



**Pakistan – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 18 April 2016**

**Up-to-date information on the current level of conflict between Shia Muslims and Sunni Muslims in Pakistan. Information on indiscriminate violence against Shia minorities in Pakistan. In addition to information in respect of Pakistan in general, Information on region specific research on the following location: Rawalpindi, Pakistan.**

The 2016 Human Rights Watch report on Pakistan, in a paragraph headed “Attacks on Minorities and Sectarian Violence”, 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.” (Human Rights Watch (27 January 2016) *World Report 2016 – Pakistan*)

The US Department of State country report on Pakistan for the events of 2015, in a section titled “Use of Excessive Force and Other Abuses in Internal Conflicts”, states:

“Sectarian violence also continued throughout the country. According to the SATP, sectarian attacks from January to mid-November resulted in the deaths of 249 individuals in 51 incidents, compared with 204 deaths in 84 incidents in 2014. On February 13, TTP militants attacked a Shi’a mosque in Peshawar’s Hayatabad district, killing 20 worshippers. In January a suicide bomber killed 62 Shi’a Muslims at a religious center in Shikarpur, Sindh. Additionally, continuing attacks against Hazara Shi’as, often perpetrated by violent extremist groups, claimed at least 146 lives. On October 23, a suicide bomber attacked a Shi’a Muharram procession in Jacobabad in upper Sindh, killing 27. LeJ claimed responsibility for the attack. On October 22, LeJ bombed a mosque and killed 11 Shi’a Muslims in rural Kacchi district of Balochistan.” (US Department of State (13 April 2016) *2015 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – Pakistan*, p.21)

A report published by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, in a section titled “Sectarian violence”, states:

“Despite the reduction in incidents of sectarian violence, some attacks represented particular deterioration. That was the case in Sindh, which had

long been a centre of Sufism and had been known for its tradition of harmonious co-existence of people of various faiths. Two major sectarian attacks targeted members of the Shia sect in Sindh in 2015. In Shikarpur district of Sindh, a suicide attack on a Shia mosque killed more than 60 people in January. In Jacobabad district, 24 people were killed when a Moharram procession was targeted in a bombing in October. One day earlier, a similar attack outside a Shia mosque in Balochistan's Bolan district had caused the death of 11 people. Many attacks on the Shia citizens were believed to be the work of Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), an extremist group. In July, the group's founder, Malik Ishaq, was killed along with 13 other people in a gunfight with police in Muzaffargarh. Another most wanted terrorist Mohammad Usman alias Saifullah Kurd, who was chief of the LeJ in Balochistan was killed in a firefight with the police in Quetta in February. The same month, a prayer leader was arrested in Kasur district for inciting hatred against the Shia sect through his sermon. In May, an anti-terrorism court sentenced him to serve five years in prison. On May 25, unidentified gunmen on motorbikes launched three separate attacks against the Hazara community in Quetta, killing four persons and injuring nine. In search of safety, large numbers of Hazara citizens in Quetta have relocated to enclaves exclusive to their community over the years. In May, six gunmen in Karachi boarded a bus carrying members of the Ismaili community and executed 43 out of around 60 passengers. Most of the victims were killed with a single bullet to the head. Thirteen passengers were injured. The bus belonged to a housing project of the Ismaili community in Karachi. The fatalities included 16 women.” (Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (31 March 2016) *State of Human Rights in 2015 [Chapter III. Fundamental freedoms - Freedom of thought, conscience and religion]*)

An article from UK newspaper The Telegraph states:

“More than 60 members of Pakistan’s Shia minority were killed when a young suicide bomber blew himself as they worshipped at a mosque on Friday. The bomber approached the Imambargah, a mosque for Shia muslims, in Shikarpur, Sindh, shortly after Friday prayers, and complained that he was sick. Shortly after he was given medicine from a dispensary inside the mosque he blew himself, turning a place of worship into a scene of carnage.” (The Telegraph (30 January 2015) *Isil-linked terrorists bomb Pakistan mosque, killing at least 60*)

A BBC News report states:

“At least 45 people have been killed and 13 injured in a gun attack on a bus carrying Ismaili Shia Muslims in the Pakistani city of Karachi, police say. Police said six gunmen on motorcycles had stopped the bus and fired indiscriminately at passengers. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has condemned the attack and ordered an investigation. Pakistani Taliban splinter group Jundullah and Islamic State (IS) both said they had carried out the attack. Later, the militant group Tehrik Taliban Pakistan (TTP) also said it was behind the shooting. Analysts say Pakistan's fragmented militant movements have previously competed to claim responsibility for attacks.” (BBC News (13 May 2015) *Pakistan gunmen kill 45 on Karachi Ismaili Shia bus*)

An Agence France Presse report on the bombing of a Shia mosque in October 2015 states:

"Sectarian violence -- in particular by Sunni hardliners against the Shiites that make up roughly 20 percent of Pakistan's 200 million people -- has claimed thousands of lives in the country over the past decade. Friday's attack came a day after a suicide bomber blew himself up at a mosque, killing at least 11 Shiites including six children in the town of Chalgari in restive Baluchistan province. In July the leader of an anti-Shiite group behind some of Pakistan's worst sectarian atrocities was killed in a shoot-out with police, along with 13 other militants. Malik Ishaq and his fellow Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) militants, including senior commanders, were shot dead in Punjab. However political and security analyst Hasan Askari told AFP Friday that the fresh wave of attacks against Shiites shows sectarian groups are still active. 'Apparently these groups have changed the tactics of their attacks,' he said. 'They are now targeting smaller cities because of the extra security arrangements in big cities.'" (Agence France Presse (23 October 2015) *At least 16 dead in blast targeting Shiites in Pakistan: officials*)

See also Agence France report which states:

"The death toll from a suspected suicide blast which targeted Shiite Muslims in the southern Pakistani city of Jacobabad has risen to 24, a provincial minister said Saturday. The officials had earlier confirmed that at least 16 people were killed and many more injured in the attack outside the residence of a local Shiite leader, which came as devotees were setting off towards a main procession in the city. Jam Mehtab Dahar, provincial minister for health in the southern province of Sindh where the attack took place, said more wounded people had succumbed to their injuries. "The death toll has risen to 24 now," Dahar told AFP, adding that two of at least 20 wounded were still in a critical condition." (Agence France Presse (24 October 2015) *Death toll from Pakistan Shiites blast rises to 24: minister*)

A report from the South Asia Terrorism Portal states:

"At least 27 persons including 13 children were killed and 36 were injured in a suicide blast targetting a 9th Muharram (Shia mourning period) procession near a park in the Lashari area of Jacobabad District in Sindh in the evening of October 23, 2015. The blast took place at about 7:30 pm when a Muharram procession, which started from the Dargah Hajan Shah, was passing through the Lashari Muhalla (neighbourhood). A day earlier, on October 22, 10 Shias were killed while several others received injuries when a blast ripped through an Imambargah (Shia place of worship) in the Bhaag area of Bolan District in Balochistan. The attack took place as Shias gathered at the mosque to observe Muharram. Responsibility was claimed by the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ). Sindh Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) official Raja Umer Khattab disclosed the LeJ had a strong network in bordering areas with Balochistan and might have been operating from there: 'The LeJ network remains intact in bordering areas of Sindh-Balochistan despite arrests and killings of several militants of the group.'" (South Asia Terrorism Portal (1 November 2015) *Sectarian Fire*)

A Voice of America report on this incident states:

"At least 20 people were killed and 40 injured when a suicide bomber attacked a Shi'ite Muslim mourning procession in the southern Pakistani city

of Jacobabad Friday night, police officials said. The attack came as minority Shi'ite Muslims marked Ashura, a 10-day ritual when they commemorate the death of Imam Hussein, the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad. Shi'ite Muslims hold public rallies despite threats from Sunni extremist groups, some of whom consider them to be heretics. The blast was the second to hit Ashura festivities in two days and came hours after a radical Sunni Muslim group threatened continued sectarian violence during the holiday." (Voice of America (23 October 2015) *Suicide Attack on Shi'ites Kills 20 in Pakistan*)

An Agence France Presse report on the bombing of a market place in December 2015 states:

"A bomb hidden in a bag ripped through a crowded bazaar in a mainly Shiite area of Pakistan's northwestern tribal region Sunday, killing at least 23 people and wounding more than 30, officials said. The death toll was expected to rise after the explosion at the Eidgah used-clothes market in Parachinar city, the capital of Kurram tribal district on the border with Afghanistan. 'The death toll has reached 23 as many of the critically wounded succumbed to injuries as they were being shifted to helicopters to fly them to Peshawar,' Amjad Ali Khan, the political administrator of Kurram, told AFP." (Agence France Presse (13 December 2015) *At least 23 killed, dozens wounded in Pakistan market bombing*)

A Voice of America report on this incident states:

"Officials in northwestern Pakistan say a bomb blast ripped through a busy clothing market Sunday, killing at least 23 people and wounding about 55 others. The explosion happened in Parachinar, the administrative center of the semi-autonomous Kurram tribal district on the Afghan border. Amjad Ali Khan, the political administrator of Kurram told the French news agency, AFP, 'the bomb had been hidden in a bag left at the market.' Outlawed Sunni Muslim extremist organization, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, claimed the bombing in the predominantly Shi'ite Muslim region. The group is notorious for launching deadly attacks against the Pakistani minority community." (Voice of America (13 December 2015) *23 Killed in Pakistan Market Blast; Sunni Group Claims Attack*)

A Voice of America report on a sectarian incident which occurred in Rawalpindi in November 2013 states:

"Eight people were killed when gunmen opened fire on a Shia Muslim religious procession in Pakistan, hospital officials said, in what appeared to be the latest incident of spiralling sectarian violence. More than 30 others were wounded in the attack on Friday, which began when the procession passed a Sunni seminary. Rock throwing quickly degenerated into gunfire, said staff at the district headquarters hospital in the city of Rawalpindi." (Voice of America (15 November 2013) *8 Killed in Attack on Shi'ite Procession in Pakistan*)

An Al Jazeera report on this incident states:

"Eight people were killed when gunmen opened fire on a Shia Muslim religious procession in Pakistan, hospital officials said, in what appeared to be the latest incident of spiralling sectarian violence. More than 30 others were wounded in the attack on Friday, which began when the procession passed a

Sunni seminary. Rock throwing quickly degenerated into gunfire, said staff at the district headquarters hospital in the city of Rawalpindi. The clashes began when mourners dragged several people out of a seminary after hearing them shout insults at the procession as it passed by, police officer Afzal Hussain told the AFP news agency. They then killed them, he said. They also set dozens of shops outside the seminary on fire, he said.” (Al Jazeera (16 November 2013) *Deadly attack on Shia procession in Pakistan*)

A report from the Xinhua General News Service on a suicide bombing in Rawalpindi in January 2015 states:

“At least eight people were killed and 20 others injured when a suicide bomber blew up himself outside a religious center of Shia Muslims in Pakistan's garrison city of Rawalpindi on Friday, local media and officials said.” (Xinhua General News Service (9 January 2015) *3rd LD: 8 killed, 20 injured as suicide blast hits Pakistan's Rawalpindi*)

See Also Voice of America report which states:

“Pakistani police say that at least six people were killed and more than a dozen wounded when a suicide bomber blew himself up Friday night outside a mosque for minority Shi'ite Muslims in the city of Rawalpindi. Witnesses say that the suicide bomber tried to enter the mosque where a big religious gathering was underway but detonated the bomb after security guards intercepted him. (Voice of America (9 January 2015) *Pakistan Blast Kills 6*)

A report from Al Jazeera states:

“A suicide bomber has struck a Shia mosque in Pakistan's garrison city of Rawalpindi, killing seven people and wounding several others, police have said. Police told Al Jazeera that the attacker blew himself up when he was stopped at the gate of the mosque. The blast occurred as minority Shias gathered in the mosque to distribute alms to mark the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad. Witnesses said the explosion was powerful and blew out windows. Tehreek-e-Taliban Jamaat-ur-Ahrar, a faction of the Pakistani Taliban, claimed responsibility for the attack.” (Al Jazeera (10 January 2015) *Suicide bomber targets Pakistan mosque*)

A Xinhua General News Service report on the bombing of a Shia mosque in Rawalpindi in February 2015 states:

“At least two people were killed and 10 others injured on Wednesday evening when a suicide bomb blast hit a mosque of Shia Muslims in Pakistan's garrison city of Rawalpindi, local media and hospital officials said. The incident took place at 6:30 p.m. when a blast hit a mosque belonged to Shia Muslims in the Shakrial area of Rawalpindi, a sister city of the country's federal capital of Islamabad. Police, security forces and rescue teams rushed to the site and shifted the bodies and injured to the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences hospital in Islamabad. Spokesperson of the hospital Aysha said two bodies and 10 injured were brought to the hospital. The death toll may further rise as three of the injured are in critical condition, the spokesperson said.” (Xinhua General News Service (18 February 2015) *2nd LD: 2 killed, 10 injured in suicide attack in Pakistan's Rawalpindi*)

See also Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty report which states:

“Pakistani officials say two people were killed and six wounded by an attack on a Shi'ite mosque in Rawalpindi, the latest in a series of deadly assaults targeting Shi'a in Pakistan. Authorities say the attacker fired a gun into the mosque on February 18 and then threw a hand grenade or bomb. A spokesman for the Taliban splinter group Jundullah claimed responsibility for the attack, saying it was revenge for an ongoing military operation against militants in North Waziristan near the Afghan border.” (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (18 February 2015) *Two Killed By Attack On Shi'ite Mosque In Pakistan*)

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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