

**Refugee Review Tribunal
AUSTRALIA**

RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE

Research Response Number: PAK35396
Country: Pakistan
Date: 27 August 2009

Keywords: Pakistan – Rawalpindi – Christians – Midwives – Police – Passport – Bahawalpur church attack – Lashkar e-Toiba – Lashkar e-Omer

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Questions

- 1. Do Christian women in Pakistan serve as midwives to Muslim women?**
- 2. Would police provide protection to a Christian women threatened by Islamists in Rawalpindi?**
- 3. How long does it take to obtain a passport in Rawalpindi?**
- 4. Please provide details of an attack on a church at Bahawalpur in October 2001.**
- 5. Please provide information on the activities of the militant groups Lashkar e-Toiba and Lashkar e-Omer**

RESPONSE

1. Do Christian women in Pakistan serve as midwives to Muslim women?

No specific information could be located regarding whether Christian midwives in Pakistan attend the births of Muslim women. The following information on midwives in Pakistan may be of interest.

An undated article sourced from the Action Aid Pakistan website reports on a Christian midwife in Rahim Yar Khan, in south Punjab province, stating that “discrimination and exclusion stood in her way to making a reasonable living”. The report quotes the midwife as claiming that her “Muslim neighbours always preferred less experienced and less professional Muslim midwives over me and at times I didn’t have any work” (Mubarak, R. & Khan, R. (undated), ‘Nasreen’s Story’, Action Aid Pakistan website <http://www.actionaid.org/pakistan/index.aspx?PageID=3780> – Accessed 27 August 2009 – Attachment 1).

A December 2008 report sourced from the Pakistan Centre for Legal Aid Assistance and Settlement website states that a Christian midwife in Rawalpindi had been accused of blasphemy. The case, as it is depicted in this report, appears to be motivated more by personal animosity than religious fervour, as the midwife was allegedly framed by a disgruntled former employee ('A new blasphemy case against a Christian midwife in Rawalpindi' 2008, Centre for Legal Aid Assistance and Settlement website, 1 December http://www.claas.org.uk/news_detail.aspx?ID=248 – Accessed 27 August 2009 – Attachment 2).

In Transparency International Pakistan's 2009 survey, 2007 figures provided by the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) and the Pakistan Nursing Council (PNC), Islamabad, state that there are 25,261 midwives in Pakistan, or one midwife for every 6,203 people (Transparency International Pakistan 2009, *National Corruption Perception Survey*, TI Pakistan website, 17 June <http://www.transparency.org.pk/documents/NCPS%202009/NCPS%202009%20%20Report.pdf> – Accessed 26 August 2009 – Attachment 3).

A November 2003 article from *Inter Press Service* reports on the high maternal mortality rate in Pakistan, and the dearth of trained midwives in the country (Ebrahim, Z. 2003, 'Dearth of Trained Midwives Plagues Planners', *Inter Press Service*, 20 November <http://ipsnews.net/interna.asp?idnews=21189> – Accessed 27 August 2009 – Attachment 4).

2. Would police provide protection to a Christian women threatened by Islamists in Rawalpindi?

No information could be located which addresses the issue of whether a Christian woman in Rawalpindi would receive adequate protection from the police. Nonetheless, some recent media reports claim that: Christians are subject to "victimisation" by Rawalpindi police; that the Rawalpindi police "unlawfully" arrest Christians in blasphemy cases because the police are "under pressure of Muslim groups"; and that police failed to protect Christians in an August 2009 incident at Gojra, Punjab, in which eight Christians were killed by a Muslim mob (Asghar, I. 2009, 'Thana culture: Christians feel victimised', *Daily Times*, 13 April http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009\04\13\story_13-4-2009_pg11_1 – Accessed 9 September 2009 – Attachment 30; 'Hector Aleem arrested under blasphemy' 2009, *Pakistan Christian Post*, 27 January <http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/viewnews.php?newsid=1311> – Accessed 9 September 2009 – Attachment 31; 'Pak Christians accuse police of failing to protect them' 2009, *Thaindian News*, (source: *Asian News International*), 4 August http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/world-news/pak-christians-accuse-police-of-failing-to-protect-them_100227386.html – Accessed 9 September 2009 – Attachment 32).

On a more general level, sources indicate that the Pakistani police are widely regarded as under resourced, ineffective, inefficient and corrupt; the police are reportedly not well-regarded by the public and are feared and mistrusted rather than seen as a source of protection. In Transparency International Pakistan's 2009 survey of corruption, 35.3% of respondents to the survey stated that the police were the most corrupt sector in Pakistan; nearly 27% of respondents had had dealings with the police during the year prior to the survey, and over 90% of households who had contact with the police reported corruption in their dealings with them. A July 2008 International Crisis Group (ICG) report claims that "Pakistan's police force is incapable of combating crime, upholding the law or protecting citizens and the state against militant violence", and an April 2005 ICG report claims that

members of Islamist groups have successfully infiltrated the Pakistani police force. A July 2008 report written by Shaun Gregory, a Professor of International Security in the Department of Peace Studies at the University of Bradford, claims that the situation for Christians in Pakistan “evidences a complex and multi-dimensional pattern of persecution, intimidation and lack of protection” (for corruption and ineffectiveness of the police, see: US Department of State 2008, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2007 – Pakistan*, ‘Role of the Police and Security Apparatus’, 11 March – Attachment 6; and: *Jane’s Sentinel Country Risk Assessment for Pakistan* (‘Defence, Security and Foreign Forces’, updated 31 May 2007), cited in: UK Home Office 2008, ‘Country of Origin information report: Pakistan’, UK Home Office website, 29 April, p.28 <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs08/pakistan-300408.doc> – Accessed 2 May 2008 – Attachment 7; for the Transparency International Pakistan report, see: Transparency International Pakistan 2009, *National Corruption Perception Survey*, TI Pakistan website, 17 June <http://www.transparency.org.pk/documents/NCPS%202009/NCPS%202009%20%20Report.pdf> – Accessed 26 August 2009 – Attachment 13; for the ICG reports, see: International Crisis Group 2008, *Reforming Pakistan’s Police*, Crisis Group Asia Report No.157, 14 July – Attachment 8; and: International Crisis Group 2005, *The State of Sectarianism in Pakistan*, Asia Report No. 95, 18 April http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/asia/south_asia/095_the_state_of_sectarianism_in_pakistan.pdf – Accessed 27 August 2009 – Attachment 14; and for the Shaun Gregory report, see: Gregory, S. 2008, ‘The Christian Minority in Pakistan: Issues and Options’, Pakistan Security Research Unit (PSRU), University of Bradford, 17 July <http://spaces.brad.ac.uk:8080/report/attachments/748/brief+37.pdf> – Accessed 13 August 2009 – Attachment 28).

Extended extracts from these sources appear below, as does information sourced from previous research responses on the police and state protection in Pakistan.

Recent reports on police in Rawalpindi and Punjab

An April 2009 article from the Pakistan *Daily Times* reports claims that “police victimise Christians of lower class in posh areas” of Rawalpindi, stating that “Christians in these areas had multiple complaints against the police”. In response, “City Police Officer (CPO) Rao Iqbal said there were some black sheep in police department who misused power”, and that “some police officials had been suspended for blackmailing Christians” (Asghar, I. 2009, ‘Thana culture: Christians feel victimised’, *Daily Times*, 13 April http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009\04\13\story_13-4-2009_pg11_1 – Accessed 9 September 2009 – Attachment 30).

An August 2009 article sourced from *Asian News International* reports “accusations from Christians that the police neglected to protect them” from an attack by Muslims in Gojra, Punjab, in which eight Christians were killed and many Christian homes and businesses torched. Further detail on the August 2009 incident in Gojra is provided in *Research Response PAK35299*, of 13 August 2009 (‘Pak Christians accuse police of failing to protect them’ 2009, *Thaindian News*, (source: *Asian News International*), 4 August http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/world-news/pak-christians-accuse-police-of-failing-to-protect-them_100227386.html – Accessed 9 September 2009 – Attachment 32; MRT Research & Information 2009, *Research Response PAK35299*, 13 August – Attachment 29).

A January 2009 article from the *Pakistan Christian Post* reports that: “A Christian human rights activist named Hector Aleem resident of Islamabad, has been arrested suspiciously, in a Blasphemy case in Rawalpindi”. According to claims made by Aleem, Rawalpindi police broke into his home and tortured him and his family, before detaining him on unspecified charges, and later charging him with blasphemy. The article further claims that police “under pressure of Muslim groups and registered the case unlawfully” (‘Hector Aleem arrested under blasphemy’ 2009, *Pakistan Christian Post*, 27 January <http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/viewnews.php?newsid=1311> – Accessed 9 September 2009 – Attachment 31).

Previous research responses

According to sources quoted in *Research Response PAK34189*, of 16 December 2008, there is extensive information to indicate that the Pakistan police are widely regarded as under resourced, ineffective, inefficient and corrupt. These sources include the US Department of State (UDDOS), which notes that: “Corruption within the police was rampant”; and that: “Police charged fees to register genuine complaints and accepted money for registering false complaints”; and *Jane’s Sentinel Country Risk Assessment for Pakistan* (31 May 2007), which reports that: “Police in Pakistan are not regarded by the population as either friends or protectors”; and that: “They are in general mistrusted and feared because their culture is one of intimidation rather than service” (MRT Research & Information 2008, *Research Response PAK34189*, 16 December – Attachment 5; US Department of State 2008, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2007 – Pakistan*, ‘Role of the Police and Security Apparatus’, 11 March – Attachment 6; *Jane’s Sentinel Country Risk Assessment for Pakistan* (‘Defence, Security and Foreign Forces’, updated 31 May 2007), cited in: UK Home Office 2008, ‘Country of Origin information report: Pakistan’, UK Home Office website, 29 April, p.28 <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs08/pakistan-300408.doc> – Accessed 2 May 2008 – Attachment 7).

The 2008 USDOS *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* for Pakistan states that corruption and bribery are commonplace in the Pakistan police force, and that police in some districts are “completely ineffective”:

Police have primary internal security responsibilities for most areas of the country. Under the Police Order (Second Amendment) Ordinance promulgated in 2005, control of the police falls under elected local district chief executives known as nazims. Paramilitary forces such as the Rangers, the Frontier Constabulary, and the Islamabad Capital Territory Police fall under the Ministry of the Interior. Provincial governments control these forces when they assist in law and order operations. During some religious holidays, the government deployed the regular army in sensitive areas to help maintain public order.

Corruption within the police was rampant. Police charged fees to register genuine complaints and accepted money for registering false complaints. Bribes to avoid charges were commonplace. Individuals paid police to humiliate their opponents and avenge personal grievances. Corruption was most prominent among police SHOs, some of whom reportedly operated arrest-for-ransom operations and established unsanctioned stations to increase illicit revenue collection.

Police force effectiveness varied greatly by district, ranging from reasonably good to completely ineffective. Some members of the police force committed numerous, serious human rights abuses. Failure to punish abuses created a climate of impunity. Police and prison officials frequently used the threat of abuse to extort money from prisoners and their families. The inspector general, district police officers, district nazims, provincial interior or

chief ministers, the federal interior or prime minister, or the courts can order internal investigations into abuses and order administrative sanctions. Executive branch and police officials can recommend and the courts can order criminal prosecution, and these mechanisms were sometimes used.

...During the year district public safety commissions in Punjab, Sindh, and a majority of districts in NWFP and Balochistan were established but their effectiveness was undermined because of inadequate staffing (US Department of State 2008, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2007 – Pakistan*, 'Role of the Police and Security Apparatus', 11 March – Attachment 6).

The UK Home Office's April 2008 *Country of Origin information report: Pakistan* notes the finding of the *Jane's Sentinel Country Risk Assessment for Pakistan* (31 May 2007) that: "Police in Pakistan are not regarded by the population as either friends or protectors"; and that: "They are in general mistrusted and feared because their culture is one of intimidation rather than service":

Police in Pakistan are not regarded by the population as either friends or protectors. They are in general mistrusted and feared because their culture is one of intimidation rather than service...The police are politicised, in addition to being subject to manipulation by powerful landlords in the rural areas and 'influentials' in the cities. Corruption is rife [sic]. Investigative procedures are generally brutal and frequently consist of torturing a suspect until a confession is obtained. Crowd-control and anti-riot skills are rudimentary, and in such encounters, police use lathis – five foot, steel-tipped bamboo canes – without mercy. They are armed with rifles but undisciplined in weapon handling as in almost every other aspect of police work (*Jane's Sentinel Country Risk Assessment for Pakistan* ('Defence, Security and Foreign Forces', updated 31 May 2007), cited in: UK Home Office 2008, 'Country of Origin information report: Pakistan', UK Home Office website, 29 April, p.28 <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs08/pakistan-300408.doc> – Accessed 2 May 2008 – Attachment 7).

In July 2008 the International Crisis Group published an extensive report on the state of policing in Pakistan. The report found that Pakistan police are under resourced, corrupt and often brutal in terms of infringing on human rights. The report also notes the inefficiency of police and, additionally, recent changes to police procedures which have added to this inefficiency by making it more difficult for the public to register a case with the police.

Promulgating the Police Order, a presidential ordinance that formed part of his scheme to restructure local government, President Pervez Musharraf pledged to transform Pakistan's ill-disciplined, politicised and violence-prone police into an efficient, apolitical and service-oriented force.¹ Six years after the order was passed into law in 2002, the police remain inefficient, corrupt and brutal. While law and order has rapidly deteriorated, police excesses and crimes have sharply risen. (p.1)

...By the late 1990s, public confidence in an unreformed, corrupt and inefficient police was at an alltime low. According to a senior police officer, complaints ranged from "routine discourtesy and incidents of neglect, incompetence and arbitrariness to institutionalised abuse of power and widespread resort to corruption". (p.6)

...According to police officials, the Police Order has brought about no meaningful change in the way in which the force functions and therefore no corresponding change in the apprehension and outright hatred with which the vast majority of citizens view it. The public is certainly justified in perceiving the police as brutal and corrupt. Since 2002, after the order came into being, the independent Human Rights Commission of Pakistan's annual reports have highlighted widespread and increasing instances of illegal detentions, deaths in custody, police torture, extrajudicial killings and pervasive corruption. (p.12)

...It is nearly impossible to eliminate corruption within the police until poor salaries and working conditions are improved, particularly for personnel of and below the rank of inspector. "We remain on call 24 hours of every day of every week", said an inspector, who considers vacations "a blessing bestowed on very few of us". The police rank and file lack transport facilities in a country where the public transportation infrastructure is poor to non-existent. Even in the federal capital, Islamabad, constables are often seen trying to hitchhike to their stations or other areas of duty. Housing facilities for the lower ranks and their families are virtually non-existent, and their meagre salaries rule out renting reasonable accommodation. "I have six kids, a wife and a mother to take care of, and I have to do all that on Rs 8,000 [around \$130] a month", said a constable, who finds policing to be "the most thankless job in the country". (pp.13-14)

Police circles are also critical of the separation of operational duties from investigation. Prior to the Police Order, the station house officer (SHO), who has the rank of inspector and presides over all activities within a police station, was in charge of both functions. To register a case, a complainant would request the SHO to file a "first information report" (FIR). The inspector and his team would then investigate on the basis of the information contained in the FIR. The SHO's powers with regard to investigation have now been transferred to a separate investigations wing, headed at the level of the police station by an inspector. The wing has its own hierarchy in every province, with an additional inspector general at its apex.

Many officers believe this separation of operational and investigation duties is ill advised. It is even more difficult for the public to have cases registered and to keep track of investigations. A complainant must now have a case registered by the SHO and then have it investigated by the investigations wing. "It is often the case that while the SHO is based in the police station, the investigations wing might be at a different location, and complainants have to move from one place to another, usually at considerable personal inconvenience", said an inspector in Lahore. "And even if the station house officer and the investigations wing are in the same police station, a complainant must deal with more officials than before, leading to increased visits to the station, more delays and blockages and greater extortion of bribes by a larger pool of officials" (p.11) (International Crisis Group 2008, *Reforming Pakistan's Police*, Crisis Group Asia Report No.157, 14 July – Attachment 8).

Research Response PAK31335, of 26 February 2007, quotes three reports on the professionalism and effectiveness of the police in Punjab, summaries of which follow below (RRT Country Research 2007, *Research Response PAK31335*, 26 February – Attachment 9).

In January 2007, *Associated Press of Pakistan* reported that the chief minister of Punjab complained of the failures of the police even given substantial budget increases. He declared that the police were "not coming up to the expectations of the government and the masses with regard to its efficiency" and warned the police that "it should utilize all its professional abilities and display a sense of responsibility for improving law and order to a satisfactory level". In December 2006, *The Daily Times* reported that the chief justice of the Supreme Court had indicated that Punjab police "were not implementing 90 percent of the Supreme Court's orders" in relation to gangsters in Punjab, and that police "seem to be silent spectators despite possessing all resources and privileges to counter crime". He also indicated

“that foul play in police ranks was of such a nature that Lahore police were reportedly even divided on the registration of an FIR [First Information Report]” (‘Police not coming up to govt’s expectations: Pervaiz’ 2007, *Associated Press of Pakistan*, 18 January http://www.app.com.pk/en/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2233&Itemid=2 – Accessed 23 February 2007 – Attachment 10; ‘Punjab police not implementing 90pc of SC orders’ 2006, *The Daily Times*, 22 December http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2006%5C12%5C22%5Cstory_22-12-2006_pg7_1 – Accessed 23 February 2007 – Attachment 11).

In December 2005, the Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives in Pakistan responded to half-page advertisements by the Punjab government on improved police performance by stating that:

Have the common people begun to feel the positive impact of the “revolutionary change” that the Punjab Government is talking about?

The crime data collected by CPDI-Pakistan about Lahore alone, which is the seat of the Punjab Government, does not indicate any reduction in the incidence of crime. Nor has the attitude of the police towards common people improved in terms of addressing their frequent complaints. In fact, there are a large number of failures that the Punjab Government has chosen to hide in its publicity campaign.

Most crucial failure, which significantly explains why people have not seen any tangible improvement in police performance, is that the Punjab Government has miserably failed to implement the Police Order 2002. It may be noted that the Police Order 2002 aims to establish a politically neutral professional police service by establishing public oversight institutions and putting in place checks and balances that guarantee operational autonomy to the police (‘Revolutionary Change in Police Culture: CPDI-Pakistan Exposes the Facts Hidden by the Punjab Government’ 2005, Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives Pakistan website, 19 May <http://www.cpd-pakistan.org/19may.htm> – Accessed 23 February 2007 – Attachment 12).

NGO reports

In Transparency International Pakistan’s 2009 survey of corruption, 35.3% of respondents to the survey stated that the police were the most corrupt sector in Pakistan, down from 64% in the 2006 survey. Nearly 27% of respondents had had dealings with the police during the year prior to the survey, and over 90% of households who had contact with the police reported corruption in their dealings with them. Among the leading reasons for bribes being paid were the lodging of a First Information Report, to avoid false arrest, to be released from a false arrest, and to have someone accused of a crime arrested. The survey states:

The Survey conducted in 2002, 2006 & 2009, indicates Police as the top most corrupt department. In spite of various measures taken from time to time & the highly published slogan “Police ka hai kaam madad aap ki” the image has not improved. Out of the ten public sectors departments, the reality is that the visibility of the Police is much more & frequency of public dealing is highest as compared to other nine. The department needs revamping & drastic measures for improvement (Transparency International Pakistan 2009, *National Corruption Perception Survey*, TI Pakistan website, 17 June <http://www.transparency.org.pk/documents/NCPS%202009/NCPS%202009%20%20Report.pdf> – Accessed 26 August 2009 – Attachment 13).

The abovementioned July 2008 report from the ICG, titled *Reforming Pakistan's Police*, claims that "Pakistan's police force is incapable of combating crime, upholding the law or protecting citizens and the state against militant violence". The report states that Pakistan's police have "a well-deserved reputation for corruption, high-handedness and abuse of human rights". The report also states that: "In 2006, the Punjab government's 'Anti-Corruption Establishment' report warned that police corruption was 'very high', ranging from bribes to registering false cases and dropping charges against criminals. This warning, however, was not accompanied by remedial action" (International Crisis Group 2008, *Reforming Pakistan's Police*, Asia Report N° 157, 14 July – Attachment 8)

An International Crisis Group report from April 2005 provides information on the police response to Islamist threats in Pakistan, and on the infiltration of the Pakistani police by Islamist groups:

The police, too, have proved ineffective, and their inaction is not for lack of information. In the Punjab, for instance, the police maintain updated lists of Shia and Sunni sectarian activists, most of whom have criminal records. Yet law enforcement agencies mainly keep watch on these terrorists, pursuing cases usually only after a high profile terrorist attack forces them to act.

This passivity can be partly attributed to fear of sectarian retaliation. Terrorists have killed many police officers investigating sectarian killings in Punjab and Karachi. In 2002 police inspector Mohammad Jamil of Jhang's elite police force was killed after arresting several LJ activists. In July 2004, a Rawalpindi police inspector was assassinated on his way to court to give evidence in the hearing on an anti-Shia sectarian attack.

...Weak prosecution cases filed by the police often fail to hold in court. This inability of the police to curb sectarian terror effectively underscores the need for urgent measures to enhance the force's organisational, technical and human capacities. As a starting point, the police should be free of political interference and organised and trained along modern professional lines. An officer says, "What we need are more resources, better training and modernisation".

The penetration of the law enforcement agencies by terrorist organisations is particularly troubling. The terrorist responsible for the attack on the Shia Hyderi Masjid in Karachi in May 2004 that killed eighteen turned out to be a police constable who was a member of the banned Sipah Sahaba. At least two policemen are said to have been among the terrorists responsible for the attack on a Shia procession in Quetta in March 2004, which killed 45. An al Qaeda suspect was detected among the bodyguards of the Punjab chief minister and removed from duty. He, too, was a member of the Sipah Sahaba. Investigation into these cases has resulted in a verification process of low-ranking police personnel by intelligence agencies but this is as yet restricted to Punjab.

...Religious parties frequently use their political clout and official contacts to influence the outcome of sectarian cases. "Why is it that when a high-profile arrest is made, the police spell a detailed indictment to the press but end up filing a toothless challan (prosecution case) in the court?" asks a news magazine after scores of arrest in terrorism cases in Karachi in 2004 produced few indictments and convictions.

Police crackdowns on sectarian terrorists are also ineffective because often action cannot be taken against suspects with links to the mainstream religious parties. On many occasions, law-enforcement agencies have been unable to act against MMA activists, even when terror suspects have been detained at the homes and offices of JUI and JI members.

Security agencies have raided sectarian seminaries only to have the government back down under pressure from an MMA component and protests by the religious right. In August 2004, the police raided a mosque and madrasa in Islamabad to arrest the prayer leader and his brother for their involvement in terrorist activities, including collaboration with al Qaeda. The two brothers were not only released and charges dropped, but they also retained their government jobs, despite a long-standing history of inciting sectarianism (23-24) (International Crisis Group 2005, *The State of Sectarianism in Pakistan*, Asia Report No. 95, 18 April http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/asia/south_asia/095_the_state_of_sectarianism_in_pakistan.pdf – Accessed 27 August 2009 – Attachment 14).

A July 2008 report written by Shaun Gregory, a Professor of International Security in the Department of Peace Studies at the University of Bradford, addresses the institutional nature of violence against Christians in Pakistan, and the political, legal and societal fabric underpinning such violence:

Two acts of violence briefly brought international attention to the plight of Christian communities in Pakistan in the aftermath of 9/11. In the first of these 16 Christians were shot and killed, including six children, and two wounded by gunmen during worship at St Dominic's church in the eastern town of Bahawalpur on 28th October 2001; in the second a grenade attack on a Protestant church in Islamabad killed five, including a U.S. Embassy employee and her 17-year-old daughter on 20 March 2002. As one of America's key allies in the international war on terrorism, Pakistan's military government was embarrassed by these attacks, but sought to dismiss them as the actions of fanatics whom the state had quickly rounded up and imprisoned. The Pakistan government pointed to the presence of many Christians amongst Pakistan's ruling elite and in the higher ranks of its armed forces as evidence of official faith-tolerance.

In fact the attacks were but the tip of an iceberg, momentarily visible expressions of the widespread and systematic violence, intimidation and persecution of Christians in Pakistan. The UN's Commission for Human Rights and Amnesty International figures for 2000-2007 suggest that between 30 and 50 Christians are subjected, for reasons of faith, to violent death in Pakistan each year and two to three times that number suffer serious injury. Beyond that many hundreds are falsely imprisoned, and many thousands are subject to serious physical abuse, intimidation and threat at the hands both of some of the majority Muslim communities and at the hands of elements of the state and local authorities.

These figures are the more serious because of the relatively small size of the Christian communities in Pakistan whose numbers in total have officially been estimated to be around 2-3 % of the population of Pakistan, in other words a community approximately 4-6 million in size, split approximately 50-50 between Protestants and Catholics. However many Christian sources within and outside Pakistan estimate the Christian community in Pakistan to be at least twice that. Approximately 80% of Christians live in the Punjab, with around 14% in Sindh, 4% in the NWFP, and 2% in Balochistan.

...The cumulative evidence is instructive because it shows that violence against Christians is widespread across the whole of Pakistan, from Muree in the North to Karachi in the South and from Lahore in the East to Peshawar in the West. It shows that violence is rural and urban, including in the capital; and that it involves ad hoc apparently spontaneous acts of violence, as well as organised violence and violence in which government authorities, local and national, collude either directly or by omission. It evidences a complex and multi-dimensional pattern of persecution, intimidation and lack of protection. It further shows patterns of retaliatory violence in which Christian communities bear the brunt of Muslim frustrations with Western policy or with events that take place in the West which are seen to be anti-Islamic, such as the publication of the Danish cartoons. Pakistan's Christians thus

stand as a cipher for the West in the eyes of some Muslims in Pakistan and pay the high price of that perception.

The explanation for all this violence and intimidation cannot consequently be found wholly in narrow regional, sectarian or community disputes nor in personal rivalries, even if these might be contributory or conditioning factors. Rather it must lie in significant measure in systemic and persistent factors which operate across Pakistan. The argument which will be made here is that Christians in Pakistan are caught in a context of violence and threat, the fabric of which is woven from the warp of what the Qur'an, Hadith and subsequent Islamic writing and practice have had to say about Muslim relations with Christians, and the weft of Pakistan's particular politics, law and society.

...While in theory there is little restriction on the freedom of Christians to practice their religion [except in relation to evangelism and proselytisation for conversion of Muslims which could be suicidal] this is not the case in practice. Many Christian churches from the colonial era remain locked up and inaccessible to Christians, many churches over the years have been burned down or demolished, and Christians find the path to the maintenance or construction of Churches often blocked by severe bureaucratic and local authority delays, corruption, and opposition – often violent – from local Muslims.

...In 2002 the Pakistani Christian NGO CLAAS, summed up the overall situation of Christians in Pakistan in this way:

“Christians in Pakistan are living under constant fear, uncertainty and with a great pain of marginalisation in their own land. They are being persecuted and discriminated against constitutionally, socially, culturally, and economically ... Constitutional and legal issues [are] linked to the negative attitudes of government, police, judiciary, and [the] local majority of Muslims towards Christians and other minority groups. Such groups are seen as inconvenient to Islamic rule rather than as full citizens offering enhancement of public life. Police and local Muslims are torturing Christians; false cases are made against Christians under discriminatory laws. Churches are being desecrated and land is being taken from Christians who are then driven into forced labour. Christian women and children are being abducted, raped and forcibly converted to Islam and minors are sent to Kashmir for jihad”.

...The rolling out of laws and constitutional amendments through the 1980s and 1990s which have moved Pakistan away from its founding secular pluralist vision, and which have gradually crushed the Christian and other minorities in Pakistan, are witness to the Islamisation of the nation. Equally the failure of intended reforms during the Musharraf era, despite some modest progress, is further evidence of the strength of Islamist groups in the country and of the growing Islamic conservatism of Pakistanis. Thus the Christian experience in Pakistan, and that of other minorities – including Hindus, Ahmadis, and the tiny number of Jews in Karachi – serves as a barometer of Pakistan's claims to modernity and pluralism (Gregory, S. 2008, 'The Christian Minority in Pakistan: Issues and Options', Pakistan Security Research Unit (PSRU), University of Bradford, 17 July <http://spaces.brad.ac.uk:8080/report/attachments/748/brief+37.pdf> – Accessed 13 August 2009 – Attachment 28)

The most recent research response to address the situation for Christians in Pakistan is provided as Attachment 29 (MRT Research & Information 2009, *Research Response PAK35299*, 13 August – Attachment 29).

Also of interest may be an older Immigration & Refugee Board of Canada report, which provides useful background information on Christians in Pakistan, and on the police response to acts of violence against Christians (Immigration & Refugee Board of Canada 2004, *PAK42533.E – Pakistan: The situation of Christians, including their treatment by Muslims; the police response to acts of violence against Christians; the location of acts of violence against Christians (January 2002-March 2004)*, 14 April – Attachment 33).

3. How long does it take to obtain a passport in Rawalpindi?

Information provided on the website of the Pakistan Directorate General of Immigration & Passports states that an applicant for a passport must visit their Regional Passport Office, and provide biometric data and have their photograph taken, as well as providing the necessary personal information. After the successful completion of this process, the passport is issued in 12 days in the case of a “normal” issue, or 5 days in the case of an “urgent” issue (‘Process Flow at the Regional Passport Offices’ (undated), Government of Pakistan Directorate General of Immigration & Passports website <http://www.dgip.gov.pk/Files/Process.doc> – Accessed 26 August 2009 – Attachment 15).

The documents required for a person over the age of 18 to obtain an ‘ordinary passport’ are set out on the same website; these are listed as:

Original Computerised National Identity Card (CNIC) issued by NADRA with its 2-photocopies.

OLD Passport with its photocopy, if issued.

NOC in case of a Government Servant.

Foreign Passport along with its photocopy, for Dual-Nationality holders only (‘Ordinary passport’ (undated), Government of Pakistan Directorate General of Immigration & Passports website <http://www.dgip.gov.pk/Files/Ordinary%20Passport.html> – Accessed 27 August 2009 – Attachment 16).

4. Please provide details of an attack on a church at Bahawalpur in October 2001.

A detailed description of the attack on the church in Bahawalpur on 28 October 2001 is provided in a statement by the National Commission for Justice and Peace, Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Pakistan, located on the Human Rights Solidarity website:

It has been the practice for the last 20 years that the Catholic and Protestant communities of Bahawalpur offer their Sunday morning prayers one after the other at St. Dominic’s Catholic Church in Bahawalpur. Sunday Oct. 28, 2001, was like any other Sunday as about 50 people of the Protestant community gathered at 8:00 a.m. in the church to offer their prayers. At about 8:55 a.m., when the Rev. Emmanuel Masih was leaving the altar after saying his last words and the congregation was singing the last hymn, three men armed with rifles entered the church hall very quietly and locked the door. Two of them stayed outside the church. They first murdered the pastor and then sprayed bullets over the worshipers. They completed this premeditated slaughter in two to three minutes and fled away with their other two accomplices on motorcycles. Before entering the church, they had already killed a Muslim policeman on the lawn of the church, Constable Mohammed Saleem.

According to witnesses, the killers were young men about 20 to 25 years old. The tragedy primarily devastated a single family as 13 out of the 16 people killed belonged to the same family. One of the victims was only 2 years old.

Church sources said that some unknown people were found inquiring about the prayer times a week before the attack. An application for protection of the church was submitted to the police, but the police failed to provide protection to the Christian community. According to press reports, the police have arrested three members of Jash-e-Muhammad and five from Harkat-ul-Mujahidine, two fundamentalist Islamic organisations.

The authorities have strongly condemned the incident and have given orders for a quick investigation and the arrest of the attackers. They also have promised the Christian community that the murderers will be brought to justice.

During the funeral on Oct. 29, the community of Bahawalpur expressed its solidarity with the victims as all shutters in the city were closed. In addition, Nazim District announced a local holiday in order to avoid any hindrance to the funeral ceremony.

According to local newspapers, about 5,000 people from all walks of life and religions participated in the funeral to pay homage to those who had been murdered in the church. Muslim and Christian men and women stood on both sides of the roads leading to the graveyard from the church. Three bishops and leading local Muslim religious leaders were also present at the funeral.

The reaction of the Christian community was naturally one of shock to this unprecedented tragedy in which such a massive number of Christians were slain in a terrorist act. They were also in a state of confusion about how to react.

Meanwhile, the Muslim community expressed tremendous solidarity with the Christians as the whole city was in a complete state of shock. The city observed a complete cessation of activity, and Muslims from all walks of life gathered to console the Christian community. Moreover, this brutal and inhuman act was condemned by almost everyone. Government officials, prominent politicians, religious leaders, all reacted to this act which was supposed to be an effort to cause disintegration among the people of Pakistan.

Similarly, the authorities reacted at once, condemning this brutal act and promising to bring those responsible to justice. President Pervez Musharraf vowed to track down the assassins and bring them to justice. The newly appointed governor of Punjab, Gen. (R) Khalid Maqbool, also visited the church in Bahawalpur right after taking his oath of office. He also strongly condemned this act of terror and ordered that the investigation be completed as soon as possible and that the criminals be arrested.

The involvement of an external hand to terrorise and disintegrate the cohesion of the people of Pakistan was suspected by the people and the government, but no one looked at the tragedy as a reaction to the U.S. attacks on Afghanistan. Some people also believed that the involvement of some extremist group could not be denied as it has been a practice in the past to victimise Christians. All citizens belonging to different religions felt very strongly the need for mutual harmony and solidarity among themselves (National Commission for Justice and Peace, Catholic Bishops' Conference of Pakistan 2002, 'Pakistan: Christians Massacred in Bahawalpur', Human Rights Solidarity website, 25 January <http://www.hrsolidarity.net/mainfile.php/2002vol12no01/2182/> – Accessed 27 August 2009 – Attachment 17).

A November 2001 article in the Egyptian *Al-Ahram Weekly Online* magazine provides background on the position of Christians in Pakistan, and information on the arrest of members of unspecified Islamist groups after the Bahawalpur church shootings:

Christians form about one per cent of Pakistan's population of 140 million. Many are concentrated in the country's largest province, the Punjab. While some enjoy wealth and good positions, in general, Christians form the poorest class in Pakistani society. They are typically employed as rubbish collectors, street sweepers and sanitary workers. Ordinary Pakistani Muslims look down on them and their limited socio-economic opportunities make them vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. In many cases, the discrimination against Pakistani Christians is comparable to that suffered by the untouchables in India. Many Muslims will not, for example, let Christians share their eating and drinking utensils and they regard many of the jobs performed by Christians as unclean.

More serious is the way in which Christians are targeted through abuse of the blasphemy laws. Pakistan has some of the strictest blasphemy laws in the Muslim world. Charges of blasphemy can be made on the flimsiest of evidence – even one man's word against another. The ease with which blasphemy charges can be made to stick has led to a spate of accusations against Christians. Often these are malicious complaints, with the real motive being personal enmity, land disputes and the like.

But violence against Christians has, for the most part, not been a big problem in Pakistan. Rioting that broke out in south Punjab among Muslims in 1997 led to a rampage that attacked Christian homes, churches and schools – again, the result of anger over blasphemy accusations against some Christians – but there were no killings. Sunday's massacre thus marks a huge escalation in the violence against Pakistani Christians. Archbishop Carey's reference to Afghanistan in his condolence message, along with reports by witnesses that the gunmen shouted "Graveyard of Christians – Pakistan and Afghanistan," give a good indication of what prompted the escalation.

Tension in Pakistan has been high since the 11 September attacks in America, and even more since the US military campaign against Afghanistan started on 7 October. Few in Pakistan support the campaign, but most accept that their government had no choice but to cooperate in it. The religious parties and their supporters, however, have strongly condemned both the US and President Musharraf's government, and are now openly calling for its violent overthrow. Most of their protests have been directed against the government, but there have been fears that resentment could be vented out against foreigners and Christians.

Most foreigners have long since left the country, or are safe in the heavily protected capital Islamabad. Christians, though, have no such protection. Even before the Bahawalpur killings, many were complaining of harassment and said they felt vulnerable. An employee with an international organisation in Islamabad said her family felt so scared in their Muslim-majority neighbourhood that they moved to a Christian one. She said local religious leaders would point to them and say, "They're the ones – they are responsible," referring to the killings of Muslims in Afghanistan.

According to local newspaper reports, the intelligence agencies had warned the government that Christians could be attacked. Some measures had already been taken to tighten security around Christian targets. There was one police constable outside Saint Dominic's Church on Sunday. He was killed first. But the fact that three others who should have been on duty with him were away "having breakfast" indicates that orders to tighten security were not always followed through.

The massacre in Bahawalpur thus appears to have been the work of people angry about the US campaign against Afghanistan. President Musharraf said the attack bore all the hallmarks of a trained terrorist organisation. In the days after it, police rounded up activists belonging to a number of militant Islamist organisations for questioning. A week later it was announced that those responsible for the attacks had been arrested – again, members of an extremist religious group. Whether this is true or a case of police scapegoating remains to be seen.

...The only consolation for the government is that – unlike with previous Shi'a or Sunni killings – this latest attack is unlikely to lead to a tit-for-tat cycle of revenge attacks. Appeals by Christian leaders for restraint will be heeded. That is not because there is no anger among the Christian community, but because the community is simply too small and vulnerable to go on the offensive. Needless to say, their sense of vulnerability has increased manifold since the killings in Bahawalpur (Malek, I. 2001, 'Caught in a cruel crossfire', *Al-Ahram Weekly Online*, Issue No. 559, 8-14 November <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2001/559/5war1.htm> – Accessed 27 August 2009 – Attachment 18).

An August 2002 report from *America* magazine, which has the subtitle "The National Catholic Weekly", reports on Christian-Muslim relations in Pakistan and the position of Christians in the country:

On a beautiful Sunday morning, March 17, I was in the Punjabi city of Lahore, attending a church service – the same morning that at another Christian service, in Islamabad, worshippers were subjected to a terrorist assault. But at the church I attended, some 150 miles south of Islamabad, all was quiet. I took part in an Anglican service at the Cathedral of the Resurrection. None of us knew what was about to happen in Islamabad.

...The next day's news headlines were a jarring wake-up to present-day realities. A grenade attack on Islamabad's Protestant International Church – five persons killed, among them a Pakistani as well as an American woman and her daughter. The assault was not the first in Pakistan on a Christian place of worship. Last Oct. 28, three weeks after the United States began bombing Taliban and al-Qaeda targets in Afghanistan, an attack on a church in Bahawalpur left 15 Pakistani Christians dead, together with a Muslim policeman who tried to guard them.

In the weeks after the Islamabad attack, I talked to many Pakistani Christians – Catholics, Protestants and Anglicans – in private homes and at dinners and church socials. Several discerned what they described as a larger pattern of violence directed not only at Christians, but at other religious minorities throughout the country.

...Among the Pakistani Christians and Shias with whom I spoke, there is a shared perception that violence against minorities in recent months has worsened in response to the success of the U.S.-led coalition in Afghanistan. As the Western-backed government of Hamid Karzai has struggled to achieve a measure of stability for Afghanistan, hundreds of Taliban militants, many of them Pakistani nationals, have fled across the border to their homes in Pakistan. In the days when they still held power in Kabul, the Taliban, whose ideology derives from the most conservative and stringent forms of Sunnism, had imprisoned Christian missionaries and persecuted Afghan Shias. Now that they are back in Pakistan, as one Christian from Lahore told me, "the defeated jihadis seem to be picking easy targets" as a way of venting rage – rage at the West in general, at the United States in particular, and at President Musharraf personally, for siding with America against the Taliban and al-Qaeda.

Pakistan's Christians constitute an especially vulnerable target. In such a country, which was founded as a homeland for the subcontinent's Muslims, where over 97 percent of the population is Islamic, to be Christian is to be susceptible to the charge that one's patriotism and national loyalty are somehow deficient. The charge is unfair – Pakistan's Christians have contributed to society at large in many ways, most notably in education, medicine and health care – but Muslim suspicions linger.

...Additionally, Christians in Pakistan are forbidden to proselytize. Parish workers told me of one form of entrapment they have learned to watch out for. Young Muslim zealots come by the church feigning interest in becoming Christian, testing to see whether a priest or minister can be tempted into breaking the law. Even before Zia's time and the institution of the blasphemy laws, a stigma clung to Christians. In one town in the Punjab (I leave the town unnamed in deference to my informant's wishes), I met an elderly gentleman who told me he had become Christian in the early 1960's. When his neighbours heard of his conversion, they shunned him. As word spread, shopkeepers refused him business. Neighbourhood boys harassed his daughters by calling out "sweepers!" whenever the girls ventured onto the street.

The insult is telling. Muslims I asked about this account said simply that many Christians are poor and therefore take menial jobs like sweeping floors. But a Christian from Lahore offered another perspective. Numerous Muslims in the subcontinent, he reminded me, are descended from impoverished lower-class Hindus who converted to Islam to escape the confinement of Hinduism's caste system. Muslims are justifiably proud of Islam's insistence on the absolute equality of all humans before God. But the past has a way of asserting itself, and caste, my informant suggested, has not altogether gone away in Muslim Pakistan. "Being Christian in a Muslim country like ours," he said, "generally means being at the bottom of the heap. In the eyes of some in my country, to be a Christian is to be a sweeper, that is, low-caste" (Pinault, D. 2002, 'Pakistan's Christians Face Sectarian Violence', *America*, 12 August http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article_id=2432 – Accessed 27 August 2009 – Attachment 19).

A March 2002 article from the *Los Angeles Times* reports on another attack on a Christian church, this time in Islamabad, and quotes Pakistan's Communications Minister as claiming that the "Sunni militant organisation Lashkar-e-Jhangvi" was suspected of this attack. The report also states that "Lashkar-e-Jhangvi has been linked by witnesses to the Oct. 28 attack at a Christian service in Bahawalpur":

Pakistani authorities Monday were investigating possible links between an attack on a Christian church here the day before and a deadly assault in October on another Christian congregation in nearby Punjab province.

In both cases, the suspected targets of the attacks were Americans. The group under investigation is a banned Sunni Muslim militant organisation with strong links to the former Taliban regime in Afghanistan.

...According to Pakistani Communications Minister Javed Ashraf Qazi, a former military intelligence chief, at the top of the list of terrorist organisations suspected in the Sunday attack is the Sunni militant organisation Lashkar-e-Jhangvi.

Banned in August by President Pervez Musharraf because of a series of violent attacks on the country's minority Shiite Muslim community, the heavily armed Lashkar-e-Jhangvi has been linked by witnesses to the Oct. 28 attack at a Christian service in Bahawalpur, in Punjab province.

In that incident, attackers sprayed the congregation with fire from Kalashnikov assault rifles, killing 15 worshipers and a policeman before escaping on motorcycles. Although all of the victims in the Bahawalpur attack were Pakistani Christians, authorities believe the primary targets were two American missionaries who had been expected to attend the service (Tempest, R. 2002, 'Church Attack May Have Targeted Americans', *Los Angeles Times*, 19 March <http://articles.latimes.com/2002/mar/19/news/mn-33550> – Accessed 27 August 2009 – Attachment 20).

A May 2002 opinion piece on the *Chowk* website provides further background on Islamist groups in Pakistan, claiming that: "A hitherto unknown group calling it self 'Sipah-e-Umar' (Omar's Army) claimed responsibility [for the Bahawalpur attack] in faxes on printed letterheads to newspaper offices":

The arrests of religious extremists since 9/11 have proved to be largely tokenism and face-saving. In most cases, there have been no formal charges, and recently, many of those arrested (including those wrongly arrested) were allowed to go free after signing affidavits about never indulging in violence again. But then, as PPP Central Information Secretary Taj Haider says, formal charges against those arrested would expose the Pakistan army's and the agencies' role in their affairs. Incredibly, a court even awarded a monthly maintenance (Rs 10,000) for the family of Maulana Azhar of the Jaish-e-Mohammad, while he is under preventive detention. Given that no such generosity has ever been forthcoming for the families of political detainees, and given the Jaish's claim for much of the violence not just in Pakistan but in the Kashmir Valley, what kind of message does this send to this, and other like-minded groups?

Militant outfits like the Jaish-e-Mohammad (Army of Mohammad), Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (the Guardians of the Friends of the Prophet) and its armed wing, the even more violent Lashkar-e-Jhangvi have been banned. But the ban means nothing when they are still effectively in operation all over the country, spearheading attacks on religious congregations, individual professionals (doctors, lawyers, religious scholars). Most of the individuals killed (over 80 doctors over the last ten years) have belonged to the Ahle-Tashih, but since 9/11 non-Muslims have also been considered fair game.

...The recent spate of violence sends a clear message about his lack of control over the law and order situation at home, even as he is lauded for his anti-terrorist stand abroad. Among the public, there is widespread fear and distrust of the religio-political groups, whose influence over government policies far exceeds their political support: besides being unable to make any significant electoral gains, they have not succeeded in communalizing the public the grassroots or community level. There also no popular support or public sanction for the violence that is committed in the name of religion. And yet no government has had the political will to call a spade a spade.

...An attack at a church congregation in Bahawalpur on October 28, 2001 by six unidentified gunmen killed 18 people and injured 20 others. A hitherto unknown group calling it self 'Sipah-e-Umar' (Omar's Army) claimed responsibility in faxes on printed letterheads to newspaper offices. The next major attack on a church was in the country's capital, Islamabad, in the heart of its secluded and well-guarded Diplomatic Enclave, on March 17, 2002. The attack killed five churchgoers, including two Americans, besides one of the suspected attackers (Sarwar, B. 2002, 'The Pattern of Violence', *Chowk*, 12 May <http://www.chowk.com/articles/print/5287> – Accessed 27 August 2009 – Attachment 21).

A July 2002 report from *Dawn* newspaper states that three members of "Lashkar-i-Umar" had been arrested for their involvement in the Bahawalpur church shootings; the report also states that Lashkar-i-Umar was established by former members of "the banned Lashkar-i-Jhangvi":

Three of the eight alleged members of a banned militant outfit involved in the Bahawalpur church firing incident have been arrested by the Vehari police.

This was claimed by Multan range DIG Iftikhar Ahmad Chaudhry at a press conference at the Vehari SP's office here on Tuesday.

...He said one Manzoor Husain alias Mumtaz was arrested from Mailsi. During investigation he gave the addresses of their hideouts. A raid was conducted on the information provided by him and his accomplices Ahsan Muaviya of Haroonabad and Talha alias Nadeem of Bahawalpur were arrested, he added.

DIG Chaudhry said their fourth accomplice, Kashif of Gujranwala, was already in police custody in connection with the murder of former minister Siddiq Kanju. Their accomplice Shakil Anwar had been killed in Bahawalpur in a police encounter. Three others, Suleman of Bahawalpur, Wasim of Layyah and Zafar Iqbal of Jhang, were still at large, he added.

...The DIG claimed that they belonged to the banned Lashkar-i-Jhangvi. Later, they established Lashkar-i-Umar after developing differences with Lashkar-i-Jhangvi chief Riaz Basra.

He said the accused opened fire on worshippers in church on October 28, 2001, and killed 16 of them, including Constable Aslam. After the incident, they faxed messages to newspapers' offices accepting the responsibility of killings.

...All the accused – Manzoor, Ahsan, Kashif and Talha – were also produced before newsmen. They confessed to their involvement in all the incidents, specially the church incident.

Accused Manzoor told Dawn that he and his accomplices got religious education from various seminaries of south Punjab. They joined Sipah-i-Sahaba in 1995 and played active role in enrolment and fund raising for this organisation.

He said later he joined the Lashkar-i-Jhangvi and got training in Jihadi camps in Afghanistan and also took part in the Afghan Jihad ('Three more accused arrested in Mailsi: Bahawalpur church massacre' 2002, *Dawn*, 24 July <http://www.dawn.com/2002/07/24/nat36.htm> – Accessed 27 August 2009 – Attachment 22).

A March 2003 statement from the NGO Pax Christi International claims that: "Seven persons were arrested in connection with the attack in Bahawalpur however, there was no court trail and the accused were killed in police encounters according to the Pakistan media (on March 11 and July 28, 2002)" (Pax Christi International 2003, 'Condemnation of Religion-based violence in Pakistan', United Nations Commission on Human Rights, 15 March <http://www.unhcr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/TestFrame/1a88c1c3c5b68506c1256cfb003fa-fed?Opendocument> – Accessed 10 September 2009 – Attachment 36).

5. Please provide information on the activities of the militant groups Lashkar e-Toiba and Lashkar e-Omer.

The South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP) website provides background information on Lashkar-e-Omar (LeO), claiming that the organisation was "group reportedly founded in January 2002 and is a conglomerate of Harkat-ul-Jihad-i-Islami (HuJI), Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) and Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) cadres". The SATP report notes that LeO "first came into prominence in November 2001 when it reportedly claimed responsibility for an attack on a church in Bahawalpur in Punjab", and claims that: "Their version of Islam is akin to that of

the Taliban militia of Afghanistan”. According to the SATP: “Most of the key members of the conglomerate are veterans of the 1980s jihad in Afghanistan against the erstwhile Soviet Union”:

Formation

Lashkar-e-Omar (LeO) is a new terrorist group reportedly founded in January 2002 and is a conglomerate of Harkat-ul-Jihad-i-Islami (HuJI), Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) and Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) cadres. It was formed after the arrests of several front-ranking Islamist leaders in Pakistan following President Pervez Musharraf’s address to the nation on January 12, 2002, in which he committed himself to dismantling the structures and networks of terrorism based in his country. The etymology of Lashkar-e-Omar is yet not clear. According to some reports, it is named after Mullah Mohammed Omar, chief of the Taliban militia. Other reports have indicated that the name is allegedly a direct homage to Syed Ahmed Omar Sheikh, a front-ranking JeM terrorist who was, on July 15, 2002, sentenced to life by an Anti-Terrorism Court in Hyderabad, Sindh, for his role in the abduction-cum-murder of US journalist Daniel Pearl.

The LeO first came into prominence in November 2001 when it reportedly claimed responsibility for an attack on a church in Bahawalpur in Punjab. A police personnel and 17 Christians, including five children, were killed and nine others injured when six unidentified gunmen opened indiscriminate fire at a church in Model Town, Bahawalpur, on October 28, 2001.

Ideology

Their version of Islam is akin to that of the Taliban militia of Afghanistan. The LeO’s ideological underpinning is a mixture of Islamist fundamentalism and totalitarian thinking.

Leadership and Structure

The LeO, according to media reports, was formed as a loose coalition of terrorists. While the group provides new cover for terrorist actions of LeJ, JeM and HuJI, it also includes several like-minded ‘freelancers’. Omar Sheikh, currently in prison, and Amjad Hussain Faruqi of the HuJI, a fugitive accused in the Daniel Pearl case, are both closely linked to the LeO. They and their terrorist colleagues were associated with the various training camps in Afghanistan when the Taliban was in power there. Omar Sheikh was reportedly one of the instructors at one such camp. LeO cadres comprise of various Taliban members, certain Al Qaeda terrorists and terrorists from the HuJI, LeJ and JeM. Reports have indicated that Pakistani cadres of terrorist groups and Islamist parties allied with Osama bin Laden’s International Islamic Front (IIF), who managed to survive the US air strikes in Afghanistan and crossed over into Pakistan, are also part of the LeO. According to a May 2002-report, the LeO consists of handpicked cadres of the HuJI, JeM and LeJ and was formed primarily to carry out ‘punishment acts’ of terrorism against Americans on Pakistani soil.

The Lashkar-e-Omar is reportedly headed by Qari Abdul Hai alias Qari Asadullah alias Talha, chief of the LeJ’s Majlis-i-Shoora (Supreme Council). Qari Asadullah reportedly formed his faction of the LeJ after parting ways with LeJ founder Riaz Basra in October 2000. Basra and three of his associates were killed in an encounter in Mailsi, Multan on May 14, 2002. According to a June-2002 media report, since the LeJ was proscribed, Qari Asadullah decided on the name Lashkar-e-Omar and also succeeded in incorporating terrorist cadres from other proscribed groups like the JeM and LeT into the new group.

The LeO is stated to be patterned after bin Laden's IIF. Besides, cells of the group comprising 5-15 cadres also exist. Therefore, according to official sources, it has become difficult to infiltrate such a homogenous group of motivated cadres.

Most of the key members of the conglomerate are veterans of the 1980s jihad in Afghanistan against the erstwhile Soviet Union.

Operational Strategies and Linkages

Official sources have indicated that what makes Lashkar-e-Omar a serious threat is the fact that most of its cadres are members of the same class and camp trained by Amjad Faruqi. Faruqi, a HuJI terrorist, is wanted for his involvement in the murder of Pearl. LeO also has suicide cadres in its ranks. The LeO is allegedly involved in the suicide bombing outside the Sheraton Hotel in Karachi on May 8. In that incident, 14 persons, including 12 French nationals, were killed. Security agencies suspect that there exist more LeO fidayeen (suicide) squads and that these would target foreign nationals, particularly Americans and Britons residing in Pakistan.

The LeO has close linkages with the Al Qaeda and several terrorist groups active in the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir. Karachi based Al-Rashid Trust (ART) is reportedly funding the Lashkar-e-Omar. The ART is one of the 27 groups and organisations listed by US State Department on September 22, 2001 for involvement in financing and supporting a network of international Islamist terrorist groups,

Activities and Incidents

- The Lashkar-e-Omar is suspected to be involved in the terrorist attack on a church in Model Town, Bahawalpur in Punjab on October 28, 2002, in which a police personnel and 17 Christians, including five children, were killed and nine others injured.
- It is reportedly closely linked to the abduction-cum-murder case of US journalist Daniel Pearl and JeM terrorist Omar Sheikh has been sentenced to life for involvement in this case.
- The group, according to official sources, is allegedly involved in the March 17, 2002 grenade attack on a church in the heavily guarded diplomatic enclave in Islamabad in which five persons, including a US diplomat's wife and daughter, were killed and 41 others injured.
- Besides, the LeO was reportedly involved in the suicide bombing outside the Sheraton Hotel in Karachi on May 8, 2002 and the June 14-attack on the US consulate in Karachi, in which 10 persons, including five women, were killed and 51 others injured ('Lashkar e-Omar (The Army of Omar)' (undated), South Asia Terrorism Portal <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/pakistan/terroristoutfits/LeO.htm> – Accessed 27 August 2009 – Attachment 23).

According to information sourced from a background paper on the Council on Foreign Relations website: "One group calling itself al-Qanoon or Lashkar-e-Omar is thought to be a coalition of members of Jaish-e-Mohammed, Lashkar-e-Taiba, and other Pakistan-based Islamist groups, including the anti-Shia Lashkar-e-Jhangvi organisation" (Afridi, J. 2009, 'Kashmir Militant Extremists', Council on Foreign Relations website, 9 July <http://www.cfr.org/publication/9135/> – Accessed 27 August 2009 – Attachment 26).

A June 2002 article in the *Asia Times* claims that LeO is a "conglomerate" of "hardcore Islamist groups":

The terrorist conglomerate is the Lashkar-e-Omar – formed in January after the arrests of several prominent hardcore Islamist leaders. Most of the leaders – and militants – are now free. The name Lashkar-e-Omar is a direct homage to Ahmed Omar Sheikh – the former leader of Jaish-e-Mohammad, the group accused of kidnapping and murdering Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl.

Lashkar-e-Omar blends three main organizations: Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammad and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi. The first two – both in the US black book of terrorist organizations – are jihadi groups, deeply involved in Kashmir, while Lashkar-e-Jhangvi is an ultra-sectarian Sunni organization engaged in murderous attacks against Shi'ite groups. But now they are acting together as a “loose coalition of jihadis” according to an ISI operative. “And of course they have links with al-Qaeda. But there is no substantial proof that the end of Indian rule in Kashmir is now part of al-Qaeda’s agenda. Musharraf is al-Qaeda’s enemy, not India.”

Most of the key members of the conglomerate are veterans of the 1980s jihad in Afghanistan against the Soviets, or were at least trained in Afghan camps. Their version of Islam is as hardcore as the Taliban’s. And their track record already boasts – according to Pakistani investigators – the kidnapping and murder of Daniel Pearl; the suicide bombing in Karachi in May that killed 12 French engineers; and last week’s attack against the US consulate in Karachi that claimed more than a dozen lives (Escobar, P. 2002, ‘Al-Qaeda: At home in Pakistan’, *Asia Times*, 21 June <http://www.atimes.com/ind-pak/DF21Df04.html> – Accessed 9 September 2009 – Attachment 34).

The South Asia Terrorism Portal website provides background information on Lashkar e-Jhangvi (LeJ), and does not link the organisation with the Bahawalpur church shootings. According to the SATP, it is “a Sunni-Deobandi terrorist outfit was formed in 1996” with the aim to “transform Pakistan into a Sunni state, primarily through violent means”. This report further states that LeJ “cadres are either under arrest in Pakistan or were based in the various training camps in Afghanistan, from where they regularly came to Pakistan to carry out terrorist activities”; and that LeJ has “very close links with the Taliban militia” and “assisted the Taliban in every way they can both in Afghanistan and within Pakistan” (‘Lashkar e-Jhangvi’ (undated), South Asia Terrorism Portal <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/pakistan/terroristoutfits/LeJ.htm> – Accessed 27 August 2009 – Attachment 27).

The South Asia Terrorism Portal website also provides information on Lashkar e-Toiba, which has been banned in Pakistan since January 2002. According to SATP, “the outfit seeks to bring about a union of all Muslim majority regions in countries that surround Pakistan”:

Formation

Formed in 1990 in the Kunar province of Afghanistan, the Lashkar-e-Toiba (also known as Jama’at-ud-Da’awa) is based in Muridke near Lahore in Pakistan and is headed by Hafiz Muhammad Saeed.

Its first presence in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) was recorded in 1993 when 12 Pakistani and Afghan mercenaries infiltrated across the Line of Control (LoC) in tandem with the Islami Inquilabi Mahaz, a terrorist outfit then active in the Poonch district of J&K.

1. Proscription

The LeT is outlawed in India under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

It was included in the Terrorist Exclusion List by the US Government on December 5, 2001. The US administration designated the Lashkar-e-Toiba as a FTO (Foreign Terrorist Organization) on December 26, 2001. It is also a banned organisation in Britain since March 30, 2001.

The group was proscribed by the United Nations in May 2005.

The military regime of Gen. Pervez Musharraf banned the Lashkar-e-Toiba in Pakistan on January 12, 2002.

2. Objectives/Ideology

The LeT's professed ideology goes beyond merely challenging India's sovereignty over the State of Jammu and Kashmir. The Lashkar's 'agenda', as outlined in a pamphlet titled Why are we waging jihad includes the restoration of Islamic rule over all parts of India. Further, the outfit seeks to bring about a union of all Muslim majority regions in countries that surround Pakistan. Towards that end, it is active in J&K, Chechnya and other parts of Central Asia.

Hafiz Saeed, a scholar of Islam, has said that the purpose of Jihad is to carry out a sustained struggle for the dominance of Islam in the entire world and to eliminate the evil forces and the ignorant. He considers India, Israel and US to be his prime enemies and has threatened to launch Fidayeen (suicide squad) attacks on American interests too.

The Lashkar-e-Toiba does not believe in democracy and nationalism. According to its ideology, it is the duty of every 'Momin' to protect and defend the interests of Muslims all over the world where Muslims are under the rule of non-Muslim in the democratic system. It has, thus chosen the path of Jihad as the suited means to achieve its goal. Cadres are drawn from the Wahabi school of thought.

Jihad, Hafiz Saeed said during the All Pakistan Ulema Convention held on July 17, 2003, at Lahore, is the only way Pakistan can move towards dignity and prosperity.

The LeT has consistently advocated the use of force and vowed that it would plant the 'flag of Islam' in Washington, Tel Aviv and New Delhi.

...4. Area of Operation

While the primary area of operations of the Lashkar-e-Toiba is Jammu and Kashmir, the outfit has carried out attacks in other parts of India, including in New Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Varanasi, Kolkata, Gujarat, etc. It reportedly has cells in many cities/towns outside Jammu and Kashmir.

The LeT has been able to network with several Islamist extremist organisations across India, especially in J&K, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Gujarat. LeT is actively engaged in subversive activities in the States of Maharashtra, West Bengal, Bihar, Hyderabad, Delhi, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh at the instance of ISI to expand the frontier of violence outside J&K by subverting fringe elements. Of all the Pakistan-based terrorist groups, the LeT is the only group with support bases across India.

The Lashkar-e-Toiba has training camps spread across Pakistan and Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK). Its camps, recruitment centres/offices are spread across the length and breadth of Pakistan and PoK in Muzaffarabad, Lahore, Peshawar, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Karachi, Multan, Quetta, Gujranwala, Sialkot, Gilgit (in the Northern Area of PoK), etc. LeT reportedly has 2,200 offices across Pakistan.

The LeT allegedly carried out the terrorist attack at the Indian Institute of Science campus in Bangalore on December 28, 2005, in which one person was killed; Earlier, on October 29, 2005, it engineered the serial explosions in New Delhi killing at least 62 persons; It is also suspected to have carried out the Varanasi attack on March 7, 2006 in which 21 civilians died and 62 others were injured; Three suspected LeT terrorists were shot dead during an abortive attempt to storm the headquarters of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a right-wing Hindu organization, at Nagpur in Maharashtra on June 1, 2006; The LeT, according to Mumbai Police, carried out the 7/11 serial bombings in Mumbai in which at least 200 people were killed.

Arrests made during March-April 2004 near Baghdad brought to light links between the LeT and Islamist groups fighting the United States military in Iraq. In March – and possibly even earlier – United States forces detained Pakistani national Dilshad Ahmad and four others in Baghdad. Ahmad, a long-time Lashkar operative from the Bahawalpur area of the province of Punjab in Pakistan, had played a key role in the Lashkar's trans-Line of Control (LoC) operations, serving between 1997 and 2001 as the organisation's commander for the forward camps from where infiltrating groups of terrorists are launched into Jammu and Kashmir with Pakistani military support. Ahmad is believed to have made at least six secret visits to Lashkar groups operating in J&K during this period.

5. Training and Operational Strategies

... Compared to other terrorist outfits in J&K, the LeT has commanded significant attention primarily due to two reasons. First, for its well planned and executed attacks on security force (SF) targets and secondly, for the massacres of non-Muslim civilians. After the Kargil war of May-July 1999, (when Pakistani troops and mercenaries, including those of the Lashkar, were forced to withdraw from peaks on the Indian side of the Line of Control – LoC), the outfit launched its Fidayeen strategy whereby small groups (2-5 members) of Lashkar cadres would storm a security force camp or base. In another frequently used strategy, groups of Lashkar cadres, dressed in SF fatigues, would arrive at remote hill villages, round up Hindu or Sikh civilians, and massacre them. These two strategies have been designed to achieve maximum publicity and extract public allegiance, mainly out of fear. On December 8, 2001, two LeT suicide squad cadres managed to penetrate inside a SF convoy and opened fire killing one soldier. They were able to generate adequate confusion to escape from the convoy after the attack but were later killed in an encounter with another SF unit ('Lashkar-e-Toiba, 'Army of the Pure'' (undated), South Asia Terrorism Portal http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/jandk/terrorist_outfits/lashkar_e_toiba.htm – Accessed 27 August 2009 – Attachment 24).

A March 2009 article on Islamist groups in Pakistan, sourced from *The News*, provides updated information on Lashkar e-Toiba, including claims that LeT members were involved in the November 2008 attack on Mumbai and the March 2009 attack on the Sri Lankan cricket team in Lahore:

Lashkar-i-Taiba (LeT) led by Prof Hafiz Mohammad Saeed

Literally meaning "Army of the Pure", the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), founded by Prof Hafiz Mohammad Saeed in 1991 at the Kunar province of Afghanistan, dreaded for its guerrilla attacks in Jammu and Kashmir and known for the infamous fidayeen attack on the Red Fort in New Delhi, has proved to be one of the most dangerous jihadi groups operating out of Pakistan and fighting the Indian security forces in Jammu and Kashmir.

The lethal Lashkar is an Ahle Hadith (Wahhabi) jihadi group which was born as an armed wing of Markaz Dawatul Irshad (MDI) or Centre for Proselytisation and Preaching. The MDI was set up in 1988 by three Islamic scholars -- Prof Hafiz Mohammad Saeed and Zafar Iqbal, who were professors of Islamic studies at the University of Engineering and Technology, Lahore, and Dr Abdullah Azzam, a professor of the International Islamic University, Islamabad. Dr Azzam was also the ideologue for the Palestinian militant group, Hamas, besides being the religio-political mentor of Al-Qa'idah chief Osama bin Laden.

The main purpose of the MDI was to promote the purification of the society, and to build a society on the teachings of Quran and Sunnah. Toward the end of the Afghan war, the MDI set up an armed wing called Lashkar-e-Taiba. With the launching of the Lashkar in 1991, several training camps were set up in the eastern Afghanistan provinces of Kantar and Paktia, both of which had a sizable number of Al Hadith (Wahabi) followers of Islam, with the aim of participating in the jihad against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan.

The participation of the cadres in Afghan jihad is believed to have helped its leadership gain the trust of the Pakistani intelligence establishment. Insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir beginning in 1989 is considered to have provided an active battleground for the LeT militants when its top brass was made to turn its attention from Afghanistan and devote itself to waging jihad in Jammu and Kashmir. The LeT soon shot to prominence for launching some deadly guerilla operations against the Indian security forces in the Kashmir Valley, especially the 2001 fidayeen attack on the Red Fort in New Delhi. However, Hafiz Saeed stepped down as the LeT chief in December 2001 and announced the launching of the Jamaatul Daawa (JuD). However, the US State Department which had actually designated the LeT a foreign terrorist organisation in 2002, describes the JuD as the 'front organisation' of the Lashkar.

The LeT was once again put in the spotlight after the bloody Mumbai attacks of Nov 26, 2008. Although the Lashkar-e-Taiba strongly refuted its involvement, the Indian authorities claimed that the lone terrorist captured alive (Ajmal Kasab) has confessed to being member of the LeT, belonging to the Faridkot village of Okara district in Punjab. After the UN banned the JuD as a terrorist group after the 26/11 tragedy, Pakistan subsequently conceded that Ajmal Kasab was its national. The ban was followed by the arrest of the Muzaffarabad-based chief operational commander of the LeT, Maulana Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi, being the mastermind of the Mumbai terror attacks.

The LeT was once again named in the March 3, 2009 attack on the Sri Lankan cricket team in Lahore that left eight people dead. The attack was described by international media as an attempt to hijack the bus carrying the visiting team to demand in return the release of Lakhvi who is presently detained at the Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi (Mir, A. 2009, 'Swelling force of extremism', *The Nation*, 22 March – Attachment 35).

A list of incidents involving Lashkar-e-Toiba, provided by the SATP, makes no reference to LeT involvement in the Bahawalpur church shootings ('Incidents involving Lashkar-e-Toiba' (undated), South Asia Terrorism Portal http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/jandk/terrorist_outfits/lashkar_e_toiba_lt.htm – Accessed 27 August 2009 – Attachment 25).

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