

5.7. Detention, including conditions and use of torture

The main laws regulating Pakistan’s prisons framework are the colonial-era Prisons Act, 1894, and Prisoners Act, 1900,1152 alongside the PPC and the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC).1153 To a certain extent, the Prisons Act and Prisoners Act have remained unaltered.1154 The Pakistan Prison Rules (PPR) of 1978, created as a core prison manual to implement these laws, defines duties and restrictions for prison officials1155 and procedures for prisoners’ admission, release, transfer, sentence reductions, while also ensuring that prisoners are provided with basic necessities like food and clothes.1156 At the same time, sources pointed to severe overcrowding in Pakistan’s prison system,1157 estimating the nationwide overcrowding rate in recent years at over 150 %.1158 According to the Prison Data Report 2024, prison conditions were further characterised by lack of hygiene, insufficient access to healthcare, nutritious food and clean water, as well as exploitative prison labour practices, limited contact with families and legal counsels, and lack of effective complaint mechanisms.1159 In Balochistan, courts have denied bail in a number of cases that involved allegations of terrorism, and Baloch activists were reported to have been kept in prison after the expiry of their pretrial detention.1160

Article 14(2) of the Constitution stipulates that ‘no person shall be subjected to torture for the purpose of extracting evidence’.1161 Meanwhile, the Global Torture Index 2025 of the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), based on data gathered in 2023 and 2024, assessed that there was a ‘high risk’ of torture and ill-treatment in Pakistan linked to what it described as ‘institutional reliance’ on forced confessions.1162 For information on reports of torture by members of the police, see section 3.1.7. Pakistani police.

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