims in Pakistan

There are approximately more than 37 million Shia Muslims in Pakistan, mainly from the Twelver sect. Shia are spread across the country, but mainly concentrated in the urban areas. The district of Parachinar, situated in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, has a Shia majority population. 6

Religious minorities have very low legal and social statuses in Pakistan, and are often implicated and imprisoned under blasphemy laws and other discriminatory legislation issued by the government. The increase in religious violence and extremism not only threatens religious minorities, but remains a challenge to the survival of “lesser” Muslim sects such as, Shias, Bohris, Ahmadis, Aghakhani Ismailis, Sufis, Nurbakhshis and Zikris.

However, to date, the number of Shia Muslims killed is far greater than all other faith-based deaths combined. The Pew Research Center, based in Washington, DC, published a study in which it was found that 50 percent of Sunnis in Pakistan consider Shia to be non-Muslims. 7 Dr. Pervez Hoodbhoy, a peace activist and an academician says: “Describing the killings as sectarian is outrageous because a conflict assumes two warring sides. But in fact here there is just one side – the Shias – which is being massacred.” 8 Many human rights activists therefore term Shia killings as target killings and religious genocide. Areas like Quetta, Karachi, Parachinar and Gilgit-Baltistan, where Shia live in large numbers, are regular targets of Islamic militant attacks. The Pakistani government has taken small steps to promote equality. In July 2011 government Ministry of National Harmony declared August 11 as National Minorities Day. 9 However, with discrimination against Shia in Pakistan escalating every day, these steps are not enough. Despite its original purpose Ministry of National Harmony has had a negative effect on religious freedom, as it simply diverted responsibility from the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which was already in place to protect religious freedom. 10
Discrimination Against Shia Muslims

Shia are constant victims of terrorist attacks and premeditated killings, mainly concentrated in the northern section of the country and Baluchistan province.  

Lakshar-e-Jangvi Terrorist Violence

Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, or the Le-J, is an anti-Shia Wahhabi militant group that is responsible for many attacks to Shia community in Pakistan. It repeatedly “proclaimed its goal of cleansing Pakistan of Shia”. Le-J leader Malik Ishaq was recently released from prison after 14 years, following the Supreme Court’s declaration that prosecutors were unable to provide sufficient evidence linking him to 44 cases of 70 murders of Shia Muslims. Upon his release from jail, many political and military figures received him with flower garlands. He now enjoys the 24/7 protection of AK-47 rifles. He has delivered militant anti-Shia speeches, calling Shia the “greatest infidels on earth” and that the state should declare them as non-Muslims. The aim of the Le-J is to raise sectarian violence and create an opportunity for Sunni domination of Pakistan. Ishaq’s release allowed the Le-J more mobility and a greater presence in Balochistan and Gilgit-Baltistan. The people of these regions have been traditionally secular, but are increasingly leaning towards radical Islam due to the presence of the Le-J in their areas. It is believed that many military led Jihadi camps situated in different parts of Balochistan like Khuzdar, Lasbela and Hab provide patronage to LeJ. Additionally, sectarian schools are increasing extremism of Balochistan and Gilgit-Baltistan. Intelligence agencies and Sunni militant tribesmen pressure regional rulers to adopt more anti-Shia policies.

According to UCIRF, In 2012 alone, 50 attacks were carried out against the Shia community: militants regularly attack Shia religious centers and schools, and ambush vehicles carrying Shia. The attacks resulted in death of more than 400 Shia-Muslims.

The Le-J has worked with other extreme Islamist groups such as Al-Qaeda and Taliban to engineer acts of terror. Terrorist groups continue to persecute, harm, and murder innocent Shia Muslims solely because of their faith.

Government Discrimination

According to members of the Hazara Democratic Party of Balochistan, the Shia-Muslim community especially the Hazaras are targeted by ISI-sponsored militants due to their refusal to help the Taliban and Pakistani agenda in Afghanistan. They accuse the military based Frontier Constabulary, Military Intelligence and ISI of supporting militants who exclusively attack and kill Shia.

Perpetrators who kill and attack in plain sight are never investigated, arrested or prosecuted. The Pakistan army and mainstream media choose to ignore the atrocities committed against Shia. Eyewitnesses claim that the police and paramilitary have provided logistical support and weapons during anti-Shia attacks. The Asian Human Rights Commission blames Pakistan’s military for the Shia genocide, citing the massacre in Mastung next to an army check post, the massacre in Kohistan conducted by assailants in military uniforms, and the Chilas massacre which happened right next to a police station. Shia citizens claim that most attacks on Shia occur between two military check posts.

The release of Malik Ishaq is a significant example of governmental interference with Shia human rights. According to Brad Adams, the Asia director of Human Rights Watch, “the arrest of Malik Ishaq, who has been implicated in dozens of killings, is
an important test for Pakistan's criminal justice system. Sectarian violence won’t end until those responsible are brought to trial and justice.”  

Ishaq's release suggests that the Pakistani government is not effectively enforcing justice within its borders. President Pervez Musharraf, who called for the arrest of Le-J leaders, lost a great deal of power and influence in the government after this proclamation. 

By and large, the Le-J is being permitted to operate unrestrained in many areas of Pakistan. 

An active movement continues in the country to declare Shia, Ismailis and Zikris as non-Muslim. Ismaili religious centers are a regular target of arson in Chitral, where Ismailis once formed a majority. Ismailis offices and vehicles are regularly attacked by extremists and workers continue to receive threats from the Taliban. 

In 2012, several Shia Bohras of Hyderabad and Karachi lost their lives in bomb attack incidents. 

In many parts of the country, Shia are denied the basic right to practice their faith in an open space. At the same time, many Shia, Ismailis and Nurbakhshi publications have been forcefully banned under the Blasphemy Laws, and authors and publishers have had to face punishment and fines. Zikris are banned from attending religious rituals and visiting Holy Site of Koh-e-Murad. On November 14, 2012, Allama Raja Nasir Abbas Jafari, secretary general of Majlis-e-Wahdat-e-Muslimeen (MWM), gave a speech at a press conference in Pakistan in which he called for the government to take more action to protect Shia rights, rather than ignoring or supporting the frequent offences. Because of repeated attacks to Shia religious processions, the government began to urge Shia to limit religious congregations. He stated, “These are irresponsible statements. We challenge its legality because the Constitution of Pakistan allows Shiites [Shia] to exercise their fundamental religious, cultural and political rights and Azadari of Imam Hussain (AS) [religious commemoration] is a fundamental legal right of Shia citizens.” 

Governmental suppression of Shia activities rather than taking steps to protect them is a growing issue in Pakistan.
Gilgit-Baltistan is an area classified by the UN as a “disputed area” under Pakistani control, which is claimed by India as its constitutional part. The region is three times the size of the State of Maryland in the USA and holds a population of around 1.5 million. The predominant population of Gilgit-Baltistan follow different forms of Shiasm. Sunnis make up around 25% of the population.

Given the constitutional impasse and dispute over the region, Pakistan has failed to merge the region and locals remain deprived of access to Pakistani political, financial and judicial institutions. The region is strategically located between China, Afghanistan, Tajikistan (Central Asian Republics), India and Pakistani province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Her location has compelled the Pakistani secret agencies and their sponsored anti-Shia militants to take special interest in the region. The rugged mountains of Gilgit-Baltistan are perfectly situated for staging military forays into northern Afghanistan and Kashmir. As NATO withdrawal is nearing, Gilgit-Baltistan has the potential to become the locus of various anti-American and anti-Shia forces including the Taliban. They are making efforts to form alliances with local extremists. In addition, the region provides short and safe access to China, Pakistan’s only ally, to her ports and security of this region has become paramount for the secret agencies. Militants target the local Shia and Nurbakhshis since they do not support terrorism and refuse to let their land be used for militancy against Afghanistan or India. It is predicted that Shia killings in Gilgit-Baltistan will continue at a much larger rate as the quest for dominance in Afghanistan will intensify enabling thousands of terrorists to choose Gilgit-Baltistan as their hide out and launch pad. Shia are left with no choice but to either confront the militants and get killed or abandon their homeland to become refugees elsewhere.

Shia killings, and forceful conversion and expulsion has a long history in Gilgit-Baltistan. The first attack on Shia community occurred in Gilgit city right after Pakistan took control of the disputed region in 1947. Not sure of the loyalty of the Shiato the newly created Pakistan, the Nawab ruler of neighboring Swat threatened a massacre and forceful capture of Gilgit-Baltistan in
case locals fail to support Pakistan. In 1972, riots broke out again during the time of Prime Minister Zulfikar Bhutto. In 1988, militants supported by Pakistani military and federal minister for Kashmir Affairs, attacked Gilgit-Baltistan and killed hundreds of people. The episode that lasted for 16 days without interruption led to burning of more than 14 villages and molestation of local women. People were burnt alive in their homes for no fault but their faith.

Nothing has changed since then as Shias (Jafari and Ismailia) of Gilgit-Baltistan continue to face ethnic cleansing and demographic change. In 2012 alone, more than 100 Shias of Gilgit-Baltistan lost lives in different incidents of target killings. The Nurbakhshis who are Twelver Sufis are targeted by the Tablighee Jamat (Wahhabi conversion squads) who visit Gilgit-Baltistan on regular basis. Till date, thousands of Nurbakhshis have been converted to Wahhabi faith in areas like Shigar and Gangche.

In Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan abrogated the State Subject Rule (SSR) in 1974 which is termed by the experts on India-Pakistan dispute as a violation of UN resolutions. The abrogation has enabled state led settlement of hundreds of thousands of Sunnis in the urban parts of Gilgit-Baltistan. Shia have already become a minority in the capital, Gilgit. Senge Sering claims that state led demographic change has enabled the Sunni candidates for the legislative assembly to contest and succeed from the capital, Gilgit city.

Furthermore, the Pakistani Prime Minister, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, passed an ordinance in 2011 guaranteeing double salary to Pakistanis as an incentive to work in Gilgit-Baltistan. Hard area allowance is also provided to Pakistanis as an incentive to take jobs in Gilgit-Baltistan. Institutions like the military led Frontier Works Organization, which employees thousands of workers to maintain and construct infrastructure in Gilgit-Baltistan has a policy of not hiring locals from Gilgit-Baltistan. Such policies are aimed at diluting the Shia plurality in the disputed region.

Hundreds of religious and political activists have been arrested countrywide and tortured and interrogated without even registering a case against them and fair trial. Two political activists of Gilgit-Baltistan named Iftikhar Hussain Karbalai and Ameer Khan continue to linger in central jail in Gilgit. Karbalai and Khan were detained in January of 2011. They face rigorous torture, affecting their health and well-being.

Many Shia political activists of Gilgit-Baltistan face sedition charges for demanding political rights in their land, and many must live incognito in order to protect their lives. Many Shia activists of Gilgit-Baltistan have been put on an exit control list, forbidding them to travel outside Pakistan.
Anti-Shia violence is prevalent in Pakistan and new cases arise every day. Throughout 2012, violations took the form of attacking Shia transportation vehicles, places of work, religious processions, and places of worship. New attacks and instances of discrimination occur every day.

Violations of Right to Life

Article 3 of the International Bill of Human Rights states that “everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.” Anti-Shia terrorist groups such as the Le-J and its members are guilty of severely violating this provision. Some of the most recent instances of terror include:

On November 26, 2012, a Shia man, aged 30, was murdered the day after a peaceful Ashura ceremony in Karachi by Le-J members. 35

On November 22, 2012, a Shia teenager was injured when Le-J terrorists threw a bomb at him. The terrorists’ attempts at a large-scale attack of terror were foiled when they were stopped by security officials. 36

On November 18, 2012, Shia shopkeeper, Hashim was murdered in Balochistan by Le-J operatives. Hashim was fired at by multiple terrorists, and the area remains tense in the wake of this attack.37

On the same day, two Shia died outside a milk shop in Karachi, where a bomb was planted on a motorcycle by the entrance. Other Shia sustained injuries from the blast. The blast also disrupted power lines and took out electricity in the area.38

Later that day, two more people were murdered in a bomb near a Shia mosque in Karachi. Azhar Hussein, a Shia man, died as a result of the blast, and 15 others were wounded.39
On November 16, 2012, two Shia men were shot by terrorist gunmen driving by motorbikes in Akhtarabad, Balochistan.

On November 14, 2012, Shujaat Ali was killed by terrorists in the town of Orangi at the age of 18. Ali was a Shia social media activist who was targeted by militants because of his twitter account which kept the people of Pakistan updated on human rights issues and events.

On November 13, 2012, a Shia officer named Raza son of Ali Raza who worked in the Excise and Taxation Department was shot and killed in Orangi, west of Karachi.

On November 12, 2012, three Shia, named Ghulam Mohammad, Ghulam Ali and Mohammad Ibrahim, were killed in a vegetable shop in Balochistan when terrorists opened fire in Mach Market. In addition to these three deaths, two men named Mohammad Taqi and Abdullah were rushed to the hospital with critical injuries.

Also on November 12, 2012, in the funeral procession of a father and his two sons who were killed because of their Shia faith, three funeral attendees were wounded when the terrorists fired guns into the procession. Although police were present, they took no action in stopping the aggressors. The father, Jarrar Hussain, and his two sons, Sajjad Hussain and Imadad Hussain, were killed the day before in a wheel-repair shop in Nazimabad when Le-J members opened fire on them.

On November 11, 2012, Syed Asad Raza, the son of the director of the Intelligence Bureau, was killed while he was sitting with a group of friends at night in the Federal Capital Area. Syed, a Shia, and his Sunni friend died on the spot after the Le-J fired at his group. His father, Qamar Raza, was also killed by Le-J members near his house.

Also on November 11, 2012, Mukhtar Hussain Zaidi was walking on Martin Road in Federal Capital Area when an anti-Shia killed him. He became the sixth Shia to be killed by the Le-J on that Sunday in Pakistan, after another Shia was killed in Bahadurabad.

On November 6, 2012, a Shia man named S. Hammad Ali Risvi died from a gunshot wound while he was at his Mobile store in Karachi.

On November 6, 2012, Haseeb Raza, a young Shia man, was targeted by anti-Shia terrorist groups in Quetta. Raza was riding on a rickshaw on a street when he was forced off. While his mother and sister were still in the rickshaw, Taliban terrorists pulled him off and shot him. He was rushed to the hospital, but he passed away before he could receive treatment.

On October 28, 2012, a 36-year-old Shia man named Mahmoud was killed in Nazimabad by members of the banned group Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamat. He died at a local hospital from a gunshot wound to the head.

On October 25, 2012, 14-year-old Shia, Ali Abbas died after spending four years in the ICU of a hospital in Peshawar. His injuries resulted from a blast in Mirza Qasim Imambargah organized by the Le-J in 2008. The attack caused the teenager to sustain injuries to his head and was paralyzed.

Anti-Shia terrorists often target cars and vans as a means to massacre Shia. On October 24, 2012, a bus filled with Shia Muslims was stopped on its way to a festival in Gilgit by 20 men dressed as Pakistani soldiers. The attackers forced several people off the bus and demanded that they present their identification. They then chose 19 people that they found to be Shia, shot and killed them. Later it was discovered that these attackers were not soldiers, but members of the Le-J.
On 22 October 2012, Maatmi Azadar died of a gunshot wound after being attacked by banned terrorist group Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamat in Sindh.  

On October 23, 2012, Zohaib Ali, aged 30, died of his day-old injuries from an attack at a fast food center in Nazimabad. Three other Shia were wounded during this attack: Sohail Yaqoob aged 25, Babu Yaqoob aged 28, and Asif Naik Mohammed, whose age is unknown.

Also on October 22, 2012, a terrorist group opened fire in a Khadda fish market in Karachi. Syed Ali Raza Shah was injured, along with 5 other Shia, and one Shia was killed. Additionally, on the same day in Nusrat Bhutto Colony, two Shia policemen were shot by terrorists. One of them, Riaz Shah, died from the attack, and the other, Mumtaz Ali, was hospitalized.

On October 16, 2012, four Shia men, including Ali Ata and Mohd Ibrahim sons of Taj Mohd, Syed Ayooz son of Syed Haider and Ghulam Ali son of Zahid, were killed in a Quetta scrap market.

On October 11, 2012, a members of the Le-J, shot and killed a Shia youth in Karachi. The 30 year-old victim’s name was Syed Aijaz Haider Rizvi. He was walking in the central district of the city when he was shot four times in the head and neck. The central district of Karachi is a constant site of violence and murder.

On October 10, 2012, Mohammad Ramzan son of Mulazim Hussain, a Shia police officer, was killed in an attack in Dera Ismail Khan.

On October 9, 2012, three Shia who were driving in a van in Parachinar. The terrorists first fired two rockets at the van. Although the rocket blasts missed, the terrorists then opened gunshot fire on the van. The victims, Arif Hussain, Kazim Hussain and Munir Hussain, had to be immediately taken to a hospital. One of them is in critical condition.

On October 6, 2012 Sajjad Ali was tortured and then killed for his Shia faith by terrorists after having been abducted.

On that same day, four Shia men who were simply taking a walk in the woods in Parachinar were ambushed by Taliban. One of the men, named Dildar Hussain, was immediately killed. Another was abducted by the terrorists, and the other two, Qamar and Javed, were severely wounded.

On October 4, 2012, another car attack in Quetta left one Shia dead and two wounded. A Shia family was getting into a car when terrorists opened fire. The victims were rushed to the hospital; however, Sikandar Ali died on the ambulance ride. Mush-taq Ali and Saqib Ali were severely injured.

On August 25, 2012, 25 Shia were killed after being pulled off a bus in northern Pakistan. The passengers were stopped, and their papers were checked. After determining that they were Shia, the terrorists pulled them off and killed them.

On August 30, 2012 Anti-Shia Terrorist armed men killed Shia Muslim judge Zulfiqar Naqvi, in Pakistan’s southwestern province of Baluchistan. The gunmen, riding a motorbike, opened fire on Zulfiqar Naqvi, his driver and a bodyguard in the provincial capital of Quetta while they were heading to the office.

On August 27, 2012, the Le-J released a video of Shia Muslims being beheaded. This video, entitled “Revenge,” shows two Shia, Haseeb Zaidi and Maulana Nooruddin, being bound and killed. It was released on the Wahhabi terrorist Seminary Jamia Hafsa.
Urdu forum and then rapidly spread to different seminaries.  

On July 8 anti-Shia terrorist killed 55 years old Shia Syed Qamar Raza. He was ambushed by two unidentified assailants when he was returning from a walk to his apartment in Sharifabad. Reza was critically injured in the attack and was sent to Karachi’s main hospital, where he later died. Raza was the director of Pakistan’s IB Security Agency as well as the Secretary to Haidery Scouts.

On February 20, 2012 a suicide bomb attack on a market in a Shia area of north-west Pakistan killed 30 Shia and injured at least 50 others, officials say. List of names of the victims can be viewed on our official website.

In January 2012, four Shia lawyers were attacked by gunmen on motorcycles in front of a court in Karachi. Three of them, Badar Munir Jafri, Shakeel Jafri and Kafeel Jafri, were killed, and one, Babar Ali, was injured. The police cordoned off the area and the investigation has been inconclusive.

On November 27, 2012, Syed Azhar Kazmi, a senior Shia Muslim Cleric, was arrested in Punjab for advocating for the rights of Shia Muslims. Kazmi was planning a protest when he was arrested. However, after relentless protest by Shia individuals, the government agreed to release him.

On November 24, 2012, a member of the Taliban targeted a Shia Muharram procession in Rawalpindi with a suicide bombing. This attack killed 23 people and injured 68. The terrorist set off his bomb when he was stopped from entering the procession. This is not the first time that terrorists have targeted Shia religious practices during the month of Muharram, during which Shia commemorate the death of Imam Hussein, the grandson of the prophet Mohammed.

Just two days earlier, on 22 November 2012, a bomb set off in an Imambargah (Shia Islamic center) killing two and wounding 16 Shia in a religious procession. This is suspected to be a suicide bombing. Among the victims were children, security officers and journalists. Attacks on Shia processions during Muharram have become so widespread that the government has had to take notice. Pakistan’s interior minister moved to suspend cell phone service for the two most important days of Muharram, as suicide bombers often set off their bombs using cell phones. However, this action did not stop terrorists from attacking Shia, as they are able to find ways to circumvent these limitations.
Also on November 22, 2012, two bombs were set off within minutes of each other. These bombs were destined for a Shia mosque in Karachi. These bombs resulted in the death of one person and the injury of 15 others. 68

On November 21, 2012 an attack on a Shia gathering during Muharram left four dead and several others wounded. Three victims were immediately identified, but the discovery of a severed head at the site of the explosion points to a suicide bomber.69

On February 2012, a suicide bomber in Kurram targeted a local mosque, resulting in the death of 31 Shia. 26 Shia were killed during the bombing, while the police fired into protesting crowds, killing an additional 5 people. This was the deadliest incident in Pakistan since a January 2010 bombing.70

On January 15, 2012 in Punjab, a Shia religious procession was attacked in the Rahim Yar Khan District, killing 18 and wounding 20. The victims had been commemorating the 40th day the death of Prophet Mohammad’s grandson Imam Hussain when the attack occurred. The Le-J claimed responsibility for this attack, where they used a homemade bomb to kill so many Shia.71

The Pakistani constitution includes protection in “educational institutions with respect to religion.” This means that no student can be forced to learn a different religion than what he or she chooses to practice. This provision is violated in many schools in Pakistan, in which Shia students are not allowed to practice or learn about their faith.

Shia, even in their strongholds like Gilgit-Baltistan and Parachinar, are banned from learning about their religion in government schools. Between 2004 and 2005, more than 100 people, including students, lost their lives in Gilgit-Baltistan after some Shia refused to follow the Jihadi syllabi and demanded change in the school curricula. The paramilitary and police used local schools as jails to detain protesting Shia students. The constitution forbids governmental or educational institutions to discriminate against other religions in admission or hiring: this provision was also violated. Moreover, because students must declare their religion on application forms for private schools, many Shia students do not get into their top choice schools. 72

Universal discrimination against Shia has reached the educational setting as anti-Shi’ism spreads across the globe. The Karakoram International University in Gilgit-Baltistan has expelled 16 Shia students for a period of three years and dismissed one Shia student for life. The students are accused of participating in “illegal activities” for organizing a Youm-e-Hussain Shia gath-
erie program. Subsequently, the program was banned. The expulsion of the Shia Students resulted in a sit-in outside the Gilg-it-Baltistan assembly. Rival Wahhabi sect attempted to disrupt the demonstration during the day causing a fight which resulted in the death of two people as Jafria News reports.

**Violations To International Bill of Human Rights**

**Article 1**: All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

**Article 2**: Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

**Article 3**: Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

**Article 7**: All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

**Article 8**: Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

**Article 10**: Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

**Article 11**: (1) Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defense.
Article 12: No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honor and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 13: (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.

Article 17: (1) Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others. (2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Article 18: Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 19: Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 26: Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

Discrimination against Shia in Pakistan clearly violates all of these provisions of the International Bill of Human Rights. Shia individuals have been killed, discriminated against, and deprived of property. The government has failed to protect the rights of Shia, and has in many cases, encouraged this discrimination. Shia indicted under the blasphemy laws are not given free trials nor presumed to be innocent until proven guilty. According to the Pakistani constitution, “Freedom of speech is subject to ‘reasonable’ restrictions in the interest of the ‘glory of Islam.’” However, as in the case of the blasphemy laws, restrictions on freedom of expression are not reasonable. Shia are not able to express their religion without fear to safety or discrimination.
The right to freedom of religion or belief is guaranteed in Article 18(1) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Pakistan is a state party. It provides that:

Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

This right shall include freedom...either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.

It is evident that Shia are unable to practice their faith without fear of repercussion in Pakistan. The Pakistani government has the responsibility, in accordance with the ICCPR, to protect the rights of all its citizens regardless of religious affiliation.

As a state party to the ICCPR, Pakistan also has an obligation to ensure the right to life, security and freedom from torture and other ill-treatment. Under Article 2(1) of the ICCPR, such protection must be provided without discrimination, including in cases of discrimination on the basis of religion.

The Pakistani constitution, while declaring Islam as the official religion, promises protection and freedom for religious minorities. However, daily attacks on Shia Muslims demonstrate that the government is not enforcing its own laws. The constitution also provides citizens with the freedom to manage religious institutions. This right has been violated, as Shia Muslims are attacked in their places of worship and during religious processions. Additionally, according to the State Department, minority religious authorities are often denied construction permits when they try to build religious centers.

The Pakistani government also passed the Anti-Terrorism Act, leading it to ban several terrorist organizations. However, these groups are still able to continue in their terrorist operations, with few setbacks. Shia Muslims are still killed and targeted daily in public places, in their religious institutions, and in the workplace.
Conclusion

In Pakistan, Shia are being discriminated against on a local and governmental level. Daily killings and attacks are not properly investigated and addressed. Laws and procedures in the government and schools make life more difficult for non-Sunni citizens. Unrestricted terrorist activity is putting a significant portion of the Pakistani population in danger. It is necessary that action be taken to end this violence in order to protect the lives and rights of Shia Muslims in Pakistan.

Recommendations

In order to promote freedom of religion and protect the rights of Shia in Pakistan, Shia Rights Watch urges the government to:

• Restore State Subject Rule in Gilgit-Baltistan to end state led demographic change
• Resume trade over Kargil-Skardo road, Parachinar-Gardez road, Parachinar-Thal road, Ishkoman-Badakhshan road and Chorbat-Ladakh road to end economic blockade
• Ensure genuine autonomy in Gilgit-Baltistan as per the UN resolutions to guarantee political and judicial rights for the local population
• Allow Shias to learn their religion in government schools especially in areas like Parachinar and Gilgit-Baltistan where they make up the majority
• Stop anti-Shia activities and respect basic human rights of Shia regarding their religious freedom,
• Increase protection and guarding of areas in which anti-Shia attacks have occurred,
• Protect Shia religious holidays and processions from terrorist attacks,
• Investigate instances of anti-Shia attacks and bring justice to culprits,
• Take action to end the activities of Le-J and its operatives,
• Put a stop to anti-Shia legislation and religious documents,
• Invest in education and policy reform,
• End militant hide outs and training camps in Gilgit-Baltistan.
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