

# **Pakistan : situation des chrétiennes et chrétiens**

Recherche rapide de l'analyse-pays

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# 1 Introduction

Le présent document a été rédigé par l'analyse-pays de l'Organisation suisse d'aide aux réfugiés (OSAR) à la suite d'une demande qui lui a été adressée. Il se penche sur les questions suivantes:

1. De quelles informations dispose-t-on sur la situation des chrétiennes et chrétiens au Pakistan ?
2. Dans quelles circonstances les chrétiennes et chrétiens sont-ils poursuivis au Pakistan ?
3. De quelles informations dispose-t-on sur la situation économique des chrétiennes et chrétiens au Pakistan ?
4. La diaspora pakistanaise fait-elle l'objet d'une surveillance à l'étranger ?

Pour répondre à ces questions, l'analyse-pays de l'OSAR s'est fondée sur des sources accessibles publiquement et disponibles dans les délais impartis (recherche rapide) ainsi que sur des renseignements d'expert-e-s.

## 2 Chrétiennes et chrétiens au Pakistan

### 2.1 Résumé

**Le Pakistan fait partie des pays où il est le plus difficile de pratiquer sa foi en tant que chrétien-ne ; les actes violents de persécution à l'encontre des chrétien-ne-s y sont courants, tout comme les fausses accusations en vertu des lois sur le blasphème.** D'après le rapport annuel 2017 paru en mars 2018 de la commission indépendante *Human Rights Commission of Pakistan* (HRCP), le Pakistan s'est classé quatrième parmi les 50 pays où il est le plus difficile de pratiquer sa foi en tant que chrétien-ne selon la *Watch List 2017* du groupe chrétien de soutien *Open Doors*. Les actes violents de persécution à l'encontre des chrétien-ne-s sont courants au Pakistan. Les chrétien-ne-s seraient la cible de meurtres, d'attentats à la bombe, d'enlèvements, de viols, de conversions forcées et d'expulsions de leurs domiciles et de leurs biens immobiliers. Les chrétien-ne-s font en outre, selon cette même source, régulièrement l'objet de fausses accusations en vertu des « lois anti-blaspème », avec pour objectif de les terroriser.

**Attaques et discrimination contre les minorités religieuses, y compris les chrétien-ne-s, de la part des groupes extrémistes et de la société pakistanaise; le gouvernement n'offre pas de protection adéquate et viole lui-même la liberté religieuse, les médias répandent l'intolérance.** Selon la *Commission on International Religious Freedom* des États-Unis (USCIRF) (avril 2018), les minorités religieuses au Pakistan, y compris les chrétien-ne-s, sont encore victimes d'attaques et de discriminations de la part de groupes extrémistes et de la société pakistanaise en 2017. Le gouvernement n'a pas proposé de protection adéquate à

ces minorités et était lui-même responsable de violations systématiques, persistantes et flagrantes de la liberté de religion. Divers médias répandent l'intolérance à l'égard des minorités religieuses.

**Des partis extrémistes nouvellement formés représentent une menace encore plus grande pour les minorités religieuses à l'approche des élections de juillet 2018.** Selon USCIRF (avril 2018), des partis fondamentalistes et souvent extrémistes ont été fondés à l'approche des élections nationales prévues pour juillet 2018, aggravant encore davantage la situation déjà précaire des minorités religieuses.

## 2.2 Contexte

**Données divergentes sur le nombre de chrétien-ne-s au Pakistan, la plupart des chrétien-ne-s du Pakistan vivent au Pendjab.** Selon le HCR (janvier 2017), entre 2,05 et 2,09 millions de chrétien-ne-s vivent au Pakistan. La grande majorité (entre 82,5 et 90 pourcents) vit dans la province du Pendjab. USDOS (29 mai 2018) cite des documents d'enregistrement mentionnés dans les médias et issus de 2014, selon lesquels il y aurait 1,3 million de chrétien-ne-s au Pakistan. Selon *UCA News* (21 mars 2017), moins de deux pourcents des 180 millions d'habitant-e-s du Pakistan sont des chrétien-ne-s, des hindou-e-s ou des membres d'autres minorités religieuses.

**Les chrétien-ne-s du Pakistan sont souvent considérés comme « impur-e-s » et « intouchables ».** Selon *UCA News* (21 mars 2017), les balayeurs et balayuses de rue au Pakistan sont pour la plupart chrétien-ne-s et sont appelé-e-s « intouchables » ou « d'ascendance inférieure ». Asia Bibi, chrétienne condamnée à mort pour blasphème, aurait dit que son seul « crime » était de boire de l'eau réservée aux musulman-e-s, car elle était considérée comme « intouchable » par les autres ouvrier-e-s agricoles.

Selon le *Friday Times* (23 octobre 2015), la plupart des chrétien-ne-s du Pakistan sont issu-e-s d'ancêtres « intouchables » converti-e-s au christianisme. À l'origine hindou-e-s des castes inférieures, leurs ancêtres se seraient convertis au christianisme dès la fin du XIXe siècle afin d'échapper à leur classification dans le système des castes. Ils étaient des fermières et fermiers sans terre et dépendaient des Sikhs qui possédaient des terres. Après 1948 et la division entre l'Inde et le Pakistan de la colonie anglo-indienne, ces sikhs ont quitté leurs terres et se sont rendus en Inde. Les 300 000 chrétien-ne-s qui travaillaient pour eux ont alors été expulsé-e-s et ont gagné les villes où ils travaillaient comme éboueurs/euses et nettoyeurs/euses. Ils se sont installés illégalement sur des terres sans infrastructure appartenant au gouvernement. Des centaines de quartiers illégaux ont ainsi vu le jour, dont France Colony à Islamabad et Joseph Colony à Lahore.

## 2.3 La situation économique des chrétiennes et chrétiens

**Les chrétien-ne-s et les autres groupes défavorisés particulièrement touchés par le travail forcé et la servitude pour dettes.** Selon USDOS (20 avril 2018), le travail forcé et la servitude pour dettes sont encore très répandus dans les industries de la brique, du charbon, du tapis ainsi que dans l'agriculture, y compris la culture du coton, du sucre de canne et du blé. Selon USDOS (20 avril 2018), une grande partie des victimes de la servitude pour dettes, interdite depuis 1992 selon *Amnesty International (AI)* (2017), sont des hindou-e-s des castes

inférieures et des chrétien-ne-s et musulman-e-s issus de milieux socio-économiques défavorisés. Les familles touchées, en particulier celles qui vivent sur des terres agricoles dans la province du Sindh, vivent selon USDOS (29 mai 2018) sans infrastructures de base et ne peuvent quitter ces terres sans l'autorisation des propriétaires fonciers.

Selon USDOS (20 avril 2018), les ONG estiment qu'environ deux millions de personnes vivent en situation de servitude pour dettes au Pakistan, principalement dans les provinces du Sindh et du Pendjab, mais aussi au Baloutchistan et au Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Ces personnes ne sont souvent pas en mesure de déterminer quand elles auront payé la totalité de leurs dettes, entre autres en raison de l'absence de contrats de travail et parce que les employeuses et employeurs profitent de l'analphabétisme des travailleuses et travailleurs pour manipuler les montants de la dette ou les prix qu'ils doivent payer pour les semences et les engrais. Dans certains cas, les propriétaires fonciers restreignent la liberté de mouvement des travailleuses et travailleurs au moyen de gardes armés ou les vendent à d'autres employeurs pour le montant de leurs dettes.

Selon AI (2017), les travailleuses et travailleurs n'ont qu'un accès limité aux crédits institutionnels, n'ont guère d'autres possibilités d'emploi et se trouvent ainsi piégés dans un cycle de servitude et de pauvreté. Lorsque des travailleuses et travailleurs sont libérés de la servitude pour dettes par les tribunaux, souvent, ils finissent par retourner chez leur ancien employeur parce qu'ils ne trouvent pas d'autre travail.

**Discrimination des chrétien-ne-s sur le marché du travail.** Selon le HCR (janvier 2017) et USDOS (29 mai 2018), les chrétien-ne-s sont également victimes de discrimination sur le marché du travail. De nombreux chrétien-ne-s auraient du mal à trouver un emploi qui n'implique pas d'activités « inférieures » ou socialement mal perçues. Selon USDOS (29 mai 2018), certaines offres d'emploi de type « inférieur » indiquent explicitement que le poste n'est ouvert qu'aux candidat-e-s chrétien-ne-s. En mars 2017, *UCA News* a fait état d'offres d'emploi pour balayeur-e-s de rue qui ne s'adressaient explicitement qu'aux chrétien-ne-s, hindou-e-s et chiites.

**Les chrétien-ne-s souvent surreprésentés parmi les éboueur-e-s.** Selon *UCA News* (21 mars 2017), les chrétien-ne-s sont souvent surreprésentés parmi les éboueurs. Selon le *World Watch Monitor*, 824 des 935 éboueurs de Peshawar sont chrétiens. A Lahore, environ 6000 des 7894 éboueuses et éboueurs sont chrétiens, à Quetta 768 sur 978. Selon le *Friday Times* (23 octobre 2015), l'ensemble des 1500 éboueuses et éboueurs d'Islamabad sont chrétiens. A Gilgit et Karachi, les chrétien-ne-s constituent également une grande partie des éboueuses et éboueurs.

## 3 Blasphème

### 3.1 « Lois anti-blasphème »

« **Lois anti-blasphème** », **blasphème sanctionné par la peine de mort.** Selon les principes directeurs du HCR pour l'évaluation des besoins de protection internationale des membres des minorités religieuses au Pakistan de janvier 2017, les lois dites « anti-blasphème » du Pakistan – sections 295, 295A et 298 du Code pénal pakistanais – ont été reprises du système juridique britannique et visent à l'origine à prévenir et à limiter la violence religieuse.

D'autres sections ont été ajoutées progressivement au cours des années 1980. Ainsi, la section 298A prévoit que les remarques dénigrantes produites « par des paroles ou des écrits ou par toute représentation visible ou par imputation, insinuation ou suggestion directe ou indirecte quelconque » concernant des « personnages saints » sont des infractions pénales et sont passibles d'une peine d'emprisonnement pouvant aller jusqu'à trois ans et/ou d'une amende. La section 295B définit la profanation du Coran comme une infraction passible de la réclusion à perpétuité. Enfin, la section 295C prévoit que toute personne qui, « par des paroles ou des écrits ou par toute représentation visible ou par imputation, insinuation ou suggestion directe ou indirecte quelconque, profane le saint nom du saint prophète Mahomet » sera punie de la peine de mort ou d'une peine d'emprisonnement à perpétuité et d'une amende.

En 1990, la *Federal Shariat Court* (FSC) a estimé que les infractions à la section 295C devaient toujours être passibles de la peine de mort et a ordonné au gouvernement d'amender la section 295C en conséquence. Bien que le gouvernement n'ait pas accédé à sa requête, la Cour suprême a statué, sur la base de l'arrêt de la FSC de 1990 et de l'article 203D(3) de la Constitution pakistanaise, que les cas de blasphème seraient obligatoirement punis de la peine de mort. Le moratoire sur l'ensemble des 28 infractions passibles de la peine de mort, introduit en 2008, a été levé en 2015. Plusieurs rapporteurs spéciaux de l'ONU pour la liberté de religion et de conviction ont qualifié de disproportionnée la condamnation à mort pour blasphème.

**Les tentatives de réforme des « lois anti-blasphème » en 2010 et 2011 ont échoué en raison des protestations des islamistes et des partis politiques religieux ; assassinats de deux hauts représentants du gouvernement qui s'étaient opposés publiquement aux « lois anti-blasphème » ; assassinat du procureur général.** Selon le HCR (janvier 2017), le gouvernement pakistanais, alors dirigé par le *Parti populaire pakistanais* (PPP), a tenté de réformer les « lois anti-blasphème » en 2010 et 2011, mais a échoué en raison des pressions exercées par des groupes religieux extrémistes qui ont organisé de grandes manifestations contre les modifications de la loi. En janvier et mars 2011, Salman Taseer, gouverneur de la province du Pendjab, et Shahbaz Bhatti, ministre pakistanais des minorités, ont été assassinés. Tous deux s'opposaient ouvertement aux « lois anti-blasphème ». Le projet de loi visant à réformer les « lois anti-blasphème » a été retiré par la suite. En mai 2013, le procureur général de l'*Agence fédérale d'investigation*, qui enquêtait sur le meurtre de Shahbaz Bhatti, a été assassiné.

**Les appels à la réforme des « lois anti-blasphème » et les critiques à l'égard des dispositions pénales relatives à la religion sont poursuivis en vertu de l'article 295C en dépit d'un arrêt de la Cour suprême.** La Cour suprême a certes établi en octobre 2015, selon le HCR (janvier 2017), qu'il n'était pas blasphématoire de soutenir une réforme des lois sur le blasphème. Néanmoins, selon le HCR (janvier 2017), les appels à la réforme des « lois anti-blasphème » et les critiques à l'égard des dispositions pénales relatives à la religion sont poursuivis en vertu de l'article 295C.

### 3.2 Blasphème et système judiciaire

**Les minorités religieuses, y compris les chrétiens, sont touchées de manière disproportionnée par les « lois anti-blasphème », les chrétiens continueront à l'avenir d'être affectés par les accusations de blasphème.** Selon le HCR (janvier 2017), USDOS

(29 mai 2018) et *Matthew Nelson*, expert sur le Pakistan cité par l'EASO (février 2018) et chercheur au SOAS Institute de l'Université de Londres, bien que les « lois anti-blasphème » s'appliquent à l'ensemble des citoyennes et citoyens pakistanais, les minorités religieuses, y compris les chrétiens, sont affectées de manière disproportionnée compte tenu de leur représentation au sein de la population totale. Selon *Matthew Nelson*, les accusations de blasphème continueront à l'avenir de cibler la communauté chrétienne au Pakistan.

**Des personnes travaillant au sein du système judiciaire font preuve de préjugés à l'encontre des personnes accusées de blasphème ; décisions « inquiétantes » car « contradictoires et arbitraires » dans les affaires de blasphème.** Selon des rapports cités par le HCR (janvier 2017), des acteurs du système judiciaire, y compris des représentants de la police, des avocats et des juges, ont souvent une attitude biaisée à l'encontre des personnes accusées de blasphème.

Selon le HCR (janvier 2017), en vertu de la loi pakistanaise de procédure pénale, seuls des juges musulmans peuvent présider une audience de première instance portant sur la section 295C du Code pénal. Le langage vague et subjectif de la section 295C laisse, selon cette même source, chaque juge libre de décider sur la base de sa propre foi musulmane si un acte a profané ou non le saint nom du saint Prophète. Le HCR fait ainsi état de décisions « inquiétantes » car « contradictoires et arbitraires » dans les affaires de blasphème. En particulier, il manque à la section 295C une définition claire du blasphème, la condition de prouver l'intention du coupable ainsi que des garanties procédurales. Dans les affaires de blasphème, les tribunaux inférieurs ne respectent souvent pas, selon le HCR, les directives de base en matière de preuve.

Les formulations vagues de la section 295C ont conduit à ce qu'un large éventail d'actions fasse l'objet de poursuites sur la base de cette section selon le HCR (janvier 2017), y compris l'affichage d'« images offensantes » ou de « caricatures blasphématoires » sur Facebook ou « la fabrication de feux d'artifice à partir de pages du Coran ».

**Accusations de blasphème dans l'intention de harceler les minorités religieuses, y compris les chrétiens, et dans le cadre de conflits personnels, climat d'impunité.** Selon le HCR (janvier 2017) et USDOS (29 mai 2018), les « lois anti-blasphème » sont souvent utilisées pour menacer et harceler les membres de minorités religieuses, y compris les chrétiens. De nombreuses accusations sont portées en raison de différends ou de querelles personnelles et un climat d'impunité règne. USDOS (29 mai 2018) fait état de cas où des organismes gouvernementaux tels que la police et les tribunaux sont complices de telles accusations.

**Les fausses accusations de blasphème restent pour l'heure insuffisamment punies et la police est corrompue.** Selon le HCR (janvier 2017), en octobre 2015, la Cour suprême a établi que l'État était responsable de la protection des personnes contre les fausses accusations de blasphème. Selon USDOS (29 mai 2018), la Haute Cour d'Islamabad a décidé en août 2017 que le code pénal devait être modifié de manière à ce que les peines pour fausses accusations de blasphème soient proportionnelles à celles pour blasphème. Jusqu'à présent, toutefois, le Parlement n'a pris aucune mesure en ce sens. Selon le HCR (janvier 2017), la police est en outre corrompue lorsqu'il s'agit de porter de fausses accusations contre des membres de minorités religieuses.

**L'absence de protection personnelle des juges et avocat-e-s chargés d'affaires de blasphème entrave leur travail, les menaces de la part de membres de groupes extrémistes retardent les procédures et allongent la détention provisoire.** Selon le HCR (janvier 2017), l'absence de protection personnelle des juges et des avocat-e-s chargés d'affaires de blasphème les empêche de mener efficacement leur travail. Selon des rapports, les membres de groupes extrémistes menacent et intimident souvent les juges et les autres représentant-e-s des tribunaux, conduisant à des reports et des retards de procédures et, partant, à des prolongations de détentions provisoires des accusé-e-s dans les affaires de blasphème. Il est rare qu'ait lieu une liberté sous caution.

**Accès limité à un-e avocat-e pour les personnes accusées de blasphème.** Selon le HCR (janvier 2017), dans les affaires de blasphème, les accusé-e-s ont souvent beaucoup de mal à trouver un-e avocat-e pour les représenter. Nombre d'avocat-e-s soutiennent les « lois anti-blasphème » et d'autres craignent d'être intimidés ou agressés par les plaignant-e-s et d'autres individus. Les avocat-e-s exigent par ailleurs, selon cette même source, des honoraires élevés dans les cas de blasphème. En outre, les avocat-e-s représentant des personnes accusées de blasphème sont menacés d'être elles-mêmes et eux-mêmes accusés de blasphème. Par conséquent, ils préfèrent souvent ne pas soutenir que l'acte reproché à l'accusé-e ne constitue pas un blasphème.

**Les juges et les témoins de la défense sont également exposés à des intimidations et des actes de violence.** Selon le HCR (janvier 2017), les juges et les témoins de la défense sont également exposés à des intimidations et à des actes de harcèlement et de violence.

**Menaces graves pour les personnes accusées de blasphème, y compris meurtres, indépendamment de la peine prononcée et même après acquittement ; torture et meurtres en détention et garde à vue ; isolement cellulaire comme « mesure de protection ».** Selon le HCR (janvier 2017), les personnes accusées de blasphème peuvent être gravement menacées, quel que soit le jugement rendu dans leur cas. Les personnes accusées de blasphème subissent des menaces de mort, des agressions, y compris des agressions de masse et des assassinats par des individus ou des membres des forces de sécurité, soit avant d'être arrêtées et jugées devant les tribunaux, soit même après leur acquittement. Cette situation contraint certaines personnes, selon cette même source, à se cacher ou à fuir parce qu'elles craignent pour leur vie.

Selon des rapports cités par le HCR (janvier 2017), certaines personnes accusées de blasphème sont également torturées ou tuées en garde à vue ou en détention. Ces personnes courent un risque élevé d'être attaquées par des codétenus ou des employés de prison. La « mesure de protection » adoptée consiste à placer en détention individuelle ou en cellule d'isolement les personnes exposées à de tels risques, parfois pendant de nombreuses années.

HRCP (mars 2018) confirme que des personnes accusées de blasphème ont été assassinées avant la fin de leur procès et parfois même après leur acquittement. Des accusations de blasphème suffisent à mettre en danger la vie de la personne concernée.

**Procédure et détention provisoire de plus longue durée dans les affaires de blasphème.** En février 2018, *Human Rights Watch* a signalé un cas de blasphème qui a été remis à un-e autre juge pour la sixième fois en janvier 2018. L'accusé, le professeur d'université Junaid



Hafeez, avait été arrêté en mars 2013 au Pendjab pour des commentaires présumés sur Facebook. Hafeez est placé à l'isolement depuis cinq ans.

### 3.3 Arrestations et condamnations pour blasphème

**Arrestations et condamnations pour blasphème.** USDOS (29 mai 2018) se fonde sur des rapports d'organisations de la société civile selon lesquels au moins 50 personnes se trouvaient en détention pour blasphème. Au moins 17 d'entre elles ont été condamnées à mort. En 2017, la police a reçu au moins dix nouvelles plaintes pour blasphème à l'encontre de 17 personnes. En 2016, 18 nouveaux cas ont été rapportés. Selon la *Commission on International Religious Freedom* des Etats-Unis (USCIRF, 26 avril 2017), au moins 40 personnes ont été condamnées à mort ou se trouvaient en détention à perpétuité fin 2016. Depuis 2011, selon USCIRF (avril 2018), environ 100 cas de blasphème ont été enregistrés et un nombre de personnes à peu près équivalent ont été placées en détention en relation avec des allégations de blasphème. Selon cette même source, 40 d'entre elles ont été condamnées à la peine de mort ou à la réclusion à perpétuité.

Selon un rapport de HRW daté du 5 février 2018, aucune des personnes condamnées à mort pour blasphème n'a été exécutée à ce jour. Au moment de la publication, au moins 18 personnes avaient été condamnées à mort pour blasphème. Vingt autres se trouvaient en détention à perpétuité pour des infractions similaires. Selon RFE/RL (23 novembre 2016), au moins neuf des personnes accusées de blasphème ont été condamnées à mort entre 2010 et 2015. Trois autres ont été placées en réclusion à perpétuité.

**Cas d'arrestations et de condamnations de chrétien-ne-s en vertu des « lois anti-blaspème », y compris peine de mort.** En janvier 2018, selon le BAMF (5 mars 2018), un chrétien a été arrêté par la police après avoir été accusé de blasphème en raison de la publication présumée de photos « blasphématoires » sur Facebook. Il a accusé la police d'abus graves et dégradants après avoir subi des blessures graves en sautant du bâtiment de la police fédérale en février 2018. Auparavant, des centaines de partisans du parti islamique *Tehreek-i-Labaik Ya Rasool Allah* (TLYRA) avaient exigé sa condamnation. Après les agressions qu'ils ont subies de la part d'extrémistes, les chrétien-ne-s vivant dans le même quartier que l'accusé ont décidé de quitter leurs domiciles.

En septembre 2017, selon USDOS (15 août 2017), la police du district de Kasur, dans la province du Pendjab, a arrêté Nabeel (Masih) Amanat, chrétien de seize ans, pour blasphème. Il avait partagé une photo de la Kaaba à La Mecque sur Facebook. Il se trouvait toujours en détention préventive fin 2017 et, en cas de condamnation, risque jusqu'à dix ans d'emprisonnement.

En août 2017, selon RFE/RL (21 août 2017), la police a arrêté Asif Masih, 18 ans, près de la ville de Wazirabad, au Pendjab, pour blasphème. Il a été accusé d'avoir brûlé des pages du Coran.

En juillet 2017, selon le HRCP (mars 2018), un membre d'un parti extrémiste islamique a accusé de blasphème Shahzad Masih, nettoyeur de seize ans travaillant dans un hôpital du district de Gujrat, dans la province du Pendjab. Depuis son arrestation, le 14 juillet 2017, sa famille n'a plus eu aucun contact avec lui. La police a nié l'avoir détenu.

Toujours en juillet 2017, selon USDOS (15 août 2017), un musulman a déposé une plainte contre Nadeem James, de religion chrétienne, car il lui aurait envoyé sur WhatsApp un "poème dégradant pour les figures saintes de l'Islam". James a été accusé de blasphème et ses proches ont été placés en « détention de sûreté » jusqu'à ce qu'il se livre de lui-même. Son cas est resté en suspend devant un tribunal de première instance à Gujrat, avant qu'il soit finalement condamné à mort par un tribunal de Bahawalpur en septembre 2017 selon HRCP (mars 2018).

Selon USDOS (29 mai 2018 et 20 avril 2018), l'audience devant la Cour suprême concernant l'appel d'Asia Bibi, chrétienne condamnée à mort pour blasphème en 2010, a été reportée en octobre 2017 pour une durée indéterminée.

Selon le HCR (janvier 2017), quatre chrétien-ne-s ont été accusés de blasphème en 2015. En 2014, cinq cas de blasphème concernant des chrétien-ne-s ont été rapportés et au moins trois chrétien-ne-s ont été déclarés coupables de blasphème et condamnés à mort.

**Pressions exercées par l'organisation *Sunni Tehreek* conduisant à des accusations de blasphème contre Shaan Taseer, fatwa.** Selon USDOS (20 avril 2018), la police du Pendjab a, sous la pression de l'organisation *Sunni Tehreek*, enregistré en décembre 2017 un cas de blasphème contre Shaan Taseer, fils de Salman Taseer, gouverneur du Pendjab assassiné en 2011 pour ses critiques à l'encontre des lois sur le blasphème. Shaan Taseer avait publié une vidéo dans laquelle il souhaitait à tous les Pakistanais un joyeux Noël et leur demandait de prier pour les victimes des « lois anti-blasphème ». L'organisation *Sunni Tehreek* a alors prononcé une fatwa à son encontre dans laquelle elle déclarait que Shaan Taseer « méritait la mort » (« *liable to death* ») pour son message vidéo.

## 4 Culture de l'intolérance religieuse, harcèlements, violence et assassinats ciblés

**Les « lois anti-blasphème » favorisent un climat d'intolérance religieuse, institutionnalisent la discrimination à l'égard des minorités religieuses, encouragent la violence extrémiste et les attaques ciblées contre les membres des minorités religieuses.** Selon le HCR (janvier 2017), l'introduction des « lois anti-blasphème » a favorisé un climat d'intolérance religieuse et contribué à l'institutionnalisation de la discrimination à l'encontre des minorités religieuses. Selon cette même source, il est également fortement reproché à ces lois d'encourager la violence extrémiste et les attaques ciblées contre les membres des minorités religieuses.

**Les discours de haine contre les minorités religieuses sont largement répandus, y compris de la part des représentant-e-s des autorités et des partis politiques.** Les discours de haine à l'encontre des minorités religieuses sont très répandus selon le HCR (janvier 2017) ; même les grands médias permettent les discours de haine et l'incitation à la violence contre les minorités religieuses sans censure. Le HCR (janvier 2017) cite un rapport du *Comité des Nations Unies pour l'élimination de la discrimination raciale* de 2016, selon lequel il y aurait une augmentation des discours de haine contre les minorités religieuses dans les médias, sur les réseaux sociaux et lors de rassemblements religieux, y compris de la part de représentant-e-s du gouvernement et des partis politiques.

**Augmentation du nombre d'organisations religieuses dont la raison d'être est de cibler les minorités religieuses.** *Muhammad Amir Rana*, directeur du *Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies* (PIPS) (cité dans EASO, février 2018), fait état de la forte augmentation du nombre d'organisations religieuses au Pakistan. Sur les 247 organisations actuellement actives, 84 ont un programme purement confessionnel, c'est-à-dire que leur raison d'être est dirigé contre les minorités religieuses, y compris les chiites, les ahmadi-e-s, les hindou-e-s ou les chrétien-ne-s. Ces groupes influencent selon cette même source de plus en plus le courant politique dominant.

**Les crimes de haine contre les minorités religieuses, y compris les assassinats, sont très répandus, les accusations de blasphème contre les chrétien-ne-s conduisent souvent à des lynchages de la part de groupes et d'individus, parfois jusqu'à la mort.** Selon la *Human Rights Commission of Pakistan* (HRCP) (mars 2018), la violence à l'encontre des membres des minorités religieuses, y compris les chrétien-ne-s, s'est poursuivie. Selon le *Comité des Nations Unies pour l'élimination de la discrimination raciale* (cité par le HCR, janvier 2017), les crimes de haine tels que le harcèlement, la violence de masse et le meurtre de membres de minorités religieuses, en particulier les hazaras, les Dalits chrétiens, les Dalits hindous et les ahmadi-e-s, sont très répandus. Selon le HCR (janvier 2017), les agressions et les violences de masse visant les chrétien-ne-s se poursuivent dans tout le pays. Cette situation découle en partie de l'influence croissante de l'idéologie sunnite extrémiste. Selon le HCR (janvier 2017), les agressions et assassinats ciblés contre les chrétien-ne-s sont également commis par des individus.

Selon USDOS (20 avril 2018), plusieurs personnes accusées de blasphème ont été tuées en 2017. Les allégations de blasphème à l'encontre de chrétiens ont conduit à des assassinats et à des agressions de masse dans certains cas, selon le HCR (janvier 2017). Selon HRCP (mars 2018), au moins 65 personnes ont été assassinées depuis 1995 dans le cadre d'allégations non fondées de blasphème.

**Exemples de crimes haineux à l'encontre de chrétien-ne-s au cours des dernières années.** En novembre 2017, cinq familles chrétiennes ont fui le village de Sukheki situé à 200 kilomètres au nord de Lahore. Celles-ci constituaient les seules familles chrétiennes de ce village. Sonu Arshad, membre de l'une de ces familles et âgé de 18 ans, avait reçu des menaces de mort pour blasphème présumé. Les familles ont fui après qu'une page Facebook, appartenant supposément à une chaîne de télévision locale, a publié une photo de Sonu Arshad accompagnée d'un message à l'attention des habitants de la communauté les appelant à « brûler son église et à le punir de la peine de mort ».

En août 2017, Sharoon Masih, étudiant chrétien de 17 ans, a été lynché par un camarade de classe à Burewala, dans le district de Vehari (Pendjab), pour avoir bu dans le même verre que lui.

Selon HRCP (mars 2018), en avril 2017, peu après la prière du Vendredi Saint, des vandales ont incendié une église improvisée à Lahore.

Toujours en avril 2017, à la suite de différends liés à la conversion d'une jeune chrétienne à l'Islam, des chrétien-ne-s de Salik Town à Faisalabad (Pendjab) ont été priés de quitter le district ou, s'ils voulaient y rester, de se convertir à l'Islam.

Selon RFE/RL (24 mars 2018), dans un cas de lynchage fréquemment cité datant de 2014, une foule en colère a brûlé vif un couple chrétien dans un four à briques près de la ville de Kot Radha Kishan au Penjab. Le couple avait été faussement accusé d'avoir jeté des pages du Coran à la poubelle. En novembre 2016, selon RFE/RL, un tribunal antiterroriste de Lahore a condamné à mort cinq individus impliqués dans le meurtre, huit personnes à deux ans d'emprisonnement et en a acquitté 93 autres.

**Agressions et attaques perpétrées contre des membres de minorités religieuses, y compris des chrétien-ne-s, de la part de groupes armés, dont l'EIPK/Daech.** Selon USDOS (29 mai 2018), des groupes sectaires armés – associés à des organisations considérées comme extrémistes et interdites par le gouvernement – et des groupes considérés comme terroristes par des gouvernements étrangers ont continué de mener des attaques à l'encontre des chrétien-ne-s, des ahmadi-e-s, des soufi-e-s et chiites, y compris des hazaras. Selon *Matthew Nelson*, expert sur le Pakistan cité par EASO (février 2018) et chercheur à l'Institut SOAS de l'Université de Londres, des groupes tels que les talibans pakistanais (*Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan*) (TTP) et une faction appelée *Jamaat-ul-Ahrar* mènent des attaques contre les chrétien-ne-s. Les menaces exercées par ces « groupes terroristes » à l'encontre des chrétien-ne-s se poursuivront à l'avenir. Selon USCIRF (avril 2018), des groupes « terroristes » tels que *Lashkar-e-Taiba* (LeT), *Lashkar-e-Jhangvi* (LeJ), « l'État islamique autoproclamé de la province de Khorasan » (EIPK)/Daech et TTP menacent les membres des minorités religieuses et les personnes qui tentent de les soutenir.

**Exemples d'attaques perpétrées par des groupes armés ces dernières années.** Le 16 avril 2018, RFE/RL a rapporté l'assassinat de deux chrétien-ne-s devant une église de la ville de Quetta. Selon RFE/RL (3 avril 2018), le 2 avril 2018, quatre chrétien-ne-s avaient déjà été tué\_e\_s par balle à Quetta. L'EIPK/Daech a revendiqué ces deux attentats.

Le 17 décembre 2017, selon USDOS (29 mai 2018), des attentats-suicides ont été perpétrés contre la *Bethel Memorial Methodist Church* à Quetta (Baloutchistan). Neuf paroissien-ne-s ont été tué\_e\_s et près de 60 blessé\_e\_s. Il s'agissait de la première attaque contre une église au Pakistan revendiquée par l'EIPK/Daech.

Le dimanche de Pâques de mars 2016, selon USDOS (15 août 2017), un attentat-suicide a tué 78 personnes, dont 29 enfants, et en a blessé plus de 350 au parc Gulshan-e-Iqbal à Lahore. Nombre de victimes étaient chrétien-ne-s, mais la majorité d'entre elles étaient musulmanes. Selon USDOS (15 août 2017), *Jamaat-ul-Ahrar*, une faction des talibans pakistanais selon le HCR (janvier 2017), a revendiqué cette attaque. Selon le HCR (janvier 2017), le groupe a déclaré que l'attaque visait des chrétien-ne-s. Selon la *Jamestown Foundation* (26 janvier 2018), l'EIPK/Daech était responsable de l'attaque. Selon le HCR (janvier 2017), le gouvernement a déployé des forces de sécurité paramilitaires nationales (les *Rangers*) ; en outre, selon les médias, les enquêtes ont conduit à l'interrogation de 5 000 personnes et à l'arrestation de plus de 200 autres.

En mars 2015, selon le HCR (janvier 2017), un groupe militant a fait exploser deux églises chrétiennes à Lahore pendant le culte dominical. Quatorze à seize personnes ont été tuées et au moins 70 blessées. Le lendemain ont eu lieu des protestations de chrétien-ne-s, qui ont pris une tournure violente, deux musulman-e-s étant tué\_e\_s. Selon cette même source, la police a arrêté plus de 500 chrétien-ne-s.

**Les attaques et les pressions de la part de groupes armés conduisent à une rhétorique anti-minorités dans l'espace public.** Selon USCIRF (avril 2018), les groupes armés se montrant également menaçants à l'égard des personnes qui s'engagent pour les droits des minorités religieuses, les politicien-ne-s et les juges évitent de se prononcer en faveur des droits de ces minorités. Cette situation favorise selon cette même source une rhétorique qui, de plus en plus, divise et cible les minorités dans la sphère publique.

**Occupations illégales, profanations et attaques contre des lieux de culte, des cimetières et des commerces.** Selon le HCR (janvier 2017), les chrétien-ne-s continuent de subir des occupations illégales et des profanations de leurs lieux de culte et de leurs cimetières. Leurs magasins et commerces sont eux aussi parfois occupés illégalement. USDOS (29 mai 2018) fait état d'attaques contre des lieux saints, des cimetières et des symboles religieux de minorités religieuses auxquelles la police ne s'est pas opposée. Ainsi, le 7 octobre 2017, un inconnu a lancé une grenade dans une église de Quetta, au Baloutchistan. Personne n'a été blessé. À la fin de 2017, personne n'avait encore été arrêté dans le cadre de cette attaque.

**Discrimination à l'encontre d'un chrétien en matière d'accès aux soins médicaux.** En juin 2017, *Christian Solidarity Worldwide* (CSW) a publié un article sur Irfan Masih, un éboueur chrétien de la ville d'Umerkot, dans la province du Sindh, qui a inhalé des vapeurs toxiques et a perdu connaissance alors qu'il nettoyait un puits sans équipement de protection. Lorsqu'il a été admis à l'hôpital, les médecins ont annoncé aux membres de sa famille qu'ils ne pouvaient pas le soigner parce qu'il était « *napaak* » (« impur ») et que, avant le traitement, la famille devait nettoyer son corps. Plus tard, les médecins ont apporté une bouteille d'oxygène vide. Avant la livraison d'une autre bouteille d'oxygène, le patient était mort.

**Discrimination à l'égard des minorités religieuses, y compris des chrétien-ne-s, en matière d'accès aux établissements d'enseignement.** Selon le HCR (janvier 2017), les chrétien-ne-s se sentent victimes de discriminations dans les établissements d'enseignement. Selon USDOS (29 mai 2018) et le HCR (janvier 2017), les manuels utilisés dans les écoles publiques prônent l'intolérance religieuse et contiennent des déclarations dénigrantes sur les minorités religieuses, y compris les ahmadi-e-s, les hindou-e-s, la population juive et les chrétien-ne-s. Selon USCIRF (26 avril 2017), les manuels scolaires pakistanais inculquent des préjugés et la méfiance à l'égard des non-musulman-e-s et les présentent comme des êtres inférieurs. En outre, ils présentent les non-musulman-e-s du Pakistan comme des non-Pakistanaise-s et les accusent de faire preuve de compréhension vis-à-vis des ennemis du Pakistan : les chrétien-ne-s pakistanais-es sont dépeints comme des oppresseurs coloniaux occidentaux ou britanniques, les hindou-e-s pakistanais-es comme des Indiens. Ces représentations renforcent les tensions sociales existantes et créent un climat négatif pour les minorités religieuses. Selon USDOS (20 avril 2018), les représentant-e-s des minorités religieuses ont fait état de discriminations contre les chrétien-ne-s, les hindou-e-s, les sikhs et les ahmadi-e-s en matière d'accès à l'enseignement supérieur, y compris les collèges et les universités.

**Discriminations à l'encontre des membres des minorités religieuses postulant à des postes de la fonction publique et candidats à une fonction parlementaire.** Selon USDOS (29 mai 2018), des représentant-e-s de minorités religieuses ont signalé qu'ils étaient victimes de discriminations au moment de postuler à des emplois dans la fonction publique. Bien que cinq pourcents des organes de l'État au niveau national soient réservés aux membres

des minorités religieuses, cette disposition ne serait pas appliquée. Les gouvernements provinciaux du Pendjab, du Sindh et du Khyber Pakhtunkhwa n'appliquent pas non plus ces règlements sur les quotas selon cette même source. De plus, les non-musulman-e-s n'atteindraient que rarement des postes cadre du gouvernement. Toujours selon USDOS (29 mai 2018), cette discrimination concerne également les postes supérieurs au sein des forces de sécurité de l'État. Par ailleurs, les membres des minorités religieuses sont également désavantagés dans le processus de sélection des candidatures parlementaires.

## 5 Protection de l'État

**Incapacité ou velléité du gouvernement en matière de protection des minorités religieuses ; la violence, les discriminations et les discours de haine de la part des extrémistes islamiques restent impunis.** Selon USCIRF (avril 2018), les auteurs de crimes violents contre les minorités religieuses restent souvent impunis. Un grand nombre d'extrémistes ont été relâchés ou n'ont même pas été arrêtés et poursuivis.

Selon la commission indépendante *Human Rights Commission of Pakistan* (HRCP) (mars 2018), le gouvernement se montre velléitaire dans la protection des minorités religieuses contre les attaques et les discriminations ou en est incapable. Les forces extrémistes qui cherchent à faire du Pakistan un pays exclusivement islamique auraient les mains libres. En novembre 2017, plusieurs centaines de fanatiques ont bloqué la capitale Islamabad et les villes de garnison pendant 23 jours en menant des protestations dans le district de Faizabad d'Islamabad jusqu'à ce que le gouvernement finisse par céder à leurs demandes. Le gouvernement a ainsi ouvert la porte au fondamentalisme et au militantisme religieux. Selon USCIRF (avril 2018), Khadim Hussain Rizvi, chef du nouveau parti *Tehreek-i-Labbaik Ya Rasool Allah* (TLYR), est à l'origine des protestations. En 2011 déjà, il avait appuyé l'assassinat de Salman Taseer, gouverneur du Pendjab, pour son engagement contre les « lois anti-blasphème ».

**Protection de l'État lacunaire pour les membres des minorités religieuses, y compris les chrétien-ne-s, contre les discriminations et la violence, y compris pour les chrétien-ne-s accusé-e-s de blasphème, défaillance de la police.** USDOS (29 mai 2018) cite des rapports de groupes de la société civile selon lesquels les autorités de l'État n'interviennent souvent pas dans les cas de violence sociale contre les minorités religieuses et les responsables de violence ne sont souvent pas arrêtés par la police. Selon le HCR (janvier 2017), il est reproché aux autorités de l'État, y compris à la police, de ne pas être intervenues pour protéger les chrétien-ne-s contre les actes de violence. En outre, celles-ci n'auraient pas suffisamment enquêté sur ces cas de discriminations et de violence. Les chrétien-ne-s accusé-e-s de blasphème ne bénéficient pas non plus d'une protection adéquate de la part de la police et de l'appareil judiciaire. Selon des membres des minorités religieuses cités par USDOS (29 mai 2018), le gouvernement n'est pas cohérent dans la protection des droits des minorités religieuses et les discriminations officielles contre les chrétien-ne-s, les hindou-e-s, les sikhs et les ahmadi-e-s se poursuivent. Selon des rapports cités par le HCR (janvier 2017), la police n'enquête que très peu sur les profanations, les actes de vandalisme et les destructions d'églises et de lieux de culte des membres des minorités religieuses et n'empêche pas de telles attaques.

Selon le HRCF (mars 2018), en octobre 2017, la police a battu à mort un jeune chrétien de quatorze ans après qu'il s'est battu avec un camarade de classe musulman qui voulait le forcer à renier sa foi.

Selon BAMF (5 mars 2018), le *Pakistan Christian Action Committee* (PCAC) a appelé le gouvernement en mars 2018 à prendre des mesures contre l'abus des « lois anti-blasphème ».

**Traitement nettement défavorable des membres des minorités religieuses en détention et en garde à vue, violence exercée par les autres détenu-e-s et les membres des forces de sécurité de l'État.** Selon le HCR (janvier 2017), les membres des minorités religieuses en détention et en garde à vue seraient nettement moins bien traités que les autres citoyen-ne-s pakistanais-es. Les détenu-e-s accusé-e-s de blasphème sont particulièrement touchés : ils sont souvent victimes de violence non seulement de la part de leurs codétenus, mais aussi des membres des forces de sécurité de l'État. Ils se verraient également attribuer des infrastructures moins bien équipées que les détenu-e-s musulman-e-s.

**Impunité des auteurs de violence religieuse ou sectaire.** Selon le HCR (janvier 2017), il règne un climat d'impunité vis-à-vis des auteurs de violences religieuses ou sectaires. Le gouvernement a certes qualifié d'« extrémistes » et de « terroristes » plusieurs groupes religieux à l'origine d'actes de violence à l'encontre de membres des minorités religieuses et les a interdits. Toutefois, certains de ces groupes ont changé de nom et sont demeurés actifs. Selon la *Commission des Nations Unies pour l'élimination de la discrimination raciale* citée par le HCR (janvier 2017), les crimes de haine contre les minorités religieuses ne font souvent pas l'objet d'enquêtes pénales et de poursuites.

En janvier 2017, selon USCIRF (26 avril 2017), un tribunal antiterroriste a innocenté plus de 100 suspects qui étaient accusés d'être impliqués dans l'attaque de janvier 2013 contre le quartier à majorité chrétienne de Joseph Colony de Lahore, au Pendjab. L'attaque a été déclenchée après qu'un résident chrétien a été accusé de blasphème. Une foule d'environ 3000 personnes a détruit plus de 150 maisons de chrétien-ne-s, des commerces et deux églises et a contraint des centaines de familles chrétiennes à la fuite.

Selon HRCF (mars 2018), en raison du climat d'impunité, des groupes religieux extrémistes revendiquent consciemment les assassinats ciblés et les attaques de masse à l'encontre des ahmadi-e-s, des chrétien-ne-s et des chiïtes hazaras, y compris au Baloutchistan. L'impunité a créé un environnement qui encourage le zèle religieux et les discours de haine. Les organisations religieuses interdites sont ouvertement présentes sur Facebook, où elles diffusent leur idéologie sectaire et traquent les minorités religieuses et les sectes musulmanes. Le gouvernement semble impuissant face à ces discours de haine propagés dans les médias sociaux.

**Peu de progrès dans la mise en œuvre de l'arrêt de la Cour suprême de 2014 sur la protection des minorités religieuses.** Selon le HCR (janvier 2017), dans un arrêt de 2014, la Cour suprême a constaté « l'absence de mesure efficace de l'État » pour protéger les minorités religieuses. Les autorités de l'État et les organes d'exécution ne sont pas suffisamment au fait des droits des minorités religieuses ou ne sont pas suffisamment sensibilisés à cet égard, ce qui entrave la protection de ces minorités. Selon USDOS (29 mai 2018), la Cour a ordonné au gouvernement d'adopter des mesures pour protéger les membres des minorités religieuses. Selon des activistes des droits humains cités par USDOS (29 mai 2018), peu de

progrès ont été réalisés jusqu'à présent dans la mise en œuvre de cette décision par le gouvernement national et les gouvernements provinciaux.

**La *National Commission for Minorities (NCM)* manque de ressources et d'indépendance.**

Selon le HCR (janvier 2017), le gouvernement a créé en novembre 2014, à la suite de l'arrêt susmentionné de la Cour suprême, la *National Commission for Minorities (NCM)* dans laquelle sont représentées les communautés chrétiennes, hindoues, musulmanes et sikhes. Cette commission a pour objectif de réviser la législation et d'élaborer une politique d'harmonie interreligieuse (*Inter-faith Harmony Policy*). Selon USDOS (29 mai 2018), le NCM s'est réuni sporadiquement depuis sa création. Selon les militant\_e\_s, elle ne bénéficie pas d'un budget régulier et n'a pas de président-e indépendant-e, ce qui complique son développement.

**Protection lacunaire contre la pratique illégale de la servitude pour dettes, chrétien-ne-s particulièrement touchés, impunité pour les employeuses et employeurs.**

Selon le HCR (janvier 2017) et USDOS (29 mai 2018), les autorités de l'État continuent de négliger la protection des membres des minorités contre la servitude pour dettes dans l'industrie de la brique et l'agriculture. Cette pratique illégale affecte les chrétien-ne-s de manière disproportionnée. Bien que l'esclavage et toutes les formes de travail forcé soient interdits, cette interdiction n'est pas appliquée par les autorités. Selon AI (2017), les employeuses et employeurs sont rarement punis, comme l'exige la loi sur l'interdiction de la servitude pour dettes (*Bonded Labour Abolition Act*) de 1992. Les juges des tribunaux inférieurs ignorent souvent les dispositions prévues par la loi. Par ailleurs, selon cette même source, la police accepte parfois des pots-de-vin et protège les employeuses et employeurs. Ces derniers auraient un grand pouvoir économique et politique et seraient donc rarement tenus de rendre des comptes.

**Protection lacunaire de l'État pour les personnes qui défendent les droits des minorités religieuses.**

Selon le HCR (janvier 2017), les autorités de l'État n'assurent pas une protection adéquate aux membres de l'appareil judiciaire, aux avocat-e-s, aux défenseuses et défenseurs des droits humains et aux autres personnes qui défendent les droits des minorités religieuses et qui sont elles-mêmes et eux-mêmes menacé\_e\_s, intimidé\_e\_s, harcelé\_e\_s et agressé\_e\_s physiquement.

**Déclarations isolées du gouvernement sur la tolérance religieuse et mesures ponctuelles de protection des membres de certaines minorités religieuses, y compris des chrétien-ne-s.**

En 2017, le gouvernement de la province de Sindh a proposé un projet de surveillance vidéo de centaines de lieux de culte des communautés chrétiennes, hindoues, parsis et sikhs pour assurer leur sécurité et surveiller leurs infrastructures. Cependant, à la fin 2017, aucun progrès n'avait été réalisé sur ce projet. Selon AI (2017), en janvier 2017, à l'occasion de l'inauguration d'un temple hindou restauré dans la province du Pendjab, le Premier ministre pakistanais a déclaré : « de mon point de vue personnel, nous sommes toutes et tous égaux – musulman-e-s, hindou-e-s, sikhs, chrétien-ne-s et les personnes d'autres religions; nous sommes un ».

Le CDH (janvier 2017) signale que, selon des rapports, en 2015, le professionnalisme de la police et des autorités locales en matière de protection des minorités contre la discrimination et la violence s'est amélioré. Après l'adoption du Plan d'action national (*National Action Plan*) en décembre 2014, la police a selon cette même source arrêté des personnes, y compris des chefs religieux et des membres du clergé, pour incitation à la haine et usage abusif de hauts-



parleurs. Des librairies qui vendaient de la littérature haineuse ont été fermées et du matériel religieux a été confisqué dans certaines mosquées et dans certains séminaires. Les gouvernements nationaux et provinciaux ont annoncé en octobre 2015 qu'ils restreignaient la liberté de mouvement de centaines de religieux accusés de répandre la haine sectaire. Toutefois, des rapports ont également signalé que la police, sous la pression de la mise en œuvre du *National Action Plan*, avait arrêté de manière injustifiée des membres de minorités religieuses.

Selon USCIRF (avril 2018), la capacité des groupes armés à mener des attaques à l'encontre des groupes vulnérables a décliné à la suite de l'opération militaire Zarb-e-Azb lancée dans le nord-ouest du Pakistan début 2014. En outre, le gouvernement prévoit des mesures de sécurité supplémentaires pour les minorités religieuses, en particulier pendant les fêtes religieuses.

En février 2016, selon le HCR (janvier 2017), la peine de mort a été exécutée sur Mumtaz Qadri, meurtrier de Salmaan Taseer, gouverneur du Pendjab (ce dernier s'était prononcé contre les « lois anti-blasphème » et en faveur de Asia Bibi, voir chapitres 3.1 et 3.3).

Toujours en février 2016, selon USCIRF (26 avril 2017), le gouvernement a annoncé un plan d'action pour les droits humains (*Human Rights Action Plan*) afin, entre autres, d'améliorer la protection des minorités religieuses. Toutefois, selon USCIRF (avril 2018) et USDOS (29 mai 2018), nombre des recommandations du plan n'ont pas encore été mises en œuvre. Selon USDOS (29 mai 2018), le plan prévoit neuf règlements visant à protéger les droits des minorités religieuses, y compris, d'une part, l'application de lois condamnant pénalement l'incitation à la haine religieuse et, d'autre part, la protection des lieux de culte pour les minorités religieuses.

**Poursuite des attaques et incitations à la violence contre les minorités religieuses, y compris les chrétien-ne-s, et privation de leurs droits socio-politiques malgré quelques mesures positives isolées.** Selon USCIRF (avril 2018), malgré certaines mesures positives, les minorités religieuses, y compris les chrétien-ne-s, continuent d'être victimes d'attaques et d'incitations à la violence à leur encontre ainsi que de privation de leurs droits socio-politiques.

## 6 Surveillance de la diaspora pakistanaise à l'étranger

**Les citoyens pakistanais à l'étranger qui critiquent l'État pakistanais publiquement ou en privé sont visés par le gouvernement pakistanais.** Selon des informations fournies le 8 juin 2018 par courriel à l'OSAR de la part d'une *personne de contact au bénéfice d'une expertise sur le Pakistan*, certaines ambassades pakistanaises suivent les activités des citoyen-ne-s pakistanais-es, y compris des Pakistanais-es en exil. Les personnes qui critiquent l'État pakistanais publiquement ou en privé, en particulier dans les forums portant sur la situation des droits humains au Pakistan, sont visées par le gouvernement pakistanais.

**Annulation d'un événement prévu par des citoyen-ne-s pakistanais-es à l'étranger en raison de menaces insinuées.** Une autre *personne de contact au bénéfice d'une expertise*

sur le Pakistan a donné le 7 juin 2018 des renseignements à l'OSAR concernant la tenue d'un événement prévu par des citoyen-ne-s pakistanais-es vivant à l'étranger. L'événement a, selon cette source, été annulé après que l'équipe d'organisation a été contactée par des membres des représentations pakistanaises dans leur pays de résidence et indirectement intimidée par le biais de menaces insinuées visant leurs proches et connaissances au Pakistan (courriel d'information daté du 7 juin 2018).

**Le système de surveillance de l'État pakistanais permet également la surveillance des citoyen-ne-s à l'étranger.** En février 2013, le Parlement pakistanais a adopté la loi sur les enquêtes pour un procès équitable (*Investigation for Fair Trial Act*), une loi réglementant la surveillance des citoyen-ne-s pakistanais-es. Selon cette loi, les citoyen-ne-s pakistanais-es peuvent elles et eux aussi être surveillés à l'étranger (*Pakistan National Assembly*, 22 février 2013).

## 7 Sources

Amnesty International, 2017:

*«(...) bonded labour continues to exist in Pakistan, particularly in agriculture and the brick kilns industry. The practice is rooted in unequal landownership patterns, and disproportionately affects certain caste and ethnic groups. In Sindh province, a majority of agricultural and brick kiln workers who is in debt-bondage, are Hindus from so-called "lower" castes. Christians and Afghan migrants make up a sizeable proportion of those who work on brick kilns in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Bonded labour was formally banned in Pakistan in 1992. The Bonded Labour Abolition Act, 1992 made forcing anyone to work in bondage a crime punishable with imprisonment for a term extending up to five years. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan and other NGOs have since successfully used the law to secure freedom for a number of bonded labourers. However, the employers are rarely punished as required under the 1992 law. Judges in the lower courts are often unaware of the provisions of the Bonded Labour Abolition Act. At times, the police become complicit in protecting the employers in exchange for bribes. Since the employers are economically and politically powerful, they evade justice.*

*In practice, limited access to institutional credit and absence of alternative livelihoods continue to push workers into a cycle of debt bondage and poverty. In many cases, the bonded labourers who are set free by the courts return to their former "employers" when they fail to find other work. (...)*

*Amnesty International notes the recent efforts by the government to celebrate Pakistan's religious diversity. In January 2017, the Prime Minister inaugurated the restoration of the 900-year-old Katas Raj Hindu temples in Punjab's Chakwal District. On that occasion, the Prime Minister gave a strong message of tolerance and social harmony by saying that "in my personal view, we are all are equal – Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Christians – and people belonging to other religions; we are all one." The Prime Minister reiterated this stance at a ceremony celebrating the Holi festival with the Hindu community in March*

2017.» Source: Amnesty International (AI), Pakistan; Submission to the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; 61st Session, 29 May - 23 June 2017 [ASA 33/6100/2017], 2017, p. 10, 15:

[www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/1402078/1930\\_1498115994\\_int-cescr-css-pak-27306-e.pdf](http://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/1402078/1930_1498115994_int-cescr-css-pak-27306-e.pdf).

BAMF, 5 mars 2018 :

*«Erneut Blasphemievorwürfe gegen Christen*

***In Lahore sprang vergangene Woche ein 24-jähriger [christlicher] Mann aus dem vierten Stock des Gebäudes der Bundespolizei und verletzte sich schwer. Er wirft der Polizei schwere und erniedrigende Misshandlungen vor. Der Mann war am 16.01.18 verhaftet worden, weil er angeblich gotteslästerliche Fotos auf Facebook veröffentlicht habe. Zuvor hatten Hunderte Anhänger der Islamistischen Partei Tehreek-i-Labaik Ya Rasool Allah (TLYRA) seine Bestrafung gefordert. Angehörige der christlichen Minderheit im Wohnviertel des Beschuldigten verließen die Gegend, nachdem es zu Übergriffen durch Extremisten gekommen war. Anlass der Anzeige gegen den Mann soll ein Streit mit muslimischen Jugendlichen bei einem Cricketspiel gewesen sein. Bei den meisten Anzeigen wegen Blasphemie sind persönliche Animositäten oder wirtschaftliche Gründe die Auslöser.***

***Am 02.03.18 forderten Vertreter verschiedener christlicher Konfessionen anlässlich einer Protestversammlung des Pakistan Christian Action Committees (PCAC) die Regierung u. a. auf, eine Untersuchungskommission einzurichten und gegen den Missbrauch des Blasphemiegesetzes vorzugehen.***» Source: Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (BAMF) (Deutschland), Briefing Notes vom 05.03.2018, 5 mars 2018:

[www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/1426088/5734\\_1520417204\\_deutschland-bundesamt-fuer-migration-und-fluechtlinge-briefing-notes-05-03-2018-deutsch.pdf](http://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/1426088/5734_1520417204_deutschland-bundesamt-fuer-migration-und-fluechtlinge-briefing-notes-05-03-2018-deutsch.pdf).

CSW, 9 juin 2017 :

***«A Christian sanitation worker, who became ill after cleaning a manhole, died at Civil Hospital in Sindh on 1 June after he was refused treatment by the duty doctors. (...)***

***Irfan Masih from Umerkot City in Sindh province, fell unconscious on 1 June after inhaling toxic fumes from a manhole he was cleaning without using protective equipment. When Mr Masih arrived at Civil Hospital in a critical condition he was covered in sludge and doctors told family members that they could not treat him because they were fasting and he was 'napaak' or unclean. Doctors asked Mr Masih's family to clean his body before administering any treatment.***

***Mr Masih was left in the hospital gasping for breath while his brother and family cleaned him. Doctors then sent for an oxygen cylinder which was found to be empty and by the time another one could be delivered, Mr Masih died. (...)***

***Since Mr Masih's death, three hospital employees have been arrested, Dr Jaam Kunbhar, Civil Hospital Medical Superintendent; Dr Allah Dad Rathore, a duty doctor and a medical officer known as Yousuf. The staff allege that Mr Masih was already dead when he was brought to the hospital. Three employees of the Umerkot Municipal Committee have also***

**been arrested.**» Source: Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW), Pakistan Christian sanitation worker dies after being denied treatment, 9 juin 2017:

[www.csw.org.uk/2017/06/09/press/3580/article.htm](http://www.csw.org.uk/2017/06/09/press/3580/article.htm).

EASO, février 2018 :

«2. *Sectarian politics*

*Matthew Nelson, Reader in Politics, PhD, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London*

(...)

*In recent years, I have mentioned here terrorists, **both the anti-Pakistan Taliban, the TTP (Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan), and a branch offshoot called Jamaat-ul-Ahrar, they have perpetrated major attacks on Christians in Peshawar against a church in 2015, in Lahore at a park, and so on. This risk is not likely to disappear anytime soon, so terrorism will continue to affect the Christian community. But, more importantly, allegations of blasphemy will also continue to target the Christian community.** Having said that, it is crucially important to note that, although Christians and especially the Ahmadiyya are targeted with blasphemy allegations, the majority of blasphemy allegations still target other Muslims. As a proportion of their population, the Ahmadiyya are vastly over-represented in allegations concerning blasphemy. **As a proportion of the population, Christians are vastly over-represented in these allegations of blasphemy.** But, in total numbers, the difficulties surrounding Pakistan's blasphemy laws affect Muslims more. (...)*

5. *Religious minorities*

*Muhammad Amir Rana, Director, Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS)*

(...)

***And we know that different militant groups have different agendas. Right now there are 247 religious organizations operating in Pakistan and just six months ago there were 234. Suddenly, 13 organizations have been added to this number. And what kinds are these organizations? Out of 247, 84 have a pure sectarian agenda, whether it is against the Shia community, the Ahmadiyya community, or against Hindus and Christians. Gradually, what we have observed is that these groups are encroaching on mainstream politics.***» Source: European Asylum Support Office (EASO), EASO COI Meeting Report: Pakistan; 16-17 October 2017; Rome, février 2018, p. 24, 34, 48, 50:

[www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/1426168/90\\_1520500210\\_easo-pakistan-meeting-report-october-2017.pdf](http://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/1426168/90_1520500210_easo-pakistan-meeting-report-october-2017.pdf).

Friday Times, 23 octobre 2015 :

***«On September 28, the Punjab Cardiology Hospital issued a corrigendum stating that both Muslims and non-Muslims were eligible for sanitation-related jobs. Earlier on September 17, the hospital, in an advertisement in several newspapers, had stated “Only Non-Muslims persons [sic] who belong to minorities will be accommodated” for the sanitation work.***

The corrigendum had appeared after the initial advertisement drew criticism on social media and coverage from BBC Urdu on the treatment meted out to minority communities.

**This was not the first time that the government reserved sanitation posts for non-Muslims. The Mandi Bahauddin DHQ Hospital, on September 18, publicised ten vacancies. Sanitation jobs were reserved for minorities. In June, a similar advertisement was issued by the Lady Wellington Hospital in Lahore, requiring only “non-Muslims” for this work.**

**Christians make up most of the non-Muslim minority in central Punjab and account for 1.5 per cent of the total population. Their representation in sanitation work, however, is above 80 percent. Data collected by World Watch Monitor states that 824 out of 935 sanitation workers in the Peshawar Municipal Corporation are Christian. About 6,000 out of 7,894 sanitation workers in the Lahore Waste Management Company are Christian. And 768 out of 978 workers in the Quetta Municipal Corporation are Christian. Islamabad’s Capital Development Authority (CDA) has 1,500 sanitation workers and all of them are Christian. Christians also have a very high representation in Gilgit and Karachi municipal corporations. (...)**

*The pure (Persian pak) and impure (Persian paleed) dichotomy permeated the Muslim mind in the subcontinent due to their close proximity with Hindus. Afghan, Turk, Arab and Persian Muslims called themselves ashraf (noble) and local converts, especially from lower castes, were called ajlaf (the lowly).*

*The Aligarh Movement inherited this dichotomy and named the country Pakistan: the “Land of the Pure”. **The attitude of forcing Christians into degrading occupations based on their descent continues and owes its existence to this long-entrenched dichotomy of “pure” and “impure”.** (...)*

**Most Christians in Pakistan come from an ‘untouchable’ background. (...)**

*The urban and heterogeneous landscape of Christianity in the Punjab changed to homogenous and rural after a man from an ‘untouchable’ background, identified only by a single name, Ditt, converted in the village of Shahabdike in Narowal in 1873. **Ditt invited others to convert to Christianity to get rid of untouchability and caste disabilities.** Ditt’s caste rapidly responded to the call and the number of Christians dramatically swelled in the central Punjab. The number increased from 3,912 in 1881 to 511,299 by 1941: mainly in rural areas. By the 1920s, the “sweeper” appellation was substituted with a more decent caste identity “Isaee,” which means “followers of Jesus”. **These converts were virtually landless peasants, called seipi and atharhi (village servitor), and were dependent on Sikh landlords for their livelihood.** (...)*

**The land left by the Sikhs was distributed among Muslim migrants arriving from India [after Partition in 1948] and Christians living on this land were being evicted. (...)**

**After being internally displaced, the only option these 300,000 Christians had was to move to cities and work as sweepers, the jobs that were already waiting for them. Over the years, they migrated to metropolitan areas where they illegally settled on government land without any basic amenities: giving birth to hundreds of illegal settlements from France Colony in Islamabad to Joseph Colony in Lahore.**

*During the Universal Periodic Review of the United Nations Human Rights Council in 2008, Pakistan stated that it is a Muslim-majority country, "and does not have the concept of Dalit... it is free from such kind of prejudices, and the existing norms do not contain discrimination on the basis of caste or creed". However, in practice, Pakistan has pursued a caste-based policy to force Punjabi Christians into the occupation of sweeping. This state policy needs to be revisited and the government needs to take extra measures to mitigate the disadvantage caused to poor Christians over decades.» Source: Friday Times, 'Christians required only as sweepers', 23 octobre 2015: [www.thefridaytimes.com/tft/christians-required-only-as-sweepers/](http://www.thefridaytimes.com/tft/christians-required-only-as-sweepers/).*

Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), mars 2018 :

*«Freedom of thought, conscience and religion*

*(...)*

- *There was no abatement in violence against religious minorities, with Christians, Ahmedis, Hazaras, Hindus and Sikhs all coming under attack.*

*(...)*

*Faith-based violence in the name of religion continues unabated and the government has failed miserably to protect minority members against attacks and discrimination. Extremist forces bent on creating an exclusive Islamic identity for Pakistan appear to have been given a free hand. A few hundred fanatics held the capital and the garrison cities hostage for 23 days in Faizabad, Islamabad in November this year until their demands were accepted. In ceding to the demands of the violent demonstrators, the state has virtually given blanket licence to fundamentalism and militancy in the name of religion.*

*This impunity has vested extremist religious groups with the confidence to proudly claim responsibility for targeted killings and mob attacks against Ahmadis, Christians and Hazara Shias in Balochistan, to name but a few, and has created an environment conducive to bigotry and hate speech. Banned religious organisations openly operate on Facebook, disseminating their sectarian ideology and spewing out venom against religious minorities and other Muslim sects. The Government seems powerless to stop this hate crime on social media. (...)*

*Christians*

*The Christian community fared no better in 2017. Pakistan ranked fourth on the Christian support group Open Doors World Watch List 2017 of the 50 countries where it is most difficult to be a Christian. Violent persecution of Christians is a common occurrence in Pakistan. Christians are targets for murder, bombings, abduction of women, rape, forced conversions, and eviction from home and country. Fake cases under blasphemy laws are regularly used to terrorise Christians.*

*In April, vandals purportedly torched a makeshift church built on a vacant plot in Lahore. The incident occurred after the congregants had observed Good Friday prayers. Also in April, Christian residents of Salik Town, a neighbourhood of Faisalabad, were told to*

*leave the area or convert if they wished to continue living in the neighbourhood, following a communal dispute when a local Christian girl converted and eloped with a Muslim boy.*

*Shahzad Masih, a 16-year-old sweeper at the Shahmim Riaz Hospital in Dinga city in Punjab Province's Gujrat district, was accused of blasphemy by a member of an Islamist extremist party. Since his arrest on 14 July 2017, his family have had no contact with him and police have denied holding the boy.*

*In August, 17-year-old Christian student Sharoon Masih was ruthlessly lynched by his classmate at Government MC Model High School for Boys in Burewala of Vehari District for daring to drink water from the same glass as him.*

*In September, an anti-terrorism court in Bahawalpur sentenced a 35-year-old Christian, Nadeem James, to death on blasphemy charges. James, a tailor by profession, was accused by a friend of sharing 'blasphemous messages' on WhatsApp.*

*Police in Pakistan allegedly beat a 14-year-old Christian boy to death on 9 October because he had got into a fight with a Muslim classmate who tried to bully him into renouncing his faith. In October, militants hurled a grenade at the Gospel Faith Church in Quetta. No casualties were reported as there was no one inside the church at the time.*

*Five Christian families in rural Pakistan have gone into hiding after death threats were made against an 18-year-old because of his alleged blasphemy against Islam. Sonu Arshad, who lives in the remote village of Sukheki, 200 kilometres north of Lahore, belongs to one of the families – the only Christians in the village. The families fled on 3 November 2017 after a Facebook page purporting to be that of a local TV channel posted a photograph of the teenager and asked locals to 'burn his church and give him the death penalty'.*

*Asia Bibi is still languishing in jail following her conviction for making blasphemous remarks over seven years ago. When her death sentence was upheld by the Lahore High Court, she filed an appeal in the Supreme Court. However, when her case finally came up for hearing, a judge recused himself and the case was adjourned indefinitely.*

*The year ended with a suicide bomb attack on Bethel Memorial Church in Quetta while hundreds of worshippers were attending service. Nine Methodist Christians died and 60 were wounded. (...)*

*Despite numerous convictions under the law, so far no blasphemy convict has been executed by the state. However, since 1995, at least 65 people have been murdered in Pakistan over unproven allegations of blasphemy. People accused of blasphemy have been murdered before their trials ended, and sometimes even after being cleared by the court. The blasphemy allegations alone are enough to put someone's life in danger. (...)*

*In January, it was reported that after Shaan Taseer, a Muslim, posted a video message on his Facebook page wishing Christians a happy holiday and asking for prayers for Asia Bibi and others victimised by the blasphemy law, he received 'very credible death threats' from supporters of the hard-line Muslim philosophy that inspired his father's*

**killer. An extremist religious group issued a fatwa demanding his prosecution and execution. (...)**

*A positive step*

***In the first project of its kind for religious minorities in Pakistan, the Sindh government has proposed a plan to bring hundreds of places of worship of non-Muslims across the province under video surveillance for their security and monitoring of their infrastructure. Four religious minorities, Christians, Hindus, Parsis and Sikhs, have been selected for the project. This is welcome news but the exclusion of the Ahmadiyya places of worship is deplored. However, as of December 2017, no progress on the project has been evident.***» Source: Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), State of Human Rights in 2017, mars 2018, p. 4, 27, 35, 82, 88-91, 93, 95, 125, 183: <http://hrcp-web.org/publication/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/State-of-Human-Rights-in-2017.pdf>.

HRW, 5 février 2018 :

***«On January 2, Pakistan's judiciary transferred the blasphemy case against university professor Junaid Hafeez from one judge to another, the sixth time it has changed hands since his trial began. The delay in the case – it has been five years since Hafeez was first charged – is only the latest miscarriage of justice stemming from Pakistan's abusive blasphemy law.***

***Hafeez, 33, was arrested on March 13, 2013 in Punjab province after a criminal case was registered accusing him of blasphemy. The charge is based on alleged comments posted on Facebook, which Hafeez denies. He has been in solitary confinement since his arrest.***

***Section 295-C of Pakistan's penal code, known as the blasphemy law, carries what is effectively a mandatory death sentence. Although there have been no executions to date, at least 18 people are currently on death row, while another 20 are serving life sentences for related offences. Hundreds have been charged under the law. The law is increasingly used to jail and prosecute people for comments made on social media.***» Source: Human Rights Watch (HRW), Pakistani Professor's Endless Blasphemy Trial, 5 février 2018: [www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/1423873.html](http://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/1423873.html).

Jamestown Foundation, 26 janvier 2018 :

***«Sectarian Attacks***

***The group [Wilayat-e-Khorasan, the Islamic State (IS) affiliate in the borderlands of Afghanistan and Pakistan] has claimed responsibility for several sectarian attacks in the region in the last six months or so, with Shia and Sufi places of worship and Christian churches the main targets.***

***In Pakistan, a deadly sectarian attack on December 17 last year in Balochistan was attributed to ISK-P and allied factions. Two armed militants with suicide vests and assault rifles stormed the Bethel Memorial Methodist Church in Quetta, leaving at least nine Christian worshipers dead and more than 50 people seriously wounded (The Nation, December 17, 2017). Although a heightened security presence meant that the death toll was much lower, the attack was reminiscent of ISK-P's March 2016 Lahore park bombing, in which more than 70 people,***



**mostly Christian women and children, were killed.**» Source: Jamestown Foundation, Islamic State Gains Ground in Afghanistan as Its Caliphate Crumbles Elsewhere; Terrorism Monitor Volume: 16 Issue: 2, 26 janvier 2018: [www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/1423037.html](http://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/1423037.html).

Pakistan National Assembly, 22 février 2013 :

«1. (...) *This Act may be called the **Investigation for Fair Trial Act, 2013.*** (...)

2. (...) (1) *The provisions of this Act shall apply to (a) all citizens of Pakistan within or outside Pakistan;* (...)

(2) *Any person liable for investigation under the provisions of this Act for a scheduled offence committed partly or fully outside Pakistan shall be dealt with according to the provisions of this Act in the same manner as if such an offence had been committed within Pakistan.* (...)

31. *Warrants to be served outside Pakistan.–(1) Warrants obtained under the Act shall be executable outside Pakistan as well as in foreign jurisdictions, either directly on the concerned service providers or through mutual legal assistance mechanism as agreed between Pakistan and the concerned foreign state as provided under the law, treaty or agreement.*» Source: Pakistan National Assembly, Act No. 1 of 2013 (Investigation for Fair Trial Act, 2013), The Gazette of Pakistan, 22 février 2013, p. 20, 30: [www.na.gov.pk/uploads/documents/1361943916\\_947.pdf](http://www.na.gov.pk/uploads/documents/1361943916_947.pdf).

RFE/RL, 16 avril 2018 :

«**Pakistani officials say two Christians have been killed in a drive-by shooting outside a church in the country's southwest. The Islamic State (IS) extremist group claimed responsibility for the attack on April 15 outside a church in the city of Quetta, the provincial capital of Balochistan Province.**» Source: RFE/RL – Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty: Pakistani Christians Killed In Drive-By Shooting, 16 avril 2018: [www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/1429460.html](http://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/1429460.html).

RFE/RL, 3 avril 2018 :

«**Four Christians were shot dead in southwestern Pakistan on April 2, police said, in an attack claimed by the Islamic State (IS) militant group. The group was travelling in a rickshaw when armed men on a motorcycle intercepted them and opened fire in the city of Quetta, the capital of Balochistan Province.**» Source: RFE/RL, Four Pakistani Christians Killed In Attack Claimed By Islamic State, 3 avril 2018: [www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/1428290.html](http://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/1428290.html).

RFE/RL, 24 mars 2018 :

«**A Pakistani court has acquitted 20 people of charges that they were part of a lynch mob who burned alive a Christian couple that had been falsely accused of blasphemy in 2014.**

**Brick-factory workers Shahzad Masih, 26, and Shama Shahzad, 24, were burned alive in an industrial kiln by a mob that had been incited by accusations the couple desecrated**

***the Koran near the town of Kot Radha Kishan in Punjab by throwing away pages of the Islamic holy book along with the trash.***

***After the attack, it emerged that the couple had been falsely accused. Police arrested scores of villagers in the case. An antiterrorism court in Lahore in November 2016 sentenced five men to death and 10 others were given varying jail terms for playing a supportive role in the killings. That court also acquitted 93 suspects in the case in 2016.***

***Prosecutor Abdur Rauf says the court on March 24 acquitted 20 other suspects who had been indicted in the case at a later stage.»*** Source: RFE/RL, Pakistani Court Acquits 20 In Case Of Christians Burned Alive, 24 mars 2018:  
[www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/1427593.html](http://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/1427593.html).

RFE/RL, 21 août 2017 :

***«Pakistani police say they have arrested a Christian teenager on blasphemy charges in the eastern province of Punjab. Local police official Pervez Iqbal said on August 20 that 18-year-old Asif Masih is accused of burning pages of the Koran. The incident allegedly took place on August 12 near the town of Wazirabad.»*** Source: RFE/RL, Pakistan Arrests Christian Teenager On Blasphemy Charges, 21 août 2017:  
[www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/1406111.html](http://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/1406111.html).

RFE/RL, 23 novembre 2016 :

***«A Pakistani antiterrorism court has sentenced five people to death in connection with the killing of a Christian couple by a mob after they were falsely accused of blasphemy. The couple, Shahzad Masih and Shama Bibi, were beaten and then set on fire by an angry mob at a brick kiln in Punjab Province in 2014.***

***The rulings represent a rare victory for the much-maligned Christian community in Pakistan, where the authorities have previously been hesitant to clamp down on mob violence for fear of angering powerful Islamist groups. The antiterrorism court in Lahore on November 23 also sentenced eight other people to two years in prison for their part in the killing. The court also acquitted 93 suspects in the case. (...) It was not clear when the death sentences would be carried out. (...)***

*Mob Justice*

***At least 1,481 people in Pakistan were charged for blasphemy between 1987 and 2015, according to the National Commission for Justice and Peace. At least nine people accused of blasphemy were given death sentences, and another three received life imprisonment between 2010 and 2015.»*** Source: RFE/RL, Pakistan Sentences Five To Death Over Christian Couple's Killing, 23 novembre 2016:  
[www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/1095675.html](http://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/1095675.html).

UCA News, 21 mars 2017 :

***«A government advertisement singling out Christians, Hindus and Shia Muslims in Pakistan for sweeper jobs have drawn the ire of church and human rights activists.***

*The advertisement for new sweepers was placed by local government officials in Bannu district in northwestern Pakistan in a local Urdu daily on March 17. Critics said that this was another example of religious minorities being forced into degrading jobs.*

*The advertisement said that male and female applicants must be Hindu, Christian or Shia — the minority Muslim sect. Although officials now claim the word "Shia" was added by mistake, they maintain that only religious minorities are preferred.*

*The Justice and Peace Commission of Multan Diocese has condemned "repeated discriminatory" advertisements by the government. "Faisalabad Waste Management Company issued a similar notice earlier this year asking for healthy non-Muslims for waste workers. We sent a legal notice to the administration of the Nishtar Hospital in Multan last year for specifying the same post," Hyacinth Peter executive secretary of the commission told ucanews.com.*

(...)

*Historically, Christians in Pakistan have been assigned jobs described as "degrading and defiling." Road sweepers are mostly Christian and are called "untouchable" or "low-born."*

*Although Asia Bibi, a Catholic mother of five, was sentenced to death on charges of blasphemy, she maintains her only crime was to drink water meant for Muslims only as she was considered untouchable by her fellow farm workers.*

*A news report quoting World Watch Monitor said that minority representation in sanitation work in Pakistan is above 80 percent. According to the report, 824 out of 935 sanitation workers in the Peshawar Municipal Corporation are Christian.*

*About 6,000 out of 7,894 sanitation workers in the Lahore Waste Management Company are Christian. And 768 out of 978 workers in the Quetta Municipal Corporation are Christian.*

*More than 95 percent of Pakistan's 180 million people are Muslims, majority of them belonging to the Sunni branch of Islam. Less than 2 percent are Christians, Hindus and other religious minorities.» Source: UCA News, Christians selected for 'degrading' jobs in Pakistan, 21 mars 2017: [www.ucanews.com/news/christians-selected-for-degrading-jobs-in-pakistan/78708](http://www.ucanews.com/news/christians-selected-for-degrading-jobs-in-pakistan/78708).*

HCR, janvier 2017 :

**«B. Penal Code: Blasphemy Laws**

*Inherited from the British legal system, Pakistan's so-called blasphemy laws – sections 295, 295A and 298 of the Pakistan Penal Code – were designed to prevent and limit religious violence. In the thirty years from independence in 1947 until 1977, there were reportedly only ten reported judgments that related to offences against religion under these laws, and not one complaint was registered by a Muslim against a non-Muslim for committing an act of blasphemy against the Prophet Muhammad or for defiling the Holy Quran.*

Significant changes were, however, introduced between 1980 and 1986 by the Zia-ul-Haq Government, with provisions relating to blasphemy and other offences against religion introduced into the Penal Code. **In the early 1980s, for instance, the insertion of Section 298A into the Penal Code made the use of derogatory remarks “by words, either spoken or written, or by visible representation, or by any imputation, innuendo or insinuation directly or indirectly” in respect of certain “holy personages” a criminal offence punishable with up to three years’ imprisonment and/or a fine. In 1982, the introduction of Section 295B rendered defiling the Quran a criminal offence punishable with imprisonment for life. Finally in 1986 Section 295C was introduced, pursuant to which anyone who “by words, either spoken or written, or by visible representation, or by any imputation, innuendo, or insinuation, directly or indirectly, defiles the sacred name of the Holy Prophet Muhammad” is liable to the death penalty or life imprisonment and is also liable to a fine.**

**The introduction of the blasphemy laws in the Penal Code has reportedly fostered an atmosphere of religious intolerance and has contributed to the institutionalization of discrimination against religious minorities. The blasphemy laws have also come under strong criticism for fuelling extremist violence and targeted attacks against individuals from religious minority groups. Although Pakistan’s blasphemy laws apply to all its citizens, irrespective of religious belief or affiliation, it is reported that such laws disproportionately affect religious minorities.**

**In 1990, the FSC ruled that Section 295C offences should always attract the death penalty, and ordered the Government to amend Section 295C accordingly. While the Government failed to act by the deadline of 30 April 1991 to do so, the Supreme Court subsequently ruled that blasphemy cases carry a mandatory capital punishment, pursuant to the FSC’s 1990 ruling and Article 203D(3) of the Constitution. As noted above, in March 2015 the government lifted the moratorium for all 28 offences which carry a death penalty; the moratorium on the death penalty had been in place since 2008. Applying the death penalty for blasphemy has been deemed disproportionate by successive UN Special Rapporteurs on freedom of religion or belief. Disproportionate punishments imposed for breaches of the blasphemy laws and/or the Hudood Ordinances (see Section III.D), such as imprisonment or death, may amount to persecution.**

**Attempts in late 2010 and 2011 by the then-ruling Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) to reform or repeal the blasphemy laws failed, reportedly due to pressure of hard-line religious groups. In November 2010, with the Government’s expression of support, the former Information Minister and member of the PPP, Sherry Rehman, introduced a private bill aimed at reforming the blasphemy laws. The proposed amendments sought, inter alia, to remove the death penalty for such offences, criminalize incitement to religious discrimination or violence, as well as to penalize false or frivolous accusations. In December 2010, at the request of the Government, the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) reviewed the blasphemy laws and recommended certain procedural changes with a view to preventing their misuse. However, in December 2010 and January 2011, reportedly under the pressure of large rallies organized by hard-line Islamic groups and protest by religious political parties against the bill, the Government reneged on its commitment to review the blasphemy laws. On 4 January and 2 March 2011, respectively, two high profile public figures were killed, purportedly due to their overt opposition to the blasphemy laws: Salman Taseer, the Governor of Punjab, and Shahbaz Bhatti, Pakistan’s Minister for Minority Affairs. The Office of the United**

**Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) condemned these assassinations as “symptomatic of pervasive violence against religious minorities in Pakistan and a lack of protection for their places of worship”. Following the murders of Governor Taseer and Minister Bhatti, Rehman withdrew her proposed legislation. On 3 May 2013, the Federal Investigation Agency’s Chief Prosecutor in the Shahbaz Bhatti murder case was reportedly killed in Islamabad by armed men. In the wake of these events, there reportedly remains a widespread climate of fear and unwillingness by officials to voice any public criticism of the blasphemy laws. In a positive development, in October 2015 the Supreme Court of Pakistan ruled that it is not blasphemous to call for reform of the blasphemy laws. The Court also stated that the State is responsible for ensuring that innocent persons are protected from false allegations of blasphemy.**

**Actors in the judicial system, including police, lawyers and judges, reportedly frequently demonstrate bias against those accused of blasphemy, thus infringing on these individuals’ right to a fair trial.**

**The Code of Criminal Procedure requires that only a Muslim judge shall preside over first instance hearings registered under Section 295C of the Penal Code. The vague and subjective language of Section 295C reportedly allows individual judges to interpret, based on their own Islamic beliefs, whether an act has defiled the sacred name of the Holy Prophet; consequently, judicial decisions relating to this provision are reported to be “disturbingly contradictory and arbitrary”. In particular, independent observers have noted that the provisions in the Penal Code relating to blasphemy are open to abuse due to the lack of a clear definition of blasphemy, the absence of a requirement to prove intent for Section 295C offences, and a lack of procedural safeguards. According to legal observers, lower courts often failed to adhere to basic evidentiary standards in blasphemy cases. In 1990, the FSC ruled that blasphemy under Section 295C was an “intentional or reckless wrong” which required the mens rea of “intention, purpose, design, or at least foresight”. However, while courts routinely impose the death penalty for Section 295C, they reportedly do often not require proof of intent for a conviction. The vague wording in Section 295C has reportedly allowed for a broad array of acts to be prosecuted under this section, including posting “objectionable pictures” or “blasphemous caricatures” on Facebook, or using “Quranic pages in making firecrackers”. Even calls for reform or critiques of provisions relating to offences against religion in the Pakistan Penal Code have been prosecuted under Section 295C. Many blasphemy convictions are reportedly overturned on appeal.**

**Judges and lawyers involved in the prosecution of religiously-motivated crimes are reportedly prevented from operating effectively due to the absence of or the inadequateness of protection of their individual safety. Members of extremist groups are reported to frequently use threats and intimidation against judges and other court officials involved in first instance court proceedings in blasphemy cases, resulting in trials being delayed and drawn-out, with the accused often subjected to long periods in pre-trial detention. Bail is reportedly often not granted in blasphemy cases, even in situations where the defendant would qualify for statutory bail.**

**Individuals accused of blasphemy can reportedly have significant difficulty finding a lawyer, because many lawyers reportedly support the blasphemy laws, while others fear**

*intimidation and attacks by complainants and other members of the community. Moreover, lawyers are reported to charge high fees to provide legal services in blasphemy cases. Lawyers who represent persons accused of blasphemy are reported to fear being accused of blasphemy themselves, as a result of which they reportedly often refrain from arguing that the alleged conduct did not in fact amount to blasphemy.*

*Judges presiding over blasphemy cases and witnesses for the defence are also reported to be subjected to intimidation, harassment and acts of violence.*

*Accusations of blasphemy may carry serious risks for the person accused as well as their families, irrespective of whether the person concerned is subsequently charged with an offence against the blasphemy laws. Individuals accused of blasphemy have reportedly been subject to death threats, assaults, including mob attacks, and assassinations by community members or members of the security forces, either before they are arrested and tried in court, or even after they have been acquitted, forcing some to go into hiding or to flee in fear of their lives. Some persons accused of blasphemy are reportedly tortured or killed while in police custody or detention. Prison officials have reportedly stated that detainees accused of or convicted of blasphemy are at high risk of attacks by other detainees or even prison staff. In many cases, individuals are reportedly kept in solitary confinement or isolation as a form of protection, sometimes for many years at a time.*

*The blasphemy laws are reportedly frequently used by members of society to threaten and harass members of religious minorities, with many allegations made to settle personal scores or carry out personal vendettas, within a climate of impunity. In addition to the vague framing of charges and the low threshold for establishing a Section 295C offence, the Penal Code does not require evidence to be presented after allegations of blasphemy are made, and in practice there are reportedly no penalties or punishments implemented against those who make false accusations. Police can reportedly be bribed into registering false charges of blasphemy against members of religious minorities. In an attempt to curb the abusive application of the blasphemy provisions, in 2004 Parliament amended the Code of Criminal Procedure, requiring a senior police officer to investigate blasphemy complaints before registering them with the courts. To date, the requirement has reportedly rarely been implemented. In October 2016, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) said that it was “concerned at reports about the large number of blasphemy cases based on false accusation and the absence of investigation and prosecutions”. In May 2015 police reportedly colluded with a religious group, encouraging them to file a First Information Report (FIR) against 68 lawyers, accusing these lawyers of committing blasphemy, allegedly in retaliation for the lawyers’ complaints against the illegal detention of one of their colleagues by the police.*

(...)

#### *IV. Situation of Religious Minorities in Pakistan*

*As noted above (Section III.B), treatment of members of religious minorities in detention and police custody is reportedly significantly worse than that of other citizens, particularly in the case of detainees accused of blasphemy, who often suffer from violence not*

**only from fellow inmates but also from members of the security forces. Killings of members of religious minorities by police officers were reported by media and NGOs in 2014. Police reportedly only conduct poor investigations into the desecration, vandalism and destruction of places of worship of religious minorities and reportedly fail to act to prevent such attacks.**

**In its 2014 judgment the Supreme Court stated that inadequate protection of minority religious groups was due to an “absence of effective State action”. The Supreme Court noted that State authorities and law enforcement officials are not aware of, or are inadequately sensitized with regards to minority rights and issues, which hinders the protection of the rights of religious minorities. The Court directed the government to take a number of remedial steps to address this. In November 2014 the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) was established, with Christian, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh representatives, with the aim of reviewing existing laws and preparing an inter-faith harmony policy.**

**In its November 2015 report to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the government reported that the NCM had been strengthened. In May 2015, according to the Minister of State for Religious Affairs the final draft of a policy on inter-faith harmony had been prepared and all provincial governments were tasked with establishing inter-faith harmony committees at the district level. Nevertheless, the government has continued to be criticized for failing to provide adequate protection to members of religious minorities against violence by members of society and for tolerating or condoning discrimination and violence against members of religious minorities.**

**However, in 2015, there were reportedly some improvements in police professionalism and instances of local authorities protecting minorities from discrimination and communal violence. In March 2016, following an attack in Lahore on Easter Sunday which was claimed by a splinter group of the Pakistani Taliban and reportedly directed against Christians, the federal government reportedly deployed federal paramilitary forces (the Rangers); according to media reports, 5,000 people were questioned as part of the investigation into the attack and more than 200 people were detained.**

**Different organs of the State have been criticized for appearing unwilling to hold perpetrators of religious or sectarian violence to account, thus perpetuating a climate of impunity. While the government has banned several religious groups which it has deemed to be “extremist” or “terrorist” and which are reported to be behind some of the violence against members of religious minorities, observers report that some of these groups reportedly remain active by changing their name after being banned under their previous name. Despite a regulatory framework that prohibits inciting violence in the name of Islam, hate speech against religious minorities is reportedly prevalent, with mainstream media outlets reportedly allowing hate speech and incitement to violence against religious minorities without censure. According to a survey from June 2014, 91 per cent of respondents had come across hate speech online directed against religious minorities. Following the adoption of the National Action Plan in December 2014, the police have reportedly made arrests of individuals, including religious leaders and clerics, for hate speech and misuse of loudspeakers; while book shops have been closed for allegedly selling hate literature, and religious material has been confiscated from some mosques**

**and seminaries. 21 individuals were reportedly convicted for hate speech between January and May 2015. In early October 2015, the federal and provincial governments reportedly announced bans on the movement of hundreds of religious clerics accused of spreading sectarian hatred. There have been allegations that police, under pressure to implement the National Action Plan, have made unfair arrests of members of religious minority groups. In its 2016 review of Pakistan, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination acknowledged the government's efforts to address hate speech and hate crimes, including through arrests. However, the Committee stated that it remained "deeply concerned" at the high incidence of hate crimes such as harassment, mob violence and killings of individuals from religious minorities, particularly Hazaras, Christian Dalits, Hindu Dalits and Ahmadis, and the absence of investigation and prosecution. It also expressed its concern "reports of a rise in hate speech targeting religious minorities, including by public officials and political parties, in the media, on social networks, and at religious gatherings".**

**State authorities have also reportedly failed to provide adequate protection to members of the judiciary, lawyers, human rights defenders and others who defend the rights of members of religious minority groups and who themselves are reportedly threatened, intimidated, harassed and physically attacked.**

(...)

### 3. Christians

**There are reported to be between 2.05 million and 2.09 million Christians in Pakistan, with between 82.5 and 90 per cent of Christians living in Punjab province.**

#### a) Situation of Christian Individuals in Pakistan

**State authorities, including the police, have been criticized for having failed to intervene to protect Christian individuals from violent attacks and for failing to adequately investigate incidents of discrimination or violence, although in some cases the police are reported to have intervened and protected Christians from attacks by members of the community. In December 2014 the Supreme Court held that the police had been negligent in their response to an incident in November 2014, when a mob of around 1,500 people reportedly killed a Christian couple who had been accused of blasphemy. In November 2016, the Anti-Terrorism Court of Kashur district sentenced five Muslim men to death for their role in the killing of the Christian couple. (...)**

**The police and the judiciary reportedly provide inadequate protection for Christian victims of forced conversion and forced marriage, as well as for those accused of blasphemy (see also Section IV, Situation of Religious Minorities in Pakistan).**

**Members of minority religious communities, including Christians, are reported to be more likely to be abused while in detention and to be allocated poorer facilities than Muslim inmates.**



**The government has also reportedly failed to protect minorities from bonded labour in the brickmaking and agricultural sectors. The unlawful practice of bonded labour reportedly disproportionately affects Christian individuals. Although Pakistani law prohibits slavery and all forms of forced labour, it is reported that in practice the authorities fail to enforce these provisions.**

**Christian individuals are also reportedly subject to discrimination at education institutions (see also Section IV, Situation of Religious Minorities in Pakistan). Public school text books reportedly teach religious intolerance, and include derogatory statements about Christians.**

**In 2015, four Christians were reportedly charged with blasphemy. In 2014 there were reportedly five blasphemy cases against Christians, and at least three Christians were sentenced to death following a conviction for blasphemy. On 16 October 2014, the Lahore High Court upheld the death sentence of Aasia Bibi, a Christian woman convicted of blasphemy in 2010. In July 2015, the Supreme Court suspended her execution pending the outcome of her appeal. (See also Section III.B, Blasphemy Laws.)**

*b) Treatment of Christian Individuals by Non-State Actors*

**Attacks and incidents of mob violence targeting Christians reportedly continue to occur throughout the country; analysts attribute the violence in part to the growing influence of Sunni extremist ideology. Militant groups have conducted attacks in particular during church services or religious processions. In September 2016, four armed men reportedly attacked a Christian residential area in Peshawar, known as Christian Colony, leaving one man dead; police reportedly intervened, killing the four militants. In March 2016, a suspected suicide bomber killed at least 72 people in a local park in Lahore on Easter Sunday; a splinter group of the Pakistani Taliban reportedly claimed responsibility and announced that the attack had targeted Christians, although there were many Muslims among the victims.**

**On 15 March 2015, a militant group reportedly bombed two Christian churches in Lahore while the churches were full of worshippers participating in a Sunday service, killing an estimated 14 to 17 people and wounding at least 70. In response to the attack, Christians protested on 16 March 2015; the protest reportedly became violent and the Christian protestors reportedly killed two Muslims; civil society groups estimated that the police arrested more than 500 Christians alleged to have participated in the killings. Residents of the Christian neighbourhood Youhanabad in Lahore reported fearing retaliation and further violence.**

**Christians have also reportedly been subject to targeted attacks and killings by members of society. Christians reportedly continue to face illegal occupation and desecration of their places of worship and graveyards, and in some cases their stores and businesses. For example, in January 2016, two churches on the outskirts of Lahore were reportedly subject to arson attacks. In November 2015, Gawahi Television, a Christian Web TV station in Karachi was reportedly the target of an arson attack, and its studios and equipment completely destroyed in the fire; the station had reportedly informed the authorities that it had received threats prior to the attack. In May 2015, an armed group reportedly vandalized a Christian church in Punjab, and injured six people, including the pastor.**

**Criminal provisions, particularly the blasphemy laws, are reportedly used by militant organizations and members of some Muslim communities to intimidate and harass Christians, and also reportedly to exact revenge or to settle personal or business disputes.** For example, in September 2016 a Christian youth was reportedly accused of blasphemy by one of his friends for “liking” a post on Facebook about a religious icon that his friends felt had been disrespected; many Christian families in the region reportedly fled their homes for fear of the blasphemy accusation triggering violence. In July 2016 a Christian man was reportedly charged with blasphemy after a Muslim friend alleged that he had sent a poem on Whatsapp that insulted Islam. In June 2016 a Christian man was reportedly convicted of blasphemy and sentenced to death by an anti-terrorism court in Gujranwala. The man had reportedly filed a complaint for blackmail/extortion and was later charged with blasphemy when the men he had accused of extortion claimed that he had in fact committed blasphemy. In September 2015 a Christian man was reported to have been arrested by police after a Muslim business rival accused him of blasphemy allegedly in retaliation for a commercial dispute. **Allegations of blasphemy by members of society have in some cases escalated into killings and mob attacks.** For example, in July 2015 in the Sheikhpura district of Punjab province, a cleric reportedly led a mob to assault a Christian couple after accusing them of blasphemy. In May 2015, a mob reportedly tried to set a Christian man on fire after allegations of blasphemy; the mob reportedly attacked a mainly Christian locality where the accused lived and ransacked homes there. **Even those who have been acquitted of blasphemy charges by the courts have reportedly continued to receive threats, prompting some recipients of such threats to flee the country in fear of their lives.**

**Christians are reportedly subject to widespread discrimination in relation to employment. Many Christians reportedly have difficulty finding jobs other than those involving menial labour.**» Source: UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Members of Religious Minorities from Pakistan, janvier 2017, p. 10-18, 22, 25, 39-45:  
[www.refworld.org/docid/5857ed0e4.html](http://www.refworld.org/docid/5857ed0e4.html).

USCIRF, avril 2018 :

**«In 2017, religious minorities in Pakistan, including Hindus, Christians, Sikhs, Ahmadis, and Shi'a Muslims, continued to face attacks and discrimination from extremist groups and society at large. The government of Pakistan failed to protect these groups adequately, and it perpetrated systematic, ongoing, egregious religious freedom violations. Various media outlets promoted intolerance against religious minorities. (...)**

**The entry of fundamentalist, and often extremist, religious parties into the political arena in advance of July 2018 national elections further threatens religious minorities' already precarious status in the country. (...)**

*Based on these violations, in 2018 USCIRF again finds that Pakistan should be designated as a “country of particular concern,” or CPC, under the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA), as it has found since 2002. Despite USCIRF’s longstanding recommendation, the State Department has never so designated Pakistan. In December 2017, the State Department named Pakistan as the first, and only, country on its “Special Watch List,” a new category created by December 2016 amendments to IRFA. (...)*

**The continued operation of terrorist groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), the Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP), and Tehrik-e-Taliban (Pakistani Taliban) challenges the overall security of the country. These groups threaten not only members of religious minority communities but also anyone who attempts to advocate on their behalf. This has resulted in politicians and judges avoiding the public promotion of rights for religious minorities, which has fostered the spread of an increasingly divisive and anti-minority narrative among the public.**

**The government of Pakistan has not addressed the spread of sectarian or religiously motivated intolerant speech and has not prosecuted perpetrators of violent crimes against religious minorities. Despite the existence of specialized antiterrorism courts to deal with extremist suspects, a vast number of extremists have either been released from custody or avoided arrest and prosecution all together. Often, acquittals of terrorist suspects can be attributed to flawed police investigation procedures, which continue to persist across Pakistan's police forces. (...)**

**The Zarb-e-Azb Operation launched by the military in 2014 in the western border region targeted sectarian terrorist groups like the Pakistani Taliban and LeJ, who have taken responsibility for several attacks against Christians, Shi'a Muslims, and Ahmadis. The impact of this operation continues to be felt today by terrorist groups who have a diminished capability to carry out attacks on vulnerable groups. The government has also provided additional security to religious minority groups, especially during religious festivals. Further, the National Action Plan of 2014 (NAP) set forth several strategies to deal with terrorism and address the spread of sectarianism and extremist ideology. Unfortunately, despite the elapse of three years, many of NAP's recommendations have not been implemented. Accordingly, religious minorities continue to deal with terrorist attacks, incitements to violence against them, and sociopolitical disenfranchisement. (...)**

#### *Blasphemy*

**By applying sections 295 and 298 of the penal code, Pakistani courts have continued to punish citizens for blasphemy. Since 2011, about 100 blasphemy cases have been registered, with nearly as many people currently serving prison sentences for blasphemy charges, approximately 40 of whom are awaiting the death penalty or are serving life sentences. This includes Asia Bibi, a Christian mother and field laborer who was sentenced to death by hanging based on allegations of blasphemy in 2010 and who has been in jail since awaiting appeal.**

**Others have been killed by mobs provoked by accusations of blasphemy, regardless of the accusation's veracity. In some cases, false allegations of blasphemy are made against religious minorities who are involved in a personal or legal conflict with a neighbor, colleague, or coworker. (...)**

**Pakistan's Telecommunication Authority has sent text messages to millions of citizens and released advertisements in local and national newspapers to emphasize that the nation's blasphemy laws apply to digital material. In 2017, authorities charged at least one individual for an allegedly blasphemous Facebook post. There is potential for digital blasphemy cases to explode in number, given the 35 million internet users in the country and nearly one million new users coming online each month. (...)**

***The government has long failed to adopt measures that would repeal the blasphemy laws, despite their continued misuse against religious minorities and progressive Muslims. Furthermore, in late 2017 the government accepted the demands of Islamist protesters to hasten and ease the process of charging an individual for blasphemy, although some of the specifics of these changes remain unclear. (...)***

#### *Elections*

***The increasing involvement of religious extremists in the political sphere in 2017, in advance of the July 2018 national elections, stirred sectarian and interreligious tensions in Pakistan and exacerbated the discrimination and violence felt by religious minorities. (...)***

***Another new entrant to the political sphere is the leader of the protest movement that shut down Islamabad in December, Khadim Hussain Rizvi. Rizvi's public career took off in 2011 when he supported the murder of a provincial governor, Salman Taseer, for advocating in favor of changing the country's blasphemy laws. Rizvi has made public speeches calling for the elimination of rights for Ahmadi citizens. By 2017, Rizvi commanded a large following and was seeking to form a new political party, the Tehreek-i-Labbaik Ya Rasool Allah (TLYR). While religious leaders like Rizvi had associated themselves with established political parties in the past, by the end of 2017 they were attempting to run independently for elections to promote incitement to violence and anti-minority narratives.***

***Regardless of their success in the 2018 elections, the formal entry into the political system of such extremist Islamist figures threatens to have a deep impact. It is likely that other political parties that have otherwise maintained a secular or pro-minority agenda will begin to adopt extremist views in order to compete with these new parties. Further, these parties have demonstrated their influence with the general populace through the 2017 oath protests led by Rizvi, which culminated in the protest group dictating policies for the government to implement without holding any seats in parliament. (...)***

#### *Education*

***Education in Pakistan impacts religious freedom and the public narrative on religious minorities through the intolerant curriculum taught at public schools and the growth of extremist-influenced madrassas (religious schools). Pakistan's public education curriculum has been criticized for intolerant and bigoted messages that portray non-Muslims as unpatriotic and teach students to distrust them. USCIRF's 2016 study, Teaching Intolerance in Pakistan: Religious Bias in Public Textbooks, found nearly 70 intolerant or biased passages in the textbooks used across the nation's four provinces.»*** Source: USCIRF, US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), United States Commission on International Religious Freedom 2018 Annual Report; 2018 Country Reports: USCIRF Recommended Countries of Particular Concern (CPC): Pakistan, avril 2018, p. 64-69: [www.uscifr.gov/sites/default/files/2018USCIRFAR.pdf](http://www.uscifr.gov/sites/default/files/2018USCIRFAR.pdf).

USCIRF, 26 avril 2017 :

«**USCIRF is aware of at least 40 individuals currently sentenced to death or serving life sentences for blasphemy in Pakistan, including two Christians, Anjum Naz Sindhu and Javed Naz, and a Muslim, Jaffar Ali, all sentenced to death on June 28, 2016, by an anti-terrorism court in Gujranwala, Punjab Province; and Aasia Bibi, a Christian woman convicted and sentenced to death in 2010 after a 2009 dispute with coworkers. In October 2016, the Pakistani Supreme Court delayed Ms. Bibi's final appeal hearing after a judge recused himself; she remains imprisoned and the hearing has not yet been rescheduled. (...)**

**In January 2017, an antiterrorism court acquitted more than 100 suspects accused of participating in the January 2013 attack on Joseph Colony, a predominantly Christian neighborhood in Lahore, Punjab Province. The attack was sparked when a Christian resident was accused of blasphemy. A mob of approximately 3,000 individuals destroyed more than 150 Christian homes, Christian businesses, and two churches, and forced hundreds of Christian families to flee. As of the end of the reporting period, not a single person has been convicted for the attack.**

However, during the past year, the government did punish several individuals for other blasphemy-related violence. **In February 2016, Mumtaz Qadri was executed by hanging for the 2011 murder of Punjab Governor Salmaan Taseer, who had spoken out against the blasphemy law and in support of Ms. Bibi. In November 2016, five individuals were sentenced to death for the brutal 2014 mob killing of Shahzad and Shama Masih, who had been falsely accused of blasphemy. Additionally, Christian communities reported to USCIRF that local officials or police sometimes made attempts to quell or protect them from violent retribution or arrests for so-called blasphemous acts. (...)**

Provincial textbooks with discriminatory content against minorities remain a significant concern. **In April 2016, USCIRF released a report, Teaching Intolerance in Pakistan: Religious Bias in Public Textbooks, which was a follow-up to its 2011 study, Connecting the Dots: Education and Religious Discrimination in Pakistan. The 2016 report found that while 16 problematic passages outlined in the 2011 report were removed from textbooks, 70 new intolerant or biased passages were added. Fifty-eight of these passages came from textbooks used in the Balochistan and Sindh provinces, while 12 came from the Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces. Overall, the report found that Pakistani textbooks continue to teach bias against and distrust of non-Muslims and followers of any faith other than Islam, and portray them as inferior. Moreover, the textbooks depict non-Muslims in Pakistan as non-Pakistani or sympathetic toward Pakistan's perceived enemies—Pakistani Christians as Westerners or British colonial oppressors and Pakistani Hindus as Indians. These portrayals stoke pre-existing societal tensions and create a negative climate for Pakistan's religious minority communities. (...)**

#### *Positive Developments*

*In the last reporting year, the government of Pakistan took some positive steps to promote human rights and to attempt to combat sectarian and religiously motivated violence and rhetoric. For example, in February 2016, it announced a 16-point Human Rights Action Plan that includes a policy framework for legislative reforms; increased protection of women's, minorities', and children's rights; human rights education; international treaty implementation; and financial support to victims of abuses. As of the end of the reporting period, however, USCIRF*

is unaware of any steps taken to implement the plan. The government also conducted an investigation and arrested over 200 people in connection with a terrorist attack in Lahore on Easter Sunday 2016 (March 27) that killed at least 70 people and injured hundreds, mostly Christians.

Additionally, it arrested several religious clerics for disseminating extremist speech or materials, closed dozens of madrassahs affiliated with banned extremist and terrorist organizations, and registered thousands of madrassahs across the country so they could be closely monitored. In February 2017, the national parliament passed the Criminal Laws (Amendment) Act 2016, which creates punishments for inciting religious, sectarian, or ethnic hatred by using loudspeakers, sound amplifiers, or any other device; calls on police to prevent sectarian and hate speech and the proliferation of hate material; and increases the punishment for the forced marriages of women belonging to minority groups. However, some religious minority communities have expressed concern that the act could be used to limit religious practices and worship and could lead to increased arrests and false accusations of blasphemy. The government also made positive gestures toward religious minority communities and encouraged interfaith harmony during the year. For example, in September 2016, the Minister for Human Rights and Minority Affairs announced the establishment of a new human rights task force, which will include members of civil society, journalists, priests, pastors, and Islamic scholars. In July 2016, for the first time in Pakistan's history, a Christian and a Sikh were acknowledged

as tribal leaders in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. In December 2016, Bishop Joseph Arshad of Faisalabad, who chairs the Catholic Bishops' National Commission for Justice and Peace, received the country's National Human Rights Award 2016 from President Mamnoon Hussain.

Also in December, the Railways and Human Rights ministries announced that over Christmas they would run a special "human rights" train—decorated with messages of religious tolerance, brotherhood, and love — "to express solidarity with the minority Christian community and promote inter-faith harmony." In January 2017, the Punjab Provincial Minister for Human Rights and Minorities Affairs, with the support of the government of the Netherlands, launched a pilot project, *Engaging Pakistani Interfaith Communities (EPIC)*, that seeks to use social media and the arts to promote religious harmony, tolerance, and peace.» Source: US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), United States Commission on International Religious Freedom 2017 Annual Report; 2017 Country Reports: USCIRF Recommended Countries of Particular Concern (CPC): Pakistan, 26 avril 2017, p. 60, 62-65:

[www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/1399567/5250\\_1494486459\\_pakistan-2017.pdf](http://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/1399567/5250_1494486459_pakistan-2017.pdf).

USDOS, 29 mai 2018 :

**«Armed sectarian groups connected to organizations banned by the government as extremist, as well as groups designated as terrorist organizations by the United States and other governments, staged attacks targeting Christians, Ahmadi Muslims, Sufi Muslims, and Shia Muslims, including the predominantly Shia Hazara community. (...)**

**According to the 2014 government registration documents cited by the press, there are approximately 1.4 million Hindus, 1.3 million Christians, 126,000 Ahmadis, 34,000 Bahais, 6,000 Sikhs, and 4,000 Parsis. (...)**

## Government Practices

Summary paragraph: **Civil society organizations continued to voice concern about the application of the country's blasphemy laws. According to civil society reports, there were at least 50 individuals imprisoned on blasphemy charges, at least 17 of whom had received death sentences. According to data provided by CSOs, police registered at least 10 new blasphemy cases against 17 individuals. There were at least two minors imprisoned for blasphemy in Punjab Province. Civil society groups said the blasphemy laws disproportionately impacted members of religious minority communities. The Supreme Court acquitted two persons charged with blasphemy during the year; a third case was closed due to the death of the accused while awaiting trial, while other blasphemy cases continued without resolution. A high-profile government campaign against blasphemy on social media resulted in several indictments and legislation codifying the criminalization of online blasphemy. A Supreme Court hearing for the appeal of Asia Bibi, a Christian woman sentenced to death for blasphemy in 2010, remained on indefinite hold since October 2016. Several sources reported the continued practice of initiating blasphemy complaints against neighbors, peers, or business associates to intimidate them or to settle personal grievances, and said there were instances in which government entities such as the police and courts were complicit in this practice. Legal observers said authorities took steps to protect some individuals from unfounded accusations of blasphemy, although lower courts continued to fail to adhere to basic evidentiary standards in blasphemy cases. Despite an August directive from the Islamabad High Court, the parliament took no action to amend the penal code to make the penalties for false accusations of blasphemy commensurate with those for committing blasphemy. (...)**

**Civil society groups expressed concern that authorities often failed to intervene in instances of societal violence against religious minorities, and police failed to arrest perpetrators of such abuses. NGOs and media outlets, however, reported police intervention helped to prevent religiously based violence on some occasions. Members of religious minority communities stated the government was inconsistent in safeguarding minority rights, and official discrimination against Christians, Hindus, Sikhs, and Ahmadiyya Muslims persisted. A bill passed by the Sindh Assembly in November 2016 criminalizing forced conversions stalled when the governor declined to ratify it, disappointing religious minority activists. (...)**

**According to data provided by CSOs, police registered new cases against at least 17 individuals under blasphemy laws during the year, compared with 18 new cases in 2016. There were continued reports of individuals initiating blasphemy complaints against neighbors, peers, or business associates to settle personal disputes or to intimidate vulnerable persons. While the law requires a senior police official to investigate any blasphemy charge before a complaint can be filed, human rights activists said police did not uniformly follow this procedure. According to religious organizations and human rights groups, religious minorities continued to be disproportionately accused of blasphemy relative to their small percentage of the population. CSOs also stated police continued not to file charges against many individuals who made false blasphemy accusations, and if charges were filed, courts most often acquitted those accused.**

(...)

***On September 14, a court in Gujrat, Punjab, sentenced Nadeem James, a Christian man, to death after he was convicted of sending blasphemous content via WhatsApp. James appealed the verdict to the Lahore High Court, and the case was pending at year's end.***

(...)

***In May a court in Rawalpindi sentenced Zafar Bhatti, a Christian, to life in prison for allegedly sending blasphemous text messages in 2012. Bhatti's lawyer said he planned to appeal the case to the Lahore High Court.***

***In January an ATC in Lahore acquitted 115 individuals charged with burning more than 125 Christian homes in Joseph Colony in 2013, following a blasphemy allegation against a member of the Christian community. According to press reports, the courts cited a lack of evidence in the acquittal. At year's end, no one had been convicted for the incident. The Christian whose alleged blasphemy sparked the attack remained on death row following his 2014 conviction.***

(...)

*The Supreme Court's indefinite postponement of hearings regarding the case of Asia Bibi, a Christian woman sentenced to death for blasphemy in 2010, continued. Authorities arrested Bibi in June 2009 after a group of Muslim women with whom she was arguing accused her of blasphemy against the Prophet Muhammad. The Supreme Court indefinitely postponed Bibi's October 2016 appeal hearing when a member of the three-judge bench assigned to the appeal unexpectedly recused himself. Prior to the judge's recusal, clerics affiliated with some religious organizations threatened death to anyone involved in Bibi's release. There was no subsequent hearing during the year.*

*In separate incidents in July and August, authorities in Punjab arrested two Christian teenagers for alleged blasphemy; the families of both boys said the accusations stemmed from interpersonal disputes. Another Christian teenager in Punjab, Nabeel (Masih) Amanat, remained in custody on blasphemy charges at year's end; he faced up to 10 years' imprisonment if convicted. Kasur District police arrested Amanat in September 2016 for sharing an allegedly blasphemous picture of the Kaaba in Mecca on Facebook. (...)*

***According to civil society activists and monitoring organizations, some public school textbooks continued to include derogatory statements about minority religious groups, including Ahmadi Muslims, Hindus, Jews, and Christians. Civil society leaders said the teaching of religious intolerance remained widespread, and although multiple groups had presented recommendations for the removal of discriminatory content, the federal government had not taken the initiative to support the recommended changes. Monitoring groups said textbooks used in all four provinces for grades one to 10 continued to contain religiously intolerant and biased material against Hindus, Christians, and other religious minorities. These groups reported there were initiatives by some provincial authorities to remove discriminatory material and promote tolerance through the textbooks, such as the Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board's effort to incorporate short stories promoting peace and harmony into Urdu textbooks, which started in 2016 and ran until March when the initiatives ended. Books published after March did not explicitly include materials derived from the effort but did include some passages***



added as part of the initiatives. Punjab authorities also added a separate chapter on religious minority groups to some textbooks. (...)

**The National Commission for Minorities, a government committee created in 2014 with Christian, Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh representatives, met sporadically to develop a national policy for minorities. Minority activists stated the commission's lack of a regular budget allocation and lack of an independent chairperson inhibited its development.**

**Some human rights groups criticized the government's commitment to the Ministry of Human Rights 2016 Action Plan for Human Rights, particularly its provisions related to religious minorities. The plan included nine provisions for the protection of the rights of minorities, among them enforcement of laws criminalizing incitement to religious hatred and protection for places of worship for minority religious groups.**

**Human rights activists continued to report neither the federal nor the provincial governments had made substantial progress in implementing the Supreme Court's 2014 decision directing the government to take measures to protect members of minority religious groups. (...)**

**Religious minority community leaders continued to state that the government failed to take adequate action to protect minorities from bonded labor in the brick-making and agricultural sectors, an illegal practice in which victims were disproportionately Christians and Hindus. Such families, particularly on agricultural lands in Sindh Province, often lived without basic facilities and were prevented from leaving without the permission of farm landlords. (...)**

**Some local administrative bodies continued to deny Christian and Ahmadi marriage registrations; advocates called for a new law governing Christian marriages, as the existing regulation dated to 1872. On June 19, the Lahore High Court restored a section of a law on Christian divorce that General Zia ul Haq's government had suspended in 1981, allowing the country's Christian community an avenue to legally divorce for reasons other than adultery. (...)**

**Most religious minority groups said they continued to face discrimination in government hiring. While there remained a 5 percent quota for hiring religious minorities at the federal level, minority organizations said government employers did not enforce it. According to religious minority members and media reports, provincial governments in Punjab, Sindh, and KP also failed to meet such quotas for hiring of religious minorities into the civil service.**

**Representatives of religious minorities said a "glass ceiling" continued to prevent their promotion to senior government positions. Although there were no official obstacles to advancement of minority religious group members in the military service, they said in practice non-Muslims rarely rose above the rank of colonel and were not assigned to senior positions. (...)**

**Religious minority leaders continued to state the system of selecting minority parliamentarians through the internal deliberations of mainstream parties resulted in the appointment of party stalwarts or those who could afford to "buy the seats" rather than**

**legislators who genuinely represented minority communities. They also stated the system effectively precluded the election of minority women, who were rarely in a position of sufficient influence with the major political parties to contend for a seat. (...)**

**On December 17, suicide bombers killed nine and injured nearly 60 members of the Christian community in a terrorist attack on the Bethel Memorial Methodist Church in Quetta, Balochistan. One of the attackers blew himself up outside the church's main hall, where hundreds of worshippers had gathered for Sunday service, and police officers providing security for the church shot and killed another attacker. This was the first attack on a church in the country claimed by ISIS-K. (...)**

*There were media reports of numerous incidents of societal violence related to allegations of blasphemy. (...) Also in August near Wazirabad, Punjab, a mob gathered outside a police station after authorities arrested an 18-year-old Christian for allegedly burning pages of the Quran outside a shrine. Police moved the teenager to another police station and charged him with blasphemy. (...)*

**Christian activists continued to report widespread discrimination against Christians in private employment. They said Christians had difficulty finding jobs other than those involving menial labor; some advertisements for menial jobs even specified they were open only to Christian applicants. (...)**

**There continued to be reports of attacks on religious minorities' holy places, cemeteries, and religious symbols, which police failed to prevent. According to media reports, an unidentified assailant threw a hand grenade in a church in Quetta, Balochistan, on October 7. No congregants were injured in the attack; there were no arrests for the incident by year's end.»** Source: USDOS/Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, International Religious Freedom Report for 2017, 29 mai 2018:

[www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/religiousfreedom/index.htm?year=2017&dlid=281032](http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/religiousfreedom/index.htm?year=2017&dlid=281032).

USDOS, 20 avril 2018 :

**«Representatives of Christian and Ahmadiyya Muslim communities claimed their members were often subjected to abuse in prison. (...)**

*Police often failed to protect members of religious minorities--including Ahmadiyya Muslims, Christians, Shia Muslims, and Hindus--from attacks. **Mob violence often accompanied blasphemy allegations, and individuals accused of blasphemy from both majority and minority communities were killed during the year. (...)***

*There were improvements in police professionalism and instances of local authorities protecting minorities from discrimination and communal violence. In August police rescued a Christian teenager accused of blasphemy from a vigilante mob in Alipur Chatha, Punjab. According to local human rights organizations, the mob was beating the accused until the police intervened and took him into protective custody while his blasphemy charges were pending. (...)*

**Courts routinely failed to protect the rights of religious minorities. Courts discriminatorily used laws prohibiting blasphemy against Shia, Christians, Ahmadis, and members of other religious minority groups. Lower courts often did not require adequate evidence**

*in blasphemy cases, and some convicted persons spent years in jail before higher courts eventually overturned their convictions or ordered them freed.*

*In 2015 the Supreme Court suspended the death sentence of Asia Bibi, a Christian woman convicted of blasphemy in 2010, pending its decision on her appeal. Bibi had been on death row since 2010 after a district court found her guilty of making derogatory remarks about the Prophet Muhammed during an argument. Her lawyers appealed to the Supreme Court in 2014. The appeal was due to be heard in October 2016 but was delayed after one member of the three-judge bench recused himself. The court did not set a date for the next hearing. (...)*

*Societal violence due to religious intolerance remained a serious problem. There were occasionally reports of mob violence against religious minorities, including Christians, Ahmadiyya Muslims, Hindus, and Shia Muslims. (...)*

*The use of forced and bonded labor was widespread and common in several industries across the country. NGOs estimated that nearly two million persons were in bondage, primarily in Sindh and Punjab, but also in Balochistan and KP. A large proportion of bonded laborers were low-caste Hindus as well as Christians and Muslims with lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Bonded labor was reportedly present in the agricultural sector, including the cotton, sugarcane, and wheat industries, and in the brick, coal, and carpet industries. Bonded laborers often were unable to determine when their debts were fully paid, in part because contracts were rare, and employers could take advantage of bonded laborers' illiteracy to alter debt amounts or the price laborers paid for seed and fertilizer. In some cases, landowners restricted laborers' movements with armed guards or sold laborers to other employers for the price of the laborers' debts. The government of Punjab funded the Elimination of Child Labor and Bonded Labor Project, which aimed to rehabilitate bonded laborers working in brick kilns, increase law enforcement and service provider capacity, and promote integration and coordination of government responses.» Source: US Department of State (USDOS), Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2017 - Pakistan, 20 avril 2018: [www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/1430102.html](http://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/1430102.html).*

USDOS, 15 août 2017 :

*«Armed sectarian groups connected to organizations banned by the government as extremist, however, as well as groups designated as terrorist organizations by the U.S. and other governments, staged attacks targeting Christians, Ahmadi Muslims, Sufi Muslims, and Shia Muslims, including the predominantly Shia Hazara community.*

*Throughout the year, attackers targeted and killed Christians, Ahmadis, Sufis, and Shia. On March 27, Easter Sunday, a suicide bomber in Lahore's Gulshan-e-Iqbal park killed 78 people, including 29 children, and injured more than 350; many of the victims were members of Christian families who had gathered in the park for the religious holiday, although the majority were Muslims. (...)*

*On October 13, one of the three Supreme Court justices assigned to hear the final appeal of the Asia Bibi case unexpectedly recused himself, resulting in an indefinite postponement of the hearing. Bibi, a Christian, was arrested in June 2009 after a group of Muslim*

**women with whom she was arguing accused her of blasphemy against the Prophet Muhammad. She was convicted and sentenced to death in November 2010. (...)**

**On December 30, at the urging of the Sunni Tehreek organization, Punjab police registered a blasphemy case against an “unnamed man” for issuing a video wishing all Pakistanis a Merry Christmas and asking for prayers for those victimized by the country’s blasphemy laws. The man identified himself in the video as Shaan Taseer, an activist and son of the late Punjab Governor Salmaan Taseer, who was assassinated in January 2011 by Mumtaz Qadri after speaking out against the country’s blasphemy laws. Sunni Tehreek issued a fatwa calling Taseer “liable to death” for the video message.**

*According to media reports, in October a nine-year-old Christian boy and his mother were detained and interrogated by police in Quetta after being accused of burning pages of the Quran. Local civil society activists engaged with police to review the case; police confirmed no evidence of Quran desecration was found and released the boy and his mother.*

**On September 18, Kasur District police arrested Nabeel (Masih) Amanat, a 16-year-old Christian, on charges of blasphemy for sharing a picture of the Kaaba in Mecca on Facebook. He faced up to ten years’ imprisonment if convicted, and remained in custody at year’s end.**

**In July a Muslim man filed a complaint against Nadeem James, a Christian, for sending him “a derogatory poem about Islamic holy figures” on WhatsApp. James was charged with blasphemy and the police took his relatives into “protective custody” until he surrendered himself. James remained in prison and his case remained pending before a trial court in Gujrat.**

*On June 28, the Gujranwala ATC sentenced three individuals, two Christians (Anjum Naz and Javed Naz) and one Muslim (Jaffar Ali), to death over blasphemy and extortion charges. Anjum Naz had reported to police that Javed and Jaffar were trying to extort money from him over what his family alleged was a fraudulent mobile phone recording of blasphemous speech. All three defendants appealed their sentences, and their cases remain pending.*

*On June 20, the Gujranwala ATC sentenced two Christians to six years imprisonment under blasphemy and terrorism charges, and acquitted five Christians who were also accused. They were part of a group of 16 individuals against whom local police near Gujranwala had filed charges for publishing offensive material and who had been detained since August 2015. The remaining nine defendants were subsequently released on bail and their cases remained pending at year’s end. (...)*

*On May 24, police in Sheikhpura, Punjab, arrested a local Christian man, Usman Liaqat, on blasphemy charges. Local activists reported that a group of Muslim and Christian men alleged Liaqat had posted blasphemous text on social media, after a quarrel between Liaqat and the group. He faces the death penalty if convicted. His case remained pending before a trial court at year’s end. (...)*

*On September 30, the Lahore ATC indicted on murder and terrorism charges 42 Christians who had been arrested in the lynching case of two Muslim men in the Youhanabad district. A*

large mob had burned the two men alive following bombings of two Christian churches in the area in March 2015. (...)

According to CSOs and media reports, in April a mob attempted to burn houses in the Christian community of Chak 44 in northern Punjab in response to reports a Christian man had blasphemous videos on his phone. Ten Christian families fled out of fear of attack; however, rapid deployment of an additional 70 police officers and the coordinated messaging of a local "peace committee" of Christians and Muslims helped to disperse the mob and diffuse tensions, according to media and NGO reports.

In May Christians near Gujrat used an emergency police hotline when a mob formed after local cleric tried to file blasphemy charges against a young Christian woman. The police and community members worked to diffuse the situation and ultimately the cleric withdrew the complaint. (...)

**Minority religious leaders stated discrimination against Christians, Hindus, Sikhs, and Ahmadis in admission to higher education institutions persisted. They reported their communities continued to face restrictions in securing admissions into colleges and universities. (...)**

**Terrorist groups continued to target Christian places of worship. On March 27, Easter Sunday, a suicide bomber in Lahore's Gulshan-e-Iqbal park killed 78 people, including 29 children, and injured more than 350; the victims included members of Christian families who had gathered in the park for the religious holiday. Jamaat-ul-Ahrar claimed responsibility for the bombing. The majority of the victims were Muslim. Authorities subsequently arrested more than 200 suspected militants in a crackdown throughout Punjab Province. (...)**

Reports continued of attempts to coerce religious minorities to convert to Islam. Rights activists reported victims of forced marriage and conversion were pressured and threatened into saying publicly they had entered into the marriage of their own free will. In April, according to Christian activist organizations, two armed men abducted a 23-year-old Christian woman from her family's home in Punjab's Kasur district. When her father attempted to press charges, the police responded the woman had willingly converted to Islam and married one of the abductors.» Source: US Department of State (USDOS), 2016 Report on International Religious Freedom - Pakistan, 15 août 2017: [www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/1408507.html](http://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/1408507.html).