



## **Pakistan – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 17 October 2016**

### **Information on honour killings in Pakistan. Is there state protection, is it effective?**

The 2016 Human Rights Watch report for Pakistan, in a paragraph headed “Women and Girls”, states:

“The government took inadequate action to protect women and girls from abuses including rape, murder through so-called honor killings, acid attacks, domestic violence, and forced marriages. According to local groups, hundreds of honor killings took place.” (Human Rights Watch (27 January 2016) *World Report 2016 – Pakistan*)

See also Human Rights Watch report which states:

“In Pakistan, murders to protect family or community ‘honor’ have received widespread attention in recent weeks. On June 8, 2016, Zeenat Rafiq, 18, was burned to death in Lahore by her mother for 'bringing shame to the family' by marrying a man of her choice. On May 31, family members tortured and burned to death a 19-year-old school teacher in Murree, Punjab province for refusing an arranged marriage proposal. On May 5, the body of Amber, 16, was found inside a vehicle that had been set on fire in Abbottabad, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, after a jirga, or traditional assembly of elders, ordered her death for helping her friend marry of her own choice.” (Human Rights Watch (14 June 2016) *Pakistan: Prosecute Rampant ‘Honor’ Killings*)

A report published by the European Asylum Support Office, in a section titled “Honour crimes”, states:

“About 1 000 cases of honour killings per year were tracked from media reports by the women’s rights group, the Aurat Foundation. However, the true figure was deemed to be much higher (675). Honour crimes usually took place when a man claimed that a woman brought dishonour to the family by, for example, having illicit relations or marrying without family consent, and included murder (honour killing), assault, acid throwing, confinement, imprisonment, burning, and nose-cutting. Such crimes were most common in rural areas although also occurred in urban areas. The majority of victims were women, though men were also affected. (European Asylum Support Office (August 2015) *Pakistan Country Overview*, p.74)

In a section titled “Extra-marital relations” this report states:

“The offence of zina defines ‘adultery’ and is covered under the Offence of Zina (Enforcement Of Hudood) Ordinance, 1979, which states ‘A man and a woman are said to commit zina if they wilfully have sexual intercourse without being married to each other.’ Zina is liable to hadd (the punishment decreed

by the Qur'an): stoning to death, or 100 lashes. The authorities have never carried out the penalty of death by stoning, partly due to the strict evidentiary requirements, according to information from 2013. However, in many rural areas of Pakistan, jirgas, issue death sentences for couples or women deemed to have offended the conservative culture." (ibid, p.73)

An article from the Houston Chronicle states:

"As modernity pushes against tradition, Pakistan has seen an increase in the number of women and girls killed in the name of honor: last year, 1,184 people died. The year before that the figure was 1,005, and in 2013 it was 869, according to the independent Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. The true numbers are believed to be higher, because many cases go unreported." (The Houston Chronicle (6 October 2016) *'Honor' killings growing despite pressure to close loopholes that let assailants go free*)

A Reuters report states:

"A couple were stoned to death for adultery in a remote area of Pakistan's western Baluchistan province, an official said Monday, leading to six men being held on suspicion of murder. The couple, both married to other people, were believed to be in their 30s, said Sarfaraz Bugti, the home minister for Baluchistan. The woman's father and brother, and the man's uncle and father have been arrested, along with a cleric believed to have issued the order to kill them at the weekend. Another man linked to the cleric is also being held." (Reuters (17 February 2014) *Pakistani couple stoned to death for adultery; six arrested*)

A report from Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty states:

"A man in Pakistan has allegedly gunned down his wife, mother-in-law, and a female cousin over suspicions they were having relations with other men, police say. The killings were carried out on May 11 with the help of two accomplices in the Balochni area of Faisalabad in the eastern province of Punjab, police said. 'Three women were killed for honor as the accused suspected that they were in relationships,' local police chief Mushtaq Ahmad told dpa. The suspects were all on the run, and police said they had launched a manhunt. So-called honor killing by male relatives is widespread in Pakistan, most often targeting women believed to be in extramarital relationships, or who marry against their family's wishes." (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (12 May 2016) *Three Women In Same Family Killed For 'Honor' In Pakistan*)

A BBC News report states:

"There have been at least four cases in the past month in which a woman was killed in a marital dispute. It is alleged the murders were carried out by family members or relatives of a rejected suitor, either on their own or following the verdict of local elders. Last week a young woman, Zeenat Rafiq, was allegedly burnt to death in Lahore by her mother for marrying without family consent, triggering widespread anger. A week earlier school teacher Maria Sadaqat was set on fire in Murree near Islamabad for refusing a marriage proposal. She died of her injuries. And last month a teenager was burnt to death near Abbottabad on the orders of village elders because she

helped a female friend to elope, police said. On Sunday, ahead of the CII statement, a group of Pakistani clerics issued a fatwa, or religious ruling, declaring honour killing to be against the teaching of Islam.” (BBC News (15 June 2016) *Pakistan 'honour' killing: Why clerics' call may fall on deaf ears*)

See also BBC News report which states:

“The former husband of a woman allegedly murdered in Pakistan has confessed to killing her, a police source has told the BBC. Samia Shahid, 28, a beautician from Bradford, died last month in northern Punjab in what is believed to have been a so-called honour killing. Ex-husband Chaudhry Muhammad Shakeel was arrested on suspicion of murder. He has now said he strangled Ms Shahid with a scarf, according to BBC Pakistan correspondent Shaimaa Khalil. The beautician's father Chaudhry Mohammad Shahid has been held as an accessory to murder.” (BBC News (15 August 2016) *Samia Shahid death: Ex-husband admits Pakistan 'honour killing'*)

A report from the Asian Human Rights Commission states:

“Shabana Brohi, 18, from Mohammad Bux Brohi Village, ShahdadKot, Kamber District, Sindh, was in love with a young man, Aijaz Magsi, from the opposing tribe, the Magsi. On August 19, they married each other without informing their families. The Brohi tribe members seethed from this perceived insult and their Chief, Mr. Aijaz Brohi, approached the Chief of the Magsi tribe, Mr. Nadir Magsi, a member of Sindh Provincial Assembly from ruling People's Party, to hand over the girl, as she was with a member of his tribe. Mr. Magsi used his influence on the couple and assured them that if she returned back to her house she would be provided protection. She was then provided shelter at Mr. Magsi's place. The chief of the Brohi tribe and her parents asked Magsi to allow them to keep her and assured her safety, vouching on the holy book of Quran. On September 1, Shabana was handed over to Aijaz Brohi, the Chief of the Brohi tribe after exchanges of oath on the Quran for the protection of her life. However, the next day, September 2, as per plan, some persons abducted her from the house of Aijaz Brohi and murdered her in her village. Mohammad Bux Brohi, her uncles, and first cousins murdered her.” (Asian Human Rights Commission (10 September 2016) *Pakistan: Eighteen-year-old murdered in 'honour' killing for choosing whom to marry*)

A report published by the US-based human rights organisation Equality Now states:

“26-year-old Pakistani model and social media star Qandeel Baloch posted these words on 14 July. One day later, she was dead. She was drugged and strangled by her own brother, Waseem Azeem, who proudly admitted to killing her because her outspoken social media activity ‘brought dishonor on the family name’ and that ‘girls are born to stay at home.’ With this murder, Qandeel Baloch became one of the 1000s – of overwhelmingly women – who are violently attacked or killed in the name of ‘honor’ in Pakistan (and around the world) every year. As one of the most extreme manifestations of violence against women, so-called ‘honor’ crimes are aimed at any woman or girl who goes against the role society has prescribed for her. Accused of bringing shame to their families or used as penance for ‘wrongs’ committed by others,

typically male, family members, their lives become forfeit to restore a family's honor and reputation in the community.

And, because of the 'forgiveness' law in Pakistan, a surviving victim typically faces intense pressure to pardon her attacker. If she is killed, as in the majority of cases, her family has the right to forgive on her behalf. Basically, the perpetrator goes unpunished and the crimes continue unchecked. The transgressions can be anything from wanting to get an education, to being a victim of rape, to refusing an arranged marriage or dressing in an 'inappropriate' manner. In Baloch's case, her 'crime' was posting social media posts that defied cultural norms." (Equality Now (6 October 2016) *No "forgiveness" for murder!*)

A BBC News report states:

"Pakistan's government has closed a loophole allowing those behind so-called honour killings to go free. New legislation means killers will get a mandatory life sentence. Previously, killers could be pardoned by a victim's family to avoid a jail term. Now forgiveness will only spare them the death penalty. It is being seen as a step in the right direction in a country where attacks on women who go against conservative rules on love and marriage are common. According to the independent Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), nearly 1,100 women were killed by relatives in Pakistan last year in such killings, while many more cases go unreported. The loophole allowed the perpetrators of 'honour killings' - often a relative acting on the pretext of defending family 'honour' - to avoid punishment because they can seek forgiveness for the crime from another family member." (BBC News (6 October 2016) *'Honour killings': Pakistan closes loophole allowing killers to go free*)

An article from Pakistani newspaper Dawn states:

"A much-trumpeted anti-honour killing bill was passed in a joint sitting of the parliament on Oct 6. While the government has been claiming that the recently-passed Criminal Law (Amendment) (Offences in the name or pretext of honour) Act 2016 would help in curbing honour-related killings, legal experts think otherwise stating that only some cosmetic changes have been made to the law, which were already available. The initial bill, Anti-Honour Killings Laws (Criminal Laws Amendment) Bill 2014, was introduced in the Senate by Senator Sughra Imam of Pakistan People's Party in Feb 2014. However, as the said bill could not be passed by both the houses of parliament in the period stipulated in the Constitution, it was referred to the joint sitting of the parliament. In order to appease the religious parties in parliament, who had been dubbing the original bill as against injunctions of Islam, a much watered down version of the bill was passed." (Dawn (10 October 2016) *View From The Courtroom: Experts see little change in law to curb honour-related offences*)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research and Information Unit within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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