



**Pakistan – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 2 February 2018**

**Attacks by extremist groups on professionals in Pakistan and in particular teachers who work for school specific budget SSB which was funded by the World Bank.**

The summary of a report published by Human Rights Watch states:

“Pakistan already faces major challenges to education because of factors such as poor access, low enrollment rates, gender bias, lack of trained teachers, and poor physical infrastructure. Islamist militant violence has further exacerbated those challenges, however, and disrupted the education of hundreds of thousands of children...Militant groups have damaged and destroyed school buildings, attacked teachers and students, and terrorized parents into keeping their children out of school. They have also targeted colleges and other higher-education institutions.” (Human Rights Watch (27 March 2017) *Dreams Turned into Nightmares: Attacks on Students, Teachers, and Schools in Pakistan*)

In a section titled “Attacks on Students, Teachers, Schools, and Universities” this report states:

“Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), and several other Islamist militant groups across the country attack schools, teachers, and students for various reasons. Some target schools for supposedly having ‘too secular’ or Western curricula. Other schools have been threatened and targeted simply for educating girls. Militants also view schools as symbols of the Pakistani state. Some groups say they attack schools because they are used as bases by the security forces.” (ibid)

A Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) of Australia country report on Pakistan, in a section headed “Education” (paragraph 2.19), states:

“Security issues can also hamper educational progress, with militant groups sometimes conducting attacks on schools. One faction of the militant group Tehreek-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) announced in January 2016 that it would target schools, colleges and universities with violent attacks. The message came two days after militants attacked the Bacha Khan University near Peshawar in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, killing 21 people. According to the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) Secretariat, more than 550 schools have been attacked since 2004 in the FATA alone.” (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Australia (31 August 2017) *DFAT Country Information Report - Pakistan (September 2017)*)

The Introduction to a report from the ‘The Scholars at Risk Network’s, in paragraph 3, states:

“Scholars, students and higher education institutions in Pakistan face significant pressures, both from government and private actors, which threaten individual academic freedom and the ability of the higher education space to function in a free and open manner. Most important among these pressures is targeted violence against professors and higher education institutions, which government actors have frequently been unable to prevent, despite the efforts of law enforcement.” (Scholars at Risk Network (SAR) (3 October 2017) *The Scholars at Risk Network's Submission to the Third Cycle of Universal Periodic Review of Pakistan, in the 28th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council*)

In a section titled “Background and Context” (paragraph 9) this report states:

“Despite the country's strong university tradition, scholars, students and universities in Pakistan are under increasing threat of deadly violence, often in retaliation for the content of academic work, or the very fact that they are part of the higher education community. These threats do not merely impact direct victims of violence. They are intended to – and do – silence entire higher education communities, narrowing the scope of acceptable discourse and chilling academic speech nationwide. This in turn impacts democracy more generally.” (ibid)

See also paragraph 10 which states:

“Scholars at Risk has verified at least fifteen significant attacks on higher education since Pakistan's last reporting cycle, including three mass attacks, eleven attacks targeting individual scholars, and one attack on a lawyer in apparent retaliation for his defense of a scholar charged with violating Pakistan's Blasphemy Law. These attacks have resulted in at least 110 deaths, and at least 143 injuries. This list is not necessarily exhaustive, however, and does not account for the large number of scholars and other members of higher education communities who are intimidated into exile or self-censorship, to avoid violent repercussions for their work or other nonviolent, expressive activity.” (ibid)

An article from the Irish Independent states:

“Islamist militants have stormed a provincial government complex for agricultural research in north-west Pakistan, killing 12 people including students and wounding 35 others, officials said. Police and soldiers killed three attackers during a firefight and while clearing the complex in Peshawar, they said. The main Taliban militant group, Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, claimed the attack.” (Irish Independent (1 December 2017) *Students killed in gun attack on agricultural college in Pakistan*)

A Sky News report on this incident states:

“At least 12 people are thought to have died and 35 have been wounded in an attack on an agricultural college near Peshawar, Pakistan. Three attackers reportedly wore women's burqas to reach the government research centre's gate in a rickshaw before opening fire to force their way into the building, targeting the student accommodation. In the firefight that ensued they were confronted by police and paramilitary troops, who killed all the assailants. Police chief Salahuddin Mahsud said troops were searching and clearing the

building after eliminating the attackers, and television footage showed bullet holes in walls, bloodstains and broken glass. Two soldiers, seven policemen, a reporter and a private guard are thought to have been injured as well as students.” (Sky News (1 December 2017) *At least 12 dead as gunmen in burqas storm Pakistan college*)

A Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty report states:

“Authorities in China and Pakistan say they are investigating the Islamic State (IS) extremist group's claim that two Chinese teachers kidnapped in southwestern Pakistan have been killed. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said on June 9 that the government was seeking information from Pakistani authorities. Pakistani security officials said they were investigating but that no bodies have been found. Islamic State on June 8 claimed to have killed two Chinese nationals the extremist group had kidnapped in Pakistan's Balochistan province in late May. The group also circulated a video of their killing late on June 8.” (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (8 June 2017) *China, Pakistan Investigate Claim Two Chinese Teachers Executed By IS*)

An article from The Guardian states:

“Mashal Khan was never afraid to speak his mind. The 23-year-old journalism student was known for questioning his peers and speaking out against injustice and corruption. But on 13 April – a few days after a heated discussion at his university in Mardan in north-western Pakistan – Khan was seized from his dorm room by a mob that stripped and beat him, then shot him dead. Initial reports suggested that Khan had been accused of offending Islam – a dangerous charge in a society where perceived disrespect for the religion can ignite violent anger. Following the lynching, Abdul Wali Khan university initially launched an investigation into Khan's alleged blasphemy, rather than the murder. But institution's provost hurriedly reversed course, saying the report had been 'a clerical error'. The case has sparked uproar in a country where blasphemy laws are often misused for revenge or personal gain.” (The Guardian (26 April 2017) *Student's lynching sparks rare uproar in Pakistan over blasphemy killings*)

A Voice of America news report states:

“Police in northwestern Pakistan say a student shot and killed his college principal on campus on Monday after accusing him of blasphemy. The incident occurred at the private Islamia College in the northwestern town of Charsadda. The shooter was arrested, according to area police chief Zahoor Afridi. Afridi explained that the slain principal, Sareer Ahmed, reprimanded one of his students for skipping classes to attend an Islamist rally supporting Pakistan's blasphemy laws. The argument angered the student, who fired six shots at Ahmed. Police arrived at the campus and took the shooter into custody along with his weapon. An investigation has been launched. In a video recorded during the arrest, the unnamed student can be heard justifying his crime in the local Pashto language, saying he believed the college principal had committed blasphemy.” (Voice of America (22 January 2018) *Student Kills Pakistan College Principal After Accusing Him of Blasphemy*)

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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