

Notice: Undefined index: et_header_layout in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1214

Notice: Trying to access array offset on value of type null in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1214

Notice: Undefined index: et_header_layout in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1215

Notice: Trying to access array offset on value of type null in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1215

Notice: Undefined index: et_template in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1216

PAKISTAN: Statistics about victims of blasphemy laws (1987-2021)

Statistics about victims of blasphemy laws (1987-2021)

Presentation by lawyer Akmal Bhatti, director of the Minorities Association of Pakistan (MAP)

To the press conference "Is Suspension Of Pakistan's GSP+ Status Overdue?" at the Press Club Brussels, hosted by Human Rights Without Frontiers

Brussels, 9 September 2021

By Akmal Bhatti

HRWF (21.09.2021) – Since 1987 to August 2021, 1,865 people have been charged under the blasphemy laws, with a significant spike in 2020, when 200 cases were registered. Punjab, the province where most Christians of Pakistan live, is leading with 76% cases and 337 people in prison for blasphemy. The largest number of inmates is in the Lahore District Jail (60). Also, at least 128 people have been killed by mobs, outside any judiciary process, after being signalled as having committed blasphemy or apostasy, without any chance to have access to an investigation, and nobody has been arrested for their murder.

The increasing trend of the misuse of the Blasphemy Law intensifies communal hatred, religious intolerance and persecution against religious minorities in Pakistan. The law is often used as a tool to settle personal scores, false witnesses are bought, and the burden of proof lies with the accused. These incidents have fostered a climate of religiously motivated violence and persecution that is mounting day by day.

Even more discrimination is imposed upon minorities with the Single National curriculum (SNC), in force since mid-August 2021. The SNC is a means of indoctrination already conservative society. In the first phase, which started from March 2021, the government is making it mandatory for students from class one to five to be acquainted with *deeniyat* (religious books on Islam). In the Urdu textbook for Grade 2, children are being instructed to recite

the *naat* (poem in praise of Prophet Muhammad), and additionally, a chapter on the life and history of Prophet Muhammad is to be introduced for eighth, ninth and tenth classes.

Pakistani government for the vision of unified educational system for all, the children of minority communities do not seem to have any space. Worse, the definition of “who is a Pakistani?” in the first years books totally excludes non-Muslims, and disparages other faiths. Holy Quran in Arabic and Islamic Studies are being made mandatory.

In such a case, students from minority communities may not have any other option but to follow the curriculum imposed on them. SNC militates against Article 22, 25 & 36 of the Pakistan Constitution, which safeguards the rights of minorities. It states that “no person attending any educational institution shall be required to receive religious instruction ... if such instruction relates to a religion other than his/her own.”

The SNC calls for summoning an army of madrassah-educated holy men – hafiz’s and qaris – as paid teachers inside schools. This will surely affect the general ambiance and the safety of students. It has also been observed that “the backdoor entry” of seminary teachers into mainstream educational institutions is a nightmare for minority students.

Minorities Alliance Pakistan staged a protest on Minorities’ Day, August 11, 2021 from the National Press club to the Parliament Square in Islamabad. We demanded the government to

enact practical and solid steps to stop the misuse of Blasphemy Laws and forced conversion, rape, abduction and sexual enslavement of girls and women. We urged P.M. Imran Khan to implement electoral reforms and to start the development of projects for Christians living in the slums of the capital Islamabad.

On August 31st, 2021, we met with the newly assigned Muslim Cleric Allama Tahir Ashrafi, he is advisor to the Prime Minister for National Harmony, we explained our ordeals and concerns about these laws and discussed many cases. What I observed during the dialogue with him is that the religious and political leaders of the present government think that Christians commit blasphemy just by merely requesting asylum in other countries. They do not acknowledge discrimination or abuses in spite of the evidence.

Minorities Alliance Pakistan urges the Government of Pakistan to take realistic and solid steps to stop the abuses of the Blasphemy Law, which are causing massive human rights violations. We demanded that the Government constitutes a competent Inquiry Commission, to look into the cases pending in the courts, to secure fair and expedite justice.

Photo : claaas.org

[Further reading about FORB in Pakistan on HRWF website](#)

Notice: Undefined index: et_footer_layout in **[/home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php](#)** on line **1267**

Notice: Trying to access array offset on value of type null in **[/home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php](#)** on line **1267**

Notice: Undefined index: et_footer_layout in
/home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-
content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1268

Notice: Trying to access array offset on value of type null in
/home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-
content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1268

Notice: Undefined index: et_template in
/home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-
content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1269