4.5. Ethnic minorities

COMMON ANALYSIS
Last update: October 2026

☐ 4.5.1. Pashtuns

For the situation of PTM members and supporters, see Human rights defenders and activists, and Protesters.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: Country Focus 2026, 1.2., 6.1., 6.1.1.(a), 6.1.2.(d); Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Pashtuns are an ethnolinguistic group in Pakistan, primarily residing in KP and Northern Balochistan, with communities in Punjab and Sindh. They account for approximately 45 million people and represent about 15.4 % of the total population.

Pashtuns in Pakistan primarily live by a social code, known as *Pashtunwali*, which governs both ethical behaviour and custom. They are said to be considered ‘second-class citizens’ by the Pakistan Army which is largely dominated by the Punjabi ethnic group. Pashtuns accuse the Pakistani security forces in KP of committing serious human rights violations under the pretext of anti-militancy operations. Despite the ban, the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) together with political leaders call for the withdrawal of Taliban as well as security forces from the region.

The Awami National Party (ANP), a Pashtun nationalist political party, is geographically anchored in KP.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Some acts to which Pashtuns could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. More precisely, they have been subjected to extrajudicial killings including through air strikes, torture, enforced disappearances, physical violence, and arbitrary detentions by the state and its proxies. Reports mention a rise in extrajudicial killings of Pashtuns in KP for several years including hundreds of targeted killings, torture and killing of a prominent Pashtun activist, and enforced disappearances in the context of army operations. Additionally, Pashtun perceived as aligned with the state face threats by TTP and ISKP.

The severity and/or repetitiveness of other acts to which Pashtuns could be subjected to and whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures, should also be considered. More precisely, Pashtuns have reportedly faced harassment and surveillance by state actors. Others faced property seizure and forced displacement from their home.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for Pashtuns to face persecution should take into account **risk-impacting circumstances** , such as:

- **Occupation**: journalists, students, human rights defenders, and political activists engaged in rights-based advocacy or criticism of state policies face a high risk, since there are reports of such individuals being targeted by the Pakistani authorities.

- **Political background**: the ANP members face a higher risk from militant groups including the TTP which has killed many of its leaders.

- **Home area**: the risk of being targeted by state actors is higher for Pashtuns living in areas of Tehreek-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and affiliated groups operations, namely parts of KP and Northern Balochistan.

- **Community based activities**: tribal elders, community leaders and other individuals involved in *jirga* (tribal assembly) or local peacebuilding face a higher risk due to threats from groups such as TTP and ISKP.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant under this profile, this is highly likely to be for reasons of **political opinion** as, for example, the Pakistani authorities see right-based advocacy or criticism of state policies as the expression of a political opinion. Also, Pashtuns taking part in local peace building activities are perceived by some non-state armed groups as opposing them.

☐ 4.5.2. Baloch people

For the situation of members and supporters of movements advocating for Baloch rights, see Human rights defenders and activists, and Protesters.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: COI Update 2026, 1.; Country Focus 2026, 6.1.1. (b), 6.1.2. (f); Country Focus 2024, 4.2.3.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Baloch people, also known as *Baluchi*, constitute a group of tribes residing primarily in Balochistan province, and partly in Iran and Afghanistan. They are mostly Sunni Muslims, but between 500 000 and 800 000 among them, mainly located in the southern Makran coastal region, adhere to Zikrist practice. Baloch people retain a strong tribal culture. Since Balochistan's incorporation into Pakistan in 1948, various groups have pursued self-determination through political, diplomatic, and, in some cases, armed means, including the insurgent activities of the Balochistan nationalist groups.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Some acts to which Baloch people could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. More precisely, Baloch people have been subjected to executions, enforced disappearances possibly linked to extrajudicial killing, physical violence including torture, arbitrary arrests and detentions. Collective punishment and gender-based violence against Baloch women and girls were also reported. See also Women and girls.

The severity and/or repetitiveness of other acts to which Baloch people could be subjected and whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures, should also be considered. Reports describe that 32 Baloch individuals, including activists, have been placed on a terrorist watchlist under the Anti-Terrorism Act. They have been subjected to severe restrictions, including heavy surveillance,

severe limits on their freedom of movement and ability to take part in public life, restrictions on travel outside designated areas without express permission from local police, and powers granted to authorities to investigate and freeze their financial assets or those of their immediate family members.

Zikris have been subjected to threats, *fatwas*, attacks on prayer sites, and restrictions on public religious expression, and are treated as second-class citizens or rebels by extremist groups including ISKP.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for Baloch people to face persecution should take into account **risk-impacting circumstances**, such as:

- **Occupation**: journalists, students, human rights defenders, and political activists engaged in rights-based advocacy or criticism of state policies face a high risk, since there are reports describing targeting by the Pakistani authorities.
- **Community based activities**: tribal elders, community leaders, and other individuals involved in local peacebuilding face a higher risk as they face threats from groups such as BLF and BLA who perceive them as aligned with the State.
- **Religious background**: Zikrist Baloch people face increased risk from extremist groups such as ISKP.
- **Political background**: BNP members may face a risk from extremist groups including ISPP which considers that 'their nationalist and democratic style of politics' violates Islamic law.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant under this profile, this is highly likely to be for reasons of **political opinion** as Baloch people taking part to some activities are perceived by the Pakistani authorities and some non-state armed groups as opposing them, respectively. Persecution may also be for reasons of **religion**, notably in the case of Zikris considered apostates by ISKP.

☐ 4.5.3. Hazaras

This profile provides background information on the situation of Pakistani of Hazara ethnicity, speaking their distinctive *hazaragi* language. It does not refer to the situation of people from or residing in the Hazara administrative division in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), a collection of ethnic groups speaking *hindko*.

The core of Hazara community is located in Quetta, the capital of Balochistan, especially in the neighbourhoods of Hazara Town and Mariabad. The overall number of Hazara people in Pakistan totals about 500 000. Some Hazaras who are entitled to Pakistani citizenship by birth have not managed to obtain it (EUAA COI product: Country Focus 2026, 6.1.1.).

As Hazara people are predominantly Shia Muslims, refer to 4.6.4. Shia Muslims for the risk-assessment of Hazaras.

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