



6.1.2. Religious minorities

Article 2 of the Constitution of Pakistan states ‘Islam shall be the State religion of Pakistan’¹³⁶¹ and 95.9 % of the country’s 241 million people identify as Muslims¹³⁶² including 85-90 % Sunni Muslims and 10-15 % Shia Muslims, with the remaining 3.5 % belonging to other religions including Christians, Hindus, Sikhs, Bahais, and Kalash.¹³⁶³ Article 20 of the Constitution states that ‘(a) every citizen shall have the right to profess, practice and propagate his religion; and (b) every religious denomination and every sect thereof shall have the right to establish, maintain and manage its religious institutions’.¹³⁶⁴ In its Article 260, section 3, the constitution defines a non-Muslim as follows: ‘non-Muslim means a person who is not a Muslim and includes a person belonging to the Christian, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist or Parsi community, a person of the Qadiani group or the Lahori group (who call themselves “Ahmadis” or by any other name), or a Bahai, and a person belonging to any of the scheduled castes.].’¹³⁶⁵ Ahmadis who identify as Muslims, were declared as non-Muslims by the State through an amendment to the constitution in 1974.¹³⁶⁶ For further background information on religious minorities, see section 6.2 of the EUAA COI report Pakistan - Country Focus (December 2024).

Despite constitutional guarantees, religious minorities in Pakistan encounter major obstacles that undermine their safety, legal rights, and social integration, and are frequently subjected to hate, violence, discrimination and limited access to opportunities.¹³⁶⁷ In March 2025, Pakistan approved a policy on interfaith harmony¹³⁶⁸ and a strategy on religious tolerance.¹³⁶⁹ The new policy on interfaith harmony describes the challenges faced by the state¹³⁷⁰ noting that despite constitutional guarantees and existing policy frameworks, federal and provincial institutions, law enforcement agencies, and the legal system have not effectively addressed the root causes of rising extremism in the country. ¹³⁷¹ This has particularly affected marginalised groups, including religious minorities and madrassa students, especially during periods of social and religious unrest. ¹³⁷² These challenges are further intensified by socio-economic pressures and limited technical and financial capacity.¹³⁷³

In 2025, religious minorities continued to face socio-economic marginalisation, as well as religious and sectarian violence linked to blasphemy laws that disproportionately affected these communities.¹³⁷⁴ Sectarian violence persisted in 2024 and 2025¹³⁷⁵ with a report counting 487 individuals killed due to sectarian violence between 2021 and 2024.¹³⁷⁶ Meanwhile, Pakistan has experienced a noted rise in Sunni radicalisation under the leadership of the Army Chief Asim Munir, which led to growing violence against religious minorities including the Ahmadis and Shia Muslims (particularly Hazara Shia).¹³⁷⁷ For more information, see section (d) Shia Muslims.

○ (a) Hindus

Hindus in Pakistan (also known as Hindu Jati), number approximately 4 million in the country, representing 1.7 % of the total population, and reside primarily in Sindh province, followed by much smaller concentrations in Balochistan, Punjab, Islamabad, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.[1378](#) For further background information on Hindus, see section 6.2.1 of the EUAA COI report Pakistan - Country Focus (December 2024).

Hindus are perceived as *kafirs* (infidels) in Pakistan[1379](#) and the term Hindu is often used as an insult in political discourse, everyday interactions, and school settings.[1380](#)

In Pakistan, Hindus face land seizures, economic and social exclusion, online hate speech and incitement to violence, allegation of blasphemy, digital extortion, threats, and harassment against Hindu activists.[1381](#) Hindus are frequently prevented from exercising their funeral rites in the country.[1382](#)

An NGO reported that Hindus, particularly Sindhi Hindus, face kidnappings for ransom, violent attacks, blasphemy accusations, systematic discrimination,[1383](#) and forced conversions to Islam,[1384](#) disputes over land or tenancy, bonded labour and local power dynamics, increasing targeted attacks by Islamist groups, and rumours to incite mobs against them[1385](#) without effective safeguard from the government.[1386](#)

According to an April 2025 report by the Centre for Social Justice, in 2024, 32 Hindu males were accused of blasphemy, and 47 Hindu girls and women were forcibly converted to Islam and 6 abducted,[1387](#) mainly by Muslim captors.[1388](#) For more information see sections [\(a\) Conversion](#), [5.4. Blasphemy law](#) and [\(d\) Individuals accused of blasphemy](#).

In an article published in September 2025, it is reported that in Pakistan, Hindu women and girls are reportedly picked up from the streets by armed groups, sometimes in daylight, harassed or abducted on their way to school, and in some cases forcibly married to Muslim men, renamed and converted to Islam.[1389](#) An NGO suggested that these incidents contributed to an exodus of Hindus[1390](#) to India that reportedly reached over 500 000 people by August 2024, according to the latest data available.[1391](#) For information on cases of forced conversion of Hindus in Pakistan, see section I [\(a\) Conversion](#).

○ (b) Sikhs

The Sikh population in Pakistan is estimated at approximately 16 000 persons, with the majority living in KP, followed by Sindh, Balochistan, Punjab, and Islamabad.[1392](#) For further background information on Sikhs, see section 6.2.1 of the EUAA COI report Pakistan - Country Focus (December 2024).

An NGO reports that Sikhs in Pakistan, particularly in KP, face increasing targeted violence that has led to major displacement over the past decade, with about 30 Sikh politicians, activists, and businessmen killed since 2013, including three in 2024, without adequate state safeguards for the community.[1393](#) In addition, Sikhs often face restrictions in accessing their funerary rituals.[1394](#)

As of April 2025, the Indian government raised concerns over reports indicating the targeting of Sikhs in Pakistan, including intimidation, forced marriages, forced conversions, and vandalism of places of worship,[1395](#) while a 2024 article by The Guardian reported that the Indian authorities allegedly carried out 'up to 20 assassinations since 2020' in Pakistan, including Sikh figures.[1396](#) Over the same period, the Centre for Social Justice in Pakistan reported two cases of abduction and forced conversion of Sikh girls in the country.[1397](#) On 20 March 2026, a media report indicated that the husband of a Punjabi Sikh woman who had travelled to Pakistan as part of a pilgrimage filed a complaint before the Lahore High Court alleging that she had been forcibly converted to Islam and subjected to rape and coerced marriage. Her subsequent appearances in viral videos, in which she expressed differing attitudes including remarks critical of the Sikh community, raised concerns that she may have been acting under pressure or duress.[1398](#)

○ (c) Christians

Christians in Pakistan are estimated at approximately 3 million people, the majority living in Punjab and Islamabad, with smaller concentrations in Sindh and smaller proportions in Balochistan and KP.[1399](#) For background information on Christians, see section 6.2.2 of the EUAA COI report Pakistan - Country Focus (December 2024).

According to a report by Réveil communautaire d'assistance aux victimes, an NGO in special consultative status at the Human Rights Council, Christians in Pakistan face intimidation, violence, and socio-economic marginalisation in the country, including ongoing threats from perpetrators released on bail, forced conversions and forced marriages, sexual violence, while state authorities repeatedly failed to provide protection or hold perpetrators accountable.[1400](#) Minority Rights Group reported that

Christians are frequently prevented from performing their funeral rites.[1401](#)

Blasphemy accusations against Christians in Pakistan have long incited mob violence and forced entire communities to flee their homes, often resulting in the seizure of their property, while weak judicial processes, lack of proper land records, and limited rule of law further expose religious minorities to intimidation, forced evictions, and land grabbing.[1402](#) According to the April 2025 report by the Centre for Social Justice, in 2024, 20 Christians (15 males and 5 females) were accused, imprisoned, or killed for blasphemy, and 30 Christian girls and women were abducted and forcibly converted to Islam.[1403](#) For more information, see sections [\(a\) Conversion](#), [5.4. Blasphemy law](#) and [\(d\) Individuals accused of blasphemy](#).

According to the latest data published in April 2025 by the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ), a total of 344 individuals were accused of blasphemy in Pakistan, including 20 Christians.[1404](#) On 3 March 2026, a Christian worker was allegedly tortured to death in Punjab province by his Muslim employer, who reportedly staged the incident as a suicide.[1405](#) Meanwhile, 25 000 Christian residents in H-9 Rimsha Colony slum, in Islamabad, faced eviction from their homes and shops after the Capital Development Authority (CDA) ordered them to leave.[1406](#) While some structures were demolished in Allama Iqbal Colony in G-7,[1407](#) the Christian community continued protesting against the CDA about the operations it launched.[1408](#)

○ **(d) Shia Muslims**

Shia Muslims, who are known as *Ahl-e Teshih*[1409](#) in Pakistan number an estimated 40 million people in the country, representing approximately 10-15 % of the total population.[1410](#) A significant proportion of Shia Muslims live in Gilgit-Baltistan, as well as in Sindh, particularly in Karachi, Sanghar, Nawabshah and Hyderabad.[1411](#) Shia communities are also present across Punjab, including Lahore, and in Balochistan, where they reside in Sanjawi, Mach, Zhob, Harnai, Loralai, and Dukki. In KP, Shia Muslims live in Peshawar, Hangu, Kohat, Dera Ismail Khan,[1412](#) and the Kurram district, including Parachinar, which lies along the Pakistan and Afghanistan border.[1413](#)

According to a statement presented in February 2025 by 'ECO-FAWN' (Environment Conservation Organization – Foundation for Afforestation Wild Animals and Nature), an NGO in special consultative status to the UN Human Rights Council (UN HRC), Pakistan has a long history of violent and targeted attacks against Shia Muslims, forcing Shia

communities to live in constant fear for their safety, while the state has failed to protect their basic rights.[1414](#) In addition, the Center for the Study of Organised Hate (CSOH) states that over 4 000 Shias have been killed by sectarian violence in the past 20 years alone.[1415](#) For information on anti-Shia groups, see sections [3.2.10. Sipah-e Sahaba Pakistan \(SSP\)](#) and [3.2.11. Lashkar-e Jhangvi \(LeJ\)](#).

Shia Pashtuns, particularly in Kurram District (Parachinar) have faced sectarian violence from Sunni extremist elements.[1416](#) In its statement to the UN HRC, ECO-FAWN reported that Shia civilians in Parachinar have been particularly exposed to sectarian violence including with methods such as suicide bombings, roadside explosions, targeted shootings, and improvised explosive devices in busy marketplaces.[1417](#)

On 21 November 2024, gunmen reportedly attacked a Shia Muslim convoy in Kurram district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province[1418](#) killing 52 people, mostly Shia Muslims.[1419](#) The incident triggered clashes between Shia and Muslims that left 80 death.[1420](#) The violence ended with a ceasefire between Shia and Sunni Muslims on 24 November 2024.[1421](#) News media also reported that, on 6 February 2026, a suicide bomber killed 31 people and injured 169 people in a Shia Mosque in Islamabad.[1422](#) The attack was claimed by the ISKP[1423](#) accusing Shia Muslims of being 'infidels'.[1424](#)

News reports stated that, following the killing of Iran's Supreme leader, Ayatullah Ali Khamenei, by a US-Israeli attack in early March 2026, the Pakistani Shia community widely protested.[1425](#) On 19 March 2026, Pakistan's Army Chief, General Asim Munir, was alleged to have said that those expressing sympathy for Iran should 'leave Pakistan and live in Iran.'[1426](#) The remarks reportedly contributed to sectarian tensions, [1427](#) with several Shia leaders stating that they felt insulted by General Munir's remarks.[1428](#)

○ (e) Ahmadis

Ahmadis, also referred to as Qadiani in Pakistan,[1429](#) identify as Muslims[1430](#) and they number around 165 000 people, i.e. about 0.1 % of the population according to the 2023 population census.[1431](#) Other sources indicate that the Ahmadi population in Pakistan can be around 500 000[1432](#) or 600 000 people.[1433](#) Sources indicated that Ahmadis hide their religious identity which made the official count of their community

difficult.¹⁴³⁴ Ahmadis reside mainly in Punjab, primarily in Rabwah city¹⁴³⁵ with some residing in Islamabad, smaller proportions in Sindh, and few in Balochistan and KP.¹⁴³⁶ Following the partition of India in 1947, the Ahmadi community moved from Qadian (India) to Rabwah (Punjab province of Pakistan).¹⁴³⁷ For further background information, and information on the criminalisation of the Ahmadis under the Penal Code, see sections 5.3 and 6.2.4 of the EUAA COI report Pakistan - Country Focus (December 2024).

Amnesty International reported that violence against Ahmadis has increasingly become routine in the country and often intensifies around religious occasions such as Eid.¹⁴³⁸ According to a June 2025 Human Rights Watch report, groups reportedly connected to local religious and political actors have regularly destroyed, sealed, or taken control of Ahmadi places of worship.¹⁴³⁹ According to Amnesty International, Ahmadis 'are forced to hide their religious identity not only because of societal threats but also due to state pressure empowered by hardline religious clerics. Everyday life becomes a struggle. Ahmadis must hide their beliefs to go to school, get jobs, or even get identity documents. Textbooks either ignore or insult them'.¹⁴⁴⁰ Ahmadis are also excluded from land inheritance from the property of a Muslim relative under Sharia, Muslim personal law, and Article 260(3) of the Constitution.¹⁴⁴¹

For information on laws, rulings related to the Ahmadi places of worship, and reported attacks and destructions prior to 2024, see section 6.2.4 of the EUAA COI report Pakistan - Country Focus (December 2024).

A report by France24 noted that supporters of Tehreek-e Labaik Pakistan (TLP) often monitor Ahmadi places of worship and file police complaints accusing them of posing as Muslims and offering Islamic style prayers, which is illegal for Ahmadis in Pakistan.¹⁴⁴²

Minority Rights Group reported that Ahmadi Muslims are often barred from using public graveyards in the country, and authorities frequently do not intervene or hold perpetrators accountable when mob violence disrupts funerals or damages graves.¹⁴⁴³ According to the Ahmadiyya Muslim community, 319 Ahmadi gravestones were damaged in 21 separate incidents in Pakistan in 2024, while an estimated 269 Ahmadi Muslim graves were desecrated in 11 separate attacks across the country in 2025,¹⁴⁴⁴ and over 22 Ahmadi places of worship were desecrated in the country in 2024.¹⁴⁴⁵ On 26 November 2024, an Ahmadi place of worship was attacked and destroyed by extremists in Faisalabad, Punjab province.¹⁴⁴⁶ On the night of 16 January 2025, authorities reportedly destroyed an Ahmadi worship place in Daska Kalan, District Sialkot, Punjab province.¹⁴⁴⁷ On 10 May 2025, over 90 Ahmadi gravestones were desecrated in Rhoda, Khushab district, Punjab province.¹⁴⁴⁸ On 29 July 2025, a 70-year-old Ahmadi place of worship was destroyed in Pakistan.¹⁴⁴⁹ On 14 August 2025, a mob of over 300 people assaulted and vandalised two Ahmadi places of worship in

Faisalabad, Punjab province.[1450](#) On 4 September 2025, two Ahmadi places of worship were demolished in Punjab province.[1451](#) On 25 September 2025, religious radicals attacked Ahmadi houses and shops in Sialkot following a burial.[1452](#) On 29 September 2025, police registered FIRs against multiple suspects for allegedly vandalising property and attacking members of the Ahmadi community in Sialkot.[1453](#) On 8 October 2025, police reportedly demolished an Ahmadi place of worship in Punjab province.[1454](#)

Between 1984 and 2025, 285 Ahmadis have been killed in Pakistan as stated by a local human rights advocacy organisation.[1455](#) According to the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan report of 19 August 2025, in a series of targeted attacks across Rawalpindi, Naukot, Karachi, Kasur, and Sargodha between December 2024 and May 2025, several Ahmadis were killed in incidents marked by religious hostility, mob violence, and targeted shootings.[1456](#) Prior to this incident, on 18 April 2025, a violent mob killed a man outside an Ahmadi place of worship in Karachi following Friday prayers.[1457](#) In late May 2025, religious groups reportedly destroyed a cold storage facility after discovering that the body of an Ahmadi woman was being kept there.[1458](#)

Several sources reported that on 16 May 2025, a famous Ahmadi doctor was shot dead at his hospital workplace in Sargodha (Punjab province).[1459](#) On 11 July 2025, Ahmadi Muslim worshippers were targeted in coordinated attacks by TLP mobs during Friday prayers in Sialkot and Lahore (Punjab province), where one mosque was attacked, another sealed, and worshippers were detained.[1460](#) On 10 October 2025, a gunman opened fire on worshippers during Friday prayers at the Bait-ul-Mahdi Mosque, part of the Ahmadi Muslim Community's headquarters in Rabwah (officially Chenab Nagar), Punjab province, seriously injuring several people.[1461](#) Concentration of Ahmadis residing in Rabwah expose the community to potential targets by certain political religious groups.[1462](#)

As of 25 December 2025, a member of the Ahmadi community in Chenab Nagar (Chiniot district, Punjab province) was sentenced to life imprisonment and a concurrent three-year term for distributing allegedly altered Urdu translations of the Quran, following a First Information Report (FIR) and police investigation.[1463](#)

○ (f) Zikris

The Zikris are a Muslim community with distinctive beliefs and religious practices, [1464](#) residing mainly in southern Balochistan including in Makran coastal region - Turbat, Panjgur, and Gwadar.[1465](#) They follow Imam Mahdi (the awaited redeemer in Islamic eschatology) and their religious practices are centred on *zikr* (the remembrance of

God), with *Zikirkhana* regarded as their place of worship¹⁴⁶⁶ and Koh-e Murad in Turbat as their holiest site and serving as the destination for an annual pilgrimage attended by thousands of followers.¹⁴⁶⁷ Zikri religious life includes collective nighttime prayers performed while sitting on the floor, passed down through generations, and has traditionally involved women leading devotional gatherings where participants recite and sing prayers together.¹⁴⁶⁸ For further background information on Zikris, see section 6.2.5 of the EUAA COI report Pakistan - Country Focus (December 2024).

Zikris have increasingly been labelled as *kafirs* (infidels), and in recent decades, Zikris in Balochistan, particularly in the Makran region, have faced rising hostility from extremist groups, including threats, *fatwas*, attacks on prayer sites, and restrictions on public religious expression, and are treated as second-class citizens or rebels.¹⁴⁶⁹ In addition, Zikris continued to be subjected to attacks by ISKP who consider them apostates.¹⁴⁷⁰

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