



Home Office

Country Policy and Information Note

Pakistan: Background information, including internal relocation

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ARCHIVED

Preface

Purpose

This note provides country of origin information (COI) and analysis of COI for use by Home Office decision makers handling particular types of protection and human rights claims (as set out in the [Introduction](#) section). It is not intended to be an exhaustive survey of a particular subject or theme.

It is split into two main sections: (1) analysis and assessment of COI and other evidence; and (2) COI. These are explained in more detail below.

Assessment

This section analyses the evidence relevant to this note – i.e. the COI section; refugee/human rights laws and policies; and applicable caselaw – by describing this and its inter-relationships, and provides an assessment of, in general, whether one or more of the following applies:

- A person is reasonably likely to face a real risk of persecution or serious harm
- The general humanitarian situation is so severe as to breach Article 15(b) of European Council Directive 2004/83/EC (the Qualification Directive) / Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights as transposed in paragraph 339C and 339CA(iii) of the Immigration Rules
- The security situation presents a real risk to a civilian's life or person such that it would breach Article 15(c) of the Qualification Directive as transposed in paragraph 339C and 339CA(iv) of the Immigration Rules
- A person is able to obtain protection from the state (or quasi state bodies)
- A person is reasonably able to relocate within a country or territory
- A claim is likely to justify granting asylum, humanitarian protection or other form of leave, and
- If a claim is refused, it is likely or unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

Decision makers **must**, however, still consider all claims on an individual basis, taking into account each case's specific facts.

Country of origin information

The country information in this note has been carefully selected in accordance with the general principles of COI research as set out in the [Common EU \[European Union\] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information \(COI\)](#), dated April 2008, and the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation's (ACCORD), [Researching Country Origin Information – Training Manual, 2013](#). Namely, taking into account the COI's relevance, reliability, accuracy, balance, currency, transparency and traceability.

The structure and content of the country information section follows a [terms of reference](#) which sets out the general and specific topics relevant to this note.

All information included in the note was published or made publicly available on or before the 'cut-off' date(s) in the country information section. Any event taking place or report/article published after these date(s) is not included.

All information is publicly accessible or can be made publicly available, and is from generally reliable sources. Sources and the information they provide are carefully considered before inclusion. Factors relevant to the assessment of the reliability of sources and information include:

- the motivation, purpose, knowledge and experience of the source
- how the information was obtained, including specific methodologies used
- the currency and detail of information, and
- whether the COI is consistent with and/or corroborated by other sources.

Multiple sourcing is used to ensure that the information is accurate, balanced and corroborated, so that a comprehensive and up-to-date picture at the time of publication is provided of the issues relevant to this note.

Information is compared and contrasted, whenever possible, to provide a range of views and opinions. The inclusion of a source, however, is not an endorsement of it or any view(s) expressed.

Each piece of information is referenced in a brief footnote; full details of all sources cited and consulted in compiling the note are listed alphabetically in the [bibliography](#).

Feedback

Our goal is to continuously improve our material. Therefore, if you would like to comment on this note, please email the [Country Policy and Information Team](#).

Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

The [Independent Advisory Group on Country Information](#) (IAGCI) was set up in March 2009 by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration to support him in reviewing the efficiency, effectiveness and consistency of approach of COI produced by the Home Office.

The IAGCI welcomes feedback on the Home Office's COI material. It is not the function of the IAGCI to endorse any Home Office material, procedures or policy. The IAGCI may be contacted at:

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Information about the IAGCI's work and a list of the documents which have been reviewed by the IAGCI can be found on the Independent Chief Inspector's pages of the [gov.uk website](#).

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Assessment

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1. Introduction

1.1 Scope of this note

- 1.1.1 This note considers general, background information on Pakistan and also whether in general, those with a well-founded fear of persecution or serious harm from state, 'rogue' state or non-state actors can internally relocate within Pakistan.

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2. Consideration of issues

2.1 Credibility

- 2.1.1 For information on assessing credibility, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).
- 2.1.2 Decision makers must also check if there has been a previous application for a UK visa or another form of leave. Asylum applications matched to visas should be investigated prior to the asylum interview (see the [Asylum Instruction on Visa Matches, Asylum Claims from UK Visa Applicants](#)).
- 2.1.3 Decision makers should also consider the need to conduct language analysis testing (see the [Asylum Instruction on Language Analysis](#)).

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2.2 Exclusion

- 2.2.1 Decision makers must consider whether one (or more) of the exclusion clauses applies. If the person is excluded from the Refugee Convention, they will also be excluded from a grant of humanitarian protection. Each case must be considered on its individual facts and merits.
- 2.2.2 For further guidance on the exclusion clauses and restricted leave, see the Asylum Instructions on [Exclusion under Articles 1F and 33\(2\) of the Refugee Convention](#), [Humanitarian Protection](#) and [Restricted Leave](#).

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2.3 Internal relocation

- 2.3.1 Where the person has a well-founded fear of persecution or serious harm from the state, they are unlikely to be able to relocate to escape that risk. Where the person's fear is of persecution or serious harm at the hands of rogue-state actors, decision makers must consider whether the person will be able to relocate to escape that risk.
- 2.3.2 Where the person fears persecution or serious harm at the hands of non-state actors, in general they will be able to relocate to escape that risk.
- 2.3.3 The Court of Appeal in [SC \(Jamaica\) v Home Secretary \[2017\] EWCA Civ 2112](#) held that: 'the evaluative exercise is intended to be holistic and ... no burden or standard of proof arises in relation to the overall issue of whether it is reasonable to internally relocate' (para 36).

- 2.3.4 Pakistan is a diverse society with an estimated total population of 233,500,636 (2020 estimate). The country is divided into:
- 4 provinces – Balochistan, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), Punjab, and Sindh;
 - 2 administered areas – Azad Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan; and
 - the Islamabad Capital Territory.

There are numerous urban centres and large cities with populations of between 1 million to over 16 million. Karachi is the 12th largest city in the world and particularly ethnically diverse (see [Geography and demography](#)).

- 2.3.5 The law provides for freedom of movement, subject to certain restrictions, for example, access to some areas may be limited for security reasons. Internal migration is widespread and common and all main cities are connected by major highways (see [Freedom of movement](#), [Internal migration](#) and [Transport networks](#)).
- 2.3.6 There is a shortage of housing, which is said to be generally unaffordable, largely due to poverty and a lack of housing finance. Although 74% of the urban population reportedly own their homes outright, an estimated 30% to 50% of urban dwellers live in katchi abadis (slums), most of which are unregularised, informal settlements, that have inadequate access to public services, infrastructure, and social facilities (see [Property and housing rights](#)). Tenant registration is mandatory and takes place at local police stations (see [Tenant registration](#)).
- 2.3.7 A number of social welfare programmes exist. Healthcare is free to all citizens although facilities are poor quality. Private facilities are better and available to those with the means to pay (see [Social welfare, Healthcare and medical issues and the Pakistan country policy and information note: Medical and healthcare](#)).
- 2.3.8 Decision makers must give careful consideration to the relevance and reasonableness of internal relocation taking full account of the individual circumstances of the particular person (for information on education, employment and housing, see Children – [Education](#), [Economy and employment](#) and [Property and housing rights](#)).
- 2.3.9 In general, a person fearing ‘rogue’ state actors and non-state actors is likely to be able to internally relocate to another area of Pakistan, although whether this would be reasonable and not unduly harsh will depend on the nature and origin of the threat as well as the person’s individual circumstances.
- 2.3.10 For information on internal relocation for minority groups, including ethnic and religious minorities, LGBTI persons and women, see the relevant [Pakistan Country Policy and Information Notes](#).
- 2.3.11 For further guidance on considering internal relocation and factors to be taken into account, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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Country information

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3. History


- 3.1.1 For a short history on Pakistan see the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) [Country of Origin Information Report – Pakistan Country Overview](#)¹, and the BBC News [Pakistan country profile](#), which includes a timeline of key dates².

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4. Geography and demography

4.1 Key geographic and demographic points

Full country name:	Islamic Republic of Pakistan ³ .
Area:	Total: 796,095 sq km ⁴ . About 3 times the area of the UK ⁵ .
Flag:	 6
Population:	Total: 233,500,636 (male: 118,961,332; female: 114,539,304 – July 2020 estimate) ⁷ .
Capital city:	Islamabad ⁸ .
Other key places:	See Main population centres .
Position:	Southern Asia, bordering the Arabian Sea, between India on the east and Iran and Afghanistan on the west and China in the north ⁹ .
Languages:	Punjabi 48%, Sindhi 12%, Saraiki (a Punjabi variant) 10%, Pashto (alternate name, Pashtu) 8%, Urdu (official) 8%, Balochi 3%, Hindko 2%, Brahui 1%, English (official; lingua franca of

¹ EASO, 'Pakistan Country Overview' (section 1.3), August 2015, [url](#).

² BBC News, 'Pakistan country profile', 18 February 2019, [url](#).

³ BBC News, 'Pakistan country profile', 18 February 2019, [url](#).

⁴ CIA World Factbook, 'Pakistan' (Geography), last updated 28 February 2020, [url](#).

⁵ CIA World Factbook, 'United Kingdom' (Geography), last updated 4 March 2020, [url](#).

⁶ CIA World Factbook, 'Pakistan', last updated 28 February 2020, [url](#).

⁷ CIA World Factbook, 'Pakistan' (People and society), last updated 28 February 2020, [url](#).

⁸ BBC News, 'Pakistan country profile', 18 February 2019, [url](#).

⁹ CIA World Factbook, 'Pakistan' (Geography), last updated 28 February 2020, [url](#).

	Pakistani elite and most government ministries), Burushaski, and other 8% ¹⁰ .
Ethnic groups:	Punjabi 44.7%, Pashtun (Pathan) 15.4%, Sindhi 14.1%, Saraiki 8.4%, Muhajirs 7.6%, Balochi 3.6%, other 6.3% ¹¹ .
Religion:	Muslim (official) 96.4% (Sunni 85-90%, Shia 10-15%), other (includes Christian and Hindu) 3.6% (2010 est.) ¹² .

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4.2 Map

4.2.1 The CIA World Factbook published the following map¹³:



4.2.2 Other maps: [Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection](#), [Pakistan Maps](#).

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4.3 Administrative divisions

4.3.1 Pakistan is divided into 4 provinces – Balochistan, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), Punjab, and Sindh; 2 administered areas – Azad Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan; and the capital territory – Islamabad Capital Territory¹⁴.

4.3.2 Freedom House noted in its 2020 report on Pakistani Kashmir that:

¹⁰ CIA World Factbook, 'Pakistan' (People and society), last updated 28 February 2020, [url](#).

¹¹ CIA World Factbook, 'Pakistan' (People and society), last updated 28 February 2020, [url](#).

¹² CIA World Factbook, 'Pakistan' (People and society), last updated 28 February 2020, [url](#).

¹³ CIA World Factbook, 'Pakistan', last updated 28 February 2020, [url](#).

¹⁴ CIA World Factbook, 'Pakistan' (Government), last updated 28 February 2020, [url](#).

'Pakistani Kashmir is administered as two territories: Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB). Each has an elected assembly and government with limited autonomy, but they lack the parliamentary representation and other rights of Pakistani provinces, and Pakistani federal institutions have predominant influence over security, the courts, and most important policy matters. Politics within the two territories are carefully managed to promote the idea of Kashmir's eventual accession to Pakistan. Freedoms of expression and association, and any political activity deemed contrary to Pakistan's policy on Kashmir, are restricted.'¹⁵

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4.4 Main population centres

4.4.1 Punjab is the most densely populated province¹⁶. UN Habitat noted that 'The 2017 census showed that 36% of the total population lived in the urban centres or urban peripheries.'¹⁷ However, the same report added that this figure was likely underestimated, 'due to disagreements and debate over the definition of urban areas.'¹⁸ UN Habitat also noted 'The ten largest cities make up more than half of the total urban population.'¹⁹

4.4.2 Pakistan's largest cities and their estimated population were, as of 2017:

- Karachi (14,910,352)
- Lahore (11,126,285)
- Faisalabad (3,203,846)
- Rawalpindi (2,098,231)
- Gujranwala (2,027,001)
- Peshawar (1,970,042)
- Multan (1,871,843)
- Hyderabad (1,732,893)
- Islamabad (1,014,825)
- Quetta (1,001,205)²⁰

4.4.3 Although the official population of Karachi is based on a 2017 census, it is likely, in 2020, to be over 16 million and the 12th largest city in the world²¹. Karachiites are made up of many ethno-linguistic groups from around Pakistan²².

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¹⁵ Freedom House, 'Freedom in the World 2020 – Pakistani Kashmir' (Overview), [url](#).

¹⁶ CIA World Factbook, 'Pakistan' (People and society), last updated 28 February 2020, [url](#).

¹⁷ UN Habitat, 'State of Pakistani Cities 2018' (page 10), 2018, [url](#).

¹⁸ UN Habitat, 'State of Pakistani Cities 2018' (pages 10-11), 2018, [url](#).

¹⁹ UN Habitat, 'State of Pakistani Cities 2018' (page 12), 2018, [url](#).

²⁰ UN Habitat, 'State of Pakistani Cities 2018' (page 13), 2018, [url](#).

²¹ World Atlas, '150 Largest Cities in the World', 2018, [url](#)

²² World Population Review, 'Karachi Demographics', 2020, [url](#)

5. Constitution

- 5.1.1 For the full constitution, with amendments, see [The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan](#)²³.

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6. Political system

- 6.1.1 For information on Pakistan's political structure see the EASO [Country of Origin Information Report – Pakistan Country Overview](#)²⁴ and the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) [Country Information Report Pakistan](#)²⁵. The Commonwealth [Pakistan: Constitution and politics](#), provides information on the August 2018 national elections²⁶.

- 6.1.2 For information on the electoral process, political participation and functioning of the government in Pakistan, see the Freedom House report [Freedom in the World 2020 – Pakistan](#)²⁷ and for the territory of Azad Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan, see [Freedom in the World 2020 – Pakistani Kashmir](#)²⁸.

- 6.1.3 Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index (BTI) 2020 covers the period from February 1, 2017 to January 31, 2019. The BTI assesses the transformation toward democracy and a market economy as well as the quality of governance in 137 countries²⁹. The report noted

'Political parties and the party system in Pakistan tend to be weak, internally undemocratic and personalistic, centered on an individual or dynasty, and sometimes splitting along the lines of personal rivalries for leadership...

'The three major political parties with nationwide representation are the PTI [Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (Pakistan Justice Movement)], the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP). The Islamic parties have followers mostly in urban areas and in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The PML-N is the exclusive preserve of the Sharif family. The PPP has had a hereditary chairmanship since its inception; it is headed by the Bhutto family from Larkana, with Benazir Bhutto's son now a member of the national legislature. In addition, there are several regional parties based on ethnicity, such as the Awami National Party (ANP), Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) with a stronghold in Karachi and the Baluchistan Nationalist Party (BNP).'³⁰

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²³ Constitution, [url](#).

²⁴ EASO, 'Pakistan Country Overview' (section 1.4), August 2015, [url](#).

²⁵ DFAT, 'Country Information Report Pakistan' (page 14), 20 February 2019, [url](#).

²⁶ The Commonwealth, 'Pakistan: Constitution and politics', n.d., [url](#).

²⁷ Freedom House, 'Freedom in the World 2020' (Sections A-C), [url](#).

²⁸ Freedom House, 'Freedom in the World 2020 – Pakistani Kashmir' (sections A-C), [url](#).

²⁹ BTI, '2020 Country Report' (page 2), 2019, [url](#).

³⁰ BTI, '2020 Country Report' (page 13), 2019, [url](#).

7. Media and communications

7.1.1 Key media/telecommunications points:

International dialling code:	+92 ³¹
Internet domain:	.pk ³²
Broadcast media:	Television is the dominant medium ³³ . State-run Pakistan Television Corporation (PTV) ³⁴ . Private TV broadcasters are permitted although there are no private, terrestrial stations so viewers watch via cable ^{35 36} .
News agencies	State-funded Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) ³⁷ ; privately-run Pakistan Press International (PPI) ³⁸
Newspapers	Daily Jang - Karachi-based, Urdu-language; largest-circulation daily Dawn - Karachi-based, largest-circulation English-language daily The News - English-language daily, published by Jang group The Nation - Lahore-based, English-language daily The Frontier Post - Peshawar-based, English-language Daily Ausaf - Islamabad-based, Urdu-language Daily Times - English-language, publishes in Lahore and Karachi Pakistan Observer - Islamabad-based daily Business Recorder - financial daily Pakistan and Gulf Economist - business weekly The Friday Times - Lahore-based weekly, English-language The Express Tribune - daily ³⁹

³¹ Countrycode.org, 'Pakistan Country Code', n.d., [url](#).

³² CIA World Factbook, 'Pakistan' (Communications), last updated 28 February 2020, [url](#).

³³ BBC News, 'Pakistan profile – Media', 2 March 2017, [url](#).

³⁴ Ministry of Finance, 'Pakistan Economic Survey 2018-19' (page 227), 10 June 2019, [url](#).

³⁵ CIA World Factbook, 'Pakistan' (Communications), last updated 28 February 2020, [url](#).

³⁶ BBC News, 'Pakistan profile – Media', 2 March 2017, [url](#).

³⁷ BBC News, 'Pakistan profile – Media', 2 March 2017, [url](#).

³⁸ Asianet, 'Pakistan Press International', n.d., [url](#).

³⁹ BBC News, 'Pakistan profile – Media', 2 March 2017, [url](#).

Radio	Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation ⁴⁰ . As of 2019, state-owned radio operates more than 30 stations; nearly 200 commercially licensed, privately owned radio stations provide programming mostly limited to music and talk shows ⁴¹ . Private FM radio stations are not allowed to broadcast their own news ⁴² .
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7.1.2 The Pakistan Economic Survey 2018/19 noted ‘By the end of March 2019, the total number of mobile subscriptions in Pakistan reached 159 million with the net addition of 8.8 million subscribers during July 2018 to March 2019. [...] broadband subscribers stood at 68.24 million. [...] Number of registered TV sets holders as on 31st March, 2019 are: 19,138,693.’⁴³

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8. Corruption

8.1.1 Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index (CPI) 2019 rated Pakistan 32 out of 100, compared to 33 in 2018 (the perceived level of public sector corruption is measured on a scale of 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean)) and ranked it 120 out of 180 countries (1st place being the least corrupt)⁴⁴. A press release, dated January 2020, by the chairperson of Transparency International Pakistan, clarified the perceived increase in corruption, stating ‘Lowering of Pakistan Score by one does not reflect any increase or decrease in Corruption as it is within the standard margin of error which is 2.46%.’⁴⁵

8.1.2 See the Country Policy and Information Note on [Pakistan: Documentation](#) for further information on corruption and fraudulent documents.

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9. Citizenship and nationality

9.1 Citizenship rights

9.1.1 The Pakistan Citizenship Act, 1951, states that Pakistan citizenship can be acquired:

- By birth - Section 4 of the Citizenship Act;
- By descent - Section 5 of the Citizenship Act;
- By migration - Section 6 of the Citizenship Act;

⁴⁰ Ministry of Finance, ‘Pakistan Economic Survey 2018-19’ (page 227), 10 June 2019, [url](#).

⁴¹ CIA World Factbook, ‘Pakistan’ (Communications), last updated 28 February 2020, [url](#).

⁴² BBC News, ‘Pakistan profile – Media’, 2 March 2017, [url](#).

⁴³ Ministry of Finance, ‘Pakistan Economic Survey 2018-19’ (pages 222 and 227), 10 June 2019, [url](#).

⁴⁴ Transparency International, CPI 2019, [url](#).

⁴⁵ Transparency International Pakistan, ‘Clarification on CPI 2019’, 26 January 2020, [url](#).

- By Naturalization - Section 9 of the Citizenship Act;
- By Marriage - Section 10 of the Citizenship Act⁴⁶.

9.1.2 Information issued on the Directorate General of Immigration and Passports website advised that Pakistan citizenship can be acquired in specific circumstances including: 'Foreign ladies married to Pakistani nationals'; and 'Minor Children (below 21 years of Age) of Pakistan Citizen.' Children born to Pakistani nationals outside of Pakistan are citizens by descent. Children born to a Pakistani mother and foreign national father after 18 April 2000 are treated automatically as citizens of Pakistan. The Government of Pakistan has dual nationality agreements with 19 countries, including the UK⁴⁷.

9.1.3 For information on documentation related to citizenship, see the Country Policy and Information Note on [Pakistan: Documentation](#).

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10. Official documents

10.1.1 See the Country Policy and Information Note on [Pakistan: Documentation](#) for information on official and fraudulent documents.

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11. Socio-economic indicators

11.1 Economy and employment

11.1.1 The following table contains some key points:

Currency	Pakistani Rupee ⁴⁸
Exchange rate	1 GBP = 199.288 PKR ⁴⁹
GDP per capita	US\$5,567 (2018) ⁵⁰

11.1.2 Employment force by occupation (labour force estimated at 64 million in 2017⁵¹):

- agriculture: 42.3%
- industry: 22.6%
- services: 35.1% (Financial Year 2015 estimate)⁵².

11.1.3 According to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 'Household Integrated Economic Survey (HIES) 2015-16', the average monthly income per

⁴⁶ Pakistan Citizenship Act, 1951, 13 April 1951, [url](#).

⁴⁷ Directorate General of Immigration and Passports, 'Citizenship of Pakistan', n.d., [url](#).

⁴⁸ BBC News, 'Pakistan country profile', 18 February 2019, [url](#).

⁴⁹ XE currency converter, GBP to PKR live rates, 12 March 2020, [url](#).

⁵⁰ World Bank, 'GDP per capita, PPP (current international \$) – Pakistan', 2018, [url](#).

⁵¹ DFAT, 'Country Information Report Pakistan' (para 2.42), 20 February 2019, [url](#).

⁵² CIA World Factbook, 'Pakistan' (Economy), last updated 28 February 2020, [url](#).

household was 29,130.49 PKR⁵³ (148.00 GBP⁵⁴). Agricultural, fishery and forestry workers (the largest employment force by occupation⁵⁵) earned an average of 6,112.46 PKR per month⁵⁶ (31.00 GBP⁵⁷).

- 11.1.4 The Pakistan Economic Survey 2018-19, citing the Labour Force Survey of 2017-18, reported that the unemployment rate had decreased to 5.79% in 2017-18⁵⁸. This was higher than the regional average, which was reported as India (2.6%), Bangladesh (4.3%), and Sri-Lanka (4.4%)⁵⁹. The Survey noted 'In 2017-18 total civilian labour force was 65.50 million consisting of 50.74 million males and 14.76 million females. Out of this 61.71 million (94.21 percent) are employed persons and remaining 3.79 million (5.79 percent) are unemployed persons...'⁶⁰
- 11.1.5 However, in October 2019, Employers' Federation of Pakistan (EFP) President, Majyd Aziz, told The Express Tribune:
- "If the unemployment rate was that low (nearly 5.79%), then it meant that almost every newcomer in the job market was getting a job in Pakistan. This should be a source of great joy and happiness for the people. In America, however, 4% unemployment rate is considered as full employment," Aziz said. "This (5.79% unemployment level) is unrealistic. It means there is no such thing like unemployment in Pakistan".⁶¹
- 11.1.6 The DFAT report noted 'In 2018, Pakistan ranked 136th out of 190 economies for ease of doing business. Pakistan's security situation, energy shortages and regulatory environment deter foreign and domestic investment and affect economic growth. Slow growth leads to a lack of employment opportunities for Pakistan's growing numbers of young people. The World Bank estimates youth unemployment in Pakistan has exceeded the overall rate of unemployment over the last decade.'⁶²
- 11.1.7 For an indication of the average cost of living in Pakistan, see the [Transferwise blog](#), aimed at expats, dated September 2017⁶³.

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11.2 Property and housing rights

- 11.2.1 Pakistan's constitution protects property rights. Article 24 of the Constitution states 'No person shall be compulsorily deprived of his property save in accordance with law.'⁶⁴
- 11.2.2 The July 2017 concluding observations of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (UNCESCR) stated:

⁵³ Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, HIES 2015-16 (Table 13), February 2017, [url](#).

⁵⁴ XE currency converter, GBP to PKR live rates, 12 March 2020, [url](#).

⁵⁵ CIA World Factbook, 'Pakistan' (Economy), last updated 28 February 2020, [url](#).

⁵⁶ Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, HIES 2015-16 (Table 09), February 2017, [url](#).

⁵⁷ XE currency converter, GBP to PKR live rates, 12 March 2020, [url](#).

⁵⁸ Ministry of Finance, 'Pakistan Economic Survey 2018-19' (page 197), 10 June 2019, [url](#).

⁵⁹ Ministry of Finance, 'Pakistan Economic Survey 2018-19' (page 200), 10 June 2019, [url](#).

⁶⁰ Ministry of Finance, 'Pakistan Economic Survey 2018-19' (page 197), 10 June 2019, [url](#).

⁶¹ Express Tribune, 'Contrary to slogan of job creation ...', 28 October 2019, [url](#).

⁶² DFAT, 'Country Information Report Pakistan' (para 2.16), 20 February 2019, [url](#).

⁶³ Transferwise, 'Cost of living in Pakistan: your guide', 28 September 2017, [url](#).

⁶⁴ Constitution, [url](#).

'The Committee is concerned at the acute shortage of adequate housing and the lack of financing programmes for low-income families. It is also concerned at the high number of persons living without legal tenure in urban informal settlements (katchi abadis), with limited access to basic services. It is further concerned that people without secure tenure in urban areas and people living in areas where development projects such as the Orange Metroline project in Lahore are being carried out are often subject to forced evictions without due process or adequate alternative housing or compensation.'⁶⁵

11.2.3 UN Habitat noted in its report on the State of Pakistani Cities, 2018, that:

'There is a general consensus that there is a "housing problem" in Pakistan, especially in its cities. The present housing shortfall in Pakistan is 10 million units and it is expected to double in the coming ten years (including depletion of some of existing housing stock). According to the latest statistics, the total number of houses built every year in Pakistan is somewhere between 0.15-0.3 million while all estimates indicate that formal supply covers less than 50 per cent of new demand.

'Housing in Pakistan is also routinely stated to be unaffordable, both because of poverty and due to the lack of formal housing finance. It is also said to be of poor quality and over-crowded, with the majority being in "slums"-or "katchi abadis" (which literally means temporary settlements) is the general term for slums, and in particular informal settlements... It is estimated that 30% to 50% of urban dwellers live in katchi abadis.

'Most katchi abadis are on publicly-owned land, especially on reserves or unused/excess land where their initial settlement often goes unnoticed, or is tolerated for a consideration. However, as they are unauthorised, they are informal settlements, with inadequate access to public services, infrastructure, and social facilities.'⁶⁶

11.2.4 However, the UN Habitat report added that some katchi abadis have been regularised by Provincial governments, who have given titles and the right to remain, as well as providing or improving infrastructure and services⁶⁷.

11.2.5 The UN Habitat report also noted that, despite housing being generally unaffordable, 74% of the urban population owned their own homes outright and cities with large numbers of government employees, such as Islamabad and Rawalpindi, have rent-free or heavily subsidised housing⁶⁸.

11.2.6 The BTI 2020 Country Report noted 'In practice, land distribution in Pakistan is highly skewed, with 64% of land owned by 5% of landlords. A total of 15% of the country's land is owned by 65% of small landholders.'⁶⁹

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⁶⁵ UNCESCR, 'Concluding observations on the initial report of Pakistan' (para 71), 20 July 2017, [url](#).

⁶⁶ UN Habitat, 'State of Pakistani Cities 2018' (page 60), 2018, [url](#).

⁶⁷ UN Habitat, 'State of Pakistani Cities 2018' (page 61), 2018, [url](#).

⁶⁸ UN Habitat, 'State of Pakistani Cities 2018' (page 61), 2018, [url](#).

⁶⁹ BTI, '2020 Country Report' (page 21), 2019, [url](#).

11.3 Healthcare and medical issues

11.3.1 The July 2017 Concluding observations of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (UNCESCR) stated 'The Committee is concerned at the very low level of public funding allocated to the health sector, at the insufficient coverage of the National Health Insurance Programme and at the weak public health system, which has led to a heavy reliance on private health services. It is particularly concerned at the high maternal and infant mortality rates.'⁷⁰

11.3.2 The International Labor Organization (ILO) noted in a 2019 report:

'In general, services in hospital emergency centres – including tests recommended to those who avail themselves of emergency services – are meant to be free of cost. Medicines are to be made available from hospital dispensaries either for free or at a nominal cost. For outpatients, a nominal fee is supposed to be charged, although medicines are to be provided from public dispensaries. In-patient facilities are normally subject to charges, but these are nominal compared to the costs of private health facilities. The Federal Government also runs a free immunization programme across the country and provides for a network of Lady Health Workers (LHWs). These primary health care practitioners work at the community level, providing advice and basic services concerning primary health care, family planning and disease prevention.

'While official policy on health coverage in Pakistan affirms that all of these services must be available, in practice, public health facilities tend to be poorly resourced. Staff attendance – particularly the presence of doctors – is uncertain in many facilities. A pressing endemic challenge is the poor state of equipment and testing facilities, which make the use of public health facilities an ordeal. Nevertheless, the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) – the Government's flagship universal coverage programme – is widely considered a success and is credited with significantly increasing immunization coverage.'⁷¹

11.3.3 The DFAT report noted 'Basic health care in Pakistan is free, but limited capacity, lack of funding, corruption, slow economic growth and overarching governance challenges combine to reduce quality and accessibility... Wealthier Pakistanis have access to better quality private health care. Rural areas have poorer access to health care services, compounded by a lack of infrastructure and transport facilities.'⁷²

11.3.4 In April 2020, ACAPS, independent non-profit specialists in humanitarian needs analysis and assessment, noted 'Access to healthcare is limited, especially for refugees and IDPs. Weak health infrastructure and surveillance systems, poor hygiene practices in homes and hospitals, and community scepticism towards public health campaigns has contributes to outbreaks of disease, including Dengue Fever, HIV, and Polio.'⁷³

⁷⁰ UNCESCR, 'Concluding observations on the initial report of Pakistan' (para 75), 20 July 2017, [url](#).

⁷¹ ILO, 'Mapping Social Protection Systems in Pakistan' (page 15), 2019, [url](#).

⁷² DFAT, 'Country Information Report Pakistan' (paras 2.22-2.27), 20 February 2019, [url](#).

⁷³ ACAPS, 'Pakistan – Key priorities', 20 April 2020, [url](#).

11.3.5 The BTI 2020 Country Report stated:

‘A state-run health insurance program was introduced under the previous administration at the end of 2015 and is designed to assist those living below the poverty line. Initially it applied mainly to parts of the Punjab and to Balochistan and FATA; however, in early 2018, it was expanded further to a total of 38 districts and had over 3 million persons enrolled. There has been some criticism of the program, describing the fundamental health care problem as one of an insufficient production of health care services for underserved populations, but a more systematic assessment of this health insurance program is needed.’⁷⁴

11.3.6 For information on the Pakistan Government’s response to the coronavirus pandemic, see its dedicated website to [Covid-19](#).

11.3.7 For further information, see the Country Policy and Information Note on [Pakistan: Medical and healthcare issues](#).

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11.4 Social welfare

11.4.1 The July 2017 Concluding observations of the UNCESCR stated:

‘The Committee regrets the lack of comprehensive information on the social security schemes of the State party, including contributory and non-contributory, public and private schemes. It is concerned that a majority of workers, including those in the formal economy, are not covered by social security programmes. For example, the participation rate in the Employees’ Old Age Benefit Institution is very low, below 10 per cent. It is also concerned that the State party has not established a social protection floor.’⁷⁵

11.4.2 The same report added:

‘While recognizing the reduction in the levels of poverty during the past 15 years, the Committee is concerned that a very high proportion of persons continue to live in poverty in the State party, especially in certain regions, for example in Sindh, in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas and in Balochistan. While welcoming the adoption of the Benazir Income Support Programme and the gradual increase in its coverage, it remains concerned that over 1 million eligible people are still not covered, that the cut-off score used to identify beneficiaries does not reflect the poverty line but is based, rather, on the fiscal capacity of the State party and that the amount awarded is not sufficient to ensure an adequate standard of living for beneficiaries.’⁷⁶

11.4.3 The BTI 2020 Country Report stated:

‘A number of social safety programs exist in Pakistan, but the majority of the population is at risk of poverty. There is some dispute over whether the incidence of poverty is falling or increasing. The Economic Survey 2016 says this statistic is falling. However, the Social Development Policy Center

⁷⁴ BTI, ‘2020 Country Report’ (page 22), 2019, [url](#).

⁷⁵ UCESCR, Concluding observations on the initial report of Pakistan’ (para 51), 20 July 2017, [url](#)

⁷⁶ UCESCR, Concluding observations on the initial report of Pakistan’ (para 65), 20 July 2017, [url](#)

Analytical Brief rejects this conclusion, pointing to discouraged workers and other indicators to suggest that the incidence of poverty is increasing. Social security programs include the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), Pakistan Bait-ul Mal, and the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF). Pakistan Bait-ul Mal has very limited funds to help orphans and widows. Foreign donors such as the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Department for International Development (DFID) and individual countries donate large sums of money to social safety nets in Pakistan. In absolute numbers, there has been an increase in the social safety net's main program, the BISP. Initiated in 2008, the BISP provides unconditional cash transfers to the poorest and conditional cash transfers to support primary school attendance. According to the IMF enrollment in the Benazir Income Support Program has increased by 1.5 million families in the three-year period of its Extended Fund Facility (which ended in 2016), and stipends have been raised by 50%. The impact of conditional transfers is more limited, as the size of the transfer is low, compared to the cost of schooling. [...] There has been rhetorical emphasis on poverty alleviation from Imran Khan's Tehreek-e-Insaf party, which came to office following the 2018.⁷⁷

11.4.4 The International Labor Organization (ILO) noted in a 2019 report:

'Workers in the formal sector receive pensions as part of contributory and tax-financed schemes. Public sector workers are provided with civil service pensions. Private sector workers have access to pensions from the Employees' Old Age Benefits Institution (EOBI) and provincially-based pension and non-pension programmes, such as the Workers' Welfare Fund (WWF) and the Employees' Social Security Institutions (ESSI), paid for by the private sector. By and large, workers in the informal sector are uncovered by these schemes.'⁷⁸

11.4.5 The following social welfare systems are not exhaustive.

11.4.6 The [Benazir Income Support Program \(BISP\)](#) was launched in July 2008 and aimed at alleviating poverty for vulnerable families. A targeted unconditional cash transfer programme is provided exclusively to women⁷⁹. The BISP website noted '... beneficiaries belong to the most under-privileged, excluded, marginalized and vulnerable sections of society, living abject poverty. Economic deprivation, regardless of political affinity, racial identity, geographical location and religious beliefs, is the sole criterion for selection [of] BISP beneficiaries.'⁸⁰ Cash transfers of 5,000 PKR per quarter are provided to eligible beneficiaries⁸¹.

11.4.7 The [Waseela-e-Taleem \(WeT\)](#) programme provides a cash transfer of 750 PKR per quarter per child to support the enrolment and retention of primary education for 4 to 12 year-old children of BISP beneficiary families⁸².

11.4.8 The Pakistan Economic Survey 2018/19 noted the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) offers micro-credit loans and financial support

⁷⁷ BTI, '2020 Country Report' (page 22), 2019, [url](#).

⁷⁸ ILO, 'Mapping Social Protection Systems in Pakistan' (page 11), 2019, [url](#).

⁷⁹ BISP, 'Overview', n.d., [url](#).

⁸⁰ BISP, 'Overview', n.d., [url](#).

⁸¹ Ministry of Finance, 'Pakistan Economic Survey 2018-19' (page 249), 10 June 2019, [url](#).

⁸² BISP, 'Waseela-e-Taleem (WeT)', n.d., [url](#).

towards water, health, education and livelihood skills⁸³. The Pakistan Baitul Mal (PBM) provides financial assistance to the destitute, widows, orphans, disabled, infirm and other needy persons regardless of their gender, cast, creed or religion through its establishments at the district level⁸⁴.

- 11.4.9 The [Workers Welfare Fund \(WWF\)](#) provides support for housing, health and education to industrial workers and financial assistance for death and marriage grants and scholarships⁸⁵.
- 11.4.10 The [Employees Old-Age Benefits Institution \(EOBI\)](#) provides monetary benefits to insured persons through the Old-Age Pension (on the event of retirement), Invalidity Pension (In case of permanent disability), Old-Age Grant (an Insured Person attained retirement age, but does not possess the minimum threshold for pension) and Survivor's Pension (in case an Insured Person has died)⁸⁶.

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11.5 Humanitarian situation

- 11.5.1 For information on the humanitarian situation, including internally displaced persons (IDPs), see the [Country Policy and Information Note on Pakistan: Security and humanitarian situation, including fear of militant groups](#).
- 11.5.2 For further information and updates on the general humanitarian situation, including Covid-19, see also the [Pakistan page](#) on reliefweb.

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Section 12 updated: 25 June 2020

12. Civil society organisations

- 12.1.1 The BTI 2020 Country Report indicated:

‘Pakistan has a vast array of associations and organizations representing the interests of different communities. These include trade unions, student unions, bar associations, peasant organizations, journalist unions and charity organizations. Welfare associations, both formal and informal, are a significant source of social support, often filling a governance vacuum or providing a social safety net. Such third-sector entities also play a prominent role in providing emergency services and health care.’⁸⁷

- 12.1.2 However, according to the USSD HR Report 2019:

‘The government maintained a series of policies that steadily eroded the freedom of international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs) and domestic NGOs to carry out their work and access the communities they serve. INGOs, UN organizations, and international missions must request government permission in the form of no-objection certificates (NOCs) before they may conduct most in-country travel, carry out certain project activities, or initiate projects. Slow government approvals to NOC requests,

⁸³ Ministry of Finance, ‘Pakistan Economic Survey 2018-19’ (page 250), 10 June 2019, [url](#).

⁸⁴ Ministry of Finance, ‘Pakistan Economic Survey 2018-19’ (page 255), 10 June 2019, [url](#).

⁸⁵ WWF, ‘Performance’, n.d., [url](#).

⁸⁶ EOBI, ‘Pension’, n.d., [url](#).

⁸⁷ BTI, ‘2020 Country Report’ (page 13), 2019, [url](#).

financial sustainability, and operational uncertainty significantly constrained INGO activity. [...] The government at both the federal and provincial levels similarly restricted the access of foreign-funded local NGOs through a separate registration regime, no-objection certificates, and other requirements. Authorities required NGOs to obtain no-objection certificates before accepting foreign funding, booking facilities or using university spaces for events, or working on sensitive human rights issues. Even when local NGOs receiving foreign funding were appropriately registered, the government often denied their requests for no-objection certificates. Domestic NGOs continued to face regular government monitoring and harassment, even if in possession of all required certifications.⁸⁸

12.1.3 The BTI 2020 Country Report, published 2019, noted:

'While Pakistan has a large number of vital civic associations, the government has demonstrated an increasingly heavy-handed attitude toward NGOs [non-governmental organisations], particularly those with international connections. For example, in November 2017, Pakistan's Ministry of Interior informed about 30 INGOs that their registration had been rejected. The Pakistani Humanitarian Forum said the work of these INGOs benefits 34 million people. Eighteen of these INGOs were ordered closed in October 2018, while the appeals of the other INGOs remained in process as of the time of writing.'⁸⁹

12.1.4 In October 2019, ACAPS noted 'Following a deterioration in 2018, which saw 18 NGOs being forced by authorities to discontinue operations in Pakistan, access constraints remain high in 2019. Humanitarian activities continue to be hindered by government delays in NGO registration and strict project approval processes.'⁹⁰

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Section 13 updated: 25 June 2020

13. Freedom of movement

13.1 Legal rights

13.1.1 Article 15 of the Constitution guarantees the right to free movement and to reside in Pakistan, 'subject to any reasonable restriction imposed by law in the public interest.'⁹¹

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13.2 Restrictions

13.2.1 The US Department of State noted in its human rights report for 2019 (USSD HR Report 2019), 'Government restrictions on access to certain areas of the

⁸⁸ USSD, 'Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2019' (section 2B), 11 March 2020, [url](#).

⁸⁹ BTI, '2020 Country Report' (page 9), 2019, [url](#).

⁹⁰ ACAPS, 'Humanitarian access', 31 October 2019, [url](#).

⁹¹ Constitution, [url](#).

former FATA [Federally Administered Tribal Areas] and Balochistan, often due to security concerns, hindered freedom of movement. The government required an approved no-objection certificate for travel to areas of the country it designated “sensitive”.⁹²

- 13.2.2 The DFAT report stated ‘The government and the military restrict physical access to the former FATA, border areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and parts of Balochistan, and access to information in those areas.’⁹³
- 13.2.3 Freedom House noted in its Freedom in the World 2020 report, covering 2019, ‘There are some legal limitations on travel and the ability to change one’s residence, employment, or institution of higher learning. The authorities routinely hinder internal movement in some parts of the country for security reasons.’⁹⁴

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13.3 Internal migration

- 13.3.1 DFAT noted in its Pakistan report that ‘Internal migration is widespread and common. Large urban centres such as Karachi, Islamabad and Lahore have ethnically and religiously diverse populations, and offer some anonymity for people fleeing violence by non-state actors.’⁹⁵
- 13.3.2 UN Habitat referred to rural-urban migration occurring over the decades, as people seek out better job opportunities, access to education and other services available in larger cities⁹⁶.

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13.4 Transport networks

- 13.4.1 Encyclopaedia Britannica noted ‘All the main cities are connected by major highways, and Pakistan is connected to each of its neighbours, including China, by road. The great majority of roads are paved.’⁹⁷ The National Highway Authority (NHA) network of roads comprised of 47 highways, motorways, expressways and strategic roads with a collective length of 12,743km⁹⁸.
- 13.4.2 As noted in the Encyclopaedia Britannica ‘The country’s main rail route runs more than 1,000 miles (1,600 km) north from Karachi to Peshawar, via Lahore and Rawalpindi. Another main line branches northwestward from Sukkur to Quetta.’⁹⁹
- 13.4.3 Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) is the national carrier and runs international flights to Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and East Asia, as well as neighbouring Afghanistan; a number of small regional airlines and charter services also run domestic flights. The principal airports are in Karachi,

⁹² USSD, ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2019’ (section 2D), 11 March 2020, [url](#).

⁹³ DFAT, ‘Country Information Report Pakistan’ (para 3.191), 20 February 2019, [url](#).

⁹⁴ Freedom House, ‘Freedom in the World 2020’ (Section G1), [url](#).

⁹⁵ DFAT, ‘Country Information Report Pakistan’ (paras 5.31-5.32), 20 February 2019, [url](#).

⁹⁶ UN Habitat, ‘State of Pakistani Cities 2018’ 2018, (page 10), [url](#).

⁹⁷ Encyclopaedia Britannica, ‘Pakistan’ (Transportation), last updated 14 August 2019, [url](#)

⁹⁸ Ministry of Finance, ‘Pakistan Economic Survey 2018-19’ (page 203), 10 June 2019, [url](#).

⁹⁹ Encyclopaedia Britannica, ‘Pakistan’ (Transportation), last updated 14 August 2019, [url](#)

Lahore, Rawalpindi, Quetta, and Peshawar. Karachi, Port Qāsim, and Gwadar are the principal seaports¹⁰⁰.

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13.5 Tenant registration

13.5.1 The Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB) Research Directorate noted in a response, dated 23 January 2018, that tenant registration systems were in place in the provinces of Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab and Sindh, as well as the Islamabad Capital Territory¹⁰¹. Two sources consulted by the Research Directorate indicated that tenant registration was mandatory and that registration took place at the tenant's local police station¹⁰².

13.5.2 For further information on Pakistan's tenant registration systems, including implementation, requirements and procedures, enforcement, how the system works in each province and whether the authorities share information, see the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB) [Research Directorate response](#), dated 23 January 2018¹⁰³.

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Section 14 updated: 25 June 2020

14. Exit and entry procedures

14.1 Airport screening

14.1.1 For information on screening at airports and documentation required when departing the country, see the [Country Information Note on Pakistan: Documentation](#).

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14.2 Exit Control List (ECL)

14.2.1 The UN Human Rights Committee (UNHRC) noted in its concluding observations, dated August 2017:

'The Committee notes that various lists exist to control entry into or exit from the State party and regrets the lack of information thereon, including the criteria or grounds for the listing, the process for listing or delisting names, and the safeguards available to prevent misuse of these lists. It is concerned that the Exit Control List is allegedly used to restrict the freedom of movement of dissenting persons and that the circumstances under which passports may be cancelled, impounded or confiscated are not stated in article 8 of the Passports Act.'¹⁰⁴

14.2.2 The Freedom House report, Freedom in the World 2020, covering 2019 events, noted 'The main tool for restricting foreign travel is the Exit Control List (ECL), which blocks named individuals from using official exit points

¹⁰⁰ Encyclopaedia Britannica, 'Pakistan' (Transportation), last updated 14 August 2019, [url](#)

¹⁰¹ IRB, 'Pakistan: Tenant registration systems...', 23 January 2018, [url](#).

¹⁰² IRB, 'Pakistan: Tenant registration systems...', 23 January 2018, [url](#).

¹⁰³ IRB, 'Pakistan: Tenant registration systems...', 23 January 2018, [url](#).

¹⁰⁴ UNHRC, 'Concluding observations on the initial report of Pakistan' (para 29), 23 August 2017, [url](#).

from the country. It is meant to include those who pose a security threat and those facing court proceedings. However, periodically it has been used as a means of controlling dissent.¹⁰⁵

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Section 15 updated: 25 June 2020

15. Returnees

15.1 Treatment on return

15.1.1 According to the DFAT report:

‘In practice, returnees tend to leave Pakistan on valid travel documents and therefore do not commit immigration offences under Pakistan law. Those who return voluntarily and with valid travel documentation are typically processed like any other citizen returning to Pakistan.

‘The government issues “genuine returnees” with temporary documents when they arrive. A genuine returnee is defined as someone who exited Pakistan legally irrespective of how they entered destination countries. Those who are returned involuntarily or who travel on emergency travel documents are likely to attract attention from the authorities upon arrival. MOI [Ministry of Interior] will interview failed returnees and release them if their exit was deemed to be legal, but may detain those deemed to have departed illegally. People suspected of or charged with criminal offences in Pakistan are likely to face questioning on return, irrespective of whether they departed legally or not.

‘DFAT understands that people returned to Pakistan involuntarily are typically questioned upon arrival to ascertain whether they left the country illegally, are wanted for crimes in Pakistan, or have committed any offences while abroad. Those who left Pakistan on valid travel documentation and have not committed any other crimes are typically released within a couple of hours. Those found to have contravened Pakistani immigration laws are typically arrested and detained. These people are usually released within a few days, either after being bailed by their families or having paid a fine, although the law provides for prison sentences. Those wanted for a crime in Pakistan or who have committed a serious offence while abroad may be arrested and held on remand, or required to report regularly to police as a form of parole.¹⁰⁶

15.1.2 According to the USSD HR Report 2019 ‘The government refused to accept the return of some Pakistanis deported to Pakistan from other countries. The government refused these deportees entry to the country as unidentifiable Pakistani citizens, despite having passports issued by Pakistani embassies abroad.¹⁰⁷

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¹⁰⁵ Freedom House, ‘Freedom in the World 2020’ (Section G1), [url](#).

¹⁰⁶ DFAT, ‘Country Information Report Pakistan’ (paras 5.37-5.39), 20 February 2019, [url](#).

¹⁰⁷ USSD, ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2019’ (section 2D), 11 March 2020, [url](#).

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Key issues relevant to protection claims

The issues below are not meant to be exhaustive; rather the key topics which may be relevant to protection claims.

Section updated: 25 June 2020

16. Children

16.1 Education

16.1.1 The education system of Pakistan was described in World Education News and Reviews (WENR), dated February 2020:

‘Education in Pakistan is free and compulsory for all children between the ages of five and 16, or up through grade 10, or what’s referred to as “matriculation” in Pakistan. It is a fundamental right accorded by Article 25 A of the constitution. However, [...] participation in compulsory education is far from universal, particularly in socio-economically disadvantaged regions.

‘Elementary education is five years in length (grades 1 to 5), followed by three years of middle school (grades 6 to 8), and four years of secondary education, divided into two years of lower-secondary and two years of upper-secondary education (5+3+2+2).

‘Private education features prominently in Pakistani elementary and middle school education, as it helps to bridge capacity gaps in the underfunded public sector. Some 35 percent of all pupils in elementary schools are enrolled in private schools, according to official statistics.

‘Many elementary schools in Pakistan suffer severely from a lack of quality including in terms of infrastructure. Recent government figures bring this into focus – merely 54 percent of elementary schools have electricity, 67 percent have drinking water, and 68 percent have latrines. A lack of trained teachers and teacher absenteeism are the other most often cited problems.

‘The elementary curriculum typically includes Urdu, English, regional languages, mathematics, science, social studies, and Islamiyat. The middle school curriculum features the same subjects as the elementary curriculum, but additional languages like Arabic or Persian may be introduced. It should be noted, however, that considerable variations in curricula may exist between jurisdictions, especially since the administration of the school system devolved from the federal government to the provinces in 2010.¹⁰⁸

16.1.2 UN Habitat noted in a 2018 report on Pakistan’s cities:

‘There are several systems and ways of education in Pakistani cities such as public sector education through government sponsored institutions, private sector institutions owned and run by educationists, and seminaries providing religious education. The 18 constitutional amendment devolves higher

¹⁰⁸ WENR, ‘Education in Pakistan’, 25 February 2020, [url](#).

education to the provinces whereas elementary and secondary education was already a provincial subject. There is a government system of education that functions through provincial departments of literacy and education. A system of government schools and colleges exists in all the four provinces, including the major cities, which follow the prescribed curricula and regulatory procedures. Educational boards examine the students for secondary and higher secondary school certificates. The universities are autonomous institutions which run specialized programs in various disciplines and award degrees. According to Pakistan Bureau of Statistics report of 2015, there were 11,491 registered seminaries. Seminaries usually receive the bottom strata of the youth as intake.¹⁰⁹

16.1.3 The BTI 2020 Country Report noted ‘Pakistan’s education system is divided between English and Urdu instruction. A flourishing Madrasa education system also exists. Most children from the middle and lower-middle classes opt for Urdu-language schools, which are run by the government. The elite send their children to English-language schools, which are costly and out of reach for the majority of the population.’¹¹⁰

16.1.4 See also:

- The Country Policy and Information Note on [Pakistan: Women fearing gender-based violence](#).
- [DFAT Country Information Report Pakistan](#).
Human Rights Watch: [‘Shall I Feed My Daughter, or Educate Her?’: Barriers to Girls’ Education in Pakistan](#), 12 November 2018.

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16.2 Child abuse

16.2.1 The US Department of State’s human rights report for 2019 (USSD HR Report 2019) noted that:

‘Child abuse was widespread. Employers, who in some cases were relatives, abused young girls and boys working as domestic servants by beating them and forcing them to work long hours. Many such children were human trafficking victims. Local authorities subjected children to harmful traditional practices, treating girls as chattel to settle disputes and debts.

‘In 2016 the government updated its definition of statutory rape and expanded the previous definition, which was sexual intercourse with a girl younger than 16, to include boys. [...]

‘Various local laws exist to protect children from child pornography, sexual abuse, seduction, and cruelty, but federal laws do not prohibit using children for prostitution or pornographic performances, although child pornography is illegal under obscenity laws. Legal observers reported that authorities did not regularly enforce child protection laws.’¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ UN Habitat, ‘State of Pakistani Cities 2018’ 2018, (page 58), [url](#).

¹¹⁰ BTI, ‘2020 Country Report’ (page 25), 2019, [url](#).

¹¹¹ USSD, ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2019’ (section 6), 11 March 2020, [url](#).

16.2.2 For further information and statistics, see the non-government organisation [Sahil](#), which works on child protection, especially against child sexual abuse.

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16.3 Child marriage

16.3.1 See the Country Policy and Information Note on [Pakistan: Women fearing gender-based violence](#).

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16.4 Child labour

16.4.1 Child labour is pervasive despite laws prohibiting certain practices¹¹². For more information, including the prevalence of, and laws on, child labour, see the US Department of Labor's [child labour and forced labour reports on Pakistan](#).

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16.5 Children born out of wedlock

16.5.1 For information on children born out of wedlock, see the country policy and information note on [Pakistan: Women fearing gender-based violence](#).

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17. Interfaith marriage

17.1.1 Under Islamic law Muslim women cannot marry non-Muslim men. Muslim men can marry Muslim women, or women who are 'People of the Book', identified as Christians and Jews¹¹³. As marriages between Muslim women and non-Muslim men are considered illegal, a non-Muslim man would have to convert to Islam to marry a Muslim woman¹¹⁴.

17.1.2 The Freedom House report, Freedom in the World 2020, noted that whilst men and women enjoy personal social freedoms and recourse to the law in some urban areas of Pakistan, '... traditional practices in much of the country subject individuals to social control over personal behavior, and especially choice of marriage partner. Despite successive attempts to abolish the practice, "honor killing," the murder of men or women accused of breaking social and especially sexual taboos, remains common, and most incidents go unreported.'¹¹⁵

17.1.3 For information on marriage laws and on love marriages – where couples exercise their right to marry a person of their choosing as opposed to an arranged marriage – see the Country Policy and Information Note on [Pakistan: Women fearing gender-based violence](#).

17.1.4 See also the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) of Canada's Research Directorate responses on [Pakistan: Treatment of persons in mixed Sunni-Shia marriages; ability to relocate to other parts of the country; state protection available \(2017-December 2018\)](#) and [Pakistan: Domestic violence](#)

¹¹² USSD, 'Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2019' (section 7c), 11 March 2020, [url](#).

¹¹³ Islam.org, 'Marriage (Part I of II)' (Issue 2406), n.d., [url](#).

¹¹⁴ IRB Canada, 'Information on marriage registration...', 14 January 2013, [url](#).

¹¹⁵ Freedom House, 'Freedom in the World 2020' (Section G3), [url](#).

[in intercaste marriages: state protection and support services for victims \(2015-January 2019\)](#).

- 17.1.5 For information on documentation relating to marriage, see the Country Policy and Information Note on [Pakistan: Documentation](#).

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18. Land disputes

- 18.1.1 USAID reported in its country profile on property rights, revised in April 2018:

‘Squatting and land-grabbing are common in Pakistan. The lack of land available for housing development and lease by individuals in growing urban areas has forced migrants into informal settlements and squatting on vacant land. Pakistan is also home to individuals and groups known as the Land Mafia who illegally take possession of land or claim ownership of land and dispossess true owners through legal or extra-legal means. The Illegal Dispossession Act of 2005 was passed in an effort to address the problem, and its execution has been improved with new evidentiary protocols passed in 2016.’¹¹⁶

- 18.1.2 The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) noted in its 2018 report on human rights, ‘Though some notable efforts were made to stop land grabbing and illegal encroachment, 2018 was not much different from previous years in respect of land grabbing, illegal occupation, encroachment and china cutting [resizing and using land designated for civic amenities to the public for residential and commercial plots¹¹⁷]. The process continued in both large and small towns but with far more speed and intensity in the bigger cities of the country.’¹¹⁸

- 18.1.3 Transparency International stated in, an undated article ‘Land grabbing by the so-called “land mafia” is reportedly prolific in Pakistan, particularly in and around Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi. In some cases, housing authorities have allegedly colluded with property developers, who employ private militias to secure the land.’¹¹⁹

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19. Political affiliation

19.1 Political parties and participation

- 19.1.1 The USSD HR Report 2019 noted:

‘There were no reports of restrictions on political parties participating in elections, except for those prohibited due to terrorist affiliations. Judges ordered media regulatory agencies to enforce constitutional bans on content critical of the military or judiciary, compelling media to censor politicians’ speeches and elections-related coverage deemed “antijudiciary” or “antimilitary.” Organizations that monitor press freedom reported direct pressure on media outlets to avoid content regarding possible military influence over judicial proceedings against politicians, and to refrain from

¹¹⁶ USAID, ‘Property rights and resource governance’ (page 12), April 2018, [url](#).

¹¹⁷ HRCP, ‘State of Human Rights in 2018’ (page 283), March 2019, [url](#).

¹¹⁸ HRCP, ‘State of Human Rights in 2018’ (page 282), March 2019, [url](#).

¹¹⁹ Transparency International, ‘Mafia Land Grab’, n.d., [url](#).

reporting on PML-N leaders in a positive way. In most areas there was no interference with the right of political parties and candidates to organize campaigns, run for election, or seek votes. In Balochistan, however, there were reports security agencies and separatist groups harassed local political organizations, such as the Balochistan National Party and the Baloch Students Organization.¹²⁰

19.1.2 The DFAT report provided information on political opinion and on the following parties: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Mutahidda Qaumi Movement (MQM) and the Awami National Party (ANP)¹²¹.

19.1.3 For information on the participation of women in the political sphere, see the Country Policy and Information Note on [Pakistan: Women fearing gender-based violence](#).

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20. Prison conditions

20.1.1 See the Country Policy and Information Note on [Pakistan: Prison conditions](#).

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21. Religious and ethnic minorities

21.1 Ahmadis

21.1.1 See the Country Policy and Information Note on [Pakistan: Ahmadis](#).

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21.2 Blasphemy

21.2.1 For a tabulated summary of the blasphemy laws and the penalties for breaching them, see Country Policy and Information Note on [Pakistan: Christians and Christian converts](#).

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21.3 Christians and Christian converts

21.3.1 See the Country Policy and Information Note on [Pakistan: Christians and Christian converts](#).

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21.4 Hindus and Sikhs

21.4.1 The DFAT report noted:

‘According to the 2017 census, 1.6 per cent of the population, or just over 3.3 million people, are Hindu. Most Hindus live in largely self-contained communities in Sindh. Hindus face similar issues in relation to blasphemy and education as other religious minorities [...], and are also affected by prevailing community attitudes to India and the state of the bilateral relationship.

‘Living in largely self-contained communities mitigates a certain degree of societal discrimination; however, affluent higher caste Hindus benefit more

¹²⁰ USSD, ‘Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2019’ (section 3), 11 March 2020, [url](#).

¹²¹ DFAT, ‘Country Information Report Pakistan’ (pages 44-46), 20 February 2019, [url](#).

than poorer castes. Hindus in Karachi are safer in wealthier areas such as Defence and Clifton, but poorer Hindus are unable to live in these areas.

'DFAT is not aware of any regional issues facing the Hindu community in central Sindh. In upper Sindh, criminals protected by tribal laws target Hindus as a socially vulnerable group, not because of their religion. Increased religious conservatism among majority Muslims in lower Sindh have [sic] increased discrimination and violence against Hindus. Most Hindus in lower Sindh live in Tharparker and Umarkot (whose populations are an estimated 70 and 80 per cent Hindu, respectively). Tharparker is vulnerable to drought and poverty.'¹²²

- 21.4.2 Despite the introduction of the Hindu Marriage Bill 2017, which aimed to protect Hindu women and girls from forced marriage and conversion¹²³, it was reported that forced conversion to Islam and marriage to Muslim men occurred^{124 125}.
- 21.4.3 The HRCP 2018 report noted 'Over the past few years, Sikhs in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have often been targeted by militant groups who have been threatening them with dire consequences if they do not pay Islamic taxes. While several Sikhs have been kidnapped, some have lost their lives and Sikh properties expropriated.'¹²⁶
- 21.4.4 The HRCP 2019 report noted some positive actions taken relating to Sikhs, stating 'The successful completion and inauguration in November [2019] of the Kartarpur Corridor for Sikh pilgrims was another step in the right direction. The Punjab Tourist Police was established to provide security to tourists and more than 100 employees of the Punjab Tourist Police were appointed in the Narowal district for the protection of Sikh yatrees [pilgrims] visiting Kartarpur.'¹²⁷
- 21.4.5 The report further noted 'For the first time in the history of Governor House, a Sikh officer, Pawan Singh Arora, was appointed as public relations officer to the Punjab governor in January. After several decades, the historic Babey Di Beri Gurdwara in Sialkot was renovated and reopened in February to allow the Sikh community to perform their religious rites.'¹²⁸
- 21.4.6 For information on Hindu and Sikh marriage laws, see the Country Policy and Information Note on [Pakistan: Women fearing gender-based violence](#).

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21.5 Shia Muslims

- 21.5.1 See the Country Policy and Information Note on [Pakistan: Shia Muslims](#).

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¹²² DFAT, 'Country Information Report Pakistan' (paras 3.144-3.146), 20 February 2019, [url](#).

¹²³ CSW, 'Pakistan: Religious freedom under attack' (page 9), December 2019, [url](#).

¹²⁴ USCIRF, 'Annual Report 2019 – Pakistan' (Forced conversions and marriage), April 2019, [url](#).

¹²⁵ USSD, '2018 Report on International Religious Freedom' (section III), 21 June 2019, [url](#).

¹²⁶ HRCP, 'State of Human Rights in 2018' (page 117), March 2019, [url](#).

¹²⁷ HRCP, 'State of Human Rights in 2019' (page 33), April 2020, [url](#).

¹²⁸ HRCP, 'State of Human Rights in 2019' (page 34), April 2020, [url](#).

21.6 Hazara

21.6.1 See the Country Policy and Information Note on: [Pakistan: Hazaras](#).

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22. Security and humanitarian situation

22.1.1 See the Country Policy and Information Note on [Pakistan: Security and humanitarian situation, including fear of militant groups](#).

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23. Sexual orientation and gender identity and expression

23.1.1 See the Country Policy and Information Note on [Pakistan: Sexual orientation and gender identity and expression](#).

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24. Trafficking

24.1.1 See the US Department of State's [2019 Trafficking in Persons Report – Pakistan](#).

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25. Women

25.1.1 See the Country Policy and Information Note on [Pakistan: Women fearing gender-based violence](#).

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Terms of Reference

A 'Terms of Reference' (ToR) is a broad outline of what the CPIN seeks to cover. They form the basis for the [country information section](#). The Home Office's Country Policy and Information Team uses some standardised ToRs, depending on the subject, and these are then adapted depending on the country concerned.

For this particular CPIN, the following topics were identified prior to drafting as relevant and on which research was undertaken:

- History, geography and demography
- Political system, corruption
- Media and communication
- Socio-economic indicators
 - Economy and employment
 - Health and welfare
 - Property rights
- Citizenship
- Freedom of movement
 - Legal rights
 - Restrictions
 - Internal movement
 - Tenant registration
 - Transport network
- Exit and entry procedures
 - Exit Control List
- Treatment of returnees

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ARCHIVE

Version control

Clearance

Below is information on when this note was cleared:

- version **3.0**
- valid from **25 June 2020**

Changes from last version of this note

Updated country information and assessment and removal of the sections referring to actors of protection, information of which is now available in a discrete CPIN. See the [Country Policy and Information Note on Pakistan: Actors of protection](#).

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