

4.8. Women and girls

COMMON ANALYSIS
Last update: October 2026

This profile addresses the situation of women (above 18 years old) and girls (below 18 years old) in Pakistan.

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI products: COI Update 2026, 3., 4.; Country Focus 2026, 6.1.1., 6.1.2., 6.1.4., 6.1.5., 6.1.7.; Country Focus 2024, 6.5.1.; Country Guidance should not be referred to as a source of COI.

Women's rights, including the prohibition of discrimination based on sex, are constitutionally guaranteed. Nevertheless, violence against women and girls remains a serious problem in Pakistan.

See also Individuals (perceived as) transgressing Islamic norms as some behaviours of women and girls can be perceived as transgressing such norms.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Some acts to which women and girls could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. More precisely, reported forms of gender-based violence include, but are not limited to killings, sexual violence, including rape, trafficking in human beings, abduction, domestic violence, forced and child marriage, and forced conversion. Refusal to enter an arranged marriage, having been raped or sexually assaulted, dressing in ways deemed inappropriate, or behaving in ways seen as disobedient have frequently led to honour-related killings. Other forms of honour-related violence include disfigurement of women by burning, cutting off nose or ears, or throwing acid in the face.

In cases of gender-based violence, perpetrators include individuals known to survivors, including husbands, as well as strangers and police. In some cases, women who marry by choice ('love marriage') have been accused of having an 'immoral relationship' by local tribal leaders and/or relatives, and have, at times, have been subjected to honour killings.

The severity and/or repetitiveness of other acts that women and girls could be subjected to and whether they occur as an accumulation of measures, should also be

considered. More specifically, women and girls face harassment, legal and economic discrimination, as well as in accessing education.

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

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

- **Religious background**: Hindu, Christian and Sikh women and girls face a higher risk of kidnapping, forced conversion to Islam, and of forced marriage.
- **Age**: girls aged 14–18 years, or even sometimes younger, face a higher risk of forced conversion through marriage.
- **Political background**: women engaged in politics and activism may be at higher risk as they have been detained and subjected to enforced disappearance and harassment. See also Persons (perceived to be) opposing the Government.
- **Socio-economic status**: girls from poor families and/or living in informal or poor urban settlements are at increased risk of child marriage and trafficking.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where a well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant under this profile, this is highly likely to be for reasons of **membership of a particular social group** (11) due to their innate characteristic (as a woman) and distinct identity in Pakistan as indicated by the social, moral, and legal norms affecting specifically Pakistani women. Persecution may also be for reasons of **religion** for individuals from religious minority, especially in the context of forced marriage/conversion, or for women who are perceived as not complying with religious gender norms or practices. For women engaged in politics and/or activism, the **political opinion** ground may also be substantiated.

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  CJEU, judgment of 16 January 2024 *Intervyuirasht organ na Darzhavna agentsia za bezhantsite pri Ministerskia savet v WS*, case C-621/21, para. 81. Summary available in the EUAA Case Law Database.

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