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# ANNUAL HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT 2013

**PAKISTAN**



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Pakistan was founded by Muhammad Ali Jinnah with the premise that it would be a state for minorities. His speech to the nation on Aug 11th 1947 contained the following words:

*“You are free. You are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or any other places of worship...You may belong to any religion or caste or creed - that has nothing to do with the business of the state.”*

Religious minorities make up barely 3% of Pakistan’s 180 million population, with the remaining 97% making up the Muslim majority. Home to one of the largest populations of Muslims in the world, Pakistan has evolved into a melting pot of violence, rivalry, animosity and prejudice. Fast forward almost 77 years since those words were spoken and the irony is brutally apparent.

In May 2013, Pakistan held the parliamentary elections amidst widespread attacks and targeted killings by the Taliban in attempts to disrupt what they considered ‘un-Islamic’ elections. Hundreds died with several more injured while The Pakistan Muslim League emerged victorious, putting Nawaz Shariff in power for an unprecedented third time. Marking a significant milestone in Pakistan’s history, the Pakistan People’s Party, the first civilian government to complete a full five year term, handed over the reins in the first democratic peaceful transition of power. Despite this encouraging development GHRD remains extremely concerned about the human rights situation in Pakistan which appears to show no significant signs of improvement.

Some of the most serious issues in Pakistan are Sectarian violence, interfaith violence; with religious minorities facing numerous threats, abuse, assaults and other forms of persecution on a regular basis, enforced disappearances, torture, honour killings, rape and bonded labour. An climate of unconstitutional prejudice, blasphemy laws, lack of access to education and the legal system by the minorities, combined with organisational corruption including those involving the government and the police, a reluctance to acknowledge crimes let alone investigate them have resulted in a sad and desperate state of affairs for

Pakistan’s religious minorities. Government accountability remained a serious problem and militant organisations amongst other nongovernmental actors contributed to a culture of lawlessness in some parts of the country, particularly the provinces of Balochistan, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). The government of Pakistan, at the time of writing, has failed to put into place any concrete measures or taken any tangible action to protect its minorities from harm. Scores of Shia’s have been killed or injured throughout 2013 with the tide of violence coming in particularly strong and high during the holy months of Ramadan and Moharram. In July, 57 people were killed when a bomb ripped through a market frequented by Shia’s, 100 of Pakistani Christian houses were set alight when a blasphemy row erupted east of Lahore and thousands of Muslim protestors turned violent after a young Christian man allegedly made derogatory remarks against the Prophet Mohammed.

While thousands of individuals from religious minorities across Pakistan are targets of attacks as a result of words or exercising their beliefs, the perpetrators actually committing violent acts and breaking the law, seem to go unpunished. Nawaz Shariff, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, in a speech to the National Assembly commented on the plight of minorities in Pakistan and instructed his Government to investigate perpetrators of acts against Shia’s. The hope is that this was meant to extend to all minorities and that the Government will begin to take actual action to discourage attacks against minorities and reform the police force so that complaints made by minorities are taken seriously and the perpetrators of crimes are arrested, tried and convicted.

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## VIOLENCE AGAINST RELIGIOUS MINORITIES

Home to over 180million people, it is no secret that Pakistan hosts one of the largest Muslim populations in the world. What is possibly less well known is that, of the 180 million or so, in Pakistan only 2.3% are of Ahmadiyya faith and around 1.5/2% of this population are either Buddhists, Hindus and Christians while the rest, nearly 97%, are Muslim. The majority of Muslims are Sunni with the Shia minority making up around 20% of the population. This disparity has resulted in a huge imbalance in power leading to Pakistan's religious minorities facing a constant and relentless threat of danger. Be it through accusations of Blasphemy, discrimination, rapes, forced conversion or other forms of oppression Pakistan's minority Shia, Hindu, Ahmadiyya and Christian population tend to live in a persistent state of fear, fear of violence, jail and the death penalty.

2013 saw a marked increase in Sectarian and inter faith violence against all the minorities and Shia's in particular. Sunni extremist groups such as Lashkar e Jhangvi, with suspected links to the Taliban and Al Qaeda have claimed responsibility for several attacks which have injured and killed numerous Shia's. Among these are:

- 10th January 2013- Bombings in Quetta. A suicide bomb attack occurred in a snooker hall around 20.00hrs followed by a car bomb outside the same building, killing over a 100 people and injuring nearly 300.
- 10th January 2013- An explosion went off in Tableeghi Jamaat seminary in the Swat Valley. Initially claimed to be a gas leak, the police later asserted that it was a bomb blast. This attack claimed over 20 lives and injured approximately 60.
- 16 February 2013 – At a market in Hazara Town, near Quetta, a bomb in a water tank exploded taking the lives of more than a 100 people and injuring nearly 200. Given the heavy population of ethnic Hazara people in this area, most of the victims were Shia Muslims from the Hazara community.
- 15th June 2013- Series of bombings killed numerous Shia's. One of these was in Balochistan when a bomb exploded on a bus carrying students from Sardar Bahadur Khan's Women University. The targets are believed to be Shia Muslims from the Hazara communities who have been previous targets of Lashkar-e-Jhangvi.



## ATTACKS AGAINST SHIAS

Attacks against Shia's have been especially prevalent during Moharram, one of the most sacred months in the Islamic calendar, where large numbers of Shia's gather in processions to mark Ashura, the 10th day of Moharram.

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### CASES

- **Rawalpindi, Pakistan**

15th November 2013- A Shia procession in Rawalpindi were passing a Sunni seminary when they heard the Imam making derogatory remarks against the Shia Sect. This led to throwing rocks followed Sunni gunmen opening fire on the procession killing eight people and injuring some thirty others. An army unit stationed just outside Rawalpindi were forced to intervene following the Police's inability to curb the violence. A curfew was imposed in the city demonstrating the gravity and extent of the attack. GHRD's partners in the field conducted a fact finding mission on this attack, interviewing witnesses who confirmed the incident.

Ali Dayab Hasan, Pakistan Director at Human Rights Watch, in condemning this attack stated "Pakistan's besieged Shia citizens should be able to participate in Ashura processions without fear of predictable attack while the government just looks on. The Pakistani authorities need to put all necessary security measures in place to protect the Shia population. Arresting extremist group members responsible for past attacks would be an important first step."

- **Rahim Yar Khan, Abbasia Town, Pakistan**

2nd August 2013- Shia Ullama Council President was leaving his house with his son to participate in a rally when 6 people on motorcycles opened fire just as they were about to get into their car. Both, father and son were seriously injured and died in hospital.

## ATTACKS AGAINST CHRISTIANS

### CASES

- **All Saints Church, Kohati Gate, Peshawar**

22nd September 2013 - Just after morning prayers worshippers were on their way out of the church and heading towards the courtyard when two suicide bombs exploded just inside the main gate of the All Saints Church. 84 people were killed and 250 were injured though local sources say the death toll is much higher. The Jandulah group belonging to the Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack.

GHRD's partner organisation, Christian True Spirit, conducted a fact finding on this attack and issued a statement expressing their "(shock) that Christians have to lose their beloveds because of the police and the government's repeated negligence once again"

- **Mohallah Farooq Nagar, Gloria Colony, Sheikhpura, Pakistan**

9th September 2013 - A young man was returning home with supplies for his family. As he entered the house, he was brutally attacked by some Muslim youths who used weapons, including an axe, to assault him. When his mother tried to intervene, she was attacked and bitten. The attackers threatened them with further attacks unless they closed their businesses.



## ATTACKS AGAINST AHMADIYAS

Ahmadiyya or Qadianies, as they are sometimes referred to, come from the village of Qadian, where the founder, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835-1908), was born. This group makes up about 2% of Pakistan's 180million population. Ahmadi's believe that the Mehdi or savior, who is prophesized in Islam, came about 100 years ago. This essentially challenges Prophet Muhammad's position as Islam's last prophet, a basic tenet of the faith and one which has been the cause of the animosity between the Muslim majority and the Ahmadiyas. During the islamatisation of General Ul-Haq's rule, Pakistan amended its constitution to make it a crime for Ahmadis, to do a number of things. One unfair and harsh requirement is that they are not allowed to identify themselves as Muslims which means, among other things that, in Pakistan, the Ahmadi's are considered Non-Muslims.

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## CASES

- **Kasur District, Punjab**

March 2013, Kasur District Punjab- A mob led by local clerics descended on a house in the Kasur district chanting Anti Ahmadiyya slogans. They broke into the house and into the room where the family of five were cowering with fear. They tortured the father until he lost consciousness and beat the wife, children and a 70 year old relative of the family. Apparently police personnel were present but did not take any action to stop the assault. The family had been receiving threats for 6 month prior to the attack and threatened with further attacks unless they converted to Islam.



## ATTACKS AGAINST HINDUS

Hindus represent around 1.2% of Pakistan's 180 million population. Most of these are concentrated in the areas of Sindh and Sanghar and Tharpakar district which border India. There are small pockets of Hindus in Baluchistan and Punjab. Most of the Hindus living in Pakistan are from Scheduled Castes previously known as 'Untouchables'. Hindus are often targets of threats, abuse and bonded labour and it seems a plausible assertion that this persecution began around the time of the partition between India and Pakistan in 1947. As Non-Muslims in a heavily Islamic state and prejudice arising from the time of the Partition, they are treated as 'anti-state' and 'anti-Islamic'. Often uneducated, in large part due to lack of access to education either because they are poor or live in rural areas they are usually found working in menial jobs such as cleaners and sweepers. They are not allowed to serve in government, the armed forces or hold civil servant positions<sup>1</sup>. In 2013, the situation of the Hindu minority as with other minorities has gotten progressively worse. There have been no changes to legislation and no evidence of Pakistan implementing any measures to protect persecution of its religious minorities.

GHRD has documented several cases where bonded labour is being used as a method to control and oppress minorities particularly Hindus.



<sup>1</sup> World Directory of Minority and Indigenous People - <http://www.minorityrights.org/5630/pakistan/>

- **Phulhadiyoon, District Mirpurkhas, Pakistan**

January 2014 - A Hindu family and police officer were abused and beaten by a Muslim landlord and his servants when filing a case to get the family freed from bonded labour. The incident took place after the court had given an order to present the family and the landowner in court to investigate the accusation of bonded labour. The police officer went to the house to collect them but was hindered by the landowner who refused to let them leave. The policeman was severely injured and the labourers were later found locked up in the house. An FIR for bonded labour and abuse has been filed against the landowner and his 6 servants who apparently had kept the family locked up for months and raped the women and children repeatedly.

- **Dhoronaro, District Umerkot, Pakistan**

February 2013 - Hindu man and his family had been living and working for the same landowner for five years. Conditions were bad and the land owner did not provide his workers any ration. Workers tired of these conditions decided to flee while the Hindu man stayed and asked the landowner for his savings. The landowner put the blame of the escape on the Hindu man and filed an FIR against him. He has been arrested by the police several times and had to spend and borrow a lot of money in his fight for justice for him and his family. He has gained no support from police or local authorities and is still a victim of bonded labour.





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# BLASPHEMY LAWS

The foundations of the Blasphemy Laws in Pakistan are found in the Indian Penal Code of 1890. Many countries have Blasphemy Laws; however, what sets Pakistan apart is this. Under General Zia Ul-Haq the Blasphemy Laws were amended to include the death penalty and single out Islam as the religion that must not be insulted among other changes. These have proved to be a serious cause for concern for the citizens of Pakistan, the international community and for Human Rights.

## Summary of the Laws.

Section 295- Initially, Section 295 was indiscriminate and prohibited the defilement or denigration of all places of worship. Under General Ul-Haq's orders this was later amended to:

- s295-B–Prohibits the defilement of the Qur'an or any extract from the Qur'an

*Sentence: Life imprisonment.*



- s295-C- Prohibits the use of derogatory remarks with respect to the Holy Prophet.

N.B: There is no reference to the will or intent of the accused individual in the wording of the law. Intention or will forms one of the most basic principles in law in deciding the gravity of the crime and the sentencing for that crime. It potentially demonstrates malice or ill will as opposed to an accidental occurrence or ignorance as to what is offensive or an oversight.

*Sentence- Death and a fine.*

N.B: Life imprisonment was initially included in the sentencing option but was later struck down which left death and an excruciatingly high fine as the only punishment was death

### **SECTIONS SPECIFICALLY TARGETING AHMADIYAS (also known as Quadiani)**

- S298-B – ‘Any person of the Quadiani group or the Lahori group (who call themselves ‘Ahmadis’ or by any other name who by words, either spoken or written, or by visible representation’, are prohibited from the use of certain epithets, descriptions and titles, including referring to their place of worship as ‘Masjid’, a mosque. It also prohibits “by words, either spoken or written, or by visible representation refers to the mode or form of call to prayers followed by his faith as “Azan”, or recites Azan as used by the Muslims, shall be punished”<sup>2</sup>

*Sentence- up to 3 years imprisonment and a fine*

- s298-C states the following: ‘Any person of the Quadiani group or the Lahori group (who call themselves ‘Ahmadis’ or by any other name), who directly or indirectly, poses himself as a Muslim, or calls, or refers to, his faith as Islam, or preaches or propagates his faith, or invites others to accept his faith, by words, either spoken or written, or by visible representations, or in any manner whatsoever outrages the religious feelings of Muslims shall be punished’<sup>3</sup>

*Sentence- up to 3 years imprisonment and a fine.*

Last year in Pakistan, 34 people were charged with blasphemy. 16 are on death row on blasphemy charges and another 20 are serving life sentences.

<sup>2</sup> Pakistan Penal Code

<sup>3</sup> Pakistan Penal Code



- **Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan**

A Christian factory worker who worked amongst many Muslims was approached several times by a colleague offering to convert him to Islam. An offer he repeatedly refused. Meanwhile the worker lost his sim card and there were attempts to frame him for sending derogatory messages about the Prophet Muhammad, a crime punishable by death and a fine. He informed the management and quit his job. Soon after he found that a report had been lodged against him at the Police accusing him of Blasphemy. Fearing for his life, he disappeared only to find that his brothers in law had been arrested in his place. The police eventually located him, arrested him and proceeded to assault him once in custody where currently remains.

- **Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan**

A 72 year old doctor of the Ahmadi faith was arrested in Lahore, on charges of Blasphemy under s298-C. His crime was reading a verse from the Qur'an. An angry mob and some mullahs demanded his detention for 'posing as a Muslim' and presented a video recording allegedly showing him referring to the Qur'an verse while reading the Urdu translation aloud. The case is pending and the Doctor remains in custody.

- **Joseph Colony, Lahore, Pakistan**

On the 8th of March 2013 Sahid Imran filed a blasphemy charge against Christian Sawan Masih. The next day on 9th March, 2013 when the blasphemy allegation on Sawan Masih became public, the extremists gathered around the Joseph colony and protested against the Christian Community. When the protesters had reached the number of thousands of protestors, about 4000 people, they moved towards the residence of Christians and brutally attacked and torched 178 Christian's houses, 18 shops and 2 Churches of Joseph Colony. Over 100 houses were ransacked and torched, while the inhabitants fled for their lives, their children in tow. Police put the number of houses set on fire at 25. Windows were smashed and burned, valuables were looted – not a single house in the colony was spared. The mob destroyed everything. And yet the city's police force failed to protect the residents of the colony, instead taking refuge in a warehouse nearby.



# ABDUCTIONS, FORCED CONVERSIONS, AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN OF MINORITY FAITH

Violence against women and girls is rife in Pakistan and females from minority communities (Hindu, Ahmadiyya, Christian and Buddhist) are particularly targeted. Rape, Honour killings, Forced conversion, forced marriage and acid attacks are regular threats and women in Pakistan live under consistent threats of physical and sexual assault.





- **Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan**

A Hindu female school teacher was kidnapped on her way home from work on the 21th of December 2013. On the day of the kidnapping she was supposed to come home around 3 pm as she did every day, but on her way home from work, a Muslim Man somehow drugged and abducted her. With support from human rights organizations in Pakistan the case was brought to the police where an investigation began. Investigators were able to trace the signals from both the victim's and the perpetrator's phones and on the 4th of January the victim was found in the house of the suspected perpetrator. On the day of the hearing at the High Court, the brave teacher told the court how a car had stopped her on her way home from work on the 21th of December and a cloth drenched in possibly chloroform was put around her face which caused her to fall unconscious.

GHRD's partner organisation conducted a fact finding mission and is monitoring the case as it progresses. GHRD has received reports that the High Court issued a warrant for the arrest and detention of the perpetrator. The perp however has managed to escape and a man hunt is on to find him.

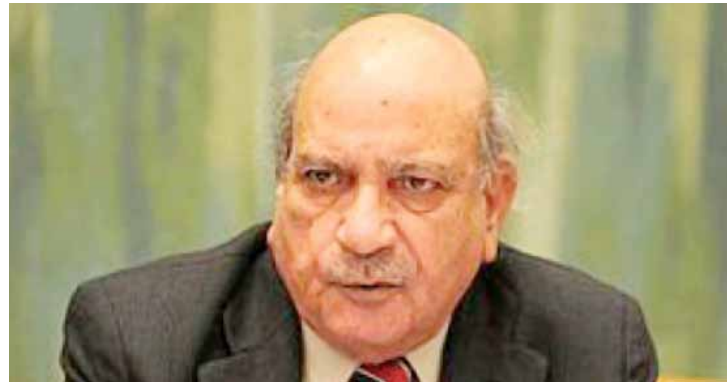
- **Kapri Mori Village, Sindh Province, Pakistan**

A Hindu girl of 13 years old was kidnapped in March 2013. The kidnapper was a former assistant to the landlord of the girl's family. The girl and her family had emigrated to find employment and the kidnapper spotted her when she was working for him. When the girl moved back to Kapri Moli with her family the perpetrator followed her and in the middle of the night on the 3rd March, he and a few of his friends arrived at the house, threatened the family with a gun and abducted the girl. The girl appears to have been forcibly converted to Islam and has managed to contact her parents requesting to be rescued. The parents of the girl are poor and have sold their livestock to get their daughter back, but the court favors the perpetrator who is accused of bribing it. The perpetrator has told the court that the girl is 18 and they have chosen to believe in his documents which are likely to be false.



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## Q & A WITH MR. I.A. REHMAN, SECRETARY GENERAL OF HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION, PAKISTAN



**Do you believe that the minorities were able to actively participate in the elections? Did they get a fair chance to vote?**

They did participate, but not actively.

**And how come?**

You see, election commission did not make special arrangements for them, political parties did not level to them in the manifesto. Secondly, a large part of the minority community is not economically independent so they are subject to dictation of the landlord or the employer. But we feel that the situation improved. Large number of candidates that came from minorities and large number of minority women have become more interested in politics. Muslim women are bound to stay indoors while minority women can go outside. So there are possibilities. But it will take some time. Because at the moment Pakistan is under threat of the Mullahs and religious fundamentalists and they campaign against non-Muslim voters and candidates.

**Do you think there will be significant effect on human rights and the situation of minorities when Pakistan does get the GSP Plus status?**

You see, this is an argument I personally subscribe to. The economic situation always has a bearing on human rights. I will give an example of England; when there was prosperity in England, there was no racism. When the economic situation declined and there was unemployment in England, the same people changed their racial attitude; they started to target Pakistanis, Hindis. Economic rivalry and problems have an effect. It is all about insecurity again. You see it every-

where. When the economic situation improves, and the people are not afraid anymore to lose their jobs, then the degree of tolerance will improve.

**What changes would you still like to see in Pakistan?**

To begin with I would like to see that the people of Pakistan are all equal to one another, regardless of belief, gender, and territorial affiliation and regardless of their social status. So if we except equality of citizens, we have taken the first important step towards establishing a popular, responsible democratic government. So it is the right and the need of all people. Therefore I would like my people to graduate in to all forms of democracy. From majority democracy to participated democracy, from rule of elite to rule of the common people, I would like to see equality of opportunity for all people. Whether a child is born in a tailor's house or a barber's house or in a soldier's house or a house of a lord of a king, everyone should have equal opportunities to become what they are capable of becoming. I have lived my life; I want the next generation to have equal opportunities in education, services health, national buildings, and politics so they can realize whatever they are capable of. I personally believe that all children are born with equal intelligence, they can do everything. It is all a matter of aptitude. Some have an aptitude for mechanics or art. An art from that they are capable of doing wonderful things. Second, I would like to see women to make more progress, to do more jobs, to come more into public life. I would like to see the minorities rise.



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# HIGHLIGHTS

## 1. International Day Events

In order to promote tolerance and harmony in society, to encourage respect and provide the opportunity to learn about other cultures and people GHRD actively engages and instigates civil society, our partners, other NGO's and the public to partake in celebrations of International Days (as recognised by the United Nations). Some of the activities in recognition of International Days in 2013 were:

- **'Peace Prayer' - International Day for Cultural Diversity, 21st May 2013**

The Peace Education and Development (PEAD) foundation in collaboration with GHRD organised a host of activities in Peshawar, Pakistan, to celebrate the Day for Cultural Diversity. These included theatre performances, plays and inspiring lectures. The distinguishing feature, however, was the 'Peace Prayer'. Held with a number of individuals of the Hindu, Sikh, Muslim and Christian faith, the message of this event was tolerance for all. Given the destruction caused by sectarian and inter faith violence in Pakistan; this was a wonderfully subtle and touching tribute to diversity and hope for harmony.

- **International Day Against Racial Discrimination, 21st March 2013**

235 people attended the events organised by PEAD and GHRD, to commemorate the Day against Racial Discrimination in Khyber Pakhtunkwa. The events included a play written, directed and performed by young artists. The play addressed the types of discrimination prevalent in the socio cultural life of the area and the importance of curtailing discrimination for the prosperity and betterment of Pakistani society. In Peshawar, Hindu Sudhar Saba utilised sport to encourage interaction, dialogue and the importance of teamwork. A one day Cricket tournament was organised and the invited participants included lecturers, professors and students from schools, universities and colleges around the area. Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians participated in order to demonstrate the benefits of a peaceful co-existing environment.

## 2. Election Monitoring Program, Jan- May 2013

GHRD launched an Election Monitoring Program in view of the (then) upcoming parliamentary elections. This took place in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh and Punjab provinces during January to May 2013. Activities included over 20 corner meetings with various communities, regional focus group discussions, provincial dialogue and publishing material including a Charter of Demand to ensure equal participation by religious minorities in the elections including voting rights and a demand for fair and transparent elections.

## 3. Workshop and Capacity Building Conference: Training of the Trainers – June and August 2013

GHRD held two capacity building workshops, 'Training the Trainers' (TOT), with the aim of creating a group of knowledgeable, well- trained and organised Pakistani human rights defenders working to protect religious minorities and marginalised groups from persecution.

The first TOT in June was training workshop in Human Rights Fact Finding, Investigation and Documentation. The second, in August, was held on Communications and the Media. The aim of this was to educate the HRD's in outreach and communications strategies to strengthen their network and share information whilst ensuring their cyber protection.

#### **4. Legal Assistance Program**

In a country where women and girls from minorities are particular targets for rape, forced conversion, kidnapping and assault among other crimes, where police brutality and corruption runs rife, the victims face considerable difficulty in being acknowledged. There is a large gap in programs aimed at assisting victims of crime with steps such as filing a First Instance Report with the Police and/or having legal representation in court. GHRD aims to fill this void and ensure that perpetrators of these crimes are punished, that these crimes are reported, documented and progressed through the correct legal channels so that the victims get justice. To achieve this, GHRD has implemented a Legal Assistance Program to assist those who have become victims of crime due to their minority status.

#### **5. Screening Events – ‘Pakistan- A Defining Moment’**

GHRD produced a film ‘Pakistan- A Defining Moment’ which tackles serious human rights issues in Pakistan in light of the then upcoming elections in Pakistan. The goal of the production was to highlight and raise awareness of the current situation in Pakistan and discuss the hopes held by activists for the future, particularly in light of the laws, constitution and violations concerning minority groups in Pakistan. GHRD took this film on a country wide tour around the Netherlands with screenings in various universities and public and private screenings. We ensured that the audience range was wide and covered people from a multitude of economic, social and racial backgrounds to inspire thought, consideration and ideas for improving the situation in Pakistan.

#### **6. Postcards For Pakistan : Stamping Out Injustice One Letter At A Time**

As part of GHRD’s Education and Raising Awareness campaign with the aim of developing a sense of responsibility among society and in particular the youth, GHRD initiated the Postcard campaign, ‘Postcard For Pakistan: Stamping Out Injustice One Letter at a Time’. After screenings of ‘Pakistan: A Defining Moment’ at universities and colleges around the Netherlands, GHRD’s officers would hold a discussion about the issues raised in the film, following which, the audience members were invited to participate in the post screening activity by writing a message to the UN Special Rapporteur on Religious Freedom or Belief. The postcards were specially designed to garner attention and GHRD is pleased to report that we collected over 200 postcards which are on their way to the Special Rapporteur.

#### **7. EU Lobby Tour Conference, 5th-8th November 2013**

As part of its Lobby and Advocacy efforts, GHRD increased its reach by organising and executing the European Union Lobby Tour. This was held in the prestigious offices of the European Parliament and appropriately marked International Human Rights as a day for discussion and dialogue about the Human Rights situation in Pakistan. The topic, ‘Trade and Human Rights’ addressed the role of Pakistan’s GSP Plus Status and the effect it can have on minorities. The conference was attended by esteemed politicians, representatives from embassies and working groups of the EU as well journalists and other professionals. GHRD’s conference achieved the aim of raising the profile of Human Rights Defenders in Pakistan and highlighting the problems faced by minorities with a view to change perceptions and incites positive change.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

GHRD respectfully urges the Government of Pakistan to deliberate the points below and take appropriate action to improve the situation faced by Pakistan's minority citizens.

We further urge international authorities, policy makers and governments involved in dialogue with Pakistan to give due consideration to these recommendations and actively persuade and encourage the Pakistani government to implement these and other measures to effect a positive change for the situation of minorities and marginalised groups in the country.

GHRD recommends that the Government of Pakistan:

- 1. Actively promote respect for freedom of religion and belief by enacting legislation ensuring freedom of religion and belief for all religious groups.**
- 2. Enact and implement legislation to ensure the protection of all Religious minorities and marginalised groups from ostracization, threats and assault.**
- 3. Enact and implement legislation and standard operating procedures to ensure that perpetrators of religiously motivated crimes are held accountable.**
- 4. Administer legal reforms for the police to ensure an efficient and fair system of law free from prejudice and discrimination against minorities.**
- 5. Initiate campaigns informing, education and encouraging religious tolerance and instill the importance and benefits of interfaith harmony.**
- 6. Repeal the discriminatory 'Blasphemy Laws' and ensure complete lack of impunity for those who commit religiously motivated crimes.**
- 7. Establish a moratorium on blasphemy laws.**
- 8. Set up a formal Commission of Inquiry to investigate the kidnapping and forced conversion of minority women, including documenting statistics and prevalence of kidnapping and/or forced conversion cases.**
- 9. Implement a clear monitoring plan for the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1992, the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Rules, 1995 and the National Policy and Plan of Action for the Abolition of Bonded Labour, 2001<sup>4</sup>**
- 10. Reopen the Federal Ministry of Interfaith Harmony and reaffirm its mission of promoting respect for members of all religious communities, particularly religious minorities.<sup>5</sup>**

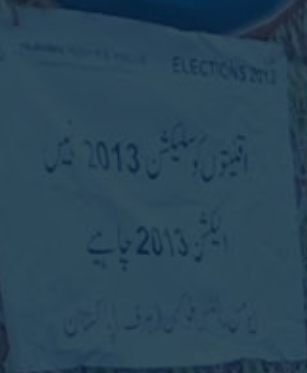
<sup>4</sup>Based on Ireland's Recommendation in the 'Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, Pakistan'

<sup>5</sup>'Pakistan's Religious Minority Problem', Robert P George, South Asia Channel.





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This report was compiled by

**Ms. Priyanka Reddy,**

*Associate Human Rights Officer for Global Human Rights Defence in 2014*

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Laan Van Meedervort 70

2517AN The Hague

The Netherlands

Phone: +31 (0)70 3605529

Fax: +31 (0)703926575

URL: [www.ghrd.org](http://www.ghrd.org)

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