

Chapter VI

PAKISTAN

*Torture & Tyranny
In a Pseudo-Democracy*

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Torture & Tyranny In a Pseudo-Democracy

Introduction

December 2014 has proven to be a deadly month in Pakistan. A blood-curdling event was witnessed at the Army Public School in Peshawar on 16 December 2014, leaving many Pakistanis speechless at the brutality on display. The killing of over 150 persons, most of them children, inside the school located in the Cantonment may well prove to be a watershed in Pakistan, in terms of human rights, and in terms of the see-sawing power equations between the military, democratic institutions, and the judiciary.

In the immediate aftermath of the incident, the military establishment has successfully dissuaded the government from initiating an inquiry into the security failure inside the military's own area of control. Furthermore, the government has been forced by the military to lift the moratorium on executions and looks set to allow for the re-establishment of military courts.

The fact that the government is groping in the dark to curb militancy, a monster that has been appeased and allowed to grow in its own backyard, will be lost on no dispassionate Pakistan observer. The lifting of the moratorium on the death penalty, and the hanging of 16 persons between December 19 and the end of the month, is but evidence of an impotent government looking for scapegoats amidst a façade of action.

Political Upheaval

While the attack on the Army School underlined the true state of Pakistan in 2014, the headlines earlier in the year were marked by the protracted political upheaval that upturned the lives of ordinary Pakistanis. The Nawaz Sharif government battled a political uprising spearheaded by opposition politicians Imran Khan and Moulana Tahir ul Qadri.

Both Khan's and Qadri's parties, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf and Pakistan Awami Tehreek, though they have major political differences, managed to stand together on one platform to try and overthrow the Nawaz government, whose electoral victory is alleged to have been secured with the help of rigging. The slogan "Go Nawaz Go" became a political mantra for the elite and neo-conservatives of Pakistan.

Conspiracy theorists speculated military backing of the whole fiasco, intended to teach the Nawaz led government a lesson for meddling in the affairs of the Military. The procession that began in Lahore on August 12 culminated in a staged sit-in outside the National Assembly in Islamabad. The actual number of protestors was debatable, but according to some estimates there were about 10,000 protestors that had arrived from all parts of the country to witness the "inqilab" that was not to be. The political leaders of both Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and Pakistan Awami Tehreek (PAT) played on mass emotion and promised gathered crowds that they will not leave Islamabad till Nawaz Sharif tenders his resignation.

On August 31 three protesters were killed and around 534 others injured as violent clashes broke out between PTI and PAT activists and personnel of the law-enforcement agencies in the 'Red Zone' of Islamabad. Moulana Tahir ul Qadri played the religious card well, terming the sit-in a jihad against oppression. The protestors turned violent on 2 September 2014, when they attacked the Pakistan Television Station located nearby, destroying machinery and chanting "Go Nawaz Go".

The political uprising dispersed when on October 21 Maulana Tahir Ul Qadri abruptly called-off the protest amidst allegations of a deal with the government. The supporters of PTI continue with the sit in though their numbers have dwindled significantly.

The sit in bought the country's capital to a complete halt causing the national exchequer billions of dollars in losses. The Chinese premier cancelled his visit to Pakistan in the wake of the protest, choosing instead to visit India.

Rule of Lawlessness

While the Army School attack and the prolonged political protests received understandable attention, what did not get addressed is the routine workings of the Pakistan criminal justice system, and how this contributed to destroy lives of innumerable citizens and demoralized the society daily in 2014.

The dysfunctional nature of the justice system has ensured that all the fundamental human rights to be guaranteed by Pakistan by virtue of enshrined Constitutional Articles, ratification of international instruments, and enacted legislation, were denied to the majority of people in Pakistan in 2014. To help analyze the true state of human rights in Pakistan, this report used several articles of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) to shed light on realities in Pakistan.

ICCPR, Article 7

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. In particular, no one shall be subjected without his free consent to medical or scientific experimentation.

Torture: An Intrinsic Part of a Torturous Justice System

Human rights can be rooted in a culture only when the ethical and moral foundations of that society are compatible with human rights concepts, norms, and standards. Wherever torture is common, one will find an underdeveloped criminal investigation system, and a society that has become removed from certain foundational principles.

In Pakistan, legal protection against torture is contained in narrow and specific provisions of the law, i.e. only in Section 156 of Police Order and in Article 14 of the Constitution of Pakistan. However, unlawful custody, illegal detention, and torture with complete impunity are what prevail across Pakistan. Under Pakistan's criminal justice system, victims carry the burden of proof in a torture claim, and there are no independent investigating agencies empowered to inquire into a complaint against torture. According to the existing legal framework in Pakistan, a claim for compensation for an act of torture can be settled under Sharia law. As a result, religious minorities are often sidelined; religious minorities, i.e. effectively non-Muslims, are not guaranteed equal rights under Sharia law.

The courts have not dealt with what is routine in the functioning of the police and law enforcement; there is a dearth of serious jurisprudence and interpretation of statute to curb the tide of torture. This further undermines the possibility of using the civilian court proceedings to obtain compensation; the process is hamstrung as it is by the requirement of a police report to substantiate a claim against torture.

In Pakistan, torture is used as a systematic instrument to extract evidence from suspects for different crimes. The *Thana* culture, entrenched in the criminal justice system since the colonial era, is used to maintain the writ of the state. People have to pay bribes to get First Information Reports registered; the investigation process is full of flaws; and those responsible for conducting the investigations are incompetent and dishonest. The majority of low ranking police officials have close links to professional criminals. Torture in custody is, at present, treated as an inevitable part of investigations. Investigators retain the notion that if enough pressure is applied, the accused will confess.

Police and other law enforcement agencies maintain private torture cells where torture is used with complete disregard for fundamental human rights or legal restrictions. Such cells are maintained to hide the arrest from any records and to escape the scrutiny of court bailiffs in cases of illegal detention. The Pakistan army currently runs 57 torture cells, including many in cantonment areas; the Pakistan Air Force maintains large number of torture cells in their bases, including one in their headquarters in Islamabad; and the Pakistan Navy also runs torture cells in Islamabad and Karachi, for instance at the Mehran Base in Karachi.

On 6 November 2014, an axe-wielding police officer killed a Shiite man in police custody, claiming he had committed blasphemy. The incident occurred at a police station in the Punjab Province. The Officer Sarfraz Naveed, who killed Syed Tufail Hyder, later gave himself up and said he did it because Hyder repeatedly insulted companions of the prophet Muhammad during questioning in relation to a street fight.

On October 4, a woman died due to torture by police during a raid at her house. Police officials entered the woman's house in Sargodha to arrest her son who had married a woman of his choice. The son escaped before the police arrived. The angry policemen allegedly tortured the woman instead, to obtain information about the whereabouts of her son, resulting in her death. The policemen, fearing retaliation by local people, fled the scene following the woman's death.

On February 18, Sahib Khan Ghoto, a student, died after being tortured in military custody. The mutilated body of Sahib Khan was later dumped near the Railway Station, in Bharia Road District, Sindh Province. Sahib Khan, son of Mr. Dhani Bux was a political activist, nationalist, and a central member of the Executive Committee of Shehri Etihad (Citizens Unity) in Ghotki.

On 14 February 2014, Sahib Khan, along with his brothers Israr Ahmed and Naveed Ahmed, was returning home after a hearing in the Anti-terrorism

Court, Sukkur, at around 12:30 p.m. On the way home, officers of the intelligence agencies and other staff who were in civilian clothes stopped their vehicle near the Navy Park in Rohri. The officers had arrived in a mirrored double cabin vehicle and were waiting for Sahib Khan. In a statement to the police, one of Sahib Khan's brothers said that they stopped their vehicle and identified themselves at the request of the officers. After the introduction, one officer disclosed his identity and told them he was Colonel Ali the In-Charge Officer of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) in the Sukkur region. Sahib Khan was then taken and detained in the Military Cantonment, where he died of torture. The Officers that tortured him were trying to get Sahib Khan to confess his involvement in certain bomb blasts at a Railway Station.

In another incident, on 17 March 2014, the police killed Mohammad Nawaz Lashari by pouring acid into his anus, and disappeared his brother. The "crime" of the Lashari brothers was that they had been unable to pay a bribe to Officers at the Sorah Police Station in Sindh Province. On March 14, Mohammad Nawaz Lashari, 22, and Aijaz Lashari, 25, from Khairpur Mirs, Sindh, were taken into custody on charges of stealing a camel. They were detained in Sorah Police Station, Tehseel Nara, District Khairpur Mirs, Sindh Province, as revealed in one police First Information Report (FIR) lodged by a landlord. The suspects named in the FIR are, however, two brothers from the Hasbani caste. After discovering that they had the wrong persons, the officials told the labourers to pay them Rs. 50,000 (500 USD) for their release and to persuade them to do so, the police beat them.

The brothers were tortured during the entire night of March 14. The next day, they were again asked to pay the amount, or to pay up at least Rs. 25,000 (250 USD). They could not afford to pay up even this reduced extortion amount. During the subsequent two days, they went through severe torture; the police poured acid into the anus of Mohammad Nawaz Lashari; he died in the early hours of March 17. The police transferred his body to a government hospital in Khairpur Mirs in an attempt to show that Mohammad Nawaz died there.

Recommendations

- There is an urgent need to work on the perception and understanding of UNCAT in Pakistan. NGOs should play an active role in raising awareness about the convention amongst the masses and legal professionals.
- Torture complainants should be protected from the institution of frivolous cases against them; the magistrate and judge must be more vigilant and should immediately quash the case if no cause of action is made out.

- Victims should be encouraged to report injuries immediately.
- Victims should be allowed to challenge the Medico Legal Officials (MLO's) report; the report of an experienced private medical practitioner or a certificate should be allowed and admissible as evidence of torture.
- Investigations Officers' (IO) reports are not satisfactory, as the Judiciary has itself noted; police training academies should provide special training to junior officers so that the preparation of quality investigation reports becomes the norm.
- Social science should be taught at the undergraduate level to sensitize the society against human right abuses, especially torture.

ICCPR, Article 18

1. *Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.*
2. *No one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice.*
3. *Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health, or morals or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.*
4. *The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.*

Article 27

In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, or to use their own language.

Violence Against Religious Minorities

Religious minorities, such as Christians, Hindus, and Sikhs, make up roughly 5% of Pakistan's population, according to the last census. Shias constitute around 15% of the population. Members of such minority communities that do not profess Sunni Islam, suffer disproportionate violence in Pakistan. And, the government has systematically failed to investigate, prosecute, and redress instances of discrimination and outright violence against ethnic and religious minorities.

Members of the Ahmaddiya, Christian, and other religious minority communities are at acute risk of violent persecution and discrimination in Pakistan. Despite the persecution of members of religious and ethnic minorities, the Pakistani government has shown nothing but contempt for those who have fled the country and sought asylum overseas.

All minorities in the country, including the Ahmadis and Shias, feel that the State has not only failed to protect them, but continues to tolerate the violence perpetrated by religious fanatics. The chronic reluctance of the ruling Pakistan Muslim League in condemning the killings of religious minorities, and the silence of most politicians over the killing of blasphemy victims, illustrates the usual mainstream political disinclination to halt or condemn attacks on minorities.

As a result of the increasing violence, insecurity, and harsh living conditions for religious minorities in Pakistan, members of these communities are abandoning the country and seeking refuge elsewhere. They seek asylum in Asian countries as well as in Western countries, such as Europe, Canada, and America.

Christians and Hindus are specially targeted for acts of terrorism, mass violence, and abuse of blasphemy laws. Thousands of Pakistani Hindus have sought refuge in India, while Christians, Ahmadis, Shias, and other religious groups have been fleeing to other nations in East Asia and South Asia and have registered with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), hoping to be able to settle in a country where they can enjoy equal rights.

Lately, a number of minority families including Ahmadis, Christians, and Shias, have also begun moving to Sri Lanka. In June 2014, Sri Lankan authorities detained 142 Pakistanis. Human rights groups have requested Sri Lankan authorities not to deport members of Pakistani minority groups until the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) has had access to them and determined whether they need international protection.

The year 2014 witnessed the upward trend of violence against minorities, particularly suicide attacks, target killings, and misuse of blasphemy laws. Blasphemy laws are used against both religious minorities and Muslims, although minorities suffer disproportionately.

Blasphemy

Blasphemy laws are part of the Islamic laws introduced by military dictator General Zia Ul Haq in the 1980s. These constitutional provisions, to “Islamise” laws, education, and culture, and the official dissemination of a particular brand of Islamic ideology, have not only acted against Pakistan’s religious diversity but have also bred discrimination against non-Muslim minorities in the country. The laws are increasingly misused to settle personal scores or to grab property.

The blasphemy accused are often lynched and lawyers who appear in their defence have frequently been attacked. Judges have been threatened and attacked for dismissing cases and many of the accused face years in jail as their trials drag on.

Societal intolerance and religious extremism have rapidly taken hostage the already weak administrative and justice system in Pakistan. The police, the lawyers, and the judges are too afraid to act. Without recognizing the diversity of Islam, pluralism, and the constitutional principle of equality for all citizens, regardless of religion or sect, it is hard for the State to establish the practice of religious and sectarian peace in the country.

Instead of empowering liberal and democratic voices, the State has opted to side with the religious right and continues to rely on it to counter civilian opposition. By depriving democratic forces even playing field and by continuing to ignore the need for policies that encourage and reflect the country’s religious diversity, the State has allowed religious extremism to flourish. It has failed to protect a vulnerable judiciary and failed to equip its law-enforcement agencies with the right tools they need to eliminate sectarian terrorism.

On 23 October 2014, the Lahore High Court upheld the death sentence of a Christian woman Asia Bibi, convicted of blasphemy in November 2010, after she was found guilty of making derogatory remarks about the Holy Prophet Mohammed (pbuh), during an argument with a Muslim woman. And later, a two-judge bench of the Lahore High Court dismissed her appeal.

On 29 May 2014, a prominent human rights lawyer Multan Rashid Rehman, who was appearing in Court on behalf of a University Professor accused of

making a blasphemous Facebook post, was shot dead after the prosecution lawyers had threatened to kill him in front of the judge during the court proceedings.

Rashid Rehman was shot and killed in his law office because of his willingness to take on the case of an English Professor accused of blasphemy by hardline student groups. The defendant had been unable to find further legal representation due to the fear surrounding blasphemy, which carries the death penalty in Pakistan. Previously, Hafeez had been in prison without a lawyer, until Rehman agreed to represent him in February 2014, almost a year after he was arrested.

On 18 September 2014, gunmen shot dead a professor of Islamic studies, a liberal, Shakeel Auj, in Karachi. The killing followed years of threats from his colleagues on allegations of blasphemy.

On 23 June 2014, the Editor and Publisher of the *Naya Zamana* magazine, Mr. Muhammad Shoaib Adil, was taken into custody on alleged charges of having published blasphemous material. Religious extremists reportedly raided his office with a contingent of police officers and took several books. The police were unable to find any blasphemous material, but the extremists coerced the police into arresting Adil for blasphemy anyway. The extremists claimed that the autobiography of a retired judge, Justice Islam Bhatti, published in 2007, was blasphemous, as an Ahmadi had written the autobiography. The book describes Justice Bhatti's career as a lawyer and a judge at the Lahore High Court. The police, however, ultimately refused to file a blasphemy case against the Editor and released him after the militants had dispersed from the area.

On 16 May 2014, Khalil Ahmad who was being held in a police lock-up in Nankana District facing blasphemy charges, was shot dead inside the police station by a teenager disguised in a police uniform. The police said that the assailant had introduced himself as Mubashir, and had told the officers at the Sharqpur Police Station that he wanted to see Khalil Ahmad. He was given access to Khalil, and subsequently he shot him dead after a brief conversation. Nankana District Police Officer Afzaal Kousar told reporters that the assailant, 18-year-old Saim Mubashir, is a seminary student.

The deceased was a member of the Ahmadi community and was among six people named in a blasphemy case on 11 May 2014. Hailing from Sajowal Village, near Sharqpur, he and the other accused men had allegedly assaulted shopkeeper Syed Riaz Hussain Shah and had torn an Islamic calendar. The shopkeeper immediately approached local leaders of the Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat, who mounted a protest and blocked the Lahore-Sharqpur Road for

about five hours. They lifted the blockade only after police officers registered a case against the six suspects under blasphemy laws. The Sharqpur police later arrested Khalil.

On 4 April 2014, Additional District and Sessions Judge Toba Tk Singh Amer Habib handed a death sentence and a fine of Rs. 100,000 to a Christian couple in a blasphemy case. The prosecution said that the convicts had sent blasphemous messages (SMS) to a shopkeeper, Malik Muhammad Hussain of Malkanwala Chowk, about a year and a half ago.

Threats to the Shia Community

Pakistan's Shia community has been the target of unprecedented sectarian violence, wherein Sunni militants have killed thousands of Shias across Pakistan since 2008.

The Hazara community in Quetta, Balochistan, which is Shia, is the latest addition to the list of minorities facing persecution and violence in Pakistan. At least 3,000 Hazara men, women, and children have lost their lives and more than 5,000 more have been injured in Quetta in recent years. The Pakistani Sunni Muslim extremist militant group Lashkar-e-Jhangvi is suspected to be behind these attacks.

On 18 June 2014, eight Shia Muslims were killed in Hangu when terrorists opened fire on certain internally displaced persons. According to reports, terrorists belonging to the Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat trespassed into a house and killed the eight Shiites on the spot. The victims belonged to the Ali Khel tribe in Orakzai Agency. The FIR stated that the incident could be termed as a sectarian killing. Ali Khel is a mixed Shia-Sunni tribe and its members are scattered across the federally administered tribal areas.

On 9 June 2014, 29 people were killed in combined suicide attacks on Shia pilgrims returning from pilgrimage in Iran and Iraq. Shia pilgrims, mostly hailing from Kohat and Hangu districts and the Orakzai Agency, were staying in two hotels in Taftan, a town near Pakistan's border with Iran, when the unidentified group attacked them.

On 29 May 2014, gunmen ambushed a group of people returning from the funeral of a member of the Shia community in Sepoy Village of Lower Orakzai Agency, killing four people and injuring another. According to the political administration, the group was returning home after attending the funeral prayer of a Shia man in the Lalpura area of lower Orakzai Tehsil when they were attacked from the mountains controlled by the Shiekhan tribe.

On 25 April 2014, at least four people were killed while 30 others, including three Shiites, sustained injuries, in an explosion on Chaudhry Khaliqz Zaman Road in the Delhi Colony area of Clifton Town, Karachi, after a bus was targeted. The bus was carrying Shia passengers on their way back from a Shia Mosque following Friday prayers. According to Inspector General Sindh Iqbal Mehmood, Shia Muslims traveling in a bus were the actual targets of the terrorists.

On 4 February 2014, a suicide blast near Imambargah in Peshawar killed nine Shias and injured 50 others. The powerful bomb blast ripped through a local hotel frequented mostly by Shias in the capital of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province. The incident took place at Pak Hotel near Imambargah Alamdar in Kucha Risaldar, a Shia dominated neighbourhood of Peshawar.

On 21 January 2014, at least 24 people, including women, were killed and over 41 were injured when a suicide bomber in Mastung area in Balochistan hit a coach carrying Shia pilgrims from Iran. An explosive-laden car, driven by a suicide bomber, rammed into the bus. Most of the dead and injured were from Marriabad and Hazara Town in Quetta. According to official reports two coaches carrying about 100 pilgrims were arriving in Quetta from Taftan, a town on the border of Iran. When the buses reached Derringer area in Mastung District, one of them was hit by the powerful blast. The bus caught fire and 22 passengers were killed on the spot, while 41 others were injured. The banned militant organisation Lashkar-e-Jhangvi claimed responsibility and warned of more such attacks to follow.

On 3 January 2014, as many as 15 Shiites were injured in a terrorist attack in Pinwal Village in Chakwal. Shia Muslims were planning to hold a majlis and a procession in the village, about 7 km north of Chakwal City. However, leaders of the terrorist group Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat (ASWJ) tried to stop them from organizing the congregation. According to Shia leaders, the local court allowed them to carry out the procession, but the leaders of ASWJ had said that the court had only allowed the holding of the Majlis and had not given permission for the procession itself. When the procession led by Shia leader Syed Ahmed Ali Shah reached Pinwal Village, it was ambushed by activists of ASWJ, who pelted the procession with stones.

On 23 February 2014, at least 12 Shiites were killed in an explosion on Hangu Road near Police Lines area in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Kohat District. According to the police, five kilograms of explosives planted in a wooden crate placed on the roadside were used in the blast. The explosives were detonated as a passenger wagon reached Peshawar Chowk.

On 16 February 2014, a famous female Shia scholar Tayyaba Khanum Bukhari left Pakistan for an unknown location after receiving threats to her life. The cleric has been receiving death threats for a couple of years from unknown groups, which has recently compelled her to leave Pakistan. Tayyaba Khanum Bukhara is famous for her thoughtful speeches in Majlis’.

Threats to the Ahmadi Community

On 27 July 2014, in Gujranwala, three members of the Ahmadi community and an unborn child were killed and four others were severely injured when an angry mob attacked Ahmadi homes and burnt five houses belonging to members of the community over alleged blasphemy.

Those who died in the attack include a 55-year-old woman, a minor girl, a 7-year-old girl, and a seven-months pregnant woman. According to details, the clash started when an Ahmadi youth, Saqib, allegedly shared a blasphemous picture with another friend, Ejaz, on Facebook. Ejaz along with Zakariya, Imam Jama Masjid Sadiqia Qari Muhammad Hakim, and others gathered outside Saqib’s house to protest, following which an angry mob attacked and damaged seven to eight houses belonging to members of the Ahmadi community in protest and set five houses on fire in Arafat Colony, Gujranwala. Following the violence, all Ahmadi families in the area fled in fear for their lives. Six houses and a shop were damaged in the incident. A majority of the male members of the Ahmadi community have still not returned to their homes fearing another unwarranted attack.

On 26 July 2014, four Ahmadis were charged with blasphemy for preaching in Badin, Sindh. Tando Bago police registered a criminal case against four men belonging to the Ahmadi community for allegedly preaching their faith. Mohammad Ramazan Rustmani, a local cleric, who is also an office-bearer of the Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam, lodged an FIR against the four men, Abbas Gurgez, Idrees Gurgez, Mushtaque Ahmed Gurgez, and Mohammad Khan Gurgez, under Pakistani Penal Code Sections 298B (misuse of epithets, descriptions and titles, etc., reserved for certain holy personages or places), and 298C (person of Qadiani group, etc., calling himself a Muslim or preaching or propagating his faith).

On 26 May 2014, a Canadian/American Ahmadi doctor, Mehdi Ali Qamar, was killed in front of his wife and his 3-year-old son, when gunmen on motorcycles riddled his body with bullets while he was visiting his mother’s grave in the town of Chenab Nagar in Punjab. The doctor had arrived in Pakistan three days before his untimely murder, to provide free medical care to heart patients. The Pakistan Medical Association condemned the murder and termed it a blatant sectarian attack.

On 9 March 2014, local police removed gravestones from several Ahmadi graves at Chak 96-GB, Jaranwala near Faisalabad. The police action was the result of an application, submitted to the police for the removal of the gravestones, claiming that the words written on the Ahmadi graves were hurting the religious feelings of others. Following the complaint, the Ahmadi community leaders were summoned to the police station and were pressured to remove the gravestones. When they refused, the policemen themselves damaged seven gravestones.

Threats to the Christian Community

On 18 May 2014, a 16-year-old Christian girl was gang-raped by four young Muslim men in Kot Mubarak District, Hafizabad. The young girl was visiting her sister's house in Kot Mubarak. When she went to a shop near her sister's house to make a purchase, the accused men, Abid Mehmood, Kameer Cast Mochi, Ali Hassan, and Muhammad Abubakar surrounded her and raped her. Abubakar also attacked the young Christian girl with a sword. When the victim started screaming in pain, the attackers ran away leaving her naked and bleeding. The victim's brother approached the police to register a case, but the police have refused to register an FIR.

On 14 June 2014, Hendry Masih, a Christian member of the Balochistan Assembly, was reportedly shot twice on his neck and chest outside his residence by his own security guard.

On 20 March 2014, a Christian man was handed the death penalty. He was convicted of insulting Prophet Mohammed during a conversation with a Muslim friend in the Joseph Colony neighbourhood of Lahore in March 2013. More than 3,000 Muslims rampaged through Joseph Colony, torching more than 100 Christian homes, following the allegations against Masih.

On 17 May 2014, four Christians, including three women and a male pastor, were arrested after being accused of blasphemy. According to reports, the four Christians were distributing Christian literature at a local railway station, when a Muslim religious leader, belonging to Islamist Sunnatwal Jammata, read the material and, realizing that it was Christian literature, immediately reported the four to the police. A mob of enraged Muslims surrounded the train station shortly after the police detained the four Christians. To prevent violence, the police arrested the four Christians and moved them to the nearest police station. The mob followed, demanding punishment be meted against the Christians immediately. The case is still under inquiry.

On 22 April 2014, authorities demolished a slum mainly inhabited by Christians, situated on the edge of Islamabad. Authorities have decided that these slums are illegal and a haven for terrorists and extremists. Unfortunately, many of the demolished slum's residents were poor Christians. The city's administration has drawn up a list of 14 such slum settlements calling them illegal, and plans to clear them all with no compensation or rehousing plans for the residents.

Threats to the Hindu Community

On 15 March 2014, a mob set a Hindu *Dharmashala* on fire on Jinnah Bagh Road in Larkana over alleged desecration of holy pages from the Quran. The Hindu community in Naudero and Ratodero closed their businesses and did not celebrate Holi due to fear of Muslim demonstrators. They remained confined to their homes, as unruly Muslim mobs continued violent protests in many areas. Personnel of the Market Police Station apprehended a Hindu man said to have committed the sacrilegious act and he was then moved to an undisclosed location.

On 31 March 2014, a large number of Hindus gathered outside the Karachi Press Club to protest against the desecration of their temples. Earlier in the year, Hindu temples were attacked in Hyderabad, Larkana, Tharparkar, and Tando Mohammad Khan, including the arson attack on a *Dharmashala* in Larkana on March 16, desecration of a Hanuman temple in Hyderabad on March 28, and robbery of Faqir Par Braham's Ashram in Nagarparkar on March 31. The protest was organised by the Pakistan Hindu Council (PHC). The protesters condemned the federal government's "utter indifference" towards the rising incidents of hate crime and the absence of any steps to secure safety for Hindus.

On 28 May 2014, five children of a Hindu trader were abducted in Dera Allah Yar area in the District Jaffarabad in Balochistan. Unidentified armed men kidnapped the children of a local trader, aged between 5 and 10, while the children were returning from school. Jaffarabad is one of the most sensitive Districts in Balochistan and kidnapping for ransom is rampant there.

On 8 March 2014, unidentified arsonists set a yoga centre on fire in the night. The centre is located near Banigala in Islamabad. According to the guard of the Art of Living Yoga Centre, eight armed men with faces covered entered the centre and tied up two guards. According to his witness statement, "The men asked us if there was any cash or valuable[s] in the centre, to which her reply was that there was nothing except blankets, furniture, and documents. They then sprinkled petrol in different rooms and set them ablaze after which they

escaped in two vehicles. There is an impression locally that yoga is a Hindu practice and that Hindu religious leaders were influencing the people at the club.

Threats to the Sikh Community

On 24 May 2014, Islamabad police charged over 200 Sikhs for allegedly attacking, assaulting, and rioting at the Parliament House. The case was registered in response to a complaint lodged by the Station House Officer of the Secretariat Police Station, stating that over 225 Sikhs had staged a protest and had mounted a resistance at Radio Pakistan Chowk. Later, the protesting members of the Sikh community entered the Parliament House breaking its gates. Fifteen Sikhs were named in the FIR, along with 225 unknown protesters.

The police said that they had tried to baton charge the protesters and fired tear gas shells but failed to stop them. Members of the Sikh community were protesting outside the Parliament House, Islamabad against Sikh gurdwaras in Karachi, Shikarpur, and various other cities of Sindh being set on fire. They were demanding that the government provide assurances regarding the safety and security of their gurdwaras.

On 14 February 2014, unidentified gunmen in the limits of Draban Police Station, Dera Ismail Khan, kidnapped four persons including two members of the Sikh community. Pawander Singh, Nand Singh, Amjad, and Arsalan Muhammad were on their way to Bhakkar District of Punjab, travelling from Peshawar in their car, when unidentified gunmen intercepted them near the Draban Road and bundled them into a van. Although Amjad and Arsalan Muhammad were traced the next day, the two kidnapped Sikhs remain missing.

ICCPR, Article 6

1. *Every human being has the inherent right to life. This right shall be protected by law. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life.*
2. *In countries which have not abolished the death penalty, sentence of death may be imposed only for the most serious crimes in accordance with the law in force at the time of the commission of the crime and not contrary to the provisions of the present Covenant and to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. This penalty can only be carried out pursuant to a final judgement rendered by a competent court.*

3. *When deprivation of life constitutes the crime of genocide, it is understood that nothing in this article shall authorize any State Party to the present Covenant to derogate in any way from any obligation assumed under the provisions of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.*
4. *Anyone sentenced to death shall have the right to seek pardon or commutation of the sentence. Amnesty, pardon or commutation of the sentence of death may be granted in all cases.*
5. *Sentence of death shall not be imposed for crimes committed by persons below eighteen years of age and shall not be carried out on pregnant women.*
6. *Nothing in this article shall be invoked to delay or to prevent the abolition of capital punishment by any State Party to the present Covenant.*

Enforced Disappearances & Extrajudicial Killings Flourish

There has been no let up in 2014 as far as acts of disappearances and extrajudicial killings by the law enforcement agencies are concerned. The Balochistan and Sindh provinces remain the most affected. Nationalists and secular forces were the main targets of state violence in the form of enforced disappearances, and following disappearance in many cases the tortured bodies of disappeared persons were found dumped on the streets.

Disappearances Legalized through Pakistan Protection Act

The government of Pakistan has accorded unlimited powers to law enforcement authorities to combat terrorism through the Pakistan Protection Act, 2014. Last year, in the month of September, the government issued the Pakistan Protection Ordinance (PPO) bypassing the National Assembly. The Ordinance gave nine months for law enforcement authorities to operate clandestine operations free from Parliamentary oversight.

The Pakistan Protection Act 2014 (PPA) that has since been passed vests unfettered powers to law enforcement authorities, which include the power to shoot a suspect at sight (with the approval of only a grade -15 official) and the power to detain a suspect for 90 consecutive days without needing to produce them before a judge. The Act has a retrospective effect, which means that law enforcement authorities, be they the police, military, or intelligence services have been granted immunity even for prior actions with regard to enforced disappearances, torture, and extrajudicial killings.

Judiciary Blames Intelligence Agencies

The Pakistani higher judiciary has observed it that intelligence agencies, including Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) and Military Intelligence (MI), have been involved in abducting people and making them disappear. The courts have also pointed out the involvement of agencies such as the Frontier Corps (FC) and other para-military forces in these abductions and enforced disappearances.

Earlier disappearances in Pakistan were a rare occurrence, but after the 9/11 incident and the subsequent war against terror, disappearances following illegal arrest have become common practice. Enforced disappearances in the form flourishing today took root in 2001 during the military government of General Musharraf, on the pretext of combating terrorism, particularly against the Al-Qaida terrorist group. The government instead of attacking Islamic militant groups such as the Al-Qaida and the Taliban, waged a war against secular and nationalist forces in Balochistan, a province that has no terrorist links. As a result, more than 8,000 persons from political and nationalist parties, students, lawyers, doctors, journalists and human rights defenders are reported missing in a little over a decade following their arrest by the Military, the ISI, or other State agencies.

Disappearances Accepted by Authorities as Normal Practice

The trend of increased enforced disappearances has been a direct cause for proportional increase in instances of custodial torture and extrajudicial killings. Enforced disappearances in Pakistan have become a routine occurrence; worse, the authorities have accepted them as a normal practice of law enforcement agencies, including the army and its intelligence agencies. Major political parties, a sizeable number of whom are Members of Parliament, have been silent on enforced disappearances and torture in military detention cells. The distress caused by the disappearances is that, despite the departure of the government of President Musharraf, the menace continues under civilian governments. On average, in Balochistan alone, every month at least five or six persons are abducted and made to disappear by persons dressed in civilian clothing. This is frequently done in the presence of police officers that then refuse to lodge FIRs, admitting verbally that intelligence agencies are involved in such disappearances.

Mass Graves of Disappeared Persons

On 25 January 2014, a shepherd discovered pieces of human bodies and bones. This led to the uncovering of three mass graves. He informed the Levies, a private armed force organised by tribal leaders, and according to Mr. Afzal

Supra Assistant Commissioner in District Khuzdar, Balochistan, the grave was excavated and 15 bodies were found.

It is suspected that these graves are of Baloch missing persons who were arrested and subsequently extrajudicially killed. The bodies were too decomposed to be identified. According to officials, from the three mass graves eight, 17, and 78 bodies were found. However, local reports reveal that a total of 169 bodies have been found.

Local residents have also found more than 100 human bodies in Tootak area, while they were digging there. However, Pakistani military forces stopped the local people from unearthing the mass graves and took control of the area and since then public access to the location has been denied.

According to the press, a security official speaking on the condition of anonymity has said that so far they have found around 56 unidentified graves and that there are many more. It is claimed that these bodies too are those of Baloch missing persons. The government subsequently conducted an inquiry. After nine months, the government has come out with a statement that only three bodies have been found.

Children of Asylum Seekers Made to Disappear

Intelligence agencies have also targeted children of Baloch asylum seekers who are in European countries. The following are some of the cases.

Mr. Nabeel Ahmed, 22 years of age was abducted on 30 August 2014, i.e. on the International Day for the Victims of Enforced Disappearance. He was arrested from Karachi. Mr. Ahmed is the son of Mr. Kachkol Ali, who served as the leader of opposition in the Provincial Assembly of Balochistan during the period of General Musharraf's military government, and also served as Member of the Provincial Assembly on three previous occasions. Mr. Ali left Balochistan in 2010 when the Frontier Corp of the Pakistan Army arrested three prominent Baloch political leaders and after two days their corpses were thrown out from a helicopter. Before he fled the country, Mr. Ali was threatened by persons from an intelligence agency for his decision to inform the media about the abduction of these political leaders.

In yet another incident, the houses of one Baloch asylum seeker in Norway, Mr. Hafeez Hassan Abadi, and his brother, were raided by security forces on August 10. The houses are located in Ahsanabad, Kharan, Balochistan Province. Security forces and persons from intelligence agencies arrested his two nephews, Mr. Najeeb Ullah and 14-year-old Hasan Jan; their whereabouts are still unknown.

Mr. Hafeez Hassan Abadi is a well-known intellectual in Balochistan; he is a teacher and a short story writer. Mr Abadi was compelled to flee the country in the year 2009 when an organization named Tehreek-e-Nefaz-e-Aman Balochistan (TNAB), which was formed by the security establishment to kill nationalists elements under the pretext of fighting terrorism began harassing him. A Pakistani news agency, NNI, has reported that the TNAB has recently threatened to kill every single member of the Baloch intelligentsia and has also threatened to kill Hafeez Hasan Abadi's family.

Two other young persons, Naseem, son of Bibaker, and Sath Nisar, son of Miran, who are all residents of Shapuk Turbat, were forcibly abducted on 29 January 2014 and their whereabouts too are still unknown.

Disappearances in Sindh Province

Secular groups in Sindh Province are the main target of disappearances, torture in custody, and extrajudicial killings by law enforcement agencies. There are many outfits of Taliban and other militant groups operating in Sindh Province but the law enforcement agencies target secular groups. The main targets are MQM, a party that largely represents urban areas in Parliament and the JSMM and JSQM, nationalist Sindhi speaking groups.

The federal government started an operation in Karachi, the capital of Sindh, called "Karachi Targeted Operation", with the support of the police and the Pakistan Rangers. The operation, which commenced on 5 September 2013, was supposedly against the increase in targeted killings, extortions, kidnappings, and incidents of terrorism including bomb blasts. The Pakistan Rangers have been given powers of arrest and detention of suspects, including permission to shoot on sight. The media has reported that more than 16,000 persons have been arrested or taken into custody and only 2,000 persons are reported to have been produced before the courts. The whereabouts of the others are still unknown. It is also reported in the media that either the Pakistan Rangers or police are behind these disappearances, and in some cases may have reached a settlement in exchange for huge bribes.

The Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), a political party with a sizeable number of parliamentarians, has been regularly pointing out the extrajudicial killings of its workers and supporters, who have been arrested, forcibly made to disappear, brutally tortured, killed, with their bodies dumped around the city. The MQM has reported that 45 activists are missing after their arrest since the Operation started.

Security agencies have developed a mindset that Sindhi political activists and nationalists are enemies of the country and they are to be treated worse than prisoners of war. This is the reason that such members of security agencies have adopted a new method of torture, carving the word “Pakistan” onto the chest of the victim, as in the case of a young three-wheeler driver, Mr. Amin Malano. Mr. Malano was abducted by persons wearing civilian clothes on May 24, and kept for three days in the custody of the Military. As a part of the torture he underwent, the word Pakistan was carved into his chest with an electric drill. After his ordeal, he was dumped on a roadside.

Mr. Munir Choliani, the Media Coordinator of the Jeay Sindh Muthida Mahaz (JSMM) was extrajudicially killed on 29 May 2014. He was travelling from his native town Warah, District Larkana, to Sann, District Dadu, in Sindh Province, with his wife and daughter. A white-coloured car followed their car. After some time, persons traveling in the white vehicle stopped them on the Indus Highway.

The victim’s wife later identified these persons as being from the intelligence agencies. All three were abducted, and later the wife and daughter were released in a nearby village. The car was abandoned in Gidrchi Forest, Dadu District. Within hours the bullet-riddled body of Munir Choliani was found near Boobak Town, District Dadu. Mr. Choliani was completely defenceless; for many years, he had been wheelchair-bound, as he was paralysed from the waist down.

Rohel Laghari, a 22-year-old JSMM activist was abducted on 1 April 2014 from Hyderabad. His bullet-riddled corpse with torture marks was found on November 30, after 10 months of his disappearance.

Sarvech Pirzado was a JSMM activist and an employee of a private medical company. Pirzado was abducted from the Impress Market in Karachi on 12 September 2014 when he was going there to purchase medicines. On the way, persons wearing civilian clothing abducted him. His family filed a petition before the Sindh High Court for his recovery. The court has taken no decision, even after his corpse, bearing gunshot wounds, turned up on December 1.

Government Fails to Ratify International Convention on Disappearances

The government as well as the judiciary has today fully realized the prevalence of enforced disappearances being perpetrated by the military and the intelligence services; it has become an open secret that these agencies of the government are abducting thousands of people from different parts of the country and making them disappear, particularly from Balochistan in staggering numbers. In cases of disappearances that have been brought before it,

the higher judiciary, i.e. the high courts of the four provinces and the Supreme Court, have on many occasions found that personnel from the Pakistan Military and paramilitary organisations are involved in such abductions, enforced detentions, and disappearances. The courts have, on numerous occasions, ordered the officers to be brought before the court. However, the government and its ally military apparatus have never respected these orders. In one such case, the Supreme Court of Pakistan gave an order for the arrest of an Army Brigadier on charges of having been directly involved in an incident of enforced disappearance of persons; that order has never been followed to date.

The government has failed to legislate, or even implement the already existing legal framework, to halt such acts of enforced disappearances and bring those responsible to account before the law. This failure runs counter to Pakistan's commitments to international obligations and the firm commitments made to ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

In contravention of such obligations, responsibilities and commitments, government officials have been quoted as saying that because of the well-established military regime and the close links with the armed forces, Pakistan's government is unable to implement such laws on the ground. In its stead, and rather to everyone's bewilderment, the government has opted to adopt a law that has virtually legalized enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings by armed forces and its intelligence services on the pretext of combating terrorism.

In September 2012, when the UN Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances came to Balochistan, a delegation of VBMP met with them regarding the cases of missing persons in Balochistan. After a few days the Chairman and Vice Chairman of VBMP received threats. Nasrullah and others submitted an application in the Supreme Court of Pakistan about the threats they had received and the Chief Justice directed the police to file a First Information Report (FIR) regarding the threats.

Nasrullah personally handed over this Supreme Court order to the Capital City Police Officer (CCPO), Quetta. The CCPO told the Station House Officer (SHO) in front of Nasrullah to register the FIR. However, as some officers told Nasrullah, the police have completely ignored the orders of the court because of the pressure exerted by the military.

Extrajudicial Killings in 2014

Extrajudicial killings, under the guise of police encounters, continued in 2014. The Judiciary paid mere lip service to this state endorsed violence. Law

enforcement officials were given complete impunity to maintain the writ of the state through torture and extrajudicial killings this year as well.

On February 3, MQM Korangi Unit 75's worker, Mohammad Salman, was taken into custody by men dressed as police officers, at the Korangi Crossing. His corpse was found in the Landhi area on 4 February 2014; it was pronounced unclaimed and sent to Edhi morgue. The body bore marks of terrible torture in custody, including a broken neck.

On October 10, Ishtiaq, an auto-electrician from Mianwali, was killed while in custody. The police claimed they were taking him to help in the recovery of a stolen car, when his accomplices, in a bid to get him free, opened fire on the police near Qatal Aamara Mor, Bhawalpur. The police said the bullets fired by the attackers hit their own accomplice, who later died in a hospital. The police alleged the deceased was a member of an inter-province car-lifter gang.

On 12 October 2014, a young 15-year-old footballer Shahzeb Razzak was among the four people shot dead in an alleged encounter with the Rangers in Malir. Shahzeb represented Pakistan in two international football events in China and Iran last year. He was asleep at his sister's house in Malir when people dressed in civilian clothes took him away and killed him in an encounter. Shazeb's older brother Faizan had been killed three years ago in an exchange of fire between two gangs in Lyari.

University Dean Assassinated

The menace of "unknown persons" shooting to death innocent civilians grew in 2014.

Prominent was the case of Dr. Shakeel Auj, Dean of the Faculty of Islamic Studies in the University of Karachi, who was shot dead by "unknown persons". Reports reveal that Dr. Auj was shot at point blank range from behind while he was in a moving vehicle. Three other colleagues who were with him in the car at the time miraculously survived the shooting.

Dr. Auj was a well-known personality and a distinguished scholar, renowned for his liberal and enlightened ideas on the philosophy of Islam. He remained a staunch critic of orthodox circles and conservatives. Before the incident, he had received threatening messages from different quarters, including from several professors in University of Karachi. An Islamic seminary had, in recent days, issued a fatwa, declaring him as blasphemous and liable to be killed.

According to reports, the police had themselves claimed to have known of these threats to Dr. Auj's life since he had lodged a police complaint by way of an FIR in 2012. Despite such a complaint being lodged, the police neither provided Dr. Auj any form of protection nor investigated the leaders of the Madrasah against whom the said complaints were made.

A prominent human rights defender and lawyer, Mr. Rashid Rehman, was gunned down in his office by Muslim fundamentalists for defending a professor charged with blasphemy. He had been threatened earlier, by fundamentalists during court proceedings. They said if he did not stop pursuing the case he would not be able to come to court again. The court was informed that Mr. Rehman had been threatened with death, prior to the Court sessions, but the judge did not take any action against the fundamentalists. Mr. Rehman was shot and killed on 9 May 2014; the judiciary, government and the police all failed to protect him and failed to take any actions against the perpetrators thereafter.

Drone Attacks

Up to 12 October 2014, there were 13 drone attacks in FATA districts, which have claimed the lives of at least 83 persons, while injuring 18. These military actions and offensives have carried with them no process of transparency; no journalists are permitted to freely visit and report and, therefore, an accurate count of how many innocent citizens have been killed in military actions and how many militants these actions have killed is unavailable. The statistics available have been provided in this chart.

Chronology of Drone Attacks

No.	Date	Tehsil	Details	Killed	Injured
1	June 11	Dargah Mandi, FATA	Six suspected militants killed in the US drone attack in the area considered a stronghold for the Al Qaeda-linked Haqqani network in Dargah Mandi village, NWA of FATA	6	0
2	June 12	Dandy Darpakhel, NWA, FATA	A US drone fired eight missiles in Dandy Darpakhel area of NWA in FATA that killed at least 10 militants while four others were wounded.	10	4
3	June 18	Dargah Mandi, Miranshah, NWA, FATA	Six militants killed in a US drone strike in the early hours in Dargah Mandi Village, Miranshah Tehsil, NWA of FATA.	6	0

4	July 10	Doga Madakhel, Dattakhel, NWA, FATA	Six unidentified militants were killed in a US drone missile strike in Doga Madakhel Village, Dattakhel Tehsil, NWA of FATA	6	0
5	July 19	Mada Khel, Dattakhel, NWA, FATA	A US drone strike, targeting a TTP compound, killed 11 militants in Mada Khel Suburb, Dattakhel Town, NWA of FATA	11	0
6	August 6	Dattakhel, NWA, FATA	At least six suspected militants killed and two others injured when a drone fired two missiles at a village house in Dattakhel area of NWA in FATA	6	2
7	September 24	FATA	10 Uzbek militants killed when a US drone hit a vehicle in the Lowra Mandai area of Dattakhel Tehsil in NWA	10	0
8	September 28	FATA	US drone strike killed four suspected militants, including two Arab militants, in a compound in Wana area of SWA	4	0
9	Oct 5	Shawal, SWA, FATA	At least five militants killed in a US drone strike in Shawal area of SWA in FATA	5	0
10	Oct 6	Bari Mail, Shawal Valley, NWA, FATA	At least eight militants killed and four others injured in a US drone strike in Bari Mail area of Shawal Valley in NWA of FATA	8	4
11	October 7	Madakhel Kunar Sar, Dattakhel, NWA, FATA	At least three militants killed and five others injured in a US drone strike in Madakhel Kunar Sar area of Dattakhel Tehsil in NWA of FATA	3	5
12	October 9	Dattakhel, NWA, FATA	At least four suspected militants killed and three others injured in a US drone strike in Dattakhel area of NWA in FATA	4	3
13	October 11	Shawal, NWA, FATA	At least four suspected militants, including a local Taliban 'commander', killed in US drone strike in Shawal Tehsil of NWA in FATA	4	0

The Order of Militancy

The law and order situation remained grim in 2014. The country witnessed the continuing bloodbath that is part of the operation of *Zarb-e-Azab*, meant to flush out militants from the North Waziristan region. The area was said

to harbour militants from Al Qaeda and other Islamic jihadist groups. The operation has caused a mass exodus from the region, increasing the number of people internally displaced. According to the Fata Disaster Management Authority (FDMA) the number of internally displaced persons in the wake of the Zarb-e-Azab operation has reached 0.8 million (800,000).

On January 20, a suicide bomber killed 13 persons, including eight soldiers and three children, and wounded 29 others in Royal Artillery Bazaar, close to General Headquarters in Rawalpindi District of Punjab.

On January 21, six police officers and a 13-year-old student were killed and nine others injured in a bomb blast near a police mobile station in Sardheri Bazaar of Charsadda Town in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

On February 13, at least 13 policemen were killed and 58 others injured in a suicide blast targeting a bus carrying 50 police officers near the gate of Razzakabad Police Training Center in Shah Latif Town of Karachi. The *Tehrik-i-Taliban* (TTP) claimed responsibility for the attack. A statement read: “We carried out the attack against the police because they are killing our people”.

On April 8, at least 17 people, including a woman and five children, were killed and 44 others wounded when a passenger train, the Jaffar Express was bombed at Sibi Railway Station in Balochistan.

On September 6, three unidentified militants and one navy officer were killed and six others injured when Pakistan Navy security personnel foiled an attempt by unidentified militants who tried to target Pakistan Navy Dockyard in Karachi.

On November 3, at least 60 people were killed in a blast near Wagah Border. Victims included ten women and seven children, while more than 110 people were injured when the bomb exploded outside a restaurant near a paramilitary soldiers’ checkpoint at Wagah Border on the outskirts of Lahore. *Jamaat-ul-Ahrar* claimed responsibility for the attack.

Terrorist Casualties

It is evident from a cursory look at the graph below, compiled with data received from Pakistani dailies, that the number of casualties peaked in June and July 2014. Following the launch of the operation ‘Zarb-e-Azb’ on 15 June 2014, as retaliation against the brazen attack at the Quaid-e-Azam international airport Karachi, the casualties have increased manifold.

Trends in Bomb Blasts

Deadly bomb blasts continued to sow fear in 2014, with the month of January proving to be the deadliest in terms of the rise in incidents of bomb blasts. On February 23, 13 persons, among them a woman and a child, were killed, and 14 others wounded, in a bomb blast at the main gate of Usterzai Suzuki Stand, Hangu Road, near Peshawar Chowk of Kohat Town in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. On 14 March 2014, 10 persons, including nine civilians and one Special Forces Officer, were killed, and 35 others injured in a bomb explosion targeting a Frontier Corps vehicle at Science College Chowk area of Quetta, Balochistan.

Casualties in Suicide Attacks

The year 2014 began with several major suicide attacks. On 1 January 2014, three people were killed and 30 others injured in a suicide attack targeting Shia pilgrims in Akhtarabad area, Quetta. On 19 January 2014, 26 soldiers were killed and another 24 were injured when a bomb ripped through a military convoy in the Bannu Town of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The very next day, on January 20, a TTP suicide bomber killed 13 persons, including eight soldiers and three children, and wounded 29 others in the Royal Artillery Bazaar, close to General Headquarters in Rawalpindi District of Punjab. The judiciary was also not spared the wrath of the militants when, on 3 March 2014, a suicide bomber attacked the courthouse complex in Islamabad. At least 12 people, including an Additional District and Sessions Judge, Rafaqat Awan, a female lawyer, and a policeman were killed and 24 others were injured.

ICCPR, Article 3

The State Parties to the present Covenant undertake to ensure the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all civil and political rights set forth in the present Covenant.

Article 26

All persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection of the law. In this respect, the law shall prohibit any discrimination and guarantee to all persons equal and effective protection against discrimination on any ground such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Unimplemented Laws Keep Women in Slave-like Conditions

Pakistan remains a dismal place for women despite several laws having been enacted for their benefit, namely: Women's Protection Act, Acid Control and Crime Act, Protection Against Harassment at Workplace Act, Law of Inheritance and the government has also ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women. The structural proclivity of the justice system, which includes the attitude and actions of the police, stop the majority of women from reporting injustices.

Gender-biased practices and discriminatory attitudes have become social norms and have even gained the status of religious diktat. Islam, in its original doctrine and essence, promotes equal recognition and respect for both women and men, and yet deceptive interpretations of religious precepts are used often to justify unjust verdicts. Centuries of patriarchal mindset and inequality have resulted in the boundaries between religion, tradition, and gender-based violence and discrimination becoming grey areas.

Pakistani women are victims of domestic violence, discriminated against on the basis of their sex, sexually abused without any hope of redress from the government. And when the survivors are able to seek help and assistance of the authorities, the authorities often return them to their torturers. Honour killings of women suspected of "dishonoring" their tribe and failing to adhere to customs occur frequently and it is rare for authorities to act against the perpetrators.

Pakistan has become a country where women are victims of Jirgas, illegal courts where young women and even minor girls are traded-off in settlement of feuds, where the local elders have the power of life and death over them. The customs of Winni and Sawara (tradition of trading girls) are treated as Islamic law and the civil courts are not interested in getting involved.

Women are often used as pawns, not only in the illegal courts, but also by the police to obtain confessional statements from suspected criminals. Women face physical torture and humiliation by supposed guardians and enforcers of law and order. There have been instances where wives and daughters have been stripped naked and paraded in front of their husbands and fathers. They have even been raped in front of their husbands and fathers to force confessions from the men.

Arranged marriages are the norm, and marriage by choice is considered a sin, something against Islamic teachings. Girls from religious minority groups are

abducted, raped, and forced to convert to Islam. Such events abound under the patronage of the authorities. Every Friday, and at least once a week, Muslim fundamentalist leaders deliver sermons suggesting that women are responsible for the vast majority of sins committed by males, while there is little or no support for them from society.

In Pakistan, laws that are by chance created for the protection of women are not implemented and enforced in order to keep women in virtual slavery. But, even apart from these laws drafted specifically for women, fundamental rights guaranteed in the Constitution and through Pakistan's ratification of the ICCPR are denied to Pakistani women in the routine functioning of society and the justice system.

Being a woman in Pakistan: deadly statistics

Violence against women is a global issue. However, Pakistani society presents an example where the worst forms of violence against women manifest, and where deeply held beliefs, based on decadent cultures, traditions, norms, and social institutions legitimize continued violence.

According to a report by the Aurat Foundation, the first six months of 2014 have been "truly alarming". According to a non-official count, 3,550 women have been subjected to violence in these six months in Punjab alone: 449 were murdered, 162 killed for "honour", 809 abducted, 687 raped/gang-raped, and 296 driven to suicide.

According to statistics provided by the Ministry of Interior, more than 14,583 rape cases were registered in the country in the past five years and only 1,041 (7%) rapists have been convicted by the Courts so far. The Punjab Province witnessed 12,796 (88%) incidents of rape during the same period while 1,077 (7%) incidents of rape were registered in the Sindh Province.

Malala Yousafzai: Epitome of the fight against religious oppression of women

From amidst the bleak landscape, hope has arisen in the form of Malala Yousufzai, a lone fighter against religious oppression of young girls in Pakistan. Malala became the youngest Nobel Prize winner when she was awarded the Noble Peace Prize for female education in 2014.

Malala, since she was a child, defied religious extremism of the worst kind in Pakistan and continued to demand that girls be allowed to receive education.

For these demands, Taliban gunmen shot her in the head in 2012. Malala miraculously survived the cold-blooded assassination attempt and continued her tireless efforts to be the voice on behalf of all women, to claim the right to an education.

Malala is an exception to the rule imposed by a male dominant society that believes in subjugating and oppressing women as a means of proving manhood. Malala's courage and valor has today inspired many women to carve out their destiny for themselves. The journey of this youngest Nobel laureate has been unlike many teens her age. From a very young age she had a passion that ignited her resolve to fight against extremist elements.

In 2007 the Taliban took hold of the Swat Valley – a pristine tourist destination in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province of Northwest Pakistan – and passed an edict banning education for girls. Hundreds of schools were blown up as a result. Malala, then only 10-years-old, writing under a pseudonym Gul Makai, chronicled her experience of living under Taliban rule. The BBC's Urdu Service later published her diary.

A basic human right, the right to education however, is only a privilege for many children in Pakistan. Malala has stood up as a symbol of the fight against oppression and tyranny in the name of religion, which seeks to deny a basic right to half of the population.

Refusing to bow to the whims of those with an obscurantist view of Islam, Malala risked her life for the cause of girls' education; two men stopped her school van and shot her in the head. She was easily identifiable as she was the only girl not covering her face. In a patriarchal society, twisted norms dictate that a "good" woman is one who suffers in silence and endures every hardship meted without complaint.

Malala elicits a mixed response from the masses in Pakistan, who are divided in their views about her as a champion of human and women's rights or a media darling who wishes to malign Pakistan as an extremist state harboring the Taliban.

"Honour" Killings

While "honour" killings are rampant in Pakistan, there are few credible statistics available about the number of these killings; they are rarely reported and are considered a private family matter. The Aurat Foundation estimates that around 1,000 women are killed in Pakistan by their families in such killings annually.

Women suffer in silence despite laws and edicts deeming the act of “honour” killing as un-Islamic. Tribal *jirgas* continue to pass judgments calling for inhuman punishment against women, including torture and death. Very few cases are prosecuted. Those that do get prosecuted languish for years in courts. Even those cases that do result in a conviction may ultimately end with the killers walking free. The irony in “honour” killings is that most of the time the murderers are the women’s own family members.

On 26 May 2014, two pregnant women were gunned down in the name of “honour” in Katlang, Mardan. The police officials claimed that Amjid Ali had allegedly spotted his pregnant wife Huma in an “objectionable state” with his neighbor. The infuriated husband picked up a gun and began shooting indiscriminately, killing Huma on the spot. The neighbour, however, managed to escape. Amjid Ali and his brother Muhammad Ali then barged into their neighbour’s house and shot their neighbour’s pregnant wife Nozaida Bibi, who died on the spot. Both the killers managed to flee the scene of crime.

On May 27, a 25-year-old woman, Farzana Iqbal, was stoned to death by her family members outside the Lahore High Court for marrying the man she loved. Farzana Iqbal was waiting for the court to open when a group of around dozen men began attacking her with bricks. Her father, two brothers, and former fiancé were among the attackers. Farzana, who was three months pregnant, suffered severe head injuries and was pronounced dead in hospital. The Lahore High Court has taken notice and ordered the police to arrest Farzana’s father and ex-fiancé.

On 4 August 2014, a man named Yousaf shot dead his sister and her male friend on Airport Road in Quetta, accusing them of having an illicit relationship. Yousaf opened fire on his sister Zar Bibi, 19, and her friend Noor Mohammed, 29, when he found them in his house.

On 16 September 2014, a 22-year-old woman was shot dead by her relative. The woman, who hailed from Karachi, was not happy in her two-year-old marriage to a shopkeeper in Swat. The woman was accused of fleeing her husband’s house and marrying another man in the northwestern Swat Valley with the help of her aunt and cousin. The local *jirga* intervened in the matter and decided that all three women should be killed. Relatives shot the three dead at their house.

ICCPR, Article 9

1. *Everyone has the right to liberty and security of person. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention. No one shall be deprived of his liberty except on such grounds and in accordance with such procedure as are established by law.*
2. *Anyone who is arrested shall be informed, at the time of arrest, of the reasons for his arrest and shall be promptly informed of any charges against him.*
3. *Anyone arrested or detained on a criminal charge shall be brought promptly before a judge or other officer authorized by law to exercise judicial power and shall be entitled to trial within a reasonable time or to release. It shall not be the general rule that persons awaiting trial shall be detained in custody, but release may be subject to guarantees to appear for trial, at any other stage of the judicial proceedings, and, should occasion arise, for execution of the judgement.*
4. *Anyone who is deprived of his liberty by arrest or detention shall be entitled to take proceedings before a court, in order that that court may decide without delay on the lawfulness of his detention and order his release if the detention is not lawful.*
5. *Anyone who has been the victim of unlawful arrest or detention shall have an enforceable right to compensation.*

Activists & Human Rights Defenders Threatened & Harassed

For human rights defenders in Pakistan, 2014 proved to be terrifying; apart from killings, illegal detentions, fabricated charges and cases against them abounded. The judiciary, in many instances, sided with the fundamentalists, showing little courage against these forms of extremism.

Despite ratification of important international treaties for the protection of human rights some four years ago, none of Pakistan's criminal laws have been reviewed with intent to conform them to the international obligations. Committed and courageous persons, men and women in Pakistan who have stood up for the rights of others have been abused, harassed, threatened, and in some instances killed on account of such legitimate activities. The impunity with which such abuses are carried out has made the defence of human rights a dangerous undertaking in Pakistan.

Journalists who uncover human rights violations as part of the peaceful exercise of their professional duties have been in the firing line of state and non-state actors as also stated in a recent report by Amnesty International. Lawyers, too, have been targeted.

Human rights defenders sentenced to life imprisonment

Prominent human rights defender Baba Jan from Gilgit Baltistan and nine other defenders, including the President of the Supreme Court Bar Association of Gilgit Baltistan, have been sentenced by two different Anti-Terrorist Courts to life imprisonment. In one of the cases, Baba Jan and 11 others were sentenced to life imprisonment after they led a public protest in Hunza Valley against the killing of a father and his son by a police firing squad in 2011. The protestors had also demanded just compensation for the families of the victims who were killed and whose entire village was lost in the Atta Abbad Lake Disaster following the landslide that buried the village and blocked the path of the Kabul River.

68 lawyers booked on charges of blasphemy

A total of 68 lawyers from Toba Tek Singh, Punjab Province, were booked for having committed blasphemy. They were booked for raising slogans against the Chief of a police station, whose name is similar to a religious / historical Islamic personality. The government has failed to take action against the police officer for filing a false case of blasphemy against the 68 lawyers. According to a 2005 amendment to the blasphemy laws, filing a false case of blasphemy is a crime.

Civil society and human rights organisations are demanding that the government amend the blasphemy laws that have become a lethal weapon against lawyers, journalists, academics, and human rights defenders, and have restricted freedom of expression. These very blasphemy laws have taken the life of one former Governor of Punjab, Mr. Salman Taseer and a former Federal Minister, Shahbaz Bhatti. Despite these deaths, the government chooses to ignore calls to review the blasphemy laws or make amendments to prevent their misuse.

A student leader is missing after his arrest

Mr. Zahid Baloch, the Chairman of the Baloch Student Organisation Azad (BSO-A) was arrested on 18 March 2014 during an ISI raid while he was holding a meeting of the members of the executive committee of the BSO-A in the suburbs of Quetta City, the capital of Balochistan Province. Persons in civilian clothes, who identified themselves as being from the ISI, accompanied

by uniformed FC men, told the participants that since the BSO-A is a banned organization, the meeting was illegal. They had been following Baloch for some time with the intention of arresting him. His whereabouts are still unknown.

A lady lawyer forced to flee the country

Ms. Munaza Bukhari, advocate and prominent human rights defender of Pakpattan, Punjab Province, was forced to flee the country under threat to her life. Those making the threats had allegedly killed two other women under the pretext of honour, after the women were accused of having illicit relationships out of wedlock. Law enforcement refused to provide her with protection.

Baloch human rights defenders under threat

The two prominent human rights defenders from Balochistan who were responsible for organizing the long march of 2,800 kilometers against disappearances, and for documenting disappearances and extrajudicial killings, have been threatened by the security agencies.

Mr. Mama Qadeer, leader of the long march, was arrested by plain clothed persons in Karachi on 26 November 2014 and dragged into a bus and sent back to Balochistan with the threat that if he is seen out of Balochistan he would be killed.

Mr. Nasrullah Baloch, Chairperson of Voice of Baloch Missing Persons (VBMP), also received threats from unknown persons who claimed to be from the ISI. The threats were made for more than a year to dissuade him from the campaign against disappearances and extrajudicial killings. Personnel from intelligence agencies told his two brothers that if they cannot stop their brother then he would be “dealt with”.

On 25 and 26 March 2014, Baloch was present in a Supreme Court hearing where he was representing cases filed for the recovery of missing persons. Military and intelligence officers also attended the court proceedings. During the hearing, representatives from the Norwegian mission arrived to attend the hearing regarding a Norwegian citizen, Mr. Ehsan Arjumandi. Mr. Arjumandi has been missing since August 2009, following his arrest by persons in civilian dress, who claimed to be officials from an intelligence agency.

The head of the Norwegian mission also talked to Nasrullah Baloch about the cases proceeding on missing persons during the hour when the court was on break. The military officers present saw this exchange and made angry and threatening signs towards Baloch. At the conclusion of the court proceedings,

Baloch was overtly followed by persons dressed in civilian clothes when he travelled back to his hotel where he was staying in Islamabad.

On March 26, after the court hearing, he went to his travel agent for the confirmation of his flight back to Quetta, Balochistan, and was followed by intelligence officials. At the Blue Area Market, they stopped Nasrullah and demanded that he show them the air ticket. They tore up the air ticket and threatened that if he did not stop maligning the security and intelligence agencies he would be killed.

In the evening, when he was proceeding to the airport, he was stopped at a check post and was thoroughly searched. As he proceeded further after clearance, he was again stopped by persons in civilian clothing who demanded that he produce his luggage for search as they had information that he was carrying arms with him. He was subjected to a body search again before being allowed to go.

As he entered the airport lounge, a person approached and told him that he had been lucky this time because they could have put a pistol in his luggage during the search. He could be arrested for carrying arms into an aircraft if they had bad intentions. He also told Baloch that they had searched his hotel room where he was staying and that no place is out of their reach. Baloch was threatened again not to visit courts for cases of missing persons and not to internationalize the issue or he would suffer severe punishment.

He was also threatened for pursuing the cases of mass graves in a tribunal formed by the orders of the Supreme Court. These mass graves were found in Balochistan. He is helping the Tribunal on the instructions of the Supreme Court as the government has been hiding the actual numbers of mass graves.

Before the incident in Islamabad, on 27 October 2013 when VBMP started the long march from Quetta to Karachi, a distance of 730 kilometers, while Nasrullah was leading the march, his younger brother, Mohammad Sami Ullah, was picked by plain clothed persons and abducted in a vehicle. He was tortured and released after they threatened him to convey a message to his brother to stop the long march, "otherwise", they said, "they know how to stop such things".

In the month of November, when Nasrullah Baloch went to hospital for the treatment of his son, his other brother, also younger, Niaz Ahmed Baloch, was sitting outside the hospital in a car. Armed personnel came to him and threatened him that if his brother does not stop activities on the issue of disappearances he will be, "dealt with in a wrong way". Nasrullah informed

the Supreme Court about the threats he was receiving from the intelligence agencies during the proceedings on 5 and 6 November 2013. The Chief Justice ordered and directed the government to provide him security, but this official order of the court has been ignored by the government and the police.

ICCPR, Article 24

1. *Every child shall have, without any discrimination as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, national or social origin, property or birth, the right to such measures of protection as are required by his status as a minor, on the part of his family, society and the State.*
2. *Every child shall be registered immediately after birth and shall have a name.*
3. *Every child has the right to acquire a nationality.*

Child Rights Violations Abound Amidst Lawlessness

The year 2014 has been horrid for children in Pakistan. A total of 213 children died in Thar, Sindh Province, due to malnutrition and famine. In Sargodha District Teachings Headquarters Hospital, 81 newborn infants died due to negligence of doctors and the unavailability of oxygen at the neonatal intensive care units. All of these 434 deaths were avoidable, but as these were the children of lesser gods, their deaths are statistics, not a national tragedy.

From their birth, a majority of children in Pakistan are denied basic rights. With an infant mortality rate of 8.6%, Pakistan ranks 26 on the list of countries with the highest mortality rate, according to UNICEF's report on the state of children in 2014. Untrained birth attendants and unhygienic conditions risk the lives of both the child and the mother.

Pakistan, as a society, has failed to protect the health of its children. An alarming rise in polio cases, especially in KPK, has brought Pakistan to the League of Nations that are proving a hurdle in achieving a polio free world. According to WHO statistics, 260 new cases of polio were reported in Pakistan in 2014.

The crises caused in Thar due to famine and drought claimed the lives of many innocent children and yet the government continued to play dirty politics. The Sindh Health Minister Jam Mehtab Dahar rubbed salt into wounds with his

statement to the media that “Children are also dying in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. But KP is not on the agenda of the powers on whose agenda the media is working in Thar.”

The basic right to education is denied to children in Pakistan thanks to rising poverty, which results in child labor and early marriages. Pakistan’s literacy rate has stagnated at 58%. Almost half the country’s adult population is unable to read or write, and only 50% of the country’s rural population has ever attended school. According to the Pakistan Education Atlas, improvement in the education sector moves at a snail’s pace, with 32% of children aged 5-9 years out of school. According to UNESCO, 75% of children in Pakistan drop out before finishing secondary school. Girls are more prone as they are denied basic rights to health and education, and parents consider investing in their education as a waste of precious resources. Given limited income, parents often prefer educating their boys.

In a gruesome act of violence documented by the AHRC this year, a landlord chopped off the arms of a 10-year-old child over a minor matter related to payment of electricity bills. His hands were tied and put into a harvesting machine.

It was on 21 July 2014 at 10:30 a.m. that the child, Shahzad, had gone to the fields where his family worked. The accused, landlord Ghulam Mustafa, was standing there. The landlord called Shahzad over to the tubewell, a peter engine installed in the open. When the child arrived Mustafa caught him, overpowered him, forcibly tied his hands with a scarf, and then proceeded to put both hands down the running belt of a harvesting machine. The boy was stuck to the running belt and both of his arms were crushed, cut, and separated from his body.

The police did not take action for two days and protected the landlord until a media outlet gave hours of extensive coverage to the story. The Chief Minister of the Punjab Province, as is his routine, issued a press release, saying that he has taken serious notice of the incident and has ordered the authorities to provide the best medical treatment to the child. However, the child has remained in a poor condition. The provincial government has promised the family that it will provide artificial limbs but the promise has still not materialized.

In another case, a 17-year-old boy was arrested by the police and killed in a fake police encounter for not paying a bribe. On 12 June 2014, Sachalgoti Karachi Police in Karachi, Sindh Province, arrested Anisur Rehman Soomro, who was the son of Anwer Soomro, and a 10th grade student. Anisur was

arrested along with two of his friends. He was illegally detained for 11 days, and tortured in full view of his father. The police demanded a huge sum of money from the father, who did not have means to pay the amount. He instead made arrangements to pay only a portion of the demand, 10%, which angered the Station House Officer, as being an insult. This led to the boy being shot dead. According to his father, the enraged police officer had taken the boy and three other young men, to an Afghan refugee camp in the late hours of the day and shot him there, point blank, killing his son on the spot. The police later released a statement saying that the killing had taken place in a skirmish with Taliban forces and that explosives had been recovered.

The murder of this boy reveals the nexus that prevails in Pakistan between the police and the courts of law, and the failure to follow the due process of law. The Sessions Court failed to save the young boy while he was being held in police custody, even after the father moved the court to intervene in the release of his son. Critics blame the newly enacted Pakistan Protection Act of 2014, which gives sweeping powers of arrest and detention to law enforcement agencies, to the extent of giving them powers to shoot on sight.