



Pakistan – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 4 August 2016

Information on the following:

- (1) Reports of Taliban violence against Mohajir;**
- (2) Reports of Taliban violence against persons believed to be Shia because of their names (even though they might be Sunni).**
- (3) Whether the name “Syad Asim Hussain” is a Shia name or could be assumed to be a Shia name.**

A report published by the European Asylum Support Office, in a section titled “Background of the conflict in Pakistan”, states:

“Interethnic violence has been a problem in the province of Sindh in recent years. Tensions between Mohajir and the Pashtun population in Karachi have increased, especially the power struggle between both groups led to numerous political murders of members of the Muttahadi Qaumi Movement (MQM), Awami National Party (ANP), Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)” (European Asylum Support Office (EASO) (July 2016) *EASO Country of Origin Information Report. Pakistan Security Situation*, p.16)

An Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada response to a request for information, in a section titled “Situation and Treatment of Muhajirs”, states:

“Sometime Muhajirs who follow Shia Islam are also attacked because of their belief in Shia Islam by Sunni militant groups who can be broadly categorized as the Taliban or the pro-Taliban or Taliban/Al-Qaeda affiliates - the most dreaded anti-Shia group being Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ).” (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (5 July 2012) *PAK104126.E – Pakistan: Situation and treatment of Muhajirs, particularly in Lahore, Islamabad and Faisalabad; situation and treatment of members of the Pakistan People's Party in Lahore, Islamabad and Faisalabad; whether the Muttahida Qaumi Movement targets Pakistan People's Party members in these cities*)

The 2016 Human Rights Watch report on Pakistan, in a section titled “Counterterrorism and Law Enforcement Abuses”, states:

“Suicide bombings, armed attacks, and killings by the Taliban, Al-Qaeda, and their affiliates targeted nearly every sector of Pakistani society, including religious minorities and journalists, resulting in hundreds of deaths.” (Human Rights Watch (27 January 2016) *World Report 2016 – Pakistan*)

In a section titled “Attacks on Minorities and Sectarian Violence” this report states:

“The government failed to take adequate steps to prevent and respond to deadly attacks on Shia and other religious minorities in 2015. In January, at least 53 people were killed in a bomb blast at a Shia mosque in the city of Shikarpur in Sindh province. Jundullah, a splinter group of the Taliban that has pledged support for the armed extremist group Islamic State (also known as ISIS), claimed responsibility for the attack.

In February, 19 people were killed after Taliban militants stormed a Shia mosque in Peshawar. In March, suicide bombers belonging to Tehrik-i-Taliban targeted two churches in the Christian neighborhood of Youhana Abad in Lahore, killing 14. In May, an attack by Jundullah on members of the Ismaili Shia community in Karachi killed 43 people.

The attacks highlighted the threat armed extremist groups to pose to religious minorities, and the government’s failure to apprehend or prosecute perpetrators.” (ibid)

In an interview published by The News on Sunday Pakistani scientist and academic Pervez Hoodbhoy states:

“There have been multiple massacres where people have been ordered off buses, their national identity cards checked, and those with Shia sounding names promptly executed.” (The News on Sunday (21 December 2014) *“Many Pakistanis have acquired the Taliban mindset”*)

A Human Rights Watch report, in a section headed “Mastung Massacre, September 2011”, describes the murder of Shia bus passengers as follows:

“On September 19, 2011, near the town of Mastung, Sunni gunmen forced about 40 Hazara to disembark from a bus in which they had been traveling to Iran to visit Shia holy sites. The gunmen then shot dead 26 of the Shia passengers and wounded six others. Although some of the Hazara passengers managed to escape, another three were killed by gunmen as they tried to bring victims of the bus shooting to a hospital in Quetta. LeJ claimed responsibility for the attack. While previous large scale attacks on Hazara involved suicide bombings, the Mastung attack was the first mass killing in which the assassins first identified and separated the Sunni and Shia passengers, and then proceeded to kill the Shia.

Haji Khushal Khan, the driver of the bus, told Human Rights Watch that gunmen in three Toyota Hi-Lux Minivans forced the bus to the side of the road and then methodically began murdering his Shia passengers:

I drive coaches on the route to the Iran border. That day we had left on time from the bus depot and entered Mastung. [The gunmen] came speeding just as we entered Mastung district and intercepted us. One vehicle passed us and set up a roadblock while another forced us off the road. I don't remember how many men there were, but they were all armed with Kalashnikovs [military assault rifles] and rocket launchers. They told us to get out. They asked who the Sunnis were, asking for names. Then they told the Sunnis to run. We jumped and ran for our lives. Everybody was so scared... someone ran in this direction and someone in that direction. But while they allowed everybody who was not a Shia to get away, they made sure that the Shias stayed on the bus. Afterwards they made them get out and opened fire. I saw

it while taking shelter in a nearby building. The bodies then just lay there for one and a half hours before help arrived. The first was a patrol that just set up a perimeter watch. A few minutes later the ambulances arrived to take away those killed.” (Human Rights Watch (29 June 2014) *“We are the Walking Dead” Killings of Shia Hazaras in Balochistan, Pakistan*, pp.28-29)

An article from India Today states:

“Shias, about 20 per cent of the population, have been picked out-Gestapo style. Last year, men in army uniforms stopped four buses bound from Rawalpindi to Gilgit, demanding that all 117 persons on board alight and show their national identification cards. Those with typical Shia names, like Abbas and Jafri, were separated. Minutes later 46 corpses lay on the ground; the earlier massacres of Hazara Shias in Mastung and Quetta had been repeated. (India Today (3 May 2013) *Shia, Ahmadi, Hindu? Then Run for Your Life*)

An Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada response to a request for information on the difference between Sunni and Shia Muslims, in a section titled “Distinguishing Features”, states:

“Sources indicate that Shia in Pakistan can often be distinguished by their names. In correspondence with the Research Directorate, the editorial team of the South Asian Studies Project of MEMRI, noted that common Shia names include Jaffer, Rizvi, Ali, Hussain, Hasan, and Abbas. The AHRC representative included Sayyed, Raza, Naqvi, Jafery, and Abbas as common Shia names, in conjunction with Hussain and the names of friends of Hussain who were also killed in the battle in Karbala.” (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (9 January 2014) *PAK104713.E – Pakistan: How Shia Muslims differ from Sunnis; treatment of Shias, particularly in Lahore and Multan; government response to violence against Shia Muslims (2010-December 2013)*)

In an academic paper written by Tariq Rahman of the Beaconhouse National University in Lahore the author states:

“In Pakistan, though populated by a majority of Muslims, it is sect (Sunni, Shia etc) which came to be indexed with names. Although the Shias and the Sunnis share most Islamic components of their names the Shias are perceived by the Sunnis to be marked by some components relating to the names of the twelve Imams (leaders) believed by the majority of Shias called twelvers (athana asharis) as the rightful spiritual leaders of Muslims are given below. However, according to a scholar of Shia Islam all the so-called distinctive Shia components given below are actually shared by the Sunnis in Pakistan besides the names Ali, Hassan and Hussain which are among the most common male names in Pakistan.” (Rahman, Tariq (May 2013) *Names As Traps: Onomastic Destigmatization Strategies in Pakistan*, Pakistan Perspectives Vol. 19, No.1, January-June 2014, p.19)

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.

References:

European Asylum Support Office (EASO) (July 2016) *EASO Country of Origin Information Report. Pakistan Security Situation*
<https://coi.easo.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/BZ0416539ENN.pdf>
(Accessed 4 August 2016)

Human Rights Watch (27 January 2016) *World Report 2016 – Pakistan*
<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2016/country-chapters/pakistan>
(Accessed 4 August 2016)

Human Rights Watch (29 June 2014) *“We are the Walking Dead” Killings of Shia Hazaras in Balochistan, Pakistan*
https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/pakistan0614_ForUplad.pdf
(Accessed 4 August 2016)

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (9 January 2014) *PAK104713.E – Pakistan: How Shia Muslims differ from Sunnis; treatment of Shias, particularly in Lahore and Multan; government response to violence against Shia Muslims (2010-December 2013)*
<http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/Eng/ResRec/RirRdi/Pages/index.aspx?doc=455043&pls=1>
(Accessed 4 August 2016)

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (5 July 2012) *PAK104126.E – Pakistan: Situation and treatment of Muhajirs, particularly in Lahore, Islamabad and Faisalabad; situation and treatment of members of the Pakistan People's Party in Lahore, Islamabad and Faisalabad; whether the Muttahida Qaumi Movement targets Pakistan People's Party members in these cities*
<http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/Eng/ResRec/RirRdi/Pages/index.aspx?doc=454079&pls=1>
(Accessed 4 August 2016)

India Today (3 May 2013) *Shia, Ahmadi, Hindu? Then Run for Your Life*
<http://www.lexisnexis.com>
(Accessed 4 August 2016)
This is a subscription database

The News on Sunday (21 December 2014) *“Many Pakistanis have acquired the Taliban mindset”*
<http://tns.thenews.com.pk/pervez-hoodbhoy-talks-about-zarb-e-azb-and-peshawar-tragedy/#.V6Nig9KYbK4>
(Accessed 4 August 2016)

Rahman, Tariq (May 2013) *Names As Traps: Onomastic Destigmatization Strategies in Pakistan*, Pakistan Perspectives Vol. 19, No.1, January-June 2014, p.19

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/274570292_NAMES_AS_TRAPS_Onomastic_Destigmatization_Strategies_in_Pakistan

(Accessed 4 August 2016)

Sources Consulted

Electronic Immigration Network
European Asylum Support Office
European Country of Origin Information Network
Google
Human Rights Watch
Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada
Lexis Nexis
Refugee Documentation Centre Query Database
South Asia Terrorism Portal
UNHCR Refworld
US Department of State