



**Pakistan – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 6 January 2014.**

**If studying in a college in Karachi, must you join a student organisation allied to one of the major political parties? e.g. college policy or peer pressure? If so, does the party depend upon which college you're attending? Information on relations between the MQM (Motaheda Qomi Momment) and Awami National Party in Karachi colleges / universities? Any attacks on each other within the past 4 years?**

Information on the recruitment practices of student groups in Karachi was not found among sources available to the Research and Information Unit.

The US Department of State country report on Pakistan for 2012, in a section titled "Academic Freedom and Cultural Events", states:

"The government generally did not restrict academic freedom. However, members of student organizations, typically with ties to political parties, fostered an atmosphere of violence and intolerance that limited the academic freedom of fellow students. On some university campuses in Karachi and Lahore, armed groups of students, most commonly associated with the All Pakistan Mutahidda Students Organization (affiliated with the Muttahida Qaumi Movement) and the Islami Jamiat Talaba (affiliated with Jamaat-e-Islam) clashed with and intimidated other students, instructors, and administrators over issues such as language, syllabus content, examination policies, grades, doctrines, and dress. These groups frequently influenced the hiring of staff, admissions to universities, and sometimes the use of institutional funds. They generally achieved such influence through a combination of protest rallies, control of campus media, and threats of mass violence. In response university authorities prohibited political activity on many campuses, but the ban had limited effect. Jamaat e-Islam also influenced the leadership of International Islamic University in Islamabad to prevent cogender educational or extracurricular activities on campus." (US Department of State (19 April 2013) *2012 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – Pakistan*)

A document published on the University World News website, in a paragraph headed "Violence has increased dramatically", states:

"Cases of violence and clashes between student organisations at Pakistan's universities have increased dramatically in recent years, but neither universities nor the various levels of government have given the problem serious attention. Islamabad's Quaid-e-Azam University appeared like a warzone in the last week of April, when students belonging to various unofficial student councils held a rally and marched on the vice-chancellor's office, wreaking serious damage to property and assaulting a professor. In February this year, 12 students were injured during an armed clash between two groups at Karachi University, which has witnessed a series of violent

incidents in the past three years. Four students were injured last December in a bomb explosion on campus. The bomb had been planted near the cafeteria, to kill students from a rival group. Violent activities, including kidnapping, shooting, killing, and smashing and burning university property, have frequently been reported, and in every case the universities have had to close for days.” (University World News (27 May 2012) *Universities reel under rising student lawlessness*)

A Right Vision News report states:

“The violence that broke out in the city at the beginning of the week continued into Wednesday when another seven people, including a police official and activists of the All Pakistan Muttahida Students Organisation (AMPSO) and the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), were gunned down. The latest deaths brought to 26 the number of those killed in the last three days of violence in various parts of the metropolis.” (Right Vision News (17 June 2011) *Pakistan: Cop, political activists among seven killed*)

A Plus Media Solutions report states:

“It was a bright sunny morning in Karachi when the activists of Awami National Party (ANP) and Pakhtoon Students Federation (PSF) started gathering at the Federal Urdu University, Gulshan-e-Iqbal campus, located on main University road. They had planned a protest demonstration against the police officials for their highhandedness towards their colleagues and party workers. The sudden increase in the strength of the ANP and PSF workers at the Urdu University campus created tension among All Pakistan Muttahida Students Federation and Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) workers, who thought their rivals -- ANP and PSF activists -- had planned to attack them. It led to a clash between activists of both the groups at Federal Urdu University of Arts, Science and Technology (FUUAST), Gulshan-e-Iqbal. Within minutes, the clash engulfed the surrounding areas and a heavy gun battle ensued near Mikasa Apartments, close to Essa Nagri, where both the groups attacked each other with automatic and semi-automatic weapons.” (Plus Media Solutions (22 July 2011) *100 casualties in 4 days*)

A report from The Messenger on a clash between two student groups in Karachi University states:

“At least 15 students were injured in a clash between two student groups in Karachi University on Monday, suspending the academic process. Student, associated with two student wings of political parties, clashed at Arts Faculty in the university, using clubs, pelting stones at each other and eventually turning the campus into battle field. The skirmish was a result of previous clash on Saturday in which members of a student organization torn apart poster placed by another organization.” (The Messenger (28 February 2012) *15 injured in KU clash*)

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:

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International Crisis Group

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