



**JUBILEE CAMPAIGN  
ECOSOC Special Consultative Status (2003)  
SET MY PEOPLE FREE  
VOICE FOR JUSTICE**

**United Nations Human Rights Council  
Universal Periodic Review – FOURTH CYCLE**  
Submission to the 42<sup>nd</sup> session of the Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review  
January – February 2023

**The Islamic Republic of Pakistan**

**A Vital Voice for Those Suffering in Silence**  
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JUBILEE CAMPAIGN IS A NON-PROFIT, TAX EXEMPT, CHARITABLE ORGANIZATION IN THE UNITED STATES

**United Nations Human Rights Council  
Universal Periodic Review of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan**

**I. Background**

1. **Jubilee Campaign**, in special consultative status with ECOSOC, submits this analysis of religious freedom and human rights in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan as a contribution to the Universal Periodic Review.
2. **Set My People Free** is a network of individuals, churches and organizations working for the freedom of converts from Islam to live and practice their new faith, and to experience equality and justice in their home countries.
3. **Voice for Justice** is an organization with a mission to liberate people from slavery, poverty and to prevent acts of injustice. We want to bring change in the lives of the poor and ensure justice for those that have been wrongly treated.

**II. Scope of international obligations and cooperation with international human rights mechanisms and bodies.**

4. Pakistan has ratified the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the Convention on the Rights of the Child; the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict; the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children child prostitution and child pornography; and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
5. Pakistan has not ratified the Optional Protocol of the Convention against Torture; the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights aiming to the abolition of the death penalty; the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance; the Interstate communication procedure under the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance; and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

**Recommendation(s)**

We urge the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to:

6. Review and ratify the above United Nations conventions and covenants to which it has not acceded.

### **III. Violations of international human rights obligations, considering applicable international humanitarian law**

#### **A. Freedom of thought, conscience, and religion**

7. Pakistan's Penal Code of 1860 includes an entire chapter regarding "offenses relating to religion" which were modeled after British colonial laws to prevent religious violence. Articles 295 through 298 criminalize acts including "injuring or defiling a place of worship, with intent to insult the religion of any class"; "deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings of any class"; "defiling, etc., of copy of Holy Quran"; "use of derogatory remarks, etc., in respect of the Holy Prophet"; "disturbing religious assembly"; "trespassing on burial places"; and "uttering words, etc., with deliberate intent to wound religious feelings".<sup>1</sup>
8. In 1991, the Federal Sharia Court ruled that the punishment for the above offenses should be made harsher, and Article 294-C was amended to make the death penalty mandatory for individuals convicted of insulting the Prophet.<sup>2</sup>

#### **(a) Legal Cases – Blasphemy**

9. In December 2011, Punjab authorities arrested Seventh-Day Adventist man Sajjad Masih Gill after accusations arose that he had sent blasphemous text messages regarding the Prophet. Despite that police were unable to find evidence of any such messages on his phone or electronics, a court in Gojra convicted Gill and sentenced him to life imprisonment. In the years following Gill's sentencing, the appeal hearing was postponed multiple times for various reasons; in March 2021, the court had accepted the prosecution's argument that the death penalty was the appropriate punishment. In a fortunate turn of events, in November 2021 Gill was finally acquitted of all charges on the grounds of insufficient evidence after he had spent an entire decade in prison. As of January 2022, Gill is currently in hiding and is fearful that he may be killed by radical Muslims angry over his acquittal.<sup>3</sup>
10. In July 2012, Rawalpindi authorities arrested Christian man Zafar Bhatti in connection to a report of blasphemous text messages, despite that Bhatti had no link to the incident. After Bhatti spent five years in pre-trial detention, in 2017 Judge Mohammad Yar charged him with blasphemy and sentenced him to life imprisonment. Another four years later in October 2021, Justice Raja Shahid Mahmood Abbasi of the Lahore High Court Rawalpindi bench remanded

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<sup>1</sup> [Pakistan: Penal Code \[Pakistan\], Act No. XLV](#), 6 October 1860.

<sup>2</sup> Jubilee Campaign, [Human Rights Abuses Committed in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan: Submission to the United Nations Universal Periodic Review](#), November 2017.

<sup>3</sup> Jubilee Campaign, [Sajjad Masih Gill](#).

Bhatti's case to the Rawalpindi District Court whose Judge Sahibzada Naqeeb Shehzad maintained Bhatti's charges and sentenced him to death for blasphemy in January 2022.<sup>4</sup>

11. In March 2013, university lecturer Junaid Hafiz was arrested and charged with blasphemy after a group of his students alleged that he had been posting "derogatory comments" about the Prophet on social media. Despite the dangers surrounding legally representing individuals accused of blasphemy in Pakistan, one attorney by the name of Rashid Rehman had decided to take up Hafiz's case. In a tragic turn of events, however, in 2014 a group of gunmen shot and killed attorney Rehman while he was sitting in his office in Multan; two of Rehman's legal colleagues were injured in the attack but survived.<sup>5</sup> For the next five years, Hafiz was kept in solitary confinement until his trial in December 2019, during which Hafiz was formally convicted and sentenced to death.<sup>6</sup>
12. In 2013, 37-year-old Christian man Asif Pervaiz was detained after his former work supervisor filed a complaint against Pervaiz for allegedly sending him blasphemous text messages; Pervaiz repeatedly denied the charges against him, stating that he believes the charges were filed against him as an act of revenge for refusing his supervisor's demands to renounce his faith and convert to Islam. In September 2020, Judge Qureshi of the Lahore Additional Sessions Court convicted Pervaiz of blasphemy and sentenced him to three years' imprisonment for "phone misuse", followed by execution by hanging for blasphemy.<sup>7</sup>
13. In June 2013, a Muslim leader in Gojra, Muhammad Hussain, accused Christian couple Shafqat Emmanuel (husband) and Shagufta Kausar (wife) of sending him blasphemous text messages written in English. Despite numerous questionable details regarding the allegations, police charged the couple with blasphemy. In 2014, a court in Toba Tek Singh convicted the couple and sentenced them to death. Finally in June 2021, Lahore High Court Justices Syed Shehbaz Rizvi and Anwar-ul-Haq rescinded the death penalty, acquitted all charges, and ordered the defendants' release from prison. As of August 2021, the couple and their children have fled Pakistan to a safe European country.<sup>8</sup>
14. In September 2013, authorities in Lahore registered a case against private school principal Salma Tanveer following a tipoff from a local Muslim cleric that Tanveer had expressed a belief that Prophet Muhammad was not the final prophet of Islam.<sup>9</sup> Over the past eight years, Tanveer's case remained relatively idle until September 2021 when Judge Qureshi formally convicted Tanveer and sentenced her to death by hanging in addition to a fine of 50,000 rupees (≈USD \$270). This harsh judgement was handed down despite that Tanveer's lawyers

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<sup>4</sup> Jubilee Campaign, [Zafar Bhatti](#).

<sup>5</sup> BBC News, ["Pakistan 'blasphemy lawyer' shot dead in Multan office"](#), 7 May 2014.

<sup>6</sup> BBC News, ["Junaid Hafeez: Academic sentenced to death for blasphemy in Pakistan"](#), 21 December 2019.

<sup>7</sup> Asad Hashim, ["Pakistani Christian sentenced for death for 'blasphemous texts'"](#), *Al Jazeera*, 8 September 2020. ; Church in Chains, [Asif Pervaiz](#), 10 February 2022.

<sup>8</sup> Jubilee Campaign, [Shagufta and Shafqat](#). ; Church in Chains, [Shagufta & Shafqat](#).

<sup>9</sup> Agenzia Fides, ["ASIA/PAKISTAN – Muslim woman sentenced to death for blasphemy"](#), 29 September 2021.

submitted medical records seven years earlier in 2014 finding that she was “suffering from Schizoaffective Disorder” at the time of the alleged blasphemy and was unfit to stand trial.<sup>10</sup>

15. In March 2017, Pakistani authorities arrested three men - Rana Nouman Rafaqat, Abdul Waheed, and Nasir Ahmad - in connection with posting some allegedly blasphemous content onto YouTube. All three men were formally indicted in September 2017 for "intending to outrage religious feelings" and "insulting the Prophet Muhammad", in addition to one crime listed in the 1997 Anti-Terrorism Act: "incit[ing] hatred and contempt on religious, sectarian or ethnic basis to stir up violence or cause internal disturbance".<sup>11</sup> In early January 2021, Judge Raja Jawad Abbas of an anti-terrorism court in Islamabad sentenced all three men to death for blasphemy.<sup>12</sup>
16. In November 2017, Pakistani authorities arrested Christian man Nadeem Samson after two men, Abdul Huq and Sakhawat Dogar, accused Samson of posting blasphemous statements on his Facebook account. Samson has repeatedly asserted his innocence and explained that he believes Huq and Dogar had conspired set up a fake Facebook account in Samson's name using his public phone number, and post blasphemous remarks in order to frame him for a crime as an act of revenge for a prior property dispute. Since his arrest and subsequent charges for blasphemy, Samson has been detained in a Lahore jail where he has reportedly not been treated for his kidney stones and deteriorating vision problems. In January 2022, Samson's lawyer Saiful Malook reported that Samson had been granted bail after four years in prison; however, his case is still pending in the District Lahore Court and acquittal of charges is not guaranteed.<sup>13</sup>
17. In March 2019, Pakistani Christian convert Stephen Masih was engaged in an argument when he verbally abused a Muslim woman neighbor. The following day, the woman's husband, Muslim cleric Hafiz Muhammad Mudassar, came to Masih's home with a mob of angry Muslims who then physically assaulted Masih and accused him of making blasphemous remarks. Rather than arresting the assailants, authorities upon arrival detained Masih, after which he was charged with blasphemy in June. Masih's family has attempted to achieve acquittal for Masih on the account that he was previously diagnosed with Bipolar Affective Disorder - which negatively affects Masih's cognition - by the Punjab Institute of Mental Health, but it was later revealed that this diagnosis was incorrect, though Masih does appear to suffer from some apparent mental disorder or ailment. Masih remains imprisoned to this day, and it is believed that he is not being properly treated.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Ross Ibbetson, "[School principal is sentenced to death for blasphemy in Pakistan after she was accused of distributing material deemed insulting to Prophet Muhammad](#)", *Daily Mail*, 28 September 2021.

<sup>11</sup> [Pakistan] *Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997*.

<sup>12</sup> The Tribune, "[3 men sentenced to death for blasphemy in Pakistan](#)", 8 January 2021. ; USCIRF FoRB Victims Database, [Rana Nouman Rafaqat, Abdul Waheed, Nasir Ahmad](#).

<sup>13</sup> Jubilee Campaign, [Nadeem Samson](#).

<sup>14</sup> Jubilee Campaign, [Stephen Masih](#).

18. In April 2020, Ahmadi Muslim woman Ramzan Bibi attempted to make a charitable donation for a local mosque celebration but was confused when her money was returned to her without explanation. When Bibi asked a non-Ahmadi relative the reasoning behind her donation rejection, there allegedly ensued a verbal argument, after which local non-Ahmadi residents accused Bibi of insulting the Prophet. Bibi was charged with blasphemy and is currently detained in Central Jail Lahore. Bibi's bail application was rejected in November 2020 by Judge Tariq Saleem.<sup>15</sup>
19. In May 2020, 26-year-old Muslim woman Aneeqa Ateeq was arrested and charged with posting "blasphemous material" as her WhatsApp status. Ateeq was not provided legal counsel and was therefore forced to represent herself on trial, during which she explained that she believed the complainant Hasnat Farooq had provoked her to engage in a religious debate after she had refused to "be friendly" with him. In late January 2022, we received the unfortunate news that a Rawalpindi court had convicted Ateeq of blasphemy and sentenced her to death by hanging.<sup>16</sup>
20. In June 2020, Faisalabad authorities arrested Wasim Abbas after an unnamed individual filed a complaint alleging that he had made derogatory and insulting comments about the prophet. In February 2022, Additional Sessions Judge Rana Sohail Tariq convicted Abbas of blasphemy and sentenced him to death.<sup>17</sup>
21. In September 2020, Pakistani authorities in Peshawar digitally tracked down the location of and arrested 42-year-old Bashir Mastan after he had posted a video on the internet in which he claimed to be a prophet. Just over a year later in December 2021, additional district and sessions judge Mohammad Tahir Aurangzeb charged Mastan with blasphemy and sentenced him to two years' "rigorous imprisonment".<sup>18</sup>
22. In April 2021, two Roman Catholic nurses employed at Civil Hospital in Faisalabad, Mariyum Lal and Newsh Arooj, were instructed by a senior nurse by the name of Rukhsana to remove some old hospital wall decorations. Meanwhile, Rukhsana provoked her Muslim colleagues by claiming that Lal and Arooj were removing signage with Quranic verses. Immediately, a mob of Muslim hospital employees gathered to demand Lal's and Arooj's deaths, and one employee named Waqas attacked Lal with a knife. Instead of arresting the assailant or the inciting mob, Pakistani authorities detained Lal and Arooj. Fortunately, in November 2021 Morning Star News reported that Lal and Arooj had been acquitted of their charges by Faisalabad Additional Sessions Court

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<sup>15</sup> Jubilee Campaign, [Ramzan Bibi](#).

<sup>16</sup> Haroon Janjua, "[Pakistan: 'WhatsApp blasphemy' death sentence reinforces dangerous trend](#)", *DW*, 21 January 2022. ; Shah Meer Baloch & Hannah Ellis-Petersen, "[Woman sentenced to death in Pakistan over 'blasphemous' WhatsApp activity](#)", *The Guardian*, 19 January 2022.

<sup>17</sup> The Hindu, "[Pakistani man sentenced to death in blasphemy case](#)", 24 February 2022.

<sup>18</sup> Dawn, "[Man gets death sentence for blasphemy](#)", 24 December 2021.

Judge Shahzad Ahmad on lack of evidence but that the decision was not publicly reported for fear of backlash from radical Muslims.<sup>19</sup>

23. In July 2021, Pakistani Christian woman Shagufta Kiran was arrested without warrant by officers from Pakistan's Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) while she was inside her home; throughout the incident, the authorities had allegedly pushed Kiran, slapped her daughter, and threatened to shoot them. Kiran's husband Rafique Masih explained that his wife was arrested after she inadvertently forwarded a blasphemous message in a WhatsApp group of which she was a member.<sup>20</sup>

#### **(b) Extrajudicial Killings**

24. In July 2020, while Ahmadi Muslim man Tahir Ahmad Naseem was on trial in Peshawar for blasphemy, a teenage boy who had passed security shot Naseem six times, killing him. Despite that the teenager was charged with murder, the Pakistani radical Muslim community has praised him and deemed him a 'holy warrior'.<sup>21</sup>
25. In August 2020 in Peshawar, unidentified perpetrators shot and killed Ahmadi Muslim businessman Meraj Ahmed in a reportedly religiously-motivated incident. Prior to his murder, Ahmed had been receiving threats regarding his faith.<sup>22</sup>
26. In October 2020, Ahmadi Muslim and Professor of Zoology at the Government Superior Science College Peshawar, Dr. Naeemuddin Khattak, was driving in Wazir Bagh when two unidentified assailants ambushed his vehicle and shot Dr. Khattak five times, killing him. The alleged perpetrator is a lecturer and colleague of Dr. Khattak, and was allegedly angry regarding a previous religious argument with him.<sup>23</sup>
27. In November 2020, 31-year-old Ahmadi Muslim Dr. Tahir Ahmad was shot and killed in a plausibly religiously-motivated attack in Nankana Sahib, Punjab District. The perpetrator was a teenager at the time of the incident, and two other victims - including Dr. Ahmad's father - were also hospitalized with related injuries from the shooting.<sup>24</sup>
28. In November 2020, 82-year-old Ahmadi Muslim man Mahmood Khan was shot and killed by unidentified assailants while he waited at a bus terminal in

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<sup>19</sup> Jubilee Campaign, ["Mariyum and Newsh"](#).

<sup>20</sup> Voice of the Persecuted, ["Pakistan: Another Christian woman accused of blasphemy for forwarding a text"](#). ; Shafique Khokhar, ["Christian woman still jailed in Islamabad on blasphemy charges after more than nine months"](#), *Asia News*, 19 May 2022.

<sup>21</sup> Emma Graham-Harrison, ["He was such a kind soul": daughter's fight for US man killed at Pakistan blasphemy trial"](#), *The Guardian*, 30 August 2020. ; Umar Farooq & Jibrán Ahmad, ["Holy warrior' selfie: Pakistan teen feted for killing U.S. blasphemy suspect"](#), *Reuters*, 9 August 2020.

<sup>22</sup> Voice Pakistan, ["Ahmadi Man Killed by Unknown Attackers in Peshawar"](#), 13 August 2020.

<sup>23</sup> Dawn, ["Professor belonging to Ahmadi community shot dead in Peshawar allegedly after religious argument"](#), 5 October 2020.

<sup>24</sup> Atalayar, ["Ahmadi doctor killed in Pakistan"](#), 23 November 2020.



Peshawar. In line with the previous murders of Ahmadi Muslims in Peshawar, experts believe Khan's killing was religiously motivated.<sup>25</sup>

29. In February 2021 in another suspected religious killing, 65-year-old Ahmadi Muslim man Abdul Qadir was killed after he opened the door of his Peshawar-based homeopathic remedies health clinic to come face to face with a gunman. The perpetrator has been identified as 20-year-old Zafar Khan.<sup>26</sup>
30. In July 2021, a 21-year-old rookie Pakistani police constable "hacked to death" a civilian man named Muhammad Waqas in the district of Sadiqabad. Previously, Waqas was charged with blasphemy in 2016 for sharing allegedly blasphemous content on social media, though he was eventually acquitted by the Lahore High Court on appeal. Waqas spent some years in hiding after his release from prison and had returned to his home community only weeks prior to his murder. The teenaged perpetrator, when questioned, explained that he killed Waqas because "he [Waqas] committed blasphemy".<sup>27</sup>
31. In September 2021, 45-year-old Ahmadi Muslim man Maqsood Ahmad was shot multiple times and killed by a group of unidentified assailants in Nankana Sahib District. Ahmad, who had previously served in the Pakistani Army prior to resettling in England, was a British national who had only returned to Pakistan six months prior to his murder.<sup>28</sup>
32. In December 2021, a large mob of Muslim extremists in Sialkot physically attacked, killed, and then set fire to the deceased body of Sri Lankan national and general manager of Rajoco Industries, Priyantha Diyawadana, after rumors had spread that he had removed from the factory walls a poster with Qur'anic text on it.<sup>29</sup>
33. In February 2022, a mosque custodian in Khanewal District, Punjab Province told local residents that he had witnessed mentally unstable 41-year-old Mushtaq Ahmed desecrating and burning a copy of the Qur'an while inside the house of worship. The following day, authorities briefly detained Ahmed under the accusations before a mob of some 300 angry Muslims abducted him, physically attacked him with bricks and iron rods, and subsequently lynched him on a nearby tree.<sup>30</sup>
34. In March 2022, 21-year-old Pakistani woman Safoora Bibi who taught at Jamia Islamia Falahul Binaat, a theological seminary in Dera Ismail Khan, was killed by a female colleague and two female students; the two students were nieces of the adult perpetrator, Umra Aman. One of the perpetrators, a 13-year-old

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<sup>25</sup> Al Jazeera, "[Ahmadi man, 82, shot dead by gunmen in Pakistan's Peshawar](#)", 9 November 2020.

<sup>26</sup> Al Jazeera, "[Ahmadi man killed in targeted attack in northwest Pakistan](#)", 12 February 2021.

<sup>27</sup> David Averre, "[Man cleared of committing blasphemy in Pakistan is hacked to death 'by policeman who refused to believe he was innocent'](#)", *Daily Mail*, 3 July 2021.

<sup>28</sup> Voice Pakistan, "[Ahmadi Man Killed: Ashrafi Condemns Killing But Uses Offensive Term](#)", 3 September 2021.

<sup>29</sup> Imran Sadiq, "[Sialkot lynching: New footage shows a colleague trying to save Sri Lankan man; police arrest scores](#)", *Dawn*, 4 December 2021.

<sup>30</sup> Ayaz Gul, "[Mob Kills Alleged Blasphemer in Pakistan](#)", *Voice of America*, 13 February 2022.



schoolgirl, claimed that she had had a dream in which Prophet Muhammad came to her, informed her that Bibi had committed blasphemy, and ordered her to kill her teacher.<sup>31</sup>

### (c) Violence and Discrimination

35. In January 2021, Christian nurse and employee at Sobhraj Maternity Hospital in Karachi, Tabitha Nazir Gill, was tied up, physically tortured, and stripped from her clothes by a radical Muslim mob after an unspecified Muslim coworker accused Gill of committing blasphemy by encouraging her patients to pray to Jesus.<sup>32</sup>
36. In late April 2021, it was reported that Pakistani Christian nurse Sakina Mehtab was being harassed and accused of blasphemy by her Muslim hospital colleagues after she had shared a video on WhatsApp of a Pakistani Muslim in France criticizing the Pakistani public's response to a European Union Parliament Resolution calling on the EU to review Pakistan's preferential trade status in light of its human rights issues. Mehtab's Muslim colleagues at Lahore's Punjab Institute of Mental Health accused her of criticizing Islam, took up clubs and sticks, and attempted to provoke their Christian colleagues. Afterwards, the angry mob stormed the hospital's Christian chapel where they chanted Muslim slogans, announced Christian activities could no longer be held in the facility, desecrated Bibles, and urged their Christian colleagues to convert to Islam.<sup>33</sup>
37. In August 2021, Catholic Pakistani senior nurse Fazilat Lal revealed to Aid to the Church in Need that she had been repeatedly discriminated against by her Muslim colleagues at Services Hospital in Lahore. Many of her peers accused Lal of inspiring *nawab utaromuham* (*removal of face covering*) because she, a Catholic, did not wear coverings. Once, Lal was targeted by Muslim colleagues who locked her in a room and threatened to kill her; fortunately, hospital security guards released her and escorted her to safety.<sup>34</sup>

### Recommendation(s)

We urge the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to:

38. Repeal Articles 295 through 298 of the Pakistani Penal Code of 1860, as blasphemy laws are inconsistent with universal standards of human rights, including the right to freedom of religion or belief;

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<sup>31</sup> Al Jazeera, "[Pakistani teacher killed for alleged blasphemy: Police](#)", 30 March 2022.

<sup>32</sup> Kamran Chaudhry, "[Mob attacks Pakistani Christian in hospital over blasphemy claim](#)", *Union of Catholic Asian News*, 30 January 2021.; Lydia Catling, "[Christian nurse is 'tied up and tortured by mob at Pakistani hospital after Muslim colleague falsely accused her of blasphemy'](#)", *Daily Mail*, 1 February 2021.

<sup>33</sup> Morning Star News, "[Another Christian Nurse Falsely Accused of Blasphemy](#)", 5 May 2021.

<sup>34</sup> Kamran Chaudhry, "[Christian nurses under threat in Pakistan](#)", *Aleteia Premium*, 4 August 2021.

39. Until a full abolition can be achieved, enact reforms to: (1) make blasphemy a bailable offense, (2) make the provision of evidence by accusers a pre-requisite to detention and formal blasphemy charges; and (3) allow investigatory authorities to dismiss unfounded and baseless accusations;
40. Abide by the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, which prohibits the application of torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and which requires state forces to provide medical care and hygienic facilities to all prisoners;
41. Enforce existing penal code articles that criminalize perjury and false accusations;
42. In light of the rising trend in mob violence, provide protection and security to individuals and defendants who are accused of blasphemy;
43. Release unconditionally and with immediate effect all religious prisoners of conscience, including those listed within this submission;
44. Ensure the equal protection of all faith minorities by punishing any advocacy of hatred against them that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility, or violence.

#### **IV. Gender-Based Violence (GBV) & Violence against Women and Girls (VAW)**

##### **(a) Abduction, Forced Religious Conversion, and Marriage of Faith Minority Girls and Women**

45. In October 2019, 14-year-old Christian girl Huma Younus was kidnapped by Muslim man Abdul Jabbar and transported to a faraway city; she was forced to marry her captor, and it was reported in July 2020 that Huma had become pregnant due to the sexual violence inflicted by her abductor.<sup>35</sup>
46. In April 2020, 14-year-old Christian girl Myra Shehbaz was on her way to complete activities as a domestic worker in Faisalabad when she was abducted from the street and forced into a vehicle by a group of Muslim men led by Muhammad Naqash.<sup>36</sup>
47. In June 2020, 12-year-old Christian girl Farah Shaheen was kidnapped by three men, forced to marry one of her captors, a 29-year-old Muslim man, before he shackled her, raped her, and subjected her to forced labor in inhumane conditions.<sup>37</sup> Fortunately, however, Farah returned to her family safely in January 2021.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Jubilee Campaign, [Abduction, Conversion, & Child Marriage of Religious Minority Girls in Pakistan: 2022 Update](#), January 2022.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

48. In July 2020, 15-year-old Saneha Kinza Iqbal was kidnapped on her way to church by 30-year-old Muslim man Saeed Amanat.<sup>39</sup>
49. In late August 2020, Hindu girl Miza Kumari was abducted, raped, forcefully converted to Islam, and married to a Muslim man in Sialkot, Punjab.<sup>40</sup>
50. In October 2020, 45-year-old Muslim man Azhar Ali kidnapped the child of his neighbors, 13-year-old Christian girl Arzoo Raja. Ali then submitted fabricated records to the court which alleged that Arzoo had willingly converted to Islam and that she was 18 years old and therefore legally marriageable. Azhar Ali currently is facing multiple charges of kidnapping, child marriage, and rape; however, his January 2021 release on bail does not bode well for achieving justice.<sup>41</sup>
51. In November 2020, 13-year-old Hindu Dalit girl Sonia Kumari was kidnapped by armed men and forcibly converted to Islam in Sindh province.<sup>42</sup>
52. In February 2021, an underaged Hindu girl, Neena Kumari failed to return home from school one day, and her family later learned that policeman Ghulam Maroof Qadri abducted Neena, forced her to convert to Islam, renamed her 'Maria', and then married her in Karachi, 400 kilometers away from her home.<sup>43</sup>
53. In February 2021, Hindu girl Reena Meghwar was abducted from Keriogjar, Badar, and forcibly converted to Islam and married to her kidnapper Muhammad Qasim.<sup>44</sup>
54. In March 2021, 13-year-old Hindu girl Kavita Oad was kidnapped and forcibly converted to Islam in Sindh Province by Islamic cleric Mian Mithoo.<sup>45</sup>
55. In March 2021, Johnson and Samina Masih received news that their 13-year-old daughter Shakaina Masih, who had been missing for a month, had been abducted, converted to Islam and married to a Muslim man.<sup>46</sup>
56. In March 2021, 13-year-old Hindu girl Pooja Maghwar was abducted while she was returning home from work in Sindh province's Tando Jam town. Fortunately, Pooja was soon rescued by police, at which point they learned that she was forcibly converted to Islam and married against her will.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

57. In April 2021, 22-year-old Hindu woman Aarti Bai went did not return home after going to work at a beauty parlor in Lakarna, Sindh province. Days later, Aarti was found to be converted to Islam and married to Muslim man Muhammad Fawad.<sup>48</sup>
58. In May 2021, 13-year-old Christian girl Nayab Gill was kidnapped in Punjab by a Muslim man named Saddam who is already married with four daughters, and forced to marry him against her will and convert to Islam.<sup>49</sup>
59. In July 2021, 9-year-old Christian girl Elisha from Hyderabad was alone at home when 45-year-old Muslim man Babar forcefully entered the home, beat, and raped Elisha.<sup>50</sup>
60. In August 2021, an unnamed 14-year-old Christian girl went missing from her family home while preparing for an exam she was to take the following morning. The girl's mother has since reported that the local authorities refused to file a First Information Report (FIR), claimed that her daughter likely eloped and converted willingly, and ignored the case.<sup>51</sup>
61. In August 2021, two Christian sisters, 16-year-old Muqds Nadeem and 12-year-old Mehwish Nadeem were alone at home when a group of six Muslim men led by Muhammad Azeem forced themselves into the home armed with guns, beat the two girls, then kidnapped the elder and dragged her onto the street.<sup>52</sup>
62. In August 2021, radical Muslim man Muhammad Ali Nawaz entered the home of Hindu man Mangal Bheel, physically assaulted him, and abducted his 15-year-old daughter Chatro. It is assumed that Nawaz intends to forcibly convert her to Islam and marry her.<sup>53</sup>
63. In August 2021, two Christian cousins, 15-year-old Simran and Sheeza, were kidnapped at gunpoint outside of their home while they were leaving to purchase some food.<sup>54</sup>
64. In August 2021, Christian father and rickshaw driver Gulzar Masih reported to the police that his daughter, 14-year-old Chashman Kanwal, had gone missing after he went to pick her up from school and was unable to find her. Days later, Chashman's kidnapper sent her family a video of her claiming that she had converted to Islam willingly and that she had changed her name to Aisha Bibi.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

65. In September 2021 in Karachi, an 8-year-old Christian girl by the name of Liza Younas was kidnapped and raped by 20-year-old Muslim neighbor Muhammad Bota; after committing the sexual assault, Bota attempted to kill Liza by hitting her with a stone and leaving her unconscious on the ground outside before fleeing. Liza's family found her on the street in poor condition and took her for an examination at Sahiwal Hospital which confirmed she was raped. Authorities have arrested Bota and he is liable to punishment of between 10 and 25 years in prison.<sup>56</sup>
66. In September 2021, the sister of aforementioned Aarti Bai, 24-year-old Sonika, went missing and her family received a cryptic message from her phone number. Sonika's family tracked her phone's location to the home of one of her Muslim friends, and they fear she was abducted and forced to convert to Islam. Sonika spoke to her father on the phone and informed him she was being held hostage and faced threats if she tried to escape.<sup>57</sup>
67. In October 2021, it was reported that 17-year-old Christian girl Misbah Imdad has gone into hiding with her family in Faisalabad after receiving threats of abduction and forced marriage from Muslim man Muhammad Saqib.<sup>58</sup>
68. In November 2021, 12-year-old Christian girl Meerab Abbas went missing and it was revealed later that she had been kidnapped by 22-year-old Muslim man Muhammad Daud, transported from Sahiwal to Balochistan, and forced to convert to Islam and marry Daud.<sup>59</sup>
69. In December 2021, it was reported that 13-year-old Hindu girl Roshni Meghwar of Sindh province's Mirpur Khas district had been married to a Muslim man, Mohammad Moosa, who is more than double her age. Roshni had been originally kidnapped months earlier and converted to Islam against her will<sup>60</sup>
70. In December 2021, 19-year-old Hindu woman Hariyan Meghwar was kidnapped, gang raped, forcibly converted to Islam, and married to perpetrator Bhai Khan, a 31-year-old Muslim man who is already married.<sup>61</sup>
71. In January 2022, 14-year-old Pentecostal Christian girl Mahnoor Ashraf was abducted by 45-year-old Muslim neighbor Muhammad Ali Khan Ghauri. The family unsuccessfully attempted to rescue Mahnoor, and days later they received news that she had converted to Islam and that Ghauri formalized a marriage certificate claiming her to be 19 years old.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

72. In January 2022, young Hindu girl Najma Kolhi was abducted and forcibly married to Muslim man Amanullah, who forced Kolhi to convert to Islam and change her name to Fatima.<sup>63</sup>
73. In May 2022, 15-year-old Roman Catholic girl Saba Masih was abducted by her family's adult Muslim neighbor, Muhammad Yasir, who then forced Saba to convert to Islam and marry.<sup>64</sup>

#### **(b) Honor Killings and Killings Following Abduction**

74. In January 2022, three unidentified men abducted, sexually assaulted, and murdered 16-year-old Hindu girl Nageena Chandio before disposing of her body, with her hands and feet bound, in a crop field.<sup>65</sup>
75. In March 2022, Wahid Bux Lashari shot and killed 18-year-old Hindu girl Pooja Kumari after she had repeatedly refused his marriage quests in the preceding months.<sup>66</sup>
76. In May 2022, a four-year-old girl from Sindh Province's Panhwar community perished in an intentional fire set by an angry mob as an act of revenge against the marriage of a woman of the Chauhan community to a man from the rival Panhwar community.<sup>67</sup>
77. In May 2022, two Pakistani Spanish sisters Aneesa, 20, and Arooj Abbas, 24, traveled to their home country of Pakistan and were subsequently strangled and shot to death by their family for requesting divorces from the distant cousins they were arranged into marriage with.<sup>68</sup>

#### **Recommendation**

We urge the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to:

78. Create an appeal or reporting mechanism to flag judges, police officers, religious institutes, Muslim clerics, and official actors who discriminate against, violate the rights of, or fail to protect religious minorities in cases of abduction, forced conversion, and child marriage.
79. Defer to secular laws, which set the minimum legal marriageable age at 18 years, rather than Islamic laws which permit the marriage of a girl as young as she reaches puberty.

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<sup>63</sup> Anurag Roushan, "[Pakistan: Hindu Girl Abducted, Forcibly Converted And Married Off In Badin District](#)", *Republic World*, 2 January 2022.

<sup>64</sup> Morning Star News, "[Muslim Forcibly Marries, Converts Christian Girl, Family Says](#)", 27 May 2022.

<sup>65</sup> OpIndia, "[Pakistan: Minor Hindu girl abducted and raped in Sindh, body found dumped in a farm](#)", 25 January 2022.

<sup>66</sup> Haroon Janjua, "[Pakistan: Hindu girls' killing reignites forced conversion fears](#)", *Al Jazeera*, 31 March 2022.

<sup>67</sup> Press Trust of India, "[Girl, 4, Dies As Angry Mob Sets 10 Houses On Fire In Pakistan](#)", 30 May 2022.

<sup>68</sup> El País, "[Sisters from Spain murdered in Pakistan after rejecting arranged marriage](#)", 24 May 2022.

80. Mandate a specially trained taskforce dedicated solely to conducting proper investigations into the circumstances surrounding victims' disappearance, religious conversion, and marriage, particularly when conditions of coercion or fraudulent documentation are present.
81. Similarly, mandate a taskforce dedicated to locating, rescuing, and aiding in the transition of survivors of abduction and forced marriage into safe houses and rehabilitation centers.