



Pakistan - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Tuesday 2 January 2017

Information on Sunni-Shia conflict

In August 2017 the *United States Department of State* issued a report which included noting that:

“Sectarian violent extremist groups targeted Shia houses of worship, religious gatherings, religious leaders, and other individuals in attacks...” (United States Department of State (15 August 2017) *2016 Report on International Religious Freedom - Pakistan*)

A document of COI sources published in August 2017 by the *European Asylum Support Office* includes stating:

“PIPS stated that there is a decline in the number of sectarian related violent incidents. The numbers decreased by 41 % in 2016 compared to 2015. The number of people killed also decreased by about 62 % in 2016. Most victims of sectarian related violence were in Khuzdar (Balochistan) and in Karachi (Sindh)...CRSS documented a decline of 19 % in sectarian related violence” (European Asylum Support Office (August 2017) *EASO Country of Origin Information Report: Pakistan Security Situation*, p.35).

In August 2017 the *Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Australia* states in a report that:

“Several Sunni militant groups operate throughout Pakistan, including the TTP, LeJ (and factional sub-groups such as LeJ al-Alami), Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP, also known as Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat or ASWJ) and Jaish-e Mohammad (JeM). All of these groups are banned by the Pakistan government but continue to operate illegally across Pakistan. DFAT assesses that sectarian violence disproportionately affects minority religious groups across the country...Shi'a militant groups such as Sipah-e-Mohammad Pakistan (SMP) have attacked Sunnis, although Shi'a militancy has declined overall as the general security situation in Pakistan has improved” (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Australia (31 August 2017) *DFAT Country Information Report – Pakistan*).

This report also states:

“Sectarian violence in Pakistan has historically targeted individuals, places of worship, shrines and religious schools. Shi'a continue to face a threat from anti-Shi'a militant groups...Sectarian violence has reduced significantly in recent years...While sectarian violence affects people of all religions and sects, Shi'a have traditionally represented a higher proportion of the casualties” (ibid).

A report issued in October 2017 by *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* notes that:

“Shi’ites are regarded as apostates by Sunni extremist groups, and are frequently targeted in deadly attacks” (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (9 October 2017) *Gunmen Kill Five In Attack On Shi’ites In Southwestern Pakistan*).

Voice of America in October 2017 points out that:

“According to the South Asia Terrorism Portal, there have been 12 sectarian attacks in Pakistan in 2017 alone, killing almost 200 people. Most of those attacks were against the Shi’ites in various parts of the country” (Voice of America (9 October 2017) *Pakistan’s Shi’ite Community Under Attack Again*).

In October 2017 the *South Asia Terrorism Portal* notes in a document that:

“The country has a long history of sectarian violence. Pakistani terrorist groups, principally followers of the Sunni sect of Islam, have continuously targeted places of worship of other sects of Islam, claiming that these 'adversaries' do not follow correct interpretation of Islam” (South Asia Terrorism Portal (9 October 2017) *Pakistan: Sectarian Spite*).

A report issued in October 2017 by the *Asia Foundation* states:

“Sectarian violence between the majority Sunnis (70–85 percent) and the minority Shias (15–20 percent) is prevalent in the country” (Asia Foundation (18 October 2017) *The State of Conflict and Violence in Asia [Pakistan excerpt]*).

In November 2017 *Voice of America* notes:

“Suspected militants attacked worshipers outside a Shi’ite Muslim mosque, killing at least one person and wounding four others late Wednesday in the Pakistani capital...Militant groups from the majority Sunni Muslim population in Pakistan are blamed for being behind the sectarian violence. The rivalry between the two Muslim sects in the country has claimed thousands of lives over the years” (Voice of America (29 November 2017) *Shi’ite Mosque in Pakistani Capital Attacked*).

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