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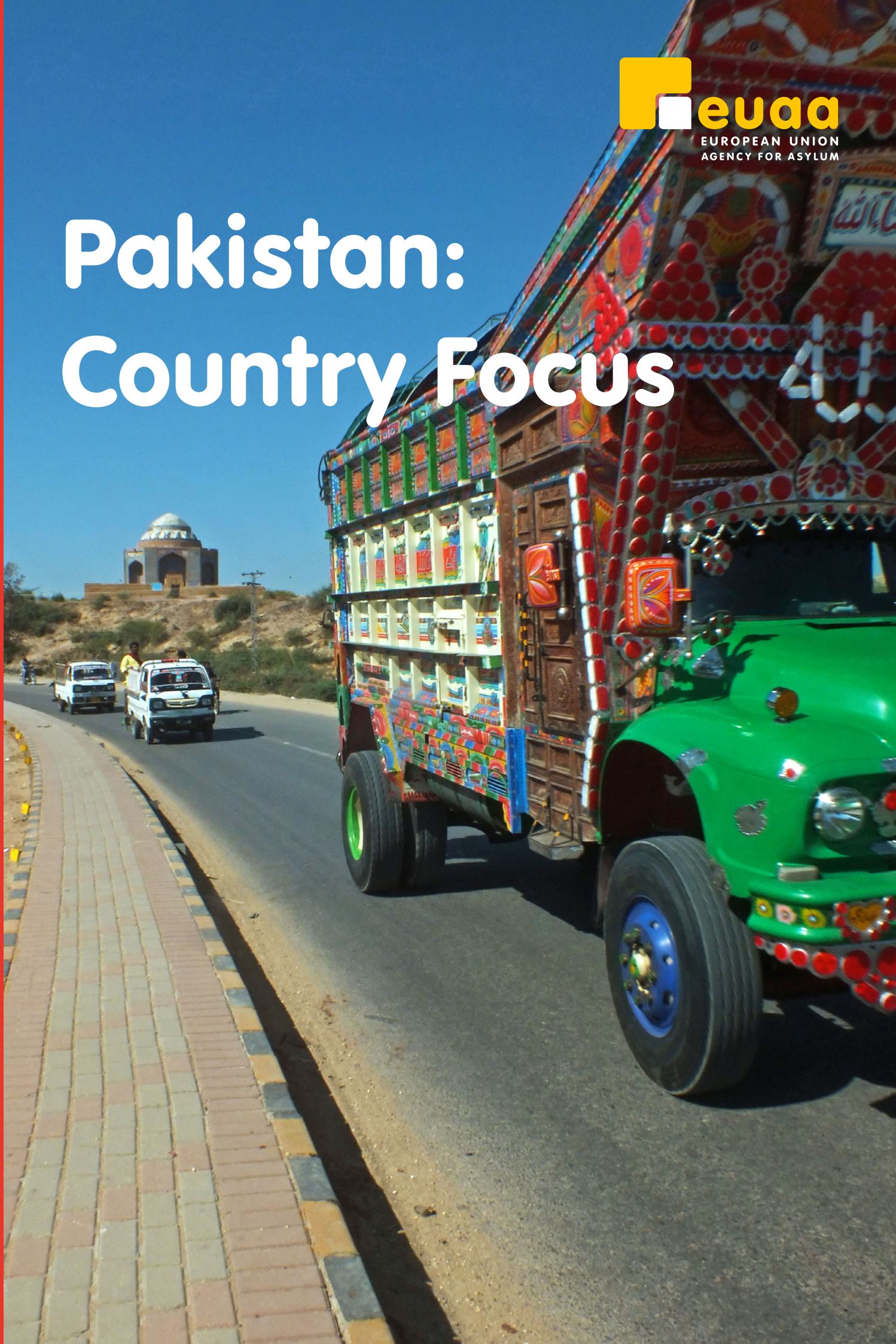

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The review carried out by the mentioned departments, experts or organisations contributes to the overall quality of the report but does not necessarily imply their formal endorsement of the final report, which is the full responsibility of the EUAA.

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Disclaimer

This report was written according to the EUAA COI Report Methodology (2023). It is based on carefully selected sources of information. All sources used are referenced.

The information contained in this report has been researched, evaluated and analysed with utmost care. However, this document does not claim to be exhaustive. If a particular event, person or organisation is not mentioned in the report, this does not mean that the event has not taken place or that the person or organisation does not exist.

Furthermore, this report is not conclusive as to the determination or merit of any particular application for international protection. Terminology used should not be regarded as indicative of a particular legal position.

'Refugee', 'risk' and similar terminology are used as generic terminology and not in the legal sense as applied in the EU Asylum Acquis, the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees.

Neither the EUAA, nor any person acting on its behalf, may be held responsible for the use which may be made of the information contained in this report.

On 19 January 2022, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) became the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA). All references to EASO, EASO products and bodies should be understood as references to the EUAA.

The drafting of this report was finalised on 24 April 2026. Any event taking place after this date is not included in this report. More information on the reference period for this report can be found in the methodology section of the Introduction.

Glossary and abbreviations

Term	Definition
ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
AJK	Azad Jammu and Kashmir
ALPS	Alert for Price Spikes
ANF	Anti-Narcotics Force
AQ	Al-Qaeda
AQIS	Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent
ASWJ	Ahle Sunnat wal Jamaat
ATA	Anti-Terrorism Act
ATCs	Anti-Terrorism Courts
BHUs	Basic Health Units
BISP	Benazir Income Support Programme
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
BLA	Balochistan Liberation Army
BLA-A	Balochistan Liberation Army Azad
BLA-J	Balochistan Liberation Army Jeeyand

Term	Definition
BLF	Balochistan Liberation Front
BNA	Baloch National Army
BNP	Balochistan National Party
BRAS	Baloch Raji Aajoi Sangar
BRG	Baloch Republican Guard
BYC	Baloch Yakjehti Committee
CDA	Capital Development Authority
CDF	Chief of Defence Forces
CJCSC	Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee
CNIC	Computerised National Identity Card
CNSC	Commander of the National Strategic Command
CPEC	China-Pakistan Economic Corridor
CPI	Consumer Price Index
CrPC	Code of Criminal Procedure
CTD	Counterterrorism Department
CTW	Counter Terrorism Wing (of the FIA)

Term	Definition
ECP	Election Commission of Pakistan
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Area
FC	Frontier Corps
FCR	Frontier Crimes Regulation
FIA	Federal Investigation Agency
FIR	First Information Report
FSC	Federal Shariat Court
GB	Gilgit-Baltistan
GHQ	Army General Headquarters
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GoP	Government of Pakistan
HGB	Hafiz Gul Bahadur
HIIP	Harkat Inqilab-e-Islami Pakistan
HM	Hizb ul-Mujahideen
HuA	Hizb-ul-Ahrar
HUJI	Harakat-ul Jihad Islami

Term	Definition
HuM	Harakat ul-Mujahideen
HRCP	Human Rights Commission Pakistan
ICT	Islamabad Capital Territory
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IFRP	Illegal Foreigners' Repatriation Plan
IGP	Inspector General of Police
IMP	Ittehad-ul-Mujahideen Pakistan
IS	Islamic State
ISI	Inter-Services Intelligence
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
ISKP	Islamic State – Khorasan Province
ISPP	Islamic State – Pakistan Province
JAAC	Jammu Kashmir Joint Awami Action Committee
JeM	Jaish-e-Muhammad
JFM	Jaish Fursan Muhammad
JSQM-A	Jeay Sindh Qaumi Mahaz-Arisar

Term	Definition
JuA	Jamaat-ul-Ahrar
JUI-F	Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam – Fazl
JUI-P	Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam (Pakistan)
KP	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
KPDMA	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Disaster Management Authority
LeI	Lashkar-e-Islam
LeJ	Lashkar-e Jhangvi
LeT	Lashkar-e-Taiba
LFS	Labour Force Survey
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoI	Ministry of Interior
MOPDSI	Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives
MQM-L	Muttahida Qaumi Movement – London
MQM-P	Muttahida Qaumi Movement – Pakistan
MRC	Migrant Resource Centre
NAB	National Accountability Bureau

Term	Definition
NACTA	National Counter Terrorism Authority
NFC	National Finance Commission
NSC	National Security Committee
PBC	Pakistan Bar Council
PBM	Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal
PECA	Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act
PMA	Pakistan Medical Association
PML	Pakistan Muslim League
PML-N	Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz
PPC	Pakistan Penal Code
PPP	Pakistan People's Party
PPR	Pakistan Prison Rules
PTI	Tehreek-e-Insaf party
PTM	Pashtun Tahafuz Movement
RHCs	Rural Health Centres
SBP	State Bank of Pakistan

Term	Definition
SCI	Sunni Ittehad Council
SLA	Sindhudesh Liberation Army
SMP	Sipah-e-Muhammad
SNC	Single National Curriculum
SP	Superintendent of Police
SPA	Sindhudesh People's Army
SRA	Sindhudesh Revolutionary Army
SSP	Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan
TDP	Temporarily Displaced Person
TJP	Tehreek-e-Jihad Pakistan
TLP	Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan
TNP	Tehrik-e Namoos Pakistan
TRF	The Resistance Front
TTP	Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan
UAVs	Unmanned Aerial Vehicles
Wilayat	Shadow province
WPMPLA	West Pakistan Muslim Personal Law Act

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide relevant information in view of the assessment of international protection, including refugee status and subsidiary protection, and to the development of EUAA's country guidance on Pakistan. This report intends to capture a selection of the main issues relevant to international protection in the assessment of claims from Pakistani nationals.

The report covers the period of 1 November 2024 – 6 April 2026.

Methodology

This report was jointly drafted by ACCORD and EUAA and reviewed by EUAA and national COI departments in EU+ countries, as mentioned in the Acknowledgements section.

This report is produced in line with the EUAA COI Report Methodology (2023)[1] and the EUAA COI Writing and Referencing Style Guide (2023).[2]

Defining the terms of reference

The terms of reference (ToR) of this report were defined by EUAA based on identified information needs, and input received from COI experts in the EUAA COI Specialist Network on Pakistan and policy experts in EU+ countries in the framework of a Country Guidance development. The ToR for this report can be found in Annex 2: Terms of Reference.

Collecting information

The information gathered is a result of research using public, specialised paper-based and electronic sources, as well as interviews with experts until 6 April 2026. Some limited additional information was added during the finalisation of this report in response to feedback received during the quality control process, until 24 April 2026.

Research challenges

During the research process, a number of articles and reports initially identified became inaccessible or were removed. It was subsequently established that many of these sources remained accessible from within Pakistan but were restricted for users accessing them from abroad. In particular, access to certain Pakistani state websites and the websites of some institutes appeared to be geographically limited.

[1] EUAA, EUAA Country of Origin Information (COI) Report Methodology, February 2023, url
[2] EUAA, Writing and Referencing Guide for EUAA Country of Origin Information (COI) Reports, February 2023, url

Quality control

To ensure that the authors respected the EUAA COI Report Methodology and that the ToR were comprehensively addressed, a review was carried out by COI specialists from the countries and organisations listed as reviewers in the Acknowledgements section. All comments made by the reviewers were taken into consideration and most of them were implemented in the final draft of this report, which was finalised on 24 April 2026. EUAA also performed the final quality review and editing of the text.

Sources

In accordance with EUAA COI methodology, a range of different published documentary sources have been consulted on relevant topics for this report. These include: COI reports by governments; information from civil society, advocacy groups, humanitarian organisations, and NGOs; international and NGO human rights reports; reports produced by various bodies of the United Nations; Pakistan and regionally-based media and social media; academic publications and think tank reports and specialised sources covering Pakistan. All information from these sources was consulted within time constraints.

In addition to using publicly available documentary sources, several oral sources were contacted for this report. Some sources who were interviewed chose to remain anonymous for security or operational reasons. Sources were assessed for their background, publication history, reputability and current ground-level knowledge. All oral sources are described in Annex 1: Bibliography.

Sources on security incidents and civilian casualties

For this report, these three data sources, CRSS, PICSS and PIPS, were selected for their ability to provide specific information and datasets relevant to the analysis of the security situation in Pakistan. CRSS (Center for Research and Security Studies) publishes annually a report on the security situation in Pakistan[3] and also quarterly reports[4] which contain statistical data on casualties caused by terrorism and counterterrorism.

The Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS) is an independent research think tank based in Islamabad studying security dynamics in Pakistan and the wider region.[5] It publishes annual security reports[6] and divides incidents of violence mainly in two categories: 1. 'violent militant attacks' and 'Security Forces Actions'. Sectarian violence, general crimes, ethnic or language-based violence are not recorded. The data collected is based on open

[3] See, for example, CRSS, Annual Security Report 2025, 31 December 2025, url; CRSS, Annual Security Report 2024, 30 December 2024, url; CRSS, Annual Security Report 2023 Pakistan, 19 February 2024, url
[4] See, for example, CRSS, Three Quarters of 2025 Nearly as Violent as Entire 2024, 1 October 2025, url; CRSS, Pakistan witnessed promising trends in its security landscape for q2, 2025 including 32% decline in violence, 30 June 2025, url; CRSS, Outlaws' Fatalities Surpass Civilian and Security Losses for First Time in 12 Years, Overall Violence Drops 13%, 30 March 2025, url
[5] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. ii
[6] See, for example, PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url

sources such as newspapers, government sources and own correspondents.[7] PICSS defines violent militant attacks as follows: a. 'Militant Attacks against the government, public, or private targets. These attacks can be against life or property e.g. government installations such as gas pipelines, electricity transmission lines etc.', b. 'Militant clashes among different militant groups.'[8]

The Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS) is a research and advocacy organisation, established in Islamabad in 2006.[9] PIPS monitors relevant incidents in Pakistan on a daily basis, from sources such as correspondents in the different regions, newspapers, magazines, journals and television news channels. The information is gathered in the PIPS conflict/security database and archives which form the basis for their annual and monthly reports.[10] PIPS divides 'attacks' into five categories: '(i) terrorist attacks including militant attacks, nationalist insurgent attacks and sectarian-related attacks; (ii) incidents of ethno-political violence; (iii) cross-border attacks; (iv) drone attacks; and (v) operational attacks by security forces against militants'.[11] PIPS defines 'casualties' as follows: 'casualties include both the number of people killed and injured'.[12]

Data of the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED)[13] has been used for information on security events and fatalities.

ACLED is a project that collects, analyses and maps information on 'dates, actors, locations, fatalities, and types of all reported political violence and protest events around the world'.[14] The EUAA downloaded the ACLED curated data files on South Asia and Asia Pacific, including Pakistan, on 20 March 2026, which are used in this report.

ACLED records six event types: battles, explosions/remote violence, violence against civilians, protests, riots and strategic developments.[15]

For the analysis of the security situation in Pakistan in this report, only battles, explosions/remote violence and violence against civilians were included as incidents. ACLED uses the following definitions of these event types:

- **Battle**: 'a violent interaction between two politically organized armed groups' which occur 'at a particular time and location', 'between armed and organised state, non-state, and external groups, and in any combination therein'. There is no fatality threshold for an incident to be included. Sub-events associated with 'battles' are designated according to the events outcome and consist of 'armed clash', 'government regains territory', and 'non-state actor overtakes territory'.[16]

[7] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 136
[8] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile 2024, 2 January 2025, url, p. 136
[9] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 50
[10] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 7
[11] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 7
[12] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 8
[13] ACLED, The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project - Bringing clarity to crisis, n.d., url
[14] ACLED, About ACLED, n.d., url
[15] ACLED, Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) Codebook, 3 October 2024, url, pp. 12-19
[16] ACLED, Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) Codebook, 3 October 2024, url, pp. 12-13

- **Violence against civilians**: 'violent events where an organized armed group deliberately inflicts violence upon unarmed non-combatants' and includes attempts at inflicting harm (e.g. beating, shooting, torture, rape, mutilation) or forcibly disappearing civilian actors. Sub-events associated with 'violence against civilians' are: 'sexual violence', 'attack', and 'abduction/forced disappearance'. It should be noted that all violence against civilians do not fall under this category, as civilians can also be harmed as 'collateral damage' in 'explosions' and 'battles' – in such cases a separate civilian-specific event is not recorded, although the number of fatalities is aggravated.[17]
- **Explosions/remote violence**: 'one-sided violent events in which the tool for engaging in conflict creates asymmetry by taking away the ability of the target to respond'. The sub-event types associated with 'explosions/remote violence' are 'chemical weapon', 'air/drone strike', 'suicide bomb', 'shelling/artillery/missile attack', 'remote explosive/landmine/IED', and 'grenade'.[18]

Structure and use of the report

The report's first chapter provides an overview of the country, including geography, demography, ethnic groups, languages, and the state structure. The second chapter focuses on background and recent political developments, as well as the regional context. The third chapter outlines the main armed actors, including state armed forces and non-state armed groups. The fourth chapter provides information on the security situation, including provincial variation. The fifth chapter describes the structure and functioning of the justice system. The sixth chapter focuses on the treatment of certain profiles and groups of the population. The final chapter presents an overview of the socio-economic situation, including climate-induced displacement, and key socio-economic indicators, with a focus on Islamabad, Karachi, and Lahore.

[17] ACLED, Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) Codebook, 3 October 2024, url, pp. 12-13
[18] ACLED, Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) Codebook, 3 October 2024, url, pp. 16-18

Map

Map Sources: ESRI, OCHA, UNGIS.
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties. Map created in July 2025.

Map 1: Pakistan: Location map (2025)[19]

[19] UNOCHA, © United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 18 July 2025, url

1. Country overview

1.1. Geography

Pakistan, situated in Southern Asia[20] north of the Arabian Sea, shares borders with Iran and Afghanistan to the west, China to the northeast, and India to the east.[21] The country is characterised by diverse landscapes, ranging from mountainous areas to lowlands and arid deserts.[22] Pakistan's total area of roughly 796 100 square kilometres[23] can be divided into three main geographic zones: the highlands in the north, the Balochistan Plateau in the southwest, and the Indus river plain across central and eastern Pakistan.[24] The Indus river system constitutes Pakistan's primary water lifeline, providing most of its renewable freshwater and sustaining the great majority of the population living in the Indus Basin. It supports the economy by irrigating more than 90 % of crops and is vital to energy security, as all of Pakistan's hydropower facilities are situated within the Indus Basin,[25] but is increasingly influenced by climate change.[26] Pakistan ranks among the states most exposed to climate impacts, confronting intensifying extremes – such as exceptionally heavy monsoon rains and faster Himalayan–Karakoram glacier melt that increases river flows and flash flooding.[27]

Pakistan possesses significant natural gas and limited petroleum reserves;[28] however, domestic output does not satisfy the country's demand, making additional imports necessary.[29] Other natural resources include iron ore, copper ore, limestone and salt,[30] with the mineral sector described as having unused potential.[31] Major agricultural commodities in 2024/2025 comprised oil, cottonseed, meal, cotton, wheat, sugar, rice and millet.[32] Pakistan has also become one of the world's largest producers of opium poppies following a ban in neighbouring Afghanistan.[33]

Administratively, Pakistan is organised into four provinces, one federal territory and two administrative territories:[34] Punjab (in the east, capital Lahore and the province with the largest population), Sindh (in the southeast, capital Karachi), Balochistan (in the southwest, capital

[20] FAO, Soil Governance Analysis: Pakistan, 2025, url, p. 1
[21] UN OCHA, Pakistan: Location Map (2025), 18 July 2025, url
[22] FAO, Soil Governance Analysis: Pakistan, 2025, url, p. 1
[23] Britannica, Pakistan, last updated 30 March 2026, url; The website of the Pakistani consulate in Los Angeles provides a higher figure, stating that the Pakistani territory covers 881 913 square kilometers: Pakistan, Consulate General of Pakistan Los Angeles, About Pakistan, n.d., url
[24] GlobalSecurity.org, Pakistan - Geography, 28 November 2016, url
[25] CSIS, Can India Cut Off Pakistan's Indus River Lifeline?, 1 May 2025, url
[26] Arab News, Pakistan warns climate shocks threaten food security, urges water resilience at Berlin forum, 17 January 2026, url
[27] Amnesty International, Pakistan's Flood of Floods: Climate Crisis and Human Rights (Part 1), 8 September 2025, url
[28] Britannica, Pakistan – Economy of Pakistan, last updated 30 March 2026, url
[29] Fair Observer, Powering Progress: How Can Pakistan Transform Its Energy Potential?, 16 November 2025, url
[30] Britannica, Pakistan – Economy of Pakistan, last updated 30 March 2026, url
[31] Arab News, Pakistan invites investments from Saudi Arabia, China, US in $6 trillion minerals sector, 8 April 2025, url
[32] US, FAS, Production - Pakistan, n.d., url
[33] Financial Times, Pakistan battles resurgent opium trade, 14 September 2025, url
[34] FAO, Pakistan at a Glance, n.d., url

Quetta and Pakistan's largest province), and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP, in the northwest, capital Peshawar and bordering Afghanistan); the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) is a federally administered area serving as the seat of government. In addition, there are the semi-autonomous regions of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB, in the north, bordering China, Afghanistan and India) and of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK, in the northeast, capital Muzaffarabad,[35] with its own president, prime minister and legislative assembly)[36]. GB and AJK form part of the contentious Kashmir region,[37] which has been contested between India and Pakistan for over six decades. The two nuclear powers have fought two wars and a limited conflict over the territory;[38] moreover, China controls part of the region.[39] Pakistan's four provinces are administratively subdivided into divisions, districts, and subdistricts (known as *tehsils*).[40]

1.2. Demographics

The UN estimated Pakistan's population to exceed 255 million at the end of 2025, making it the world's fifth most populous country, marked by rapid population increase.[41] The most recent census was carried out in 2023 by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics and produced a population figure of about 241.5 million, with a growth rate of 2.55 % between 2017 and 2023.[42] The urban population, which made up roughly 39 % of the overall population, expanded at a rate of 3.67 % – around twice the pace of the rural population. Only about 1 % of Pakistan's people lived in the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) in 2023,[43] with other cities in the country being significantly larger than its capital: the largest urban centre by a wide margin was Karachi with approximately 18.9 million residents.[44] Situated on the Arabian Sea coast, it is the capital of Sindh province and functions as the principal port and a key hub for trade and industry.[45] Lahore, the capital of Punjab province,[46] came next with 13 million residents.[47] Punjab was Pakistan's most populated province with approximately 52.9 % of the total population, followed by Sindh with around 23.1 %, and KP with around 16.9 %; the least populous of Pakistan's four provinces was Balochistan, with an approximate proportion of 6.2 % of the total population.[48]

[35] Pakistan, Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the United Nations – New York, Political Map of Pakistan, n.d., url
[36] Pakistan, Azad Government of the State of Jammu & Kashmir, AJ&K Overview, n.d., url
[37] Britannica, Kashmir, last updated 28 March 2026, url
[38] BBC, Kashmir: Why India and Pakistan fight over it, 7 May 2025, url
[39] Britannica, Kashmir, last updated 28 March 2026, url
[40] Britannica, Pakistan – Government and society, last updated 30 March 2026, url; the names of divisions, districts and tehsils as of 2023 can be found in following source, Table-1, under the hyperlinks 'province wise' and 'district wise': Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 – Detailed Results, n.d., url
[41] UNFPA, Pakistan 2026: Walking the Talk on Population and Reproductive Rights, 30 December 2025, url
[42] UNFPA, State of Pakistan Population Report 2025, 30 December 2025, url, p. 302; Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 – Detailed Results, Table 1 – Area, Population By Sex, Sex Ratio, Population Density, Urban Population, Household Size And Annual Growth Rate, n.d., url
[43] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 – Detailed Results, Table 1 – Area, Population By Sex, Sex Ratio, Population Density, Urban Population, Household Size And Annual Growth Rate, n.d., url
[44] Gallup Pakistan, Gallup Pakistan Analysis: Major Cities Growth Since 1951, 24 November 2025, url, p. 5
[45] Britannica, Karachi, last updated 19 March 2026, url
[46] Britannica, Pakistan – Urban settlement, last updated 30 March 2026, url
[47] Gallup Pakistan, Gallup Pakistan Analysis: Major Cities Growth Since 1951, 24 November 2025, url, p.5
[48] Gallup Pakistan, Analysis of Census 2023 Results, 20 October 2023, url, p. 6

Pakistan is a culturally, ethnically and linguistically varied country,[49] with its division into four provinces reflecting the country's traditional regions, each defined by its distinct ethnic and linguistic profile.[50] The 2023 Census does not provide data on ethnic affiliation. However, it is estimated that 44.7 % of the population is Punjabi, 15.4 % Pashtun (mainly living in northwestern Pakistan[51]), 14.1 % are Sindhi, 8.4 % Saraiki, 7.6 % Muhajirs, and 3.6 % Balochis, with the remaining 6.3 % belonging to other ethnic communities.[52] Each of the ethnic groups is further broken down into multiple subgroups and some groups may span more than one category.[53] Languages used in Pakistan include Punjabi (37 %), Pashto (18.2 %), Sindhi (14.3 %), the Punjabi variant Saraiki (12 %), Urdu (9.3 %), Balochi (3.4 %), Hindko (2.7 %), and Brahvi (1.2 %). A further 1.9 % of the population speak other languages.[54] (For more information, see section 6.1.1. Ethnic minorities). Pakistan is characterised as broadly multilingual, with no single language being shared by all its peoples. The main languages are largely anchored in particular regions, although some are spoken across multiple provinces. The 1973 constitution introduced a transitional phase from English to Urdu for official purposes, a shift that has not been fully implemented, as English remains in use, particularly within educational and government institutions.[55] Official Pakistani websites describe Urdu as the national language and English as the official language.[56]

Pakistan as a Muslim-majority state was established through the partition of the Indian sub-continent in 1947[57] and the later secession of Bangladesh in 1971.[58] The 2023 national census found that about 96.4 % of Pakistan's population is Muslim.[59] Sunnis are estimated to comprise 85 to 90 % of the Muslims,[60] while Shiites (including ethnic Hazara, Ismaili, Bangash, Turi and Bohra[61]) are considered to account for around 10 to 15 %.[62] Among the non-Muslim population, the main religious affiliations are Christian and Hindu, alongside other smaller religious groups.[63] For more information, see section 6.1.2. Religious minorities.

[49] Britannica, Pakistan – People of Pakistan, last updated 30 March 2026, url
[50] Britannica, Pakistan – Religion of Pakistan, last updated 30 March 2026, url
[51] RFE/RL, Anger And Chaos As Thousands Displaced Ahead Of Pakistani Military Operation, 23 January 2026, url
[52] Minority Rights Group, Pakistan, last updated December 2025, url
[53] Britannica, Pakistan – People of Pakistan, last updated 30 March 2026, url
[54] Minority Rights Group, Pakistan, last updated December 2025, url; Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 – National Census Report, August 2024, url, p.138; Britannica, Pakistan – People of Pakistan, last updated 30 March 2026, url
[55] Britannica, Pakistan – People of Pakistan, last updated 30 March 2026, url
[56] Pakistan, Consulate General of Pakistan Los Angeles, About Pakistan, n.d., url; Pakistan, Embassy of the Islamic Republik of Pakistan - Berlin, Basic Facts, n.d., url
[57] Britannica, Partition of India, last updated 13 February 2026, url
[58] Britannica, The Pakistani period, 1947–71, last updated 26 March 2026, url
[59] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 – Detailed Results, Table 9 – Population By Sex, Religion And Rural/Urban, n.d., url; the Ahmadi community is not included under the category 'Muslim' in the census but is listed separately.
[60] USCIRF, Pakistan, 19 April 2025, url, p. 33
[61] Australia, DFAT, DFAT Country Information Report Pakistan, 30 April 2025, url, p. 50
[62] USCIRF, Pakistan, 19 April 2025, url, p. 33
[63] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 – Detailed Results, Table 9 – Population By Sex, Religion And Rural/Urban, n.d., url

1.3. State structure

The 1973 constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan provides for a federal[64] parliamentary system with a bicameral legislature comprising the Senate of Pakistan and the National Assembly of Pakistan.[65] For a bill to become law, it must be passed by both houses and receive presidential assent.[66] The Senate has 96 members, who are elected by the four provincial assemblies and the federal capital territory for six-year terms; its composition includes reserved seats for women (four per province and one from the Federal Capital) and non-Muslims (one per province), as well as seats commonly categorised for technocrats/*ulema* (religious scholars) (four per province and one from the Federal Capital). Half of the house is renewed every three years.[67] The National Assembly is composed of 336 members in total. Of these, 266 are chosen through direct elections, while 60 seats are allocated to women and a further 10 are set aside for representatives of religious minority communities. The selection of members takes place under a mixed electoral framework, which integrates both regional representation and proportional representation mechanisms.[68] The National Assembly elects the prime minister,[69] while the president is elected by an electoral college, consisting of members of both houses and the provincial assemblies.[70] The president has constitutionally defined ordinance-making powers when parliament is not in session; ordinances have the force of law but are time-limited and must be placed before parliament for continuation.[71]

The president appoints the cabinet on the advice of the prime minister;[72] in line with the constitution, the prime minister exercises most executive authority, while the president, as head of state,[73] generally performs a more ceremonial function.[74] At provincial level, executive authority is exercised by provincial governments led by chief ministers,[75] while each province also has a governor appointed by the president on the advice of the prime minister.[76] As a federal state, Pakistan also has constitutional coordination mechanisms for federation–province relations, including the Council of Common Interests[77] (which is tasked with formulating and regulating policies in specified shared subject areas[78]) and the National Economic Council (which has a constitutional mandate related to reviewing the economy and

[64] Pakistan, Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (as amended up to 2025), 1973, url, Art. 1
[65] Pakistan, Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (as amended up to 2025), 1973, url, Art. 50
[66] Pakistan, Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (as amended up to 2025), 1973, url, Art. 70
[67] Pakistan, Senate of Pakistan, Senate Elections, n.d., url
[68] Pakistan, National Assembly of Pakistan, How the National Assembly Works, n.d., url
[69] Pakistan, National Assembly of Pakistan, How the National Assembly Works, n.d., url
[70] Pakistan, Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (as amended up to 2025), 1973, url, Art. 41
[71] Pakistan, Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (as amended up to 2025), 1973, url, Art. 89
[72] Pakistan, Government of Pakistan, Cabinet Secretariat, Cabinet Division, Notification, 27 February 2025, url, p. 1
[73] Pakistan, National Assembly of Pakistan, How the National Assembly Works, n.d., url
[74] Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Pakistan, 2025, url, section A1
[75] Pakistan, Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (as amended up to 2025), 1973, url, Art. 129
[76] Pakistan, Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (as amended up to 2025), 1973, url, Art. 101
[77] Begum, S. and Ali, A., Federalism in Pakistan: Challenges to Provincial Autonomy, 2025, url, p. 909
[78] Pakistan, Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (as amended up to 2025), 1973, url, Art. 154; Pakistan, CCI, FAQs – CCI Secretariat, n.d., url

advising on economic planning).[79] Despite these mechanisms, several scholars noticed the challenges provincial autonomy faces in the country.[80]

Several observers further consider the military to be the most dominant actor in Pakistan's political system,[81] citing its involvement in electoral processes, government formation and key policy decisions. Freedom House, for example, characterises the military as exercising 'enormous influence' across these domains.[82] This position has been further institutionalised through the 27th constitutional amendment, which consolidated military command structures and conferred lifetime rank and legal immunity on the highest-ranking officers.[83] For further information on 27th Constitutional amendment, see sections 2.1. Recent political developments and 3.1.1. Pakistan Army.

Within Pakistan's judicial system, the Supreme Court of Pakistan remains the highest court of appeal in civil and criminal matters[84] and is headed by the Chief Justice.[85] Following the 26th Constitutional Amendment of 2024, the Chief Justice is appointed for a fixed three-year term through the vote[86] of a special parliamentary committee from among the three most senior Supreme Court judges.[87] Subordinate courts include the High Courts (one for each province and one for the ICT),[88] civil and criminal courts at district levels and a magistracy, which deals with suits by the police force.[89] The judiciary also incorporates a religious component: the Federal Shariat Court, whose primary purpose is to assess whether laws conform to Islamic principles.[90] The 27th Constitutional Amendment of 2025 fundamentally altered the judicial architecture by establishing the Federal Constitutional Court, which was granted exclusive jurisdiction over constitutional interpretation, inter-governmental disputes, enforcement of fundamental rights and the review of constitutional amendments.[91] Judges of this court are

[79] Pakistan, Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (as amended up to 2025), 1973, url, Art. 156
[80] Begum, S. and Ali, A., Federalism in Pakistan: Challenges to Provincial Autonomy, 2025, url; Jamshid, N. and Gul, S., Federalism in Pakistan, January-March 2025, url; Fahad, U. and Ayaz, M., Federalism vs. Centralization: Ethnic Autonomy in Pakistan, 25 December 2024, url
[81] Guardian (The), 'A king above all': The rise and rise of Asim Munir, Pakistan's increasingly powerful army chief, 3 December 2025, url; ConstitutionNet, Shifting the Scales: How Pakistan's 27th Amendment Undermines Judicial Independence and Cements Executive Dominance, 28 November 2025, url; BBC, Pakistan's army has always been influential - now its chief has new powers, 15 November 2025, url; MEI, Deepening Pakistan's enduring civil-military imbalance, 30 May 2025, url; Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Pakistan, 2025, url, section C1
[82] Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Pakistan, 2025, url, Overview
[83] ConstitutionNet, Shifting the Scales: How Pakistan's 27th Amendment Undermines Judicial Independence and Cements Executive Dominance, 28 November 2025, url
[84] ICJ, Pakistan – Dismantling Justice: A Full-Frontal Assault on the Rule of Law, 13 November 2025, url; Dawn, 'Funeral of judicial independence': How proposed constitutional changes affect structure of Pakistan's judiciary, 8 November 2025, url
[85] Reuters, Pakistan passes constitutional amendment empowering parliament to pick top judge, 22 October 2024, url
[86] ConstitutionNet, The Story of the 26th Amendment: Executive Interference and the Judiciary's Struggle for Independence in Pakistan, 29 December 2024, url
[87] ICJ, Pakistan – Dismantling Justice: A Full-Frontal Assault on the Rule of Law, 13 November 2025, url; ConstitutionNet, The Story of the 26th Amendment: Executive Interference and the Judiciary's Struggle for Independence in Pakistan, 29 December 2024, url; Reuters, Pakistan passes constitutional amendment empowering parliament to pick top judge, 22 October 2024, url
[88] Pakistan, Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (as amended up to 2025), 1973, url, Art. 175
[89] Britannica, Pakistan – Government and society, last updated 30 March 2026, url
[90] Britannica, Pakistan – Government and society, last updated 30 March 2026, url
[91] ConstitutionNet, Shifting the Scales: How Pakistan's 27th Amendment Undermines Judicial Independence and Cements Executive Dominance, 28 November 2025, url; SLN, Pakistan: Supreme Court turned into 'pawn' of

appointed under a framework that increases parliamentary and executive involvement.[92] Critics have argued that the reforms of 2024 and 2025 weaken judicial independence by expanding political influence.[93] For more information, see section 5.2. Major judicial and constitutional reforms.

executive in all-out attack on judges, 27 November 2025, url; ICJ, Pakistan – Dismantling Justice: A Full-Frontal Assault on the Rule of Law, 13 November 2025, url

[92] ICJ, Pakistan – Dismantling Justice: A Full-Frontal Assault on the Rule of Law, 13 November 2025, url

[93] ConstitutionNet, The Story of the 26th Amendment: Executive Interference and the Judiciary's Struggle for Independence in Pakistan, 29 December 2024, url; ConstitutionNet, Shifting the Scales: How Pakistan's 27th Amendment Undermines Judicial Independence and Cements Executive Dominance, 28 November 2025, url; SLN, Pakistan: Supreme Court turned into 'pawn' of executive in all-out attack on judges, 27 November 2025, url; ICJ, Pakistan – Dismantling Justice: A Full-Frontal Assault on the Rule of Law, 13 November 2025, url; Arab News, Two Pakistan top court judges resign in protest as 27th constitutional amendment becomes law, 13 November 2025, url; Dawn, 'Funeral of judicial independence': How proposed constitutional changes affect structure of Pakistan's judiciary, 8 November 2025, url

2. Background and political developments

2.1. Recent political developments

Throughout the referencing period, the federal government continued to be led by the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) (PML-N) in coalition with the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and smaller allies,[94] with the by-elections in November 2025 strengthening the position of the PML-N.[95] Although public disagreements between the PML-N and the PPP were reported in 2025, sparked by a dispute concerning assistance frameworks for victims of flooding, the two parties maintained their cooperation within their coalition.[96] At the same time, the opposition remained largely marginalised,[97] as the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) continued to be affected by arrests,[98] convictions,[99] disqualifications,[100] and legal proceedings.[101] In response, PTI lawmakers boycotted parliamentary sessions[102] and organised public protests.[103]

In November 2024, thousands of supporters of former Prime Minister Imran Khan and the PTI marched into Islamabad,[104] with Amnesty International reporting the use of force by security forces, casualties, temporary restrictions on mobile internet services and mass arrests of 4 000 people.[105] Further protests by opposition supporters took place in major cities on 8 February 2026, marking the second anniversary of the 2024 general election.[106] In May 2025, the Supreme Court of Pakistan validated the conduct of military trials for civilians accused of involvement in the May 2023 unrest,[107] reversing earlier restrictions, a decision

[94] DW, Taking stock of Pakistan's government a year after elections, 2 July 2025, url; Pakistan, National Assembly, Pakistan Muslim League (N) (PML (N)) Seats Distribution, n.d., url; Nation (The), PML-N to continue development politics, decisive fight against terrorism: Sanaullah, 9 February 2026, url

[95] Arab News, Pakistan by-election gains boost PM Sharif's party but coalition dynamics unchanged — analysts, 25 November 2025, url; Arab News, Ruling party sweeps Pakistan by-elections— unofficial results, 24 November 2025, url; Dawn, PML-N largely sweeps lacklustre by-elections, 24 November 2025, url

[96] News International (The), War of words ends as PML-N, PPP reach fragile peace in Nawabshah huddle, 9 October 2025, url; Dawn, PPP escalates, PML-N tempers attacks on coalition ally, 8 October 2025, url; Express Tribune (The), PPP, PML-N rush to heal coalition cracks, 2 October 2025, url

[97] HRW, World Report 2026 – Pakistan, 4 February 2026, url; Arab News, Pakistani opposition alliance says government trying to 'eliminate' rivals, calls for joint strategy, 1 August 2025, url

[98] DW, Pakistan: Hundreds of Imran Khan supporters arrested, 5 August 2025, url

[99] BBC, Authorities jail 108 members of Imran Khan's party, 1 August 2025, url; Peoples Dispatch, Pakistan jails 75 opposition leaders in mass conviction over 2023 protests against Imran Khan's arrest, 29 August 2025, url

[100] Dawn, ECP disqualifies 3 PTI lawmakers following their convictions, 28 July 2025, url

[101] Nation (The), Perpetual arrest warrants issued for Omar Ayub, Ali Amin Gandapur, 10 February 2026, url

[102] Express Tribune (The), PTI Senators begin resigning from standing committees, 11 September 2025, url; Dawn, PTI lawmakers exit parliamentary panels, 28 August 2025, url; Express Tribune (The), Omar Ayub boycotts parliament until Imran Khan's release, 18 December 2024, url

[103] Arab News, Imran Khan's party calls for 'shutter-down' strike on second anniversary of Pakistan elections, 8 February 2026, url; Al Jazeera, What's next for Imran Khan's PTI after Islamabad protest setback?, 27 November 2024, url

[104] Al Jazeera, What's next for Imran Khan's PTI after Islamabad protest setback?, 27 November 2024, url

[105] Amnesty International, Pakistan: 'brutal and lethal' crackdown on Imran Khan supporters condemned, 27 November 2024, url

[106] Peoples Dispatch, Hundreds of thousands participated in a national strike in Pakistan against the conservative government's policies, 9 February 2026, url

[107] In May 2023 countrywide demonstrations occurred following the arrest of former Prime Minister Imran Khan. HRW, Pakistan: Excessive Force against Violent Khan Protests, 11 May 2023, url

criticised as undermining fair trial guarantees.[108] Following judicial review in mid-2025 concerning the allocation of reserved seats to the PTI, these seats were reassigned in a manner that substantially increased the governing coalition's parliamentary majority, enabling it to reach a two-thirds majority.[109] In October 2025, large-scale protests led by Islamist party Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) erupted in Punjab in response to a US-brokered ceasefire between Hamas and Israel and escalated into violent clashes with police.[110] The federal government subsequently banned the TLP under anti-terrorism legislation, sealed its offices and froze its assets.[111]

On 12 November 2025, parliament adopted a constitutional amendment that expanded the formal authority of the army chief, including the establishment of a Chief of Defence Forces role,[112] and restructuring constitutional adjudication by transferring key powers from the Supreme Court to a newly established Federal Constitutional Court.[113] Opposition lawmakers boycotted the vote.[114] The amendment was interpreted as reinforcing the institutional role of the Pakistan Army in political affairs and limiting civilian judicial oversight.[115]

2.1.1. Landscape of political parties in Pakistan

The Election Commission of Pakistan listed on its website 171 registered political parties and one alliance of five parties.[116] In practice, however, political competition remained dominated by a limited number of major actors,[117] notably the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) (PML-N), the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), and the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).[118] Smaller parties, including the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P), Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam (Pakistan) (JUI-P) and Pakistan Muslim League (PML) continued to hold limited representation at national level.[119]

Ethnic identity continued to play a significant role in Pakistan's political landscape[120] with several parties drawing support from particular ethnic or regional constituencies, resulting in

[108] Dawn, May 9 and military courts: What the SC decision means for civilians, 9 May 2025, url; Khan, M. A., Legalising Authoritarianism through Pakistan's Supreme Court, Verfassungsblog [Blog], 18 June 2025, url
[109] Samaa, Supreme Court divides PTI's reserved seats among ruling parties, 27 June 2025, url; PNP, Supreme Court 's Historic Judgement on Reserved Seats, 28 June 2025, url; Arab News, Pakistan's top court rules Imran Khan's party ineligible for reserved parliamentary seats, 27 June 2025, url
[110] AFP, Pakistan Islamists march towards capital after violent anti-Israel protests, 11 October 2025; NPR, Pakistan bans hard-line Islamist party known for its fierce anti-blasphemy stance, 25 October 2025, url; Al Jazeera, What's behind Pakistan's latest crackdown on religious party TLP?, 17 October 2025, url
[111] Dawn, No religious group backs TLP as ban takes effect, 25 October 2025, url; AP, Pakistan bans hard-line Islamist party after recent deadly clashes with police, 23 October 2025, url; NPR, Pakistan bans hard-line Islamist party known for its fierce anti-blasphemy stance, 25 October 2025, url
[112] ConstitutionNet, Shifting the Scales: How Pakistan's 27th Amendment Undermines Judicial Independence and Cements Executive Dominance, 28 November 2025, url
[113] ICJ, Pakistan – Dismantling Justice: A Full-Frontal Assault on the Rule of Law, 13 November 2025, url
[114] Express Tribune (The), 27th Amendment rushed through Senate amid opposition walkout, 11 November 2025, url
[115] ConstitutionNet, Shifting the Scales: How Pakistan's 27th Amendment Undermines Judicial Independence and Cements Executive Dominance, 28 November 2025, url
[116] Pakistan, ECP, List of All Political Parties, n.d., url
[117] Pakistan, National Assembly, Members (263), n.d., url
[118] International Crisis Group, Disputed Polls and Political Furies: Handling Pakistan's Deadlock, 28 November 2024, url; Usman, S., The Political Parties of Pakistan: A Lack of Ideology, Paradigm Shift, 18 March 2025, url
[119] Pakistan, National Assembly, Members (263), n.d., url
[120] Ahmed, M. S., Politicization of Ethnic Identities in Pakistan: Implications for National Unity and Cohesion, 1 December 2025, url, p. 159

geographically concentrated patterns of political support.[121] The PML-N remained strongest in Punjab,[122] while the PPP maintained its dominant position in Sindh,[123] particularly in rural areas of the province.[124]

The legal framework governing political parties is primarily set out in the Elections Act 2017, which regulates, *inter alia,* registration with the Election Commission, financial reporting requirements, and the conduct of intra-party elections.[125] During the reporting period, Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) was banned under anti-terrorism legislation following violent protests in October 2025.[126] In December 2025, the Punjab Assembly passed a resolution to ban PTI and its founder, former prime minister Imran Khan, without explicitly mentioning either by name.[127]

2.2. Regional context

2.2.1. Relations with Afghanistan

The border between the two countries, the Durand Line, remained a key point of contention.[128] Heavy fighting broke out along the border in October 2025 after Afghan Taliban forces attacked several Pakistani military posts, amid accusations that Pakistan had earlier conducted airstrikes on Afghan territory, including in Kabul.[129] The conflict was described as the deadliest between the two nations since the Taliban took power in Afghanistan in 2021.[130] Consequently, a ceasefire was agreed upon but talks to achieve long-lasting peace stalled.[131] Pakistan reportedly continued to accuse the Taliban *de facto* administration of harbouring groups like the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA),[132] which Afghanistan denies.[133] Afghanistan, for its part, alleged that Pakistan was sheltering the

[121] Shah, S. N. A., The Rise of Ethnic Nationalism and Its Implications for Pakistan's Multi-Ethnic Future, June 2025, url, p. 50
[122] Aaj News, PML-N strengthens grip in Punjab with six-seat gain in by-elections, 24 November 2025, url; Pakistan Today, PML-N takes clear lead as by-polls held in 13 NA and PA constituencies amid rigging allegations, 24 November 2025, url
[123] Express Tribune (The), PPP enjoyed supremacy amid weak opposition, 3 January 2025, url
[124] Mangi, S.N. et al., Predicting partisanship and voting behaviour: Ethno-political polarization in Sindh, Pakistan, 4 December 2024, url, p. 1
[125] FAFEN, Explainer: Legality of Ban on Political Parties, 29 October 2025, url
[126] Dawn, Federal govt approves ban on TLP under anti-terrorism act, 23 October 2025, url
[127] Dawn, Punjab Assembly adopts resolution to ban PTI, Imran for being 'anti-state', 9 December 2025, url
[128] Soufan Center (The), Tensions Between Afghanistan and Pakistan Destabilize South Asia, 21 November 2025, url
[129] Guardian (The), Heavy clashes erupt along Pakistan-Afghanistan border, 12 October 2025, url
[130] Al Jazeera, Afghanistan-Pakistan peace talks end in Turkiye without resolution, 28 October 2025, url
[131] Afghanistan International, Taliban–Pakistan Talks In Saudi Arabia Collapse Without Agreement, 1 December 2025, url; RFE/RL, Taliban Says Peace Talks With Pakistan Collapse But Cease-Fire Will Hold, 8 November 2025, url; Al Jazeera, Afghanistan-Pakistan peace talks end in Turkiye without resolution, 28 October 2025, url
[132] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 11; Soufan Center (The), Tensions Between Afghanistan and Pakistan Destabilize South Asia, 21 November 2025, url; Al Jazeera, Pakistan says ceasefire hinges on Afghanistan curbing armed groups, 20 October 2025, url; RFE/RL, Once Allies, Pakistan And Afghan Taliban Lurch Toward Full-Blown Conflict, 13 October 2025, url; BBC, Afghanistan accuses Pakistan of 'violating Kabul's sovereign territory', 10 October 2025, url
[133] RFE/RL, Taliban Says Peace Talks With Pakistan Collapse But Cease-Fire Will Hold, 8 November 2025, url; Al Jazeera, Afghanistan-Pakistan peace talks end in Turkiye without resolution, 28 October 2025, url

local offshoot of the Islamic State group.[134] TTP's alleged refuge in Afghanistan and its militant actions within Pakistan were reported central to the ongoing tensions between Pakistan and the Afghan Taliban.[135]

Pakistan continued border fencing and fortification efforts during 2025,[136] with clashes at the border leading to a lengthy closure. Economic relations deteriorated as a result, with border closures disrupting cross-border trade flows[137] and the political disagreements leading to a halt of reciprocal trade between the two countries.[138] Furthermore, Pakistan's policy of deporting Afghan nationals continued throughout the reference period.[139] According to Medecins Sans Frontieres the policy initially focused on undocumented Afghans, mainly the refugee population, but was later broadened to cover Afghan Citizen Card (ACC) holders as well as holders of Proof of Registration (PoR) cards, who had been granted short-term legal stay.[140] An acceleration of the number of deportations was reported in April 2025[141] as well as between September 2025 and January 2026.[142]

By the end of February 2026, Pakistan and Afghanistan conducted a series of cross-border airstrikes targeting areas along their shared frontier, including, *inter alia*, Pakistani strikes on Kabul.[143] Hostilities intensified throughout March,[144] with the UN reporting severe impacts on civilian populations,[145] such as the airstrike on a drug rehabilitation facility in Kabul, which killed over 400 people.[146] Following a brief ceasefire during the Eid al-Fitr holiday, Pakistan resumed military operations against Afghanistan, which, as of the end of March 2026, were reported to be continuing and increasing in intensity.[147] For more information, see section 4.1.2. Border security, including incidents along the Durand Line (Afghanistan), the Line of Control (India), and the Pakistan–Iran border.

[134] Reuters, Militant leader at heart of Afghan-Pakistan conflict survived strike that provoked clashes, 16 October 2025, url
[135] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2024: An Abridged Version, Vol. 17, No. 1, January 2025, url, p. 15
[136] Hasht e Subh Daily, Taliban Rule and Border Walls: Rising Security Costs Across the Region, 18 December 2025, url
[137] RFE/RL, Costs Mount As Afghanistan-Pakistan Trade War Strands Thousands Of Trucks, 27 December 2025, url; Amu, Afghanistan–Pakistan border crossings remain shut for 50th day as trade and travel grind to a halt, 30 November 2025, url; Dawn, Afghan border closure chokes crucial exports, 30 November 2025, url
[138] Dawn, Afghanistan bears heavier economic cost as Pakistan trade suspension bites harder, 31 December 2025, url
[139] BBC, Pakistan expels tens of thousands of Afghans, 19 April 2025, url; Amu, Pakistan deports over 19,000 Afghan migrants in past week, 14 February 2026, url
[140] MSF, Harsh winter conditions deepen humanitarian crisis for Afghans in Pakistan, 2 January 2026, url
[141] Al Jazeera, Pakistan accelerates deportation of Afghans: UN, 15 April 2025, url
[142] MSF, Harsh winter conditions deepen humanitarian crisis for Afghans in Pakistan, 2 January 2026, url
[143] BBC, What we know after latest escalation in Pakistan-Afghanistan tensions, 27 February 2026, url
[144] Guardian (The), Pakistan targets militant hideouts in Afghanistan as conflict continues, 15 March 2026, url
[145] UN OHCHR, Türk says Pakistan-Afghanistan conflict piles 'misery on misery', pleads for dialogue, 6 March 2026, url
[146] UN News, Afghanistan: UN condemns deadly attack on rehab centre in Kabul, 17 March 2026, url
[147] ABC, Pakistan's conflict with Afghan Taliban intensifies in shadow of Middle East war, 27 March 2026, url; Foschini, F. et al., Breaking Point? The mounting conflict between Afghanistan and Pakistan, 29 March 2026, url; MEI, Pakistan-Afghanistan tensions drifting into a dangerous escalation cycle, 30 March 2026, url

2.2.2. Relations with India

During the reporting period, relations between Pakistan and India remained adversarial and security-focused.[148] Formal bilateral dialogue mechanisms remained suspended, and no comprehensive talks were resumed.[149] Both states reiterated long-standing and opposing positions on Kashmir.[150] India maintained that Pakistan facilitated or tolerated cross-border infiltration by militant groups, particularly in the context of attacks in Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir, while Pakistan rejected these allegations and denied any support for cross-border militancy.[151] The Pakistani government, for its part accused India of supporting Baloch insurgent groups,[152] officially labelling all terrorist groups operating in Balochistan 'Fitna al Hindustan', claiming that this denomination reflected the groups' links to India.[153]

In April 2025, following a fatal armed attack targeting tourists in India-administered Kashmir, India announced a series of diplomatic measures against Pakistan, including the suspension of a key water-sharing treaty, the cessation of bilateral trade and the suspension of most visas[154], resulting in the deportation of hundreds of Pakistani nationals from India.[155] In response, Pakistan announced reciprocal measures, including the suspension of visas for Indian nationals, the closure of its airspace to Indian flights and a trade ban. The measures were followed by four days of heavy cross-border shelling and aerial operations. These were halted by a ceasefire,[156] which the International Crisis Group assessed in September 2025 as fragile, referring to continued mutual accusations and entrenched mistrust between the parties.[157] Despite the ceasefire, exchanges of small-arms fire between Pakistani and Indian forces were reported during the remainder of the reporting period.[158] Both states also conducted military exercises[159] and missile tests,[160] and accused each other of mismanaging

[148] Business Recorder, Pessimism grows about prospects of Pakistan-India relations, 21 November 2025, url
[149] Indian Express (The), For India-Pakistan, peace is not weakness, dialogue is not defeat, 5 February 2026, url; Arab News, Pakistan calls for reset in South Asia as dialogue with India hits 11-year freeze, 3 December 2025, url; Chatham House, India–Pakistan ceasefire remains shaky, with relations unlikely to return to status quo, 5 June 2025, url; DW, India-Pakistan crisis deepened by lack of informal diplomacy, 27 May 2025, url
[150] Britannica, The Kashmir problem, last updated 28 March 2026, url; Pakistan Today, Pakistan rejects India's claim over Jammu and Kashmir at UN, 17 January 2026, url
[151] Al Jazeera, 'What's our fault?': India's expulsion of Pakistanis still splits families, 4 December 2025, url; Al Jazeera, Who are the armed groups India accuses Pakistan of backing?, 9 May 2025, url
[152] Al Jazeera, 'Army alone can't neutralise grievances': What fuels Balochistan violence, 1 February 2026, url; Shaikh, F., The hijacking of a train marks a watershed in the Balochistan insurgency, Chatham House, 16 April 2025, url
[153] Business Recorder, Balochistan: Terror groups branded as 'Fitna al Hindustan', 1 June 2025, url
[154] BBC, These five measures remain, despite the India-Pakistan ceasefire, 13 May 2025, url
[155] Al Jazeera, 'What's our fault?': India's expulsion of Pakistanis still splits families, 4 December 2025, url
[156] BBC, These five measures remain, despite the India-Pakistan ceasefire, 13 May 2025, url
[157] International Crisis Group, India-Pakistan: Avoiding a War in Waiting, 17 September 2025, url, p. 1
[158] Sunday Guardian (The), Tension in North Kashmir After LOC firing; Army Responds, 22 February 2026, url; APB Live, Exchange Of Fire Reported Along LoC In Keran Sector Of North Kashmir, 21 January 2026, url; India Today, India, Pak troops exchange brief fire at LoC, months after Op Sindoor: Sources, 21 September 2025, url
[159] Diplomat (The), India's Exercise Trishul: Why Pakistan Should Be Worried, 18 November 2025, url; Firstpost, What is India's military exercise that has forced Pakistan to close most of its airspace?, 28 October 2025, url; News International (The), Pakistan Army stages military exercises as tensions with India escalate, 1 May 2025, url
[160] Chatham House, An imminent Indian ballistic missile test highlights escalation risks in the Indian Ocean, 19 December 2025, url; Resonant News, Pakistan and India Conducting Missile Tests On Same Dates, 4 November 2024, url; Le Monde, Pakistan conducts second missile test since renewed India tensions over Kashmir, 5 May 2025, url

their nuclear weapons.[161] For more information, see section 4.1.2. Border security, including incidents along the Durand Line (Afghanistan), the Line of Control (India), and the Pakistan–Iran border.

2.2.3. Relations with Iran

Relations between Pakistan and Iran have long been characterised as complicated, particularly with regards to their shared border between Pakistan's Balochistan province and Iran's Sistan–Balochistan province.[162] Amid the heightened tensions in the Middle East during the reporting period, Iran and Pakistan were said to have sought to consolidate mutual relations.[163] In August 2025 Iran and Pakistan concluded and endorsed twelve agreements designed to enhance cooperation across diverse sectors, including commercial and economic relations, transit and transport, scientific and technological collaboration, agricultural activities and tourism,[164] setting a target of USD 10 billion in annual bilateral trade.[165] In light of the US-Israeli attack on Iran in 2026, Pakistan adopted a cautious yet broadly supportive position of Iran, urging restraint and diplomatic engagement while refraining from direct military participation.[166] By end of March 2026, it had increasingly positioned itself as a potential peace broker, leveraging its maintained communication channels with both Washington and Tehran.[167]

Border security remained a sensitive issue.[168] Both states faced threats from cross-border militant and insurgent groups, including Baloch separatist organisations operating on both sides of the border.[169] High-level defence talks in 2025 signalled efforts to strengthen military ties between the two countries, although sustained counterterrorism cooperation between Iran and Pakistan remained limited.[170] Pakistan maintained heightened security deployments and surveillance in border districts to prevent spillover violence, particularly during the internal unrest in Iran in early 2026.[171]

For more information, see section 4.1.2. Border security, including incidents along the Durand Line (Afghanistan), the Line of Control (India), and the Pakistan–Iran border.

[161] Al Jazeera, India and Pakistan trade accusations of nuclear weapons mismanagement, 15 May 2025, url
[162] Calabrese, J., Between Fragility and Reset: The Future of Iran–Pakistan Relations, Modern Diplomacy, 28 August 2025, url
[163] Keynoush, B., From Caution to Cooperation: Iran-Pakistan Relations in the Shadow of Regional Conflict, Gulf International Forum, 6 October 2025, url
[164] IRNA, Iran, Pakistan sign 12 cooperation documents across various sectors, 3 August 2025, url
[165] Al Jazeera, Pakistan's Sharif hosts Iran's Pezeshkian, agrees to security, trade boost, 3 August 2025, url
[166] Express Tribune (The), Iran thanks Pakistan for 'strong solidarity' amid US-Israel aggression, 16 March 2026, url
[167] Reuters, Pakistan leans on US and Iran ties to emerge as potential peacebroker, 24 March 2026, url; DW, Pakistan under pressure to host successful US-Iran talks, 30 March 2026, url
[168] Arab News, Pakistan, Iran to form joint committee to resolve border trade, logistics issues, 26 October 2025, url; Keynoush, B., From Caution to Cooperation: Iran-Pakistan Relations in the Shadow of Regional Conflict, Gulf International Forum, 6 October 2025, url
[169] Kaleji, V., Complications of the 'Cooperative Rivalry' Between Iran and Pakistan, Valdai Club, 2 September 2025, url
[170] Kaleji, V., Complications of the 'Cooperative Rivalry' Between Iran and Pakistan, Valdai Club, 2 September 2025, url
[171] ASPI, Iran war puts Pakistan in a strategic squeeze, 13 March 2026, url; Arab News, Pakistan puts border districts on high alert amid Iran protests — official, 16 January 2026, url; Times of Islamabad, Iran unrest sparks heightened security fears along Pakistan border, 16 January 2026, url

3. Main armed actors

3.1. State Actors

Pakistan's military and security forces are comprised of the Pakistan Armed Forces, which operate largely independently with little oversight by civilian authorities, and the forces affiliated with the Ministry of Interior (MoI), including the police.[172] Several paramilitary forces engage in security work as part of the Pakistan Army[173] or under the MoI.[174] The Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) is the country's main intelligence agency.[175]

3.1.1. Pakistan Army

The Pakistan Army has been described as being arguably the country's most powerful institution.[176] Sources from 2025 and early 2026 estimated that the Pakistan Armed Forces in their entirety had between 650 000[177] and 660 000 active-duty personnel, with an overall personnel strength of around 1 710 000.[178] Within the armed forces, active duty members of the Pakistan Army accounted for 550 000 as of December 2025. Pakistan's military forces are tasked with external defence but also have a role in internal security.[179] Troops serve on a voluntary basis. Each of the main services of Pakistan's armed forces (army, navy, air force) is commanded by a chief of staff.[180]

The 27th amendment to the Constitution, signed into law in November 2025,[181] rewrote Article 243 of the Constitution to create the new supreme military position of Chief of Defence Forces (CDF), a post designed to be held automatically by the sitting chief of the Pakistani Army, currently Asim Munir.[182] This grants the army chief (Munir) primacy[183]/direct operational command[184] over the chiefs of the air force and navy,[185] thus effectively placing these two

[172] US, CIA, World Factbook – Pakistan, last updated 30 December 2025, archived page from 4 February 2026, url
[173] Britannica, Pakistan, Political Process, last updated 30 March 2026, url; US, CIA, World Factbook – Pakistan, last updated 30 December 2025, archived page from 4 February 2026, url
[174] US, CIA, World Factbook – Pakistan, last updated 30 December 2025, archived page from 4 February 2026, url
[175] Britannica, Pakistan, Political Process, last updated 30 March 2026, url; VOA, Pakistan's ex-spy chief indicted on political interference, other charges, 10 December 2024, url
[176] Arab News, Pakistan appoints intelligence chief as National Security Adviser amid tensions with India, 1 May 2025, url; Al Jazeera, Pakistan promotes army chief Asim Munir to field marshal: Why it matters, 21 May 2025, url
[177] US, CIA, World Factbook – Pakistan, last updated 30 December 2025, archived page from 4 February 2026, url
[178] GFP, 2026 Pakistan Military Strength, last updated 22 January 2026, url
[179] US, CIA, World Factbook – Pakistan, last updated 30 December 2025, archived page from 4 February 2026, url
[180] Britannica, Pakistan, Political Process, last updated 30 March 2026, url
[181] Express Tribune (The), President signs 27th Amendment Bill into law, 14 November 2025, url
[182] Sinha, R. and Sharma, S., Pakistan: The Winner Takes It All, ORF, 20 November 2025, url
[183] Chatham House, Pakistan's 27th constitutional amendment moves it one step closer to authoritarian rule, 2 December 2025, url
[184] Khan, A., What Pakistan's 2025 Army Reforms Really Mean for the Country, The Diplomat, 17 November 2025, url
[185] Chatham House, Pakistan's 27th constitutional amendment moves it one step closer to authoritarian rule, 2 December 2025, url; Khan, A., What Pakistan's 2025 Army Reforms Really Mean for the Country, The Diplomat, 17 November 2025, url

services under the CDF's authority.[186] At the same time, the new amendment abolished the position of Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC), which, albeit ceremonial, had embodied a degree of equilibrium between the three armed services.[187] The amendment further provides for professional safeguards for Munir, requiring a two-thirds majority in parliament to remove a CDF. Moreover, it grants lifelong immunity from prosecution to five-star military officers, a rank presently only held by Munir.[188] The amendment also created the new military position of Commander of the National Strategic Command (CNSC), whose holder is responsible for overseeing the country's nuclear command[189] and reports through the army's chain of command.[190]

The Army General Headquarters (GHQ) is located in Chaklala in the city of Rawalpindi.[191] As reported in mid-2025, the army's command system encompassed nine corps-level commands, each covering a specific geographic zone and operational domain.[192] Paramilitary groups affiliated with the Pakistan Army include the Khyber Rifles[193] and the National Guard. Pakistan's military arsenal consists of foreign and some domestically produced equipment.[194] During the reference period, the military forces significantly stepped up their use of targeted drone strikes against militants.[195] In Balochistan, there were a number of reported instances of the army subjecting civilians to extrajudicial killing,[196] arbitrarily detention/enforced disappearance,[197] and torture.[198]

3.1.2. Federal Investigative Agency (FIA)

The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) describes itself as a 'border control, criminal investigation, counter-intelligence and security agency' under the MoI.[199] Created in 1975 under the FIA Act 1974,[200] the FIA is tasked with handling complex criminal cases requiring a response at federal level, including cases of a cross-regional or international nature.[201] The FIA's responsibilities include fighting terrorism, espionage, human trafficking, illegal

[186] Khan, A., What Pakistan's 2025 Army Reforms Really Mean for the Country, The Diplomat, 17 November 2025, url; Al Jazeera, Will Pakistan's defence overhaul strengthen or upset its military balance?, 14 November 2025, url
[187] Khan, A., What Pakistan's 2025 Army Reforms Really Mean for the Country, The Diplomat, 17 November 2025, url
[188] Chatham House, Pakistan's 27th constitutional amendment moves it one step closer to authoritarian rule, 2 December 2025, url
[189] Al Jazeera, Will Pakistan's defence overhaul strengthen or upset its military balance?, 14 November 2025, url
[190] Sinha, R. and Sharma, S., Pakistan: The Winner Takes It All, ORF, 20 November 2025, url
[191] Economic Times (The), After Indian missile blitz, Pakistan weighs shifting Army HQ from Chaklala to Islamabad: Reports, 16 May 2025 url
[192] Print (The), Mapping Pakistan Army's corps commands & their strategic roles, from Rawalpindi to LoC, 17 May 2025, url
[193] Britannica, Pakistan, Political Process, last updated 30 March 2026, url
[194] US, CIA, World Factbook – Pakistan, last updated 30 December 2025, archived page from 4 February 2026, url
[195] ACLED, Pakistan battles rising militancy that risks spreading beyond the frontiers, 11 December 2025, url
[196] PAANK, Paank Monthly Report August 2025, 28 September 2025, url
[197] HRCB, Balochistan: 104 Enforced Disappearances, 65 Killings, and a Major Military Siege in Zehri – September 2025, 30 October 2025, url; News on the Air, Several human rights organisations in Pakistan sound alarm over rising disappearances in Balochistan, 5 December 2025, url; PAANK, Paank Monthly Report August 2025, 28 September 2025, url
[198] PAANK, Paank Monthly Report August 2025, 28 September 2025, url
[199] Pakistan, FIA, About Us, n.d. a, url
[200] Pakistan, FIA, About Us, n.d. a, url; Dr. Shahab Imam Law Associates, What is FIA: The Role of Pakistan's Federal Investigation Agency, n.d., url
[201] Dr. Shahab Imam Law Associates, What is FIA: The Role of Pakistan's Federal Investigation Agency, n.d., url

immigration, and corruption.[202] The FIA is empowered to conduct arrests, seize assets, and present legal cases before special courts.[203] It comprises a number of separate specialised departments,[204] including the Counter Terrorism Wing (CTW) whose work includes handling cases related to terrorism (including cyber terrorism), blasphemy and espionage.[205] Amongst others, during the reference period, there were reports of FIA members arresting media professionals[206] and torturing and temporarily detaining individuals and their family members.[207]

3.1.3. Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI)

The Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI), established in 1948,[208] is the country's largest intelligence agency and has often exerted a strong influence on government policy.[209] Sources described it as a military[210]/military-run[211] organisation, with no specific law or formalised oversight process regulating its activities.[212] Externally, the ISI engages in the collection of foreign intelligence and counter-intelligence activities,[213] while in the domestic realm, it is known as an actor of repression in Balochistan and against individuals voicing dissent against the country's military leaders.[214] The ISI has internal and external wings[215] and a number of specialised sections,[216] with sources from late 2025 reportedly indicating that the organisation was shifting away from human-intelligence centred approaches towards data-driven monitoring.[217]

The ISI is headed by a Director-General who holds the rank of three-star army general.[218] Since September 2024, this position has been held by Muhammad Asim Malik, who was additionally appointed to the post of National Security Adviser in April 2025.[219] Both the ISI's directorate board[220] and its core staff are composed of military officers. Meanwhile, the organisation also employs civil servants for administrative and analytical roles, as well as other civilians operating as informants and surveillance personnel.[221] While no precise data was available of

[202] Pakistan, FIA, About Us, n.d. url
[203] Dr. Shahab Imam Law Associates, What is FIA: The Role of Pakistan's Federal Investigation Agency, n.d., url
[204] Pakistan, FIA, Wings, n.d., url
[205] Pakistan, FIA, Counter Terrorism Wing, n.d., url
[206] IFJ, Pakistan: Digital journalist Sohrab Barkat detained for over two months, 13 February 2026, url; HRW, World Report 2026 – Pakistan, 4 February 2026, url, p. 343
[207] Express Tribune (The), FIA cybercrime officers accused of abducting families, extorting millions, 23 January 2026, url
[208] SATP, Pakistan: ISI And Unwavering Malignancy – Analysis, Eurasia Review, 29 July 2025, url
[209] Britannica, Pakistan, Political Process, last updated 30 March 2026, url
[210] Richards, J., Pakistan's ISI: A Concise History of the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate, 2024, p. 78; Sirrs, O., Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate: Covert Action and internal operations, 2017, p. 2
[211] VOA, Pakistan names new chief for powerful ISI spy agency, 23 September 2024, url
[212] Richards, J., Pakistan's ISI: A Concise History of the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate, 2024, p. 80
[213] Bokhari, K. and Haider, E., Pakistan's Intelligence Crisis, New Lines Institute for Strategy and Policy, 3 September 2024, url
[214] Richards, J., Pakistan's ISI: A Concise History of the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate, 2024, p. 1
[215] Richards, J., Pakistan's ISI: A Concise History of the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate, 2024, p. 29
[216] SATP, Pakistan: ISI And Unwavering Malignancy – Analysis, Eurasia Review, 29 July 2025, url
[217] Sunday Guardian (The), Sweeping Digital Surveillance Overhaul at ISI-GHQ, 25 January 2026, url
[218] Richards, J., Pakistan's ISI: A Concise History of the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate, 2024, pp. 27, 78
[219] Express Tribune (The), Lt Gen Asim Malik to continue as DG ISI: security sources, 6 October 2025, url; Arab News, Pakistan appoints intelligence chief as National Security Adviser amid tensions with India, 1 May 2025, url
[220] Richards, J., Pakistan's ISI: A Concise History of the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate, 2024, p. 78
[221] Richards, J., Pakistan's ISI: A Concise History of the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate, 2024, p. 27

the overall size of the ISI,[222] the New Delhi-based South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP)[223] in mid-2025 estimated the agency's strength at around 25 000.[224] The ISI has been involved in multiple enforced disappearances[225] and extrajudicial killings in Balochistan.[226]

3.1.4. Frontier Corps (FC)

The Frontier Corps (FC) is a MoI-affiliated[227] group of four paramilitary forces[228] overseen by army officers[229] and constitutes one of the Pakistan Army's reserve forces.[230] It mainly operates in KP and Balochistan. Its two primary components are the KP Frontier Corps (composed of the FC KP North (headquartered in Peshawar) and the FC KP South (Dera Ismail Khan)) and the Balochistan Frontier Corps (comprising the FC Balochistan North[231] (Quetta)[232] and the FC Balochistan South (Turbat)).[233] FC units conduct border patrols and surveillance to counter smuggling, illegal border crossings, and infiltration by militant groups. They administer and secure checkpoints, crossing points, and trade routes. Having some limited law enforcement powers, FC personnel also provide assistance to civilian authorities in internal security operations.[234] The reference period witnessed several deadly militant attacks on FC personnel in their areas of operation.[235] Meanwhile, the FC was reported to have been involved in dozens of enforced disappearances[236] and extrajudicial killings in Balochistan.[237]

[222] Zebari, D.F., Secret Service of the World: A Comparison of Three Intelligence Agencies - ISI, CIA and RAW, 2020, url, p. 1334
[223] SATP, Contact US, n.d., url
[224] SATP, Pakistan: ISI And Unwavering Malignancy – Analysis, Eurasia Review, 29 July 2025, url
[225] HRCB, Human Rights Violations in Balochistan: 234 Enforced Disappearances, 87 Killings Documented in February 2026, 28 March 2026, url; PAANK, Balochistan Human Rights Report – 2025, 10 February 2026, url, p. 3
[226] HRCB, Human Rights Violations in Balochistan: 234 Enforced Disappearances, 87 Killings Documented in February 2026, 28 March 2026, url
[227] US, CIA, World Factbook – Pakistan, last updated 30 December 2025, archived page from 4 February 2026, url
[228] Express Tribune (The), New force planned to handle security, 14 July 2025, url
[229] Express Tribune (The), New force planned to handle security, 14 July 2025, url; Baloch, K., Two Years on, State of Pakistani Security Continues to Deteriorate After Taliban Seizure of Afghanistan, The Jamestown Foundation, 8 September 2023, url
[230] US, CIA, World Factbook – Pakistan, last updated 30 December 2025, archived page from 4 February 2026, url
[231] Land of Pure People (The), Frontier Corps, 29 September 2025, url. The Land of Pure People is a Pakistani non-governmental website informing about cultural and political/government-related topics in the country, including on various security forces and state-linked paramilitary organisations. Land of Pure People (The), Homepage, n.d., url
[232] Al Jazeera, Suicide blast near paramilitary headquarters in Pakistan's Quetta kills 10, 30 September 2025, url; Land of Pure People (The), Frontier Corps, 29 September 2025, url
[233] Land of Pure People (The), Frontier Corps, 29 September 2025, url
[234] Land of Pure People (The), Frontier Corps, 29 September 2025, url
[235] SATP, Pakistan: Balochistan Bleeds – Analysis, Eurasia Review, 27 January 2026, url; SATP, Balochistan: Assessment- 2025, n.d., url; SATP, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Assessment- 2025, n.d., url
[236] HRCB, Human Rights Violations in Balochistan: 234 Enforced Disappearances, 87 Killings Documented in February 2026, 28 March 2026, url; PAANK, Balochistan Human Rights Report – 2025, 10 February 2026, url, pp. 1, 3; Malikzada, N., The True Cost of Enforced Disappearances in Balochistan, The Diplomat, 14 October 2025, url ; Voice PK, Enforced Disappearances: Govt claims drop, rights groups say rise, 8 July 2025, url
[237] HRCB, Human Rights Violations in Balochistan: 234 Enforced Disappearances, 87 Killings Documented in February 2026, 28 March 2026, url

3.1.5. Levies and Khasadars

The Levies and Khasadars were formerly[238] tribal paramilitary forces that existed in the former Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).[239] Following the merger of these areas with KP province in 2018, over 26 000 former Khasadar and Levies were incorporated into the KP provincial police. However, they are inadequately equipped[240] and have struggled to operate within a modern legal framework based on standardised procedures due to their lack of formal training and education.[241] For further information, see section 3.1.6. Levies and Khasadars of the EUAA COI report Pakistan - Country Focus (December 2024).

3.1.6. Pakistan Rangers

The Pakistan Rangers are a paramilitary[242] federal law enforcement organisation[243] that operate under the MoI while constituting one of the Pakistan Army's reserve forces.[244] It is composed of two entities – the Punjab Rangers and the Sindh Rangers.[245] The Rangers' duties include providing security in border areas[246] (mainly along the Afghan and Indian borders),[247] but also in parts of Balochistan,[248] and maintaining law and order in urban zones,[249] with Rangers deployed under the Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997, in Karachi[250] and the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi.[251] The Rangers are also tasked with providing security during major events[252] (e.g., protests[253] and religious[254] and sports gatherings[255]) and take part in counter-terrorism operations alongside units of the armed forces[256] and police Counter-Terrorism Departments (CTDs).[257]

[238] Zaidi, M., Policing the Tribal Areas of Pakistan: The Influence of Tribal Traditions and the Need for Police Reforms, Global Ecco, 10 January 2025, url
[239] Khan, A. et al., The Fata Conundrum: A Study of the Post-Merger Administrative Chaos, 2024, url
[240] Younas, S., Is Pakistan's Second Chance in the Tribal Areas Slipping Away?, The Diplomat, 11 August 2025, url
[241] Khan, A. et al., The Fata Conundrum: A Study of the Post-Merger Administrative Chaos, 2024, url
[242] Britannica, Pakistan, Political Process, last updated 30 March 2026, url
[243] Land of Pure People (The), Pakistan Rangers, 26 September 2025, url
[244] US, CIA, World Factbook – Pakistan, last updated 30 December 2025, archived page from 4 February 2026, url
[245] Land of Pure People (The), Pakistan Rangers, 26 September 2025, url
[246] Britannica, Pakistan, Political Process, last updated 30 March 2026, url; Land of Pure People (The), Pakistan Rangers, 26 September 2025, url
[247] Land of Pure People (The), Pakistan Rangers, 26 September 2025, url
[248] APP, Mohsin Naqvi lauds Rangers Sindh at Passing-Out Parade of Basic Course 33, 2 January 2026, url
[249] Land of Pure People (The), Pakistan Rangers, 26 September 2025, url
[250] Dawn, Rangers deployment in Karachi extended for another year, 2 December 2025, url
[251] Business Recorder, Interior Ministry approves deployment of Rangers, FC in Islamabad ahead of PTI protest, 20 November 2024, url
[252] Land of Pure People (The), Pakistan Rangers, 26 September 2025, url; Arab News, Pakistan to deploy army, paramilitary Rangers troops for tri-nation cricket series, 3 February 2025, url
[253] Media Line (The), Deadly Protests Erupt Across Pakistan After Killing of Iran's Supreme Leader, 3 March 2026, url
[254] Arab News, Thousands of security personnel, including army, deployed across Pakistan for Ashura procession, 6 July 2025, url
[255] Arab News, Pakistan to deploy army, paramilitary Rangers troops for tri-nation cricket series, 3 February 2025, url
[256] Land of Pure People (The), Pakistan Rangers, 26 September 2025, url
[257] Dawn, Three held in Rangers-CTD raid, 17 February 2026, url;

3.1.7. Pakistani police

Police organisations in Pakistan are divided into those operating under federal control and those controlled by the administrations of their respective provinces and territories.[258] According to an estimate found in academic papers from 2023 and 2025, Pakistan's police had an overall strength of around 624 390.[259] A CTD is found in each of the country's four provincial police organisations[260] and the Islamabad Capital Territory Police.[261] Efforts were ongoing to also establish CTDs in AJK[262] and GB.[263] The Frontier Constabulary, a federal paramilitary force mainly recruited from KP[264] and initially tasked to maintain law and order in border and frontier zones,[265] is now present across multiple areas of the country, with its duties including operations against criminal gangs and smugglers. In mid-2025, the government decided to convert the Frontier Constabulary into a nationwide force named the Federal Constabulary, with recruitment efforts, offices[266] and jurisdiction to be expanded across Pakistan.[267]

The highest police rank is that of Inspector General of Police (IGP),[268] who acts as the head of a provincial or administrative police organisation.[269] Police have been criticised for alleged bias and arbitrariness in handling criminal complaints,[270] discouraging the registration of crimes, their conduct with the public, and inadequacies in preventing and responding to crimes.[271] Moreover, NGOs noted that police frequently employed torture,[272] mainly during arrests and interrogations,[273] relying on torture to obtain confessions.[274] According to findings of the National Corruption Perception Survey (NCPS) 2025, conducted by Transparency International (TI) Pakistan across all of the country's four provinces in September 2025, public perceptions of the police had improved by 6 % compared to 2023. Nonetheless, the police were viewed as the country's most corrupt institution (24 %), with perceptions of police

[258] RSIL, Frequently Applied Police Laws & Criminal Procedures, July 2016, url, p. 12
[259] Korai, A.G. et al., Trust, Collaboration and Policing: A Qualitative Study of Street Crime in Karachi, July-September 2025, url, p. 629; Hadi, M.R., Community Policing: Lessons from Peshawar Police, 2023, url, p. 5
[260] ANI, Pakistan: Balochistan Counter Terrorism Department files FIR in Noshki attack, 16 April 2024, url; News International (The), CTD KP to hire 181 investigation officers, 9 September 2025, url; Dawn, Punjab CTD control extended to entire Dera Ghazi Khan region, 18 December 2025, url; UNODC, Strengthening security, law enforcement, and justice—Pakistan, Canada, and UNODC's enduring partnership for a safer future, 25 February 2025, url
[261] Pakistan, ICTP, About, n.d., url
[262] APP, AJK PM announces induction of Rangers, launch of CTD amid security, economic reforms, 6 April 2025, url
[263] Dawn, Centre okays establishment of CTD police for GB, 13 September 2025, url
[264] Express Tribune (The), New force planned to handle security, 14 July 2025, url
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[266] Express Tribune (The), New force planned to handle security, 14 July 2025, url
[267] Arab News, Pakistan's new federal force sparks fears of political repression ahead of Khan party protests, 16 July 2025, url
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[269] Faisalabad Realtor's, Guide to Police Force Ranks in Pakistan, 30 October 2024, url
[270] Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Pakistan, 2025, url section F2
[271] Chishti, A.M. et al., Addressing the Public Trust Deficit in Pakistan's Police: Challenges, Causes, and Pathways to Reform, 2025, url, p. 17
[272] OMCT, Global Torture Index 2025: Pakistan Factsheet, June 2025, url, p. 1; HRCP, State of Human Rights in 2024, 2025, url, p. 32
[273] OMCT, Global Torture Index 2025: Pakistan Factsheet, June 2025, url, p. 1
[274] Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Pakistan, 2025, url, section F2

corruption highest in Punjab (34 %).[275] During the reference period, law enforcement agencies were attributed responsibility for arbitrary detentions and extrajudicial killings.[276] These included multiple enforced disappearances[277] and extrajudicial killings in Balochistan that were reported to have been carried out by the CTD.[278]

3.1.8. Pro-government armed militias

Sources noted that pro-government militia groups known as 'peace militia' were operating in KP,[279] while security forces collaborated with unidentified local militias in Balochistan (sometimes referred to as 'death squads') that were directly involved in instances of government repression against local civilians.[280] These militias are known to have detained,[281] abducted[282] and killed civilians,[283] including by means of targeted assault[284] and planting landmines, and for attempting to forcibly occupy lands in Balochistan. In one instance, the Frontier Corps (FC) was alleged to have backed a 'death squad' by providing it with significant funding, heavy weapons and drones to reinforce FC operations in conflict-affected areas.[285] The reference period further saw activities of allegedly state-backed Kashmiri[286] armed groups such as Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammad.[287] For more information on these Kashmiri groups, see sections 3.2.2. Lashkar-e Taiba (LeT) and 3.2.14. Other local/small militia groups below.

[275] TI, Transparency International Pakistan has released National Corruption Perception Survey 2025, ALAC Pakistan, 9 December 2025, url, p. 1
[276] HRW, World Report 2026 – Pakistan, 4 February 2026, url, p. 345
[277] HRCB, Human Rights Violations in Balochistan: 234 Enforced Disappearances, 87 Killings Documented in February 2026, 28 March 2026, url; Voice PK, Enforced Disappearances: Govt claims drop, rights groups say rise, 8 July 2025, url
[278] HRCB, Human Rights Violations in Balochistan: 234 Enforced Disappearances, 87 Killings Documented in February 2026, 28 March 2026, url
[279] AA, 5 killed in explosion at wedding ceremony in northwest Pakistan, 24 January 2026, url; SATP, Detail of Terrorism Update Sunday, June 29, 2025, 29 June 2025, url
[280] Defence XP, Pakistan's Death Squad Exposed – The Truth Will Horrify You, 11 October 2025, url; Sunday Guardian (The), Pakistan: Frontier Corps accused of arming death squads as landmines kill civilians in Dera Bugti, 18 September 2025, url; PAANK, Balochistan Human Right Report January-June 2025, 4 August 2025, url, p. 2; HRCB, An Overview of Human Rights Situation in Balochistan, 20 July 2025, url, pp. 2, 5, 8
[281] HRCB, Human Rights Violations in Balochistan: 234 Enforced Disappearances, 87 Killings Documented in February 2026, 28 March 2026, url; TOI, Pakistan-linked 'death squads' accused as seven go missing in Balochistan, 15 February 2026, url
[282] HRCB, Human Rights Violations in Balochistan: 234 Enforced Disappearances, 87 Killings Documented in February 2026, 28 March 2026, url; Defence XP, Pakistan's Death Squad Exposed – The Truth Will Horrify You, 11 October 2025, url
[283] HRCB, Human Rights Violations in Balochistan: 234 Enforced Disappearances, 87 Killings Documented in February 2026, 28 March 2026, url; PAANK, Balochistan Human Right Report January-June 2025, 4 August 2025, url, p. 5; IFJ, Pakistan: Journalist killed by militia in Balochistan, 28 May 2025, url; Sunday Guardian (The), Pakistan: Frontier Corps accused of arming death squads as landmines kill civilians in Dera Bugti, 18 September 2025, url
[284] IFJ, Pakistan: Journalist killed by militia in Balochistan, 28 May 2025, url
[285] Sunday Guardian (The), Pakistan: Frontier Corps accused of arming death squads as landmines kill civilians in Dera Bugti, 18 September 2025, url
[286] Al Jazeera, Who are the armed groups India accuses Pakistan of backing?, 9 May 2025, url
[287] Staikou, D., Pakistan: When the State Does Not Fight Terrorism, but Manages It, Europawire, 9 January 2026, url; Resonant News, Lashkar's New Training Centre, Pakistan's spy Agency ISI's new strategy, 26 September 2025, url

3.1.9. Authorities' surveillance capabilities, including online

The Pakistani authorities have built up considerable surveillance capabilities in recent years[288] and their degree of control of online/social media content continued to expand.[289] The state's surveillance operations have been enhanced by advanced foreign-made surveillance and censorship tools and lacked or often ignored legal safeguards.[290] According to a digital rights activist quoted by the Islamabad-based journalist Osama Ahmad, the lack of comprehensive legislation on data protection and rules regulating surveillance technologies hampers the effectiveness of existing laws protecting citizens' rights.[291] Against this backdrop, state authorities have repeatedly used the 2016 Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) (amended in 2025), which contains vague wording on 'hate speech', defamation and 'cyber terrorism', as a means of targeting activists, journalists and the political opposition.[292] PECA gave the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) 'unchecked'[293] discretionary powers to remove and block online material and obliged telecommunications providers to store traffic data for periods of one year or more upon request by the PTA. According to testimony given by the PTA, telecommunications providers are obliged to ensure that up to 2 % of their customers (i.e., over 4 million users across the country) can be surveilled at any given time through LIMS, a system used by the ISI and the armed forces to track calls, text messages and internet activity. Journalists interviewed by Amnesty International pointed to actual or attempted instances of hacking of their email, WhatsApp and X accounts and interceptions of phone calls and messages.[294]

3.2. Main non-state armed groups

3.2.1. Tehreek-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP)

Tehreek-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) has been described as a 'coalition',[295] 'network'[296] or 'umbrella' organisation of various armed militant groups[297] operating in areas of KP near the border with Afghanistan.[298] It was formed in December 2007 by a *shura* (council) of 40 high-

[288] Ahmad, O., The Rise of Digital Authoritarianism in Pakistan, The Diplomat, 30 September 2025, url
[289] Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Pakistan, 2025, url, section D1
[290] Amnesty International, Pakistan: Mass surveillance and censorship machine is fueled by Chinese, European, Emirati and North American companies, 9 September 2025, url
[291] Ahmad, O., The Rise of Digital Authoritarianism in Pakistan, The Diplomat, 30 September 2025, url
[292] Amnesty International, Shadows of Control: Censorship and mass surveillance in Pakistan, 9 September 2025, url, pp. 14-15
[293] Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Pakistan, 2025, url, section D4
[294] Amnesty International, Shadows of Control: Censorship and mass surveillance in Pakistan, 9 September 2025, url, pp. 15, 18
[295] CRSS, Complex terrorism landscape in Pakistan-Afghanistan region: Afghan Emirate as counter-terror partner, 24 January 2025, url, p. 29
[296] Basit, A., The Transformation of TTP: Rise, Fall and Resurgence, 31 December 2024, url, p. 1
[297] Sayed, A., TTP Projecting Power Outside Pakistan's Northwest, The Jamestown Foundation, 6 November 2025, url; Tahir, S. and Jadoon, A., Leaders, Fighters, and Suicide Attackers: Insights on TTP Militant Mobility Through Commemorative Records, 2006-2025, May 2025, url, p. 26; IEP, Global Terrorism Index 2025, 2025, url, p. 17
[298] ACLED, Pakistan battles rising militancy that risks spreading beyond the frontiers, 11 December 2025, url
Sayed, A., TTP Projecting Power Outside Pakistan's Northwest, The Jamestown Foundation, 6 November 2025, url; Tahir, S. and Jadoon, A., Leaders, Fighters, and Suicide Attackers: Insights on TTP Militant Mobility Through Commemorative Records, 2006-2025, May 2025, url, p. 24

ranking Taliban commanders as a reaction to Pakistani military operations that targeted al-Qaeda-affiliated insurgents in the former FATA. Drawing heavily from the tenets of the Deobandi school of Islamic thought,[299] TTP seeks to overthrow the Pakistani government[300] and to create a state based on Islamic rule.[301] Since 2018, the group has been headed by Noor Wali Mehsud.[302] Under his leadership, and especially since the August 2021 Taliban takeover in Afghanistan, the group has undergone a resurgence[303] and is currently deemed the most lethal insurgent group in Pakistan. Since 2018, the group has reportedly incorporated over 70 militant factions into its coalition,[304] including Taliban factions that had temporarily withdrawn from the TTP umbrella (e.g., Jamat-ul Ahrar (JuA), Pakistani al-Qaeda affiliates (e.g., the Aslam Farooqi group),[305] and even militant factions from both Pashtun- and Baloch-majority areas of Balochistan.[306] According to a mid-2025 UN estimate, TTP had around 6 000 fighters.[307] The group's recruitment efforts mainly focus on North Waziristan, Dera Ismail Khan, and Peshawar districts.[308]

TTP maintains its centralised command structure[309] but was also reported to provide room for decentralised operations led by smaller, flexible units.[310] The group has sought to establish structured quasi-governance systems.[311] It has declared to have set up shadow administrations in the former tribal districts and southern KP,[312] as well as in North and South Punjab[313] and Balochistan.[314] In late 2025, TTP presented an organisational blueprint for 2026 that divides the country into northern, southern central, and western zones, each further subdivided into multiple so-called 'waliyats' (administrative units). As of late 2025, the group's military commands and intelligence/counterintelligence cells existed to varying degrees across the

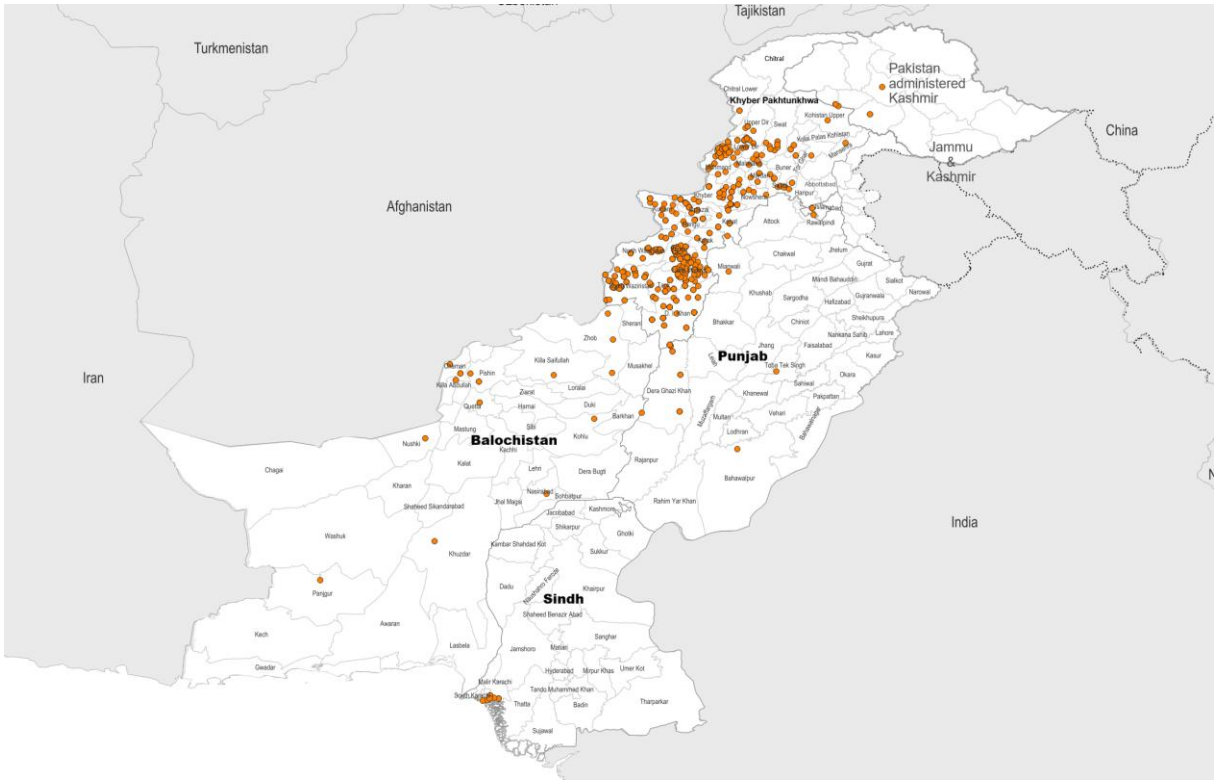
[299] Tahir, S. and Jadoon, A., Leaders, Fighters, and Suicide Attackers: Insights on TTP Militant Mobility Through Commemorative Records, 2006-2025, May 2025, url, p. 26
[300] Guardian (The), Pakistan declares 'open war' against Afghanistan after cross-border attack – as it happened, 27 February 2026, url; IEP, Global Terrorism Index 2025, 2025, url, p. 17
[301] Guardian (The), Pakistan declares 'open war' against Afghanistan after cross-border attack – as it happened, 27 February 2026, url; CRSS, Complex terrorism landscape in Pakistan-Afghanistan region: Afghan Emirate as counter-terror partner, 24 January 2025, url, p. 29
[302] Reuters, Militant leader at heart of Afghan-Pakistan conflict survived strike that provoked clashes, 16 October 2025, url
[303] CRSS, Complex terrorism landscape in Pakistan-Afghanistan region: Afghan Emirate as counter-terror partner, 24 January 2025, url, p. 29
[304] Jadoon, A., Confronting Pakistan's Deadly Trifecta of Terrorist Groups, South Asian Voices, 17 October 2025, url
[305] CRSS, Complex terrorism landscape in Pakistan-Afghanistan region: Afghan Emirate as counter-terror partner, 24 January 2025, url, p. 38
[306] Basit, A., The Transformation of TTP: Rise, Fall and Resurgence, 31 December 2024, url, p. 16
[307] UN Security Council, Letter dated 21 July 2025 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities addressed to the President of the Security Council [containing thirty-sixth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2734 (2024) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities], S/2025/482, 24 July 2025, url, para. 93
[308] Tahir, S. and Jadoon, A., Leaders, Fighters, and Suicide Attackers: Insights on TTP Militant Mobility Through Commemorative Records, 2006-2025, May 2025, url, p. 32
[309] CRSS, Organizational Structures and Security Implications of TTP and IS-K in Pakistan, 9 February 2026, url; Jadoon, A., Confronting Pakistan's Deadly Trifecta of Terrorist Groups, South Asian Voices, 17 October 2025, url
[310] Jadoon, A., Confronting Pakistan's Deadly Trifecta of Terrorist Groups, South Asian Voices, 17 October 2025, url
[311] CRSS, Complex terrorism landscape in Pakistan-Afghanistan region: Afghan Emirate as counter-terror partner, 24 January 2025, url, p. 39
[312] TOI, Pakistan Taliban running 'shadow government' in North Waziristan, 4 December 2023, url
[313] Basit, A., Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakstan Ingress Into Punjab: Prospects and Challenges, The Diplomat, 28 May 2024, url
[314] Rehman, Z., Pakistani Taliban move into new territories, DW, 3 May 2023, url

northwest and certain areas of Balochistan.[315] At the same time, 2025 saw recurring signs of internal disagreement within the TTP ranks, especially between its leadership and JuA loyalists.[316] The TTP has gained greater operational manoeuvrability in Pakistan[317] and continued to attack security forces[318] and infrastructure to undermine the state's authority.[319] As the group reinforced its organisational structure, it shifted towards more strategic and coordinated high-profile operations[320] and away from indiscriminate attacks on civilians.[321] However, the group continued to strike civilians with perceived links to the state in targeted attacks.[322] A new 'general code of conduct' introduced in 2025 broadened TTP's declared set of legitimate targets from a narrower focus on security forces to include other state-related targets[323] such as 'military-owned businesses'[324] and individuals working in the legal and judicial domains.[325] The group sustained a high pace of operations throughout 2025, [326] with some attacks resulting in large numbers of casualties. The lethality of attacks was enhanced by TTP's continued access to sophisticated weaponry[327] such as sniper rifles, night-vision goggles, and drones.[328]

In 2025, KP's former tribal districts and their adjoining border districts remained the TTP's core operational theatre.[329] In these areas, the group has set up roadblocks and checkpoints, and its fighters were reported to roam freely and live among the population while not maintaining

[315] Sunday Guardian (The), TTP unveils 2026 plan, signals shift to shadow-govern Pak, 28 December 2025, url
[316] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 24
[317] IEP, Global Terrorism Index 2025, March 2025, url, p. 23
[318] Masomy, M.J., Can Pakistan Play a Role in Regime Change in Afghanistan?, RUSI, 9 January 2026, url; CRSS, Complex terrorism landscape in Pakistan-Afghanistan region: Afghan Emirate as counter-terror partner, 24 January 2025, url, p. 29
[319] IEP, Global Terrorism Index 2025, March 2025, url, p. 23; note that the IEP uses artificial intelligence and machine learning technologies to analyse and process GTI data.
[320] CRSS, Complex terrorism landscape in Pakistan-Afghanistan region: Afghan Emirate as counter-terror partner, 24 January 2025, url, p. 33
[321] Jadoon, A., Confronting Pakistan's Deadly Trifecta of Terrorist Groups, South Asian Voices, 17 October 2025, url
[322] ACLED, The battle for the borderlands: The Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan challenges the state's control, 6 October 2025, url
[323] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 24
[324] UN Security Council, Letter dated 8 December 2025 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011) addressed to the President of the Security Council [containing Sixteenth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2763 (2024) concerning the Taliban and other associated individuals and entities constituting a threat to the peace, stability and security of Afghanistan], S/2025/796, 8 December 2025, url, para. 85
[325] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 24
[326] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 24; UN Security Council, Letter dated 8 December 2025 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011) addressed to the President of the Security Council [containing Sixteenth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2763 (2024) concerning the Taliban and other associated individuals and entities constituting a threat to the peace, stability and security of Afghanistan], S/2025/796, 8 December 2025, url, para. 82, 86
[327] UN Security Council, Letter dated 21 July 2025 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities addressed to the President of the Security Council [containing thirty-sixth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2734 (2024) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities], S/2025/482, 24 July 2025, url, para. 93
[328] Guardian (The), 'An environment of terror': deadly resurgence of Pakistan Taliban gathers pace, 13 October 2025, url
[329] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 23

sizeable bases.[330] Beyond these core areas, the group has also expanded its activities to the province's northwest and south, particularly Bannu, Lakki Marwat and Dera Ismail Khan,[331] and has maintained persistent operational intensity in these areas.[332] Some of TTP's operations in 2025 also extended to areas like South Punjab and Pishin[333] in Balochistan.[334] Although TTP has yet to establish a strong operational presence in regions outside KP,[335] it has reinforced its footprint in these areas through alliances with influential local militant factions (notably in northern and southern Punjab[336] and Karachi).[337]



Map 2: TTP activities in Pakistan between 1 November 2024 and 21 April 2026[338]

Please note: The depictions on Map 2 do not imply any opinion whatsoever on the part of EUAA concerning legal status or effective control over any country, territory, city, or area. Every effort is made to ensure this map is free of errors, but there is no guarantee that the

[330] Guardian (The), 'An environment of terror': deadly resurgence of Pakistan Taliban gathers pace, 13 October 2025, url
[331] ACLED, The battle for the borderlands: The Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan challenges the state's control, 6 October 2025, url
[332] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 23
[333] Jadoon, A., Confronting Pakistan's Deadly Trifecta of Terrorist Groups, South Asian Voices, 17 October 2025, url
[334] Dawn, Five terrorists killed in Pishin operation: CTD, 27 January 2026, url
[335] Sayed, A., TTP Projecting Power Outside Pakistan's Northwest, The Jamestown Foundation, 6 November 2025, url
[336] Basit, A., The Transformation of TTP: Rise, Fall and Resurgence, 31 December 2024, url, p. 16
[337] Basit, A., Implications of TTP-Hafiz Gul Bahadur Group Competition for Pakistan's Internal Security, The Diplomat, 25 February 2025, url
[338] EUAA map visualisation based on ACLED data for the reference period and publicly available administrative division boundaries.

map or its features are either spatially or temporally accurate or fit for a particular use. This map is provided without any warranty of any kind whatsoever, either expressed or implied.

Beyond developments on the ground, TTP now employs propaganda as a principal tool for extending its influence,[339] showing enhanced capabilities in using social media as a means of recruiting new members.[340] Its recent messaging, amplified by its multilingual AI-supported Umar Media channel, blends traditional Islamist ideology with Pashtun nationalist rhetoric.[341]

The group continued to benefit from significant operational and logistical support from Afghanistan's Taliban *de facto* authorities. Some member states of the UN Security Council reported of sustained tactical-level relations between TTP and Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP). According to one member state, TTP operatives also provided training to insurgents in Balochistan,[342] although there was disagreement between members states as to the degree of cooperation between TTP and the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA).[343] For further information see section 3.2.1. Haqqani Network of the EUAA COI report Pakistan - Country Focus (December 2024).

3.2.2. Lashkar-e Taiba (LeT)

Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) is an Islamic Salafist militant group established in 1986[344] as an armed wing of the Sunni Islamist organisation Markaz-ud-Dawa-wal-Irshad.[345] While seeking exclusive Pakistani control over the Kashmir region,[346] it is known to harbour more wide-reaching hostility towards India,[347] striving to establish Islamic rule across the Indian subcontinent.[348] It has collaborated with other Kashmiri-oriented[349] groups such as Jaish-e Mohammed (JeM) and Harakat ul-Mujahideen (HuM) and supported al-Qaeda.[350] At the same time, the group has refrained from attacks inside Pakistan and condemned anti-state militancy in the country, at times even providing assistance in neutralising militants.[351] While Pakistan's ISI had strong

[339] Firdous, I., The reinvention of the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, XCEPT, March 2025, url, p. 1
[340] Jadoon, A., Confronting Pakistan's Deadly Trifecta of Terrorist Groups, South Asian Voices, 17 October 2025, url
[341] Jadoon, A., Beyond Counterterrorism: A Legitimacy-Centered Framework for Pakistan's Security Crisis, Hudson Institute, 6 October 2025, url
[342] UN Security Council, Letter dated 21 July 2025 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities addressed to the President of the Security Council [containing thirty-sixth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2734 (2024) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities], S/2025/482, 24 July 2025, url, para. 93
[343] UN Security Council, Letter dated 21 July 2025 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities addressed to the President of the Security Council [containing thirty-sixth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2734 (2024) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities], S/2025/482, 24 July 2025, url, para. 95
[344] Guardian (The), Kashmir crisis: what is Lashkar-e-Taiba and is it supported by Pakistan?, 7 May 2025, url
[345] Britannica, Lashkar-e-Taiba, last updated 6 March 2026, url
[346] Britannica, Lashkar-e-Taiba, last updated 6 March 2026, url
[347] Guardian (The), Kashmir crisis: what is Lashkar-e-Taiba and is it supported by Pakistan?, 7 May 2025, url
[348] Britannica, Lashkar-e-Taiba, last updated 6 March 2026, url
[349] Britannica, Jaish-e-Mohammed, last updated 21 May 2025, url; US, CIA, World Factbook – Terrorist Organizations, n.d., url
[350] US, CIA, World Factbook – Terrorist Organizations, n.d., url
[351] Guardian (The), Kashmir crisis: what is Lashkar-e-Taiba and is it supported by Pakistan?, 7 May 2025, url

institutional, albeit covert, ties with LeT in the past, there has been less clarity as to the current extent of state support for the group.[352] There was even some controversy during the reference period as to whether the group was active[353] or defunct.[354] Sources estimated that the group had 'several thousand'[355] up to 5 000 members.[356] The group's headquarters are reportedly located in the city of Muridke in Pakistan's Punjab province.[357] Disputed allegations held that LeT played a role in a major deadly attack in Pahalgam (Jammu and Kashmir) in April 2025 that was initially claimed by The Resistance Front (TRF), a group possibly identical with LeT.[358] Following the Pahalgam attack, India launched missile strikes against the alleged LeT headquarters.[359]

3.2.3. Jamaat-ul Ahrar (JuA)

Jamaat-ul Ahrar (JuA) was created in 2014 as a TTP splinter group[360] and maintains close ties to al-Qaeda.[361] The group has claimed suicide attacks targeting Pakistani security forces[362] and civilians in recent years.[363] In 2020, the group rejoined the TTP. However, following the death of JuA leader Omar Khalid Khorasani in a 2022 roadside bombing in Afghanistan,[364] which prominent JuA figures blamed on the TTP leadership,[365] disputes between JuA adherents and TTP reemerged. In 2025, there were signs that these rifts were growing, as Muhammad Imad Abbas, a researcher at the digital media outlet The Khorasan Diary, stated.[366] Notably, JuA resumed operating its propaganda arm Ghazi Media,[367] made efforts to expand its own alliance network, and was alleged to have adopted a 'hedging policy' between the TTP and its

[352] Guardian (The), Kashmir crisis: what is Lashkar-e-Taiba and is it supported by Pakistan?, 7 May 2025, url
[353] US, CIA, World Factbook – Terrorist Organizations, n.d., url
[354] UN Security Council, Letter dated 21 July 2025 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities addressed to the President of the Security Council [containing thirty-sixth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2734 (2024) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities], S/2025/482, 24 July 2025, url, para. 84
[355] US, CRS, Terrorist and Other Militant Groups in Pakistan, last updated 25 March 2026, url, p. 2
[356] US, CIA, World Factbook – Terrorist Organizations, n.d., url
[357] International Crisis Group, India-Pakistan: Avoiding a War in Waiting, 17 September 2025, url, p. 7; Al Jazeera, Inside Muridke: Did India hit a 'terror base' or a mosque?, 9 May 2025, url
[358] UN Security Council, Letter dated 21 July 2025 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities addressed to the President of the Security Council [containing thirty-sixth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2734 (2024) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities], S/2025/482, 24 July 2025, url, para. 84
[359] International Crisis Group, India-Pakistan: Avoiding a War in Waiting, 17 September 2025, url, p. 7
[360] LWJ, Taliban splinter group Jamaat-ul-Ahrar forms in northwestern Pakistan, 26 August 2014, url
[361] LWJ, Analysis: Pakistan attempts to shift blame for TTP attacks toward India, 8 October 2025, url
[362] Al Jazeera, Afghanistan says Pakistan bombed Khost, killing nine children and a woman, 25 November 2025, url
[363] LWJ, Pakistani Taliban kills scores in mosque bombing in Peshawar, 30 January 2023, url
[364] LWJ, Analysis: Pakistan attempts to shift blame for TTP attacks toward India, 8 October 2025, url
[365] Basit, A., Implications of TTP-Hafiz Gul Bahadur Group Competition for Pakistan's Internal Security, The Diplomat, 25 February 2025, url
[366] Abbas, M.I., Fractures and Realignments Among Pakistan's Jihadist Groups, The Diplomat, 30 October 2025, url
[367] Khorasan Diary (The), [X], posted on: 15 February 2025, url; Basit, A., Implications of TTP-Hafiz Gul Bahadur Group Competition for Pakistan's Internal Security, The Diplomat, 25 February 2025, url

new rival, the Ittehad-ul-Mujahideen Pakistan (IMP) group led by the Hafiz Gul Bahadur faction (HGB).[368]

3.2.4. Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS)

As of 2025, al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) remained active,[369] with estimates of the group's overall size ranging from 200[370] to 400 members (not limited to Pakistan).[371] While AQIS has reportedly 'blended itself' with TTP and increasingly shifted its focus towards Pakistan,[372] it did not claim any large-scale attacks in the country in 2025, with no fatalities attributed to the group. According to the think tank Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS), its operational capabilities have been disrupted by arrests of alleged members (e.g., in Punjab and Karachi), losses within its leadership ranks, and competition from rivalling groups such as ISKP.[373] Nonetheless, member states of the UN Security Council voiced concerns that AQIS's ambitions and confidence were growing.[374]

3.2.5. Jamaat-ul Ansar Al-Sharia

Jamaat-ul Ansar al-Shariah Pakistan was an AQIS-linked group[375] that emerged in June 2017.[376] It was comprised of a small number of fighters[377] who had returned from fighting for jihadist groups in the Syrian conflict. The group's apparent objective was to achieve a revival of AQIS in Pakistan by luring ISKP and other IS members back to AQIS.[378] However, by September 2017, the Dawn newspaper referred to sources confirming that the group had been dismantled and nearly all its members detained.[379] Abdullah Khan, Managing Director of PICSS, told the EUAA that the group was 'largely dysfunctional' as of September 2024,[380] and

[368] Abbas, M.I., Fractures and Realignments Among Pakistan's Jihadist Groups, The Diplomat, 30 October 2025, url
[369] US, CIA, World Factbook – Terrorist Organizations, n.d., url
[370] UN Security Council, Letter dated 8 December 2025 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011) addressed to the President of the Security Council [containing Sixteenth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2763 (2024) concerning the Taliban and other associated individuals and entities constituting a threat to the peace, stability and security of Afghanistan], S/2025/796, 8 December 2025, url, para. 96
[371] US, CIA, World Factbook – Terrorist Organizations, n.d., url
[372] UN Security Council, Letter dated 8 December 2025 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011) addressed to the President of the Security Council [containing Sixteenth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2763 (2024) concerning the Taliban and other associated individuals and entities constituting a threat to the peace, stability and security of Afghanistan], S/2025/796, 8 December 2025, url, para. 96
[373] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, pp. 35-37
[374] UN Security Council, Letter dated 21 July 2025 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities addressed to the President of the Security Council [containing thirty-sixth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2734 (2024) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities], S/2025/482, 24 July 2025, url, para. 92
[375] Zahid, F., Jamaat ul Ansar al-Sharia: The New al-Qaeda Threat in Pakistan, The Jamestown Foundation, 22 September 2017, url; Dawn, The rise and 'fall' of Ansarul Sharia Pakistan, 9 September 2017, url
[376] Zahid, F., The Return of Al-Qaeda to Pakistan, MEI, 24 August 2017, url
[377] Khan, Abdullah, Managing Director of PICSS, online interview with EUAA, 26 March 2026; Dawn, The rise and 'fall' of Ansarul Sharia Pakistan, 9 September 2017, url
[378] Zahid, F., Jamaat ul Ansar al-Sharia: The New al-Qaeda Threat in Pakistan, The Jamestown Foundation, 22 September 2017, url
[379] Dawn, The rise and 'fall' of Ansarul Sharia Pakistan, 9 September 2017, url
[380] Khan, Abdullah, Managing Director of PICSS, online interview with EUAA, 19 September 2024

that no activity of the group had been reported ever since, which suggests that the group has become dormant.[381]

3.2.6. Punjabi Taliban

The term 'Punjabi Taliban' is an unofficial term referring to militants from non-Pashtun backgrounds who joined the TTP[382] or allied with them in 2007, hailing from Punjab and Karachi.[383] Their proclaimed aim was to implement Sharia.[384] Within this broad category of militants, there was a distinct group led by Asmatullah Muawiya, a former commander of Jaish-e Muhammad (JeM). Many militants in this Punjabi group came from militant groups such as JeM and HuM which were primarily focused on anti-India operations in Kashmir.[385] However, Punjabi Taliban figures disappeared from the TTP leadership after 2014.[386] While the group continued to exist in name, its activities in Pakistan ceased,[387] with some Punjabi Taliban factions becoming dormant, while others merged with AQIS.[388] More recently, however, TTP was reported to have reactivated its networks in Punjab and Karachi, reviving the 'Punjabi Taliban' as part of its new ambition to wage a nationwide insurgency.[389] A senior ethnic Punjabi TTP commander, Chaudhry Muneeb-ur-Rehman Jatt,[390] played a key role in TTP's recent attempts to re-expand its networks in these areas. At the same time, as of mid-2025, he remained the only known high-ranking ethnic Punjabi commander within TTP.[391]

3.2.7. Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP) and Islamic State Pakistan Province (ISPP)

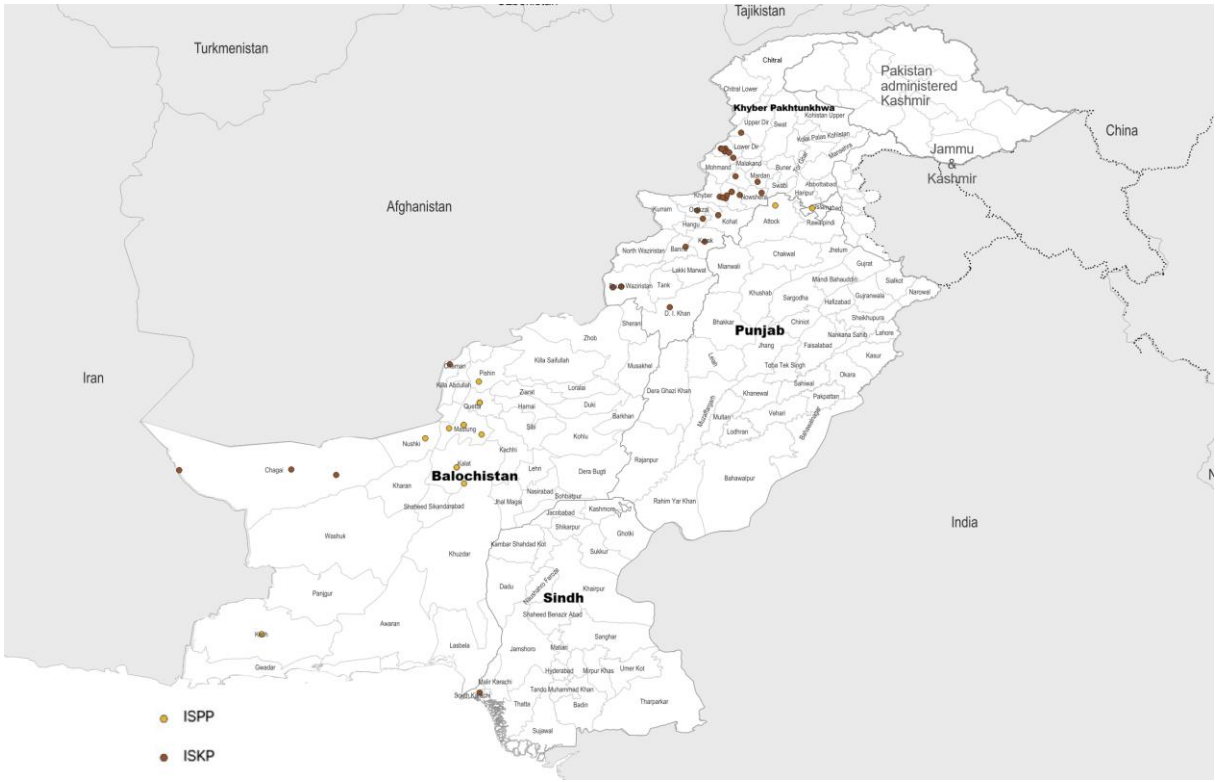
Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP), formed in 2015, is a regional affiliate of the Islamic State (IS) group.[392] ISKP follows a Salafist-jihadist ideology[393] and in recent years has evolved

[381] Khan, Abdullah, Managing Director of PICSS, online interview with EUAA, 26 March 2026
[382] Khan, Abdullah, Managing Director of PICSS, online interview with EUAA, 26 March 2026; Sayed, A., TTP Projecting Power Outside Pakistan's Northwest, The Jamestown Foundation, 6 November 2025, url
[383] Sayed, A., TTP Projecting Power Outside Pakistan's Northwest, The Jamestown Foundation, 6 November 2025, url
[384] Dawn, Punjabi Taliban give up 'armed struggle', 14 September 2014, url
[385] Khan, Abdullah, Managing Director of PICSS, online interview with EUAA, 26 March 2026
[386] Sayed, A., TTP Projecting Power Outside Pakistan's Northwest, The Jamestown Foundation, 6 November 2025, url
[387] Khan, Abdullah, Managing Director of PICSS, online interview with EUAA, 26 March 2026
[388] Basit, A., Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan Ingress Into Punjab: Prospects and Challenges, The Diplomat, 28 May 2024, url
[389] Sayed, A., TTP Projecting Power Outside Pakistan's Northwest, The Jamestown Foundation, 6 November 2025, url
[390] Ahmad, O., Commander Muneeb: The Mind Behind the TTP's Media Transformation, The Jamestown Foundation, 24 January 2025, url
[391] Sayed, A., TTP Projecting Power Outside Pakistan's Northwest, The Jamestown Foundation, 6 November 2025, url
[392] CRSS, Complex terrorism landscape in Pakistan-Afghanistan region: Afghan Emirate as counter-terror partner, 24 January 2025, url, p. 22
[393] CRSS, Complex terrorism landscape in Pakistan-Afghanistan region: Afghan Emirate as counter-terror partner, 24 January 2025, url, pp. 6, 23; Sharifi, A., Der »Islamische Staat – Khorasan-Provinz«. Vom regionalen IS-Ableger in Zentralasien zur globalen Terrororganisation [" Islamic State – Khorasan Province". From a regional IS branch in Central Asia to a global terrorist organisation"] , 9 December 2024, url, p. 7

towards adopting a more global posture.[394] The group maintains a presence in Pakistan.[395] Estimates of the size of the group during the reference period ranged from around 2 000[396] to 4 000–6 000 fighters.[397] The group, which has a history of attacking military and civilian targets in Pakistan,[398] maintains a decentralised network of cells in the country.[399] Despite experiencing a number of setbacks due to security operations in 2024 and 2025,[400] it continues to present an 'unpredictable' security challenge to the state due to its resilience and 'difficult-to-trace and rapidly evolving operational tactics', according to an Islamabad-based security analyst.[401] Meanwhile, its operational footprint during the reference period was more limited compared to that of other militant groups like TTP, HGB/IMP[402] and major Balochi militant groups.[403]

Islamic State Pakistan Province (ISPP) is a separate regional Islamic State affiliate that split from ISKP in 2019 and focuses on Pakistan. It primarily operates in Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan and AJK while being less present in KP. While the group was generally known for conducting smaller-scale attacks (including acts of sectarian violence),[404] it claimed several major deadly attacks in Balochistan in 2024[405] and 2025[406] and Islamabad in February 2026. Abdul Sayed, a conflict analyst based in Sweden, was quoted by Al Jazeera as saying that since 2019, ISPP carried out about 100 attacks, most of them in Balochistan.[407]

[394] CRSS, Complex terrorism landscape in Pakistan-Afghanistan region: Afghan Emirate as counter-terror partner, 24 January 2025, url, pp. 6, 23; Sharifi, A., Der »Islamische Staat – Khorasan-Provinz«. Vom regionalen IS-Ableger in Zentralasien zur globalen Terrororganisation [" Islamic State – Khorasan Province". From a regional IS branch in Central Asia to a global terrorist organisation"] , 9 December 2024, url, pp. 8-9; Zelin, A.Y., ISKP Goes Global: External Operations from Afghanistan, TWI, 11 September 2023, url
[395] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 32
[396] UN Security Council, Letter dated 21 July 2025 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities addressed to the President of the Security Council [containing thirty-sixth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2734 (2024) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities], S/2025/482, 24 July 2025, url, para. 86
[397] US, CRS, Terrorist and Other Militant Groups in Pakistan, last updated 25 March 2026, url, p. 2
[398] CRSS, Complex terrorism landscape in Pakistan-Afghanistan region: Afghan Emirate as counter-terror partner, 24 January 2025, url, p. 27
[399] Jadoon, A., Confronting Pakistan's Deadly Trifecta of Terrorist Groups, South Asian Voices, 17 October 2025, url; Basit, A., Is the Islamic State of Khorasan Province Losing Momentum?, The Diplomat, 26 June 2025, url
[400] Basit, A., Pakistan's Worsening Threat Landscape in 2025, The Diplomat, 31 December 2025, url; Jadoon, A., Confronting Pakistan's Deadly Trifecta of Terrorist Groups, South Asian Voices, 17 October 2025, url; UN Security Council, Letter dated 6 February 2025 from the President of the Security Council acting in the absence of a Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities addressed to the President of the Security Council [containing thirty-fifth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2734 (2024) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities], S/2025/71, 6 February 2025, url, para. 89
[401] DW, Pakistan mosque attack highlights worsening militant threat, 11 February 2026, url
[402] CRSS, Organizational Structures and Security Implications of TTP and IS-K in Pakistan, 9 February 2026, url; PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 32
[403] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 32
[404] Shahab-ud-Din, M., [X], posted on: 6 February 2026, url
[405] CNN, At least 30 dead in Balochistan explosions, day before Pakistan election, 7 February 2024, url
[406] PICSS, Militancy, Human Rights, and Strategic Partnerships: Pakistan in a Week of Turmoil and Diplomacy (WR:29 August-4 September), 8 September 2025, url; ECSSR, Implications as ISPP Expands Operational Presence, 16 April 2025, url
[407] Al Jazeera, Deadly Islamabad bombing sharpens focus on cross-border attacks in Pakistan, 7 February 2026, url



Map 3: ISPP and ISKP activities in Pakistan between 1 November 2024 and 21 April 2026[408]

Please note: The depictions on Map 3 do not imply any opinion whatsoever on the part of EUAA concerning legal status or effective control over any country, territory, city, or area. Every effort is made to ensure this map is free of errors, but there is no guarantee that the map or its features are either spatially or temporally accurate or fit for a particular use. This map is provided without any warranty of any kind whatsoever, either expressed or implied.

3.2.8. Haqqani Network

The Haqqani Network continued to provide support to the TTP[409] while sources claimed that the group had links to the ISI.[410] As of March 2026, it was estimated to have several hundred core members and 3 000 to 5 000 armed militants with various degrees of affiliation, many of them reportedly operating in the border areas between Pakistan and Afghanistan.[411] For further information, see section 3.2.8. Haqqani Network of the EUAA COI report Pakistan - Country Focus (December 2024).

[408] EUAA map visualisation based on ACLED data for the reference period and publicly available administrative division boundaries.
[409] LWJ, Pakistani and Tajik Taliban open training camps in Afghanistan, 13 February 2025, url
[410] IISS, Renewal of India–Pakistan rivalry over Afghanistan, 5 November 2025, url; US, CRS, Terrorist and Other Militant Groups in Pakistan, last updated 25 March 2026, url, p. 2
[411] US, CRS, Terrorist and Other Militant Groups in Pakistan, last updated 25 March 2026, url, p. 2

3.2.9. Hafiz Gul Bahadur (HGB)

Hafiz Gul Bahadur (HGB) is a militant umbrella organisation named after its founder[412] and current commander Hafiz Gul Bahadur,[413] a former leader of the North Waziristan Taliban.[414] HGB has a strong presence in the same district[415] and has ties with AQ, the Haqqani Network, and TTP.[416] While some sources referred to HGB as being affiliated[417] or aligned with TTP,[418] PICSS emphasised that HGB is an independent group that has distinct command structures and follows its own agenda.[419] As it sought to counter the TTP's rising influence in its own 'backyard', the group, mainly rooted in North Waziristan's Wazir and Dawar tribes, and TTP, dominated by South Waziristan's Mehsud tribe,[420] engaged in intense tribal rivalries during the reference period, competing over resources, authority, and territorial control. During the reference period, the group recruited several TTP commanders and claimed that multiple local faction commanders had joined its coalition.[421] At the same time, it lost one of its key commanders to TTP.[422] HGB allied with the group Lashkar-e Islam (LeI)[423] and is now at the helm of TTP's emerging rival, Ittehad-ul-Mujahideen Pakistan (IMP),[424] a military alliance[425] which includes the groups LeI and Harkat Inqilab-e Islami Pakistan (HIIP).[426] Safdar Sial, an expert at PIPS, was quoted as saying that HGB has been perceived as a growing security threat[427] as it carried out large numbers of attacks over the reference period, targeting security forces in ambushes, IED attacks and suicide bombings, mainly in North Waziristan. Attacks were claimed by HGB proxy groups.[428] While a number of HGB members were killed in

[412] Valle, R., Jabhat Ansar al-Mahdi Khorasan Emerges as Prominent Faction of Hafiz Gul Bahadur in Pakistan, The Jamestown Foundation, 22 March 2024, url
[413] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 26
[414] Sulaiman, S., Hafiz Gul Bahadur: A Profile of the Leader of the North Waziristan Taliban, The Jamestown Foundation, 10 April 2009, url
[415] ACLED, The battle for the borderlands: The Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan challenges the state's control, 6 October 2025, url
[416] Bhattacharya, S., Hafiz Gul Bahadur: Pashtun Militant Fostering Jihadist Factional Unity Along Pakistan's Durand Line, The Jamestown Foundation, 6 March 2025, url
[417] Arab News, Pakistani, Afghan negotiators hold talks in Doha after fierce clashes, airstrikes, 18 October 2025, url; Rehman, Z., Taliban regime deepens Pakistan's internal security woes, DW, 14 August 2025, url
[418] Bhattacharya, S., Hafiz Gul Bahadur: Pashtun Militant Fostering Jihadist Factional Unity Along Pakistan's Durand Line, The Jamestown Foundation, 6 March 2025, url
[419] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 26
[420] Basit, A., Implications of TTP-Hafiz Gul Bahadur Group Competition for Pakistan's Internal Security, The Diplomat, 25 February 2025, url
[421] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 27
[422] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 27; Basit, A., Implications of TTP-Hafiz Gul Bahadur Group Competition for Pakistan's Internal Security, The Diplomat, 25 February 2025, url
[423] Basit, A., Implications of TTP-Hafiz Gul Bahadur Group Competition for Pakistan's Internal Security, The Diplomat, 25 February 2025, url
[424] Abbas, M.I., Fractures and Realignments Among Pakistan's Jihadist Groups, The Diplomat, 30 October 2025, url
[425] PICSS, Emergence of 'Ittehad-ul-Mujahideen Pakistan': A New Militant Alliance Challenges TTP's Monopoly. Weekly Report 11-17 April, 2025, 18 April 2025, url
[426] Abbas, M.I., Fractures and Realignments Among Pakistan's Jihadist Groups, The Diplomat, 30 October 2025, url; PICSS, Emergence of 'Ittehad-ul-Mujahideen Pakistan': A New Militant Alliance Challenges TTP's Monopoly. Weekly Report 11-17 April, 2025, 18 April 2025, url
[427] Rehman, Z., Taliban regime deepens Pakistan's internal security woes, DW, 14 August 2025, url
[428] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 27

counterterrorism operations,[429] they did not destroy its operational capabilities. Rumours that emerged in October 2025 of the killing of Hafiz Gul Bahadur remained unverified.[430]

3.2.10. Sipah-e Sahaba Pakistan (SSP)

Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) is a Sunni Deobandi[431] anti-Shia sectarian group[432] founded in Punjab's Jhang district in 1985.[433] Following its official ban by the Pakistani government in 2002, SSP continued to act overtly under the name of Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat (ASWJ),[434] its political party,[435] while claiming militant acts using the name SSP and that of Lashkar-e-Jhangvi,[436] its purportedly separate armed wing.[437] According to an author specialising in counterterrorism interviewed by Canada's Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) in November 2024, SSP/ASWJ had a 'clear organization[al] structure with central leadership, with assigned people who are responsible [for] media and finances'.[438] The group had between 3 000 and 6 000 members mainly operating in Punjab, Karachi, and the former FATA, according to a late 2023 estimate presented by the CRS.[439]

3.2.11. Lashkar-e Jhangvi (LeJ)

Lashkar-e Jhangvi (LeJ) is a Sunni Deobandi sectarian armed group established in 1996[440] as a separate militant wing of SSP.[441] While in the past LeJ was a vigorous group conducting high-profile attacks targeting the Shia community,[442] it was severely weakened in more recent years[443] following internal rifts, defections and security operations.[444] According to Zia Ur

[429] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, pp. 28-29; SATP, Detail of Terrorism Update, 19 October 2025, url
[430] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 26; KT, Reports Conflict Over Death of Pakistani Taliban Commander Hafiz Gul Bahadur, 23 October 2025, url
[431] International Crisis Group, A New Era of Sectarian Violence in Pakistan, 5 September 2022, url, p. i
[432] ABP Live, ABP Exclusive: Terror Outfit Sipah-e-Sahaba Held Anti-Shia Event Just 1 Km From Islamabad Mosque During Blast, 7 February 2026, url
[433] International Crisis Group, A New Era of Sectarian Violence in Pakistan, 5 September 2022, url, p. 2
[434] ABP Live, ABP Exclusive: Terror Outfit Sipah-e-Sahaba Held Anti-Shia Event Just 1 Km From Islamabad Mosque During Blast, 7 February 2026, url
[435] Canada, IRB, Pakistan: Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan [Sipah-i-Sahaba Pakistan] (SSP) / Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat [Ahl-e-Sunnat-wal-Jamaat] (ASWJ) [Rah-e-Haq, Rah-i-Haq party (PRHP)], Lashkar-e-Jhangvi [Lashkar-i-Jhangvi, Army of Jhangvi] (LeJ), and Tehrik-i-Taliban [Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan, Tehrik-e-Taliban, Pakistani Taliban, Tehreek-e-Taliban] (TTP) militant groups [...] (2022–December 2024), 2 January 2025, url
[436] ABP Live, ABP Exclusive: Terror Outfit Sipah-e-Sahaba Held Anti-Shia Event Just 1 Km From Islamabad Mosque During Blast, 7 February 2026, url
[437] International Crisis Group, A New Era of Sectarian Violence in Pakistan, 5 September 2022, url, p. i
[438] Canada, IRB, Pakistan: Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan [Sipah-i-Sahaba Pakistan] (SSP) / Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat [Ahl-e-Sunnat-wal-Jamaat] (ASWJ) [Rah-e-Haq, Rah-i-Haq party (PRHP)], Lashkar-e-Jhangvi [Lashkar-i-Jhangvi, Army of Jhangvi] (LeJ), and Tehrik-i-Taliban [Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan, Tehrik-e-Taliban, Pakistani Taliban, Tehreek-e-Taliban] (TTP) militant groups [...] (2022–December 2024), 2 January 2025, url
[439] US, CRS, Terrorist and Other Militant Groups in Pakistan, last updated 1 December 2023, url, p. 2
[440] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 43
[441] International Crisis Group, A New Era of Sectarian Violence in Pakistan, 5 September 2022, url, p. 2
[442] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 43
[443] Dawn, Islamabad atrocity, 7 February 2026, url; Canada, IRB, Pakistan: Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan [Sipah-i-Sahaba Pakistan] (SSP) / Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat [Ahl-e-Sunnat-wal-Jamaat] (ASWJ) [Rah-e-Haq, Rah-i-Haq party (PRHP)], Lashkar-e-Jhangvi [Lashkar-i-Jhangvi, Army of Jhangvi] (LeJ), and Tehrik-i-Taliban [Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan, Tehrik-e-Taliban, Pakistani Taliban, Tehreek-e-Taliban] (TTP) militant groups [...] (2022–December 2024), 2 January 2025, url
[444] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 43

Rehman, a Pakistan-based journalist who was interviewed by Canada's Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) in early December 2024, most of the LeJ's leaders have been killed.[445] The group shifted its focus to smaller-scale targeted killings. In 2025, the LeJ's structure remained fragmented, and the group continued to show limited operational capabilities, claiming sporadic attacks in Punjab, Sindh, and KP.[446] A 2023 estimate presented in the former CIA World Factbook put the group's strength at a few hundred members.[447] According to Rehman, as of late 2024, LeJ operated in Quetta (Balochistan), Karachi, parts of Punjab (including Lahore), and in KP's Kurram and Peshawar districts.[448] For further information, see section 3.2.10. Lashkar-e Jhangvi (LeJ) of the EUAA COI report Pakistan - Country Focus (December 2024).

3.2.12. Sipah-e Mohammed Pakistan (SMP)

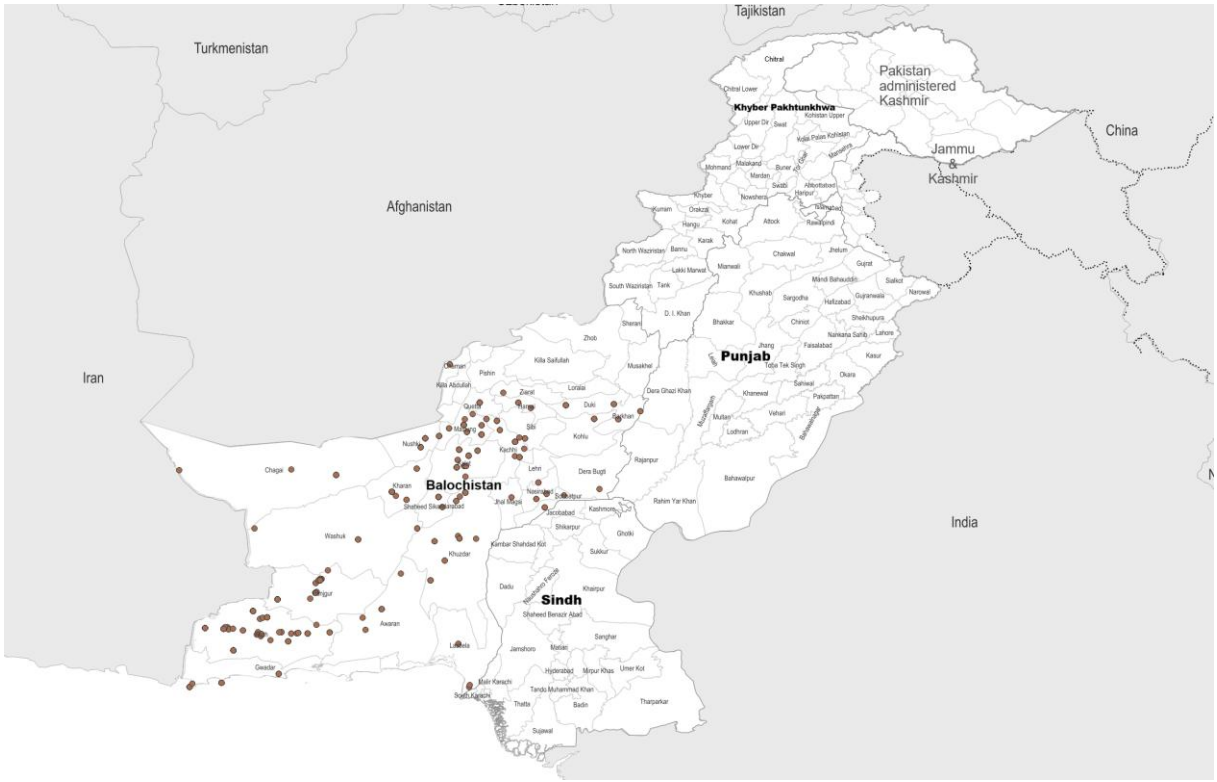
Sipah-e Muhammad Pakistan (SMP) is a Shia militant group backed by Iran[449] that was involved in tit-for-tat killings with SSP in the 1980s and 1990s.[450] Its main objective is to protect the Shia community from Sunni militant outfits.[451] In an interview with the EUAA in March 2026, Abdullah Khan, Managing Director of PICSS, stated that SMP primarily operates in central Punjab and Karachi, although its activities have decreased over the years. Khan indicated that while the group 'still exists, its influence is much smaller than in the 1990s'. Currently, more prominent Shia groups are operating in Pakistan, including the (Iran-backed) Zainabiyoun Brigade.[452]

3.2.13. Balochistan nationalist groups

According to Balochistan's Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti, an estimated 4 000 to 5 000 Baloch separatists were active across the Balochistan province.[453] These movements were fuelled by repressive state conduct and local perceptions of the continued marginalisation of the population and economic exploitation of the province's resources by the government[454] and through projects launched as part of the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)

[445] Canada, IRB, Pakistan: Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan [Sipah-i-Sahaba Pakistan] (SSP) / Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat [Ahl-e-Sunnat-wal-Jamaat] (ASWJ) [Rah-e-Haq, Rah-i-Haq party (PRHP)], Lashkar-e-Jhangvi [Lashkar-i-Jhangvi, Army of Jhangvi] (LeJ), and Tehrik-i-Taliban [Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan, Tehrik-e-Taliban, Pakistani Taliban, Tehreek-e-Taliban] (TTP) militant groups [...] (2022–December 2024), 2 January 2025, url
[446] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 43
[447] US, CIA, World Factbook – Terrorist Organizations, n.d., url
[448] Canada, IRB, Pakistan: Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan [Sipah-i-Sahaba Pakistan] (SSP) / Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat [Ahl-e-Sunnat-wal-Jamaat] (ASWJ) [Rah-e-Haq, Rah-i-Haq party (PRHP)], Lashkar-e-Jhangvi [Lashkar-i-Jhangvi, Army of Jhangvi] (LeJ), and Tehrik-i-Taliban [Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan, Tehrik-e-Taliban, Pakistani Taliban, Tehreek-e-Taliban] (TTP) militant groups [...] (2022–December 2024), 2 January 2025, url
[449] Khan, Abdullah, Managing Director of PICSS, online interview with EUAA, 26 March 2026; Ahmad, O., Iran and Pakistan Cooperate on Counter-Terrorism Amid Jaish al-Adl and Baloch Separatist Attacks, The Jamestown Foundation, 21 August 2024, url; International Crisis Group, A New Era of Sectarian Violence in Pakistan, 5 September 2022, url, p. 2
[450] International Crisis Group, A New Era of Sectarian Violence in Pakistan, 5 September 2022, url, p. 2
[451] SATP, Sipah-e-Mohammed Pakistan, Terrorist Group of Pakistan, n.d., url
[452] Khan, Abdullah, Managing Director of PICSS, online interview with EUAA, 26 March 2026
[453] CRSS, Balochistan Violence: Reality Lost To Inconsistency, 6 February 2026, url
[454] Shaikh, F., The hijacking of a train marks a watershed in the Balochistan insurgency, Chatham House, 16 April 2025, url; EurAsian Times (The), China's "Ukraine": Another Mineral-Rich Region Is Fast Emerging New Flashpoint As Beijing Faces The Heat In CPEC Zone!, 22 March 2025, url; Samad, Y., The Balochistan Quagmire: A Cycle of Violence, Political Mobilization, and Repression, Georgetown Journal of International Affairs, 14 March 2025, url

initiative.[455] As of April 2025, the Baloch insurgency encompassed around 10 militant factions, with the Balochistan Liberation Army Jeeyand faction (BLA-J), the BLA Azad faction (BLA-A) and the Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF) regularly claiming responsibility for attacks. The Baloch Raji Aajoi Sangar (BRAS) organisation, formed in 2018,[456] continued to act as a platform for Baloch and Sindhi militant groups to coordinate attacks in Balochistan and Sindh. It currently comprises the BLA-J, the BLF, the Baloch Republican Guard (BRG), and the Sindhudesh Revolutionary Army (SRA).[457]



Map 4: BLA activities in Pakistan between 1 November 2024 and 21 April 2026[458]

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Baloch nationalist groups have targeted security forces, infrastructure, and foreign investments,[459] as well as non-Baloch workers and settlers, especially ethnic Punjabis.[460]

[455] Mehdi, S. S., Targeting Chinese nationals: Unrest in Balochistan and the CPEC Challenge, Global Voices, 1 February 2025, url
[456] Verma, A. et al., The Baloch Insurgency in Pakistan: Evolution, Tactics, and Regional Security Implications, April 2025, url, p. 31
[457] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 48
[458] EUAA map visualisation based on ACLED data for the reference period and publicly available administrative division boundaries.
[459] Ur Rehman, Z., Pakistan's security situation is off the tracks. Can the authorities reclaim control?, Dawn, 13 March 2025, url
[460] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2024: An Abridged Version, Vol. 17, No. 1, January 2025, url, p. 25

Sources referred to the BLA-J faction as the most active[461] and lethal insurgent group in Balochistan in 2025. It seeks Baloch independence through armed struggle and operates as a decentralised network with cells spread across Balochistan.[462] The group runs four special forces units,[463] including the suicide unit Majeed Brigade and the Fatah Squad, as well as media and intelligence cells.[464] Its operational focus lies on mobile and hit-and-run tactics, including suicide car bombings, IED attacks, ambushes, and blockades.[465] Its targets include security forces,[466] infrastructure, Chinese investments,[467] and civilians in Balochistan, including off-duty security personnel[468] and individuals travelling to Punjab.[469] The Majeed Brigade has expanded its ranks to include female fighters.[470] Amongst others, the deadly hijacking of the Jaffar Express train by BLA-J in March 2025[471] indicated an increase in the group's operational capabilities.[472]

The BLA-A faction, traditionally weaker than BLA-J and BLF,[473] operates a loose network of Baloch fighters under its exiled leader Hyrbyair Marri. During the reference period, it showed signs of a resurgence after having been relatively dormant since 2016, conducting its first suicide bombing, as well as low-profile bombings and ambushes. It also executed alleged state collaborators and security force members.[474]

The BLF concentrated on guerilla warfare, operating cells in central and southern Balochistan. In a new tactical development, its leader Allah Nazar Baloch allowed suicide attacks and included women fighters. A first suicide attack by the group, carried out by a woman, targeted a Frontier Corps (FC) headquarters.[475] For further information on Balochi nationalist groups, including background information, see section 3.1.6. Balochistan nationalist groups of the EUAA COI report Pakistan - Country Focus (December 2024).

[461] Verma, A. et al., The Baloch Insurgency in Pakistan: Evolution, Tactics, and Regional Security Implications, April 2025, url, p. 32
[462] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 53
[463] Verma, A. et al., The Baloch Insurgency in Pakistan: Evolution, Tactics, and Regional Security Implications, April 2025, url, p. 32
[464] US, CIA, World Factbook – Terrorist Organizations, n.d., url
[465] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, pp. 53-54
[466] US, CIA, World Factbook – Terrorist Organizations, n.d., url; Dawn, Timeline: Attacks claimed by BLA over the last one year, 12 March 2025, url
[467] US, CIA, World Factbook – Terrorist Organizations, n.d., url
[468] Verma, A. et al., The Baloch Insurgency in Pakistan: Evolution, Tactics, and Regional Security Implications, April 2025, url, p. 27; US, CIA, World Factbook – Terrorist Organizations, n.d., url
[469] Dawn, Timeline: Attacks claimed by BLA over the last one year, 12 March 2025, url
[470] Salim, N., Growing Role of Women in Baloch Militancy, The Jamestown Foundation, 13 March 2026, url; PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 53
[471] Verma, A. et al., The Baloch Insurgency in Pakistan: Evolution, Tactics, and Regional Security Implications, April 2025, url, p. 27
[472] ISAS/NUS, ISAS Briefs – Pakistan's Mounting Security Challenges, 24 March 2025, url
[473] Verma, A. et al., The Baloch Insurgency in Pakistan: Evolution, Tactics, and Regional Security Implications, April 2025, url, p. 33
[474] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 57
[475] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, pp. 50-51

3.2.14. Other local/small militia groups

Further local armed militant groups in Pakistan include Kashmir-oriented groups seeking annexation of Indian-administered Kashmir into Pakistan (e.g., Jaish-e Mohammed (JeM),[476] Harakat ul-Mujahideen (HuM), and Hizb ul-Mujahideen (HM))[477] and the Sindhudesh Revolutionary Army (SRA), a significant Sindhi separatist group.[478] For further information, see section 3.2.13. Other local/small militia groups of the EUAA COI report Pakistan - Country Focus (December 2024).

3.3. Main geographical control and operational presence of armed groups

In KP, the militant landscape is dominated by TTP and affiliated factions, HGB, local Taliban groups, and Lashkar-e Islam (LeI), with factions linked to TTP now present in nearly all of the province's districts.[479] HGB maintains a particularly strong presence in North Waziristan[480] while also operating in South Waziristan and adjoining areas of KP. In 2025, the group extended its influence into Khyber district through an alliance with LeI.[481] ISKP maintains a presence in Pakistan,[482] where it has major footholds in KP's Bajaur district and Balochistan.[483] While the southern and southwestern districts of Balochistan have been the traditional hotbeds of the Baloch insurgency, Baloch militants have increasingly extended their operations into central Balochistan districts such as Bolan, Kalat, Harnai, and Kachhi.[484]

3.4. Forced recruitment including by TTP

No information could be found on instances of forced recruitment among the sources consulted within the reference period.

3.5. Groups designated as terrorist organisations

Groups proscribed by Pakistan's federal government (the MoI) up to October 2024 are, amongst others, LeJ (proscribed in 2001), LeT (2002), SSP (2002), JeM (2002), Al-Qaeda

[476] Britannica, Jaish-e-Mohammed, last updated 21 May 2025, url
[477] US, CIA, World Factbook – Terrorist Organizations, n.d., url
[478] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 58
[479] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 29
[480] ACLED, The battle for the borderlands: The Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan challenges the state's control, 6 October 2025, url
[481] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, pp. 26-27
[482] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 32
[483] CRSS, Complex terrorism landscape in Pakistan-Afghanistan region: Afghan Emirate as counter-terror partner, 24 January 2025, url, p. 35
[484] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 30

(2003), BLA (2006), TTP (2008), BLF (2010), JuA (2016), HGB (2024), and the BLA's Majeed Brigade (2024).[485]

Armed militant groups designed as 'foreign terrorist organization' by the US Department of State (USDOS) include the BLA/the Majeed Brigade,[486] TTP, LeT, AQ and AQIS, the Haqqani Network, ISKP, ISPP, LeJ, the HuM, HM, JeM,[487] and TRF.[488] The BLA and its Majeed Brigade[489] and TRF are additionally designated by the USDOS as 'specially designated global terrorists' (SDGTs),[490] along with JuA.[491] The UN Security Council's list of entities subject to its sanctions includes TTP, JuA, LeT, AQ, ISKP, the Haqqani Network, LeJ, JeM, and HuM.[492]

[485] Pakistan, NACTA, 82 Organizations Proscribed by Ministry of Interior u/s 11-B-(1) r/w Schedule-I, ATA 1997, 6 October 2024, url
[486] USDOS, Terrorist Designation of The Majeed Brigade, 11 August 2025, url
[487] US, CIA, World Factbook – Terrorist Organizations, n.d., url
[488] USDOS, Terrorist Designation of The Resistance Front, 17 July 2025, url; US, CIA, World Factbook – Pakistan, last updated 30 December 2025, archived page from 4 February 2026, url
[489] USDOS, Terrorist Designation of The Majeed Brigade, 11 August 2025, url
[490] USDOS, Terrorist Designation of The Resistance Front, 17 July 2025, url
[491] USDOS, State Department Terrorist Designations of Jamaat-ul-Ahrar and Mohamed Abrini, 3 August 2016, url
[492] UN Security Council, United Nations Security Council Consolidated List, n.d., url

4. Security situation

4.1. General description of the security situation

For information on the security situation between October 2023 and October 2024, see section 4 of the EUAA COI report: Pakistan – Country Focus (December 2024).

The three Pakistani think tanks, Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS), Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS) and the Center for Research and Security Studies (CRSS) all reported a noticeable surge in militant violence[493] in the reference period.[494] According to the Global Terrorism Index (GTI),[495] Pakistan was the second-most terrorism-affected country of 163 countries in 2024[496] and – for the first time since the index's inception in 2007[497] – the most terrorism-affected country in 2025.[498] PICSS reported that the militancy reasserted itself as the number one driver of insecurity in 2025, with an increase in scale and lethality, as well as an intensified state response.[499] For detailed information on the surge in militant violence since November 2024, including separatist and sectarian violence and involved actors, see section 4.1.1. Surge in militant violence since November 2024.

In March 2025, the Institute of South Asian Studies at the National University of Singapore (ISAS/NUS) reported that Pakistan was facing 'an increasingly volatile security situation', exacerbated by economic turmoil and ongoing political instability.[500] Political scientist Amira Jadoon characterised this security challenge in an October 2025 commentary published by the Hudson Institute as being 'of multi-front nature'.[501] Sources noted that the security situation deteriorated significantly in 2025, marking it as one of the most violent years in nearly a decade.[502] CRSS reported a 67 % increase in overall violence in 2024 followed by a 34 % increase in 2025 resulting from 1 272 violent incidents.[503] PIPS recorded overall 785 conflict-related violence incidents in 2024, including 521 militant attacks and 158 anti-militant state

[493] PIPS, PICSS and CRSS all continuously track security-related incidents in Pakistan based on slightly varying methodologies and publish annual reports detailing the recorded events. They also use different terminology: CRSS and PIPS use the term terrorist attacks, with PIPS encompassing militant attacks, nationalist insurgent attacks and sectarian-related attacks, while PICSS uses the term militant attacks.
[494] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, pp. 24-25; PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, pp. 1-2; CRSS, Annual Security Report 2025, 31 December 2025, url; CRSS, Annual Security Report 2024, 30 December 2024, url
[495] 'The GTI ranks 163 countries based on four indicators weighted over five years': incidents, fatalities, injuries, hostages. IEP, Global Terrorism Index 2025, March 2025, url, p. 96
[496] IEP, Global Terrorism Index 2025, March 2025, url, p. 6
[497] IEP, Global Terrorism Index, n.d., url
[498] IEP, Global Terrorism Index 2026, March 2026, url, p. 2
[499] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 1
[500] ISAS/NUS, ISAS Briefs – Pakistan's Mounting Security Challenges, 24 March 2025, url
[501] Jadoon, A., Beyond Counterterrorism: A Legitimacy-Centered Framework for Pakistan's Security Crisis, Hudson Institute, 6 October 2025, url. Amira Jadoon is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Political Science at Clemson University in South Carolina, USA.
[502] PICCS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 1; CRSS, Annual Security Report 2025, 31 December 2025, url; ACLED, Pakistan battles rising militancy that risks spreading beyond the frontiers, 11 December 2025, url
[503] CRSS, Annual Security Report 2025, 31 December 2025, url

security operations.[504] In 2025, PIPS reported a total of 1 124 conflict-related incidents, a 43 % increase over 2024, including 699 militant attacks and 259 security operations. This rise is attributed to a surge in terrorist attacks, counter-terrorism operations, and increased abductions and border incidents.[505] PICSS recorded a 29 % increase in violent incidents in 2025 (1 548 incidents) compared to 2024.[506]

PICSS saw a 75 % increase in overall fatalities (3 413),[507] including 580 civilians,[508] with 534 due to militant attacks and the rest from security operations, 2 138 militants, 667 members of the security forces as well as 28 members of pro-government armed militias (PGR).[509] Compared to 2024 (468 civilian fatalities), this amounts to a 24 % rise and is the highest figure since 2015 (642 civilian fatalities). Similarly, civilian injuries rose by 40 % from 2024 (701) to 2025 (983).[510] PIPS saw an increase of around 53 % in overall conflict-related fatalities in 2025 (2 985), compared to 2024 (1 950). The 2025 figure includes 488 civilian fatalities, equalling – contrary to the PICCS analysis – a decrease of 15 % compared to 577 civilians killed in 2024. Overall, 1 034 militancy-related fatalities in 2025, reflecting a 21 % increase compared to 2024, comprised 354 civilians and 437 security and law enforcement personnel.[511] CRSS observed a decrease in civilian deaths by over 24 % (707 deaths) and of security personnel fatalities by over 5 % (650 deaths) in 2025 compared to 2024. Amid intensified security operations, 2025 was the year where civilian and security personnel deaths combined did not represent most overall fatalities and the highest number of militants (2060) was killed since 2015.[512] According to PICSS, 2025 was also the year with the highest number of annual security personnel fatalities (667) since 2011, marking a 26 % rise since 2024 (528).[513]

CRSS reported November 2024 as the year's deadliest month,[514] while PICSS noted that March 2025 showed a surge in militant attacks and had the highest number of injuries. August exhibited the greatest attack frequency. The report noted a historical trend of reduced attacks in December, although the final quarter of 2025 did not show a consistent decline in violence.[515] CRSS reported a significant drop in cross-border terrorist incidents of 9 % in November and nearly 17 % in December. The source linked this decline to the closure of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border on 11 October 2025[516]

[504] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2024: An Abridged Version, Vol. 17, No. 1, January 2025, url, p. 7
[505] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 22
[506] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 1
[507] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 1
[508] PICSS, Pakistan's 2025 Counterterrorism Toll Surges 74% as Militancy Hits Multi-Year Highs: PICSS, Islamabad, January 01, 2026, 5 January 2026, url
[509] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 1
[510] PICSS, Pakistan's 2025 Counterterrorism Toll Surges 74% as Militancy Hits Multi-Year Highs: PICSS, Islamabad, January 01, 2026, 5 January 2026, url
[511] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, pp. 17, 28
[512] CRSS, Annual Security Report 2025, 31 December 2025, url
[513] PICSS, Pakistan's 2025 Counterterrorism Toll Surges 74% as Militancy Hits Multi-Year Highs: PICSS, Islamabad, January 01, 2026, 5 January 2026, url
[514] CRSS, Annual Security Report 2024, 30 December 2024, url
[515] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, pp. 2-3
[516] CRSS, Annual Security Report 2025, 31 December 2025, url

Violence mainly concentrated in Balochistan and KP[517] provinces,[518] with both accounting for more than 93 % of violent incidents and 96 % of all fatalities in 2025, according to CRSS,[519] and the southern and tribal districts of KP particularly affected.[520] KP saw the highest surge in violence. The province accounted for 63 % of violence-related incidents in the country and over 82 % of the net national rise of fatalities, marking a rise in violence of almost 44 % from 2024 to 2025. Balochistan province accounted for more than 30 % of countrywide violence-related incidents and recorded the highest number of overall fatalities in 2025 (956 fatalities or 28 % of overall fatalities).[521] For detailed information regarding the security situation in the individual provinces, see section 4.2.1. Balochistan.

Pakistan's claim that the Afghan de facto government harboured groups such as the TTP[522] and the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA)[523] were reportedly central to the ongoing tensions between Pakistan and the Afghan Taliban,[524] which escalated in October 2025[525] and again in late February 2026.[526] As part of this new escalation, characterised as an 'open war',[527] Pakistan carried out air and ground strikes targeting the Afghan Taliban and the TTP in Afghanistan, and the Taliban *de facto* government responded in turn.[528] The UN reported serious impacts on civilian populations,[529] including as a result of an airstrike in March on a drug rehabilitation facility in Kabul, which killed over 400 people, according to the Taliban *de facto* authorities.[530] After a temporary ceasefire in mid-March 2026, as of the month's end, exchanges of fire continued on both sides.[531] However, PICSS reported 'no major escalation' thereafter.[532]

[517] Including the former Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA), which was a region bordering Afghanistan that was governed under the Frontier Crimes Regulation (not Pakistani laws) between 1947 and 2018 and merged with KP province in 2018. It comprised seven tribal districts: Bajaur, Mohmand, Khyber, Orakzai, Kurram, North Waziristan, and South Waziristan. Al Jazeera, Pakistan's tribal areas: 'Neither faith nor union found', 2019, url
[518] PICSS, Pakistan's 2025 Counterterrorism Toll Surges 74% as Militancy Hits Multi-Year Highs: PICSS, Islamabad, January 01, 2026, 5 January 2026, url; CRSS, Annual Security Report 2025, 31 December 2025, url; ACLED, Pakistan battles rising militancy that risks spreading beyond the frontiers, 11 December 2025, url; CRSS, Annual Security Report 2024, 30 December 2024, url
[519] CRSS, Annual Security Report 2025, 31 December 2025, url
[520] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 11
[521] CRSS, Annual Security Report 2025, 31 December 2025, url
[522] Rehman, Z., Taliban regime deepens Pakistan's internal security woes, DW, 14 August 2025, url
[523] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 11
[524] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2024: An Abridged Version, Vol. 17, No. 1, January 2025, url, p. 15;
[525] EUAA, Pakistan – Security situation in Khyber district (December 2025 to 12 March 2026), 13 March 2026, url, p. 3; Foschini, F. et al., Breaking Point? The mounting conflict between Afghanistan and Pakistan, 29 March 2026, url
[526] CFR, Why Are the Afghan Taliban and Pakistan in an 'Open War'?, 18 March 2026, url
[527] MEI, Pakistan-Afghanistan tensions drifting into a dangerous escalation cycle, 30 March 2026, url; DW, Iran war overlaps with Afghanistan-Pakistan conflict, 17 March 2026, url
[528] MEI, Pakistan-Afghanistan tensions drifting into a dangerous escalation cycle, 30 March 2026, url
[529] UN OHCHR, Türk says Pakistan-Afghanistan conflict piles 'misery on misery', pleads for dialogue, 6 March 2026, url
[530] UN News, Afghanistan: UN condemns deadly attack on rehab centre in Kabul, 17 March 2026, url
[531] Foschini, F. et al., Breaking Point? The mounting conflict between Afghanistan and Pakistan, 29 March 2026, url; PICSS, Militancy, Security Dynamics, and Strategic Developments in Pakistan (13–18 March 2026), 20 March 2026, url
[532] PICSS, Persistent Militancy and Strategic Uncertainty: Pakistan's Security Landscape (19–26 March 2026), 28 March 2026, url

For detailed information on Pakistan's relationship to its neighbouring countries, see section 2.2. Regional context.

For information on sectarian tensions in Kurram district during the reporting period, see section 4.2.2. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

4.1.1. Surge in militant violence since November 2024

As mentioned in section 4.1. General description of the security situation, during the reporting period, Pakistan experienced a notable rise in militant violence,[533] marking 2025 the fifth consecutive year of an increase in militant attacks.[534] According to PICCS, militant attacks expanded geographically and in frequency and lethality in 2025, with recorded incidents increasing from 908 in 2024 to 1 066 in 2025, reflecting a 17 % rise. Concurrently, security operations spiked by 63 % from 296 to 482.[535] PIPS noted 521 militant attacks in 2024 – up 70 % from 2023[536] – and 699 in 2025, marking a 34 % increase over 2024.[537] CRSS documented 444 militant attacks in 2024[538] and 880 in 2025.[539] PIPS, PICSS, and CRSS reported that in 2025, KP experienced the highest number of militant attacks.[540] The GTI highlighted that over 96 % of militant attacks and fatalities in Pakistan in 2024, including as a result of intensified attacks by militant groups operating from Afghanistan, occurred in the western border regions of KP and Balochistan,[541] compared to over 74 % of militant attacks and over 67 % of fatalities in 2025.[542]

Militant groups targeted security forces, civilian infrastructure, and government installations in 2025,[543] employing attack types such as suicide attacks, tactical assaults, grenade throwing, mortar or rocket fire, drones, improvised explosive device (IED), abductions and targeted killings.[544]

PICSS reported an increase in the usage of small drones and a higher deployment of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) by security forces.[545] Drones were reportedly increasingly

[533] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, pp. 24-25; PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, pp. 1-2; CRSS, Annual Security Report 2025, 31 December 2025, url; CRSS, Annual Security Report 2024, 30 December 2024, url
[534] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 23
[535] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, pp. 1-2
[536] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2024: An Abridged Version, Vol. 17, No. 1, January 2025, url, p. 4
[537] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 17
[538] CRSS, Annual Security Report 2024, 30 December 2024, url
[539] CRSS, Annual Security Report 2025 [2nd graph], 31 December 2025, url
[540] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, pp. 19-20; PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 3; CRSS, Annual Security Report 2025, 31 December 2025, url
[541] IEP, Global Terrorism Index 2025, March 2025, url, p. 23
[542] IEP, Global Terrorism Index 2026, March 2026, url, p. 20
[543] PICSS, Pakistan's 2025 Counterterrorism Toll Surges 74% as Militancy Hits Multi-Year Highs: PICSS, Islamabad, January 01, 2026, 5 January 2026, url
[544] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 5
[545] PICSS, Pakistan's 2025 Counterterrorism Toll Surges 74% as Militancy Hits Multi-Year Highs: PICSS, Islamabad, January 01, 2026, 5 January 2026, url

used by security forces for monitoring and striking militants, particularly in remote regions close to Afghanistan, resulting in civilian fatalities and injuries.[546]

ACLED reported that in 2025, Baloch separatist groups adapted their tactics from traditional hit-and-run methods towards more complex operations, including the temporary occupation of public spaces. They also increasingly resorted to traditional methods such as direct assaults on security positions like police stations.[547] These groups engaged in sieges, hijackings, highway roadblocks, and hostage-taking.[548] The Chinese-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), part of China's Belt and Road Initiative,[549] has attracted violence from ethno-nationalist armed groups in Balochistan and Sindh, including the BLA, targeting Chinese nationals and investments, a shift from earlier attacks primarily by Islamist groups.[550]

In 2025, religiously motivated groups carried out 454 out of 699 militant attacks, an increase from 335 in 2024, as noted by PIPS, primarily driven by the TTP and its local allies, alongside the Hafiz Gul Bahadur (HGB) group, Lashkar-e Islam (LeI) and Islamic State-Khorasan Province (IS-KP).[551]

Between January and November 2025, the TTP engaged in around 700 attacks or confrontations with security forces, as reported by ACLED,[552] while the Ittihadul Mujahideen alliance, comprising LeI, HGB, and Inqilab-e Islami, was also active.[553] PICSS documented 18 ISKP-linked attacks in 2025 in Pakistan (including ISPP), compared to 24 (or 23[554]) in 2024, generating higher casualties despite fewer attacks. The occurrence of two suicide bombings in 2025, compared to none in 2024, indicated a 'shift toward higher-impact tactics'. ISKP attacks in 2025 were carried out in KP, while attacks in Balochistan and Sindh were attributed to ISPP. Main targets included police forces, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) leaders and gatherings, political rallies, clerics, tribal elders, businessmen, and civilians accused of espionage.[555] PIPS reported seven ISKP attacks and four major suicide bombings in 2025 in Balochistan, as well as two suicide bombings in KP province.[556]

Baloch separatist groups, notably the BLA and the BLF, intensified their insurgency in Balochistan province in 2024.[557] This trend continued into 2025,[558] with 234 recorded ethnic

[546] New York Times (The), Quietly, Pakistan Wages a Deadly Drone Campaign Inside Its Own Borders, 19 June 2025, url
[547] ACLED, Pakistan battles rising militancy that risks spreading beyond the frontiers, 11 December 2025, url
[548] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 20
[549] Express Tribune (The), Pakistan, China agree to align development plans, launch CPEC 2.0, 5 January 2026, url
[550] Salman, M. and Usmani, S., Balochistan: CPEC, Anti-China Sentiment and the Way Ahead, LSE [Blog], 19 May 2025, url
[551] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 17
[552] ACLED, Pakistan battles rising militancy that risks spreading beyond the frontiers, 11 December 2025, url
[553] PICSS, Pakistan's 2025 Counterterrorism Toll Surges 74% as Militancy Hits Multi-Year Highs: PICSS, Islamabad, January 01, 2026, 5 January 2026, url
[554] PICSS speaks of 23 ISKP attacks on page 33. PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 33
[555] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, pp. 32-33
[556] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 20
[557] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2024: An Abridged Version, Vol. 17, No. 1, January 2025, url, p. 24; IEP, Global Terrorism Index 2025, March 2025, url, p. 23
[558] Verma, A. et al., The Baloch Insurgency in Pakistan: Evolution, Tactics, and Regional Security Implications, April 2025, url, p. 27; PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 17

or sub-nationalist, militant violence attacks, up from 175 in 2024.[559] Of these attacks, primarily targeting security forces, 225 occurred in Balochistan province, and four in Sindh and Karachi.[560] Five attacks were linked to Sindh insurgent groups.[561]

PICSS reported a 162 % rise in militant abductions in 2025, including of security forces, civilians, and government officials and pro-government figures, from 82 in 2024 to 215, particularly in KP (127)[562] and Balochistan provinces (82).[563] PIPS also recorded a rise in militant abduction incidents from 3 in 2024,[564] to 47 in 2025, primarily by the TTP and affiliated groups in KP province.[565].

For a detailed description of the main non-state armed groups, see section 3.2. Main non-state armed groups and for a description of the state actors, see section 3.1. State Actors .

From 1 November 2024 to 24 April 2026 ACLED reported 5 149 security incidents at national level: 2 023 (39 %) were coded as battles, 1 176 (23 %) as explosions/remote violence and 1 950 (38 %) as incidents of violence against civilians.[566]

[559] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, pp. 17-18
[560] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, pp. 17-18, 20
[561] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 17
[562] Including former FATA.
[563] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, pp. 1, 3, 19
[564] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2024: An Abridged Version [Table 3], Vol. 17, No. 1, January 2025, url, p. 8
[565] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, pp. 22, 27
[566] EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Pakistan, data covering 1 November 2024 to 24 April 2026, as of 29 April 2026, url

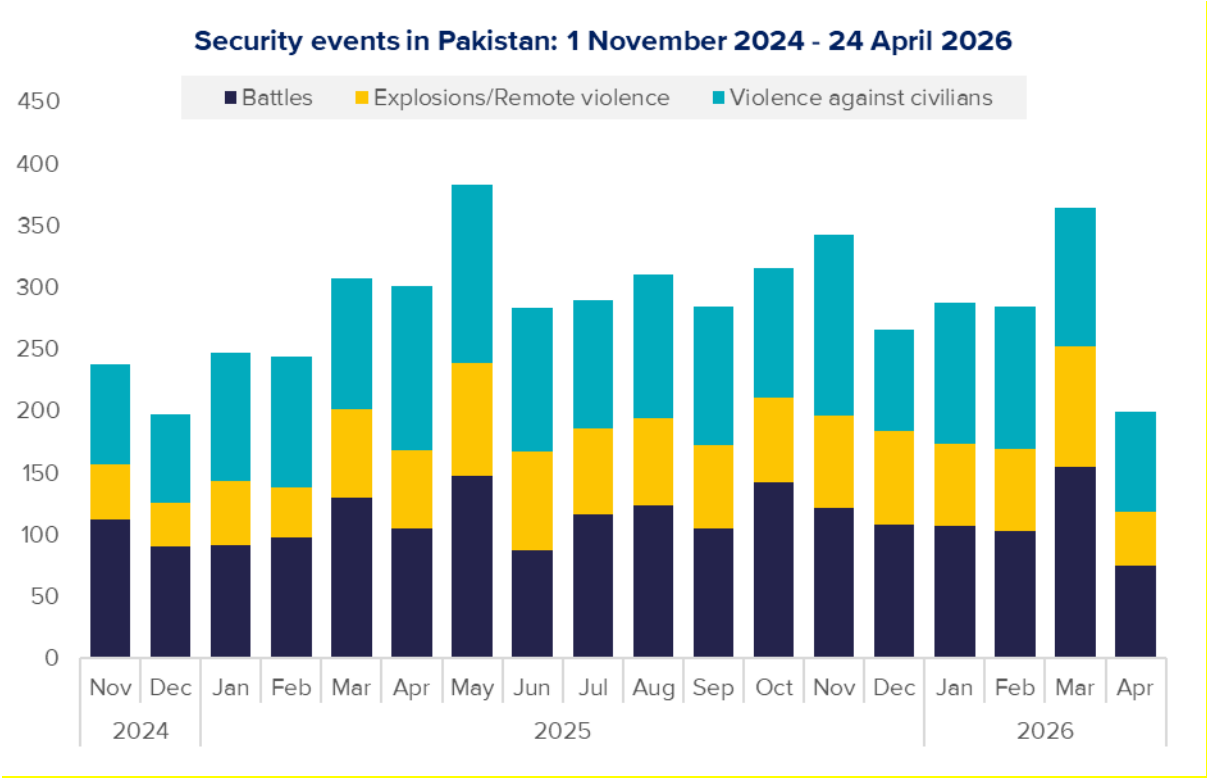

Figure 1: Evolution of security events coded as battles, explosions/remote violence and violence against civilians in Pakistan, 1 November 2024 – 24 April 2026, based on ACLED data[567]

ACLED recorded security incidents across all provinces during the reference period. The highest number were reported in Balochistan (2 755 events, 53 % of total) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces (2 003 events, 39 % of total).[568]

[567] EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Pakistan, data covering 1 November 2024 to 24 April 2026, as of 29 April 2026, url
[568] EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Pakistan, data covering 1 November 2024 to 24 April 2026, as of 29 April 2026, url
[568] EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Pakistan, data covering 1 November 2024 to 24 April 2026, as of 29 April 2026, url

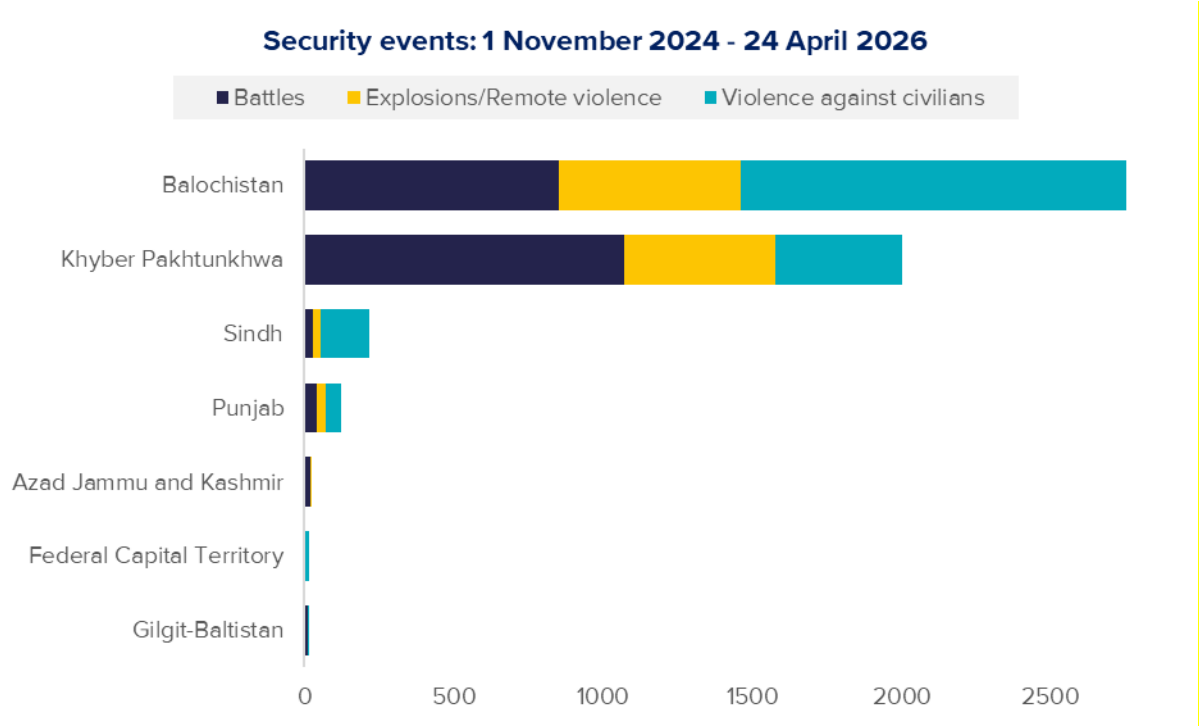

Figure 2: Security events coded as battles, explosions/remote violence and violence against civilians in Pakistan, 1 November 2024 – 24 April 2026. Breakdown by provinces based on ACLED data[569]

Battles was the event type with the highest number of incidents by far with the majority of them recorded in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan.[570]

Fatalities

From 1 November 2024 to 24 April 2026 ACLED reported 7 736 fatalities.[571]

4.1.2. Border security, including incidents along the Durand Line (Afghanistan), the Line of Control (India), and the Pakistan–Iran border

In 2024, PIPS reported an increase in violent incidents along the Pakistani border, with 28 recorded incidents (including attacks and clashes) compared to 12 in 2023. The incidents occurred along the Durand Line[572] with Afghanistan (25), India (1) and Iran (2).[573] In 2025, PIPS

[569] EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Pakistan, data covering 1 November 2024 to 24 April 2026, as of 29 April 2026, url
[570] EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Pakistan, data covering 1 November 2024 to 24 April 2026, as of 29 April 2026, url
[571] EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Pakistan, data covering 1 November 2024 to 24 April 2026, as of 29 April 2026, url
[572] The Durand Line is a line of around 2 600 km length between Pakistan and Afghanistan established in 1893 as the border between British India and the Emirate of Afghanistan. It was inherited by Pakistan after the partition of British India in 1947, but successive Afghan governments have disputed its legitimacy. Friday Times (The), Durand Line Dispute: The Historical Root Of Pakistan–Afghanistan Tensions, 3 April 2026, url; Britannica, Durand Line, 27 February 2026, url; Washington Post (The), Line drawn by 19th-century Britain stokes Pakistan-Taliban tension, 27 October 2025
[573] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2024: An Abridged Version, Vol. 17, No. 1, January 2025, url, p. 11

documented 49 incidents, including clashes and armed attacks, along borders with Afghanistan (31) and India (18), resulting in 63 Pakistani civilian and 47 Pakistani security personnel deaths, as well as 282 injuries.[574]

Incidents along the Durand Line (Afghanistan)

ACLED reported a rise in border clashes between Pakistan and Afghanistan in 2024 and again in 2025, from 39 to 81 clashes.[575] 2024 saw cross-border clashes involving militants and Pakistani forces. No meaningful advancements toward improving bilateral ties were reported that year.[576] Early 2025 saw intensified tensions and clashes, particularly in the Kurram district, prompting Pakistan to strengthen its border (Durand Line) fortifications.[577] The border situation remained volatile throughout 2025.[578]. A total of 31 violent border incidents resulted in one civilian and 33 security forces deaths, alongside 64 injuries, with 21 incidents reported in KP and 10 in Balochistan province.[579]

In December 2024, hostilities escalated between Pakistan and Afghanistan as Pakistan conducted airstrikes on alleged TTP hideouts in Afghanistan,[580] which continued into 2025.[581] Subsequently, in February 2025, Pakistan closed the Torkham border crossing due to a dispute over an Afghan border post, disrupting trade and travel,[582] and leading to the displacement of thousands. The crossing was reopened following a ceasefire mediated by a tribal *jirga* (Pashtun local assembly).[583] Though there were hints of modest rapprochement in mid-2025, October saw the crisis peak, marked by severe military escalation, including Pakistani airstrikes and cross-border clashes.[584] Defence Security Asia reports that a notable escalation occurred on 9 October 2025, when Pakistan conducted airstrikes in Kabul.[585] Cross-border firing was reported in various frontier sectors[586] and clashes persisted until mid-October,[587] mainly in KP districts with a Pashtun majority (including former FATA), and Balochistan.[588] As of early January 2026, border crossings were closed to civilians and

[574] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 26
[575] Up to 28 November 2025. ACLED, Pakistan battles rising militancy that risks spreading beyond the frontiers [graph], 11 December 2025, url
[576] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2024: An Abridged Version, Vol. 17, No. 1, January 2025, url, pp. 15-16
[577] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 110
[578] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 26
[579] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 26
[580] Al Jazeera, As Pakistan, Afghanistan attack each other, what's next for neighbours?, 30 December 2024, url
[581] Jadoon, A., Beyond Counterterrorism: A Legitimacy-Centered Framework for Pakistan's Security Crisis, Hudson Institute, 6 October 2025, url; RFE/RL, Pakistan Creates Special Security Unit To Protect Chinese Citizens Amid A Rise In Attacks, 8 January 2026, url
[582] Germany, BAMF, Briefing Notes Summary, 30 June 2025, url, pp. 4-5
[583] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, pp. 110-111
[584] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, pp. 111-112
[585] Defence Security Asia, Pakistan Reportedly Launches Precision Airstrikes In Kabul, Targeting TTP Leader Amid Rising Border Tensions, 10 October 2025, url
[586] PICSS, Pakistan's 2025 Counterterrorism Toll Surges 74% as Militancy Hits Multi-Year Highs: PICSS, Islamabad, January 01, 2026, 5 January 2026, url
[587] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, pp. 26-27
[588] PICSS, Pakistan's 2025 Counterterrorism Toll Surges 74% as Militancy Hits Multi-Year Highs: PICSS, Islamabad, January 01, 2026, 5 January 2026, url

commercial traffic,[589] allowing only for return movements of Afghan nationals and UN humanitarian assistance.[590]

In late February 2026, tensions between the two countries escalated again.[591] Pakistan carried out large-scale air and ground strikes across several Afghan locations,[592] including the above-mentioned airstrike in March on a drug rehabilitation facility in Kabul.[593] In response, Taliban *de facto* authorities launched an operation against the Pakistani army along the Durand Line,[594] resulting in civilian casualties and displacement, as well as school closures on both sides, including at least 289 civilian casualties and the displacement of more than 115 000 individuals in Afghanistan.[595] After a conditional pause around mid-March, Pakistan resumed military operations.[596] ACLED categorised this conflict escalation round as the 'most intense' since August 2021, surpassing October 2025 levels.[597] As of late-March 2026, exchange of fire continued on both sides.[598] Sources reported the reopening of KP's Torkham border crossing in late March after it had been closed in February.[599] Some noted that this step was initially taken to facilitate the forced return of Afghan nationals.[600]

Incidents along the Line of Control (India)

February 2025 saw ongoing tensions along the Line of Control (LoC).[601] The Pahalgam terrorist attack in April 2025[602] in Indian-administered Kashmir, which India partially blamed on Pakistan,[603] escalated tensions in May 2025,[604] resulting in exchanges of fire across the LoC.[605] The International Crisis Group described the conflict as 'the most serious confrontation' between the two countries in decades, noting the deployment of weaponised drones for the first time ever across the LoC.[606] Out of 18 incidents recorded by PIPS in 2025 along the LoC, 11 occurred in May, resulting in 218 injuries and 76 fatalities,[607] including

[589] PICSS, Pakistan's 2025 Counterterrorism Toll Surges 74% as Militancy Hits Multi-Year Highs: PICSS, Islamabad, January 01, 2026, 5 January 2026, url
[590] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 27
[591] CFR, Why Are the Afghan Taliban and Pakistan in an 'Open War'?, 18 March 2026, url
[592] MEI, Pakistan-Afghanistan tensions drifting into a dangerous escalation cycle, 30 March 2026, url
[593] UN News, Afghanistan: UN condemns deadly attack on rehab centre in Kabul, 17 March 2026, url
[594] Al Jazeera, Pakistan and Afghanistan agree to temporary Eid al-Fitr 'pause' in conflict, 18 March 2026, url; BBC, What we know after latest escalation in Pakistan-Afghanistan tensions, 27 February 2026, url
[595] UN OHCHR, Afghan–Pakistani border: UN experts urgently call for lasting peace, 24 March 2026, url
[596] MEI, Pakistan-Afghanistan tensions drifting into a dangerous escalation cycle, 30 March 2026, url
[597] ACLED, Asia-Pacific Overview: March 2026, 5 March 2026, url
[598] Foschini, F. et al., Breaking Point? The mounting conflict between Afghanistan and Pakistan, 29 March 2026, url; New Arab (The), Pakistan continuing military operations against Afghanistan, 26 March 2026, url
[599] AA, Pakistan reopens key border crossing with Afghanistan, 31 March 2026, url; Eurasia review, Pakistan, Afghanistan Reopen Torkham Border Crossing Following Almost A Month Of Shutdown – OpEd, 24 March 2025, url; Arab News, Key Pakistan-Afghanistan border crossing reopens after nearly a month, 19 March 2025, url
[600] AA, Pakistan reopens key border crossing with Afghanistan, 31 March 2026, url; Express Tribune (The), K-P to partially reopen Torkham border, 25 March 2026, url
[601] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 103
[602] Britannica, What was the Pahalgam attack?, 20 April 2026, url; ICFS, The Pahalgam Attack: Context, Impact, and Implications, 25 April 2025, url, p. 5; CNN, Dozens killed as gunmen massacre tourists in Kashmir beauty spot, 23 April 2025, url
[603] Germany, BAMF, Briefing Notes Summary, 30 June 2025, url, p. 9
[604] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 104
[605] Germany, BAMF, Briefing Notes Summary, 30 June 2025, url, p. 9
[606] International Crisi Group, India-Pakistan: Avoiding a War in Waiting, 17 September 2025, url, pp. 1-2
[607] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 26

civilians. A ceasefire agreed upon mid-May[608] was holding as of early 2026.[609] For more information on the violent events that followed the terrorist attack in Pahalgam, see section 4.2.6. Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Gilgit-Baltistan.

Pakistan–Iran border

In 2024, militant attacks were concentrated near Pakistan's western border, including with Iran, amidst a complex bilateral relationship (see section 2.2.3. Relations with Iran for information on Pakistan's role and position considering the US-Israeli attack on Iran in 2026) shaped by mutual concerns over cross-border militant activities and border security.[610] In January 2024, tensions increased with Iranian missile strikes on Pakistani territory targeting the Baloch militant group Jaish Al-Adl (Army of Justice) claiming to fight for more rights for the ethnic Baloch minority living in Iran and responsible for a series of attacks in the Iranian Sistan and Balochistan province. In retaliatory strikes, Pakistan's two days later targeted the BLA and the BLF.[611] A few days after the strikes, which had initially led to a mutual withdrawal of ambassadors, both countries declared that they would restore diplomatic ties.[612] Late in 2024, coordinated border operations in Iran's Sistan-Balochistan province suggested a collaborative approach to security,[613] which intensified in 2025 with strategic alignments, including joint border patrols and intelligence sharing.[614] Following the outbreak of the Israel-Iran war in June 2025, Pakistan closed its border with Iran until further notice.[615] Amid large-scale protests in Iran in December 2025, security measures along border districts increased, reflecting fears of a potential spillover.[616] The outbreak of the Iran-US-Israel war in late February 2026 reportedly prompted thousands of Pakistani nationals and foreigners to cross into Pakistan from Iran via Balochistan border crossings.[617]

No further information could be found on border security and violent incidents along the Pakistan-Iran border during the reference period. For details on the security situation in Balochistan province, see section 4.2.1. Balochistan and for the relationship between Pakistan and Iran, see section 2.2.3. Relations with Iran.

[608] International Crisi Group, India-Pakistan: Avoiding a War in Waiting, 17 September 2025, url, p. 1; Germany, BAMF, Briefing Notes Summary, 30 June 2025, url, p. 10
[609] Tribune (The), India, Pakistan don't want conflict but terrorists continue to create conditions: US report, 19 March 2026, url; Al Jazeera, Handshake in Dhaka: Can India and Pakistan revive ties in 2026?, 2 January 2026, url; PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 105
[610] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile 2024, 2 January 2025, url, pp. 2[7], 3[10], 45[69]
[611] New Arab (The), Where is the Iran-Pakistan relationship heading?, 23 January 2024, url
[612] Al Jazeera, Iran and Pakistan rebuilding diplomatic ties following tit-for-tat strikes, 22 January 2024, url; BBC News, Pakistan-Iran diplomatic ties restored after missile and drone strikes, 19 January 2024, url
[613] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile 2024, 2 January 2025, url, pp. 2[7], 3[10], 45[69]
[614] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, pp. 117-118
[615] WION, 'NO crossing into Iran': Pakistan shuts Iran border indefinitely after Tehran claims Islamabad 'will attack Israel with nuclear bomb', 16 June 2025, url; DAWN, Iran border crossings in Balochistan closed 'indefinitely': district administration, 15 June 2025, url; Al Jazeera, Borders closing and airspace shut as Israel-Iran conflict rages, 16 June 2025, url
[616] Arab News, Pakistan puts border districts on high alert amid Iran protests — official, 16 January 2026, url
[617] Nation (The), Over 10,600 Pakistanis return from Iran via Taftan border since war began, 10 April 2026, url; Pakistan Today, Over 5,600 Pakistanis repatriated from Iran amid war, says CM Bugti, 18 March 2026, url

4.2. Security situation per province

4.2.1. Balochistan

(a) General description of the province

Balochistan is the largest of Pakistan's provinces, making up 43.6 % of the country's total landmass with a size of 347 190 square kilometres.[618] It is situated in the southwest of the country. To the north and east, Balochistan borders the provinces of KP, Punjab and Sindh. To the south, it has a coastline along the Arabian Sea and to the southwest and northwest, it shares international borders with Iran and Afghanistan. The province's capital city is Quetta.[619] In terms of administrative units, Balochistan is divided into eight divisions (Quetta, Kalat, Makran, Nasirabad, Sibi, Zhob, Loralai, and Rakhshan), which are further subdivided into 36 districts.[620]

Balochistan province had a population of 14 894 402, according to the 7th Population & Housing Census of Pakistan of 2023.[621] While being the largest it is also the least densely populated province of Pakistan.[622] The province's main ethnic groups include the Baloch[623] and Pashtuns;[624] the main languages in terms of mother-tongue spoken are Baloch (39.9 %), Pashto (also Pushto) (34 %) and Brahvi (17.2 %). Smaller language groups include Sindhi, Saraiki, and others.[625]

The province's main economic sectors include minor crops such as fruits and vegetables, mining and quarrying, and electricity and gas.[626] Balochistan is rich in natural resources, including gold, diamonds, copper, silver, chromite, and lithium in more than 1 600 mines, such as the Saindaku gold-and-copper-mine, leased to a Chinese company until 2035.[627] Moreover, more than 58 % of Pakistan's coal production takes place in Balochistan.[628] Pakistan is part of the Chinese-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a project of China's Belt and Road Initiative, which includes infrastructure projects such as the Gwadar deep sea port.[629] On the other hand, according to the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), quoted by the Pakistani newspaper The Nation in a May 2024 article, 70 % of Balochistan's population is 'multidimensionally poor', the highest rate across the country.[630] Separatist and insurgent

[618] Pakistan, Government of Balochistan, n.d., url
[619] Pakistan, Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the United Nations – New York, Political Map of Pakistan, n.d., url
[620] Pakistan, Government of Balochistan, Bureau of Statistics, Planning & Development Department, Balochistan Districts, n.d., url
[621] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 – Dashboard, n.d., url. Set filters to Balochistan, accessed on 3 February 2026
[622] Pakistan, Government of Balochistan, n.d., url
[623] The source mentioned three major tribes, however, subsumed Baloch and Brahvi ethnic groups under the general term 'Baloch'.
[624] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population and Housing Census 2023 – Provincial Census Report Balochistan, n.d., url, p. 37
[625] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 – Dashboard, n.d., url. Set filters to Balochistan, accessed on 31 March 2026
[626] Business Recorder, Development gap of Balochistan, 3 April 2025, url
[627] Klauber, R., Terrorism and Activism of the Baloch Ethnic Group, PCMR, 29 January 2025, url, p. 3
[628] EurAsian Times (The), China's "Ukraine": Another Mineral-Rich Region Is Fast Emerging New Flashpoint As Beijing Faces The Heat In CPEC Zone!, 22 March 2025, url
[629] VOA, Pakistan struggles to bring trade to China-built port, 10 January 2025, url
[630] Nation (The), Poverty rate increases in Pakistan from 38.6pc to 39.5pc in five years: PIDE, 25 May 2024, url

movements have emerged as a result of the local population's perceptions of ongoing marginalisation and external economic exploitation.[631] Attacks against foreign workers, including Chinese nationals, have increased, with China being perceived as a 'colonial usurper of local resources',[632] and projects like CPEC as further sidelining the local population economically and politically.[633]

(b) Presence and general activities of the armed actors

The federal government responded to the insurgency with military force, without, however, addressing the underlying grievances.[634] Increased militarisation of the region, reports on human rights violations such as enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings,[635] and the detention of critics without due process, rather deepened the population's resentment and increased resistance.[636] Moreover, the authorities' repression also extended to peacefully protesting and politically dissenting groups and individuals,[637] such as the Baloch Yakjehti Committee (Balochistan Unity Committee, BYC), a Baloch rights movement,[638] whose leader, Mahrang Baloch, has been imprisoned since March 2025.[639] ACLED documented a 'sharp rise' in the reported deaths of ethnic Baloch people at the hands of security forces related to anti-militancy operations in 2025, the majority of whom had previously become victims of enforced disappearance.[640]

The authorities also accused neighbouring countries of supporting insurgent groups, including Afghanistan,[641] and, particularly, India.[642] In May 2025, the government officially labelled all

[631] EurAsian Times (The), China's "Ukraine": Another Mineral-Rich Region Is Fast Emerging New Flashpoint As Beijing Faces The Heat In CPEC Zone!, 22 March 2025, url; Shaikh, F., The hijacking of a train marks a watershed in the Balochistan insurgency, Chatham House, 16 April 2025, url; Samad, Y., The Balochistan Quagmire: A Cycle of Violence, Political Mobilization, and Repression, Georgetown Journal of International Affairs, 14 March 2025, url
[632] Salman, M. and Usmani, S., Balochistan: CPEC, Anti-China Sentiment and the Way Ahead, LSE [Blog], 19 May 2025, url; Khiam Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture, Written statement submitted by Khiam Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status [A/HRC/59/NGO/335], Human Rights Council (ed.), 2 July 2025, url, p. 2
[633] Mehdi, S. S., Targeting Chinese nationals: Unrest in Balochistan and the CPEC Challenge, Global Voices, 1 February 2025, url
[634] Basit, A., The BLA Becomes South Asia's Most Effective Insurgent Group, The Jamestown Foundation, 22 October 2025, url; Samad, Y., The Balochistan Quagmire: A Cycle of Violence, Political Mobilization, and Repression, Georgetown Journal of International Affairs, 14 March 2025, url; Khiam Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture, Written statement submitted by Khiam Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status [A/HRC/59/NGO/335], Human Rights Council (ed.), 2 July 2025, url, p. 3
[635] Khiam Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture, Written statement submitted by Khiam Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status [A/HRC/59/NGO/335], Human Rights Council (ed.), 2 July 2025, url, p. 3
[636] Samad, Y., The Balochistan Quagmire: A Cycle of Violence, Political Mobilization, and Repression, Georgetown Journal of International Affairs, 14 March 2025, url
[637] UN OHCHR, UN experts urge Pakistan to address human rights violations in Balochistan, 29 April 2025, url; Samad, Y., The Balochistan Quagmire: A Cycle of Violence, Political Mobilization, and Repression, Georgetown Journal of International Affairs, 14 March 2025, url
[638] Diplomat (The), The Great Balochistan Propaganda War, 6 March 2025, url
[639] Guardian (The), A dispatch from solitary confinement in a Pakistani women's prison, 1 April 2026, url; RFE/RL, Who Is Mahrang Baloch, The Rights Advocate Arrested By Pakistan On Terrorism Charges?, 1 April 2025, url
[640] ACLED, Pakistan battles rising militancy that risks spreading beyond the frontiers, 11 December 2025, url
[641] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 11; Shaikh, F., The hijacking of a train marks a watershed in the Balochistan insurgency, Chatham House, 16 April 2025, url
[642] Al Jazeera, 'Army alone can't neutralise grievances': What fuels Balochistan violence, 1 February 2026, url; Shaikh, F., The hijacking of a train marks a watershed in the Balochistan insurgency, Chatham House, 16 April 2025, url

armed groups operating in Balochistan 'Fitna al Hindustan', claiming that this denomination reflected the groups' links to India and their actions as 'detrimental to Pakistan's sovereignty, Islamic values, and traditional norms'.[643]

The Pakistani research institute Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS) noted in its security report for 2025 that Balochistan and the southern and tribal districts of KP remained 'the epicentres of insecurity', with Baloch insurgent groups appearing 'as a particularly lethal and strategically disruptive threat'.[644]

Similarly, the Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS) pointed to an increase in the intensity of operations and the 'evolving tactics' of Baloch insurgent groups, noting that Balochistan was the province with the highest number of casualties recorded in 2025.[645] Already in 2024, both organisations had observed an increase in the number of attacks and casualties in the province, mainly due to the activities of Baloch insurgent groups, including the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) and the Baloch Liberation Front (BLF), and to religiously motivated Muslim armed groups such as Tehreek-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP).[646] The two sources differed in terms of the Islamic State group: while PICSS pointed to activities attributed to the Islamic State Pakistan Province (ISPP) in Balochistan,[647] PIPS referred to Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP) activities.[648] Other Baloch insurgent groups included the Baloch Republican Guards (BRG) (also part of BRAS, see section 3.2.13. Balochistan nationalist groups) and the Baloch Republican Army (BRA).[649].

According to researcher Neeraj Singh Manhas, CPEC had become a 'prime target' for Baloch insurgent and religiously motivated armed groups, particularly since 2021.[650] During the reference period, Baloch insurgent groups also intensified attacks on security forces[651] and individuals, apparently particularly targeting those of Punjabi origin,[652] and officials accused of collaborating with the state, according to PIPS.[653]

The groups' main areas of activity comprised the central, southern and southwestern regions,[654] including Kech, Quetta, Kalat, Mastung, Nushki, Khuzdar, Panjgur, Gwadar, and

[643] Business Recorder, Balochistan: Terror groups branded as 'Fitna al Hindustan', 1 June 2025, url
[644] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 11
[645] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 1
[646] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2024: An Abridged Version, Vol. 17, No. 1, January 2025, url, p. 6; PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile 2024, 2 January 2025, url, p. 20[44]
[647] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile 2024, 2 January 2025, url, p. 20[44]
[648] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2024: An Abridged Version, Vol. 17, No. 1, January 2025, url, p. 6
[649] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 43
[650] Singh Manhas, N., Amid Geopolitical Tensions, Baloch Militant Attacks Undermine Sino–Pakistan Projects, The Jamestown Foundation, 30 July 2025, url
[651] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 30;
Dawn, Timeline: Attacks claimed by BLA over the last one year, 12 March 2025, url; PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2024: An Abridged Version, Vol. 17, No. 1, January 2025, url, p. 6
[652] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 30; New Arab (The), Pakistani Baloch militants kill 9 in bus attack, 11 July 2025, url; VOA, Eyewitnesses give harrowing account of Pakistan train attack, 12 March 2025, url; Defense Post (The), Pakistan Separatists Claim Killing of Seven Punjabi Travelers, 22 February 2025, url; PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2024: An Abridged Version, Vol. 17, No. 1, January 2025, url, p. 25
[653] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 30; PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2024: An Abridged Version, Vol. 17, No. 1, January 2025, url, p. 25
[654] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 20; PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2024: An Abridged Version, Vol. 17, No. 1, January 2025, url, p. 6

other districts.[655] In its 2025 security report, however, PIPS observed a 'widening geographic footprint', with violent activity extending also to northwestern districts such as Washuk, Kharan, Kachhi, and others and into neighbouring provinces. Other trends identified by PIPS included more coordinated high-profile operations (temporarily taking control of territory, disrupting key economic lines), an expansion of methods of attack (seizing and burning government facilities, roadblocks, sieges, suicide attacks, and information operations), and changes in recruitment, resulting in increasing levels of support among Balochistan's middle-classes.[656] The BLA particularly gained support from middle-class communities along the Makran coast and in poorer areas around Kohlu and Sibi in the province's central and eastern districts.[657] Moreover, the group was able to gain increased support from Baloch women, including women willing to join BLA's suicide unit,[658] the Majeed Brigade.[659]

During the reference period, the TTP was mainly active in Balochistan's northern districts with a majority Pashtun population,[660] such as Quetta and Zhob districts.[661] In 2025, however, the group's operations extended also to other areas such as Makran, Pishin, Qila Saifullah and Kalat – not necessarily because Balochistan had turned into one of its 'primary theatres', according to PICSS, but rather because of TTP's desire to demonstrate nationwide reach.[662] In May 2025, TTP reportedly claimed responsibility for an attack in Khuzdar district.[663]

PICSS recorded a total of eight attacks attributed to ISPP in 2024, including in Quetta, Pishin, Kuchlak, Sibi, and Qila Saifullah districts,[664] and six attacks in 2025, in Quetta, Kalat, Mastung, Pishin, Noshki districts.[665] PIPS recorded operations of ISKP in Kalat, Pishin, Qillah Abdullah, Qilla Saifullah, Quetta, and Sibi districts in 2024,[666] and in Kalat, Mastung and Quetta districts in 2025, including two major suicide attacks on political gatherings in the latter two districts.[667] In May 2025, ISKP released a video and a document declaring war against Baloch ethno-national insurgent groups and Baloch rights groups, such as the BYC and its female leader Mahrang Baloch, calling them un-Islamic, and accusing BLA of killing its fighters in Mastung district, ISKP's main foothold in the province.[668]

[655] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 20; PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile 2024, 2 January 2025, url, pp. 11-12[35-36]
[656] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, pp. 43-44
[657] Shaikh, F., The hijacking of a train marks a watershed in the Balochistan insurgency, Chatham House, 16 April 2025, url
[658] Shaikh, F., The hijacking of a train marks a watershed in the Balochistan insurgency, Chatham House, 16 April 2025, url; Samad, Y., The Balochistan Quagmire: A Cycle of Violence, Political Mobilization, and Repression, Georgetown Journal of International Affairs, 14 March 2025, url
[659] Samad, Y., The Balochistan Quagmire: A Cycle of Violence, Political Mobilization, and Repression, Georgetown Journal of International Affairs, 14 March 2025, url; PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile 2024, 2 January 2025, url, p. 20[44]; Verma, A. et al., The Baloch Insurgency in Pakistan: Evolution, Tactics, and Regional Security Implications, April 2025, url, p. 34
[660] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 20; PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2024: An Abridged Version, Vol. 17, No. 1, January 2025, url, p. 6
[661] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile 2024, 2 January 2025, url, p. 18[25]
[662] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 23
[663] Arab News, Blast kills three, injures 11 in Pakistan's restive southwest, 18 May 2025, url
[664] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile 2024, January 2025, url, p. 7[31]
[665] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 33
[666] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2024: An Abridged Version, Vol. 17, No. 1, January 2025, url, p. 6
[667] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, pp. 20, 25
[668] Rana, M. A., IS-K in Balochistan, Dawn, 1 June 2025, url; GNET, The Shadow War in Balochistan: ISKP Weaponises Digital Land to Gain Influence, 4 August 2025, url

(c) Recent security incidents and impact on the civilian population and infrastructure

Security incidents

According to the Pakistani Center for Research and Security Studies (CRSS), 386 incidents of violence[669] were recorded in Balochistan province in 2025, resulting in 956 fatalities and 717 injuries and thus marking a 22 % increase in fatalities compared to 2024, when 787 fatalities were recorded.[670]

PIPS recorded 225 attacks by Baloch insurgent groups in 2025, causing 338 fatalities and injuring 462 people across 27 of Balochistan's districts. Religiously motivated Muslim armed groups, including TTP and ISKP carried out 28 attacks, half of them in Quetta and Qilla Abdullah, killing 80 people and injuring 141.[671] PIPS recorded eight suicide attacks in Balochistan province in 2025, claimed by TTP (one), ISKP (two), the BLA (four) and the BLF (one).[672] The latter two groups also used female suicide attackers.[673]

Recent security incidents included attacks on 'pro-government' tribesmen in Panjgur city, killing at least five civilians in March 2026,[674] and a series of gun and bomb attacks in Quetta and other towns and cities across the province in January 2026, killing at least 31 civilians and 17 security personnel.[675] BLA claimed responsibility for the attacks, which reportedly targeted civilian infrastructure and security installations, according to government officials.[676] Official reporting on the final number of fatalities, however, was inconsistent, according to the CRSS.[677] Subsequent security operations included house raids, assaults on women and children, mass detentions and other abuses, according to the Human Rights Council of Balochistan (HRCB). Moreover, the organisation mentioned the enforced disappearances of 100 individuals detained as 'suspects' in the context of these security operations.[678]

At least 15 people were killed and more than 30 injured in a suicide attack on a rally of the Balochistan National Party (BNP) in Quetta in September 2025.[679] ISPP claimed responsibility for the attack,[680] stating that the BNP's 'nationalist and democratic style of politics', violated

[669] CRSS includes militant attacks and state security operations in its recording of incidents of violence, using the terms terrorism and counter-terrorism.
[670] CRSS, Annual Security Report 2025, 31 December 2025, url
[671] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 20
[672] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, pp. 25-26
[673] Firstpost, How Baloch militant groups are using female suicide bombers for attacks, 2 February 2026, url; PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 57
[674] Arab News, Five civilians, six militants killed in attacks in Pakistan's Balochistan, 29 March 2026, url
[675] BBC, Deadly gun and bomb attacks hit Pakistan's Balochistan province, 1 February 2026, url
[676] BBC, Deadly gun and bomb attacks hit Pakistan's Balochistan province, 1 February 2026, url; Guardian (The), More than 120 dead after multiple suicide and gun attacks in Pakistan, officials say, 1 February 2026, url
[677] CRSS, Balochistan Violence: Reality Lost To Inconsistency, 6 February 2026, url
[678] HRCB, Human Rights Violations in Balochistan: 234 Enforced Disappearances, 87 Killings Documented in February 2026, 28 March 2026, url
[679] BBC, Bomb blast kills 15 near political rally in Pakistan, 4 September 2025, url
[680] PICSS, Militancy, Human Rights, and Strategic Partnerships: Pakistan in a Week of Turmoil and Diplomacy (WR:29August-4September), 8 September 2025, url

Islamic law.[681] The bomb reportedly detonated in a parking area after the end of the rally when people were leaving the area.[682]

In March 2025, the BLA hijacked the Jaffar Express train with more than 400 passengers, including at least 100 members of the security forces, on board, travelling from Quetta to Peshawar. After bombing the tracks, armed men entered the rain and took the passengers hostage, demanding the release of Baloch political prisoners or otherwise killing the hostages. The siege ended after more than 30 hours with 300 hostages released and 21 civilians, 4 soldiers and 33 insurgents killed. There remained, however, some uncertainty about the remaining passengers and the unfolding of the attack.[683]

At least four children attending a military-run school, and two adults were killed in a suicide bomb attack on a school bus in Khuzdar district in May 2025. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack.[684]

From 1 November 2024 to 24 April 2026, ACLED reported 2 755 security incidents in Balochistan: 853 were coded as battles, 607 as explosions/remote violence and 1 295 as incidents of violence against civilians. Kech district registered the highest number of security incidents, in particular violence against civilians (329).[685]

[681] Balochistan Post (The), IS Claims Responsibility for Suicide Attack on BNP Rally, Mengal Blames The State, 4 September 2025, url
[682] Al Jazeera, At least 11 killed in explosion at political rally in Pakistan's Quetta, 2 September 2025, url
[683] BBC, 'Killed in front of our eyes': How the Pakistan train hijacking unfolded, 13 March 2025, url
[684] DW, Pakistan: Suicide bomber targets children's school bus, 21 May 2025, url
[685] EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Pakistan, data covering 1 November 2024 to 24 April 2026, as of 29 April 2026, url

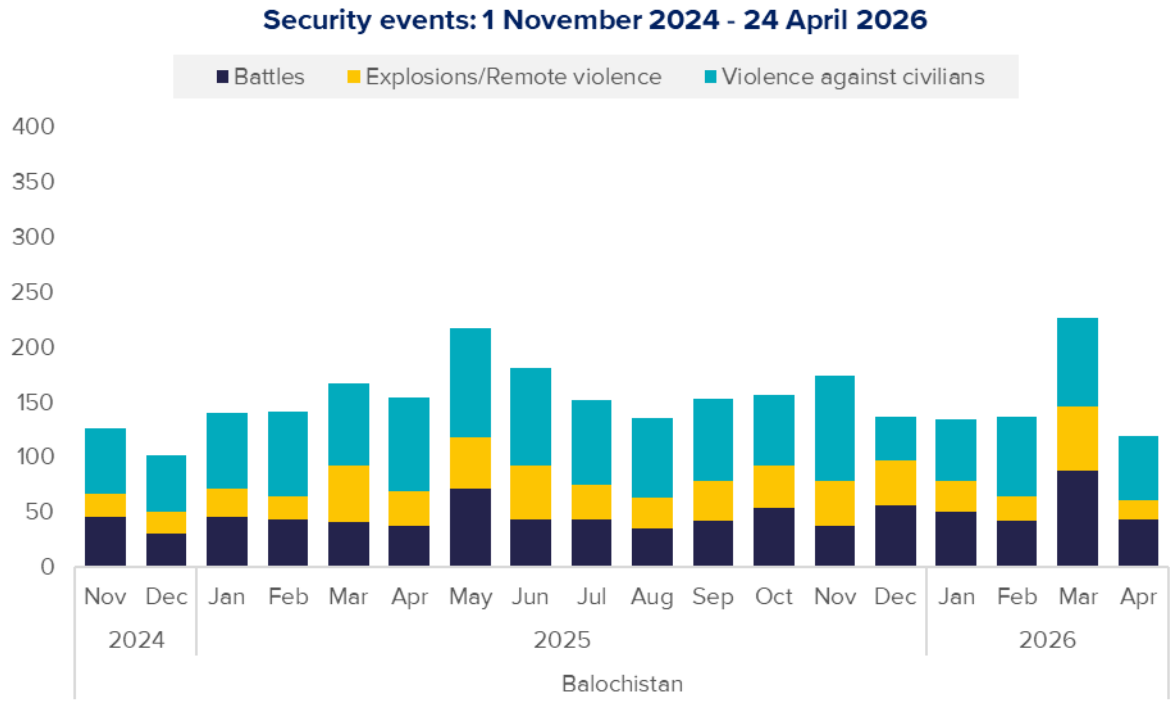

Figure 3: Evolution of security events coded 'battles', 'explosions/remote violence' and 'violence against civilians' in Balochistan province between 1 November 2024 and 24 April 2026, based on ACLED data[686]

Fatalities

From 1 November 2024 to 24 April 2026 ACLED reported 3 391 fatalities.[687]

Civilian casualties

PICSS recorded 254 civilian deaths and 433 injured in 2025.[688] The source noted a significant increase in targeted killings (80, compared to 44 in 2024), particularly directed against civilians, tribal elders, political actors and persons related to the state or economic activity.[689]

On the other hand, according to an expert quoted by Al Jazeera, the government frequently responded to insurgents' attack with military force, thereby often targeting innocent civilians without evidence that they had links to armed groups.[690]

Impact on infrastructure

[686] EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Pakistan, data covering 1 November 2024 to 24 April 2026, as of 29 April 2026, url
[687] EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Pakistan, data covering 1 November 2024 to 24 April 2026, as of 29 April 2026, url
[688] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 71
[689] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, pp. 68-69
[690] Al Jazeera, Deadly Pakistan train hijack: What happened, who was rescued, what's next?, 11 March 2025, url

Assaults by Baloch insurgent groups included the seizing and burning of government buildings, roadblocks and sieges, and the destruction of civil registration infrastructure such as National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) offices.[691] Baloch insurgent groups also targeted CPEC-related infrastructure projects.[692] Dawn and Arab News reported on repeated attacks on railway infrastructure, including the Jaffar Express train.[693] A major gas pipeline running through the outskirts of Quetta was blown up in March 2026, leading to the suspension of gas supplies to the city and other parts of the province.[694] BLA later claimed responsibility for the attack.[695] Security forces demolished houses and property owned by political figures and civilians during military operations across Balochistan in February 2026, according to HRCB.[696] The Balochistan Post reported that houses, fields and infrastructure were destroyed or damaged by security forces in the context of military operations in the Zehri area in September 2025.[697]

Displacement and return

No information could be found on displacement and return in the reference period.

4.2.2. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP)

(a) General description of the province

The area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) is 101 741 square kilometres.[698] KP is located in northwestern Pakistan. It shares internal boundaries with Punjab province and the ICT to the south, as well as with GB and AJK —parts of Pakistan-administered Kashmir— to the northeast and east. KP shares its western and northern borders with Afghanistan.[699] In terms of administrative units, KP is divided into seven divisions (Mardan, Peshawar, Malakand, Bannu, Kohat, Dera Ismail Khan, Hazara), which are further subdivided into 35 districts. Peshawar is KP's capital city.[700]

KP is the country's third most populous province.[701] According to the 7th Population & Housing Census of Pakistan in 2023, its population was 40 856 097. Pashto-speaking (also: Pushto-

[691] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 44
[692] Singh Manhas, N., Amid Geopolitical Tensions, Baloch Militant Attacks Undermine Sino–Pakistan Projects, The Jamestown Foundation, 30 July 2025, url
[693] Dawn, Jaffar Express targeted again, escapes bomb attack in Balochistan's Nasirabad: officials, 16 November 2025, url; Arab News, Pakistan's Jaffar Express struck in latest Balochistan attack, months after deadly hijacking, 23 September 2025, url
[694] Dawn, Gas supply to Quetta, other parts of Balochistan suspended, 31 March 2026, url
[695] Balochistan Post (The), BLA Says It Carried Out 65 Coordinated Attacks Across Balochistan, Claims Over 86 Personnel Killed, 4 Apri 2026, url
[696] HRCB, Human Rights Violations in Balochistan: 234 Enforced Disappearances, 87 Killings Documented in February 2026, 28 March 2026, url
[697] Balochistan Post (The), Zehri Under Siege: BYC Warns of 'Humanitarian Crisis' Amid Ongoing Military Operation, 2 October 2025, url
[698] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 – Provincial Census Report Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, n.d., url, p. 27
[699] Pakistan, Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the United Nations – New York, Political Map of Pakistan, n.d., url
[700] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 – Provincial Census Report Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, n.d., url, p. 50
[701] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 – Provincial Census Report Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, n.d., url, p. 81

speaking) groups made up 81 % of the KP's inhabitants, while Hindko-speaking groups made up about 9 % of KP's population. Smaller language groups include Saraiki, Kohistani, Urdu, and others.[702] According to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (BPS), 99 % of people in KP are Muslim, although there are also Christians, Hindus/Jati, and Sikhs in the province.[703] In parts of Kurram district, Shiites formed a majority.[704]

According to reports, KP's economy is 'agrarian in nature'. For 83 % of the population, agriculture is their primary source of income and accounts for 22.7% of KP's GDP.[705] Additionally, KP engages in mining,[706] notably rare earth mineral extraction.[707] According to the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), quoted by the Pakistani newspaper The Nation in a May 2024 article, 48 % of KP's population is 'multidimensionally poor', the second-highest rate across the country (following Balochistan with 70 %).[708]

(b) Presence and general activities of the armed actors

During the reporting period, insurgents gained foothold throughout former FATA.[709] PICSS reported that while violence in the parts of KP excluding former FATA was 'traditionally' concentrated in the divisions of Peshawar and Malakand, in 2024, a 'shift in militant focus toward the southern districts' bordering North and South Waziristan was noticeable.[710] The security situation in the province was described as very unstable,[711] with ongoing militant attacks and counterterrorism operations.[712] Approximately 4 000 militants were reportedly based in KP,[713] especially in former FATA.[714] Key players in this environment included the TTP, its affiliates, such as the splinter group JuA[715] or the HGB group, local Taliban factions, and Lel.[716] The TTP maintained a robust presence in South and North Waziristan,[717] Bajaur, Mohmand, Khyber, Orakzai, and Kurram districts.[718] The HGB emerged as a rival in districts like

[702] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 – Dashboard, n.d., url. Set filters to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, accessed on 31 March 2026
[703] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 – Provincial Census Report Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, n.d., url, p. 92
[704] Ur Rehman, Z., The roots of Kurram's cycles of bloodshed, 1 December 2024, Dawn, url; Arab News, Gunmen fire on vehicles carrying Shiites in northwest Pakistan, killing at least 42, 21 November 2024, url; AP, A 2nd ceasefire is reached between warring Shiites and Sunni Muslims in Pakistan's restive northwest, 2 December 2024, url
[705] Hamid, A. and Akram, N., Significance and Role of Agriculture Sector in the Socio-Economic Development of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, January 2025, url, p. 1384
[706] Khyber News, Is the Military Really Controlling Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Mineral Resources?, 31 July 2025, url
[707] HRCP, Caught in the Crossfire, 2025, url, p. 18
[708] Nation (The), Poverty rate increases in Pakistan from 38.6pc to 39.5pc in five years: PIDE, 25 May 2024, url
[709] DI, The High-Stakes Future of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: National Liability or Economic Engine?, 6 December 2025, url
[710] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile 2024, 2 January 2025, url, pp. 29-30
[711] HRCP, Caught in the Crossfire, 2025, url, p. 1; ISAS/NUS, ISAS Briefs - Pakistan's Mounting Security Challenges, 24 March 2025, url
[712] HRCP, Caught in the Crossfire, 2025, url, p. 1
[713] International Crisis Group, Crisiswatch [Set filters: Pakistan, January 2025 – January 2025], January 2025, url
[714] Dawn, Officials reveal presence of 4,000 terrorists in KP, 4 November 2025, url
[715] Al Jazeera, Six killed in suicide attack on security complex in Pakistan's Peshawar, 24 November 2025, url
[716] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, pp. 27-28
[717] IEP, Global Terrorism Index 2025, March 2025, url, p. 18
[718] RFE/RL, Struggle For Peace In Pakistan's Restive Tribal Areas Faces Deadly Challenges, 20 July 2025, url

North Waziristan and Bannu.[719] In April 2025, it became part of the Ittehad-ul-Mujahideen Pakistan (IMP), a coalition of smaller Islamist militant factions, including the Lel, or the newly formed Inqilab-e-Islami Pakistan.[720] The HGB and TTP re-grouped and expanded their presence from the southern to almost all districts of KP. TTP militants reportedly infiltrated the region from Afghanistan and integrated into local villages, as per official sources cited by PIPS.[721] ACLED reported in December 2024 that the TTP and HGB aimed to expel security forces from KP to seize control of tribal territories,[722] while the Ahl-e Sunnat wa-l-Jamaat (ASWJ) (also: Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan, SSP) was also present in Peshawar and Kurram districts as of late 2024.[723]

In 2024, 72 % (221) of all militant attacks in the parts of KP excluding former FATA occurred in Dera Ismail Khan, Lakki Marwat, Bannu, Tank, Kohat, Hangu, and Karak.[724] As for the former FATA region, PICSS reported that in 2024, militancy shifted from the northern and central areas to the south. This made South Waziristan the district most affected by militant attacks for the first time in over a decade. The district experienced 76 of the overall 259 militant attacks that occurred in the former FATA region. North Waziristan followed with 61 attacks. The two districts together accounted for 53 % of the overall attacks in the former FATA, followed by Bajaur (54), Khyber (36), and Kurram (20).[725]

In 2025, PIPS reported incidents in 27 districts of KP (including former FATA),[726] up from 22 in 2024.[727] SATP noted with reference to its database, that while 28 districts in KP (including former FATA) recorded militancy-related incidents in 2024 (up from 22 in 2023), the number decreased to 24 in 2025.[728] According to PICSS, militant attacks in the parts of KP province excluding former FATA increased in both frequency and intensity, while compared to 2024, the security situation in former FATA areas deteriorated further, with militant activity expanding and having a more severe human impact.[729] The TTP and allied factions were reported as the main perpetrators.[730] Militant activity in 2025, according to PIPS, was particularly high in six southern districts: North and South Waziristan, Bannu, Tank, Lakki Marwat, and Dera Ismail Khan, which accounted for over 60 % (248) of total attacks in KP (including former FATA). Notable attacks were also reported in Bajaur (36), Peshawar and

[719] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 29
[720] Jadoon, A., Beyond Counterterrorism: A Legitimacy-Centered Framework for Pakistan's Security Crisis, Hudson Institute, 6 October 2025, url
[721] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, pp. 29-30
[722] ACLED, Militants thrive amid political instability in Pakistan, 12 December 2024, url
[723] Canada, IRB, Pakistan: Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan [Sipah-i-Sahaba Pakistan] (SSP) / Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat [Ahl-e-Sunnat-wal-Jamaat] (ASWJ) [Rah-e-Haq, Rah-i-Haq party (PRHP)], Lashkar-e-Jhangvi [Lashkar-i-Jhangvi, Army of Jhangvi] (LeJ), and Tehrik-i-Taliban [Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan, Tehrik-e-Taliban, Pakistani Taliban, Tehreek-e-Taliban] (TTP) militant groups [...] (2022–December 2024), 2 January 2025, url
[724] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile 2024, 2 January 2025, url, pp. 29-30
[725] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile 2024, 2 January 2025, url, pp. 24-25
[726] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 20
[727] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2024: An Abridged Version, Vol. 17, No. 1, January 2025, url, p. 6
[728] SATP, Pakistan: Persistent Peril In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa – Analysis, Eurasia Review, 10 March 2026, url
[729] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, pp. 75, 81-82
[730] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 83; PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 29; PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2024: An Abridged Version, Vol. 17, No. 1, January 2025, url, p. 20

Khyber districts (50 together), and Kurram (17).[731] Regarding former FATA districts, PICSS reported that South Waziristan was the most affected by militancy in 2025, recording 95 of overall 260 militant attacks recorded in the area, continuing the trend observed in 2024. The district was followed by Bajaur (65), North Waziristan (55), Khyber (31), and Kurram districts (20).[732] Bannu (118) and Lakki Marwat (117) emerged as major hotspots in the other parts of KP (excluding former FATA), which overall recorded 419 militant attacks, as noted by PICSS, while Dera Ismail Khan recorded high fatalities relative to incidents (39 attacks). Militant violence in the area also spread beyond the south, impacting Peshawar, Swat, Lower Dir, and Shangla with significant attacks including suicide attacks and targeted strikes.[733] ACLED highlighted an increase in militancy in the southern districts, particularly Dera Ismail Khan, Lakki Marwat, and Bannu.[734] ISKP was also active in some parts of KP,[735] such as in Bajaur district.[736] There were also reports of drone strikes in KP[737] by state forces, the TTP, and other groups.[738]

Government security operations, according to PIPS, focused on North Waziristan, Dera Ismail Khan, Lakki Marwat, and Bannu districts, with activities also noted in Khyber, Karak, and South Waziristan.[739] Other sources reported operations in Bajaur,[740] Mohmand,[741] and Orakzai districts.[742] According to PICSS, in 2025, 139 'security force actions' were documented in former FATA districts. The report states that the focus was on the North and South Waziristan districts, with Bajaur and Kurram being identified as other relevant areas. PICSS also reported damage to civilian infrastructure and civilian casualties resulting from these operations.[743] PICSS further reported that operations in the parts of KP excluding former FATA were expanded into the peripheries of cities, with frequent support by 'local peace committees and armed villagers', in particular in Lakki Marwat and the south.[744] Drone strikes were reportedly used.[745] In December 2025, ACLED reported the use of quadcopter drone strikes in support of military operations targeting militant hideouts in KP. Civilian casualties from at least six air and drone strikes reportedly sparked backlash. The source also noted a more direct involvement of local communities, with tribal councils directly negotiating with members of the

[731] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, pp. 19-20
[732] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, pp. 76-77
[733] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, pp. 81-82
[734] ACLED, Pakistan battles rising militancy that risks spreading beyond the frontiers, 11 December 2025, url
[735] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 29; RFE/RL, Civilians Killed In Pakistani Drone Strikes Targeting Militants, 29 March 2025, url; ACLED, Militants thrive amid political instability in Pakistan, 12 December 2024, url
[736] New York Times (The), Pakistan Fights Its Fiercest Taliban Insurgency in a Decade, 6 October 2025, url
[737] Amnesty International, Pakistan: Recurrent drone strikes in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa signal alarming disregard for civilian life, 24 June 2025, url; Germany, BAMF, Briefing Notes Summary, 30 June 2025, url, p. 12
[738] ACLED, Asia-Pacific Overview: January 2026, 12 January 2026, url
[739] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 27
[740] New York Times (The), Pakistan Fights Its Fiercest Taliban Insurgency in a Decade, 6 October 2025, url
[741] Dawn, 11 terrorists killed in separate operations in KP: ISPR, 18 December 2024, url
[742] EUAA, Pakistan – Security situation in Khyber district (December 2025 to 12 March 2026), 13 March 2026, url, p. 4
[743] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 79
[744] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 84
[745] New York Times (The), Pakistan Fights Its Fiercest Taliban Insurgency in a Decade, 6 October 2025, url; New York Times (The), Quietly, Pakistan Wages a Deadly Drone Campaign Inside Its Own Borders, 19 June 2025, url

TTP and an increased support of security forces by armed local militias.[746] The government did not officially confirm the use of drones in anti-militant efforts by 2025.[747]

In December 2024, hostilities escalated between Pakistan and Afghanistan due to Pakistan's airstrikes on alleged TTP hideouts in Afghanistan.[748] Tensions intensified in early 2025, particularly in the Kurram district, leading Pakistan to reinforce its border fortifications.[749] They erupted again in October 2025, when Pakistan launched attacks on Kabul, and Afghanistan targeted Pakistan's border area.[750]

For border incident details, see section 4.1.2. Border security, including incidents along the Durand Line (Afghanistan), the Line of Control (India), and the Pakistan–Iran border, and for information on Pakistan's relationship with neighbouring countries, see section 2.2. Regional context.

(c) Recent security incidents and impact on civilian population and infrastructure

Security incidents

PIPS, PICSS, and CRSS reported that in 2025, KP saw the highest number of militant attacks in Pakistan,[751] with incident counts ranging from 413 (PIPS)[752] to 699 (PICSS, including former FATA).[753] CRSS documented 795 violent incidents (including militant attacks and counter-militancy operations). The CRSS figure constituted about 63 % of all violent incidents in the country that year.[754] These figures marked a 36 to 44 % increase from 2024.[755] The TTP carried out 96 % of its assaults in KP in 2024, more than doubling 2023 counts.[756] Moreover, about 75 % of 158 security operations in Pakistan during 2024 occurred in KP,[757] which increased to 80 % of 259 attacks in 2025. Of the 23 suicide and *fedayeen*[758] attacks recorded by PIPS in 2025, 14 took place in KP, attributed to groups including TTP, HGB, IMP, and

[746] ACLED, Pakistan battles rising militancy that risks spreading beyond the frontiers, 11 December 2025, url
[747] New York Times (The), Quietly, Pakistan Wages a Deadly Drone Campaign Inside Its Own Borders, 19 June 2025, url; Dawn, Minister defends Mardan action dubbed 'drone strike' in NA, 8 April 2025, url
[748] Al Jazeera, As Pakistan, Afghanistan attack each other, what's next for neighbours?, 30 December 2024, url
[749] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 110
[750] EUAA, Pakistan – Security situation in Khyber district (December 2025 to 12 March 2026), 13 March 2026, url, p. 3; Foschini, F. et al., Breaking Point? The mounting conflict between Afghanistan and Pakistan, 29 March 2026, url
[751] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, pp. 19-20; PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 3; CRSS, Annual Security Report 2025, 31 December 2025, url
[752] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 19
[753] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 3
[754] CRSS, Annual Security Report 2025, 31 December 2025, url
[755] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 19; CRSS, Annual Security Report 2025, 31 December 2025, url; PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 81
[756] IEP, Global Terrorism Index 2025, March 2025, url, p. 18
[757] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2024: An Abridged Version, Vol. 17, No. 1, January 2025, url, p. 12
[758] According to Britannica, *fedayee* 'is a term used in Islamic url to describe a devotee of a religious or national group willing to engage in self-immolation to attain a group goal'. Britannica, fedayee, 28 April 2016, url; The Balochistan Post describes fedayee attacks as self-sacrificing attacks in the name of political objectives. Balochistan Post (The), Fedayeen are Successful in Their Objectives – Says Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies, 21 March 2024, url

ISKP.[759] As of March 2026, KP remained either the country's most[760] or second-most militant violence-affected province, alternating with Balochistan.[761] Sources reported civilian casualties resulting from government security operations during the reference period.[762] In a June 2025 publication, Amnesty International cited its Regional Director for South Asia who stated that the authorities had failed to protect civilian lives, including those of children, and civilian property in KP province. They noted that civilians were continuing to fall victims of the increasing number of drone strikes.[763] An attack by the Pakistani air force on villages in the Northwest's Tirah valley in September 2025 reportedly targeting TTP hideouts, for example, resulted in 30 civilian fatalities, including children, while others were injured.[764]

In 2024, PICSS reported 54 abducted individuals in KP (including 12 in former FATA), including police officials, marking a 'concerning' increase.[765] This trend escalated in 2025, with 127 abducted individuals reported (including 66 in former FATA).[766] PIPS reported that in 2025, abductions of security personnel, tribal elders and government officials, as well as business people and traders by the TTP and affiliated groups intensified, with 39 of the country's 40 such incidents taking place in KP, some resulting in civilian fatalities.[767]

In the second half of 2024, long running sectarian tensions[768] around land in Kurram district[769] have led to violence between Sunnis and Shiites,[770] causing civilian deaths[771] and injuries.[772] Sporadic clashes persisted until the beginning of September 2025.[773] PIPS recorded 11

[759] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, pp. 25, 27
[760] PICSS, Militancy, Security Dynamics, and Strategic Developments in Pakistan (13–18 March 2026), 20 March 2026, url; PICSS, Security on Edge: Militancy, Protests, and Regional Crises Shape Pakistan's Week, 7 March 2026, url; PICSS, Escalating Militancy, Regional Tensions, and Strategic Uncertainty: Pakistan's Monthly Security and Policy Outlook – February 2026, 6 March 2026, url
[761] PICSS, Pakistan's Security, Political, and Economic Landscape amid Escalating Violence and the Iran Crisis, 15 March 2026, url
[762] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 79; ACLED, Pakistan battles rising militancy that risks spreading beyond the frontiers, 11 December 2025, url; Firstpost, Why did Pakistan air force bomb its own villages in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa?, 22 September 2025, url; Amnesty International, Pakistan: Recurrent drone strikes in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa signal alarming disregard for civilian life, 24 June 2025, url; Dawn, 11 killed in Mardan security action, 30 March 2025, url
[763] Amnesty International, Pakistan: Recurrent drone strikes in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa signal alarming disregard for civilian life, 24 June 2025, url
[764] Firstpost, Why did Pakistan air force bomb its own villages in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa?, 22 September 2025, url
[765] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile 2024, 2 January 2025, url, pp. 15, 28
[766] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, pp. 18, 81-82
[767] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 27
[768] ACLED, Militants thrive amid political instability in Pakistan, 12 December 2024, url
[769] HRCP, Caught in the Crossfire, 2025, url, p. 22
[770] AP, A 2nd ceasefire is reached between warring Shiites and Sunni Muslims in Pakistan's restive northwest, 2 December 2024, url; PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2024: An Abridged Version, Vol. 17, No. 1, January 2025, url, p. 13
[771] ACLED, Militants thrive amid political instability in Pakistan, 12 December 2024, url
[772] AP, Gunmen fire on vehicles carrying Shiites in northwest Pakistan, killing at least 42, 22 November 2024, url; Al Jazeera, At least 42 killed in sectarian violence in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 22 November 2024, url; RFE/RL, Violence Flares In Northwest Pakistan Following Attack That Killed Dozens, 22 November 2024, url
[773] SATP, Pakistan: Persistent Peril In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa – Analysis, Eurasia Review, 10 March 2026, url

sectarian attacks in 2024, including 4 in Kurram, which also saw 12 out of 13 recorded clashes,[774] involving mainly Shiite and Sunni groups and rival tribes.[775]

In 2025, PIPS reported 21 border incidents,[776] a decrease from 26 in 2024.[777] The situation peaked in October 2025, characterised by intense military escalation between Pakistan and Afghanistan, including Pakistani airstrikes and cross-border clashes,[778] and again in February 2026.[779] Hostilities continued into March 2026.[780]

Protests against security operations in KP province, including in Bajaur, Waziristan, Khyber, and Swat were reported.[781] After a March 2025 security operation in Mardan district, resulting in civilian fatalities among a nomadic tribe from the Swat region, reportedly acknowledged by the Pakistani government, large protests erupted.[782] In September 2025, an explosion in the Tirah valley, reportedly at a TTP compound, resulted in the deaths of at least 24 civilians, including children. Local opposition figures and authorities claimed that the Pakistani military was responsible for conducting nighttime airstrikes under the guise of a 'counterterror operation' targeting fighters in the mountainous areas near the Afghanistan border, according to Al Jazeera.[783] Protests also erupted in mid-2025 in Bajaur district in response to the sudden initiation of a security operation.[784] According to Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), military operations in the Tirah Valley in FATA have resulted in the displacement of thousands of people since 2009.[785]

From 1 November 2024 to 24 April 2026, ACLED reported 2 003 security incidents in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: 1 070 were coded as battles, 507 as explosions/remote violence and 426 as incidents of violence against civilians. Security incidents in Bannu, Lakki Marwat and South and North Waziristan districts accounted for nearly half of all recorded security incidents in the province (990).[786]

[774] Please note that on page 7, the source says 13 sectarian clashes occurred in Kurram district in 2024: PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2024: An Abridged Version, Vol. 17, No. 1, January 2025, url, p. 7
[775] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2024: An Abridged Version, Vol. 17, No. 1, January 2025, url, p. 13
[776] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 26
[777] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2024: An Abridged Version, Vol. 17, No. 1, January 2025, url, p. 11
[778] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, pp. 111-112
[779] CFR, Why Are the Afghan Taliban and Pakistan in an 'Open War'?, 18 March 2026, url
[780] MEI, Pakistan-Afghanistan tensions drifting into a dangerous escalation cycle, 30 March 2026, url; Foschini, F. et al., Breaking Point? The mounting conflict between Afghanistan and Pakistan, 29 March 2026, url
[781] TNH, Children under fire as Pakistan drone war escalates, 23 October 2025, url
[782] Germany, BAMF, Briefing Notes Summary, 30 June 2025, url, p. 7
[783] Al Jazeera, Calls for probe after killing of civilians reported in northwest Pakistan, 23 September 2025, url
[784] DI, The High-Stakes Future of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: National Liability or Economic Engine?, 6 December 2025, url; Fazl-e-Haider, S., Pakistan's Operation Sarbakaf Against TTP Angers Locals, The Jamestown Foundation, 7 November 2025, url
[785] MSF, Pakistan: In Tirah, the difficult return of populations displaced by the conflict, 12 September 2025, url
[786] EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Pakistan, data covering 1 November 2024 to 24 April 2026, as of 29 April 2026, url

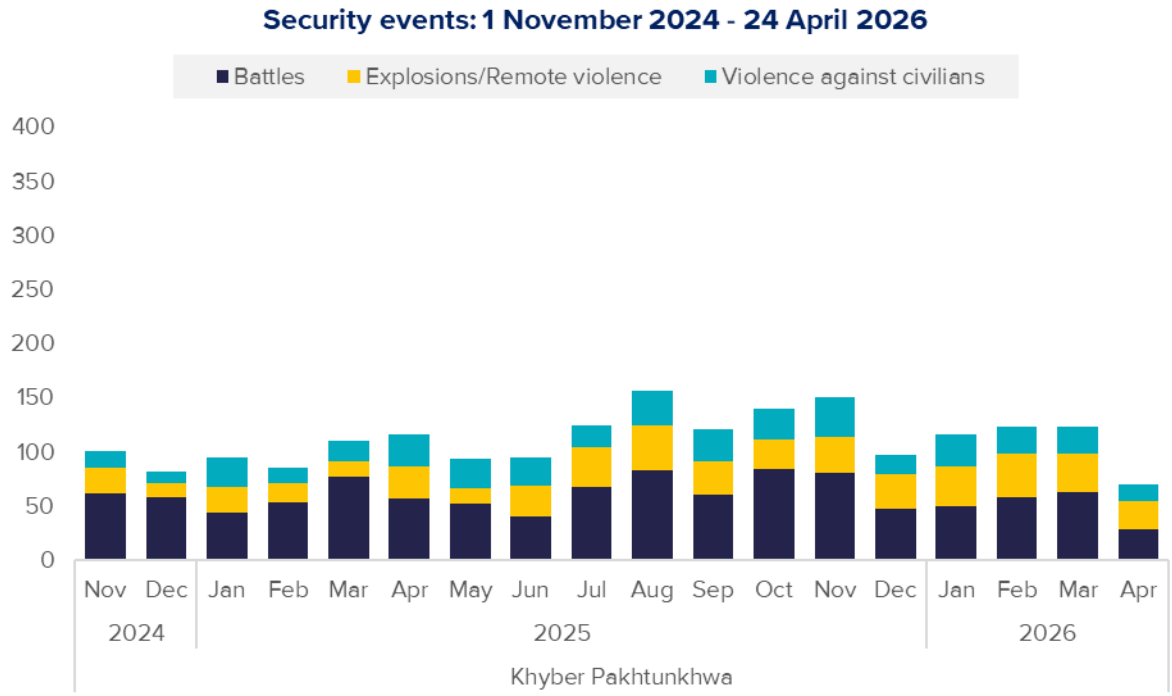

Figure 4: Evolution of security events coded 'battles', 'explosions/remote violence' and 'violence against civilians' in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province between 1 November 2024 and 24 April 2026, based on ACLED data[787]

Fatalities

From 1 November 2024 to 24 April 2026 ACLED reported 3 963 fatalities.[788]

Civilian casualties

SATP reported 48 civilian deaths due to militant violence in KP from 1 January 2026 and 7 March 2026.[789] In 2025, civilian casualties in KP included 129 deaths and 211 injuries reported by PICSS,[790] alongside a December 2025 KP police report cited by SATP noting 223 deaths and 570 injuries due to militant violence.[791] In comparison, in 2024, 89 civilians were killed and 80 were injured according to PICSS,[792] indicating an increase in civilian deaths of 45 %. According to PICSS, the rise in civilian casualties indicated a growing spread of violence into populated areas.[793] CRSS reported that KP suffered more than 68 % (2 331) of all violence-

[787] EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Pakistan, data covering 1 November 2024 to 24 April 2026, as of 29 April 2026, url
[788] EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Pakistan, data covering 1 November 2024 to 24 April 2026, as of 29 April 2026, url
[789] SATP, Pakistan: Persistent Peril In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa – Analysis, Eurasia Review, 10 March 2026, url
[790] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, pp. 81-82
[791] SATP, Pakistan: Persistent Peril In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa – Analysis, Eurasia Review, 10 March 2026, url
[792] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile 2024, 2 January 2025, url, p. 28[52]
[793] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 81

related deaths in 2025,[794] compared to more than 63 % (1 616) in 2024.[795] The IEP reported that, in 2024, 545 of 558 militancy-related deaths took place in KP.[796]

73 % of all militant attacks in KP in 2025, according to PIPS, targeted security personnel, particularly army and police staff,[797] continuing a 2024 trend.[798] ISKP, for its part, carried out a few attacks against civilians, including members of the Shia community, religious minorities, politicians, and tribal leaders.[799]

In 2024, Kurram district accounted for 97 % of deaths from sectarian violence, totalling 227 fatalities, according to PIPS.[800] The above-mentioned November 2024 sectarian incident in Kurram was described as one of the region's most lethal attacks in recent years by the German BAMF, resulting in at least 130 deaths and 186 injuries.[801]

Drone strikes in South and North Waziristan districts caused civilian deaths, including children, and injuries,[802] along with civilian fatalities from an alleged government drone strike in Mardan district in March 2025.[803] According to Amnesty International, '[d]rone strikes have been long part of "counterterrorism" efforts in Pakistan.'[804]

Impact on infrastructure

As of June 2025,[805] Kurram district has been inaccessible since November 2024 due to road blockages by authorities following the sectarian clashes mentioned above. The blockages have sparked protests.[806] Due to the road blockages and insecure overland travel, essential commodities have been transported into Kurram by helicopter.[807] Sources reported that the ongoing security conflict between Pakistan and Afghanistan has led to the indefinite closure of state-run schools in Kurram, Bajaur, and Khyber,[808] as well as Mohmand and North Waziristan districts.[809]

[794] CRSS, Annual Security Report 2025, 31 December 2025, url
[795] CRSS, Annual Security Report 2024, 30 December 2024, url
[796] IEP, Global Terrorism Index 2025, March 2025, url, p. 18
[797] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 20
[798] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2024: An Abridged Version, Vol. 17, No. 1, January 2025, url, p. 6
[799] ACLED, Militants thrive amid political instability in Pakistan, 12 December 2024, url
[800] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2024: An Abridged Version, Vol. 17, No. 1, January 2025, url, p. 13
[801] Germany, BAMF, Briefing Notes Summary, 31 December 2024, url, pp. 9-10
[802] Amnesty International, Pakistan: Recurrent drone strikes in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa signal alarming disregard for civilian life, 24 June 2025, url
[803] New York Times (The), Quietly, Pakistan Wages a Deadly Drone Campaign Inside Its Own Borders, 19 June 2025, url; Dawn, Minister defends Mardan action dubbed 'drone strike' in NA, 8 April 2025, url; Dawn, 11 killed in Mardan security action, 30 March 2025, url
[804] Amnesty International, Pakistan: Recurrent drone strikes in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa signal alarming disregard for civilian life, 24 June 2025, url
[805] Germany, BAMF, Briefing Notes Summary, 30 June 2025, url, p. 2
[806] TNN, Over Half a Million Trapped as Road Closures Cripple Life in Kurram District, 11 April 2025, url; News International (The), Road closures in Kurram worsen public hardships, 26 March 2025, url
[807] VOA, Pakistan secures peace deal in violence-torn district bordering Afghanistan, 1 January 2025, url
[808] TNN, Echoes of Shelling Drive Thousands From Homes Along the Pakistan–Afghanistan Border, 9 March 2026, url; Voicepk.net, Pak-Afghan border conflict forces thousands to shelter in British-era railway tunnel, 6 March 2026, url
[809] Voicepk.net, Pak-Afghan border conflict forces thousands to shelter in British-era railway tunnel, 6 March 2026, url

Displacement and return

Militant activity and military operations in KP and the former FATA have led to large-scale displacement,[810] affecting over 6 million residents between 2003 and 2014.[811] Sources indicated that security operations in KP[812] and a worsening security situation have led to significant displacement during the reporting period.[813] After the above-mentioned November 2024 incidents in Kurram district, residents were moved to temporary shelters, while a security operation reportedly targeting militants was carried out in several areas, such as Bagan city.[814] In mid-2025, a targeted government offensive against the TTP in Bajaur district (Operation Sarbakaf)[815] displaced around 100 000 individuals, according to official sources cited by Arab News.[816] In February 2025, Pakistan closed the Torkham border crossing over disputes regarding an Afghan border post,[817] resulting in the displacement of thousands, but it was later reopened after a ceasefire.[818] In January 2026, significant displacement reportedly occurred[819] amid 'talk of a limited offensive' against the TTP in KP's Tirah valley.[820] However, there were conflicting reports as to whether such an offensive was officially planned,[821] with Pakistan's defence minister reportedly denying claims that a military operation was planned or about to be implemented.[822] Reports regarding the number of people evacuated[823] and whether an official evacuation order was given also vary.[824] Many displaced individuals have found temporary housing in Khyber district,[825] while others settled with host communities in Bara or rented accommodations in Jamrud and Peshawar countryside due to inadequate government housing solutions for IDPs from Tirah Valley, as reported by Dawn in March 2026.[826]

[810] USDOS, 2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Pakistan, 23 April 2024, url, p. 53
[811] RFE/RL, Violence By Islamist Militants Haunts Pakistani Elections In Restive Province, 11 January 2024, url
[812] PICCS, From Tirah to Islamabad: Security Operations and the Politics of Narrative Control, 17 January 2026, url; New York Times (The), Pakistan Fights Its Fiercest Taliban Insurgency in a Decade, 6 October 2025, url; Arab News, Mortar kills 2 children and their mother in northwest Pakistan where troops are targeting militants, 13 August 2025, url; Germany, BAMF, Briefing Notes Summary, 30 June 2025, url, p. 2
[813] Express Tribune (The), Thousands displaced from Tirah as security fears, snowfall slow evacuation, 28 January 2026, url
[814] AP, Pakistan launches security operation in the northwest after surge in violence and sectarian strife, 20 January 2025, url
[815] Fazl-e-Haider, S., Pakistan's Operation Sarbakaf Against TTP Angers Locals, The Jamestown Foundation, 7 November 2025, url; Jadoon, A., Beyond Counterterrorism: A Legitimacy-Centered Framework for Pakistan's Security Crisis, Hudson Institute, 6 October 2025, url
[816] Arab News, Mortar kills 2 children and their mother in northwest Pakistan where troops are targeting militants, 13 August 2025, url
[817] Germany, BAMF, Briefing Notes Summary, 30 June 2025, url, pp. 4-5
[818] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, pp. 110-111
[819] AP, Tens of thousands flee northwest Pakistan over fears of military operation, 28 January 2026, url; PICCS, From Tirah to Islamabad: Security Operations and the Politics of Narrative Control, 17 January 2026, url
[820] Tribune Magazine, Can Pakistan's Tribal Areas find lasting peace?, 1 February 2026, url
[821] PICCS, From Tirah to Islamabad: Security Operations and the Politics of Narrative Control, 17 January 2026, url
[822] AP, Tens of thousands flee northwest Pakistan over fears of military operation, 28 January 2026, url; Al Jazeera, Tens of thousands flee northwest Pakistan's Tirah over fears, 28 January 2026, url
[823] Express Tribune (The), Mass evacuation from Tirah nears completion, 9 February 2026, url
[824] New York Times (The), Thousands Displaced for a Military Push Pakistan Said It Didn't Order, 5 February 2026, url
[825] New York Times (The), Thousands Displaced for a Military Push Pakistan Said It Didn't Order, 5 February 2026, url; Voicepk.net, Pak-Afghan border conflict forces thousands to shelter in British-era railway tunnel, 6 March 2026, url
[826] Dawn, Registration of more displaced persons from Tirah begins today, 9 March 2026, url

4.2.3. Punjab

(a) General description of the province

Punjab is the second largest of Pakistan's provinces, making up 25.9 % of the country's total landmass with a size of 205 344 square kilometres.[827] The province is located in eastern Pakistan and shares internal borders with Sindh province to the south, Balochistan and KP provinces to the northwest and the ICT and the AJK region to the north. Externally, it shares borders with India and the Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir region to the east and northeast.[828] In terms of administrative units, Punjab is divided into nine divisions (Bahawalpur, Dera Ghazi Khan, Faisalabad, Gujranwala, Lahore, Multan, Rawalpindi, Sahiwal, Sargodha), which are further subdivided into 36 districts. Lahore city is Punjab province's capital.[829]

Punjab province is the country's most densely inhabited[830] and most populous province and the second largest by area.[831] Punjab had a population of 127 688 922, according to the 7th Population & Housing Census of Pakistan of 2023. The Punjabis are the province's main ethnic group (67 %), with Saraiki-speaking communities constituting roughly 21 % of Punjab's population and Urdu-speaking groups making up around 7 %. Smaller language groups include Pashto (also: Pushto), Mevati, Balochi, Hindko, Sindhi, and others.[832] According to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS), most of Punjab's population is Muslim, with Christians, Hindus, Sikhs and Ahmadis also present in the province.[833]

In a May 2025 article, The Reporters noted that Punjab accounted for more than 70 % of the country's wheat and rice production and of almost 60 % of its cotton production. However, it added that the harvest had seen 'alarming declines in recent years'.[834] Punjab province reportedly has an active mining sector,[835] with newly discovered gold,[836] as well as oil and gas reserves in Attock district.[837]

(b) Presence and general activities of the armed actors

The military headquarters of the Pakistan Armed Forces, including the Joint Staff Headquarters and the Pakistan Army General Headquarters, the Air headquarters and the Navy HQ[838] are located at the Noor Khan base in Rawalpindi.[839]

[827] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 – Provincial Census Report Punjab, n.d., url, p. 27
[828] Pakistan, Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the United Nations – New York, Political Map of Pakistan, n.d., url
[829] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 – Provincial Census Report Punjab, n.d., url, pp. 41, 43
[830] Britannica, Punjab, last updated 15 February 2026, url
[831] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 – Provincial Census Report Punjab, n.d., url, p. 27
[832] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 – Dashboard, n.d., url. Set filters to Punjab, accessed on 16 February 2026
[833] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 – Provincial Census Report Punjab, n.d., url, pp. 37-38
[834] Reporters (The), Punjab's Agricultural Decline and Pakistan's Economy, 7 May 2025, url
[835] Daily Parliament Times, Punjab strengthens Mineral exploration: MoU signs with Geological Survey of Pakistan, 3 March 2025, url; Express Tribune (The), Punjab govt eyes mining transparency, 30 October 2025, url
[836] Express Tribune (The), Gold deposits worth Rs800b found in Attock, 14 January 2025, url
[837] Express Tribune (The), New oil, gas reserves discovered in Punjab, 5 September 2025, url
[838] Pakistan Forces, Command Structure of Pakistan Army, n.d., url
[839] International Crisis Group, India-Pakistan: Avoiding a War in Waiting, 17 September 2025, url, p. 8

Both PIPS and PICSS reported an increase in militant attacks in Punjab province in 2024 compared to 2023,[840] with a slight reduction in 2025 (see below).[841] In 2025, the security situation in Punjab province showed a persistent intent by militants to maintain a foothold, as reported by PICSS.[842] Militant attacks occurred in various districts, including Mianwali,[843] Lahore, Dera Ghazi Khan,[844] Bahawalpur and Taunsa in 2024.[845]

The TTP has reportedly created two shadow provinces in Punjab[846] (Wilayat North Punjab and Wilayat South Punjab[847]), uniting with armed factions and appointing regional commanders.[848] The group was the main perpetrator of militant attacks in 2025,[849] focusing on South Punjab, as noted by PICCS.[850] PIPS recorded all TTP attacks in Punjab in 2025 in the Dera Ghazi Khan district.[851] In 2024, the TTP focused its attacks on targets such as police stations and checkpoints, with Lahore emerging as the most affected district, followed by Mianwali.[852] Attacks in districts bordering KP and/or Balochistan during the reference period indicated an expansion into areas beyond the TTP's traditional strongholds.[853] In November 2025, the Jamestown Foundation reported that the TTP's intensified efforts to expand its operational network, including into Punjab province.[854]

In 2025, isolated incidents of militancy were noted in Rawalpindi, Attock, Taunsa and Mianwali, indicating a limited yet geographically dispersed militant presence. Notably, major cities like Lahore experienced no attacks, suggesting effective disruption of urban militant cells by intelligence agencies, with anti-militant operations expanding further in the second half of 2025.[855] However, PIPS reported one attack in Lahore attributed to the HGB group, which targeted a Head Constable, leading to his death.[856] The International Crisis Group refers to Muridke and Bahawalpur in Punjab as headquarters for the Laskhar-e-Taiba (LeT) and

[840] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2024: An Abridged Version, Vol. 17, No. 1, January 2025, url, p. 7; PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile 2024, 2 January 2025, url, p. 32[56]
[841] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 85; PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 21
[842] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, pp. 85, 86-87
[843] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2024: An Abridged Version, Vol. 17, No. 1, January 2025, url, p. 21
[844] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2024: An Abridged Version, Vol. 17, No. 1, January 2025, url, p. 7; PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile 2024, 2 January 2025, url, p. 32[56]
[845] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile 2024, 2 January 2025, url, p. 32[56]
[846] Sayed, A., TTP Projecting Power Outside Pakistan's Northwest, The Jamestown Foundation, 6 November 2025, url
[847] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile 2024, 2 January 2025, url, p. 18[25]
[848] ACAPS, Pakistan: Key crisis to watch, 12 June 2025, url, p. 6
[849] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 21
[850] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, pp. 23, 86-87
[851] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 21
[852] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile 2024, 2 January 2025, url, pp. 18[25], 32 [56]
[853] PIPS, Policy Paper – Trends of Extremism in Pakistan - Challenges and Counter Strategies, November 2025, url, p. 7; New York Times (The), Pakistan Fights Its Fiercest Taliban Insurgency in a Decade, 6 October 2025, url; PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile 2024, 2 January 2025, url, p. 32[56]; PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2024: An Abridged Version, Vol. 17, No. 1, January 2025, url, p. 21; ACLED, Militants thrive amid political instability in Pakistan, 12 December 2024, url
[854] Sayed, A., TTP Projecting Power Outside Pakistan's Northwest, The Jamestown Foundation, 6 November 2025, url
[855] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, pp. 85-87
[856] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 7

JeM.[857] Additionally, PICSS linked LeJ to sporadic incidents in the province.[858] An article from May 2025 by RFE/RL corroborated that JeM and LeJ had bases in these areas.[859]

In 2024, PICSS noted intensified counterterrorism efforts, particularly in districts near KP. Lahore, which faced limited militant activity in 2023, became a primary target for security operations, resulting in 31 operations and the arrest of 275 suspects linked to groups such as TTP, ISKP/ISPP, Al-Qaeda, LeJ, and Sipah-e-Muhammad (SMP), highlighting Lahore's strategic importance in the militant landscape.[860] PIPS reported that four counterterrorism operations were conducted in Punjab in 2024.[861] The killing of TTP regional intelligence chief Habib ur Rahman in 2025 in Taunsa Sharif was believed to have weakened the militant command.[862] An ISKP affiliate involved in propaganda was also arrested in Okara in 2025, according to PICSS.[863] In early 2026, sources further reported security operations against organised crime (dacoits) in southern Punjab province's Katcha region[864].

PIPS noted in November 2025 that incidents like the public targeting of minorities and forced conversions of Christian and Hindu girls indicated that religious extremism was 'extending beyond terrorism'.[865] With reference to several sources, the German BAMF reported incidents of detainment of members of the Ahmadi community in Punjab province in early 2025 for offering Friday prayers. Furthermore, persecution of the community by supporters of the TLP party, as well as attacks on places of worship were reported. In one instance, in early March 2025, authorities removed the minaret of an Ahmadi place of worship in Bahawalnagar district responding to TLP pressure.[866] An October 2025 Dawn article reported with reference to police officials that 25 attacks on churches and other religious sites in Punjab between 2022 and 2025, including vandalism and explosions, were linked to TLP workers.[867] In October 2025, authorities blocked roads and suspended mobile internet services ahead of a TLP protest march. The march, which started in Muridke, was dispersed by security personnel and led to clashes between TLP supporters and security forces, eventually leading to a ban of the TLP under the Anti-Terrorism Act on 24 October.[868]

In April 2025, Verma A. and others noted that minor Baloch militant factions exhibited limited activity in southern Punjab, attacking gas pipelines and mineral extraction machinery.[869]

[857] International Crisis Group, India-Pakistan: Avoiding a War in Waiting, 17 September 2025, url, p. 7
[858] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 43
[859] RFE/RL, Pakistan And India Say Civilians Killed After India Fires Missiles Into Pakistani Territory, 6 May 2025, url
[860] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile 2024, 2 January 2025, url, pp. 32[56], 33[57]
[861] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2024: An Abridged Version, Vol. 17, No. 1, January 2025, url, p. 12
[862] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, pp. 86-87
[863] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 34
[864] Dawn, Two more dacoits surrender during Katcha operation, 22 January 2026, url; Dawn, Riverine areas of Rahim Yar Khan, Rajanpur cleared of dacoits: Punjab CM Maryam, 14 February 2026, url
[865] PIPS, Policy Paper – Trends of Extremism in Pakistan - Challenges and Counter Strategies, November 2025, url, pp. 8, 9
[866] Germany, BAMF, Briefing Notes Summary, 30 June 2025, url, p. 7
[867] Dawn, Can the TLP be brought under control?, 9 November 2025, url
[868] Dawn, Punjab to field new riot control force for 'unlawful' protests, 15 December 2025, url
[869] Verma, A. et al., The Baloch Insurgency in Pakistan: Evolution, Tactics, and Regional Security Implications, April 2025, url, p. 27

Additionally, PICSS indicated that the Baloch Republican Guards (BRG) were active in Punjab province in 2025.[870]

On 7 May 2025, amid escalating tensions with Pakistan, Indian forces launched missiles into various cities in Punjab and parts of AJK,[871] resulting in civilian casualties.[872] The escalation involved gunfire and mortar fire.[873] For detailed information on the relationship between the two countries, see section 2.2.2. Relations with India. For information regarding border security, see section 4.2.6. Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) and 4.1.2. Border security, including incidents along the Durand Line (Afghanistan), the Line of Control (India), and the Pakistan–Iran border.

(c) Recent security incidents and impact on civilian population and infrastructure

Security incidents

CRSS documented 25 violent incidents (including militant attacks and counter-militancy operations) in 2025 in Punjab province[874] compared to 51 incidents in 2024.[875] PIPS documented 7 militant attacks in Punjab in 2025 compared to 11 in 2024.[876] PICSS documented 16 attacks in Punjab in 2025[877] compared to 21 attacks in 2024.[878]

From 1 November 2024 to 24 April 2026 ACLED reported 122 security incidents in Punjab: 42 were coded as battles, 27 as explosions/remote violence and 53 as incidents of violence against civilians.[879]

[870] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 55
[871] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 12
[872] RFE/RL, Pakistan And India Say Civilians Killed After India Fires Missiles Into Pakistani Territory, 6 May 2025, url
[873] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, pp. 12
[874] CRSS, Annual Security Report 2025, 31 December 2025, url
[875] CRSS, Annual Security Report 2024 [Table 1], 30 December 2024, url
[876] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 7
[877] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 3
[878] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile 2024, 2 January 2025, url, p. 32[56]
[879] EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Pakistan, data covering 1 November 2024 to 24 April 2026, as of 29 April 2026, url

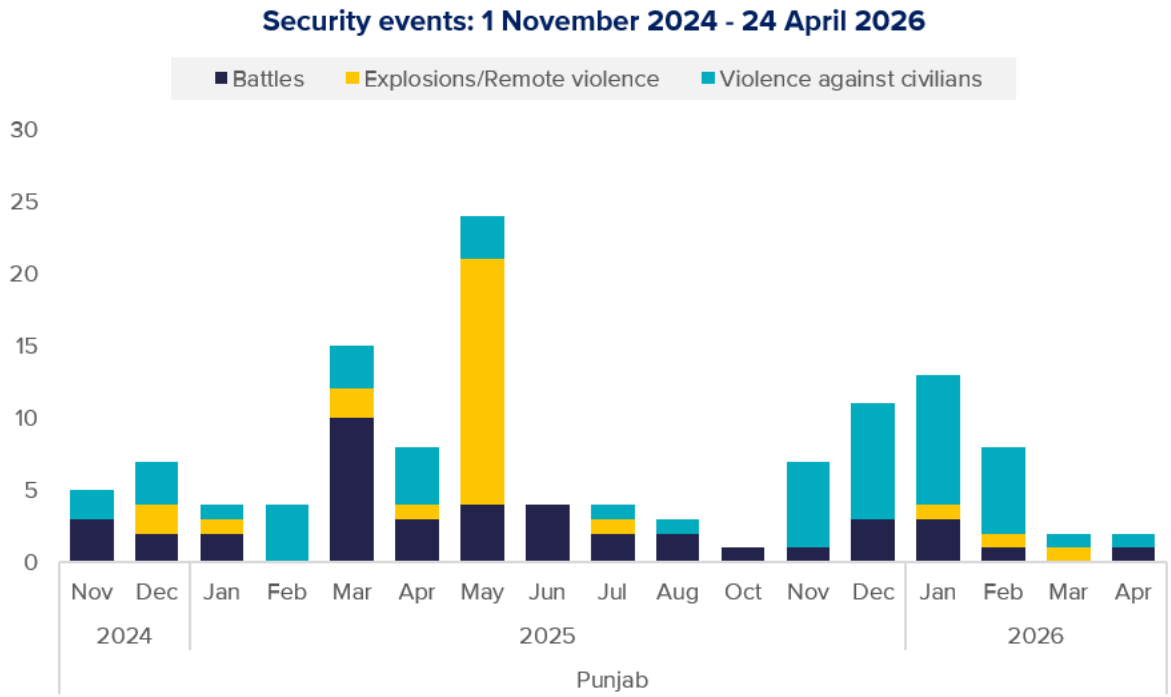

Figure 5: Evolution of security events coded 'battles', 'explosions/remote violence' and 'violence against civilians' in Punjab province between 1 November 2024 and 24 April 2026, based on ACLED data[880]

Fatalities

From 1 November 2024 to 24 April 2026 ACLED reported 138 fatalities.[881]

Civilian casualties

According to PICSS, 4 civilians were killed in militant incidents in 2025 (2 in Taunsa, 1 each in Rawalpindi and Attock).[882] In 2024, 3 civilians had been killed (all 3 in Lahore) and 6 injured (3 in Lahore, 3 in Rahim Yar Khan).[883]

Impact on infrastructure

No information could be found on the impact of the security situation on the infrastructure in Punjab province during the reference period.

Displacement and return

[880] EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Pakistan, data covering 1 November 2024 to 24 April 2026, as of 29 April 2026, url
[881] EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Pakistan, data covering 1 November 2024 to 24 April 2026, as of 29 April 2026, url
[882] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 86
[883] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile 2024, 2 January 2025, url, p. 32[56]

No information could be found on conflict-related IDP or return movements from or into Punjab province during the reference period.

4.2.4. Sindh

(a) General description of the province

Sindh province is located in southeastern Pakistan[884] and shares internal borders with Balochistan to the west and north and Punjab to the northeast.[885] Externally, the province shares borders with India to the east[886] and the Arabian Sea to the south.[887] Sindh is comprised of 6 divisions and 30 districts,[888] with the port city[889] of Karachi serving as provincial capital.[890] The administrative division of Karachi had a population of 20.4 million, according to the 7th Population & Housing Census of Pakistan of 2023, whereas the total population of Sindh was 55.7 million.[891]

At least 16 distinct languages were spoken in the province. Sindhi was the predominant language, followed by Urdu, Pashto and Punjab.[892] Other major indigenous languages – apart from Sindh - included Seraiki and Balochi.[893] Regarding religious composition,[894] approximately 90 % of Sindh's population was Muslim, numbering about 50.1 million people, while 6.4 % was Hindu.[895] According to another source, Sindh's Hindu population was at 8.8 %, making Sindh the province with the highest proportion of Pakistan's Hindu population.[896] According to the 2023 census, 2.4 % of the population belonged to scheduled castes and around 1 % was Christian, while smaller proportions of Ahmadis, Sikhs, and Parsis were also recorded.[897]

Sindh plays a significant role in Pakistan's economic development. Karachi, the country's largest port city, serves as financial hub, generating substantial revenues. The province hosts textile units, sugar mills, pulp and paper mills, and processes edible oil. Sindh accounts for 44 % of total large-scale industrial capacity and has a well-developed agricultural base supported by the Indus irrigation system. In addition, the province has the Thar coalfield, one of the world's largest coal reserves, with significant potential for power generation.[898] Sindh is

[884] Britannica, Sindh, last updated 1 March 2026, url
[885] UK, PCGN, Pakistan [Map], 2023, url, p. 4; France, OFPRA, Carte des provinces du Pakistan [Map], June 2021, url, p. 1; Pakistan, Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the United Nations – New York, Political Map of Pakistan, n.d., url
[886] France, OFPRA, Carte des provinces du Pakistan [Map], June 2021, url, p. 1; Pakistan, Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the United Nations – New York, Political Map of Pakistan, n.d., url
[887] Britannica, Sindh, last updated 1 March 2026, url
[888] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 — Provincial Census Report Sindh, n.d., url, p. 41
[889] Xinhua, Death toll from shopping mall fire in Pakistan's Karachi rises to 60, 21 January 2026, url
[890] Britannica, Sindh, last updated 1 March 2026, url
[891] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population and Housing Census 2023 — Provincial Census Report Sindh, n.d., url, p. 57
[892] Express Tribune (The), Census shows rich lingual tapestry in Sindh, 22 July 2024, url
[893] Britannica, Sindh, last updated 1 March 2026, url
[894] For more detailed information on the religious composition of Sindh see section 4.2.4 of the url.
[895] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population and Housing Census 2023 — Provincial Census Report Sindh, n.d., url, p. 66
[896] HRCP, Exodus: Is the Hindu Community Leaving Sindh?, 2024, url, p. 2
[897] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population and Housing Census 2023 — Provincial Census Report Sindh, n.d., url, p. 66
[898] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population and Housing Census 2023 — Provincial Census Report Sindh, n.d., url, p. 43

part of China's CPEC initiative, including the development of energy infrastructure projects,[899] and industrial hubs such as the Dhabeji Special Economic Zone (SEZ) near Karachi's ports.[900]

(b) Presence and general activities of the armed actors

According to PICSS, the security situation in Sindh province in 2025 remained characterised by sporadic and low-level incidents, despite a slight increase in militant attacks compared to the previous year. While Karachi continued to be the district most affected by militant attacks, a limited number of attacks was also recorded across the country in Shikarpur, Qambar Shahdadkot, Jacobabad, Sukkur, Ghotki, Dadu, Hyderabad, and Badin districts.[901] PIPS named the Sindhudesh Revolutionary Army (SRA), the Baloch insurgent groups BLF and BRG, as well as the religiously motivated groups TTP and Hafiz Gul Bahadur (HGB) as the main armed groups involved in militant attacks across the province.[902] In its 2025 report, PICSS also mentioned the presence of BLA and of actors linked to transnational networks such as Al Qaeda as well as the growing presence of the Iran-linked Al-Zainabiyoun Brigade.[903]

The SRA claimed responsibility for at least 15 attacks in 2024, targeting predominantly security forces, suspected collaborators with the state and infrastructure, according to PICSS. Nevertheless, the source described the SRA's operational capabilities as limited compared to other militant groups operating in Pakistan.[904] Similarly, in 2025, the group's activities were characterised by infrequent small attacks against targets perceived as external and/or state-linked,[905] such as Punjabi workers or National Logistics Corporation (NLC) oil tankers,[906] claiming that the state was exploiting Sindh's natural resources to the detriment of the local population,[907] and Punjab's advantage.[908] PICSS noted, however, that SRA was not only a Sindh separatist group but, through its membership in BRAS, part of the larger network of Baloch insurgent groups. Given BRAS' opposition to Chinese investment in the region, this alliance held the possibility of an extension of attacks on China-related infrastructure from Balochistan province into Sindh province, according to PICSS.[909]

Baloch insurgent groups were responsible for several attacks in Sindh province during the reference period, including BLF and BRG. BLF claimed responsibility for one attack in Karachi in 2025 (specifically, an attack on a police station in January 2025[910]), while BRG was linked to

[899] Nation (The), 12 energy projects completed across Sindh under CPEC, 11 December 2025, url
[900] Arab News, Pakistan eyes $3 billion investment as Sindh announces China-backed special economic zone, 18 January 2025, url
[901] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 87
[902] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 20
[903] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, pp. 87-88
[904] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile 2024, 2 January 2025, url, p. 15[39]
[905] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 58
[906] Balochistan Post (The), SRA Claims Responsibility for Attacks on Punjabi Citizens in Sindh, 14 April 2025, url
[907] Balochistan Post (The), SRA Claims Responsibility for Attack on Oil Tankers in Sujawal-Badin Area, 16 April 2025, url; Balochistan Post (The), SRA Claims Responsibility for Attack on NLC Vehicles in Sindh, 5 March 2025, url
[908] Balochistan Post (The), SRA Claims Responsibility for Attacks on Punjabi Citizens in Sindh, 14 April 2025, url
[909] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 59
[910] Balochistan Post (The), BLA, BLF Claim Multiple Attacks on Pakistani Forces and 'Agents', 30 January 2025, url

three attacks on railway tracks in Jacobabad and Shikarpur,[911] including in June,[912] October,[913] and December 2025,[914] as well as January 2026.[915] BRG also claimed responsibility for attacks on oil pipelines running through Sindh,[916] and attacks targeting police officers.[917] PIPS noted that BRG's claims of operations inside Sindh and its recruitment attempts in Karachi and Sindh province, indicated the group's desire to extend the conflict into other provinces.[918] In January 2026, the Sindh Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) reportedly seized a large quantity of explosives in Karachi and arrested several individuals allegedly associated with BLA.[919] The Balochistan Pulse quoted security officials saying that Karachi was turning into a 'fallback target' for banned groups experiencing setbacks in Balochistan.[920]

The TTP and the Hafiz Gul Bahadur (HGB) groups were involved in eight attacks in Karachi in 2025, resulting in civilian casualties, according to PIPS,[921] reflecting the TTP's re-emergence in Karachi,[922] and its increasing expansion into other provinces beyond its main base of KP.[923] PICSS notes that the number of attacks did not identify Sindh as a primary theatre but showed the group's intent to have a nationwide presence.[924] Dawn noted in September 2025 that an ongoing investigation into the killings of police officers in Karachi in 2025 pointed to the presence of the TTP in the city.[925]

Sources also mentioned sectarian violence in Sindh province during the reference period,[926] such as attacks on members of the Ahmadi minority,[927] and the religiopolitical ASWJ group.[928]

[911] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 20
[912] Dawn, Four bogies derail as bomb rips through Jaffer Express in Jacobabad, 19 June 2025, url
[913] Express Tribune (The), Jaffar Express targeted again by outlawed terrorist group in Shikarpur, 8 October 2025, url; Balochistan Post (The), Sindh: Jaffar Express Derails After IED Blast; BRG Claims Responsibility, 7 October 2025, url
[914] Balochistan Post (The), Baloch Armed Groups Claim Attacks in Balochistan and Sindh; At Least 19 Pakistani Soldiers Reported Killed, 17 December 2025, url
[915] Balochistan Post (The), Blast Derails Four Carriages of Jaffar Express in Sindh; BRG Claims Responsibility, 27 January 2026, url
[916] Zrumbesh, Baloch Republican Guards Claim Responsibility for Pipeline Blast near Nawabshah, 25 September 2025, url; Zrumbesh, BRG Claims Responsibility for Roadblock, Attacks on Mineral Transport Vehicles and Gas Pipeline, 19 September 2025, url
[917] Balochistan Post (The), Balochistan: Police Vehicle Bombed, Checkpoints Seized in Wave of Attacks, 20 January 2025, url; Balochistan Post (The), Nine Pakistani Soldiers Killed as Baloch Armed Groups Claim Multiple Attacks in Balochistan and Sindh, 22 December 2025, url
[918] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 43
[919] Arab News, Pakistan police say foiled major attack in Karachi linked to separatist militants, 5 January 2026, url
[920] Balochistan Pulse (The), BLA Terror Bid Foiled in Karachi: Inside the Operation That Seized 2,000kg Explosives, 5 January 2025 url
[921] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, pp. 20-21
[922] Sayed, A., TTP Projecting Power Outside Pakistan's Northwest, The Jamestown Foundation, 6 November 2025, url
[923] Sayed, A., TTP Projecting Power Outside Pakistan's Northwest, The Jamestown Foundation, 6 November 2025, url; Tahir, S. and Jadoon, A., Leaders, Fighters, and Suicide Attackers: Insights on TTP Militant Mobility Through Commemorative Records, 2006-2025, May 2025, url, p. 25
[924] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 23
[925] Dawn, Outlawed TTP on the radar for targeted killings of policemen in Karachi, 19 September 2025, url
[926] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2024: An Abridged Version, Vol. 17, No. 1, January 2025, url, p. 7; PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, pp. 87-88
[927] Dawn, Ahmadi man lynched as TLP supporters storm worship place in Karachi's Saddar: police, 18 April 2025, url
[928] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 21; Dawn, ASWJ local leader shot dead, father hurt in 'targeted attack': Karachi police, 30 March 2025, url

In terms of state actors, media sources reported several arrests made by the Sindh CTD of suspected members of armed groups, including SRA,[929] BLA,[930] TTP,[931] and the Zainabiyoun Brigade.[932]

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) noted in its state of human rights report for 2024 that enforced disappearances 'continued unabated' during 2024, with 44 new complaints recorded that year, according to official data.[933] In its 2025 annual report, HRCP recorded 28 cases of enforced disappearance in Sindh.[934] According to data by the Baloch civil rights movement BYC, 18 persons of Baloch descent were forcibly disappeared in Karachi in the period January - June 2025.[935] Voice of Missing Persons of Sindh (VMPS) recorded 40 cases in the same period. According to a joint statement by several human rights organisations, among them BYC and VMPS, authorities 'routinely' used enforced disappearances to target dissidents and human rights defenders.[936]

(c) Recent security incidents and impact on the civilian population and infrastructure

Security incidents

PICSS recorded 34 militant attacks in 2025, compared to 24 in 2024. Karachi remained the district most affected by militant attacks, with 24 attacks recorded in 2025.[937] In comparison, PIPS recorded 12 militant attacks in 2024 and 21 incidents in 2025, including 16 in Karachi.[938]

Ten people were killed and more than 30 injured when security forces opened fire on pro-Iranian protesters attacking the US consulate in Karachi in March 2026.[939]

At least seven people were injured and four coaches of the Jaffar Express passenger train derailed in an IED explosion near the Sultan Kot railway station in Shikarpur District in October 2025.[940] The BRG reportedly claimed responsibility for the attack, saying it was targeting soldiers travelling on the train and that some of them had been killed or injured. As of October 2025, that claim remained to be confirmed by the authorities, according to the Balochistan Post.[941]

[929] Express Tribune (The), CTD claims arrest of two SRA militants, 2 November 2025, url
[930] Dawn, Sindh CTD says major terrorist plot in Karachi foiled; 2,000kg of explosive material seized, 5 January 2026, url
[931] Dawn, CTD says five 'terrorists linked to TTP and AQIS' arrested in Karachi, 31 August 2025, url
[932] Arab News, Pakistan detains suspected militants of sectarian Zainabiyoun Brigade, 23 October 2025, url; Dawn, CTD arrests suspected militant linked with proscribed outfit in Karachi, 12 April 2025, url
[933] HRCP, State of Human Rights in 2024, 2025, url, p. 75
[934] HRCP, State of Human Rights in 2025, 4 May 2026, url, p. 30
[935] Voicepk.net, Enforced Disappearances: Govt claims drop, rights groups say rise, 8 July 2025, url
[936] AFAD et al., Joint statement - PAKISTAN: Failure to address enforced disappearance perpetuates injustice against victims, 29 August 2025, url
[937] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 87
[938] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 20
[939] Guardian (The), At least 22 people dead after pro-Iran protests in Pakistan and Iraq, 1 March 2026, url
[940] Arab News Pakistan, Seven injured as blast derails Jaffar Express train in southern Pakistan, 7 October 2025, url
[941] Balochistan Post (The), Sindh: Jaffar Express Derails After IED Blast; BRG Claims Responsibility, 7 October 2025, url

Several Punjab settlers were reportedly injured in a shooting attack on a passenger train near Guddu Chowk in the Hussainabad area of Hyderabad district in April 2025. The SRA claimed responsibility for the attack.[942]

At least four people were killed and one injured in a shooting incident in the Faqira Goth area in Karachi in August 2025. TTP reportedly released a statement later the same day claiming responsibility for the attack.[943]

In April 2025, an Ahmadi man was reportedly killed by a group of Tehreek-i-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) workers who were attacking an Ahmadi place of worship to prevent the community from holding Friday prayers. The Ahmadi man was filming the protest when the group turned against him and started beating him, leading to his death.[944] TLP is a Sunni Muslim far-right political party known for violent protests focusing on (perceived) blasphemy.[945] The party was banned in October 2025, following violent clashes between TLP followers and the police.[946]

From 1 November 2024 to 24 April 2026, ACLED reported 216 security incidents in Sindh: 28 were coded as battles, 25 as explosions/remote violence and 163 as incidents of violence against civilians.[947] Karachi city registered the highest number of security incidents, the majority of which were recorded as violence against civilians (88).[948]

[942] Balochistan Post (The), Armed Men 'Capture' Military Outpost in Kalat; BLF Claims Attacks in Kharan, SRA Claims Train Attack in Sindh, 23 April 2025, url
[943] Khorasan Diary (The), [X], posted on 26 August 2025, url
[944] Dawn, Ahmadi man lynched after religious party demo outside worship place, 19 April 2025, url
[945] Al Jazeera, What's behind Pakistan's latest crackdown on religious party TLP?, 17 October 2025, url
[946] Reuters, Pakistan bans Islamist party after deadly clashes, 23 October 2025, url
[947] EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Pakistan, data covering 1 November 2024 to 24 April 2026, as of 29 April 2026, url
[948] EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Pakistan, data covering 1 November 2024 to 24 April 2026, as of 29 April 2026, url

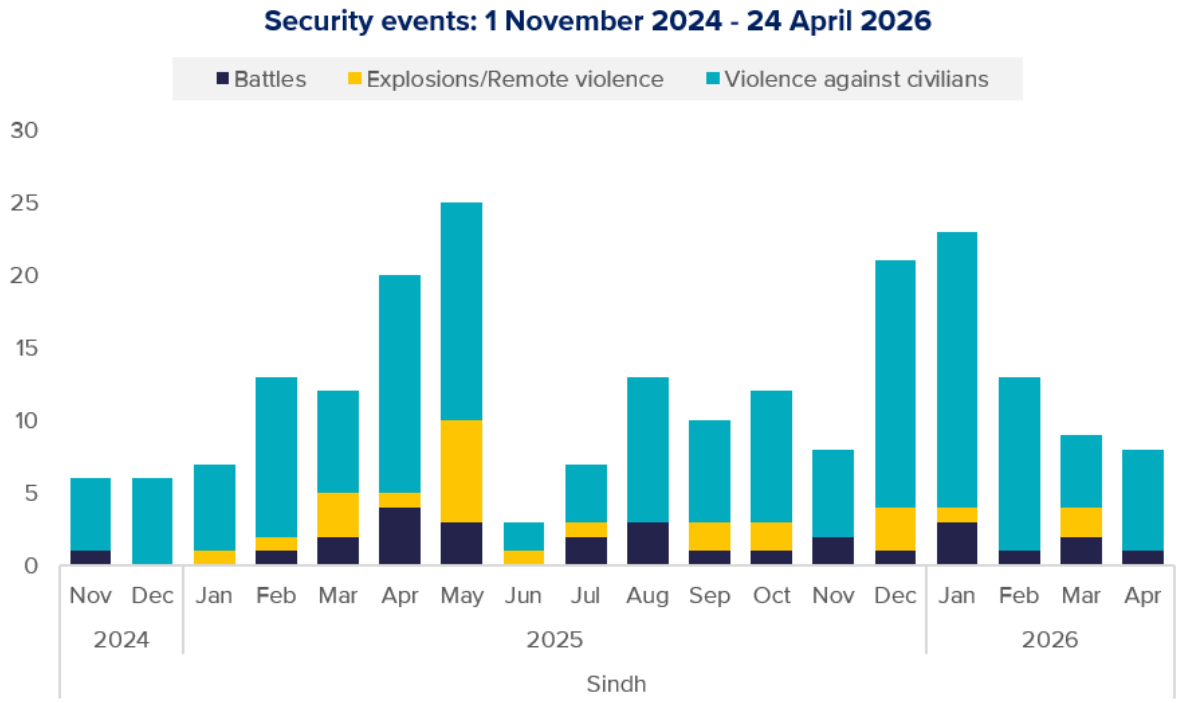

Figure 6: Evolution of security events coded 'battles', 'explosions/remote violence' and 'violence against civilians' in Sindh province between 1 November 2024 and 24 April 2026, based on ACLED data[949]

Fatalities

From 1 November 2024 to 24 April 2026 ACLED reported 137 fatalities.[950]

Civilian casualties

According to PICSS, 18 civilians were killed in militant incidents in 2025, and 11 injured. Most of these civilian victims were recorded in Karachi, with 14 dead and 7 injured.[951] In comparison, in 2024, the number of civilian victims had been slightly lower, with 14 civilians killed and 23 injured, all in Karachi.[952]

Impact on infrastructure

Attacks on railway lines in Sindh province led to the derailment of several train coaches,[953] and to a temporary suspension of railway operations due to damaged tracks.[954] PICSS pointed to

[949] EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Pakistan, data covering 1 November 2024 to 24 April 2026, as of 29 April 2026, url
[950] EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Pakistan, data covering 1 November 2024 to 24 April 2026, as of 29 April 2026, url
[951] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 89
[952] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile 2024, 2 January 2025, url, p. 34[58]
[953] Arab News Pakistan, Seven injured as blast derails Jaffar Express train in southern Pakistan, 7 October 2025, url; Arab News, IED explosion derails five Jaffar Express train coaches in southwestern Pakistan, 10 August 2025, url
[954] Arab News, IED explosion derails five Jaffar Express train coaches in southwestern Pakistan, 10 August 2025, url

SRA's tendency to attack 'state-linked logistics' such as NLC oil tankers,[955] and damaging vehicles.[956]

Displacement and return

HRCP noted in January 2025 that many Hindu communities in Sindh province felt compelled to migrate abroad due to discrimination, violence, extortion by criminal gangs, and Hindu women's vulnerability to abduction, forced conversion and underage marriage.[957]

4.2.5. Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT)

(a) General description of the Capital Territory

The ICT is located in the northern part of Pakistan and shares internal borders with Punjab and KP provinces.[958] It includes the capital city, Islamabad. The ICT does not have international borders.[959] According to Pakistan's 7th Population & Housing Census in 2023, the ICT had a population of approximately 2.36 million,[960] while Islamabad city had 1.11 million inhabitants.[961]

It is organised into five zones.[962] The Soan and Kurang rivers are the two main streams that provide the water supply for both Islamabad and Rawalpindi.[963] The rural area of the ICT includes 23 Union Councils, encompassing 129 villages, whereas the urban region is made up of 27 Union Councils.[964] The ICT Administration serves as both the civil authority and the primary law enforcement body for the Federal Capital.[965]

According to Pakistan's 7th Population & Housing Census in 2023, the ICT's population was predominantly Muslim (95,55 %), with a minority of Christians constituting 4,26 % of the total population. Smaller communities of Ahmadis (0,1 %) and Hindus (0,04 %) were also recorded.[966] The most spoken language was Punjabi, followed by Pashto and Urdu. Other languages included Hindko, Saraiki, Kashmiri, and Sindhi.[967]

(b) Presence and general activities of the armed actors

The ICT Police operated under the administrative authority of the Chief Commissioner of the ICT Administration. The police force comprised the Capital City Police, the Islamabad Traffic

[955] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, pp. 58-59
[956] Balochistan Post (The), SRA Claims Responsibility for Attack on NLC Vehicles in Sindh, 5 March 2025, url
[957] HRCP, HRCP report investigates Hindu migration from Sindh, 22 January 2025, url
[958] France, OFPRA, Carte des provinces du Pakistan, June 2021, url, p. 1; Pakistan, Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the United Nations – New York, Political Map of Pakistan, n.d., url
[959] France, OFPRA, Carte des provinces du Pakistan, June 2021, url, p. 1
[960] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 – National Census Report, August 2024, url, p. 7
[961] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 – National Census Report, August 2024, url, p. 109
[962] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 – District Census Report Islamabad, n.d., url, p. 46
[963] Sohail, M. T. et al., Impacts of urbanization, LULC, LST, and NDVI changes on the static water table with possible solutions and water policy discussions: A case from Islamabad, Pakistan, 9 February 2023, url, p. 3
[964] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 – District Census Report Islamabad, n.d., url, p. 46
[965] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 – District Census Report Islamabad, n.d., url, p. 44
[966] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 – District Census Report Islamabad, n.d., url, p. 62
[967] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 – District Census Report Islamabad, n.d., url, p. 36

Police, and the Capital Security Police.[968] During the reference period, the ICT Police carried out search and combing operations in various locations of the federal capital, aiming to curb criminal activities.[969]

The Counter Terrorism Department's (CTD) mandate covers conducting counter terrorism operations in the ICT in collaboration with local police and other law enforcement agencies.[970] In 2024, the ICT police's CTD reportedly conducted 52 intelligence-based operations and 141 search operations, arresting at least 46 persons and recovering explosives and weapons.[971] PICSS mentioned a 'notable CTD and Intelligence Bureau operation' in August 2025, thwarting a 'major TTP plot' reportedly planning to target a federal educational institution. Security forces detained an operational commander and an Afghan suicide bomber before they could act, forestalling a potentially large-scale incident.[972] In 2025,[973] especially in the aftermath of the November 2025 suicide attack, operations by CTD were reported in Islamabad (see also below).[974]

(c) Recent security incidents and impact on the civilian population and infrastructure

Security incidents

In early February 2026, a suicide attack inside a Shiite mosque in the ICT killed a minimum of 30 people and injured around 170 others. ISPP reportedly claimed responsibility for the attack.[975]

In its National Security Profile covering 2025, PICSS noted that, amongst others, the ICT 'remained comparatively stable and low in intensity when measured against Pakistan's primary conflict zones.' Islamabad experienced fewer attacks compared to other provinces, however, the incidents 'carried disproportionate symbolic and psychological weight, reinforcing the nationwide reach of militant networks.' PICSS recorded two attacks, resulting in 13 persons killed and 36 wounded. In 2025, no drone attacks were recorded in the ICT. Two security forces' actions against militants were recorded in 2025, involving the arrest of individuals.[976]

[968] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 – District Census Report Islamabad, n.d., url, p. 46
[969] APP, ICT Police check 225 individuals in coordinated search and combing operations across multiple areas, 13 January 2026, url
APP, ICT Police conduct search, combing operations across Islamabad, 4 January 2026, url
Urdu Point, ICT Police Conduct Grand Search & Combing Operation In PS Tarnol, 12 September 2025, url
PTV, Islamabad Police Conduct Extensive Search Operation in Sabzi Mandi, Four Suspects Detained, 20 July 2025, url
[970] Pakistan, Islamabad Police, Counter Terrorism Department, n.d., url
[971] SATP, Pakistan: Capital Risks – Analysis, Eurasia Review, 18 November 2025, url
[972] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 61
[973] Urdu Point, ICT Police Conduct Grand Search & Combing Operation In PS Tarnol, 12 September 2025, url
[974] AP, Pakistan arrests 4 militants in connection to suicide bombing at Islamabad court, 14 November 2025, url; Express Tribune (The), TTP chief Noor Wali orchestrated Islamabad suicide attack: Tarar, 25 November 2025, url
[975] Le Monde, Islamic State claims responsibility for attack on Shiite mosque that killed at least 31 in Pakistan, 7 February 2026, url; CBS News, 4 suspects arrested after bombing at Pakistan mosque leaves 31 dead, 7 February 2026, url
[976] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, pp. 1; 4; 10; 60; 89; 90

SATP cites reports by The Balochistan Post mentioning that Baloch students faced enforced disappearance by Islamabad security forces in March, June and July 2025.[977]

The SATP recorded four[978] terrorism-related incidents in the ICT in 2025, including a 'mini-rocket' attack on a police station, the wounding of a Frontier Corps official in the Chatha Bakhtawar area, and a suicide attack.[979] On 29 November 2025, a police officer was reportedly killed in Islamabad by unidentified assailants.[980] On 11 November 2025, a suicide bomber outside a court in Islamabad killed at least 12 people and wounded between 27[981] and 36 people.[982]

According to CRSS Annual Security Report covering 2025, the ICT's violent incidents numbers (comprising both militant attacks and violence linked to counter-terrorism operations) remained minimal, however the injury figures were relatively high, with 38 registered injuries in five incidents. Fatality numbers in the ICT declined from 26 in 2024 to 15 in 2025.[983]

PIPS reported one incident in 2025 causing 12 fatalities and 36 injuries. In 2024, PIPS also recorded one incident in the ICT with both one fatality and injury.[984] The incident occurred in January 2024.[985]

In November 2024, protests were reported in Islamabad.[986] Amnesty International, reported the alleged killing of 12 people in Islamabad after security forces used lethal ammunition against PTI protesters.[987] According to the government, no protester was killed.[988]

From 1 November 2024 to 24 April 2026 ACLED reported 14 security incidents in Islamabad Capital Territory: 3 were coded as explosions/remote violence and 11 as incidents of violence against civilians.[989]

[977] SATP, Islamabad Capital Territory: Timeline (Terrorist Activities)-2025, n.d., url
[978] SATP, Pakistan: Capital Risks – Analysis, Eurasia Review, 18 November 2025, url; SATP, Islamabad Capital Territory: Timeline (Terrorist Activities)-2025, n.d., url
[979] SATP, Pakistan: Capital Risks – Analysis, Eurasia Review, 18 November 2025, url
[980] SATP, Islamabad Capital Territory: Timeline (Terrorist Activities)-2025, n.d., url
[981] Reuters, Suicide bombing in Pakistan capital kills 12, raises regional tension, 12 November 2025, url
[982] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 90
[983] CRSS, Annual Security Report 2025, 31 December 2025, url
[984] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 25
[985] AP, Thousands of mourners in Islamabad attend funeral for Pakistani cleric gunned down in broad daylight, 6 January 2024, url
[986] Dawn, Day of clashes in Islamabad ends in PTI protesters' retreat, 27 November 2024, url; Al Jazeera, Dead but not counted: Hidden victims of Pakistan's latest political clash, 4 December 2024, url
[987] Amnesty International, The State of the World's Human Rights, Pakistan 2024, 29 April 2025, url
[988] Al Jazeera, Dead but not counted: Hidden victims of Pakistan's latest political clash, 4 December 2024, url
[989] EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Pakistan, data covering 1 November 2024 to 24 April 2026, as of 29 April 2026, url

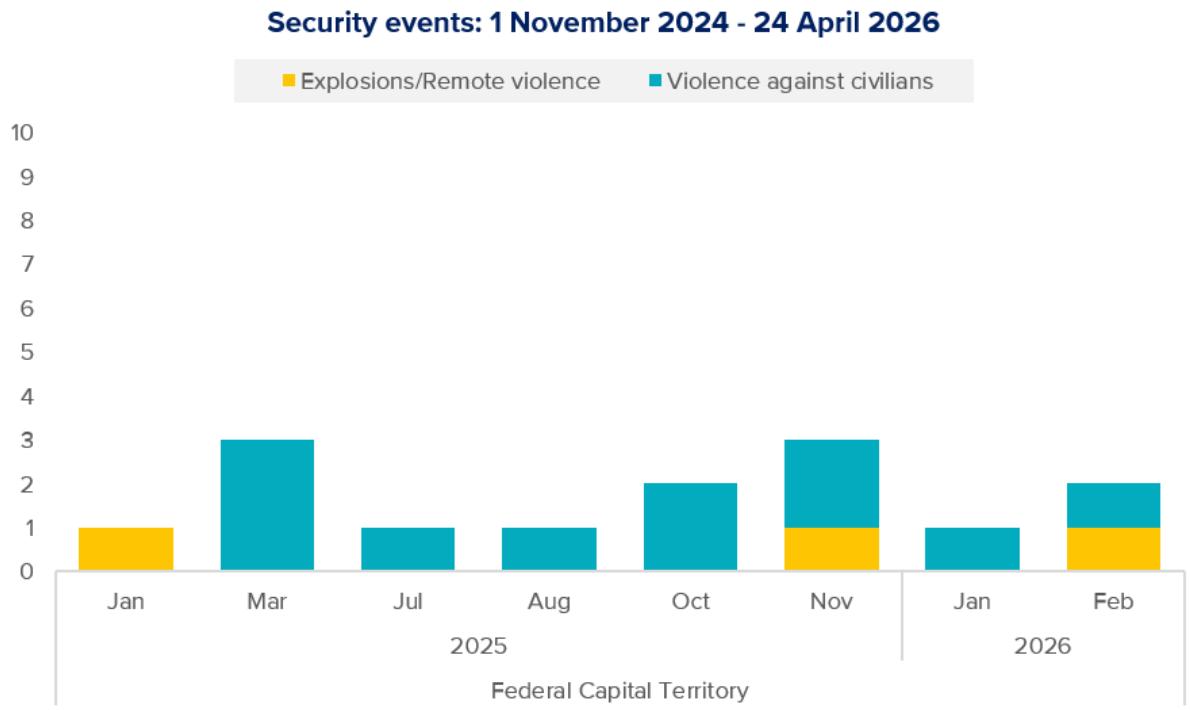

Figure 7: Evolution of security events coded 'battles', 'explosions/remote violence' and 'violence against civilians' in Islamabad Capital Territory between 1 November 2024 and 24 April 2026, based on ACLED data[990]

Fatalities

From 1 November 2024 to 24 April 2026 ACLED reported 51 fatalities.[991]

Civilian casualties

PICSS recorded 12 civilian deaths and 32 injured in 2 militant attacks in 2025.[992]

Impact on infrastructure

No further information on impact on infrastructure could be found during the reference period.

[990] EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Pakistan, data covering 1 November 2024 to 24 April 2026, as of 29 April 2026, url
[991] EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Pakistan, data covering 1 November 2024 to 24 April 2026, as of 29 April 2026, url
[992] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 4

Displacement and return

No information could be found on conflict-related IDP or return movements from or into ICT during the reference period.

4.2.6. Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB)

(a) General description of the territories

The area of AJK is 13 297 square kilometres, and the area of GB is 77 676 square kilometres.[993] AJK and GB are in northeastern Pakistan.[994] GB shares internal borders with KP province in the west and AJK in the south. AJK further shares internal borders with KP and Punjab provinces in the west.[995] The Kashmir region is disputed between India, Pakistan and China but claimed in its entirety by both Pakistan and India.[996] Each of the two territories of Pakistan-administered Kashmir has an elected assembly and government with limited autonomy but lacks federal parliamentary representation and other rights granted to Pakistani provinces. Pakistani federal institutions hold significant control,[997] including over security, the courts, and key policy decisions.[998]

In terms of administrative units, AJK is divided into three divisions (Muzaffarabad, Poonch, Mirpur), which are further subdivided into ten districts.[999] Muzaffarabad is AJK's capital city.[1000] GB is divided into 10[1001] to 14 districts,[1002] depending on the source consulted. Gilgit is GB's capital city.[1003]

Pakistan's Population & Housing Census of 2023 lacks data for Pakistan-administered Kashmir.[1004] A March 2026 publication by the AJK government cites the 2023 census, reporting AJK's population at 4 333 000.[1005] Meanwhile, the government of GB states the region's population was approximately 2.3 million as of April 2024[1006].[1007]

[993] Pakistan, Azad Government of the State of Jammu & Kashmir, Azad Jammu & Kashmir at a glance – 2025, March 2026, url, p. 2
[994] Pakistan, Legislative Assembly of Azad Jammu & Kashmir, About Azad Jammu & Kashmir, n.d., url
[995] Pakistan, Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the United Nations – New York, Political Map of Pakistan, n.d., url
[996] Britannica, Kashmir, last updated 28 March 2026, url; Newsweek, Kashmir Map Shows Who Controls Territory in Contested Himalayan Region, updated 13 January 2026, url
[997] Bhatti, M.U and Yousuf, M., Ambiguity and Unrest: AJK and GB in a Perpetual Constitutional Limbo, Centre for Peace Studies, 27 January 2026, url
[998] Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Pakistani Kashmir*, 2025, url; Azadi Times (The), AJK and GB: The Push for Political Unity in Pakistan-Administered Kashmir, 19 May 2025, url
[999] Pakistan, Azad Government of the State of Jammu & Kashmir, Azad Jammu & Kashmir – District Profiles 2022, August 2023, url, p. i; Sahiwal News, How many Divisions and Districts are in Azad Kashmir (AJK), 28 July 2025, url
[1000] Sahiwal News, How many Divisions and Districts are in Azad Kashmir (AJK), 28 July 2025, url
[1001] Pakistan, Government of Gilgit-Baltistan, Annual Development Programme 2024-25, July 2024, url, pp. 14-15
[1002] UN OCHA, Pakistan - Subnational Administrative Boundaries, modified 26 January 2026, url, sheet: pak_admin2; Adventure Pakistan, Districts of Gilgit Baltistan-Exploration, 17 September 2024, url
[1003] Pakistan, Government of Gilgit-Baltistan, About Us, n.d., url
[1004] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 – Dashboard, n.d., url, accessed on 30 March 2026
[1005] Pakistan, Azad Government of the State of Jammu & Kashmir, Azad Jammu & Kashmir at a glance – 2025, March 2026, url, p. 2
[1006] More recent population figures for GB could not be found during research.
[1007] Pakistan, Tourism, Sports Culture Archaeology & Museums Department, Government of Gilgit-Baltistan, Importance of Gilgit-Baltistan, 22 April 2024, url

AJK's social landscape is predominantly structured along clan lines known as *biradari* networks. The source lists Jats, Rajputs, Gujjars, Sudhans (also: Sudhozai), Awans, Syeds, as well as Mughals and Kashmiri Sheiks as the major communities in AJK. As for GB, the source described it as 'the most ethnically complex' area of the wider region, where tribes such as the Shins and Yashkuns, Burusho, Wakhi, Baltis, and Kohistanis lived.[1008] In AJK, where Urdu is the official language, other languages spoken are Gojri, Kashmiri, Pahari, Pothwari, Hindko, Dogri, and Punjabi.[1009] GB was described as linguistically diverse, with Shina spoken most widely there. Additionally, Balti, Burushaski, Wakhi, and Khowar are reportedly also spoken in GB.[1010] In terms of religious composition, Shias reportedly form the majority in GB.[1011] No information could be found on the religious composition in AJK within the time constraints of research.

AJK was described as a mineral-rich region,[1012] having among others copper, gold, silver, coal, ruby, sapphire, and tourmaline deposits.[1013] AJK economy is based on agriculture, tourism and remittances. In addition, AJK has several hydropower projects,[1014] while GB reportedly has timber and minerals,[1015] such as gold, copper, nickel and cobalt.[1016]

(b) Presence and general activities of the armed actors

In 2024, no militant attacks were reported in AJK and GB, while security forces carried out two operations in GB according to PICSS.[1017] In 2025, PICSS documented a small number of violent incidents[1018] including a significant but isolated targeted counter-militancy operation in May 2025 against suspected TTP operatives in Pooch district's Rawalakot. Militant groups reportedly continued to regard AJK as a potential operational area, and the TTP announced 'Kashmir' as a new *wilayat* (shadow province) in its 2026 appointments.[1019] According to PIPS, two of three militant attacks in GB in 2025 and one abduction[1020] in GB's Diamer district were attributed to the TTP and its affiliates.[1021] PICSS further reported one unverified claim of an Ittehad-ul-Mujahideen Pakistan (IMP) attack in AJK.[1022] According to PICSS, the Zainabiyoun

[1008] Azadi Times (The), Caste and Tribal Communities Across Jammu & Kashmir: A Comprehensive Study of Social Identities From Azad Kashmir to Ladakh, 16 November 2025, url
[1009] Kosar, A. and Khan, A. Q., Preserving Linguistic Diversity: Uncovering Teachers and Students' attitudes towards Local Languages in Muzaffarabad, April-June 2024, url, p. 872
[1010] Azadi Times (The), The Languages of Jammu, Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Ladakh: A Rich Tapestry of Cultures and Traditions, 22 January 2025, url
[1011] DW, Pakistan imposes curfew after deadly Iran protests, 2 March 2026, url
[1012] Global Strat View, The Farce of Kashmir Solidarity Day: Why PoJ&K Views Islamabad as an Occupier, 4 February 2026, url
[1013] Daily Kashmir Post, Natural Resources and Minerals in AJK- By Ghulam Mohiuddin Dar, 23 July 2025, url
[1014] Pakistan, Azad Government of the State of Jammu & Kashmir, AJ&K Overview, n.d., url
[1015] Global Strat View, The Farce of Kashmir Solidarity Day: Why PoJ&K Views Islamabad as an Occupier, 4 February 2026, url
[1016] Express Tribune (The), Massive Antimony reserves found in Balochistan; Gold and Copper confirmed in GB, 29 March 2025, url; Daily Kashmir Post, Natural Resources and Minerals in AJK- By Ghulam Mohiuddin Dar, 23 July 2025, url
[1017] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile 2024, 2 January 2025, url, p. 34
[1018] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 60
[1019] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, pp. 89-90, 91
[1020] According to PIPS, the TTP abducted security personnel, government officials, tribal elders as well as traders and businesspeople during the year. However, the source does not specify who was abducted in this particular incident in GB. PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 27
[1021] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 27
[1022] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 30

Brigade was believed to be involved in sectarian assassination attempts of religious and judicial figures in Gilgit in 2025.[1023]

The Pahalgam terrorist attack in April 2025[1024] in Indian-administered Kashmir triggered an escalation of tensions between Pakistan and India.[1025] The escalation which involved gunfire and mortar fire,[1026] in turn reportedly spiked as a result of Indian airstrikes on parts of AJK and various cities in Punjab in early May,[1027] resulting in civilian deaths and injuries.[1028] India alleged that the attack was carried out by a splinter group of Pakistan-based LeT and suspected Pakistani intelligence service involvement, both of which Pakistan denied.[1029] Pakistan responded to India's military operation with its own operation Bunyanul Marsoos, which included 'large-scale conventional strikes, drone deployments, and cyber actions',[1030] including surveillance drones and loitering munitions[1031].[1032] India deployed drones that were partially intercepted by Pakistan.[1033] The International Crisis Group described the conflict as 'the most serious confrontation' between the two countries in decades,[1034] and, in mid-February 2026, the private US-think tank Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) described these hostilities as 'the most significant bilateral confrontations since 2019'.[1035] A ceasefire was agreed on in mid-May 2025.[1036] As of early 2026, the ceasefire was holding.[1037]

PICSS further explained that in GB, the security situation in 2025 reflected a gradual rise in challenges, such as militant violence, threats to strategic infrastructure and sectarian targeting.[1038]

(c) Recent security incidents and impact on the civilian population and infrastructure

Security incidents

[1023] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 90
[1024] On 22 April 2025, around 30 tourists were killed by armed men at a resort near Pahalgam town in Indian-administered Kashmir; CNN, Dozens killed as gunmen massacre tourists in Kashmir beauty spot, 23 April 2025, url; AP, Militants kill at least 26 tourists at a resort in Indian-controlled Kashmir, 23 April 2025, url
[1025] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 104
[1026] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 26
[1027] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 26; Germany, BAMF, Briefing Notes Summary, 30 June 2025, url, p. 10
[1028] BBC, What we know about India's strikes on Pakistan and Pakistan-administered Kashmir, 7 May 2025, url; Diplomat (The), Pakistan Prepares Counterblow as India's Airstrikes Raise War Fears, 7 May 2025, url
[1029] Jadoon, A., Beyond Counterterrorism: A Legitimacy-Centered Framework for Pakistan's Security Crisis, Hudson Institute, 6 October 2025, url
[1030] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 104
[1031] Compact, short-range suicide drones. PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 12
[1032] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, pp. 12-13
[1033] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 26
[1034] International Crisi Group, India-Pakistan: Avoiding a War in Waiting, 17 September 2025, url, pp. 1-2
[1035] CFR, Conflict Between India and Pakistan, 18 February 2026, url
[1036] International Crisi Group, India-Pakistan: Avoiding a War in Waiting, 17 September 2025, url, p. 1; Germany, BAMF, Briefing Notes Summary, 30 June 2025, url, p. 10; AP, India claims its strikes inside Pakistan territory last week killed over 100 militants, 12 May 2025, url
[1037] Tribune (The), India, Pakistan don't want conflict but terrorists continue to create conditions: US report, 19 March 2026, url; Al Jazeera, Handshake in Dhaka: Can India and Pakistan revive ties in 2026?, 2 January 2026, url; PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 105
[1038] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, pp. 89-90

As for 2025, PIPS documented one security operation in AJK and three militant attacks in GB, including two in Diamer and one in Gilgit districts.[1039] CRSS recorded five attacks each in GB and AJK in 2025.[1040] PICSS only documented five attacks in GB.[1041]

According to a report by PICSS, AJK faced its 'most severe episodes of unrest' in late September and early October 2025, as demonstrations organised by the Jammu Kashmir Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC) turned into violent confrontations with law enforcement. Reportedly, daily life across AJK was impeded, with markets closed and transport suspended. PICSS further noted that the demonstrations and strikes, amid a communication blackout, led to civilian deaths and dozens of injuries. The events mirrored a growing public frustration over failures in governance, economic grievances, and the territory's unresolved constitutional status. According to PICSS, similar patterns of unrest were observed in GB across the Line of Control (LoC), with the lack of meaningful autonomy in AJK and GB continuing to drive recurring protests.[1042] In March 2025, protests were reported in GB over the detention of local leaders under Pakistan's Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA).[1043]

From 1 November 2024 to 24 April 2026 ACLED reported 39 security incidents in AJK and GB: 30 were coded as battles, with a prevalence in the AJK (21), 7 as explosions/remote violence and 2 as incidents of violence against civilians.[1044]

[1039] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, pp. 11, 13
[1040] CRSS, Annual Security Report 2025, 31 December 2025, url
[1041] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 3
[1042] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, pp. 98-99
[1043] Azadi Times (The), Gilgit-Baltistan Erupts: Protests Intensify Over Detention of Civic Leaders, 15 March 2026, url
[1044] EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Pakistan, data covering 1 November 2024 to 24 April 2026, as of 29 April 2026, url

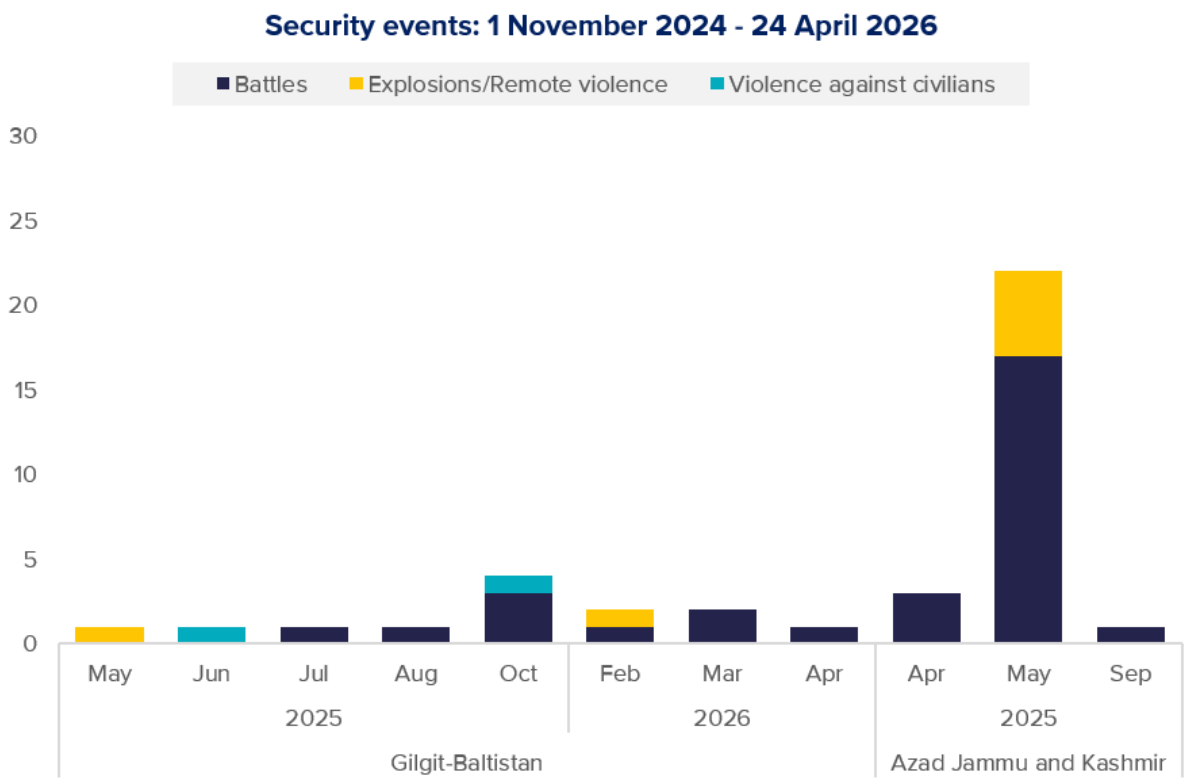

Figure 8: Evolution of security events coded 'battles', 'explosions/remote violence' and 'violence against civilians' in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan between 1 November 2024 and 24 April 2026, based on ACLED data[1045]

Fatalities

From 1 November 2024 to 24 April 2026 ACLED reported 56 fatalities.[1046]

Civilian casualties

In 2025, PICSS reported no civilian casualties in AJK and GB,[1047] and in 2024, two civilian injuries resulting from security operations were recorded by PICSS in GB.[1048] The abovementioned escalation in tensions between Pakistan and India in May 2025[1049] reportedly

[1045] EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Pakistan, data covering 1 November 2024 to 24 April 2026, as of 29 April 2026, url
[1046] EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Pakistan, data covering 1 November 2024 to 24 April 2026, as of 29 April 2026, url
[1047] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, pp. 89-90
[1048] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile 2024, 2 January 2025, url, p. 34[58]
[1049] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 104

resulted in civilian casualties,[1050] including deaths.[1051] Casualties resulting from Indian airstrikes were recorded in early May 2025 in AJK's Bagh and Muzaffarabad districts.[1052]

Civilian casualties during protests were reported in 2025 by PICSS.[1053] According to a Deutsche Welle (DW) article, protests by Shiites against the killing of Iran's then Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei in GB in early March 2026 turned violent, with Pakistani authorities deploying military and imposing a three-day long curfew in Gilgit and Skardu cities. Referring to police sources, DW noted that a minimum of 12 people were killed and another 80 were injured in GB.[1054]

Impact on infrastructure

The abovementioned escalation in tensions between Pakistan and India,[1055] which spiked in early May 2025,[1056] reportedly resulted in the destruction of homes, schools and hospitals in AJK. Furthermore, despite the ceasefire agreement reached in May 2025, India continued to enforce the suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty that had been enacted previously. The source further reported the enforcement of the state of emergency in districts along the LoC and the closure of educational facilities.[1057] No information could be found on conflict-related impact on infrastructure in GB during the reference period.

Displacement and return

Indian airstrikes on parts of AJK in early May 2025[1058] reportedly resulted in internal displacement.[1059] Referring to official sources, the German BAMF reported the internal displacement of 1 186 families in AJK as a result of Indian shelling in the night of 8 to 9 May 2025.[1060] In May 2025, Islamic Relief Pakistan reported the displacement of 529 families (or 3 176 individuals) in Muzaffarabad, Bagh, and Haveli districts.[1061] No information could be found on conflict-related return movements from or into AJK and on conflict-related IDP or return movements from or into GB during the reference period.

[1050] CNN, May 7, 2025 India launches attacks on Pakistan after Kashmir massacre - It's Thursday morning in India and Pakistan. Here's the latest on the conflict, 7 May 2025, url; UN CRC, Concluding observations on the combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of Pakistan, CRC/C/PAK/CO/6-7, 23 February 2026, url, p. 5
[1051] Germany, BAMF, Briefing Notes Summary, 30 June 2025, url, p. 10; New York Times (The), A Timeline of Tensions Between India and Pakistan Over Kashmir, 5 May 2025, url
[1052] Germany, BAMF, Briefing Notes Summary, 30 June 2025, url, pp. 9-10
[1053] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, pp. 98-99
[1054] DW, Pakistan imposes curfew after deadly Iran protests, 2 March 2026, url
[1055] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile – Annual Report 2025, 7 January 2026, url, p. 104
[1056] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 26; Germany, BAMF, Briefing Notes Summary, 30 June 2025, url, p. 10
[1057] Germany, BAMF, Briefing Notes Summary, 30 June 2025, url, pp. 9-10
[1058] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 26; Germany, BAMF, Briefing Notes Summary, 30 June 2025, url, p. 10
[1059] CNN, May 7, 2025 India launches attacks on Pakistan after Kashmir massacre - It's Thursday morning in India and Pakistan. Here's the latest on the conflict, 7 May 2025, url
[1060] Germany, BAMF, Briefing Notes Summary, 30 June 2025, url, p. 10
[1061] Islamic Relief Pakistan, Rapid Needs Assessment Report- AJ&K, May 2025, url, p. 4

5. Structure and functioning of the judiciary

5.1. Formal and informal systems

The Constitution of Pakistan, in Part VII, addresses matters concerning the judiciary, including various types of courts, the separation of the judiciary and executive, the appointment of judges, and the composition, jurisdiction, powers, and functions of courts.[1062] Amongst others, the Constitution provides for a Federal Constitutional Court, a Supreme Court, a High Court for each province and the ICT,[1063] and a Federal Shariat Court (FSC).[1064] Article 175(1) of the Constitution stipulates that courts other than those mentioned above 'may be established by law'.[1065]

At federal level, the Federal Constitutional Court, established in 2025, has exclusive jurisdiction[1066] to adjudicate constitutional matters as well as inter-provincial disputes and disputes between a province and the federal government. The Supreme Court, until 2025 competent for constitutional matters,[1067] is currently the country's highest appellate court in civil and criminal cases;[1068] its jurisdiction has been largely limited to appeal cases that do not touch upon constitutional issues.[1069]

The Federal Shariat Court's is the judiciary's religious component.[1070] Its purpose is to 'examine and decide', upon petition from citizens or federal or provincial governments, 'the question whether or not any law or provision of law is repugnant to the Injunctions of Islam'.[1071]

The provincial High Courts hear appeals from civil and criminal cases that have been adjudicated by the courts in their respective province.[1072] Under the oversight of the provincial High Courts,[1073] there are district-level courts handling civil cases ('District Courts') and criminal matters ('Sessions Courts',[1074] adjudicating particularly serious crimes[1075]). Cities and towns have magistrates' courts for criminal cases relating to offences that do not carry the death penalty[1076] and thus serve as first-instance courts for all but the most serious criminal cases.[1077]

[1062] Pakistan, Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (as amended up to 2025), 1973, url, Part VII
[1063] Pakistan, Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (as amended up to 2025), 1973, url, Art. 175(1)
[1064] Pakistan, Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (as amended up to 2025), 1973, url, Art. 203A-J
[1065] Pakistan, Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (as amended up to 2025), 1973, url, Art. 175(1)
[1066] ICJ, Pakistan – Dismantling Justice: A Full-Frontal Assault on the Rule of Law, 13 November 2025, url
[1067] Jamal, U., 2025: The Military Emerges Stronger in Pakistan's Power Equation, The Diplomat, 29 December 2025, url
[1068] Britannica, Pakistan, last updated 30 March 2026, url
[1069] Jamal, U., 2025: The Military Emerges Stronger in Pakistan's Power Equation, The Diplomat, 29 December 2025, url
[1070] Britannica, Pakistan, last updated 30 March 2026, url
[1071] Pakistan, Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (as amended up to 2025), 1973, url, Art. 203D(1)
[1072] Commonwealth Governance, Judicial System of Pakistan, n.d., url
[1073] Britannica, Pakistan, last updated 30 March 2026, url
[1074] Britannica, Pakistan, last updated 30 March 2026, url; RSIL, Overview of Criminal Justice System (CJS) in Pakistan, n.d., url
[1075] RSIL, Overview of Criminal Justice System (CJS) in Pakistan, n.d., url; Commonwealth Governance, Judicial System of Pakistan, n.d., url
[1076] RSIL, Overview of Criminal Justice System (CJS) in Pakistan, n.d., url
[1077] Commonwealth Governance, Judicial System of Pakistan, n.d., url

Moreover, there are various specialised administrative courts and tribunals at both federal level (handling federal matters) and provincial level. These include Anti-Corruption Courts, Anti-Terrorism Courts (ATCs) and Anti-Narcotics Courts, as well as courts dealing with customs, taxation and matters relating to civil servants.[1078]

At military courts, which under section 59(4), in conjunction with section 2(1)(d) of the Pakistan Army Act of 1952, may also conduct trials of civilians (e.g., civilians accused of terrorism),[1079] cases are handled by military officers who are part of the military hierarchy.[1080] Notably, section 133 of the Pakistan Army Act provides that 'no appeal' can be lodged against a military court's decision at 'any Court exercising any jurisdiction whatever',[1081] except at Courts of Appeal consisting of the Chief of the Army Staff or officers designated by him.[1082]

Community-based forms of dispute resolution such as *jirgas* and *panchayats*[1083] are frequently sought by residents of rural and peri-urban areas as an alternative to the formal justice system. While controversial due to their disregard of constitutional provisions[1084] and patriarchal structures,[1085] they are valued for their accessibility and the swiftness and cultural acceptability of their decisions[1086] in disputes linked to family, honour, and land.[1087]

While *jirgas* in the former tribal districts were officially abolished in 2018 together with the Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR) that regulated them, they continue to operate in some of these areas where formal courts have difficulties exercising their authority. To overcome the respective limitations of formal and informal justice systems, the State has sought to formalise community dispute resolution through government-led Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) initiatives, but their implementation has been reported to be slow.[1088]

5.2. Major judicial and constitutional reforms

The 26th constitutional amendment, passed in October 2024, and the 27th amendment of November 2025, have significantly changed the judiciary's structure and way of

[1078] RSIL, Overview of Criminal Justice System (CJS) in Pakistan, n.d., url
[1079] Pakistan, The Pakistan Army Act (as amended up to 2017), 1952, url, sections 59(4) and 2(1)(d)
[1080] ICJ, Military "Justice" in Pakistan: A Glaring Surrender of Human Rights, May 2025, url, p. 5
[1081] Pakistan, The Pakistan Army Act (as amended up to 2017), 1952, url, section 133
[1082] Pakistan, The Pakistan Army Act (as amended up to 2017), 1952, url, section, section 133(A)-(B)
[1083] *Jirgas* are community-based forms of dispute resolution in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, while *panchayats* are similar systems found in Punjab and Sindh. Both *jirgas* or *panchayats* consist of male members of the society chosen on the basis of their age, status, or wealth. Butt, M.F. et al., Parallel Paths to Justice: Evaluating the Informal Justice System in Pakistan, 12 July 2025, url, p. 119
[1084] Nqavi, M.H., Contemplating the Jirga System: Between Tradition and Justice, 4 August 2025, url, p. 3; Butt, M.F. et al., Parallel Paths to Justice: Evaluating the Informal Justice System in Pakistan, 12 July 2025, url, pp. 116-117
[1085] Farooq, S. and Shehzad, T., Exploring the Processes of Informal Justice System in Resolving Gender-Based Violence: A Case Study of Mansehra City, 27 March 2025, url, p. 2653
[1086] Nqavi, M.H., Contemplating the Jirga System: Between Tradition and Justice, 4 August 2025, url, p. 1; Butt, M.F. et al., Parallel Paths to Justice: Evaluating the Informal Justice System in Pakistan, 12 July 2025, url, pp. 117, 119; Farooq, S. and Shehzad, T., Exploring the Processes of Informal Justice System in Resolving Gender-Based Violence: A Case Study of Mansehra City, 27 March 2025, url, p. 2653
[1087] Butt, M.F. et al., Parallel Paths to Justice: Evaluating the Informal Justice System in Pakistan, 12 July 2025, url, p. 117
[1088] Butt, M.F. et al., Parallel Paths to Justice: Evaluating the Informal Justice System in Pakistan, 12 July 2025, url, pp. 121, 123

functioning.[1089] The 26th amendment to the Constitution removed the Supreme Court's jurisdiction to hear cases through action taken of its own accord (*suo motu*),[1090] restricted the term of the Supreme Court's chief justice to three years,[1091] and granted the government a role in appointing the chief justice.[1092]

The 27th amendment to the Constitution, signed into law by President Asif Ali Zardari on 13 November 2025 after it had been adopted in both houses of the federal legislature,[1093] provides for the creation of a new Federal Constitutional Court. The new court has taken over many previous functions of the Supreme Court,[1094] including jurisdiction to adjudicate on constitutional matters,[1095] and has been granted powers to override Supreme Court decisions.[1096] The Supreme Court's role has in turn been reduced to handling non-constitutional civil and criminal cases.[1097] The new amendment also strengthened the government's influence over the appointment of judges.[1098] Besides the chief justice and other judges of the Federal Constitutional Court, those of the Supreme Court are now also appointed by the country's President[1099] and the Judicial Commission of Pakistan which not only includes judges of the highest courts, but also MPs and senior executive officials.[1100]

The 27th amendment also grants, save exceptions, lifelong immunity to the country's President.[1101] Moreover it rewrote Article 243 of the Constitution to create the new supreme military position of Chief of Defence Forces (CDF), a post designed to be held automatically by the sitting chief of the Pakistani Army.[1102] For more detailed information on implications of the 27th amendment on the armed forces, see section 3.1.1. Pakistan Army.

In November 2025, a federal representative stated that consultations were ongoing within the cabinet regarding a 28th Constitutional Amendment Bill. It was said that the bill would focus on local bodies, health, and the National Finance Commission (NFC),[1103] addressing longstanding tensions between the federal and provincial governments over fiscal powers.[1104]

[1089] ICJ, Pakistan – Dismantling Justice: A Full-Frontal Assault on the Rule of Law, 13 November 2025, url
[1090] Sinha, R. and Sharma, S., Pakistan: The Winner Takes It All, ORF, 20 November 2025, url
[1091] Pakistan, Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (as amended up to 2025), 1973, url, Art. 179
[1092] Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 - Pakistan, 2025, url, section F1
[1093] Express Tribune (The), President signs 27th Amendment Bill into law, 14 November 2025, url
[1094] ICJ, Pakistan – Dismantling Justice: A Full-Frontal Assault on the Rule of Law, 13 November 2025, url
[1095] Jamal, U., 2025: The Military Emerges Stronger in Pakistan's Power Equation, The Diplomat, 29 December 2025, url; ICJ, Pakistan – Dismantling Justice: A Full-Frontal Assault on the Rule of Law, 13 November 2025, 13 November 2025, url
[1096] Chatham House, Pakistan's 27th constitutional amendment moves it one step closer to authoritarian rule, 2 December 2025, url
[1097] UN OHCHR, Pakistan: Türk concerned by constitutional amendments and immunity provisions, 28 November 2025, url
[1098] PICSS, Fragmented Politics, Expanding Militancy, and Regional Constraints: Pakistan's Strategic Outlook This Month, 8 December 2025, url
[1099] Pakistan, Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (as amended up to 2025), 1973, url, Art. 175C(1), 177(1)
[1100] Pakistan, Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (as amended up to 2025), 1973, url, Art. 175A(1)-(2)
[1101] ICJ, Pakistan – Dismantling Justice: A Full-Frontal Assault on the Rule of Law, 13 November 2025, 13 November 2025, url
[1102] Sinha, R. and Sharma, S., Pakistan: The Winner Takes It All, ORF, 20 November 2025, url
[1103] Express Tribune (The), Govt to move 28th Amendment soon: Rana Sanaullah, 17 November 2025, url
[1104] Arab News, Pakistan business body seeks constitutional fixes for economy as 28th Amendment debate heats up, 21 November 2025, url

5.3. Applicable laws (including Sharia)

Laws enacted during the reference period include the Prevention of Electronic Crimes (Amendment) Act, 2025,[1105] the Anti-Terrorism (Amendment) Act, 2025,[1106] the National Commission for Minority Rights Bill, 2025,[1107] the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill, 2026,[1108] and the ICT Child Marriage Restraint Act, 2025.[1109]

The Prevention of Electronic Crimes (Amendment) Act, 2025, enacted in January 2025, inserted the new section 26A into the existing Prevention of Electronic Crimes, 2016, making the dissemination of 'false or fake' information a crime punishable by up to three years' imprisonment or a fine.[1110] It uses vague language when referring to 'false or fake' information,[1111] describing it as information 'likely to cause or create a sense of fear, panic or disorder or unrest in general public or society'.[1112] The amendments also provide for the creation of four new government bodies for the regulation of online content.[1113] Among them, the Social Media Protection and Regulation Authority was granted powers to remove and block various types of content, including information containing 'aspersions against any person including members of Judiciary; Armed Forces, Majlis-e Shoora (Parliament) or a Provincial Assembly'.[1114] The term 'aspersion' is described as 'spreading false and harmful information which damages the reputation of a person'.[1115] However, the amended act lacks a precise definition of what constitutes 'false' and 'harmful' information.[1116]

In the security realm, the reference period saw the enactment of the controversial federal Anti-Terrorism (Amendment) Act 2025[1117] and the Anti-Terrorism (Balochistan Amendment) Act, 2025, for Balochistan.[1118] For more information, see section 5.5. Anti-Terrorism Acts.

Meanwhile, late December 2025 saw the adoption of the National Commission for Minority Rights Bill, 2025, that provides for the creation of a statutory body mandated to protect the rights of minorities and investigate violations.[1119] Another piece of legislation, the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill, 2026, enacted in January 2026, defines domestic violence as abuse (physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, or economic) occurring in a

[1105] HRW, Pakistan: Repeal Amendment to Draconian Cyber Law, 3 February 2025, url
[1106] Express Tribune (The), Zardari assents 'draconian' anti-terror amendment into law, 31 August 2025, url
[1107] PICSS, A Week of Polarisation: From KP Fault Lines to National Defence Reconfiguration, 8 December 2025, url
[1108] Express Tribune (The), President Zardari signs off on domestic violence bill, 26 January 2026, url
[1109] US, LOC, Pakistan: President Grants Assent to Islamabad Child Marriage Law, 1 July 2025, url
[1110] Pakistan, Prevention of Electronic Crimes (Amendment) Act, 2025, 29 January 2025, url
[1111] Zafar, P. and Ali, S., The PECA Amendment 2025: A Critical Analysis, 16 November 2025, url, p. 3; HRW, Pakistan: Repeal Amendment to Draconian Cyber Law, 3 February 2025, url
[1112] Pakistan, Prevention of Electronic Crimes (Amendment) Act, 2025, 29 January 2025, url, amendment newly inserting section 26A of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016
[1113] HRW, Pakistan: Repeal Amendment to Draconian Cyber Law, 3 February 2025, url
[1114] Pakistan, Prevention of Electronic Crimes (Amendment) Act, 2025, 29 January 2025, url, section 2Rh
[1115] Pakistan, Prevention of Electronic Crimes (Amendment) Act, 2025, 29 January 2025, url, amendment of section 2 of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016
[1116] Pakistan, Prevention of Electronic Crimes (Amendment) Act, 2025, 29 January 2025, url; Zafar, P. and Ali, S., The PECA Amendment 2025: A Critical Analysis, 16 November 2025, url, p. 2
[1117] Express Tribune (The), Zardari assents 'draconian' anti-terror amendment into law, 31 August 2025, url
[1118] Shahi, S.M., Pakistan's New Detention Law Presumes Baloch Citizens Guilty of Terrorism Until Proven Innocent, The Diplomat, 9 July 2025, url
[1119] PICSS, A Week of Polarisation: From KP Fault Lines to National Defence Reconfiguration, 8 December 2025, url

domestic setting that causes fear or physical/psychological harm. It specifies that acts already constituting an offence under the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) will be prosecuted under that code, while relevant acts not falling under the PPC's provisions will be treated as domestic violence under the new law, punishable by imprisonment ranging from six months to three years as well as a fine and compensation to be paid to the victim.[1120] For further information, see sections 6.1.4. Women and girls and 6.1.5. Children.

In the capital territory, the ICT Child Marriage Restraint Bill, 2025, was enacted in May 2025. It repeals the federal Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929, as far as the ICT is concerned. It defines 'child' as a male or female person under 18 years of age and stipulates that a male adult (over the age of 18) who marries a child faces between two and three years in prison and a fine. It also prohibits *Nikah* [Islamic marriage contract] registrars from registering marriages where one or both parties are below the age of 18. The Council of Islamic Ideology, a constitutional advisory body on issues relating to Sharia law, has criticised the ICT Child Marriage Restraint Bill as 'un-Islamic'[1121] and also contrary to traditions and societal values.[1122] For further information on Sharia law, see section 5.6. Punishments under the law of this report and section 5.2. Applicable laws (including *Sharia*) of the previous EUAA COI report Pakistan - Country Focus (December 2024).

5.4. Blasphemy law

Pakistan's blasphemy laws have their roots in British colonial laws intended to curb incitements to religious violence.[1123] Article 295A of the PPC stipulates, in general terms, that 'deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs [...] shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, or with fine, or with both'.[1124] For the two descriptions of imprisonment, see section 5.6. Punishments under the lawbelow.

Referring to acts specifically relating to Islam, Article 295B of the PPC provides that 'defiling, etc., of copy of Holy Quran [...] shall be punishable with imprisonment for life', while article 295C notably stipulates that 'use of derogatory remarks, etc., in respect of the Holy Prophet [...] shall be punished with death, and shall also be liable to fine'.[1125] Additionally, Article 298 of the PPC provides for imprisonment of up to three years and/or a fine for persons who make 'derogatory remarks, etc., in respect of holy personages' (298A), engage in 'misuse of epithets, descriptions and titles, etc., reserved for certain holy personages or places' (298B), as well as for 'any person of the Quadiani group or the Lahori group (who call themselves 'Ahmadis' or by any other name), who directly or indirectly, poses himself as a Muslim, or calls, or refers to, his faith as Islam, or preaches or propagates his faith' (298C).[1126]

[1120] Express Tribune (The), President Zardari signs off on domestic violence bill, 26 January 2026, url
[1121] US, LOC, Pakistan: President Grants Assent to Islamabad Child Marriage Law, 1 July 2025, url
[1122] Dawn, Clerics warn president against signing child marriage bill, 29 May 2025, url
[1123] HRW, "A Conspiracy to Grab the Land", June 2025, url, p. 4
[1124] Pakistan, Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) (as amended up to 2025), 1860, url, section 295A
[1125] Pakistan, Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) (as amended up to 2025), 1860, url, section 295B, C
[1126] Pakistan, Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) (as amended up to 2025), 1860, url, section 298 A, B, C

In blasphemy cases, police are allowed to make arrests without a permission of the local magistrate, and blasphemy is a non-bailable offence.[1127] Measures aiming to introduce protections against abuse of the blasphemy laws, notably through criminal law amendments (2005 and 2017) and a 2014 Supreme Court decision, remained largely unenforced.[1128]

While thus far, the death penalty has not been implemented in blasphemy cases,[1129] hundreds of people remained imprisoned on blasphemy charges.[1130] As of early 2026, a removal of the death penalty for blasphemy was reportedly under discussion.[1131] For more information, see section (d) Individuals accused of blasphemy.

5.5. Anti-Terrorism Acts

The term 'terrorism' is defined in section 6(1) of the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA), 1997, as 'the use or threat of action [...] to coerce and intimidate or overawe the Government or the public or a section of the public or community or sect [...] for the purpose of advancing a religious, sectarian or ethnic cause'.[1132] According to section 7(a), acts of terrorism causing the 'death of any person [...] shall be punishable, on conviction, with death or with imprisonment for life, and with fine'.[1133] Similarly, 'kidnapping for ransom or hostage-taking [...] shall be punishable, on conviction, with death or imprisonment for life' (section 7(e)).[1134]

In August 2025, President Zardari signed into law the Anti-Terrorism (Amendment) Act 2025[1135] which reintroduces powers granted to the security forces under the expired sub-section (1) of section 11EEEE of the ATA, 1997.[1136] This amendment allows the government and, if relevant, the armed and civilian forces to impose up to three months of preventive detention on individuals suspected of terrorism-related offences[1137] (e.g., targeted killing, kidnapping for ransom, or extortion), provided that 'sufficient grounds' exist.[1138] This sub-section section 11EEEE is to remain in effect for a period of three years.[1139] This enactment followed the passing of the Punjab Anti-Terrorism (Amendment) Act, 2025, in May 2025 and the Anti-Terrorism (Balochistan Amendment) Act, 2025, in June 2025, which amended the ATA by allowing preventive detentions on similar grounds[1140] Pakistani authorities were reported to

[1127] IIRF, Blasphemy Law: The Reason for Injustice in Pakistan, 12 November 2025, url, p. 8
[1128] HRW, "A Conspiracy to Grab the Land", June 2025, url, pp. 6-7
[1129] Shahid, K.K., Is Pakistan Ready to Reform Its Lethal Blasphemy Laws?, The Diplomat, 24 January 2026, url; HRW, "A Conspiracy to Grab the Land", June 2025, url, p. 4
[1130] Rehman, Z., Accused of Online Blasphemy, and Languishing in Pakistan's Jails, The New York Times, 25 August 2025
[1131] Shahid, K.K., Is Pakistan Ready to Reform Its Lethal Blasphemy Laws?, The Diplomat, 24 January 2026, url
[1132] Pakistan, Anti-Terrorism Act (as amended up to 2025), 1997, url, section 6(1)(a), (b), (c)
[1133] Pakistan, Anti-Terrorism Act (as amended up to 2025), 1997, url, section 7(a)
[1134] Pakistan, Anti-Terrorism Act (as amended up to 2025), 1997, url, section 7(e)
[1135] Express Tribune (The), Zardari assents 'draconian' anti-terror amendment into law, 31 August 2025, url
[1136] Express Tribune (The), ATA rearmed with preventive detention clause, 14 August 2025, url
[1137] Pakistan, Anti-Terrorism Act (as amended up to 2025), 1997, url, section 11EEEE(1); UN OHCHR, Mandates of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, 18 November 2025, url, p. 2
[1138] Pakistan, Anti-Terrorism Act (as amended up to 2025), 1997, url, section 11EEEE(1)
[1139] Pakistan, Anti-Terrorism Act (as amended up to 2025), 1997, url, section 11EEEE(2A)
[1140] UN OHCHR, Mandates of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, 18 November 2025, url, p. 2

frequently invoke the ATA to detain dissenters,[1141] protesters and human rights defenders.[1142] For further information, see section 6.1.7. Critical voices and individuals perceived as opposing the state.

5.6. Punishments under the law

Pakistan's legal system offers a range of punishments. The imposition of these punishments, while often regulated by clear legal provisions, remains subject to judicial discretion.[1143] Punishments under the PPC are listed in its section 53 and include the death penalty, imprisonment for life, imprisonment of two descriptions – rigorous imprisonment with hard labour and simple imprisonment[1144] without hard labour[1145] – forfeiture of property, and fines.[1146] For information on the death penalty, see section 5.8. Death penalty. If an individual has been convicted of an offence for which the court 'has power to sentence him to rigorous imprisonment, the court may [...] order that the offender shall be kept in solitary confinement for any portion or portions of the imprisonment to which he is sentenced, not exceeding three months in the whole' (section 73).[1147] However, solitary confinement 'shall in no case exceed fourteen days at a time' (section 74).[1148] Apart from these punishments, the PPC provides for *qisas*, *ta'azir,*[1149] *hudud*[1150] and other punishments based on Islamic law.[1151] For further information on Sharia-based punishments under statutory law as well as information on punishments imposed within the context of informal justice systems, see section 5.5. Punishments under the law of the previous EUAA COI report Pakistan - Country Focus (December 2024).

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,

[1141] Amnesty International, Pakistan: Inclusion of Baloch activists on terrorist watchlist an affront to human rights, 23 October 2025, url
[1142] Malikzada, N., The True Cost of Enforced Disappearances in Balochistan, The Diplomat, 14 October 2025, url
[1143] LG, Types Of Punishments Under Pakistani Law, 3 October 2025, url
[1144] Pakistan, Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) (as amended up to 2025), 1860, url, section 53
[1145] LG, Types Of Punishments Under Pakistani Law, 3 October 2025, url
[1146] Pakistan, Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) (as amended up to 2025), 1860, url, section 53
[1147] Pakistan, Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) (as amended up to 2025), 1860, url, section 73
[1148] Pakistan, Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) (as amended up to 2025), 1860, url, section 74
[1149] Pakistan, Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) (as amended up to 2025), 1860, url, section 53
[1150] Pakistan, Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) (as amended up to 2025), 1860, url, sections 366, 372, 373, 493, 497 and 498; Mukhtar, S., In Defense of the Codification of the Islamic Law of Hudud into the Law of Pakistan, 12 May 2016, url, p. 1
[1151] *Qisas* refers to retaliation, *ta'azir* to discretionary punishment, and *hudud* to fixed punishment. Mukhtar, S., In Defense of the Codification of the Islamic Law of Hudud into the Law of Pakistan, 12 May 2016, url, p. 1
[1152] Sohail, I.B., Pakistan's Prison System: Outdated Regulations and Modern Challenges, IPRI, April 2024, url, p. 5
[1153] Ullah, M.S., Sindh's reformative prison rules, The Express Tribune, 25 April 2025, url
[1154] Sohail, I.B., Pakistan's Prison System: Outdated Regulations and Modern Challenges, IPRI, April 2024, url, p. 5

defines duties and restrictions for prison officials[1155] 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.

5.8. Death penalty

Under the PPC, the death penalty may be imposed for murder,[1163] referred to as *qatl-i-amd*, (sections 302(a) and (b))[1164] and blasphemy (section 295C).[1165] The death penalty is further specified for certain acts, including 'the offence of kidnapping for ransom or hostage-taking', falling under the purview of the ATA.[1166] For details on blasphemy provisions and ATA provisions stipulating the death penalty, see sections 5.4. Blasphemy law and 5.5. Anti-Terrorism Acts above, respectively. There were continued reports of courts imposing new death sentences,[1167] including on blasphemy charges,[1168] with varying estimates of their overall

[1155] Afzal, Q., The State of Female Prisoners in Pakistan, RSIL, 25 October 2023, url
[1156] Sohail, I.B., Pakistan's Prison System: Outdated Regulations and Modern Challenges, IPRI, April 2024, url, p. 5
[1157] OMCT, Global Torture Index 2025: Pakistan Factsheet, June 2025, url, p. 4; NCHR et al., Prison Data Report – Pakistan's Prison Landscape: Trends, Data, and Developments in 2024, January 2025, url, pp. 5, 8; HRCP, State of Human Rights in 2024, 2025, url, p. 13
[1158] NCHR et al., Prison Data Report – Pakistan's Prison Landscape: Trends, Data, and Developments in 2024, January 2025, url, pp. 8, 10; OMCT, Global Torture Index 2025: Pakistan Factsheet, June 2025, url, p. 1
[1159] NCHR et al., Prison Data Report – Pakistan's Prison Landscape: Trends, Data, and Developments in 2024, January 2025, url, p. 5
[1160] Amnesty International, Pakistan: Baloch Activists Face Secret Trials and Ongoing Detention, 20 March 2026, url
[1161] Pakistan, Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (as amended up to 2025), 1973, url, Art. 14
[1162] OMCT, Global Torture Index 2025: Pakistan Factsheet, June 2025, url, p. 1
[1163] LG, Types Of Punishments Under Pakistani Law, 3 October 2025, url
[1164] Pakistan, Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) (as amended up to 2025), 1860, url, sections 302(a) and (b)
[1165] Pakistan, Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) (as amended up to 2025), 1860, url, section 295C
[1166] Pakistan, Anti-Terrorism Act (as amended up to 2025), 1997, url, section 7(a), (e)
[1167] See, for example, News International (The), Man sentenced to death in double murder case, 25 March 2026, url; Hands Off Cain, Pakistan: Two Brothers Sentenced to Double Death Penalty, 17 March 2026, url; Shahid, K.K., Is Pakistan Ready to Reform Its Lethal Blasphemy Laws?, The Diplomat, 24 January 2026, url; AP, Pakistani court sentences 4 people to death for blasphemy, 15 January 2025, url
[1168] Shahid, K.K., Is Pakistan Ready to Reform Its Lethal Blasphemy Laws?, The Diplomat, 24 January 2026, url; AP, Pakistani court sentences 4 people to death for blasphemy, 15 January 2025, url

number.[1169] In 2025, HRCP reported a significant increase in death sentences, with at least 225 issued, mainly by lower courts, compared to 174 in 2024; at least 15 of these related to blasphemy charges.[1170]

The Justice Project Pakistan (JPP) recorded 3 204 death row prisoners in the country's prisons as of October 2025. However, a *de facto moratorium* on the implementation of the death penalty has been in place since 2019,[1171] with no executions reported in 2024[1172] and no such reports found during the remainder of the reference period.

5.9. Effectiveness and integrity of the judiciary

While sources described the judiciary as being 'formally'[1173] or 'for the most part' independent from the other state powers, it was noted that it 'has not been entirely independent' since 2024 as political oversight over the judiciary increased as a result of the 2024 and 2025 constitutional amendments.[1174] For further information on the implications of these constitutional reforms for the judiciary, see section 5.2. Major judicial and constitutional reforms above. In broad terms, the court system was 'marred' by endemic corruption, intimidation, lack of security, low rates of conviction for serious offences,[1175] as well as lengthy trials[1176] coupled with significant backlogs of cases.[1177] Moreover, the prosecution system was reported to have limited authority and independence, being under-financed, undertrained, and subject to political pressure.[1178] According to the findings of Transparency International (TI) Pakistan's National Corruption Perception Survey (NCPS) 2025, the judiciary was viewed as the country's third most corrupt public institution, being perceived as corrupt by 14 % of respondents across Pakistan's four provinces. At provincial level, public perceptions of the judiciary as being corrupt were comparatively higher in KP (18 %) and Punjab (17 %) than in Sindh and Balochistan (12 % each).[1179]

[1169] Amnesty International, Death Sentences and Executions 2024, 8 April 2025, url, pp. 21, 23; HRCP, State of Human Rights in 2024, 2025, url, p. 12
[1170] HRCP, State of Human Rights in 2025, 4 May 2026, url, p 12
[1171] NCHR and JPP, The Death Penalty in Pakistan 2025, 10 October 2025, url, pp. 18-19
[1172] Amnesty International, Death Sentences and Executions 2024, 8 April 2025, url, p. 21; HRCP, State of Human Rights in 2024, 2025, url, p. 12
[1173] Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Pakistan, 2025, url, section F1
[1174] Britannica, Pakistan, last updated 30 March 2026, url
[1175] Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Pakistan, 2025, url, section F1
[1176] UNODC, Strengthening citizens' access to justice in Balochistan through judicial mediation, 20 November 2025, url; Malik, R. and Shaikh, B.A., The Impact of Procedural Delays on Criminal Trials in Pakistan: Causes and Solutions, 31 December 2024, url, p. 1
[1177] Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025 – Pakistan, 2025, url, section F1; HRCP, State of Human Rights in 2024, 2025, url, pp. 30, 69, 112, 162
[1178] Berjees, S., Police Reform in Pakistan, Daily Times, 24 January 2026, url
[1179] TI, Transparency International Pakistan has released National Corruption Perception Survey 2025, ALAC Pakistan, 9 December 2025, url, p. 1

5.10. Legal remedies against human rights violations and support mechanisms for the victims and family members

The constitutional framework provides for remedies for victims of human rights violations, mainly through petitions under Article 199[1180] which grants High Courts jurisdiction to order an official to 'refrain from doing anything he is not permitted by law' and jurisdiction to decide on whether a person 'is not being held in custody without lawful authority or in an unlawful manner'.[1181] However, it was noted in early 2026 that a judiciary that may have been weakened by recent reforms could be 'less able to provide effective remedies'.[1182]

Lodging a First Information Report (FIR) has been described as the initial step in the investigation of a possible violation/criminal offence.[1183] The CrCP, 1898, stipulates in section 154 that 'information relating to the commission of a cognizable offence',[1184] when given orally to a police officer, 'shall be reduced to writing by him or under his direction, and be read over to the informant'. Subsequently, the FIR 'shall be signed by the person giving it' and recorded by the police officer.[1185] The informant lodging a FIR may be any individual who has knowledge of the commission of the cognizable offence and does not necessarily have to be the victim.[1186] In cases where police refuse to register a FIR, victims can, amongst others, take legal action by submitting a written complaint to the Superintendent of Police (SP) or refer to a magistrate to seek directions on registering the FIR.[1187] The law further provides for penal and civil remedies for individuals against whom a false FIR has been filed.[1188] No information could be found on legal mechanisms of support for family members of victims of human rights violations. For detailed information on human rights violations in Pakistan, see section 6. Treatment of certain profiles and groups of population.

[1180] Ahmed, M.S., The rule of law and human rights in Pakistan, International Bar Association, 28 January 2026, url
[1181] Pakistan, Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (as amended up to 2025), 1973, url, Art. 199(1)(a)(i), (b)(i)
[1182] Ahmed, M.S., The rule of law and human rights in Pakistan, International Bar Association, 28 January 2026, url
[1183] Canada, IRB, Pakistan: First Information Reports (FIRs) [...] (2012–December 2025), PAK202450.E, 8 January 2026, url; Shabir Shah Law Associates, Registration of FIR in Pakistan — Rights, Procedure, and Legal Remedies, November 2025, url
[1184] 'Cognizable offences' are offences where police are authorised to make arrests without a warrant. Shabir Shah Law Associates, Registration of FIR in Pakistan — Rights, Procedure, and Legal Remedies, November 2025, url
[1185] Pakistan, Code of Criminal Procedure (as amended up to 2025), 1898, url, section 154
[1186] Canada, IRB, Pakistan: First Information Reports (FIRs) [...] (2012–December 2025), PAK202450.E, 8 January 2026, url; Shabir Shah Law Associates, Registration of FIR in Pakistan — Rights, Procedure, and Legal Remedies, November 2025, url
[1187] Shabir Shah Law Associates, Registration of FIR in Pakistan — Rights, Procedure, and Legal Remedies, November 2025, url
[1188] Hussain, N. et al., Legal Remedies for Victims of False FIRs in Pakistan, 2026, url, pp. 221-222

6. Treatment of certain profiles and groups of population

6.1. Overview of human rights situation

Despite the June 2024 Pakistan National Assembly resolution that 'strongly urge[d] the Federal and Provincial governments to ensure the safety and security of all [...] citizens including religious minorities and other segments of the society',[1189] human rights violations continued in the country in 2025.[1190] By 25 March 2026, 'widespread human rights abuses' continued in Pakistan, including enforced disappearances, torture, and the misuse of blasphemy laws, while the military maintained significant influence over state institutions and suppressed dissent.[1191] Sources reported that the State has fallen short in protecting minorities from violence.[1192] For more background information, see section 6 of the EUAA COI Country Report on Pakistan (December 2024).

While the state of civic space in Pakistan continued to remain 'repressed',[1193] anti-terrorism, and sedition laws led to restrictions on peaceful assembly and to detention of protestors.[1194] These measures also affected human rights defenders, activists, political opponents, and ethnic and religious minorities,[1195] who were subjected to enforced disappearances (commonly referred to as missing persons in Pakistan[1196]), intimidation, excessive force, and arbitrary arrests.[1197] According to Human Rights Watch, 'the space for free expression and dissent in Pakistan under the [Prime Minister Shehbaz] Sharif government is shrinking at an alarming pace'.[1198]

Enforced disappearances persisted in 2025[1199] with the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances (COIED) reporting 10 618 cases as of August 2025[1200] compared to 10 000 cases until September 2024 as reported in the previous EUAA COI report Pakistan - Country Focus (December 2024). Meanwhile, ACLED recorded 960 cases of abduction and enforced

[1189] Pakistan, National Assembly, Resolution, 23 June 2024, url
[1190] UNOCHA, Pakistan: Widespread impunity for violence and discrimination against minorities must end, warn UN experts, 24 July 2025, url; HRW, Pakistan, Events of 2025, 5 February 2026, url; AI, Pakistan 2025, n.d., url
[1191] ANI, Pakistan's widespread human rights abuses exposed, 25 March 2026, url
[1192] UN HRC, Written statement* submitted by Réveil communautaire d'assistance aux victimes, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status , Pakistan's Systematic Failure to Protect Minorities, A/HRC/58/NGO/44, 28 February 2025, url; OHCHR, Pakistan: Widespread impunity for violence and discrimination against minorities must end, warn UN experts, 24 July 2025, url ; Center for the Study of Organized Hate (CSOH), Systemic persecution of religions minorities in Pakistan, 17 August 2025, url p. 23
[1193] CIVICUS, Pakistan, Current score: 24, Current rating: repressed, information observed on 13 January 2026, url
[1194] UN CCPR, HRC, Concluding observations on the second periodic report of Pakistan, CCPR/C/PAK/CO/2, 2 December 2024, url, para. 50
[1195] UN CCPR, HRC, Concluding observations on the second periodic report of Pakistan, CCPR/C/PAK/CO/2, 2 December 2024, url, para. 50
[1196] Arab News, Pakistan introduces court-reviewed detention facilities to tackle 'missing persons' cases in insurgency-hit Balochistan, 18 February 2026, url
[1197] UN CCPR, HRC, Concluding observations on the second periodic report of Pakistan, CCPR/C/PAK/CO/2, 2 December 2024, url, para. 50
[1198] HRW, Pakistan : New government cracks down on free expression, 16 January 2025, url
[1199] Voicepk.net, 60 new cases of enforced disappearances recorded in 2025, 31 December 2025, url
[1200] Pakistan, PID, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of Pakistan, 9 September 2025, url

disappearance between 1 November 2024 and 24 April 2026 in Pakistan, predominantly in Balochistan (778), followed by KP (95), Sindh (69), and Punjab (12), Federal Capital Islamabad (5), and Gilgit-Baltistan (1).[1201] Enforced disappearance primarily affect Baloch, Pashtun and Sindhi people,[1202] in a context where Punjabis dominate the Pakistani army and remain the most influential ethnic group in matters of security, politics[1203] and the economy.[1204]

While the COIED claimed having resolved 103 cases of enforced disappearances by August 2025 by bringing the total cases addressed to 8 873,[1205] Amnesty International notes that it has failed to provide effective remedies to victims and their families.[1206] Pakistan's legal framework, including the Anti-Terrorism Act of 1997, Actions (in Aid of Civil Power) Regulation 2011, Army Act Amendments 2023, and Official Secrets Act Amendments 2023, reportedly provides 'legal cover' for arbitrary detention and secret imprisonment,[1207] while the 2025 Amendments to the Anti-Terrorism Act expanded preventive detention powers, allowing individuals to be detained for up to 90 days without charge or trial.[1208]

Between 1 November 2024 and 24 April 2026, ACLED recorded 104 incidents of mob violence across the country with the majority in Sindh, followed by Punjab and KP.[1209]

6.1.1. Ethnic minorities

The Constitution of Pakistan stipulates that 'the State shall safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of minorities, including their due representations in the Federal and Provincial services.'[1210]Pakistan is home to major ethnic groups[1211] including Punjabis who make up the largest share of the population, followed by Pashtuns, Sindhis, Saraiki, Muhajirs, and Baloch, with the other ethnic communities.[1212] Each of the ethnic groups is further broken down into multiple subgroups and some groups may span more than one category.[1213] . For further background information on ethnic minorities, see section 6.1 of the EUAA COI report Pakistan - Country Focus (December 2024).

[1201] EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Pakistan, data covering 1 November 2024 to 24 April 2026, as of 29 April 2026, url
[1202] Voicepk.net, Rights groups decry Pakistan's failure to tackle enforced disappearances, 30 August 2025, url
[1203] EFSAS, Pakistan's Army: New Chief, traditional institutional interests, n.d., url News Press, Punjab's dominance in Pakistan from army to politics, now it is not giving wheat, 25 October 2025, url
[1204] India Today, Why Imran Khan the Pathan spooks Punjabi General Asim Munir, 27 November 2025, url
[1205] Pakistan, PID, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of Pakistan, 9 September 2025, url
[1206] AI, PAKISTAN: Failure to address enforced disappearance perpetuates injustice against victims, 30 August 2025, url
[1207] Voicepk.net, Rights groups decry Pakistan's failure to tackle enforced disappearances, 30 August 2025, url
[1208] Voicepk.net, 60 new cases of enforced disappearances recorded in 2025, 31 December 2025, url
[1209] EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Pakistan, data covering 1 November 2024 to 4 April 2026, as of 4 April 2026, url
[1210] Pakistan, The constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, n.d., url, p. 18
[1211] Britannica, Pakistan – People of Pakistan, last updated 30 March 2026, url
[1212] Minority Rights Group, Pakistan, last updated December 2025, url
[1213] Britannica, Pakistan – People of Pakistan, last updated 30 March 2026, url

(a) Pashtuns

Pashtuns are an ethnolinguistic group in Pakistan, primarily residing in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and northern Balochistan.[1214] Native Pashto speakers account for approximately 45 million people in the country,[1215] with the ethnic group representing about 15.4 % of the total population.[1216] A smaller proportion of Pashto speakers reside in Islamabad, Sindh, and Punjab.[1217] While Pashtuns are a majority in Afghanistan, they remain a significant minority in Pakistan.[1218]

The majority of Pashtuns in Pakistan identify as Sunni Muslims[1219] and are followers of the Hanafi school of thought (*madhhab*),[1220] while a smaller Shia Pashtun population is concentrated mainly in the Kurram district of KP.[1221] Pashtuns share a common social code, known as *Pashtunwali* that governs both ethical behaviour and custom.[1222] Pakistani Pashtuns maintain deep historical and cultural ties with Pashtuns in Afghanistan.[1223] Pashtun tribes were divided in 1893 when the British established the Durand Line, the border between British India and Afghanistan.[1224] In Pakistan, the main Pashtun tribes reside between the Sulaiman Mountain Range and the Indus River. In the hill areas, from south to north, these include the Kakar, Sherani, and Ustarana south of the Gomal River; the Mahsud, Darvesh Khel, Wazir, and Bitani between the Gomal River and Thal; the Turi, Bangash, Orakzai, Afridi, and Shinwari from Thal to the Khyber Pass; and the Mohmand, Utman Khel, Tarklani, and Yusufzai north and northeast of the Khyber Pass.[1225] The settled areas, by contrast, include lowland tribes subject to direct administration by the provincial government.[1226] From south to north, the main tribes in these areas are the Banuchi and Khattak from the Kurram River to Nowshera, and the Khalil and Mandan in the Vale of Peshawar.[1227]

Pashtun parties and movements such as the[1228] Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) oppose militancy and also criticise the human and economic costs of counterinsurgency measures;[1229] the secular Awami National Party strongly opposes the TTP, which has killed many of its

[1214] Britannica, Pashtuns, 27 November 2025, url
[1215] Gallup Pakistan Digital Analytics, Dashboard, language, information observed on 15 January 2026, url
[1216] Minority Rights Group, Pakistan, last updated December 2025, url
[1217] Gallup Pakistan Digital Analytics, Dashboard, language, information observed on 15 January 2026, url
[1218] WION News, Pakistan Army opens fire on Pashtun protesters, killing seven, injuring more than 20: Here's what happened, 28 July 2025, url
[1219] Minority Rights Group, Pashtuns in Pakistan, December 2025, n.d., url; Britannica, People of Pakistan, 10 March 2026, url; EBSCO, Pashtuns, 2025, n.d., url
[1220] Minority Rights Group, Pashtuns in Pakistan, December 2025, n.d., url
[1221] UNGA, HRC, Human rights situations that require Council's attention, A/HRC/58/NGO/128, 11 March 2025, url, p. 2
[1222] AAN, Breaking the Cycle of Centuries-old Violence: A decline in blood feuds in Khost province?, 3 August 2025, url; Britannica, Pashtuns, 27 November 2025, url; Shah H and Tariq Ziad K, Female voting preferences in district Buner, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, 27 January 2025, url, p. 9
[1223] Britannica, Pashtuns, 27 November 2025, url
[1224] Britannica, Durand Line, 27 February 2026, url
[1225] Britannica, Pashtuns, 27 November 2025, url
[1226] Britannica, Pashtuns, 27 November 2025, url
[1227] Britannica, Pashtuns, 27 November 2025, url
[1228] International Crisis Group, Pakistan: responding to the militant surge on the Afghan border, 27 February 2026, url
[1229] International Crisis Group, Pakistan: Responding to the Militant Surge on the Afghan Border, 27 February 2026, url

leaders, and also criticises military operations due to their high security and economic costs to its constituents.[1230] On 30 March 2026, an international organisation working on Pakistan indicated in an interview with the EUAA that 'Pashtuns are generally not targeted in Pakistan on the basis of ethnicity alone; rather, targeting are linked to specific profiles, activities, and geographic contexts'.[1231] The international organisation further noted that 'the most consistently identified groups who are targeted include members and supporters of the PTM, as well as Pashtun journalists, students, human-rights defenders, and political activists engaged in rights-based advocacy or criticism of state policies, who have reportedly faced surveillance, harassment, arrest, and prosecution by state actors, particularly following restrictions on assemblies and the proscription of PTM in 2024'.[1232] Pashtuns seek accountability for violations committed during security operations in Pashtun regions, including Pakistan military operations such as drone strikes on civilian homes, the government's ban on the PTM on 6 October 2024, which was upheld by the Peshawar High Court in February 2026 ,[1233] and the use of anti-terrorism laws to target Pashtun activists and peaceful protesters.[1234]

Pashtun majority areas are affected by militancy, especially the districts of northern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including former FATA regions, where civilians, tribal elders, and community leaders involved in *jirgas* (tribal assembly[1235]) or local peacebuilding face threats from non-state armed groups such as TTP and ISKP, who perceive them as aligned with the state.[1236] For more information, see section 4.2.2. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

In 2024, a PTM-led national *jirga* called for the demilitarisation of Pashtun-inhabited areas,[1237] including KP and tribal areas,[1238] which have witnessed military operations.[1239] According to PTM leadership, more than 300 operations were conducted in 2025, while the Pakistani military maintains that these actions target alleged militant hideouts linked to the TTP.[1240] Pashtuns accused the Pakistani security forces in KP of 'committing serious human rights violations under the pretext of anti-militancy operations.'[1241] The Pakistan Army, which is largely

[1230] International Crisis Group, Pakistan: responding to the militant surge on the Afghan border, 27 February 2026, url
[1231] International organisation working on Pakistan, email communication with EUAA, 30 March 2026
[1232] International organisation working on Pakistan, email communication with EUAA, 30 March 2026
[1233] Dawn, Peshawar High Court upholds ban on PTM, its leaders, 5 February 2026, url; ANI, Pakistan: Peshawar High Court upholds ban on Pashtun Tahafuz Movement, and its leaders, 5 February 2026, url
[1234] WION News, Pakistan Army opens fire on Pashtun protesters, killing seven, injuring more than 20: Here's what happened, 28 July 2025, url
[1235] Shah H and Tariq Ziad K, Female voting preferences in district Buner, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, 27 January 2025, url, p. 9
[1236] International organisation working on Pakistan, email communication with EUAA, 30 March 2026
[1237] ACLED, The battle for the borderlands: The Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan challenges the state's control, 6 October 2025, url
[1238] Shamshad News, Pashteen Says Pakistani Army Conducted Over 300 Attacks in Pashtun Areas Last Year, 1 February 2026, url
[1239] ACLED, The battle for the borderlands: The Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan challenges the state's control, 6 October 2025, url; Al Jazeera, Anger And Chaos As Thousands Displaced Ahead Of Pakistani Military Operation, 23 January 2026, url
[1240] ACLED, The battle for the borderlands: The Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan challenges the state's control, 6 October 2025, url; Al Jazeera, Anger And Chaos As Thousands Displaced Ahead Of Pakistani Military Operation, 23 January 2026, url
[1241] ACLED, The battle for the borderlands: The Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan challenges the state's control, 6 October 2025, url

dominated by the Punjabi ethnic group,[1242] has, according to a retired Indian Army officer, reportedly caused civilian casualties[1243] including women, children, and the elderly, forcibly displacing families from their homes, seizing property, and arresting members of the PTM.[1244] For more information on civilian casualties in KP province, see section 4.2.2. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

Pashtuns have continued to be subjected to enforced disappearance in the country,[1245] and human rights organisations documented a significant rise in extrajudicial killings in KP over the past six years, including more than 600 targeted killings by the state and its proxies.[1246] These human rights organisations have called for investigations into cases such as the torture and killing of Hazrat Naeem (known as Gilaman Wazir), a prominent Pashtun activist.[1247] Meanwhile, the September 2025 peaceful protests by the PTM[1248] against enforced disappearances, violence, and marginalisation were met with threats, arrests, and the use of force by the Pakistani army.[1249]

On 28 July 2025, a shooting during a Pashtun protest in Tirah Valley, KP, left between 5 to 7 people dead and around 20 injured, with one source attributing the shooting to the Pakistani Army, while others to security forces in general or unknown actors.[1250] By February 2026, the Pashtuns continued to be targeted[1251] including the killing of four Pashtun civilians and the injuring of six by the Pakistani army during a military operation on 24 February 2026.[1252]

(b) Baloch people

The Baloch people constitute a group of tribes, who reside primarily in Pakistan, and partly in Iran and Afghanistan.[1253] They are largely Sunni Muslims and followers of the Hanafi school of

[1242] EFSAS, Pakistan's Army: New Chief, traditional institutional interests, n.d., url News Press, Punjab's dominance in Pakistan from army to politics, now it is not giving wheat, 25 October 2025, url; India Today, Why Imran Khan the Pathan spooks Punjabi General Asim Munir, 27 November 2025, url
[1243] Kunwar N, Pakistan army's undeclared war against Pashtuns, EURASIA Review, 26 September 2025, url
[1244] Shamshad News, Pashteen Says Pakistani Army Conducted Over 300 Attacks in Pashtun Areas Last Year, 1 February 2026, url
[1245] Voicepk.net, Rights groups decry Pakistan's failure to tackle enforced disappearances, 30 August 2025, url; Naemm A, Pakistan's Baloch students are vanishing, and no one is held accountable, The New Humanitarian, 3 February 2026, url
[1246] UN GA HRC, Written statement* submitted by Centre for Gender Justice and Women Empowerment, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status, A/HRC/58/NGO/82, 24 February 2025, url
[1247] UN GA HRC, Written statement* submitted by Centre for Gender Justice and Women Empowerment, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status, A/HRC/58/NGO/82, 24 February 2025, url
[1248] WION News, Pakistan Army opens fire on Pashtun protesters, killing seven, injuring more than 20: Here's what happened, 28 July 2025, url; AA, At least 7 killed, 16 injured amid protest in northwestern Pakistan, 28 July 2025, url
[1249] Kunwar N, Pakistan army's undeclared war against Pashtuns, EURASIA Review, 26 September 2025, url
[1250] WION News, Pakistan Army opens fire on Pashtun protesters, killing seven, injuring more than 20: Here's what happened, 28 July 2025, url; AA, At least 7 killed, 16 injured amid protest in northwestern Pakistan, 28 July 2025, url; Dawn, Seven lives lost as protest turns violent in Tirah, 28 July 2025, url
[1251] Freedom House, Freedom House Commends UN Working Group Ruling; Urges Immediate Release of Pakistani Human Rights Defender Idris Khattak, 23 February 2026, url
[1252] TOQUN News, Escalating violence in Pashtun regions during Ramadan raises concerns, 24 February 2026, url; Ariana News, Escalating violence in Pashtun regions during Ramadan raises concerns, 23 February 2026, url; Dawn, CM terms killing of civilians in Tirah 'incompetence' of security forces, 23 February 2026, url
[1253] Britannica, Baloch people, n.d., url

thought (*madhhab*).[1254] Baloch native speakers are an estimated nine million people in Pakistan,[1255] with the ethnic group representing 3.5 % of the total population.[1256] The majority of native Baloch speakers reside in Balochistan province, with smaller population living in KP, followed by Sindh, Punjab, and Islamabad each with smaller proportions.[1257]

Baloch people have long sought greater autonomy from Pakistan,[1258] with some seeking full independence.[1259] Since the province's integration into Pakistan in 1948, many Baloch groups have pursued a self-determination movement through political, diplomatic, and, at times, armed insurgency, including by the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA).[1260]

Balochistan province remains underdeveloped, and Baloch people are perceived to be marginalised.[1261] For more information, see section 4.2.1. Balochistan. The Khiam Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture, a NGO promoting democracy, co-existence and respect for human rights,[1262] stated that the government continues extracting minerals in Balochistan for Islamabad's benefit, not local, with infrastructure projects involving Chinese companies and workers, causing displacement and increasing militarisation.[1263] Local resistance has faced heavy military crackdowns, surveillance and human rights abuses[1264] including enforced disappearance of thousands of Baloch people over the past two decades,[1265] collective punishments and gender based violence against Baloch women and girls, with 12 disappeared in 2025.[1266] Baloch political activists, students, journalists, human-rights defenders, and individuals perceived to support Baloch nationalist or separatist movements are targeted, with reported violations encompassing arbitrary arrest, detention under security legislation, enforced disappearance, and, in some cases, extrajudicial killing, largely attributed to state actors in the context of counterinsurgency operations in Balochistan.[1267] Meanwhile, some prominent Baloch activists have been placed on the Exit Control List, restricting their travel.[1268] In addition, several have also been placed under the Fourth Schedule of Pakistan's Anti-

[1254] Minority Rights Group, Baluchis in Pakistan, n.d., url; Britannica, Baluchistan, n.d., url; Britannica, People of Pakistan, 10 March 2026, url
[1255] Gallup Pakistan Digital Analytics, Dashboard, language, information observed on 15 January 2026, url
[1256] Minority Rights Group, Pakistan, last updated December 2025, url
[1257] Gallup Pakistan Digital Analytics, Dashboard, language, information observed on 15 January 2026, url
[1258] Firstpost, 'We're not Pakistani': Reports of Balochistan's independence spike on X amid BLA attacks on Pak forces, 14 May 2025, url; Al Jazeera, Why peace remains elusive in Pakistan's troubled Balochistan, 3 February 2026, url
[1259] News On Air, Balochs declare independence from Pakistan, urge UN to recognise 'Democratic Republic of Balochistan', 15 May 2025, url; Firstpost, 'We're not Pakistani': Reports of Balochistan's independence spike on X amid BLA attacks on Pak forces, 14 May 2025, url
[1260] Firstpost, 'We're not Pakistani': Reports of Balochistan's independence spike on X amid BLA attacks on Pak forces, 14 May 2025, url; Al Jazeera, Why peace remains elusive in Pakistan's troubled Balochistan, 3 February 2026, url
[1261] CTC, The Baloch Insurgency in Pakistan: Evolution, Tactics, and Regional Security Implications, April 2025, url, pp. 28-29
[1262] OMCT, Network Members – Khima Rehabilitation Center (KRC), n.d., urlv
[1263] UN GA, HRC, Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance, follow-up to and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, A/HRC/59/NGO/335, 2 July 2025, url, p. 2
[1264] UN GA, HRC, Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance, follow-up to and implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, A/HRC/59/NGO/335, 2 July 2025, url, p. 2
[1265] BBC, A life spent waiting - and searching rows of unclaimed bodies, 23 March 2025, url
[1266] SATP, 12 Baloch women forcibly disappeared in 2025 as a collective punishment, says BYC, 14 January 2026, url
[1267] International organisation working on Pakistan, email communication with EUAA, 30 March 2026
[1268] UN OHCHR, UN experts urge Pakistan to address human rights violations in Balochistan, 29 April 2025, url

Terrorism Act, with authorities designating 32 individuals from Khuzdar, Kech, and Chagai districts as 'proscribed individuals' through notifications issued on 2 and 16 October 2025, effectively subjecting them to heightened surveillance and restrictions.[1269]

In 2025, 1 355 Baloch people were subjected to enforced disappearance according to a report by PAANK, the human rights department of the Baloch National Movement,[1270] including 106 new cases reported in November by the Human Rights Council of Balochistan (HRBC), a non-profit human rights group based in Balochistan and Sweden.[1271] Among them were farmers, students, shopkeepers and labourers who were reportedly taken during raids, detentions, at checkpoints or through summons to military camps by the Frontier Corps, intelligence agencies, the Counter Terrorism Department and 'state-backed death squads' across districts such as Kech, Quetta, Panjgur and Gwadar.[1272] HRBC also noted a significant escalation in the enforced disappearance of women, including health workers, housewives, activists and a 15-year-old girl, with abductions carried out through house raids and late-night operations by security agencies including the Counter Terrorism Department, Frontier Corps and Military Intelligence.[1273]

As of 1 February 2026, provincial authorities claimed having established de-radicalisation centres in Balochistan to address the issue of enforced disappearances by placing suspects in legally supervised custody with access to medical care, family visits and judicial oversight.[1274] While authorities present these measures as targeting insurgency-related cases and addressing enforced disappearances,[1275] the issue is also reported to involve the disappearance of political activists in Balochistan, a concern repeatedly raised by human rights organisations.[1276] On 13 February 2026, a student from Panjgur district in Balochistan was reportedly subjected to enforced disappearance after being arrested by the Pakistani army in Karachi on 30 December 2025.[1277]

In addition, in 2025, PAANK reported that an estimated 225 Baloch people were subjected to extrajudicial killings and 407 to torture by Pakistani authorities,[1278] with some victims reportedly found dead in unmarked graves across Balochistan.[1279] Meanwhile, the HRBC stated that in November 2025, 42 Baloch people were reported killed in targeted executions, custodial deaths, torture, honour killings and indiscriminate firing, with perpetrators not identified in 18

[1269] AI, Pakistan: Inclusion of Baloch activists on terrorist watchlist an affront to human rights, 23 October 2025, url
[1270] PAANK, A year of repression: Balochistan 2025, 4 February 2026, url
[1271] HRCB, About us, n.d., url
[1272] HRCB, Balochistan: 106 Enforced Disappearances and 42 Killings Reported in November 2025, 25 December 2025, url
[1273] HRCB, Enforced Disappearance of Baloch Women: An Escalating Trend and the Normalization of Abuse in Balochistan, 18 December 2025, url
[1274] Arab News, Pakistan introduces court-reviewed detention facilities to tackle 'missing persons' cases in insurgency-hit Balochistan, 18 February 2026, url; Balochistan Pulse, 'No One Will Be Missing': Balochistan Sets Up De-Radicalization Centers, Says CM Bugti, 18 February 2026, url
[1275] Arab News, Pakistan introduces court-reviewed detention facilities to tackle 'missing persons' cases in insurgency-hit Balochistan, 18 February 2026, url; Balochistan Pulse, 'No One Will Be Missing': Balochistan Sets Up De-Radicalization Centers, Says CM Bugti, 18 February 2026, url
[1276] IANS, Pakistan legalises enforced disappearance in Balochistan to silence rising voices, 23 January 2026, url; UN OHCHR, UN experts urge Pakistan to address human rights violations in Balochistan, 29 April 2025, url
[1277] PAANK Human Rights, Enforced disappearance of Zakir Noor from Karachi, 13 February 2026, url
[1278] PAANK, A year of repression: Balochistan 2025, 4 February 2026, url
[1279] BBC, A life spent waiting - and searching rows of unclaimed bodies, 23 March 2025, url

cases, and the remaining cases attributed to Frontier Corps (12), state-backed death squads (7), the Balochistan Liberation Front (2), intelligence agencies (1), and family members in isolated cases.[1280]

In October 2025, Balochistan authorities placed 32 individuals, including women activists, on a terrorist watchlist under the Anti-Terrorism Act, subjecting them to severe restrictions, [1281] including heavy surveillance, severe limits on their freedom of movement and ability to take part in public life, restrictions on travel outside designated areas without express permission from local police, and powers granted to authorities to investigate and freeze their financial assets or those of their immediate family members.[1282] As of 16 March 2026, many Baloch activists in detention report serious health issues and lack adequate medical care, while five activists continue to face repeated bail denials, trial in prison, and restricted access to medical treatment or independent observers following their arbitrary detention a year earlier.[1283]

In March 2026, a Baloch woman presented by Pakistani authorities in Quetta as a suspected suicide bomber was reported to having been subjected to enforced disappearance for over three months prior to her public appearance, raising concerns that statements made during incommunicado detention may have been obtained under coercion.[1284] On 22 March 2026, a young man was reportedly abducted in Panjgur district, Balochistan, allegedly by a pro-government armed group known as the 'death squad'.[1285] In a separate incident, a young man was shot dead in Mastung district, Balochistan, after Frontier Corps personnel raided his home and forcibly took him outside.[1286] By 1 April 2026, enforced disappearance of Baloch people continued in Balochistan, with Baloch rights activist Mahrang Baloch held in solitary confinement claiming that no home in Balochistan is safe due to ongoing state violence.[1287] For more information, see section 4.2.1. Balochistan.

(c) Sindhis

The Sindhis reside primarily in the Sindh province of Pakistan,[1288] bordering India and forming the country's third largest ethnic group, having a cultural heritage stretching back to the ancient Indus Valley civilisation and were historically recognised as a distinct political and territorial entity in Sindh, which lost its autonomy after the 1947 partition and has since been

[1280] HRCB, Balochistan: 106 Enforced Disappearances and 42 Killings Reported in November 2025, 25 December 2025, url
[1281] AI, Pakistan: Inclusion of Baloch activists on terrorist watchlist an affront to human rights, 23 October 2025, url
[1282] CIVICUS Monitor, Pakistan: Criminalisation of Baloch and Pashtun activists, harassment of journalists and crackdown on protests, 24 November 2025, url
[1283] AI, Pakistan: Further Information: Baloch activists face secret trial, 16 March 2026, url
[1284] Balochistan Post (The), Activists Question Detention Timeline After Quetta Presser, Reject Allegations Against Dr Sabiha Baloch, 20 March 2026, url; ANI, Missing Baloch woman presented as 'bomber', raises questions on Pakistan's tactics, 21 March 2026, url
[1285] Balochistan Post (The), Panjgur: Youth Reportedly Abducted by Alleged Pro-State Armed Group, 22 March 2026, url
[1286] Balochistan Post (The), Youth Shot Dead in Balochistan's Mastung After Raid on Eve of Eid, Family Says, 22 March 2026, url
[1287] Guardian (The), My year in solitary confinement has not broken me. My peaceful fight for Baloch rights in Pakistan goes on, 1 April 2026, url
[1288] Gallup Pakistan Digital Analytics, Dashboard, language, information observed on 15 January 2026, url

under Pakistan's military rule.[1289] Native Sindhi speakers number an estimated 36 million, [1290] representing 14.1 % of the total population, [1291] with the majority living in Sindh province, followed by Balochistan, Islamabad, Punjab, and KP with smaller proportions.[1292] Islam is the predominant religion in Sindh province, comprising approximately 91 % of the population, while Hinduism accounts for around 8 %.[1293]

Sindhis seek recognition of their distinct identity and greater autonomy within Pakistan,[1294] claiming that state policies have undermined Sindh's culture, language, heritage, and lands.[1295] The Jeay Sindh Muttahida Mahaz (JSMM), a Sindhi nationalist movement, claims independence for the people of Sindh, a state under the name of 'Sindhudesh'.[1296] JSMM's leader, Shafi Burfat, who runs the movement in exile, reported human rights violations in Sindh province and has been seeking the UN's recognition of Sindhudesh as an independent nation.[1297]

In September 2025, the Unrepresented Nations & Peoples Organization (UNPO) denounced the wide range of human rights abuses faced by Sindhis in Pakistan, including arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, political repression, and religious-based targeting,[1298] including Hindu Sindhis.[1299] For more information, see section Religious minorities, (a) Hindus.

On 7 December 2025, the celebration of the Sindh Culture Day turned into violent clashes with security forces during which participants raised demands for Sindhudesh,[1300] resulting in the arrest of 45 individuals.[1301] On 22 January 2026, workers of Jeay Sindh Tehreek (JST) and Jeay Sindh Students Federation (JSSF) staged a protest and symbolic hunger strike in Hyderabad, Sindh, denouncing the torture of nationalist activists in prison and their transfer to other cities in Sindh.[1302] In addition, Sindhis reportedly faced discrimination from both the state and society, and their dissent was reportedly suppressed through intimidation and hostility in

[1289] UNPO, At UN Human Rights Council, UNPO joins Sindh to call for justice, 22 September 2025, url
[1290] Minority Rights Group, Pakistan, last updated December 2025, url
[1291] Minority Rights Group, Pakistan, last updated December 2025, url
[1292] Gallup Pakistan Digital Analytics, Dashboard, language, information observed on 15 January 2026, url
[1293] UNPO, Sindh, n.d., url
[1294] Organiser, From Sindh to Balochistan: Protests escalate against control, oppression and terrorism by Pakistan, 19 May 2025, url
[1295] UNPO, At UN Human Rights Council, UNPO joins Sindh to call for justice, 22 September 2025, url; Organiser, From Sindh to Balochistan: Protests escalate against control, oppression and terrorism by Pakistan, 19 May 2025, url
[1296] ANI, Pakistan: JSMM organises massive rally in Sindh demanding for 'Sindhudesh', 17 January 2025, url
[1297] Times of India (The), Sindhudesh as an independent nation: JSMM demands UN recognise, 23 May 2025, url
[1298] UNPO, At UN Human Rights Council, UNPO joins Sindh to call for justice, 22 September 2025, url
[1299] UN GA, HRC, Written statement* submitted by Stichting Global Human Rights Defence, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status, Exodus of Sindhi Hindus from Sindh, Pakistan, A/HRC/59/NGO/253, 13 June 2025, url
[1300] Financial Express, Karachi on edge as Sindhudesh demand explodes into streets – Why is Pakistan facing fresh protests?, 9 December 2025, url
[1301] Firstpost, Why is Pakistan's Karachi seeing separatist protests over Sindhudesh?, 10 December 2025, url
[1302] Express Tribune (The), Nationalist inmates in Hyderabad transferred to other cities, 22 January 2026, url

political, media, and everyday contexts.[1303] In 2025, Sindhi activists continued to be subjected to detention and enforced disappearance.[1304]

On 8 March 2026, the alleged enforced disappearance of a Sindhi nationalist leader, the Jamshoro district president for the Jeay Sindh Freedom Movement (JFSM), Saeed Tiyono's has triggered widespread outrage, with the JSFM accusing Pakistani state agencies of rights violations and calling for his release.[1305]

(d) Muhajirs

The Muhajirs are Muslims, predominantly Urdu speaking, who migrated to Pakistan during the 1947 partition of British India or are descendants of those migrants and settled largely in urban centres of Sindh province, particularly Karachi and Hyderabad.[1306] Muhajirs are estimated at approximately 30 million people,[1307] representing 7.6 % of the total population.[1308]

Despite their decades-long presence and their legal citizenship[1309] sources note that Muhajirs have never been accepted as legitimate citizens by the Pakistani army, and faced systemic discrimination in the country,[1310] and have often remained socially and politically marginalised in Sindh province, where even second- and third-generation communities are denied full acceptance as Pakistanis or Sindhis and are derogatorily referred to as '*Panahgir*' (refugees), '*Bhagoray*' (runaways), and 'Hindustani,' (Indian).[1311] They continue seeking for identity recognition and equal rights in the country.[1312]

In a 2025 statement, Altaf Hussain, founder of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), claimed that 'the Muhajirs are treated as outsiders in their homeland', called on the United Nations to recognise their right to self-determination, and indicated that state institutions have targeted Muhajir politicians, activists and members of civil rights groups through arbitrary arrests, extrajudicial violence and restrictions on education and employment.[1313] The MQM has been a major electoral force in Karachi and other urban centres, particularly Hyderabad,

[1303] Friday Times (The), Racism Against Sindhis: Pakistan's Normalised Prejudice And Its Dangerous Silence, 24 December 2025, url
[1304] Minority Rights Group, Sindhis and Muhajirs in Pakistan, December 2025, url
[1305] ANI, Sindhi nationalist leader's disappearance triggers outrage, rights violations alleged in Pakistan, 8 March 2026, url;
[1306] Britannica, Muhajirs, 30 December 2025, url; Friday Times (The), The Struggle Of Muhajirs In Pakistan: Identity, Discrimination, And The Quest For Recognition, 18 March 2025, url
[1307] Minority Rights Group, Sindhis and Muhajirs in Pakistan, December 2025, n.d., url
[1308] Minority Rights Group, Pakistan, last updated December 2025, url
[1309] Friday Times (The), The Struggle Of Muhajirs In Pakistan: Identity, Discrimination, And The Quest For Recognition, 18 March 2025, url
[1310] Hindustan Times, Exiled MQM leader Altaf Hussain's urgent appeal to PM Narendra Modi over Muhajirs, 28 May 2025, url; Friday Times (The), The Struggle Of Muhajirs In Pakistan: Identity, Discrimination, And The Quest For Recognition, 18 March 2025, url
[1311] Friday Times (The), The Struggle Of Muhajirs In Pakistan: Identity, Discrimination, And The Quest For Recognition, 18 March 2025, url
[1312] Friday Times (The), The Struggle Of Muhajirs In Pakistan: Identity, Discrimination, And The Quest For Recognition, 18 March 2025, url
[1313] ANI, Pakistan treats muhajirs as enemies, Not citizens; Altaf Hussain Demands UN-backed freedom, 19 June 2025, url

consistently mobilising Muhajir voters to secure significant representation in local, provincial and national legislatures, while conducting advocacy for Muhajir rights.[1314]

(e) Kashmiris

The population of Pakistan-administered Kashmir is estimated at about 4.5 million people[1315] including an estimated 1.5 million people residing near the Line of Control (LoC) in Pakistan-administered Kashmir.[1316] The population of Kashmir is predominantly Muslim.[1317] Pakistan governs the northern and western regions, including Azad Kashmir, Gilgit and Baltistan, while India administers the southern and southeastern areas, such as the Kashmir Valley and its largest city, Srinagar, along with Jammu and Ladakh.[1318] For more information, see section 4.2.6. Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB).

Kashmiris continue to be affected by multiple wars and prolonged diplomatic confrontations between India and Pakistan,[1319] while numerous Muslim Kashmiris backing the insurgency to bring the Indian-administered Kashmir under the control of Pakistan or as an independent country.[1320] The April 2025 terrorist attack in the Indian-administered Kashmir area killing 26 people further created tensions in the region.[1321]

According to a statement submitted by the Centre Independent de Recherches et d'Initiatives pour le Dialogue (CIRID) submitted to the UN Human Rights Council in January 2025, Kashmiris face severe restrictions on freedom of speech, assembly, and political activity.[1322] The statement notes that Kashimiri opposition political leaders are subjected to arbitrary arrests, prosecution, and harassment.[1323] The CIRID underscores a context where the judiciary is presented as lacking independence and a regional context of heavy militarisation, contributing to arbitrary detentions, enforced disappearances, and violence by the Pakistani security forces.[1324] The statement also mentions the 'chronic economic deprivation' endured

[1314] Muqaddis Bibi, Dr. Muhammad Adil, & Muhammad Naeem. (2025). Evolution of Identity Politics: A Case Study of the Muhajir Quami Movement in Pakistan. *Pakistan Research Journal of Social Sciences*, *4*(1), PRJSS, url, p. 89
[1315] BBC, Kashmir profile, 10 March 2025, url; Al Jazeera, Why has Pakistan-administered Kashmir erupted in protest again?, 3 October 2025, url
[1316] Al Jazeera, Fears of attack in Pakistan-administered Kashmir amid acute India tensions, 1 May 2025, url
[1317] Al Jazeera, Pahalgam attack: A simple guide to the Kashmir conflict, 2 May 2025, url
[1318] Al Jazeera, Pahalgam attack: A simple guide to the Kashmir conflict, 2 May 2025, url
[1319] Reuters, The Himalayan region of Kashmir, at the heart of India-Pakistan enmity, 23 April 2025, url; CFR, Conflict between India and Pakistan, 18 February 2026, url; Al Jazeera, Pahalgam attack: A simple guide to the Kashmir conflict, 2 May 2025, url
[1320] Guardian (The), India and Pakistan's dispute over Kashmir – explained in 30 seconds, 7 May 2025, url
[1321] Chatham House, Rising tensions resurface Pakistan's credibility problem– and India's backfiring policy on Kashmir, 9 May 2025, url; CSIS, What Led to the Recent Crisis Between India and Pakistan?, 20 May 2025, url; BBC, What happened after previous Kashmir militant attacks, 7 May 2025, url
[1322] UN HRC, Written statement submitted by CIRID (Centre Independent de Recherches et d'Iniatives pour le Dialogue), a nongovernmental organization in special consultative status, The Denial of Rights in Pakistan-administered Azad Jammu and Kashmir, A/HRC/58/NGO/43, 13 March 2025, url para. 1, 2 and 4
[1323] UN HRC, Written statement submitted by CIRID (Centre Independent de Recherches et d'Iniatives pour le Dialogue), a nongovernmental organization in special consultative status, The Denial of Rights in Pakistan-administered Azad Jammu and Kashmir, A/HRC/58/NGO/43, 13 March 2025, url para. 2
[1324] UN HRC, Written statement submitted by CIRID (Centre Independent de Recherches et d'Iniatives pour le Dialogue), a nongovernmental organization in special consultative status, The Denial of Rights in Pakistan-administered Azad Jammu and Kashmir, A/HRC/58/NGO/43, 13 March 2025, url para. 5

by the Kashmiri populations and limited access to healthcare and education.[1325] In addition, travel abroad for work is reported to be increasingly restricted due to documentation controls, while limited domestic jobs, rising living costs, and growing poverty have worsened mental health challenges and drug abuse among an increasingly educated Kashmiri population.[1326] Section 7(3) of the Interim Constitution of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (1974) prohibits individuals or political parties from opposing the region's accession to Pakistan; reports indicate that those who speak out against alleged abuses and discrimination have been labelled as traitors and subjected to torture or extrajudicial killings amid the presence of militant groups and monitoring by security and intelligence agencies.[1327]

According to a statement submitted to the UN Human Rights Council in February 2025 by the *Centre d'Encadrement et Developpement des Anciens Combattant*, a non-governmental organisation in special consultative status, indigenous peoples and ethnic and religious minorities in Pakistan-administered Azad Jammu and Kashmir have been involved in violent clashes with local and national authorities since May 2023, triggered by a sudden surge in the prices of essential commodities, particularly electricity and wheat.[1328] In September 2025, over eight Kashmiris were killed in Pakistan-administered Kashmir following clashes with security forces, driven by widespread dissatisfaction with local governance, economic hardship, and demands for civil rights and structural reforms.[1329] Authorities reportedly cut off internet and phone services during the protests.[1330]

(f) Hazaras

Hazaras are comprised of both Pakistani[1331] citizens and Afghan nationals, with legal status determined by citizenship and documentation rather than ethnicity.[1332] They reside primarily in Balochistan province, [1333] in the city of Quetta (Hazara Town and Mariabad)[1334] coming originally from Afghanistan due to poverty and conflict, mainly between 1978 and 1992.[1335] They hold Computerised National Identity Cards (CNICs) and are recognised as citizens under the Pakistan Citizenship Act (1951).[1336] The latest available data from 2018 suggests that the

[1325] UN HRC, Written statement submitted by CIRID (Centre Independent de Recherches et d'Iniatives pour le Dialogue), a nongovernmental organization in special consultative status, The Denial of Rights in Pakistan-administered Azad Jammu and Kashmir, A/HRC/58/NGO/43, 13 March 2025, url
[1326] AI, Unrest in Azad Kashmir: Repeating pattern of Gen-Z voices raised in anger, 27 October 2025, url
[1327] UN HRC, Violation of Political Rights of Indigenous People and Local Ethnic Minorities in Pakistan Administered Azad Jammu and Kashmir, A/HRC/58/NGO/337, 19 March 2025, url, p. 2
[1328] UN HRC, Written statement submitted by Centre d'Encadrement et Développement des Anciens Combattants, a nongovernmental organization in special consultative status, Violation of Political Rights of Indigenous People and Local Ethnic Minorities in Pakistan Administered Azad Jammu and Kashmir, A/HRC/58/NGO/337, 19 March 2025, url, p. 2
[1329] Reuters, Eight killed in protests in Pakistan's Kashmir, 2 October 2025, url
[1330] Reuters, Eight killed in protests in Pakistan's Kashmir, 2 October 2025, url
[1331] Pakistan, NCHR, Annual report 2024, 24 April 2025, url, p. 86
[1332] International organisation working on Pakistan, email communication with EUAA, 30 March 2026
[1333] Britannica, Hazara, 17 January 2026, url
[1334] Minority rights Group, Shia's and Hazaras in Pakistan, December 2025, n.d., url; International organisation working on Pakistan, email communication with EUAA, 30 March 2026
[1335] Britannica, Hazara, 17 January 2026, url
[1336] International organisation working on Pakistan, email communication with EUAA, 30 March 2026

Hazaras in Pakistan were estimated approximately at 500 000 people.[1337] Afghan Hazaras reside under varying legal arrangements, including Proof of Registration (PoR) cards, Afghan Citizen Cards (ACC), other temporary documentation, or undocumented status, which directly affects their exposure to arrest, detention, or deportation. [1338]

Hazara people are predominantly Shia Muslims and are identifiable due to their distinct features and their Shia faith.[1339] Some Hazaras also identify as Sunni Muslims.[1340] For more information, see section (d) Shia Muslims.

Hazara communities have historically been targeted by Sunni extremist groups[1341] including LeJ and ISKP, who consider Shia Muslims as heretics.[1342] Despite fluctuations in large-scale attacks[1343] against Hazara communities, particularly in Quetta, including attacks in markets, buses, and places of worship by militant groups,[1344] 'persistent security threats, discrimination, and significant restrictions on freedom of movement, often requiring checkpoints or security escorts outside Hazara-majority areas', according to an international organisation interviewed by the EUAA on 30 March 2026.[1345] A news article from February 2026, report the killing of a Hazara man in Gulbahar, Pakistan.[1346] In April 2026, news articles reported on the killing of two Hazara men and the wounding of three others by armed assailants in Quetta,[1347] with sources reporting the attack as appearing to be targeted killing against the Hazara community.[1348]

(g) Kalash people

The Kalash population is an ethnic and religious minority residing in the Chitral district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, in the Kalash valleys of Bumburet, Rumbur and Birir on Hindu Kush mountains, near the border with Afghanistan,[1349] and their population is estimated between 4 000 [1350] and 7 500 people.[1351] They have a distinct ancient Indo-Aryan culture, and a unique language[1352] with a polytheistic pagan religion closely linked to animism, the belief

[1337] Haider M. Z., Human Security Paradigm in Pakistan: The Case of Hazaras in Quetta, Pakistan, Vol. 4. No. 03 (JulSep) 2024 International Journal of Human and Society, url, p. 1; Minority rights Group, Shia's and Hazaras in Pakistan, December 2025, n.d., url
[1338] International organisation working on Pakistan, email communication with EUAA, 30 March 2026
[1339] AI, 'Treat us like human beings', Afghans in Pakistan at risk of unlawful deportation, 1 April 2025, url p.8
[1340] Minority rights Group, Shia's and Hazaras in Pakistan, June 2018, n.d., url
[1341] International organisation working on Pakistan, email communication with EUAA, 30 March 2026
[1342] Kashmir Observer, Violence Pakistan refuse to name, 10 February 2026, url
[1343] International organisation working on Pakistan, email communication with EUAA, 30 March 2026
[1344] Kashmir Observer, Violence Pakistan refuse to name, 10 February 2026, url
[1345] International organisation working on Pakistan, email communication with EUAA, 30 March 2026
[1346] News Pakistan (The), Suspects still at large eight days after Hazara man murder in Gulbahar, 28 February 2026, url
[1347] Amu, Two killed in attach on Hazaras in Quetta, Pakistan, 12 April 2026, url; SocialNews, Pakistan: two Hazara community members shot dead amid growing violence against minorities, 15 April 2026, url
[1348] Pakistan Today, Three Coast Guards martyred, two Hazara men killed in separate attacks, 13 April 2026, url; SocialNews, Pakistan: two Hazara community members shot dead amid growing violence against minorities, 15 April 2026, url
[1349] Le Monde, Secluded Kalash tribe fights for survival in Pakistan, 5 November 2025, url
[1350] Arab News, Ancient winter festival in Pakistan's northwestern Chitral valley underway, 17 December 2025, url
[1351] Minority Rights Groupe, Kalash in Pakistan, 15 February 2026, url
[1352] Dawn, KP's cabinet committee on legislation approves 'historic' Kalash marriage bill, 31 August 2025, url

that all living things have a soul.[1353] The community has long been referred to as '*kafir*' ('infidels').[1354]

Kalash people, among other ethnic and religious minorities in Pakistan, are subjected to systemic discrimination and suffer from harassment, caught in fabricated blasphemy allegations, mob violence, lynchings, targeted killings, forced conversions, arbitrary detention, and destruction of property, including their places of worship and cemeteries.[1355]

While the community has long been deprived from a formal legal framework to safeguard their social and cultural rights, the KP Cabinet Committee on Legislation approved the draft Kalash Marriage Bill on 13 August 2025.[1356] Kalash marriages have traditionally been conducted according to the community's own religious laws, customs, and rituals, with disputes usually resolved through local *jirga*, while the draft bill sets the minimum legal age of marriage at 18 for both men and women, and it 'acknowledges three culturally distinct forms of marriage within the Kalash community' including:

- 'arranged Marriage: A traditional union with the consent of both families, involving rituals such as *Khaltabari* and *Marrat*;
- love Marriage (*Alashing* Marriage): a Kalash girl chooses her partner independently, without parental consent. The marriage becomes valid once her parents or close relatives confirm her willingness and happiness within seven days;
- elopement (*Shisha-Istongas*): couples who elope and complete the *Marrat* ceremony are recognised as legally married under customary law;
- this categorisation respects traditional Kalash practices while providing a legal framework for registration and protection.'[1357]

Sources reported in April 2026 that the KP government has tabled the Kalash Marriage Bill 2026 for detailed review and consultation before its final approval.[1358]

The Kalash-inhabited valleys remain under threat from several Muslim groups, including the TTP, which regards the Kalash as infidels and has carried out repeated attacks to seize their land, while surrounding communities exert constant religious pressure by building mosques and madrasas on Kalash territory.[1359] In addition, the Kalash people lack curriculum adapted to their children, most of whom attend public schools in non-Kalash villages, where Islamic instruction is compulsory.[1360]

[1353] AI, The power of photography: an interview with Khaula Jamil, 1 May 2025, url
[1354] Le Monde, Secluded Kalash tribe fights for survival in Pakistan, 5 November 2025, url; Minority Rights Groupe, Kalash in Pakistan, 15 February 2026, url
[1355] CSOH, Systematic persecution of religious minorities in Pakistan, 17 August 2025, url, p. 1
[1356] Dawn, KP's cabinet committee on legislation approves 'historic' Kalash marriage bill, 31 August 2025, url; Pamir Times, KP Cabinet Approves "Historic" Kalash Marriage Bill Recognizing Indigenous Family Law, 12 February 2026, url; Minority Rights Groupe, Kalash in Pakistan, 15 February 2026, url
[1357] Voice.pk Net, Kalash Marriage Bill set to go for KP cabinet approval, 1 July 2025, url
[1358] Dawn, In a first, KP govt moves to register Kalash marriage, 15 April 2026, url ; Pakistan Today, KP Assembly takes up bill to register Kalash marriages, 15 April 2026, url, APP, Introduction of Kalash Marriage Bill 2026 in KP assembly termed as historic milestone, 14 April 2026, url
[1359] Le Monde, Secluded Kalash tribe fights for survival in Pakistan, 5 November 2025, url
[1360] Le Monde, Secluded Kalash tribe fights for survival in Pakistan, 5 November 2025, url

6.1.2. Religious minorities

Article 2 of the Constitution of Pakistan states 'Islam shall be the State religion of Pakistan'[1361] and 95.9 % of the country's 241 million people identify as Muslims[1362] including 85-90 % Sunni Muslims and 10-15 % Shia Muslims, with the remaining 3.5 % belonging to other religions including Christians, Hindus, Sikhs, Bahais, and Kalash.[1363] Article 20 of the Constitution states that '(a) every citizen shall have the right to profess, practice and propagate his religion; and (b) every religious denomination and every sect thereof shall have the right to establish, maintain and manage its religious institutions'.[1364] In its Article 260, section 3, the constitution defines a non-Muslim as follows: 'non-Muslim means a person who is not a Muslim and includes a person belonging to the Christian, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist or Parsi community, a person of the Qadiani group or the Lahori group (who call themselves "Ahmadis" or by any other name), or a Bahai, and a person belonging to any of the scheduled castes.]'.[1365] Ahmadis who identify as Muslims, were declared as non-Muslims by the State through an amendment to the constitution in 1974.[1366] For further background information on religious minorities, see section 6.2 of the EUAA COI report Pakistan - Country Focus (December 2024).

Despite constitutional guarantees, religious minorities in Pakistan encounter major obstacles that undermine their safety, legal rights, and social integration, and are frequently subjected to hate, violence, discrimination and limited access to opportunities.[1367] In March 2025, Pakistan approved a policy on interfaith harmony[1368] and a strategy on religious tolerance.[1369] The new policy on interfaith harmony describes the challenges faced by the state[1370] noting that despite constitutional guarantees and existing policy frameworks, federal and provincial institutions, law enforcement agencies, and the legal system have not effectively addressed the root causes of rising extremism in the country.[1371] This has particularly affected marginalised groups, including religious minorities and madrassa students, especially during periods of social and religious unrest.[1372] These challenges are further intensified by socio-economic pressures and limited technical and financial capacity.[1373]

In 2025, religious minorities continued to face socio-economic marginalisation, as well as religious and sectarian violence linked to blasphemy laws that disproportionately affected

[1361] Pakistan, The constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, n.d., url, art. 2
[1362] Gallup Pakistan Digital Analytics, Dashboard, religion , information observed on 15 January 2026, url
[1363] CSOH, Systematic persecution of religious minorities in Pakistan, 17 August 2025, url, p. 4
[1364] Pakistan, The constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, n.d., url, art. 20
[1365] Pakistan, The constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, n.d., url, art. 260
[1366] CSOH, Systematic persecution of religious minorities in Pakistan, 17 August 2025, url, p. 4
[1367] LCWU, 2nd International conference on conflict management, 9 February 2025, url, p. 42
[1368] Pakistan, Policy on Interfaith Harmony, Approved by the Federal Cabinet vide case No. 76/07/2025, 12 March 2025, url
[1369] Pakistan, Strategy of religious tolerance, approved by the Federal Cabinet vide case No. 76/07/2025, 12 March 2025, url
[1370] Pakistan, Strategy of religious tolerance, approved by the Federal Cabinet vide case No. 76/07/2025, 12 March 2025, url
[1371] Pakistan, Policy on Interfaith Harmony, Approved by the Federal Cabinet vide case No. 76/07/2025, 12 March 2025, url, p. 3
[1372] Pakistan, Policy on Interfaith Harmony, Approved by the Federal Cabinet vide case No. 76/07/2025, 12 March 2025, url, p. 3
[1373] Pakistan, Policy on Interfaith Harmony, Approved by the Federal Cabinet vide case No. 76/07/2025, 12 March 2025, url, p. 3

these communities.[1374] Sectarian violence persisted in 2024 and 2025[1375] with a report counting 487 individuals killed due to sectarian violence between 2021 and 2024.[1376] Meanwhile, Pakistan has experienced a noted rise in Sunni radicalisation under the leadership of the Army Chief Asim Munir, which led to growing violence against religious minorities including the Ahmadis and Shia Muslims (particularly Hazara Shia).[1377] For more information, see section (d) Shia Muslims.

(a) Hindus

Hindus in Pakistan (also known as Hindu Jati), number approximately 4 million in the country, representing 1.7 % of the total population, and reside primarily in Sindh province, followed by much smaller concentrations in Balochistan, Punjab, Islamabad, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.[1378] For further background information on Hindus, see section 6.2.1 of the EUAA COI report Pakistan - Country Focus (December 2024).

Hindus are perceived as *kafirs* (infidels) in Pakistan[1379] and the term Hindu is often used as an insult in political discourse, everyday interactions, and school settings.[1380] In Pakistan, Hindus face land seizures, economic and social exclusion, online hate speech and incitement to violence, allegation of blasphemy, digital extortion, threats, and harassment against Hindu activists.[1381] Hindus are frequently prevented from exercising their funeral rites in the country.[1382]

An NGO reported that Hindus, particularly Sindhi Hindus, face kidnappings for ransom, violent attacks, blasphemy accusations, systematic discrimination,[1383] and forced conversions to Islam,[1384] disputes over land or tenancy, bonded labour and local power dynamics, increasing targeted attacks by Islamist groups, and rumours to incite mobs against them[1385] without effective safeguard from the government.[1386]

According to an April 2025 report by the Centre for Social Justice, in 2024, 32 Hindu males were accused of blasphemy, and 47 Hindu girls and women were forcibly converted to Islam

[1374] HRW, Pakistan, Events of 2025, 5 February 2026, url
[1375] PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2025, Vol. 18, No. 1, January 2026, url, p. 18
[1376] CRSS, Annual Security Report 2024, 30 December 2024, url
[1377] IANS, Pakistan witnesses sharp rise in violence against minorities under Asim Munir: report, 11 March 2026, url
[1378] Gallup Pakistan Digital Analytics, Dashboard, religion, information observed on 15 January 2026, url
[1379] Behal M, Hindus Escape Pakistan's Persecution, Only to Hit India's Bureaucratic Walls, the Revealer, 4 September 2025, url
[1380] CSOH, Hindus in Pakistan Face Rising Online Hate and Disinformation, 14 February 2025, url
[1381] CSOH, Hindus in Pakistan Face Rising Online Hate and Disinformation, 14 February 2025, url
[1382] Minority Rights Group, "Denial of funeral rights has been part of this phenomenon of exclusion and marginalisation in South Asia" MRG and the South Asia Collective make a Statement at the UN Human Rights Council, 11 March 2026, url
[1383] UN GA, HRC, Written statement* submitted by Stichting Global Human Rights Defence, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status, Exodus of Sindhi Hindus from Sindh, Pakistan, A/HRC/59/NGO/253, 13 June 2025, url
[1384] CSOH, Ethnic and Religious Minorities in Pakistan Face Systemic Violence, 21 November 2024, url
[1385] Khabar Hub, Targeted violent attacks on Hindus in Pakistan continue amid systemic state impunity, 22 January 2026, url
[1386] CSOH, Ethnic and Religious Minorities in Pakistan Face Systemic Violence, 21 November 2024, url

and 6 abducted,[1387] mainly by Muslim captors.[1388] For more information see sections (a) Conversion, 5.4. Blasphemy law and (d) Individuals accused of blasphemy.

In an article published in September 2025, it is reported that in Pakistan, Hindu women and girls are reportedly picked up from the streets by armed groups, sometimes in daylight, harassed or abducted on their way to school, and in some cases forcibly married to Muslim men, renamed and converted to Islam.[1389] An NGO suggested that these incidents contributed to an exodus of Hindus[1390] to India that reportedly reached over 500 000 people by August 2024, according to the latest data available.[1391] For information on cases of forced conversion of Hindus in Pakistan, see section Individuals perceived as transgressing religious and moral codes, (a) Conversion.

(b) Sikhs

The Sikh population in Pakistan is estimated at approximately 16 000 persons, with the majority living in KP, followed by Sindh, Balochistan, Punjab, and Islamabad.[1392] For further background information on Sikhs, see section 6.2.1 of the EUAA COI report Pakistan - Country Focus (December 2024).

An NGO reports that Sikhs in Pakistan, particularly in KP, face increasing targeted violence that has led to major displacement over the past decade, with about 30 Sikh politicians, activists, and businessmen killed since 2013, including three in 2024, without adequate state safeguards for the community.[1393] In addition, Sikhs often face restrictions in accessing their funerary rituals.[1394]

As of April 2025, the Indian government raised concerns over reports indicating the targeting of Sikhs in Pakistan, including intimidation, forced marriages, forced conversions, and vandalism of places of worship,[1395] while a 2024 article by The Guardian reported that the Indian authorities allegedly carried out 'up to 20 assassinations since 2020' in Pakistan, including Sikh figures.[1396] Over the same period, the Centre for Social Justice in Pakistan

[1387] CSJ, Human Rights Observer 2025, 16 April 2025, url, pp. 1 and 13
[1388] Pakistan, NCHR, Drivers of forced conversion through marriage in Pakistan, 12 September 2025, url; CSOH, Systematic persecution of religious minorities in Pakistan, 17 August 2025, url, p. 7
[1389] Behal M, Hindus Escape Pakistan's Persecution, Only to Hit India's Bureaucratic Walls, the Revealer, 4 September 2025, url
[1390] UN GA, HRC, Written statement* submitted by Stichting Global Human Rights Defence, a non-governmental organisation in special consultative status, Exodus of Sindhi Hindus from Sindh, Pakistan, A/HRC/59/NGO/253, 13 June 2025, url; Behal M, Hindus Escape Pakistan's Persecution, Only to Hit India's Bureaucratic Walls, the Revealer, 4 September 2025, url
[1391] Pew Research Center, 6. Hindu migrants around the world, 19 August 2024, url
[1392] Gallup Pakistan Digital Analytics, Dashboard, religion, information observed on 15 January 2026, url
[1393] UN HRC, Written statement* submitted by Réveil communautaire d'assistance aux victimes, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status , Pakistan's Systematic Failure to Protect Minorities, A/HRC/58/NGO/44, 28 February 2025, url
[1394] Minority Rights Group, "Denial of funeral rights has been part of this phenomenon of exclusion and marginalisation in South Asia" MRG and the South Asia Collective make a Statement at the UN Human Rights Council, 11 March 2026, url
[1395] India, Ministry of External Affairs, media centre, questions no 3754 persecution of Sikh community in Pakistan and Afghanistan, 3 April 2025, url
[1396] Guardian (The), Indian government ordered killings in Pakistan, intelligence officials claim, 4 April 2024, url

reported two cases of abduction and forced conversion of Sikh girls in the country.[1397] On 20 March 2026, a media report indicated that the husband of a Punjabi Sikh woman who had travelled to Pakistan as part of a pilgrimage filed a complaint before the Lahore High Court alleging that she had been forcibly converted to Islam and subjected to rape and coerced marriage. Her subsequent appearances in viral videos, in which she expressed differing attitudes including remarks critical of the Sikh community, raised concerns that she may have been acting under pressure or duress.[1398]

(c) Christians

Christians in Pakistan are estimated at approximately 3 million people, the majority living in Punjab and Islamabad, with smaller concentrations in Sindh and smaller proportions in Balochistan and KP.[1399] For background information on Christians, see section 6.2.2 of the EUAA COI report Pakistan - Country Focus (December 2024).

According to a report by Réveil communautaire d'assistance aux victimes, an NGO in special consultative status at the Human Rights Council, Christians in Pakistan face intimidation, violence, and socio-economic marginalisation in the country, including ongoing threats from perpetrators released on bail, forced conversions and forced marriages, sexual violence, while state authorities repeatedly failed to provide protection or hold perpetrators accountable.[1400] Minority Rights Group reported that Christians are frequently prevented from performing their funeral rites.[1401]

Blasphemy accusations against Christians in Pakistan have long incited mob violence and forced entire communities to flee their homes, often resulting in the seizure of their property, while weak judicial processes, lack of proper land records, and limited rule of law further expose religious minorities to intimidation, forced evictions, and land grabbing.[1402] According to the April 2025 report by the Centre for Social Justice, in 2024, 20 Christians (15 males and 5 females) were accused, imprisoned, or killed for blasphemy, and 30 Christian girls and women were abducted and forcibly converted to Islam.[1403] For more information, see sections (a) Conversion, 5.4. Blasphemy law and (d) Individuals accused of blasphemy.

According to the latest data published in April 2025 by the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ), a total of 344 individuals were accused of blasphemy in Pakistan, including 20 Christians.[1404] On 3 March 2026, a Christian worker was allegedly tortured to death in Punjab province by his

[1397] CSJ, Human Rights Observer 2025, 16 April 2025, url, p. 15
[1398] Tribune (The), Why should Sikhs visit Nankana Sahib in Pakistan? Punjabi woman Sarabjit Kaur sparks controversy over alleged remarks in viral video, 20 March 2026, url
[1399] Gallup Pakistan Digital Analytics, Dashboard, religion, information observed on 15 January 2026, url
[1400] UN HRC, Written statement* submitted by Réveil communautaire d'assistance aux victimes, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status , Pakistan's Systematic Failure to Protect Minorities, A/HRC/58/NGO/44, 28 February 2025, url
[1401] Minority Rights Group, "Denial of funeral rights has been part of this phenomenon of exclusion and marginalisation in South Asia" MRG and the South Asia Collective make a Statement at the UN Human Rights Council, 11 March 2026, url
[1402] HRW, "A Conspiracy to Grab the Land" Exploiting Pakistan's Blasphemy Laws for Blackmail and Profit, 9 June 2025, url
[1403] CSJ, Human Rights Observer 2025, 16 April 2025, url, pp. 1 and 13
[1404] CSJ, Human Rights Observer 2025, 16 April 2025, url, pp. 1 and 2

Muslim employer, who reportedly staged the incident as a suicide.[1405] Meanwhile, 25 000 Christian residents in H-9 Rimsha Colony slum, in Islamabad, faced eviction from their homes and shops after the Capital Development Authority (CDA) ordered them to leave.[1406] While some structures were demolished in Allama Iqbal Colony in G-7,[1407] the Christian community continued protesting against the CDA about the operations it launched.[1408]

(d) Shia Muslims

Shia Muslims, who are known as *Ahl-e Teshih*[1409] in Pakistan number an estimated 40 million people in the country, representing approximately 10-15 % of the total population.[1410] A significant proportion of Shia Muslims live in Gilgit-Baltistan, as well as in Sindh, particularly in Karachi, Sanghar, Nawabshah and Hyderabad.[1411] Shia communities are also present across Punjab, including Lahore, and in Balochistan, where they reside in Sanjawi, Mach, Zhob, Harnai, Loralai, and Dukki. In KP, Shia Muslims live in Peshawar, Hangu, Kohat, Dera Ismail Khan,[1412] and the Kurram district, including Parachinar, which lies along the Pakistan and Afghanistan border. [1413]

According to a statement presented in February 2025 by 'ECO-FAWN' (Environment Conservation Organization – Foundation for Afforestation Wild Animals and Nature), an NGO in special consultative status to the UN Human Rights Council (UN HRC), Pakistan has a long history of violent and targeted attacks against Shia Muslims, forcing Shia communities to live in constant fear for their safety, while the state has failed to protect their basic rights.[1414] In addition, the Center for the Study of Organised Hate (CSOH) states that over 4 000 Shias have been killed by sectarian violence in the past 20 years alone.[1415] For information on anti-Shia groups, see sections 3.2.10. Sipah-e Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) and 3.2.11. Lashkar-e Jhangvi (LeJ).

Shia Pashtuns, particularly in Kurram District (Parachinar) have faced sectarian violence from Sunni extremist elements.[1416] In its statement to the UN HRC, ECO-FAWN reported that Shia civilians in Parachinar have been particularly exposed to sectarian violence including with

[1405] Voice.pk Net, Murder case filed against Christian labourer's employers after community protest, 5 March 2026, url; IANS, Christian worker tortured to death in Pakistan amid escalating violence against minorities, 7 March 2026, url; Chaudhry K, Two Muslims detained in Pakistan for killing Christian 'bonded laborer', UCA News, 9 March 2026, url
[1406] Prime Asia News, Islamabad: 25,000 Christian residents threatened with eviction, 13 March 2026, url
[1407] Dawn, Slum dwellers protest against expected CDA anti-encroachment operations, 16 March 2026, url
[1408] Dawn, Slum dwellers protest against expected CDA anti-encroachment operations, 16 March 2026, url; Friday Times, Christian Families In Islamabad Slums Protest CDA Eviction, Cite Supreme Court Stay, 13 March 2026, url
[1409] Pakistan, The Pakistan Code, Ministry of Law and Justice, The Muslim Family Laws Ordinance, 1961, n.d., url
[1410] CSOH, Systematic persecution of religious minorities in Pakistan, 17 August 2025, url, p. 4; DW, Pakistan: IS affiliate group claims Islamabad mosque bombing, 7 February 2026, url
[1411] Eurasia, Pakistan: Targeting Shias – Analysis, 19 September 2023, url
[1412] Eurasia, Pakistan: Targeting Shias – Analysis, 19 September 2023, url
[1413] UNGA, HRC, Written statement submitted by Alulbayt Foundation, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status, A/HRC/58/NGO/167, 3 February 2025, url, p. 2
[1414] UNGA, HRC, Written statement submitted by "ECO-FAWN" (Environment Conservation Organization – Foundation for Afforestation Wild Animals and Nature), a non-governmental organization in special consultative status, A/HRC/58/NGO/128, 26 January 2025, url, p. 2
[1415] CSOH, Pakistan's Betrayal of Its Shia Muslim Community, 16 December 2024, url
[1416] International organisation working on Pakistan, email communication with EUAA, 30 March 2026

methods such as suicide bombings, roadside explosions, targeted shootings, and improvised explosive devices in busy marketplaces.[1417]

On 21 November 2024, gunmen reportedly attacked a Shia Muslim convoy in Kurram district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province[1418] killing 52 people, mostly Shia Muslims.[1419] The incident triggered clashes between Shia and Muslims that left 80 death.[1420] The violence ended with a ceasefire between Shia and Sunni Muslims on 24 November 2024.[1421] News media also reported that, on 6 February 2026, a suicide bomber killed 31 people and injured 169 people in a Shia Mosque in Islamabad.[1422] The attack was claimed by the ISKP[1423] accusing Shia Muslims of being 'infidels'.[1424]

News reports stated that, following the killing of Iran's Supreme leader, Ayatullah Ali Khamenei, by a US-Israel attack in early March 2026, the Pakistani Shia community widely protested.[1425] On 19 March 2026, Pakistan's Army Chief, General Asim Munir, was alleged to have said that those expressing sympathy for Iran should 'leave Pakistan and live in Iran.'[1426] The remarks reportedly contributed to sectarian tensions, [1427] with several Shia leaders stating that they felt insulted by General Munir's remarks.[1428]

(e) Ahmadis

Ahmadis, also referred to as Qadiani in Pakistan,[1429] identify as Muslims[1430] and they number around 165 000 people, i.e. about 0.1 % of the population according to the 2023 population census.[1431] Other sources indicate that the Ahmadi population in Pakistan can be around 500 000[1432] or 600 000 people.[1433] Sources indicated that Ahmadis hide their religious identity which made the official count of their community difficult.[1434] Ahmadis reside mainly in Punjab,

[1417] UNGA, HRC, Written statement submitted by Alulbayt Foundation, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status, A/HRC/58/NGO/167, 3 February 2025, url, p. 2
[1418] RFE/RL, What is behind the deadly sectarian violence in Pakistan?, 26 November 2024, url
[1419] PICSS, Pakistan's Comprehensive National Security Profile 2024, 2 January 2025, url, p. 116; AP, Pakistan launches security operation in the northwest after surge in violence and sectarian strife, 20 January 2025, url
[1420] RFE/RL, What is behind the deadly sectarian violence in Pakistan?, 26 November 2024, url
[1421] RFE/RL, Pakistan says cease-fire deal reached among parties in Northwest, 24 November 2024, url
[1422] Dawn, At least 31 killed, 169 injured in suicide bombing at Islamabad imambargah, 6 February 2026, url; UN News, Pakistan: Guterres condemns deadly suicide bombing at Islamabad mosque, 6 February 2026, url
[1423] Le Monde, Islamic State claims responsibility for attack on Shiite mosque that killed at least 31 in Pakistan, 7 February 2026, url; DW, Pakistan: IS affiliate group claims Islamabad mosque bombing, 7 February 2026, url
[1424] DW, Pakistan: IS affiliate group claims Islamabad mosque bombing, 7 February 2026, url
[1425] MEE, At least 23 protesters killed in Pakistan after killing of Iran's Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, 2 March 2026, url; Al Jazeera, Anger on Pakistan streets, 20 dead, after US-Israel strike kills Khamenei, 2 March 2026, url
[1426] Kashmir Observer, Army Chief's Remarks Spark Shia Outrage in Pakistan, 21 March 2026, url; India Today, Shias can go to Iran: Pak clerics furious over Army Chief Munir's warning, 23 March 2026, url
[1427] ANI, Pakistan army faces sharp criticism over sectarian remarks and PoGB policies, 22 March 2026, url
[1428] News18, 'Go To Iran': Asim Munir's Iftar Shia Insult Sparks Sectarian Storm In Pakistan | Exclusive Details, 20 March 2026, url
[1429] Gallup Pakistan Digital Analytics, Dashboard, religion, information observed on 15 January 2026, url
[1430] AP, Gunmen attack house of worship of minority sect in Pakistan, wounding 6 worshippers, 10 October 2025, url
[1431] Gallup Pakistan Digital Analytics, Dashboard, religion, information observed on 15 January 2026, url
[1432] AI, Pakistan: Authorities must end escalating attacks on minority Ahmadiyya community, 21 June 2024, url
[1433] MRG, Ahmaddiyas in Pakistan, 17 August 2022, url
[1434] Global Order, Religious Minorities in Pakistan: A Vicious Cycle of Violence and Suppression, 8 May 2023, url; VOA News, Pakistan's Religious Minorities Say They Were Undercounted in Census, 1 July 2021, url

primarily in Rabwah city[1435] with some residing in Islamabad, smaller proportions in Sindh, and few in Balochistan and KP. [1436] Following the partition of India in 1947, the Ahmadi community moved from Qadian (India) to Rabwah (Punjab province of Pakistan).[1437] For further background information, and information on the criminalisation of the Ahmadis under the Penal Code, see sections 5.3 and 6.2.4 of the EUAA COI report Pakistan - Country Focus (December 2024).

Amnesty International reported that violence against Ahmadis has increasingly become routine in the country and often intensifies around religious occasions such as Eid.[1438] According to a June 2025 Human Rights Watch report, groups reportedly connected to local religious and political actors have regularly destroyed, sealed, or taken control of Ahmadi places of worship.[1439] According to Amnesty International, Ahmadis 'are forced to hide their religious identity not only because of societal threats but also due to state pressure empowered by hardline religious clerics. Everyday life becomes a struggle. Ahmadis must hide their beliefs to go to school, get jobs, or even get identity documents. Textbooks either ignore or insult them'.[1440] Ahmadis are also excluded from land inheritance from the property of a Muslim relative under Sharia, Muslim personal law, and Article 260(3) of the Constitution.[1441]

For information on laws, rulings related to the Ahmadi places of worship, and reported attacks and destructions prior to 2024, see section 6.2.4 of the EUAA COI report Pakistan - Country Focus (December 2024).

A report by France24 noted that supporters of Tehreek-e Labaik Pakistan (TLP) often monitor Ahmadi places of worship and file police complaints accusing them of posing as Muslims and offering Islamic style prayers, which is illegal for Ahmadis in Pakistan.[1442]

Minority Rights Group reported that Ahmadi Muslims are often barred from using public graveyards in the country, and authorities frequently do not intervene or hold perpetrators accountable when mob violence disrupts funerals or damages graves.[1443] According to the Ahmadiyya Muslim community, 319 Ahmadi gravestones were damaged in 21 separate incidents in Pakistan in 2024, while an estimated 269 Ahmadi Muslim graves were desecrated in 11 separate attacks across the country in 2025,[1444] and over 22 Ahmadi places of worship were desecrated in the country in 2024.[1445] On 26 November 2024, an Ahmadi place of

[1435] MRG, Ahmaddiyas in Pakistan, 17 August 2022, url
[1436] Gallup Pakistan Digital Analytics, Dashboard, religion, information observed on 15 January 2026, url
[1437] Britannica, Ahmadiyya, 18 December 2025, url
[1438] AI, Pakistan: End cyclical harassment and persecution of minority Ahmadiyya community, 5 June 2025, url
[1439] HRW, "A Conspiracy to Grab the Land" Exploiting Pakistan's Blasphemy Laws for Blackmail and Profit, 9 June 2025, url
[1440] AI, Forgotten Constitution and Founder, 16 June 2025, url
[1441] Dawn, Non-Muslim can't inherit from Muslim relative: LHC, 28 December 2024, url
[1442] France 24, Man from Pakistan's persecuted religious minority lynched by Karachi mob, 18 April 2025, url
[1443] Minority Rights Group, "Denial of funeral rights has been part of this phenomenon of exclusion and marginalisation in South Asia" MRG and the South Asia Collective make a Statement at the UN Human Rights Council, 11 March 2026, url
[1444] Stop The Persecution, 90 Ahmadi Muslim graves desecrated in Khushab, Pakistan, 16 May 2026, url
[1445] Friday Times, Ahmadiyya Place Of Worship In Sialkot Demolished Amid Ongoing Persecution, 21 January 2025, url

worship was attacked and destroyed by extremists in Faisalabad, Punjab province.[1446] On the night of 16 January 2025, authorities reportedly destroyed an Ahmadi worship place in Daska Kalan, District Sialkot, Punjab province.[1447] On 10 May 2025, over 90 Ahmadi gravestones were desecrated in Rhoda, Khushab district, Punjab province.[1448] On 29 July 2025, a 70-year-old Ahmadi place of worship was destroyed in Pakistan.[1449] On 14 August 2025, a mob of over 300 people assaulted and vandalised two Ahmadi places of worship in Faisalabad, Punjab province.[1450] On 4 September 2025, two Ahmadi places of worship were demolished in Punjab province.[1451] On 25 September 2025, religious radicals attacked Ahmadi houses and shops in Sialkot following a burial.[1452] On 29 September 2025, police registered FIRs against multiple suspects for allegedly vandalising property and attacking members of the Ahmadi community in Sialkot.[1453] On 8 October 2025, police reportedly demolished an Ahmadi place of worship in Punjab province.[1454]

Between 1984 and 2025, 285 Ahmadis have been killed in Pakistan as stated by a local human rights advocacy organisation.[1455] According to the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan report of 19 August 2025, in a series of targeted attacks across Rawalpindi, Naukot, Karachi, Kasur, and Sargodha between December 2024 and May 2025, several Ahmadis were killed in incidents marked by religious hostility, mob violence, and targeted shootings.[1456] Prior to this incident, on 18 April 2025, a violent mob killed a man outside an Ahmadi place of worship in Karachi following Friday prayers.[1457] In late May 2025, religious groups reportedly destroyed a cold storage facility after discovering that the body of an Ahmadi woman was being kept there.[1458]

Several sources reported that on 16 May 2025, a famous Ahmadi doctor was shot dead at his hospital workplace in Sargodha (Punjab province).[1459] On 11 July 2025, Ahmadi Muslim

[1446] IHRC Committee, PAKISTAN: Continuing desecration of Ahmadi Mosques by Police and Extremists, 29 November 2024, url
[1447] Friday Times, Ahmadiyya Place Of Worship In Sialkot Demolished Amid Ongoing Persecution, 21 January 2025, url; Dawn, Ahmadi worship place in Sialkot built by ex-FM Zafarullah Khan razed, 18 January 2025, url
[1448] Stop The Persecution, 90 Ahmadi Muslim graves desecrated in Khushab, Pakistan, 16 May 2026, url; CSW, Doctor shot dead and gravestones desecrated amid continued targeting of Ahmadiyya community, 19 May 2025, url
[1449] Hindu (The), 70 year old Ahmadi community worship place demolished in Pakistan, available by subscription at, 29 July 2025, url
[1450] Dawn, 300 booked, 25 held for attacks on Ahmadi worship places in Faisalabad, 16 August 2025, url
[1451] Week (The), Two places of worship of minority Ahmadis demolished in Pakistan's Punjab, 4 September 2025, url
[1452] Hindu (The), religious extremists attacked houses and shops of Ahmadis over burial of woman in Pakistan, available by subscription at, 25 September 2025, url
[1453] Dawn, Multiple suspects booked for allegedly vandalising properties of, attacking members of Ahmadi community in Sialkot, 29 September 2025, url
[1454] DH, Police demolish nearly 50 year old Ahmadi worship place in Pakistan's Punjab, 8 October 2025, url
[1455] Voice.pk Net, Relentless Persecution: Why every Friday has become a day of fear for Pakistan's Ahmadiyya community, 17 May 2025, url
[1456] HRCP, Streets of fear, freedom of religion or belief in 2024/25, 19 August 2025, url, pp. 7 and 8; France 24, Man from Pakistan's persecuted religious minority lynched by Karachi mob, 18 April 2025, url; AI, Pakistan: End cyclical harassment and persecution of minority Ahmadiyya community, 5 June 2025, url
[1456] France 24, Man from Pakistan's persecuted religious minority lynched by Karachi mob, 18 April 2025, url
[1457] Dawn, Ahmadi man lynched as TLP supporters storm worship place in Karachi's Saddar: police, 18 April 2025, url
[1458] AI, Pakistan: End cyclical harassment and persecution of minority Ahmadiyya community, 5 June 2025, url
[1459] IANS, Pakistan witnesses sharp rise in violence against minorities under Asim Munir: report, 11 March 2026, url; CSW, Doctor shot dead and gravestones desecrated amid continued targeting of Ahmadiyya community, 19 May 2025, url; Voice.pk Net, Leading doctor killed: For Ahmadis, Friday can spell murder, 16 May 2025, url

worshippers were targeted in coordinated attacks by TLP mobs during Friday prayers in Sialkot and Lahore (Punjab province), where one mosque was attacked, another sealed, and worshippers were detained.[1460] On 10 October 2025, a gunman opened fire on worshippers during Friday prayers at the Bait-ul-Mahdi Mosque, part of the Ahmadi Muslim Community's headquarters in Rabwah (officially Chenab Nagar), Punjab province, seriously injuring several people.[1461] Concentration of Ahmadis residing in Rabwah expose the community to potential targets by certain political religious groups.[1462]

As of 25 December 2025, a member of the Ahmadi community in Chenab Nagar (Chiniot district, Punjab province) was sentenced to life imprisonment and a concurrent three-year term for distributing allegedly altered Urdu translations of the Quran, following a First Information Report (FIR) and police investigation.[1463]

(f) Zikris

The Zikris are a Muslim community with distinctive beliefs and religious practices, [1464] residing mainly in southern Balochistan including in Makran coastal region - Turbat, Panjgur, and Gwadar.[1465] They follow Imam Mahdi (the awaited redeemer in Islamic eschatology) and their religious practices are centred on *zikr* (the remembrance of God), with *Zikirkhana* regarded as their place of worship[1466] and Koh-e Murad in Turbat as their holiest site and serving as the destination for an annual pilgrimage attended by thousands of followers.[1467] Zikri religious life includes collective nighttime prayers performed while sitting on the floor, passed down through generations, and has traditionally involved women leading devotional gatherings where participants recite and sing prayers together.[1468] For further background information on Zikris, see section 6.2.5 of the EUAA COI report Pakistan - Country Focus (December 2024).

Zikris have increasingly been labelled as *kafirs* (infidels), and in recent decades, Zikris in Balochistan, particularly in the Makran region, have faced rising hostility from extremist groups, including threats, *fatwas*, attacks on prayer sites, and restrictions on public religious expression, and are treated as second-class citizens or rebels.[1469] In addition, Zikris continued to be subjected to attacks by ISKP who consider them apostates.[1470]

[1460] IHRC, Targeted on Fridays: Genocidal Intimidation, Mosque Sealing, and Religious Apartheid Against Ahmadiyya Muslims Intensify in Pakistan, 12 July 2025, url
[1461] Rana S, Pakistan, Rabwah under fire – A wake-up call for international human rights protection, ISHR, 1 December 2025, url; Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Press release, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad Prays for Victims Following Terror Attack on Ahmadiyya Mosque In Rabwah, Pakistan, 10 October 2025, url; Friday Times (The), Terrorist Attacks Ahmadi Worship Place In Rabwah, Six Injured, 10 October 2025, url
[1462] Expert on Ahmadis in Pakistan, email communication with the EUAA, 1 April 2026
[1463] Dawn, Ahmadi sentenced to life term in blasphemy case, 25 December 2025, url
[1464] Contrapuntal (The), The mother's vigil for disappeared son in Balochistan, 2 February 2026, url
[1465] Taaza Khabar, Is Pakistan un-Islamic? What can a nation that makes life miserable for its own Muslims offer Kashmir?, 3 May 2025, url
[1466] WWF, Study on knowledge, attitude & practices of fisherfolk communities about fisheries and mangrove resources, 2005, n.d., url, p. 5
[1467] Contrapuntal (The), The mother's vigil for disappeared son in Balochistan, 2 February 2026, url
[1468] GroundXero, The Baloch women: from tradition to resistance, 6 April 2025, url
[1469] Taaza Khabar, Is Pakistan un-Islamic? What can a nation that makes life miserable for its own Muslims offer Kashmir?, 3 May 2025, url
[1470] Kinra M, ISKP's Expanding War In Balochistan Targets Nationalists Amid Alleged Intelligence Ties – OpEd, 4 October 2025, url

6.1.3. Individuals perceived as transgressing religious and moral codes

(a) Conversion

Conversion in Pakistan is mainly reported in the context of forced conversion to Islam of girls and women, as well as men from religious minorities, often under threat of death.[1471] This differs from apostasy, which involves abandoning or renouncing one's faith in Islam.[1472] For more information, see section (b) Apostasy.

In Pakistan, women and girls from religious minority groups are vulnerable to forced conversion, with the phenomenon primarily affecting Hindu and Christian women and girls, who are forced to convert through marriage by Muslim captors.[1473] They also face threats of violence, and social pressure in this context.[1474] Factors such as poverty, limited access to education, low socio-economic status, and cultural stigma are additional barriers for their access to effective protection, including legal protection, while fear of retaliation further prevents families and communities from speaking out.[1475] According to Zia Ur Rehman, a Pakistan-based journalist, in an interview with the EUAA on 18 March 2026, 'Hindus and Christians who convert to Islam for various social, economic, or personal reasons but later attempt to return to their previous faith may face significant social pressure, threats, or legal complications, for instance, in two cases involving Christians in Karachi who fled from Punjab due to fear and insecurity and are now living discreetly in Karachi's densely populated Christian neighbourhoods'.[1476] Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted within the time constraints of drafting this report.

The National Commission for Human Rights in Pakistan describes eight types of conversions in Pakistan, including wilful (when an individual freely chooses to convert to another religion), for shelter (when vulnerable individuals, particularly women and girls, seek protection from poverty, violence, or other difficult circumstances and convert as a means of survival), induced (when individuals are persuaded to convert through promises of financial stability, marriage, or other incentives), fraudulent (when conversion occurs through deception or false promises about the nature of marriage or conversion), out of greed (when perpetrators seek material gain such as access to the individual's property, inheritance, or dowry), exploitative (when individuals' vulnerabilities such as poverty, lack of education, or social marginalisation are used to pressure them into conversion), under threat or duress (when physical or emotional threats, including harm to the individual or their family, compel conversion), and forceful (when conversion occurs through overt physical or psychological coercion, violence, or severe intimidation).[1477]

[1471] CSOH, Systematic persecution of religious minorities in Pakistan, 17 August 2025, url, p. 2
[1472] Mian Yasim M, Apostasy in Islamic Jurisprudence, available at LEAP, 15 January 2025, url
[1473] Pakistan, NCHR, Drivers of forced conversion through marriage in Pakistan, 12 September 2025, url; CSOH, Systematic persecution of religious minorities in Pakistan, 17 August 2025, url, p. 7
[1474] CSOH, Systematic persecution of religious minorities in Pakistan, 17 August 2025, url, p. 5-6
[1475] CSOH, Systematic persecution of religious minorities in Pakistan, 17 August 2025, url, p. 5-6
[1476] Rehman Z, Pakistan based journalist, email communication with EUAA, 18 March 2026
[1477] NCHR, Drivers of forced conversion through marriage in Pakistan, 12 September 2025, url, pp. 18-19

Men from religious minority communities are also pressured to convert to Islam, including threats of death or coercion as well as inducements such as debt forgiveness, land donations, employment opportunities and societal acceptance. In some cases, individuals are threatened with death if they refuse conversion.[1478] In some interpretations of Islam, the recitation of the *shahada* (Kalima in Urdu or declaration of faith) by a non-Muslim is considered sufficient to establish conversion to Islam, regardless of personal belief or coercive circumstances, and once an individual is regarded as Muslim under this view, any subsequent return to their original faith can be treated as apostasy.[1479] For more information, see section (b) Apostasy.

In 2024 and 2025, several non-Muslim minor girls, mainly Hindus in Sindh, went missing and were reportedly subjected to forced conversion, with some returning days later after being forcibly married to Muslim men.[1480] When conversion to Islam by a non-Muslim is carried out in a court, a conversion certificate for marriage is issued by the religious authority as a proof of new faith.[1481]

According to Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) data published in April 2025, 83 cases of abduction were recorded in Pakistan in 2024, including 52 Hindus (63 %) and 31 Christians (37 %). Of these, 68 cases involved abduction combined with forced conversion, while 15 involved abductions.[1482] 49 victims (59 %) were between 14 and 18 years, 12 (15 %) were below 14 years, 12 (14 %) were above 18 years, 8 (10 %) were of unknown age.[1483]

Between January and June 2025, several cases of forced conversion of minors from minority groups were reported across Pakistan including Balochistan,[1484] KP[1485] Punjab,[1486] and in Sindh where three Hindu sisters and their male cousin, including two minors, were forcibly converted to Islam[1487] and days later a video appeared online showing them reciting Islamic prayers under new names.[1488] In January and February 2026, at least 23 cases of abduction, forced conversion, or forced marriage of minority group girls were documented across Pakistan, including both Christian and Hindu victims.[1489] On 3 February 2026, Pakistan's Federal Constitutional Court in Lahore (capital of Punjab province) granted custody of a 13-year-old Christian girl, who was allegedly abducted on 29 July 2025 and forcefully converted and

[1478] CSOH, Systematic persecution of religious minorities in Pakistan, 17 August 2025, url, p. 7
[1479] CDI, Muslim employer forcibly converts Christian boy in Pakistan, 29 July 2025, url
[1480] HRCP, Streets of fear, freedom of religion or belief in 2024/25, 19 August 2025, url, p. 10
[1481] Court Marriage Karachi, Religious conversion process under Pakistani law for court marriage, 8 January 2026, url
[1482] CSJ, Human Rights Observer 2025, 16 April 2025, url, p. 14
[1483] CSJ, Human Rights Observer 2025, 16 April 2025, url, p. 14
[1484] HRCP, Streets of fear, freedom of religion or belief in 2024/25, 19 August 2025, url, p. 11
[1485] UCA News, Hindu man shot dead in Pakistan for refusing Islam, 1 April 2025, url; Hindu Vishwa, Hindu in Pakistan facing pressure to convert to Islam shot death, 3 April 2025, url
[1486] ACN International, Young Christan brutally attacked in Pakistan, 24 March 2025, url
[1487] Express Tribune (The), Conversion of Hindu minors triggers community uproar, 20 June 2025, url
[1488] IANS, Minority girls face abduction, forced conversion in Pakistan, 24 August 2025, url
[1489] Voicepk.net Net, Dire state of forced conversions, abductions of girls from religious minorities, 9 March 2026, url

married, to a 30-year-old Muslim man, rejecting her parents' age documentation and declaring the marriage valid.[1490]

(b) Apostasy

The act of abandoning or renouncing one's faith in Islam is referred to as apostasy[1491] (also known as *Ridda* in Arabic), and the term *murtad* refers to a Muslim who allegedly left Islam.[1492]

Apostasy is widely viewed in Pakistan through a strong religious and social lens, in a country where Islam plays a central role in national identity and public morality, and is often perceived by conservative religious segments as a serious moral and communal transgression rather than merely a matter of personal belief.[1493] Apostasy is punishable by death in most schools of Islamic jurisprudence.[1494] While apostasy is not mentioned in the Pakistani Penal Code,[1495] it 'can lead to prosecution under Pakistan's blasphemy laws,'[1496] which addresses acts deemed offensive to religious sentiments and carries penalties of up to 10 years of imprisonment.[1497] Apostasy can be also punished by death under *hadd* crimes according to the Sharia law.[1498] According to the Enforcement of the Sharia Act of 1991, Sharia is the supreme law of Pakistan, and all laws of the country must be interpreted in the light of Sharia.[1499] For information on Blasphemy, see sections 5.4. Blasphemy law and (d) Individuals accused of blasphemy.

(c) Atheism

Atheism, which is known as *ilḥād* in Urdu,[1500] refers to 'the denial of the existence of God', and in classical religious terminology issued by the Darul Ifta of Jamia Farooqia, a seminary in Karachi, categorises an atheist as *mulhid* (denier of faith) or *dahri* (materialist), while individuals who renounce Islam after previously adhering to it are labelled *murtad* (apostates).[1501] These classifications significantly influence both societal attitudes and legal interpretations.[1502]

[1490] Eurasia Review, Pakistan: New law could limit forced marriages of minority girls – OpEd, 19 February 2026, url; AsiaNews, Pakistan's Constitutional Court upholds marriage between Muslim man and 13-year-old Christian girl, 31 March 2026, url
[1491] Mian Yasim M, Apostasy in Islamic Jurisprudence, available at LEAP, 15 January 2025, url; Rehman Z, Pakistan based journalist, email communication with EUAA, 18 March 2026
[1492] Mian Yasim M, Apostasy in Islamic Jurisprudence, available at LEAP, 15 January 2025, url
[1493] Rehman Z, Pakistan based journalist, email communication with EUAA, 18 March 2026
[1494] ADF International, Christians fraudulently 'converted' in attempted enslavement, 5 December 2025, url
[1495] Pakistan, The Pakistan Penal Code, 1860, url, Art. 295; Chaudary K, Pakistan court paves way for official recognition of Chrisitan convert, UCA News, 3 July 2025, url
[1496] Morning Start News, Change in religion on ID card ordered for Chrisitan in Pakistan, 5 August 2025, url
[1497] Pakistan, The Pakistan Penal Code, 1860, url, Art. 295A.
[1498] Britannica, Penal law, 31 January 2026, url
[1499] Pakistan, The Enforcement of Shari'ah Act, 1991, n.d., url, pp. 3-4
[1500] Farooq Bukhari S H, Rising Atheism and Agnosticism among Pakistani Youth Causes and Counter-Narratives from Islamic Theology, Maarif-e Auliya Research Journal, 2 April 2025, url
[1501] Farooqia, کا فر، مرتد، ملحد، زندیق اور منافق میں فرق؟ [What is the difference between a disbeliever, apostate, atheist, heretic, and hypocrite?], information observed on 31 March 2026, url
[1502] Rehman Z, Pakistan based journalist, email communication with EUAA, 30 March 2026

Within the Islamic theological context that is predominant in Pakistan[1503] both constitutionally and ideologically,[1504] the denial of the existence of God constitutes *kufr* (disbelief) when it involves a deliberate and conscious denial (*inkār*) of established theological truths,[1505] and *kufr* is considered as the most serious religious transgression.[1506]

Atheism exists within a highly sensitive and complex framework shaped by theology, law, and deeply rooted social norms,[1507] and the country has seen a growing visibility of scepticism, atheism and agnosticism, particularly among urban, educated youth, most noticeably in universities and digital and social-media spaces where religious taboos are increasingly questioned.[1508]

According to a Gallup International survey released in July 2025, Pakistan ranks first among the top five most religious nations in the world, with 94 % of Pakistanis identified as religious, while only about 1 % described themselves as convinced atheists and 3 % as not religious.[1509]

According to Zia, 'although atheism is not explicitly criminalised under Pakistani statutory law, its expression often intersects with the country's stringent blasphemy laws'.[1510] In practice, statements perceived as denying or challenging core religious beliefs can be prosecuted under these laws, which carry severe penalties, including the death sentence.[1511] A notable example is the 2017 case involving several bloggers who were reportedly abducted and later accused of disseminating blasphemous content online.[1512]

Zia noted that 'socially, atheists in Pakistan often face stigmatisation and are frequently perceived as apostates or as individuals acting against societal and religious values'.[1513] According to Nida Aly, Executive Director of the Asma Jahangir Legal Aid Cell (AGHS), interviewed by EUAA on 7 May 2026, 'Open identification as an atheist is uncommon in the country, and many individuals therefore conceal their atheistic views. Discourse on atheism, whether online or offline, is restricted and may expose individuals to verbal threats or physical violence where such discourse or expression is considered blasphemous, even where no such intent exists.'[1514]

[1503] Rehman Z, Pakistan based journalist, email communication with EUAA, 18 March 2026
[1504] Farooq Bukhari S H, Rising Atheism and Agnosticism among Pakistani Youth Causes and Counter-Narratives from Islamic Theology, Maarif-e Auliya Research Journal, 2 April 2025, url
[1505] Farooq Bukhari S H, Rising Atheism and Agnosticism among Pakistani Youth Causes and Counter-Narratives from Islamic Theology, Maarif-e Auliya Research Journal, 2 April 2025, url
[1506] Hassan A, The truth about TTP and the poison of Takfir, Eurasia Review, 21 May 2025, url
[1507] Rehman Z, Pakistan based journalist, email communication with EUAA, 30 March 2026
[1508] Farooq Bukhari S H, Rising Atheism and Agnosticism among Pakistani Youth Causes and Counter-Narratives from Islamic Theology, Maarif-e Auliya Research Journal, 2 April 2025, url
[1509] Gallup International, End of year survey 2024, 25 July 2025, url, p. 9
[1510] Rehman Z, Pakistan based journalist, email communication with EUAA, 30 March 2026
[1511] Rehman Z, Pakistan based journalist, email communication with EUAA, 30 March 2026
[1512] Dawn, No evidence found against bloggers accused of blasphemy, FIA tells court, 23 December 2017, url
[1513] Rehman Z, Pakistan based journalist, email communication with EUAA, 30 March 2026
[1514] Aly N., Executive Director Asma Jahangir Legal Aid Cell (AGHS), Pakistan, email communication with EUAA, 7 May 2026

While atheism is largely practiced and promoted in digital spaces in Pakistan,[1515] the expansion of cybercrime legislation has further intensified the risks associated with expressing dissenting or non-religious views online. Content shared online, even within private forums, may be deemed blasphemous, making digital expression particularly hazardous. High-profile cases, such as individuals prosecuted for alleged blasphemy on social media, underscore the seriousness with which such matters are treated.[1516] Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted within the time constraints of drafting this report.

(d) Individuals accused of blasphemy

Human Rights Watch points at Pakistan's blasphemy laws as discriminatory, denying equality before the law and enabling violence; the laws have been used for personal vendettas and against minority religious communities, and in the past decade dozens of people were killed in mob violence following blasphemy accusations.[1517] The blasphemy law has allegedly been used to settle personal disputes.[1518] For information on criminalisation of Blasphemy in Pakistan, see section 5.4. Blasphemy law and for further background information on individuals accused of blasphemy, see section 6.3 of the EUAA COI report Pakistan - Country Focus (December 2024).

According to Zia, 'blasphemy laws prescribe severe penalties and accused individuals can, in principle, seek police protection, but in practice state protection is often inconsistent once allegations become public, as law-enforcement officials and judges have at times shown reluctance to handle such cases due to fears of public backlash and security risks.'[1519] Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted within the time constraints of drafting this report.

According to the latest data published in April 2025 by the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ), a total of 344 individuals were accused of blasphemy, the majority of whom were Muslim (242 individuals, 70 %), followed by Ahmadis (49 individuals, 14 %), Hindus (32 individuals, 9 %), and Christians (20 individuals, 6 %).[1520] The source further noted that blasphemy accusations were mostly concentrated in Punjab, which accounted for 213 individuals (62 %), followed by Sindh with 102 individuals (30 %), while significantly fewer cases were reported in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (17 individuals, 5 %), Azad Jammu and Kashmir (8 individuals, 2 %), Gilgit-Baltistan (3 individuals, 1 %), and Balochistan (1 individual, less than 1 %).[1521]

According to the European Centre for Law and Justice (ECLJ) report of 27 February 2026, those accused of blasphemy in Pakistan are sentenced to death by hanging, although the penalty has not been carried out, and individuals accused often spend years on death row. [1522] Zia stated that 'non-state actors frequently take matters into their own hands and mob

[1515] Kamal M, The digital landscape of atheism in Pakistan, ISA forum of sociology, 11 July 2025, url
[1516] Rehman Z, Pakistan based journalist, email communication with EUAA, 30 March 2026
[1517] HRW, "A conspiracy to grab the land", 9 June 2025, url
[1518] AP, Pakistani court sentences 4 people to death for blasphemy, 25 January 2025, url
[1519] Rehman Z, Pakistan based journalist, email communication with EUAA, 30 March 2026
[1520] CSJ, Human Rights Observer 2025, 16 April 2025, url, pp. 1 and 2
[1521] CSJ, Human Rights Observer 2025, 16 April 2025, url, pp. 1 and 2
[1522] ECLJ, input – the death penalty from the perspective of the prohibition against torture and other forms of ill-treatment and the protection of human dignity, 27 February 2026, url, p. 4

violence linked to blasphemy accusations has occurred repeatedly.'[1523] Meanwhile, authorities fail to prevent mob violence and intimidation by fundamentalist individuals and organisations targeting the accused, their families, and communities, including through courtroom pressure on judges, with lawyers often involved and reportedly paid by these groups, contributing to rare acquittals at trial level.[1524] Zia indicated that 'accused individuals and their families often experience harassment, displacement, or economic boycotts.'[1525]

In this context of violence and mobilisation around blasphemy allegations, Zia identified two types of *fatwas* (non-binding religious opinion issued by an Islamic scholar) in Pakistan: 'mobilising' *fatwas*, used to rally communities around social or political objectives, and 'punitive' *fatwas*, which endorse punishment or violence.[1526] Zia noted that 'such pronouncements are often informal and disseminated through sermons and digital messaging, including by clerics and groups such as TLP, allowing allegations to spread rapidly, trigger public mobilisation prior to formal investigations, and in some cases contribute to incitement to violence, while accountability for such actions remains limited'.[1527] Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted within the time constraints of drafting this report.

According to the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR), a network referred to as the 'blasphemy business' is involved in the entrapment of young people on blasphemy charges,[1528] particularly individuals from marginalised religious groups or economically disadvantaged backgrounds, who are often targeted and pressured into paying intermediaries in an attempt to avoid prosecution or reach informal settlements.[1529] This contributes to a significant increase in registered cases, most initiated by the FIA's cybercrime unit, frequently in 'collaboration with a private entity.' In these cases, 'due process was notably disregarded', arrests were often carried out by 'private individuals' rather than law enforcement agencies, reports documented 'torture both during apprehension and immediately afterward', detainees' statements were obtained 'under duress, compromising the legitimacy of their content', legal aid was 'systematically obstructed and, in some instances, actively threatened'.[1530]

By August 2025, hundreds of people in Pakistan remained imprisoned on blasphemy charges, with some cases stemming from online entrapment by individuals seeking to extort victims or provoke arrests.[1531]

In January 2025, a court in Pakistan reportedly sentenced four persons to death for blasphemy after they have allegedly posted 'sacrilegious materials' on social media about Islamic religious figures and Quran.[1532] Zia noted that 'private groups and volunteers often

[1523] Rehman Z, Pakistan based journalist, email communication with EUAA, 30 March 2026
[1524] ECLJ input – the death penalty from the perspective of the prohibition against torture and other forms of ill-treatment and the protection of human dignity, 27 February 2026, url, p. 4
[1525] Rehman Z, Pakistan based journalist, email communication with EUAA, 30 March 2026
[1526] Rehman Z, Pakistan based journalist, email communication with EUAA, 18 March 2026
[1527] Rehman Z, Pakistan based journalist, email communication with EUAA, 18 March 2026
[1528] HRCP, Streets of fear, freedom of religion or belief in 2024/25, 19 August 2025, url, p. 14
[1529] CSOH, Digital Blasphemy Cases Are Entrapping Pakistan's Most Vulnerable Communities, 26 January 2026, url
[1530] HRCP, Streets of fear, freedom of religion or belief in 2024/25, 19 August 2025, url, p. 14
[1531] Rehman, Z, How Online Chats Are Leading to Imprisonment for Blasphemy, New York Times (The), 24 August 2025, url
[1532] AP, Pakistani court sentences 4 people to death for blasphemy, 25 January 2025, url

monitor social media to identify alleged offenders'.[1533] Human Rights Watch reported that in 2025 there has been an increase in blasphemy-related attacks in the country.[1534] By June 2025, a fabricated blasphemy case against a Pakistani national living abroad prevented him from returning to Pakistan, while his brother was already imprisoned on the same charges.[1535] According to a 26 February 2026 report by Human Rights Watch, Pakistan's blasphemy laws, particularly Section 295-C of the penal code, effectively carry a mandatory death sentence; although no executions have been carried out, several individuals remain on death row, dozens are serving life sentences, and hundreds have been charged under these laws over the past three decades.[1536] In December 2025, a court in Lahore, Punjab province, overruled a *fatwa* issued against a religious scholar based on a social-media video, noting that the validity and authority of such religious decrees, especially from bodies like the Punjab Quran Board, are for the trial court to examine and do not take precedence over the legal process in blasphemy cases.[1537]

(e) Interfaith marriage

In Pakistan, interfaith marriage is regulated under specific laws including[1538] the Muslim Family Laws Ordinance of 1961,[1539] the Christian Marriage Act of 1872,[1540] the Hindu Marriage Act of 2017,[1541] the Punjab Anand Karaj Act of 2017 that regulates Sikh marriages,[1542] and the Special Marriage Act of 1872,[1543] which permits inter-religious marriage registration for couples who do not follow the same faith.[1544]

Despite legal provisions, interfaith marriage frequently faces challenges including social stigma, often resulting in family disputes, legal delays, and religious restrictions, where some religious communities restrain mixt marriage.[1545] While a Muslim man in Pakistan can marry a Christian or Jewish woman, Muslim women encounter restrictions in interfaith marriages.[1546] According to an AsiaNews report of 31 March 2026, Pakistan's Federal Constitutional Court in Lahore upheld the marriage between a Muslim man and a 13-year-old Christian girl, recognising her conversion to Islam and rejecting her father's petition for her release. [1547] According to the Pakistani law, marriage between a Muslim and a non-Muslim person is

[1533] Rehman, Z, How Online Chats Are Leading to Imprisonment for Blasphemy, New York Times (The), 24 August 2025, url
[1534] HRW, Pakistan, Events of 2025, 5 February 2026, url
[1535] Voice.pk Net, Pakistani national trapped abroad: blasphemy case blocks return after father's sectarian killing, 5 June 2025, url
[1536] Pakistan: Quash longstanding blasphemy case, 26 February 2026, url
[1537] Tribune Pakistan (The), Court grants Engr Muhammad Ali Mirza bail in blasphemy case, 3 December 2025, url
[1538] Khalil O, Court marriage for interfaith couples in Pakistan, n.d., url
[1539] Pakistan, The Pakistan Code, Ministry of Law and Justice, The Muslim Family Laws Ordinance, 1961, n.d., url
[1540] Pakistan, The Pakistan Code, Ministry of Law and Justice, The Christian Marriage Act, 1872, url
[1541] Pakistan, The Pakistan Code, Ministry of Law and Justice, The Hindu Marriage Act, 2017, 17 March 2017, url
[1542] Court Marriage Karachi, The law of marriage in Pakistan, n.d., url
[1543] Pakistan, The Pakistan Code, Ministry of Law and Justice, The Special Marriage Act, 1872, n.d., url
[1544] Khalil O, Court marriage for interfaith couples in Pakistan, n.d., url
[1545] Khalil O, Court marriage for interfaith couples in Pakistan, n.d., url
[1546] Khalil O, Court marriage for interfaith couples in Pakistan, n.d., url
[1547] Eurasia Review, Pakistan: New law could limit forced marriages of minority girls – OpEd, 19 February 2026, url; AsiaNews, Pakistan's Constitutional Court upholds marriage between Muslim man and 13-year-old Christian girl, 31 March 2026, url

allowed if the non-Muslim partner accepts and converts to Islam voluntarily.[1548] For information on forced conversion of persons from religious minorities in Pakistan, see section (a) Conversion.

(f) Consumption of alcohol

Consumption of alcohol by Muslims is prohibited and punished under the Pakistan law.[1549] The Prohibition (Enforcement of *Hadd*) Order, 1979, stipulates that 'whoever being an adult Muslim takes intoxicating liquor by mouth is guilty of drinking liable to "hadd" and shall be punished with whipping numbering eighty stripes'.[1550] For information on *hadd* (plural *hudud*) punishments, see section 5.5 of the EUAA COI report Pakistan - Country Focus (December 2024).

Proof for *hadd* punishment requires either a confession by the accused or testimony from at least two adult male Muslim witnesses.[1551] Under the Pakistan Penal Code, appearing drunk in public is also a punishable offense.[1552] The punishment includes imprisonment for up to seven days, with a minimum detention of 24 hours.[1553] Alcohol is considered *haram* (forbidden) in Islam and described as an 'intoxicants' and the 'work of Satan'.[1554] Although there is a complete legal prohibition on alcohol consumption for Muslims,[1555] it is still consumed in Pakistan.[1556] Muslims often obtain alcohol through bootlegging networks and informal liquor shops, particularly in the southern province of Sindh.[1557]

Non-Muslims are legally permitted limited access to alcohol[1558] including Hindus and Christians, who may purchase restricted quantities with official permits.[1559] As of 8 August 2025, five hotels in Islamabad were legally licensed to sell alcohol to non-Muslim foreigners,[1560] and in January 2026, authorities also lifted a ban on a Pakistani brewery allowing it to export beer.[1561]

[1548] Court Marriage Karachi, Religious conversion process under Pakistani law for court marriage, 8 January 2026, url
[1549] Pakistan, The Pakistan Code, Ministry of Law and Justice, The Prohibition (enforcement of hadd) order (4 of 1979), n.d., url, Art. 6
[1550] Pakistan, The Pakistan Code, Ministry of Law and Justice, The Prohibition (enforcement of hadd) order (4 of 1979), n.d., url, Art. 6
[1551] Pakistan, The Pakistan Code, Ministry of Law and Justice, The Prohibition (enforcement of hadd) order (4 of 1979), n.d., url, Art. 9
[1552] Pakistan, The Pakistan Penal Code, 1860, url, Art. 510.
[1553] Pakistan, The Pakistan Penal Code, 1860, url, Art. 510.
[1554] Independent, In a country where alcohol is banned, Pakistan's top brewery has to make changes, 4 July 2025, url
[1555] Abbas Khan M A, Akhtar F, Examining the effects of alcohol prohibition in laws in Pakistan on public health, December 2024, url
[1556] NPR, With decades-long restrictions lifted, a Pakistani brewery has started exporting beer, 31 January 2026, url
[1557] NPR, With decades-long restrictions lifted, a Pakistani brewery has started exporting beer, 31 January 2026, url
[1558] Abbas Khan M A, Akhtar F, Examining the effects of alcohol prohibition in laws in Pakistan on public health, December 2024, url
[1559] NPR, With decades-long restrictions lifted, a Pakistani brewery has started exporting beer, 31 January 2026, url
[1560] Dialogue Pakistan, Five Islamabad hotels legally permitted to sell alcohol: Ministry, 8 August 2025, url
[1561] NPR, With decades-long restrictions lifted, a Pakistani brewery has started exporting beer, 31 January 2026, url

6.1.4. Women and girls

Women in Pakistan face discrimination,[1562] including legal and economic, as well as various forms of societal violence.[1563] They are underrepresented or marginalised from public and political spheres, including in the electoral rolls,[1564] with a substantial voter gender gap of 9.9 million, which decreased from 11.8 % (2018) to 7.1 % (2025).[1565] The majority of out-of-school children in the country are girls.[1566]

Pakistan is a party to several international treaties and agreements related to the rights of women and girls, including the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). When Pakistan ratified CEDAW in 1996, it made reservations stating that it does not consider itself bound by Article 29(1),[1567] which stipulates that 'States Parties shall grant women equal rights with men to acquire, change or retain their nationality. They shall ensure in particular that neither marriage to an alien nor change of nationality by the husband during marriage shall automatically change the nationality of the wife, render her stateless or force upon her the nationality of the husband.'[1568] Pakistan did not ratify the Optional Protocol to CEDAW.[1569]

Women's rights are enshrined in the constitution, which guarantees fundamental rights, such as prohibiting discrimination based on sex[1570] and ensuring their full participation in national life.[1571] The 'protection to women against misuse and abuse of law and to prevent their exploitation' is stated by the 2006 Protection of Women (Criminal Laws Amendment) Act.[1572] For further background information on women, see section 6.5 of the EUAA COI report Pakistan - Country Focus (December 2024).

Patriarchy is still present in Pakistan, affecting women's role in society,[1573] particularly from a young age.[1574] Women in Pakistan represent more than half of the total population;[1575] however, the female literacy rate stood at only 49 % as of 2025, according to the Global

[1562] UN Women, National report on the status of women in Pakistan, June 2024, url, p. 2; BTI, BTI 2024 Country Report Pakistan, 19 March 2024, url, pp. 13, 18
[1563] HRCP, State of Human Rights in 2023, 8 May 2024, url, p. 7; UN Women, National report on the status of women in Pakistan, June 2024, url, pp. 2, 82-91
[1564] HRCP, State of Human Rights in 2023, 8 May 2024, url, p. 7
[1565] HRCP, State of Human Rights in 2025, 4 May 2026, url, p. 34
[1566] World Bank, Five major challenges to girls' education in Pakistan, June 2024, url; Pakistan, Pakistan Institute of Education, Pakistan Education Statistics 2022-2023, url, pp. 70-72
[1567] United Nations Treaty Collection, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women 1979, url; UN OHCHR, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women New York, 18 December 1979, 18 December 1979, url
[1568] UN OHCHR, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women New York, 18 December 1979, 18 December 1979, url, art 9(1)
[1569] United Nations Treaty Collection, Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women 1999, url
[1570] Pakistan, Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 1973, url, Art. 25
[1571] Pakistan, Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 1973, url, Art. 34
[1572] Pakistan, Protection of Women (Criminal Laws Amendment) Act, 2006: url
[1573] Dawn, Pakistan's Struggle for Women's Rights, 21 September 2025, url
[1574] Shah M, Patriarchy starts young in Pakistan – so must equality, LSE, 7 November 2025, url
[1575] Dawn, Over 22m children out of schools in Pakistan, says PM Shehbaz, 11 January 2025, url

Gender Gap Index.[1576] The majority of out-of-school children in Pakistan are girls.[1577] The literacy rate among girls in Pakistan is impacted by militants targeting girls' schools, specifically in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Balochistan provinces.[1578] For more information, see section 6.1.5. Children.

Women engaged in politics and activism continue to experience challenges. During the general election in 2024, a *fatwa* (Islamic decree) prohibiting campaigning by women candidates was issued in Kohistan district. The *fatwa* was rejected by the Election Commission.[1579] In March 2026, 19 women activists of Aurat March were detained by police prior to the rally planned for the International Women's Day.[1580]

Female-headed households

Under Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), a state-run programme, supporting more than 10 million families in Pakistan – a female beneficiary is recognised as the head of the household.[1581] In November 2025, a special support package for women and children was announced. According to the package details, all women registered as heads of households under BISP will receive a higher monthly stipend, an increase from Rs 8 500 [around 80 EUR] to Rs 10,500 [around 100 EUR]. The package also included free or subsidised health insurance for women, especially mothers.[1582]

Violence against women and girls, including sexual, domestic and honour related violence

Violence against women and girls remains a serious problem in Pakistan,[1583] 'including rape, murder, acid attacks, domestic violence, denial of education, sexual harassment at work, and child and forced marriage,'[1584] and an increase in gender-based violence cases,[1585] including digital based violence.[1586] In rape cases, perpetrators include both individuals known to survivors and strangers, including husbands. In some instances, the identity of the perpetrator was not reported[1587] or was attributed to the police.[1588] Many incidents of gender-based violence occurred within victims' homes.[1589] For information on shelters for women and

[1576] WEF, Global Gender Gap Report 2025, June 2025, url, p. 32
[1577] Save the Children, Education spending in Pakistan hits new low with more than one in three children out of school – Save the Children, 19 June 2025, url; AI, Pakistan 2024, April 2025, url
[1578] AI, Pakistan 2024, April 2025, url
[1579] AI, Pakistan 2024, April 2025, url
[1580] Dawn, Dozens of Aurat March activists, participants detained by police in Islamabad ahead of International Women's Day rally, 8 March 2026, url; Pakistan Today, Aurat March participants call for inquiry into police action after release, 10 March 2026, url
[1581] Business Recorder, Women recognised as head of household under BISP: chairperson, 9 January 2026, url; Pakistan, Benazir Income Support Programme, About us, overview, n.d., url
[1582] BFECS, Special BISP Support Package Planned for Women and Children in 2025, 10 November 2025, url
[1583] HRW, Pakistan, Events of 2024, 16 January 2025, url; HRW, Pakistan, Events of 2025, 5 February 2026, url
[1584] HRW, Pakistan, Events of 2025, 5 February 2026, url
[1585] Tribune Express (The), Gender-based violence against women surges 25% in Pakistan, 2 December 2025, url
[1586] UNFPA, Technology-facilitated gender-based violence in Pakistan: Critical gaps in justice system's response, December 2025, n.d., url
[1587] Tribune Express (The), Gender-based violence against women surges 25% in Pakistan, 2 December 2025, url
[1588] Express Tribune (The), 6 cops arrested for 'gang rape of teen in custody', 20 January 2026, url
[1589] Tribune Express (The), Gender-based violence against women surges 25% in Pakistan, 2 December 2025, url

protection units centres in Pakistan, see section 6.5.1(b) of the EUAA COI report Pakistan - Country Focus (December 2024).

The law defines rape as sexual intercourse with a person against their will, without their consent, or with consent obtained by fear of death/hurt. It also includes intercourse with a minor under 16 or with a person unable to communicate consent.[1590]

In 2024, 70 % of gender-based violence (GBV) incidents went unreported. Of those reported, the national conviction rate stands at 5 %, with certain GBV offenses as low as 0.5 % and domestic violence convictions at 1.3 %.[1591]

According to the 2024 Sustainable Social Development Organisation (SSDO), a non-governmental organisation working on issues of peace and sustainable development in Pakistan, a total of 32 617 cases of gender-based violence were reported in Pakistan in 2024, including 5 339 incidents of rape, and 24 439 incidents of kidnapping/abduction.[1592] The conviction rate in rape cases at the national level stood at 0.5 %.[1593] In 2024, Islamabad recorded seven convictions out of 176 reported rape cases. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa reported one conviction from 258 cases, Sindh reported no convictions despite 243 cases, and Balochistan recorded 21 rape cases with no convictions.[1594] In December 2025, the Supreme Court of Pakistan issued a case judgement changing a rape conviction to fornication (consensual sex out of marriage).[1595]

In December 2025, Senator Sherry Rehman warned that despite numerous gender-based violence laws in Pakistan,[1596] weak enforcement and systemic gaps continue to hinder access to justice for survivors[1597] including insufficient police investigations and forensic practices, delays in judicial and procedural processes, and persistent impunity.[1598]

While gender-based violence in Pakistan includes acts such as rape, domestic violence, harassment, and so-called honour killings rooted in gender inequality, gender-based violence broadly refers to physical, sexual, psychological, and economic harm directed at individuals because of their gender, and the country continues to face major gaps in addressing emerging forms such as technology-facilitated gender-based violence due to weak legal recognition, limited enforcement, low digital literacy, and insufficient institutional and survivor support mechanisms.[1599]

[1590] Pakistan, Pakistan Penal Code (Act XLV of 1860), Section 375, url
[1591] Dawn, Consent on trial: How Pakistan's courts are failing rape survivors, 10 January 2026, url
[1592] SSDO, SSDO Report 2024: Gender-Based Violence Surges in Pakistan with Dismal Conviction Rates, n.a., url
[1593] SSDO Report 2024: Gender-Based Violence Surges in Pakistan with Dismal Conviction Rates, n.a., url
[1594] Dawn, Consent on trial: How Pakistan's courts are failing rape survivors, 10 January 2026, url
[1595] Voicepk.net, Women's rights activists condemn Supreme Court for turning rape conviction into 'fornication', 17 December 2025, url; Dawn, Consent on trial: How Pakistan's courts are failing rape survivors, 10 January 2025, url
[1596] Dawn, Call for effective implementation of gender-based violence laws, 19 December 2025, url
[1597] Dawn, Call for effective implementation of gender-based violence laws, 19 December 2025, url; ANI, Pakistan's justice system fails women: Sindh's battle against gender violence exposes deep structural flaws, 17 October 2025, url
[1598] UN Women, How Pakistan's anti-rape crisis cells are transforming support for survivals, 18 November 2025, url
[1599] UNFPA Pakistan, Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence in Pakistan: CRITICAL GAPS IN JUSTICE SYSTEM'S RESPONSE, 7 December 2025, url

On 12 January 2026, six policemen reportedly gang raped a 17-year-old girl in custody in Jacobabad district (Sindh) after detaining her, her 15 years old sister, and their grandmother in a private place with male copes in connection with an alleged murder case.[1600] Initial medical check-up report confirmed that the victim was subjected to gang rape.[1601]

Conviction rates for crimes related to gender-based violence remained low across all provinces in Pakistan in 2024. For example, the national level conviction rate of rape and honour killings stand at 0.5 %, convictions. Furthermore, kidnapping and abduction cases demonstrate a lower conviction rate of 0.1 %, and domestic violence cases result in 1.3 % conviction rate.[1602]

In November 2025, the National Assembly passed the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill.[1603] The bill,[1604] applicable only in Islamabad, aims to provide protection to victims of domestic violence.[1605] The bill criminalises harassment, threats, and abuse within households[1606] and foresees penalties of a maximum period of three years and not less than six months and a fine of up Rs 100 000 [around 300 EUR], paid to the victim. In case of failure to pay the fine, the court may award additional imprisonment of three months.[1607] The bill was rejected by Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) senators[1608] who labelled the bill as 'un-Islamic'.[1609] In January 2026, the Domestic Violence Act was approved by Pakistan's Parliament[1610] and signed into law by President Asif Ali Zardari.[1611] Under the Act, the definition of domestic violence has been expanded and includes emotional, psychological, sexual, and economic abuse.[1612] One in three women in Pakistan face some form of domestic abuse.[1613]

Honour killings remain prevalent in Pakistan. A total of 531 honour killings were recorded from January 2024 to November 2024, and 101 cases were reported between January 2024 and June 2024 in Sindh province. In the first half of 2024, 1 630 cases of child abuse (59 % of which were girls) were recorded by Sahil, a non-governmental organisation working on child protection.[1614]

[1600] Express Tribune (The), 6 cops arrested for 'gang rape of teen in custody', 20 January 2026, url
[1601] Dawn, Six policemen held for raping girl in Jacobabad police station, 20 January 2026, url
[1602] SSDO Report 2024: Gender-Based Violence Surges in Pakistan with Dismal Conviction Rates, n.a., url
[1603] Dawn, Everything you need to know about the new Domestic Violence Bill passed by the National Assembly, 14 November 2025, url
[1604] Pakistan, Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill, 2025, url
[1605] Dawn, NA rubber-stamps four bills linked to new tweaks, 14 November 2025, url; Dawn, Anti-domestic violence bill promises 'stringent penalties' in ICT, 16 November 2025, url
[1606] Daily Times, Parliament passes Domestic Violence Act 2026, threats to wife criminalized, 24 January 2026, url
[1607] Dawn, Anti-domestic violence bill promises 'stringent penalties' in ICT, 16 November 2025, url
[1608] Dawn, Fazl objects to legislations enacted to combat child marriages and domestic violence, protect transgender people, 25 November 2025, url
[1609] Dawn, Senate okays domestic violence bill amid opposition outcry, 28 November 2025, url
[1610] Daily Times, Parliament passes Domestic Violence Act 2026, threats to wife criminalized, 24 January 2026, url; Nation (The), Second marriage, divorce threats against wife now punishable offenses under new law, 25 January 2026, url
[1611] Pakistan Today, President Zardari signs Domestic Violence Bill into law despite earlier objections, 26 January 2026, url; Express Tribune (The), President Zardari signs off on domestic violence bill, 26 January 2026, url
[1612] Friday Times (The), Lifeline For Survivors: Understanding Pakistan's Domestic Violence Act 2026, 23 January 2026, url
[1613] UN Women Pakistan, n.a., url; Dawn, Anti-domestic violence bill promises 'stringent penalties' in ICT, 16 November 2025, url
[1614] AI, Pakistan 2024, April 2025, url

As reported by Al Jazeera in 2025, honour killings have increased in recent years in Pakistan.[1615] According to HRCP, 405 women were killed in 2024, in comparison to 226 cases in 2023.[1616] To contrast, according to SSDO, a total of 2 238 incidents of domestic violence, and 547 cases of honour killing were recorded in 2024.[1617] HRCP's 2025 update indicates continued prevalence of domestic and "honour"-related violence, including at least 470 "honour" killings and thousands of domestic violence cases.[1618]

In the period between January 2025 and June 2025, 50 cases of domestic violence were reported, and none resulted in conviction or acquittal. The findings highlighted that physical abuse remained the most prevalent, accounting for 76 % of all reported cases. Of these, 13 cases were still under investigation, while 24 had reached the trial stage. Sexual abuse constituted 14 %, financial abuse 8 %, and psychological abuse 2 % of the reported cases.[1619]

Forced and child marriage

In 2024, girls from religious minority groups faced forced conversions and marriages, particularly in Sindh and Punjab provinces, as reported by Amnesty International.[1620] For more information, see section (a) Conversion.

Sindh and Islamabad enforced 18 as the minimum marriage age for girls in 2024.[1621] The ordinance was promulgated in February 2026 declaring child marriage a non-bailable offence.[1622] In addition, the Balochistan Assembly adapted the child marriage prohibition bill in November 2025,[1623] setting the marriage age to 18 years old.[1624]

In May 2025, Pakistan's parliament passed the landmark Child Marriage Restraint Bill.[1625] The bill, applicable only in the Islamabad territory,[1626] bans child marriages and establishes minimum legal age of 18 for girls and boys to get married.[1627] The bill was signed into law by the president Asif Ali Zardari on 30 May 2025.[1628] The Pakistan Council of Islamic Ideology criticised the bill, describing it as 'un-Islamic'.[1629]

[1615] Al Jazeera, Father, ex-husband, among 9 arrested in alleged honour killing in Pakistan, 29 July 2025, url
[1616] Al Jazeera, Father, ex-husband, among 9 arrested in alleged honour killing in Pakistan, 29 July 2025, url
[1617] SSDO, SSDO Report 2024: Gender-Based Violence Surges in Pakistan with Dismal Conviction Rates, n.a., url
[1618] HRCP, State of Human Rights in 2025, 4 May 2026, url, p. 16
[1619] Dawn, Conviction rate in domestic abuse cases between Jan-June remained zero, says report, 29 October 2025, url
[1620] AI, Pakistan 2024, April 2025, url
[1621] Dawn, Punjab set to fix minimum age for marriage at 18, 31 October 2025, url
[1622] Dawn, Punjab governor promulgates ordinance declaring child marriage non-bailed offense, 12 February 2026, url
[1623] Dawn, Balochistan Assembly passes child marriage bill, 15 November 2025, url
[1624] Save the Children, Balochistan becomes latest province to ban child marriage in Pakistan, 19 November 2025, url
[1625] UN Women Pakistan, Islamabad Capital Territory Child Marriage Restraint Bill 2025, 20 May 2025, url; LiCAS .news,, Pakistan passes landmark law banning child marriages in capital, 23 May 2025, url
[1626] UN Women Pakistan, Islamabad Capital Territory Child Marriage Restraint Bill 2025, 26 May 2025, url
[1627] UN Women Pakistan, Islamabad Capital Territory Child Marriage Restraint Bill 2025, 20 May 2025, url; Girls Not Brides, A Turning Point in Pakistan's Fight to End Child Marriage: The Child Marriage Restraint Act 2025 for Islamabad Capital Territory, 11 July 2025, url
[1628] Dawn, President signs child marriage bill into law, 31 May 2025, url
[1629] Arab News, Pakistan Council of Islamic Ideology declares bill to criminalize child marriages 'un-Islamic', 28 May 2025, url

In the period between 2024[1630] and 2025, there were over 19 million child brides in Pakistan, with nearly one in six girls married before the age of 18 while 4.8 million girls were married before the age of 15, according to UNICEF.[1631]

According to an article from November 2025, child marriages were still prevalent in parts of Sindh, Punjab and Balochistan, with child marriage cases allegedly rarely going through the formal legal system.[1632]

According to SSDO, inefficiencies, delays, and systemic biases of Pakistan's criminal justice system weaken justice for gender-based violence survivors. In addition, gender-based violence survivors have limited access to legal aid, face prolonged trial durations, as well as cultural pressures, that impede them from reporting or pursuing cases.[1633]

6.1.5. Children

Pakistan is party to several international treaties and agreements related to the rights of children, including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990; as well as the UN Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict in 2016, and the UN Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography in 2011.[1634]

Children's rights are enshrined in the constitution, which guarantees the protected status of children,[1635] their right to education,[1636] and protection from employment in vocations unsuited to their age.[1637] Moreover, the constitution prohibits child labour, stating that 'no child below the age of fourteen shall be engaged in any factory or mine or any other hazardous employment.'[1638]

In June 2025, the province of Punjab approved the first Comprehensive Child Protection Policy to improve the safety and well-being of children[1639] However, according to Nida Aly, Executive Director of the Asma Jahangir Legal Aid Cell (AGHS) interviewed by EUAA in March 2026, the Punjab Child Protection Policy has been approved by the cabinet but has not yet been notified (gazetted), meaning that in the absence of a formal publication by the government in the Gazette, laws or subordinate regulations cannot legally take effect.[1640]

[1630] UN Women, Breaking tradition to end child marriage in Pakistan's remote village, 13 November 2024, url
[1631] Dawn, Pakistan home to over 19 million child brides: Unicef, 21 September 2025, url
[1632] Voicepk.net, National report warns of rising violence against children in first half of 2025, 25 November 2025, url
[1633] SSDO Report 2024: Gender-Based Violence Surges in Pakistan with Dismal Conviction Rates, n.a., url
[1634] UN OHCHR, UN Treaty Body Database, Ratification Status for Pakistan, n.a., url
[1635] Pakistan, Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 1973, url, Art. 25 (3)
[1636] Pakistan, Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 1973, url, Art. 25A
[1637] Pakistan, Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 1973, url, Art. 37 (e)
[1638] Pakistan, Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 1973, url, Art. 11 (3)
[1639] Daily News Egypt, Punjab Province in Pakistan approves first Child Protection Policy, 5 June 2025, url; Pakistan Today, First child protection policy marks new chapter for Punjab's children, 3 June 2025, url; Express Tribune (The), Punjab gets first Child Protection Policy, 4 June 2025, url
[1640] Aly N., Executive Director Asma Jahangir Legal Aid Cell (AGHS), Pakistan, email communication with EUAA, 9 March 2026

As reported by the local media The News and announced by the Punjab Home Secretary Dr Ahmed Javed Qazi, the Punjab government 'carries out a zero-tolerance policy against violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation of children.'[1641]

In 2024, Pakistan ranked 153rd out of 194 countries in the Kids Rights Index 2024,[1642] and declined to the 155th place out of 194 countries in 2025 as reported by the Kids Rights, an international non-governmental organisation that promotes the wellbeing of vulnerable children across the world.[1643]

Children in Pakistan comprise nearly half of the total population, with an estimated number of 100 million children.[1644]

The birth rate in Pakistan in 2025 was 25.11 births per 1 000 population, representing a 1.81 % decline from 2024, when it stood at 25.58 births per 1 000 population (an 8.01 % decline from 2023).[1645] Infant mortality rate for 2025 was 53.54, a 2.05 % decline from the 2024 rate of 54.66 (9.1 % increase from 2023).[1646] In contrast and per the findings of the Pakistan Household Integrated Economic Survey (HIES) 2024–25, infant mortality rate has decreased from 60 to 47 per 1 000 live births.[1647] According to UNICEF Pakistan's 2024 Annual Report, infant and maternal mortality rates remain high in Pakistan, with approximately 1 000 children under five dying every day - mostly from preventable causes.[1648] For example, in 2025, Pakistan was one of two countries in the region with a vaccination rate among one-year old children of less than 90 % (exact rate: 84 %).[1649]

Only one in three children under the age of five was registered at birth in Pakistan.[1650] According to Nida Aly, Executive Director of the Asma Jahangir Legal Aid Cell (AGHS) interviewed by EUAA in March 2026, 'low birth registration rates in Pakistan reflect limited government capacity, under-resourced offices, and weak implementation. The process has historically been complex, awareness of the importance of registration is low, and socio-economically disadvantaged families face high direct and indirect costs. For instance, physical inaccessibility in rural and remote areas severely constrains birth registration.'[1651] In 2024, UNICEF reported 600 000 births registered in health facilities.[1652]

Access to education

[1641] News (The), Punjab becomes first province to approve comprehensive child protection policy, 17 December 2025, url
[1642] Kids Rights, The Kids Rights Index 2024, 2024, url
[1643] Kids Rights, The Kids Rights Index 2025, 2025, url
[1644] UN OHCHR, Experts of the Committee on the Rights of the Child Praise Pakistan's Protections for the Best Interests of the Child, Ask about Violence against Children and the "Education Emergency", 16 January 2026, url
[1645] Macro Trends, Pakistan Birth Rate, Historical Data, Chart, 1950-2025, 2025, url
[1646] Macro Trends, Pakistan Infant Mortality Rate, 1950-2025, 2025, url
[1647] Pakistan, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, PID, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics Launches First Ever Digital HIES 2024–25, 1 January 2026, url
[1648] UNICEF Pakistan, Annual Report 2024, url, p. 10
[1649] Kids Rights, The Kids Rights Index 2025, url, p. 46
[1650] WHO, WHO and Pakistan initiate consultations to protect 112 million children from violence, 15 November 2025, url
[1651] Aly N., Executive Director Asma Jahangir Legal Aid Cell (AGHS), Pakistan, email communication with EUAA, 9 March 2026
[1652] UNICEF Pakistan, Annual Report 2024, url, p. 9

Pakistan has the world's second-highest number of out-of-school children with an estimated 25.1 million children aged 5-16 not attending school, which represents 35 % of the total population in this age group.[1653] In 2025, Save the Children reported an estimated number of 26 million children being out-of-school, which represented one of the highest percentages globally.[1654]

In contrast, the Pakistan HIES 2024–25 findings revealed that the number of out-of-school children has decreased from 30 % to 28 %.[1655] According to the household survey conducted between September 2024 and June 2025, the number of out of school children has dropped from 25.3 million to approximately 20 million.[1656] In January 2026, the expert of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, Thuwayba Al Barwani, stated that 'Pakistan was facing a severe education crisis,' with some 77 % of children unable to read and comprehend simple texts by the age of 10.[1657]

In Punjab, the number of out-of-school and street children has reached 30 million and continues to rise. In 2023, there were around 53 000 government schools, while in 2026 this number decreased to 38 000.[1658]

To address the education emergency,[1659] the Pakistani government offered a cash stipend for girls which facilitated the enrolment of 800 000 girls. Furthermore, large-scale teacher training programmes were carried out by the government.[1660]

In an interview with the EUAA in March 2026, Nida Aly stated that 'overall [...] progress in education remains severely constrained by poverty, gender disparities, varying regional literacy rates, and weak infrastructure.'[1661]

[1653] UNICEF Pakistan, Education, n.a., url
[1654] Save the Children, Education spending in Pakistan hits new low with more than one in three children out of school – Save the Children, 19 June 2025, url
[1655] Pakistan, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, PID, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics Launches First Ever Digital HIES 2024–25, 1 January 2026, url
[1656] Pakistan Today, 20 million children still lack access to education in Pakistan, 2 January 2026, url
[1657] UN OHCHR, Experts of the Committee on the Rights of the Child Praise Pakistan's Protections for the Best Interests of the Child, Ask about Violence against Children and the "Education Emergency", 16 January 2026, url
[1658] Economic Times (The), Pakistan's education crisis deepens as teachers, schools' bodies reject patchwork policies, 25 January 2026, url; Express Tribune (The), Teachers reject govt's 'anti-education' policies, 25 January 2026, url
[1659] Hindu (The), Pakistan PM Shehbaz Sharif declares education emergency on International Literacy Day, 8 September 2024, url
[1660] UN OHCHR, Experts of the Committee on the Rights of the Child Praise Pakistan's Protections for the Best Interests of the Child, Ask about Violence against Children and the "Education Emergency", 16 January 2026, url
[1661] Aly N., Executive Director Asma Jahangir Legal Aid Cell (AGHS), Pakistan, email communication with EUAA, 9 March 2026

Violence against children

Children in Pakistan have continued to face different forms of violence,[1662] including sexual abuse and exploitation,[1663] domestic labour,[1664] child trafficking[1665] and child labour.[1666] Moreover, according to UNICEF, children in Pakistan are highly vulnerable to climate-induced disasters.[1667] According to HRCP, as reported by Dawn, an increase in violence against women and children was recorded in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.[1668] In 2024, a total of 3 364 child abuse cases were reported in local media.[1669]

Human Rights Watch reported that child sexual abuse remained common in Pakistan in 2024. In the period between January 2024 and June 2024, 862 cases of child sexual abuse, 668 cases of abduction, 82 cases of missing children, and 18 cases of child marriages were reported, according to the children's rights organisation Sahil.[1670] Between January 2025 and June 2025, 950 cases of child sexual abuse, 605 cases of abduction, 192 cases of missing children, and 34 cases of child marriages or compensation marriage were reported,[1671] with 31 children killed after sexual abuse, and 62 abandoned newborns (alive or dead).[1672] In its 2025 update, HRCP cites NGO Sahil data reporting over 3 600 cases of violence against children, including 2 003 cases of child sexual abuse, 1 107 cases of abduction, 365 cases of missing children, and 53 cases of child marriage.[1673]

Pakistan witnessed a 20 % increase in reported child sexual abuse cases between January 2025 and June 2025 compared to the same period in 2024, according to Sahil's Cruel Numbers report.[1674] According to a 2025 national report on violence against children, in the period between January 2025 and June 2025, 5 097 cases of violence against children were reported.[1675]

[1662] UNICEF, Pakistan Child Protection, n.d., url
[1663] UN OHCHR, Experts of the Committee on the Rights of the Child Praise Pakistan's Protections for the Best Interests of the Child, Ask about Violence against Children and the "Education Emergency", 16 January 2026, url; Friday Times (The), Invisible And Exploited: Sexual Violence Against Street-Connected Children In Pakistan, 20 January 2026, url
[1664] UN OHCHR, Experts of the Committee on the Rights of the Child Praise Pakistan's Protections for the Best Interests of the Child, Ask about Violence against Children and the "Education Emergency", 16 January 2026, url; France 24, 'I know it's immoral': Child workers still common in Pakistan, 13 October 2025, url
[1665] UN OHCHR, Experts of the Committee on the Rights of the Child Praise Pakistan's Protections for the Best Interests of the Child, Ask about Violence against Children and the "Education Emergency", 16 January 2026, url; Dawn, Child trafficking, 8 November 2025, url
[1666] UN OHCHR, Experts of the Committee on the Rights of the Child Praise Pakistan's Protections for the Best Interests of the Child, Ask about Violence against Children and the "Education Emergency", 16 January 2026, url; Pakistan Today, Broken futures, child labour in Pakistan, 26 August 2025, url
[1667] YouTube, UNICEF, Climate change is reshaping childhoods in Pakistan #COP30, 21 November 2025, url
[1668] Dawn, HRCP records rise in violence against women, children in KP, 1 July 2025, url
[1669] Sahil, Cruel Numbers 2024, A compilation of statistics on child sexual abuse reported cases in Pakistan, url, p. 7
[1670] HRW, Pakistan, Events of 2024, 16 January 2025, url
[1671] Voicepk.net, Alarming rise in child sexual abuse cases from Jan to June 2025, 29 July 2025, url
[1672] HRC – Pakistan, Annual report 2025, 5 February 2026, url, p. 3
[1673] HRCP, State of Human Rights in 2025, 4 May 2026, url, pp. 16-17
[1674] Voicepk.net, Alarming rise in child sexual abuse cases from Jan to June 2025, 29 July 2025, url; India Tribune, Rising cases of sexual abuse reveals Pakistan's systemic failure in child protection mechanism: Report, 11 September 2025, url
[1675] Voicepk.net, National report warns of rising violence against children in first half of 2025, 25 November 2025, url

While there has been an increase in the conviction rate for child sexual abuse cases from 5 to 17 % between 2021 and 2026, slow investigations and low number of cases resulting in convictions remain challenges when seeking justice in cases related to violence against children.[1676]

In January 2026, the Pakistani delegation reiterated the national strategic plan to combat violence against children. According to the delegation, the strategic plan focuses on protection, prosecution and rehabilitation, and included actions against sexual and online abuse. State legislation-imposed penalties that were proportionate with the gravity of these crimes. District-level mechanisms had been established to protect children from sexual violence, including through inspections and rescue operations.[1677]

Child trafficking and child labour

A 2025 national report expressed concern over the continued threat of internal and cross-border trafficking, with children forced into labour and sexual exploitation.[1678] According to USDOS, 'traffickers buy, sell, rent, and kidnap children for forced labor in begging, domestic work, work in small shops, agriculture, cotton, brickmaking, fishing, and child sex trafficking, and some children are at risk of trafficking in food stalls, restaurants, construction, street vending, the coal industry, and scavenging at garbage dumpsites.'[1679]

A 2025 survey conducted by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics with the technical assistance of UNICEF revealed that Pakistan's children are subjected to hazardous labour in workshops, kilns, tanneries, and domestic settings.[1680]

In 2025, more than 12.5 million children in Pakistan were involved in child labour. Displaced children, migrant children, and children living in informal or poor urban settlements faced 'disproportionately high risks of exploitation, early marriage, trafficking, and child labour', as reported by WHO.[1681]

According to the 2025 Pakistan Bureau of Statistics survey, over 1.6 million – 10.3 % of children aged 5-17 – were engaged in child labour in Sindh province.[1682] District-level data showed wide disparities: Qambar Shahdadkot with child labour prevalence of 30.8 %,

[1676] Voicepk.net, National report warns of rising violence against children in first half of 2025, 25 November 2025, url
[1677] UN OHCHR, Experts of the Committee on the Rights of the Child Praise Pakistan's Protections for the Best Interests of the Child, Ask about Violence against Children and the "Education Emergency", 16 January 2026, url
[1678] Voicepk.net, National report warns of rising violence against children in first half of 2025, 25 November 2025, url
[1679] USDOS, 2024 Trafficking in Persons Report: Pakistan, url
[1680] Friday Times (The), Pakistan's Child Labour Crisis: Hazardous Work, Lost Childhoods, And Exploitation, 16 January 2026, url
[1681] WHO, WHO and Pakistan initiate consultations to protect 112 million children from violence, 15 November 2025, url
[1682] Nation (The), Over 1.6m children engaged in various forms of labour across province: Survey reveals, 3 August 2025, url; Economic Times (The), Over 1.6 million children engaged in child labour in Pakistan's Sindh: Official, 9 November 2025, url

followed by Tharparkar at 29 %, Tando Muhammad Khan at 20.3 %, and Shikarpur at 20.2 %. Karachi had the lowest rate, at 2.38 %.[1683]

In 2024, an official of the district administration in Hyderabad (Sindh) stated that an estimated number between 1.2 million and 1.5 million of children were involved in begging on streets in Pakistan.[1684] The Consortium for Street Children estimates that there are around 1.5 million street children in Pakistan, with numbers reportedly increasing due to poverty, displacement, and violence.[1685] Street children were at a higher risk of facing abuse, child labour, exploitation, trafficking, and arbitrary arrest.[1686] Children were also forced to beg by organised criminal groups.[1687]

In a 2024 Child Labor report, US Department of Labor (USDOL) highlighted that Pakistan's federal and provincial laws did not align with international standards for the minimum age for work or hazardous work. Moreover, Pakistan's federal and provincial laws did not prohibit the use of children in illicit activities. USDOL reported on the lack of sufficient human and financial resources by the provincial labour inspectorates, and unavailability of national enforcement data. Police corruption, and a lack of willingness to conduct criminal investigations were also reported as factors deterring Pakistan's ability to address child labour across the country.[1688]

According to UNICEF, children are highly vulnerable to recurrent natural disasters in Pakistan.[1689] Since the end of June 2025, more than 200 children were killed due to torrential monsoon rains across Pakistan. At least 674 schools were destroyed or damaged.[1690]

In the northwestern province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, about 860 schools were damaged by floods or were not accessible, consequently placing education for more than 119 000 children on hold, according to Save the Children.[1691]

Some 2 000 schools were reconstructed in Sindh and Punjab following the floods as reported by UN OHCHR in January 2026.[1692]

[1683] Nation (The), Over 1.6m children engaged in various forms of labour across province: Survey reveals, 3 August 2025, url; Economic Times (The), Over 1.6 million children engaged in child labour in Pakistan's Sindh: Official, 9 November 2025, url
[1684] Dawn, Around 1.5m children begging in country's streets, human rights day rally in Hyderabad told, 11 December 2024, url
[1685] Consortium for Street Children, Street Children in Pakistan, n.a., url
[1686] Consortium for Street Children, Street Children in Pakistan, n.a., url
[1687] USDOS, 2024 Trafficking in Persons Report: Pakistan, url
[1688] US Department of Labor, 2024, url
[1689] UNICEF, Pakistan, 2025, url
[1690] Save the Children, Pakistan: At least 200 children killed in deadly monsoon season as rains threaten education for millions, 28 August 2025, url
[1691] Save the Children, Pakistan floods: Almost 1 million people evacuated from Punjab as children miss out on third week of school – Save the Children, 2 September 2025, url
[1692] UN OHCHR, Experts of the Committee on the Rights of the Child Praise Pakistan's Protections for the Best Interests of the Child, Ask about Violence against Children and the "Education Emergency", 16 January 2026, url

6.1.6. LGBTIQ+ persons

In Pakistan, consensual same-sex sexual relations continue to be criminalised[1693] under Section 377 of the Pakistan Penal Code, which states that 'whoever voluntarily has carnal intercourse against the order of nature with any man, woman or animal shall be punished'.[1694] While the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act was enacted in 2018,[1695] it has been reported as being challenged, undermined, and only partially implemented.[1696] In 2023, the Federal Shariat Court Islamabad passed judgement that some sections of the 2018 Transgender Act were against Islamic teachings.[1697] Politicians and religious leaders in Pakistan are often reported to describe homosexuality as 'un-Islamic' or 'immoral'.[1698] Moreover, critics argue that the 2018 law provides limited or weak penalties for crimes against transgender persons, and relies largely on existing legal frameworks for enforcement.[1699]

There are societal taboos surrounding LGBTIQ issues in Pakistan,[1700] and persons belonging to these communities rarely reveal their sexual orientation or gender identity in the public sphere.[1701] While there are some organisations actively supporting LGBTIQ rights in Pakistan, including by providing them with legal aid, progress has been slow and met with significant societal resistance.[1702] Islamic groups have described LGBTIQ+ identities as a western agenda.[1703] For background information on LGBTIQ persons in Pakistan, including legal framework, social stigma, and patterns of discrimination and violence during the period between October 2023 and October 2024, see section 6.7 of the EUAA COI report Pakistan - Country Focus (December 2024).

In September 2025, the Balochistan cabinet approved the first-ever Transgender Policy, which bans hate speech and sets out rules for transgender rights and welfare.[1704] Furthermore, building on the 2018 Transgender Act 2018, in early 2026, KP province announced targeted policies to enhance the inclusion and protection of transgender persons in the areas of welfare, shelters, jobs and protection.[1705]

[1693] ILGA, Consensual same-sex sexual acts continue to be criminalised, n.a., url;
HRW, Pakistan, Events of 2025, 5 February 2026, url
[1694] Pakistan, The Pakistan Penal Code, 1860, url
[1695] Pakistan, Transgender Act, 2018, url
[1696] APTN, Namkeen's takes on her Trans Advocacy Week participation, 5 August 2025, url; ILGA Asia, Pakistan: Targeted harassment and expulsion of transgender individuals across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa needs to stop, 20 October 2025, url; HRW, Pakistan, Events of 2025, 5 February 2026, url
[1697] Nation (The), Shariat Court strikes down three sections of Transgender Act 2018, 19 May 2023, url
[1698] Rainbow Communities Tasmania, Open Life Is Difficult In Pakistan, 3 November 2025, url
[1699] Nation (The), Transgender Rights in Pakistan: Beyond the ID Card, 6 June 2025, url
[1700] Aurat Foundation, Pakistan based NGO, online interview with EUAA, 20 September 2024
[1701] USDOS, 2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Pakistan, 23 April 2024, url, p. 84
[1702] Aurat Foundation, Pakistan based NGO, online interview with EUAA, 20 September 2024
[1703] Pakistan Today, Islamic groups reject Transgender Act, denounce LGBTQ agenda as 'un-Islamic', 23 December 2025, url
[1704] Dawn, Balochistan cabinet approves landmark policies on transgender rights and minority welfare, bans hate speech, 12 September 2025, url
[1705] Express Tribune (The), K-P announces new transgender policy, 16 February 2026, url

Despite objections by Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman,[1706] in January 2026, the Parliament passed[1707] and the president Asif Ali Zardari signed into law the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill, which extends its protection to transgender individuals. [1708]

In Pakistan's 2017 national census, people were given three gender options: male, female, and a third category for those who declared themselves transsexuals.[1709] While Islamic groups in Pakistan recognise these categories, the umbrella of LGBTIQ+ has been described as 'un-Islamic' and rejected by some religious clerics.[1710] In the meanwhile, intersex persons remained excluded from national statistics as of 2025,[1711] and merging intersex identities under the transgender umbrella erases their distinct experiences.[1712]

According to Asia Pacific Transgender Network (ASTN), violence against transgender persons has been increasing in Pakistan[1713] including in KP.[1714]

The violent attacks against transgender community in KP had reportedly increased in the last few years. According to a December 2025 article published by The Friday Times, the transgender community in the KP province faced honour killings, violence and forced displacement.[1715] The KP province recorded 267 cases of violence against transgender persons in the last five years, with only one resulting in a conviction, as reported by Human Rights Watch in 2024.[1716]

According to media reports, at least seven transgender women were killed in KP in 2024.[1717] Transgender women also experience online hate.[1718] In 2025, transgender persons were subjected to harassment and forced expulsion, as reported by ILGA Asia.[1719] In September 2025, a group of political and community elders formed a committee to expel transgender

[1706] Dawn, Fazl objects to legislations enacted to combat child marriages and domestic violence, protect transgender people, 25 November 2025, url
[1707] Daily Times, Parliament passes Domestic Violence Act 2026, threats to wife criminalized, 24 January 2026, url; Nation (The), Second marriage, divorce threats against wife now punishable offenses under new law, 25 January 2026, url
[1708] Nation (The), Second marriage, divorce threats against wife now punishable offenses under new law, 25 January 2026, url
[1709] Dawn, Pakistan's 6th census: A third sex, nine languages, many faiths, 13 March 2017, url; News Laundry, Pakistan: Census starts under heavy security, to record third sex for the first time, 16 March 2017, url
[1710] Pakistan Today, Islamic groups reject Transgender Act, denounce LGBTQ agenda as 'un-Islamic', 23 December 2025, url
[1711] Paradigm Shift, Invisible in Data: Why Intersex People in Pakistan Are Absent from National Statistics, 19 August 2025, url
[1712] Friday Times (The), The Unfulfilled Promise Of Equality: Intersex Rights In Pakistan, 12 February 2025, url
[1713] APTN, Namkeen's takes on her Trans Advocacy Week participation, 5 August 2025, url
[1714] Dawn, Transgender persons in Mardan protest rising attacks on them, 7 August 2025, url
[1715] Friday Times (The), Forced Displacement And Violence Against Transgender Community In KP, 2 December 2025, url
[1716] HRW, Pakistan: Events of 2024, 16 January 2025, url
[1717] HRW, Pakistan: Events of 2024, 16 January 2025, url
[1718] Media Matters for Democracy, Online Hate Isn't Just Virtual for Transgender Women in Pakistan – It's Lethal, 10 October 2025, url
[1719] ILGA Asia, Pakistan: Targeted harassment and expulsion of transgender individuals across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa needs to stop, 20 October 2025, url

persons from Swabi district in KP province.[1720] The expulsion decision was criticised by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP).[1721]

In 2024, at least 22 transgender persons were killed in Pakistan.[1722] In 2025, sources reported on cases of killings of transgender persons.[1723]

As reported by India Today in 2025, transgender persons in Pakistan continued to experience stigma, high cost of gender-affirming healthcare, and lack of specialised doctors when seeking medical services.[1724]

In October 2025, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Department launched the new Protection and Welfare Policy for Transgender and Intersex Persons policy, with aim to provide healthcare more accessible and respectful for transgender and intersex persons.[1725]

Although Pakistan opened the first school for transgender students in 2018[1726], education remains an obstacle for transgender due to 'harassment from peers and teachers'.[1727]

Many transgender persons face challenges to find employment and are forced into sex work,[1728] which increases their risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases and infections.[1729] To survive, some transgender persons beg and perform as dancers at weddings or birth celebrations, raising their level of vulnerability to violence and abuse.[1730]

Activists working on LGBTIQ rights can be seen by the authorities 'as promoting same-sex-relationships'. There were cases of activists and their family members being approached by state authorities and warned not to promote 'any capacity building of transgender populations.'[1731] No further information could be found on activists for LGBTIQ rights within the time constraints of drafting this report.

[1720] Dawn, Elders form body to 'expel' transgenders from Swabi, 14 September 2025, url; DW, Pakistan: Transgender people shaken by tribal expulsion, 25 September 2025, url
[1721] Dawn, HRCP condemns decision by elders to 'expel' transgender persons from KP's Swabi district, 14 September 2025, url
[1722] APTN, Namkeen's takes on her Trans Advocacy Week participation, 5 August 2025, url
[1723] Dawn, Transgender person killed in Malakand, 27 May 2025, url; Dawn, Transgender person shot dead in Peshawar, 10 July 2025, url; Dawn, Bodies of 3 transgender individuals found in Karachi's Memon Goth, 21 September 2025, url; BBC, Bodies of three transgender people found in Pakistan, 21 September 2025, url; DW, Pakistan: 3 transgender women shot dead in Karachi, 22 September 2025, url
[1724] India Today, Legal rights exist, but safe healthcare remains out of reach for Pakistan's transgender people, 24 October 2025, url
[1725] Express Tribune (The), New policy in K-P makes healthcare more accessible for transgender, intersex patients, 22 October 2025, url; Nation (The), KP Health Dept launches Welfare Policy on Transgenders, 23 October 2025, url Dawn, Hospitals asked to allocate separate wards, toilets to transgender persons, 23 October 2025, url
[1726] DW, Pakistan's first school for transgender students opens, 23 March 2018, url
[1727] Nation (The), Transgender Rights in Pakistan: Beyond the ID Card, 6 June 2025, url
[1728] Nation (The), Transgender Rights in Pakistan: Beyond the ID Card, 6 June 2025, url; APTN, Namkeen's takes on her Trans Advocacy Week participation, 5 August 2025, url
[1729] Guardian (The), Shunned and shamed, Pakistan's trans community finally gets help for TB, 3 January 2025, url
[1730] Guardian (The), Shunned and shamed, Pakistan's trans community finally gets help for TB, 3 January 2025, url
[1731] Senior representative at Vision, email communication with EUAA, 23, 30 September 2024

6.1.7. Critical voices and individuals perceived as opposing the state

(a) Members and supporters of opposition parties

The Pakistani Constitution allows every citizen to form or be a member of a political party 'subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interest of the sovereignty or integrity of Pakistan'.[1732] As of February 2026, there were 171 registered political parties in Pakistan.[1733] Freedom House notes that while political parties participate in national, provincial and local elections, the army, which is regarded as more powerful than the elected politicians, is able to influence the outcome.[1734] For more information see section 2.1.1. Landscape of political parties in Pakistan.

In 2025, political opposition continued to be subjected to crackdown in the country.[1735] The exclusion of Pakistan Tehreek-e Insaf (PTI) candidates from formally participating in the 2024 general elections by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) was allegedly influenced by the Pakistani army.[1736]

By December 2024, military courts sentenced several individuals linked to PTI to prison terms following the May 2023 unrest after the arrest of Imran Khan.[1737] The use of military courts to try civilians raised significant concerns among international observers.[1738] Human Rights Watch expressed serious concerns regarding the right to a fair trial,[1739] while the European Union, the United States, and the United Kingdom condemned Pakistan's use of military courts to prosecute civilians.[1740]

By August 2025, thousands of supporters of Imran Khan continued to protest across Pakistan, demanding his release from prison.[1741] During these demonstrations, more than 240 PTI supporters were reportedly arrested[1742] and 122 detained.[1743] Pakistani courts subsequently convicted nearly 200 supporters for their involvement in the violent protests that followed Khan's 2023 arrest.[1744] In addition, an anti-terrorism court sentenced 108 members of the PTI

[1732] Pakistan, The constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, n.d., url, Art. 17
[1733] Pakistan, ECP, list of political parties, 17 February 2026, url
[1734] Freedom House, Freedom in the world, 2025, Pakistan, 6 June 2025, url
[1735] HRW, Pakistan, Events of 2025, 5 February 2026, url
[1736] Freedom House, Freedom in the world, 2025, Pakistan, 6 June 2025, url; New York Times (The), Pakistan's military has swayed many elections. Now it's going full tilt., 7 February 2024, url; ACLED, Political repression and militant targeting set the stage for Pakistan's 2024 elections, 1 February 2024, url
[1737] Pakistan Today, PTI rejects military courts sentencing of civilians, 22 December 2025, url
[1738] HRW, Pakistan, Events of 2025, 5 February 2026, url; Express Tribune (The), PTI rejects CB ruling on military courts, 8 May 2025, url; Reuters, US, UK and EU condemn Pakistan military courts over sentencing of civilians, 23 December 2024, url
[1739] HRW, Pakistan, Events of 2025, 5 February 2026, url
[1740] Reuters, US, UK and EU condemn Pakistan military courts over sentencing of civilians, 23 December 2024, url
[1741] Al Jazeera, Imran Khan's supporters rally in Pakistan on two years of imprisonment, 5 August 2025, url
[1742] DW, Pakistan: Hundreds of Imran Khan supporters arrested, 5 August 2025, url; Al Jazeera, Imran Khan's supporters rally in Pakistan on two years of imprisonment, 5 August 2025, url
[1743] DW, Pakistan: Hundreds of Imran Khan supporters arrested, 5 August 2025, url;
[1744] AP, Pakistani opposition leader and nearly 200 Imran Khan supporters sentenced over 2023 riots, 31 July 2025, url

to prison for protesting against the military after Khan's arrest and also disqualified six PTI legislators.[1745]

As of 12 December 2025, Imran Khan tasked Secretary General Salman Akram Raja with forming a 23-member political committee of PTI, with the restructured body including senior leaders such as party chairman Gohar Ali Khan.[1746] On 27 December 2025, over 1 000 PTI supporters were detained in Pakistan ahead of protests demanding the release of Imran Khan.[1747] Military courts were reportedly used for trials related to PTI.[1748] By 30 January 2026, Imran Khan continued to be imprisoned in isolation with no visitors allowed for weeks.[1749]

On 12 February 2026, PTI leaders Raja Azhar and Faheem Khan were reportedly subjected to custodial torture at Awami Police Station in Sindh, where they were blindfolded, beaten, verbally abused, and humiliated.[1750] On 19 February 2026, a Pakistani opposition alliance called off nationwide sit-ins over jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's health, while his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf launched a new mobilisation campaign, including the formation of an 'Imran Khan Release Force'.[1751] During the same period, police launched a crackdown on workers of PTI removing protesters from the Peshawar–Islamabad Motorway (M-1) and reopening the road after a five-day blockade by supporters demanding medical treatment for jailed former prime minister Imran Khan.[1752]

News reports informed that on 9 December 2024, the police in Karachi arrested 24 workers of Muttahida Qaumi Movement–London (MQM-L) including women and stopped their rally commemorating the party's martyrs' day in Azizabad. [1753] Similarly, on 11 December 2024, the police charged and arrested several supporters of MQM-L in Hyderabad during a commemoration gathering, where authorities blocked access to the memorial site with barbed wire, accused participants of chanting anti-Pakistan slogans and supporting exiled party leader Altaf Hussain, and registered criminal and anti-terrorism charges against dozens of supporters.[1754] During the same period, a judicial magistrate in Karachi released 24 supporters of MQM-L arrested for holding rallies, while in Hyderabad six activists were imprisoned for sedition and anti-terrorism charges.[1755] Meanwhile, Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) reorganised as a Karachi-based party, formally cutting ties with the London-based

[1745] BBC, Authorities jail 108 members of Imran Khan's party, 1 August 2025, url; Financial Times, Pakistan court sentences 108 opposition figures to 10 years in prison, 31 July 2025, url
[1746] Express Tribune (The), PTI forms 23-member political committee, excluding Ali Amin Gandapur, 12 December 2025, url; Pakistan Today, PTI reconstitutes 23-member Political Committee for future decision-making, 12 December 2025, url; The News Pakistan, PTI forms 23-member top political panel, 13 December 2025, url
[1747] Firstpost, Over 1,000 PTI supporters detained in Pakistan ahead of protests demanding Imran Khan's release, 27 December 2025, url
[1748] Pakistan Today, PTI rejects military courts sentencing of civilians, 22 December 2025, url; Express Tribune (The), PTI rejects CB ruling on military courts, 8 May 2025, url
[1749] BBC, Imran Khan not the only one silenced as Pakistan military stifles dissent, 30 January 2026, url
[1750] Dawn, Sindh PTI leaders allege custodial torture, demand justice, 12 February 2026, url
[1751] Arab News, Pakistan opposition ends protests, PTI forms 'Imran Khan Release Force' for jailed ex-PM, 19 February 2026, url
[1752] Dawn, Police clear motorway of PTI protesters after five days, 19 February 2026, url
[1753] Dawn, Karachi Police foil MQM-London rally in Azizabad, detain 24 protesters, 9 December 2024, url; News International (The), 24 MQM-L workers held over violating Section 144 discharged, 11 December 2024, url
[1754] Express Tribune (The), Six MQM-London workers arrested, 11 December 2024, url
[1755] Dawn, Court releases 24 MQM-L workers held for violating Section 144 in Karachi, 11 December 2024, url; News International (The), 24 MQM-L workers held over violating Section 144 discharged, 11 December 2024, url

MQM-L faction, which has operated independently since August 2016, [1756] a separation reiterated by MQM-P in January 2026.[1757]

In addition, the National Awami Party (NAP), a Pashtun political party, continues to be targeted by militant groups including the TTP, which has killed many of its leaders,[1758] resulting in 1 225 deaths among its members and workers by December 2025.[1759] The party continues to oppose the TTP, and criticise Pakistani military operations for their high security and economic costs to Pashtun-inhabited areas.[1760] In July 2025, Maulana Zeb Khan, a leader of the ANP, was killed by unknown gunmen in KP.[1761]

Meanwhile, political exclusion and opposition in Balochistan have fuelled an ongoing insurgency,[1762] with the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) carrying out attacks against security personnel.[1763] In response, the government has killed over 150 BLA militants.[1764] On 2 September 2025, a suicide bombing targeted a Balochistan National Party (BNP) rally in Quetta, killing 15 people and injuring 32.[1765] Daesh, which maintains presence in Balochistan, has claimed the attack.[1766] For more information see section 4.2.1. Balochistan.

(b) Human rights defenders and activists

The right to freedom of assembly is enshrined in the constitution,[1767] while the 2024 Peaceful Assembly and Public Order Act regulates public gatherings in Islamabad.[1768] Moreover, the Peaceful Assembly and Public Order Act permits the authorities to limit demonstrations in Islamabad on broad grounds including 'disruption of daily activities' and increases punishments for taking part in 'unlawful assemblies' from six months to three years imprisonment.[1769] In 2024, Amnesty International expressed concern that the Peaceful Assembly and Public Order Act may threaten the right to protest in Pakistan.[1770] According to a scholar Tehreem Sultan, the Act permits the Government to designate a specific area of

[1756] Geo News, Which MQM is real, wonders UK Judge Clive Jones, 29 November 2022, url
[1757] Daily Times, Khalid Maqbool reiterates MQM-P's post-2016 stance amid fresh allegations, 3 January 2026, url
[1758] International Crisis Group, Pakistan: responding to the militant surge on the Afghan border, 27 February 2026, url
[1759] Dawn, New terror threat biggest challenge, says ANP, 2 December 2025, url
[1760] International Crisis Group, Pakistan: responding to the militant surge on the Afghan border, 27 February 2026, url
[1761] Arab News, Awami National Party leader killed as militant violence escalates in northwest Pakistan, 11 July 2025, url
[1762] Al Jazeera, Why peace remains elusive in Pakistan's troubled Balochistan, 3 February 2026, url
[1763] BBC, Deadly gun and bomb attacks hit Pakistan's Balochistan province, 1 February 2026, url
[1764] Al Jazeera, Why peace remains elusive in Pakistan's troubled Balochistan, 3 February 2026, url
[1765] AA, Explosion at political rally in southwestern Pakistan leaves 15 dead, 3 September 2025, url; BBC, Bomb blast kills 15 near political rally in Pakistan, 4 September 2025, url
[1766] Arab News, Daesh claims suicide bombing at Pakistan political rally, killing 15, 3 September 2025, url
[1767] Pakistan, The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 1973, url, Art. 16
[1768] Pakistan, Peaceful Assembly and Public Order Act, 2024, url
[1769] Front Line Defenders, Global Analysis 2024/25, 2025, url, p. 27
[1770] AI, Pakistan: The new Peaceful Assembly and Public Order Act threatens the right to protest, 9 September 2024, url

Islamabad as a 'red zone' or 'high security zone', and consequently declare a blanket rule and ban all forms of gatherings.[1771]

In November 2024, the United Nations Human Rights Committee expressed concern regarding legislation restricting the right to assembly as reported by the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH).[1772]

Based on the 2026 Global Organized Crime Index developed by the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, restrictions imposed by the government on Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and freedom of press remain significant.[1773]

The CIVICUS Monitor rated the state of civic space in Pakistan as 'repressed'. Ongoing concerns include attacks on peaceful protests held by the opposition and human rights movements. Other ongoing concerns include the criminalisation, threats and harassment of human rights defenders and the failure to hold perpetrators to account. There have also been violations documented against women's rights activists.[1774] According to the same source, authorities are targeting activists, stifling protests and restricting digital spaces.[1775] Human rights defenders are arbitrarily criminalised on terrorism charges, while Pashtun rights movement was banned, and crackdowns on opposition and ethnic minority protests are 'rampant'.[1776]

Between February 2025 and November 2025, CIVICUS Monitor reported on repression of human rights groups, and targeting and criminalising Baloch and Pashtun activists by the government. Moreover, the government continued with unlawful mass surveillance and censorship and failed to address enforced disappearance.[1777] The crackdown on protests by the opposition in Jammu and Kashmir and criminalisation of protesters was also reported.[1778]

FIDH indicated that the 'systematic crackdown on peaceful protests' and targeting of Baloch defenders, especially the Baloch Yakjehti Committee (BYC), continued in 2025.[1779]

Human rights defenders in Pakistan are subjected to a range of attacks and abuses, including extra-judicial killings and violence, arbitrary arrest and detention, brutal sectarian violence, abduction and enforced disappearance, surveillance, threats and judicial harassment.[1780]

[1771] Sultan, Tehreem, Oxford Human Rights Lab, The Draconian Public Order Act – Protests Crackdown In Pakistan, 13 January 2025, url
[1772] FIDH, Pakistan: United Nations Human Rights Committee calls for urgent reforms echoing civil society recommendations, 27 November 2024, url
[1773] Global Organized Crime Index, Pakistan, 2026, url
[1774] CIVICUS Monitor, Pakistan, n.a., url
[1775] CIVICUS Monitor, Activists targeted, protests stifled, digital spaces gagged in Pakistan – CIVICUS Monitor Watchlist, 10 March 2025, url
[1776] CIVICUS Monitor, Activists targeted, protests stifled, digital spaces gagged in Pakistan – CIVICUS Monitor Watchlist, 10 March 2025, url
[1777] CIVICUS Monitor, Pakistan: Government criminalises activists, increases online controls and cracks down on protests by the opposition and ethnic groups, 26 February 2025, url
[1778] CIVICUS Monitor, Pakistan: Criminalisation of Baloch and Pashtun activists, harassment of journalists and crackdown on protests, 24 November 2025, url
[1779] FIDH, Pakistan: The authorities must end crackdown on Baloch human rights defenders, 27 May 2025, url
[1780] Front Line Defenders, #Pakistan, n.a., url

In 2024 and 2025, minority rights defenders in Pakistan, including from Baloch, Pashtun and Sindhi communities, were reportedly subjected to harassment, arrest, terror and treason charges, violence and travel bans, as reported by Front Line Defenders.[1781]

In March 2025, Amnesty International reported on systematic attacks on Baloch activists.[1782] Reportedly, police used tear gas[1783] and water cannon and fired blank shots to disperse protesters from the Baloch Yakjehti Committee (BYC).[1784] In July 2025, a civil rights organisation, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) reported on 'arbitrary, illegal and unjustified actions' by the Pakistani authorities directly affecting the HRCP's operations.[1785] Sources reported on cases of arrest of human rights defenders, activists, and protesters between December 2024 and April 2025 in Pakistan.[1786] Notably, in August 2024, a leader of PTM, Ali Wazir, was arrested in Islamabad on fabricated charges.[1787] Ali Wazir remained jailed in December 2024[1788] under the Maintenance of Public Order (MPO) Ordinance.[1789]

Volunteer activities, including social work, carried out by human rights defenders and activists, including the PTM,[1790] in areas affected by conflict, are subjected to targeting by the Pakistani army.[1791] The PTM, which is a civil society group supported by many Pashtun youth, has organised *uloosi pasoons* ('people's uprisings') in areas affected by militant violence and military operations, opposing militancy while also criticising the human and economic costs of counterinsurgency measures.[1792] The PTM also documents human rights abuses in areas affected by conflict such as enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings and landmine explosions.[1793]

The Pakistani government designated PTM as a 'proscribed organisation', and over 200 of its activists were arrested prior to a *jirga* (Pashtun elders' assembly).[1794] Two PTM workers went

[1781] Front Line Defenders, Global Analysis 2024/25, url, p. 74
[1782] AI, AI, Pakistan: Systematic attacks and relentless crackdown on Baloch activists must end, 27 March 2025, url
[1783] UN OHCHR, Pakistan: UN experts demand release of Baloch human rights defenders, and an end to crackdown on peaceful protest, 26 March 2025, url
[1784] Dawn, Tear gas, water cannon employed to disperse Baloch Yakjehti Committee protesters in Quetta, 22 March 2025, url
[1785] DW, Leading Pakistan rights group decries government crackdown, 26 July 2025, url
[1786] Ary News, FIA arrests multiple social media activists across Pakistan, 11 December 2024, url;
Dawn, Police disperse BYC protesters in Karachi, take 6 people into custody, 24 March 2025, url
[1787] UN HRC, Written statement* submitted by Tumuku Development and Cultural Union (TACUDU), a non governmental organization in special consultative status, 30 August 2024, url, p. 2; Arab News, Islamabad police arrest Pashtun rights activist Ali Wazir after road accident, 4 August 2024, url
[1788] Voicepk.net, Ali Wazir remains jailed despite courts clearing from all cases, lawyer says, 11 December 2025, url
[1789] AI, Pakistan 2024, April 2025, url
[1790] Taj F, De facto social work against enforced disappearances, targeted killings, and landmines: Insights from Pakistan's war on terror, BASW, 4 April 2025, url
[1791] Al Jazeera, Pakistan bans prominent Pashtun rights group citing security concerns, 7 October 2024, url; Dawn, CM condemns 'disappearance' of banned PTM workers, 14 November 2025, url; Dawn, Peshawar High Court upholds ban on PTM, its leaders, 5 February 2026, url; ANI, Pakistan: Peshawar High Court upholds ban on Pashtun Tahafuz Movement, and its leaders, 5 February 2026, url
[1791] Dawn, Punjab issues list of proscribed organisations, warns citizens against giving charity to these entities, 20 February 2026, url
[1792] International Crisis Group, Pakistan: Responding to the Militant Surge on the Afghan Border, 27 February 2026, url
[1793] Taj F, De facto social work against enforced disappearances, targeted killings, and landmines: Insights from Pakistan's war on terror, BASW, 4 April 2025, url
[1794] Al Jazeera, Pakistan bans prominent Pashtun rights group citing security concerns, 7 October 2024, url

missing on 13 November 2025 following their attendance in a peace *jirga,*[1795] and the PTM continued to remain banned as per the Peshawar High Court order issued in February 2026.[1796] The court upheld the government's decision to ban PTM and several of its leaders, including Manzoor Ahmad Pashteen.[1797] On 20 February 2026, the Punjab Home Department included the PTM among 89 proscribed organisations, warning that providing financial support or charity to these groups would constitute an offence under the Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997.[1798]

On 22 March 2025, police arrested Mahrang Baloch, chief organiser of the Baloch Yakjehti Committee (BYC), for 'inciting' violence, terrorism and creating disorder.[1799] On 24 March 2025, at least six activists were detained for reportedly disobeying a ban on gatherings in the city[1800] with the UN experts demanding their release.[1801] In July 2025, six Baloch activists, including Mahrang Baloch, Bebarg Zehri, Beebow Baloch, Shah Jee Sibghat Ullah, Ghaffar Qambarani and Gulzadi Baloch, were arbitrarily detained by the government, as reported by AI.[1802]

In April 2025, a lawyer advocating for the rights of Baloch people has faced repeated FIRs, travel bans, arrests, threats, and harassment.[1803] In January 2026, Amnesty International reported on judicial harassment of two human rights lawyers, Imaan Zainab Mazari-Hazir and Hadi Ali Chattha ,[1804] who were arrested[1805] and sentenced to 17 years of imprisonment under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) by the Sessions Court in Islamabad in January 2026.[1806]

In 2024, Amnesty International reported on activists being subjected to enforced disappearance. By June 2024, the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances received 197 missing persons' cases. In contrast, the Defence of Human Rights recorded 2 332 cases of enforced disappearances in 2024 as reported by Amnesty International.[1807] In 2024, Front Line Defenders recorded seven human rights defenders killed in Pakistan.[1808]

[1795] Dawn, CM condemns 'disappearance' of banned PTM workers, 14 November 2025, url
[1796] Dawn, Peshawar High Court upholds ban on PTM, its leaders, 5 February 2026, url
[1797] Dawn, Peshawar High Court upholds ban on PTM, its leaders, 5 February 2026, url; ANI, Pakistan: Peshawar High Court upholds ban on Pashtun Tahafuz Movement, and its leaders, 5 February 2026, url
[1798] Dawn, Punjab issues list of proscribed organisations, warns citizens against giving charity to these entities, 20 February 2026, url
[1799] BBC Monitoring, Explainer: Arrest of Pakistan's Baloch leader highlights local unrest, 24 March 2025, url
[1800] AI, Pakistan: Systematic attacks and relentless crackdown on Baloch activists must end, 27 March 2025, url
[1801] UN OHCHR, UN OHCHR, Pakistan: UN experts demand release of Baloch human rights defenders, and an end to crackdown on peaceful protest, 26 March 2025, url;
[1802] AI, Pakistan: Release All Detained Baloch Activists, 15 July 2025, url
[1803] Voicepk.net, "I fought silently before, I'll fight this too": Quetta lawyer faces PECA charges for supporting Baloch activist, 27 April 2025, url
[1804] AI, Pakistan: Authorities must end judicial harassment of lawyers Imaan Mazari and Hadi Chatta, 16 January 2026, url; AI, Pakistan, human rights lawyers imprisoned, 2 February 2026, url
[1805] Dawn, Social media posts case: Court directs Islamabad DIG to arrest Imaan, Hadi 'within 24 hours', 16 January 2026, url
[1806] ICJ, Pakistan: Arbitrary arrest and sentencing of human rights lawyers Imaan Zainab Mazari-Hazir and Hadi Ali Chattha, 29 January 2026, url; Front Line Defenders, Pakistan: Imaan Zainab Mazari and Hadi Ali Chattha sentenced to 17 years imprisonment, 30 January 2026, url
[1807] AI, Pakistan 2024, April 2025, url
[1808] Front Line Defenders, Global Analysis 2024/25, url, p. 9

Arbitrary inclusion of 32 individuals, including Baloch activists, as “proscribed persons” under section 11-EE of the Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997. The Balochistan authorities, through notifications issued on 2 and 16 October, have designated 32 individuals from Khuzdar, Kech and Chagai districts in Balochistan province under the Fourth Schedule of the Anti-Terrorism Act as “proscribed individuals”. These include women activists such as Dr. Sabiha Baloch, Sammi Deen Baloch, Naz Gul and Syed Babi Sharif and Shalee Assa.[1809]

The designation places the individuals under heavy surveillance and severely restricts their freedom of movement and ability to take part in public life. Proscribed individuals are forbidden from traveling without permission from the local police. Moreover, the proscription grants powers to the authorities to investigate and freeze financial assets of the person or their immediate family members.[1810] For instance, in January 2024, Sindhi human rights defender Amar Sindhu was reportedly subjected to cyber-harassment and intimidation through fake social media accounts, while in January 2025 the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders raised concerns about an online smear campaign targeting her.[1811]

(c) Protestors

The constitution of Pakistan states that ‘Every citizen shall have the right to assemble peacefully and without arms, subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interest of public order’.[1812] Peaceful protests are allowed in the country,[1813] and during the period between 1 November 2024 and 24 April 2026, ACLED recorded 1 114 protests across the country with majority in Sindh, followed by Punjab, KP, Balochistan. During the same period, 274 riots were also recorded, with most occurring in Sindh, followed by Punjab, Balochistan, and KP.[1814]

The UN Human Rights Committee raised concerns about restrictions on peaceful assembly in Pakistan, including blanket bans on gatherings and the use of sedition and unlawful assembly provisions to detain protesters.[1815] These measures reportedly affected human rights defenders, activists, political opponents, and ethnic or religious minorities.[1816] The committee also indicated reports of intimidation, enforced disappearances, torture, excessive force, and mass arbitrary arrests during protests such as the Aurat March, the Baloch Long March, the Baloch Raji Machi, and the Pashtun Qaumi Jirga.[1817] Freedom House noted that authorities continued to retain broad legal powers to prohibit gatherings deemed threats to public order

[1809] AI, Pakistan: Inclusion of Baloch activists on terrorist watchlist an affront to human rights, 23 October 2025, url
[1810] AI, Pakistan: Inclusion of Baloch activists on terrorist watchlist an affront to human rights, 23 October 2025, url
[1811] AHRC, PAKISTAN: Government criminalises activists, increases online controls and cracks down on protests by the opposition and ethnic groups, 26 February 2026, url
[1812] Pakistan, The constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, n.d., url, Art. 16
[1813] Freedom House, World in 2025, Pakistan, 6 June 2025, url
[1814] EUAA analysis based on publicly available ACLED data. ACLED, Data Export Tool, Pakistan, data covering 1 November 2024 to 24 April 2026, as of 29 April 2026, url
[1815] UN ICCPR, Human Rights Committee, concluding observations on the second periodic report of Pakistan, CCPR/C/PAK/CO/2, 2 December 2024, url, para. 50
[1816] UN ICCPR, Human Rights Committee, concluding observations on the second periodic report of Pakistan, CCPR/C/PAK/CO/2, 2 December 2024, url, para. 50
[1817] UN ICCPR, Human Rights Committee, concluding observations on the second periodic report of Pakistan, CCPR/C/PAK/CO/2, 2 December 2024, url, para. 50

and use structured law enforcement to suppress assemblies viewed by the military as harmful to national security or as challenges to its authority.[1818]

In February 2025, several protesters have been killed in clashes with police in Pakistan-administered Kashmir.[1819] In October 2025, Amnesty International reported that Pakistani authorities used excessive force against protests in Pakistan-administered Jammu and Kashmir, and called on the government to protect the right to peaceful assembly and lift the communications blackout.[1820]

In April 2025, UN experts 'condemned reports of widespread torture, ill-treatment, extrajudicial killings and indiscriminate violence by security forces, especially against peaceful protesters, and Baloch human rights defenders.'[1821]

On 1 March 2026, over 26 protesters were killed in Pakistan when security forces[1822] used live fire, tear gas and rubber bullets.[1823] Most of the demonstrations took place in the cities of Skardu, Gilgit, Karachi, Islamabad, Lahore, and Peshawar[1824] including protests by the Pakistani Shia community[1825] in response to the killing of Iran's Supreme leader, Ayatullah Ali Khamenei, in a US-Israel attack.[1826]

(d) Journalists and media workers

Article 19 of the Constitution guarantees freedom of the press; however, this right is subject to 'to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interest of the glory of Islam or the integrity, security or defence of Pakistan or any part thereof, friendly relations with foreign States, public order, decency or morality, or in relation to contempt of court, [commission of] or incitement to an offence'.[1827]

Despite the opposition by journalists and media bodies,[1828] the amendment to the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) was passed by the National Assembly[1829] and signed into law by the president Asif Ali Zardari in January 2025.[1830] The amendment empowers government agencies with the authority to imprison individuals for up to three years for spreading disinformation on social media. The law also authorises the government to impose fines of up to two million rupees [around 6 000 EUR] for spreading disinformation on social media; and introduces the requirement to register social media platforms with the new Social Media

[1818] Freedom House, World in 2025, Pakistan, 6 June 2025, url
[1819] DW, Pakistan : Kashmir unrest leave 8 dead, 10 February 2025, url
[1820] AI, Pakistan: Authorities must protect the right to peaceful protest and lift communications blackout amid Jammu & Kashmir protests, 2 October 2025, url
[1821] UN OHCHR, UN experts urge Pakistan to address human rights violations in Balochistan, 29 April 2025, url
[1822] AI, Pakistan: Investigation urgently needed after killings during Iran protests, 2 March 2026, url
[1823] MEE, At least 23 protesters killed in Pakistan after killing of Iran's Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, 2 March 2026, url
[1824] AI, Pakistan: Investigation urgently needed after killings during Iran protests, 2 March 2026, url
[1825] Al Jazeera, Anger on Pakistan streets, 20 dead, after US-Israel strike kills Khamenei, 2 March 2026, url
[1826] AP, At least 22 people killed in Pakistan as protesters try to storm US Consulate, 2 March 2026, url
[1827] Pakistan, The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 1973, url, Art. 19
[1828] Dawn, President Zardari assents to Peca amendment law despite journalists' calls to desist, 29 January 2025, url; PPF, President Zardari Signs PECA Amendment Bill Into Law Amid Journalists' Protests, 30 January 2025, url
[1829] Pakistan, The Prevention of Electronic Crimes (Amendment) Act, 2025 ('Amendment'), url
[1830] Dawn, President Zardari assents to Peca amendment law despite journalists' calls to desist, 29 January 2025, url; PPF, President Zardari Signs PECA Amendment Bill Into Law Amid Journalists' Protests, 30 January 2025, url

Protection and Regulatory Authority.[1831] According to the president of Pakistan's Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ), Afzal Butt, no journalistic body was consulted by the government before enacting the law.[1832] Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ), Dastoor President Haji Muhammad Nawaz Raza, and Secretary General, AH Khanzada, termed the law amendments as an 'attack on freedom of expression'.[1833] Following the Senate's approval of the PECA amendments, journalists staged protests across the country, and specifically in Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore, Quetta, Faisalabad, Bahawalnagar and Sukkur.[1834]

In November 2025, the government established a 12-member Commission for the Protection of Journalists and Media Professionals, including journalists from across the country. The aim of the commission is to safeguard the rights and safety of journalists as per the 2021 Protection of Journalists and Media Professionals Act.[1835]

In 2025, Pakistan fell six places, from 152nd in 2024 to 158,th according to World Press Freedom Index by Reporters Without Borders (RSF).[1836] The Council of Pakistan Newspaper Editors (CPNE) expressed concerns over the state of media freedom in Pakistan, specifically with journalists and media organisations being subjected to pressure, censorship, and punitive actions.[1837]

The state of civic space in Pakistan has been categorised as 'repressed' by CIVICUS Monitor since 2018.[1838] According to the same source, in 2025, Pakistan continued to criminalise activists, target journalists, and suppress protests.[1839]

In the period between November 2024 and December 2024, sources reported on partial suspension of internet by the government.[1840] The internet and mobile services were suspended in Balochistan Intermittently in 2025.[1841]

As reported by CIVICUS Monitor in 2025, journalists were targeted under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) and accused of allegedly spreading 'false narratives against state institutions.'[1842] Furthermore, PECA has been allegedly used to silence dissent, as

[1831] DW, Pakistan: Journalists slam new law regulating social media, 24 January 2025, url
[1832] Reuters, Pakistani journalism body criticises new law regulating social media, 24 January 2025, url
[1833] Dawn, NA passes controversial Peca amendment bill amid walkout by PTI, journalists, 23 January 2025, url
[1834] Dawn, Senate's approval of contentious Peca amendments bill triggers protests across country, 28 January 2025, url
[1835] Dawn, Govt forms journalists' protection commission, 15 November 2025, url; Pakistan, PID, Inaugural Meeting of the Commission for the Protection of Journalists and Media Professionals held, 25 November 2025, url
[1836] RSF, Pakistan, n.a., url
[1837] Dawn, 'Media faced extreme punitive actions in 2025', 1 January 2026, url
[1838] CIVICUS Monitor, Pakistan, n.a., url
[1839] CIVICUS Monitor, Activists targeted, protests stifled, digital spaces gagged in Pakistan – CIVICUS Monitor Watchlist, 10 March 2025, url; CIVICUS Monitor, Pakistan, n.a., url
[1840] RFE/RL, Pakistani Capital Locked Down, Internet Partially Suspended Ahead Of Protest, 24 November 2024, url; Index on Censorship, Pakistan faces increasing internet censorship, 19 December 2024, url; Access Now, #KeepItOn: authorities in Pakistan must stop the ongoing suppression of digital rights, 12 December 2024, url
[1841] Reuters, Pakistan suspends mobile data service in restive province, 8 August 2025, url; AI, "The Pakistani government shut down the internet. I couldn't even tell my family I was safe", 4 September 2025, url; Dawn, Mobile internet suspended in Balochistan till November 16, 12 November 2025, url
[1842] CIVICUS Monitor, Activists targeted, protests stifled, digital spaces gagged in Pakistan – CIVICUS Monitor Watchlist, 10 March 2025, url

reported by Amnesty International.[1843] In 2025, Human Rights Watch reported that government threats and attacks on journalists created 'a climate of fear' with many journalists exercising self-censorship. Moreover, journalists faced harassment, arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, and physical attacks for reporting critically of the government and security forces.[1844]Journalists in Pakistan continue to face threats and censorship, which limits investigative reporting on organised crime and corruption. Pakistan's media environment has further deteriorated, with increasing state surveillance, legal intimidation and press censorship. The government's control over information flow raised concerns about freedom of expression and access to independent reporting.[1845]

According to Pakistan Press Foundation's (PPF) Impunity Day Report 2025, at least 137 attacks on journalists were documented between January and October 2025. These included 35 physical assaults, five detentions, two abductions, and four attacks on media property. Journalists also continued to face legal pressures, with eight arrests, 30 cases registered—including 22 under PECA— and 23 actions from investigative and cybercrime agencies. The report also noted 19 incidents of intimidation and harassment.[1846]

In the period between January 2024 and December 2024, PPF documented at least 168 confirmed attacks on journalists and media professionals in connection to the work and attempts of censorship to regulate and restrict free expression either through punitive measures or regulation including two murders, 76 instances of assault, four instances of abduction, 12 attacks on property, five arrests, 12 detentions, 15 instances of case registration, eight documented instances of FIA action and two of other legal action, two instances of placement on the Exit Control List, 15 instances of online harassment, five threats, 31 instances of censorship including 19 instances of internet, mobile connectivity and social media platform disruptions including the ban on X, four restrictive directives by the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) – the broadcast regulator –, and eight other directives, orders or actions tantamount to censorship.[1847]

Between 2024 and 2026, sources reported that journalists in Pakistan were subjected to harassment,[1848] intimidation,[1849] and surveillance by the Pakistani government.[1850] In addition, Voicepk.net reported that television journalism in Pakistan experienced increased restrictions in 2025, with a number of anchor persons reportedly taken off-air or forced to leave their

[1843] AI, Pakistan: Authorities pass bill with sweeping controls on social media, 24 January 2025, url
[1844] HRW, Pakistan, Events of 2025, 2026, url
[1845] Global Organized Crime Index, Pakistan, 2026, url
[1846] PPF, PPF Welcomes Much-Delayed Establishment of Federal Commission for Protection of Journalists and Media Professionals, 18 November 2025, url
[1847] PPF, Pakistani Journalism Under Pressure In A Tightly Restricted Political Environment, Safety, Threats and Internet Shutdowns, Press Freedom and Media Safety in Pakistan in 2024, 2024, url, p. 5
[1848] CPJ, Pakistani authorities summon journalist Harmeet Singh over alleged anti-state rhetoric, 17 December 2024, url; CIVICUS Monitor, Pakistan: Criminalisation of Baloch and Pashtun activists, harassment of journalists and crackdown on protests, 24 November 2025, url; IFJ, Pakistan: Digital journalist Sohrab Barkat detained for over two months, 13 February 2026, url
[1849] VOA, Pakistan media experienced surge in violence, suppression in 2024, 18 December 2024, url
CPJ, Pakistan journalist Nadir Abbas Baloch targeted with intimidation, threats, 27 January 2026, url; Express Tribune (The), Media in Pakistan still stifled by censorship and threats in 2025, 1 January 2026, url
[1850] AI, Pakistan: Shadows of Control: Censorship and mass surveillance in Pakistan, 9 September 2025, url, pp. 15-16

programmes, including Kashif Abbasi, Habib Akram, Paras Jahanzeb, Samina Pasha, Sami Ibrahim, Arif Hameed Bhatti, and Khalid Jamil.[1851]

In November 2025, PPF condemned the circulation of an AI-generated video targeting and harassing journalist Benazir Shah.[1852]

In 2025, local news media Dawn reported on attacks against journalists in Pakistan.[1853] In the period between January 2025 and October 2025, Pakistan Press Foundation (PPF) documented at least 137 confirmed attacks on journalists and media professionals.[1854] In January 2026, Pakistan Press Foundation (PPF) expressed concern about a trend with journalists being subjected to violence while reporting during large political rallies or gatherings.[1855] On 11 January 2026, the vehicle of Aaj News media was attacked by the PTI supporters.[1856]

In 2025, CIVICUS Monitor reported on a raid on a press club.[1857] Specifically, on 2 October 2025, Islamabad police carried out a raid at the National Press Club (NPC) and reportedly attacked several journalists.[1858]

Local and international media reported on several arrests of journalists between the end of 2024 and beginning of 2026 in Pakistan. In November 2024, a journalist Matiullah Jan was arrested on narcotics and terrorist charges.[1859] According to the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), the arrest of Matiullah Jan was allegedly due to his reporting on casualties during Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) protests,[1860] which were denied by the government.[1861]

In March 2025, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) in Karachi arrested a journalist and the founder of media agency Raftar, Farhan Mallick over the content of his YouTube videos. The charges included activities involving 'several programmes against the security establishment'.[1862] In December 2025, the journalist Sohrab Barkat was arrested in Islamabad over allegedly spreading misinformation about state institutions.[1863] In addition, reports

[1851] Voicepk.net, Pakistan's media under siege as worldwide journalist deaths reach 128 in 2025, 2 January 2025, url
[1852] PPF, PPF condemns AI-generated attack on Benazir Shah; urges urgent accountability, 18 November 2025, url
[1853] Dawn, Attacking the press, 3 October 2025, url
[1854] PPF, Attacked, Threatened, Booked and Silenced, November 2025, url, p. 2
[1855] PPF, PPF condemns assault on Aaj News team during PTI rally in Karachi; expresses alarm at repeated attacks on journalists during political rallies, 13 January 2026, url
[1856] Aaj News, PTI workers attacked Aaj News DSNG, reporter and cameraman injured, 11 January 2026, url
[1857] CIVICUS Monitor, Pakistan, n.a., url
[1858] Dawn, Probe ordered after Islamabad police storm National Press Club, assault journalists, 2 October 2025, url; Aaj News, Islamabad Police storm National Press Club, assault journalists, smash cameras, 2 October 2025, url; IFJ, Pakistan: Police raid press club and assault media workers, 10 October 2025, url
[1859] Voicepk.net, Narcotics case not yet quashed, says Matiullah Jan, 3 November 2024, url; IFJ, Pakistan: Journalist arrested on false terrorism charges, 3 December 2024, url
[1860] IFJ, Pakistan: Journalist arrested on false terrorism charges, 3 December 2024, url
[1861] Al Jazeera, Dead but not counted: Hidden victims of Pakistan's latest political clash, 4 December 2024, url
[1862] Dawn, FIA arrests journalist Farhan Mallick over content of videos, 20 March 2025, url
[1863] Journalism Pakistan, Sohrab Barkat's airport arrest defies court directive, 27 November 2025, url; Dawn, NCCIA gets remand of digital journalist Sohrab Barkat, 29 November 2025, url; CPJ, Pakistani journalist Sohrab Barkat detained over interview with opposition politician, 2 December 2025, url

indicate that journalists were also subjected to movement restrictions, including placement on the Exit Control List, preventing them from travelling abroad.[1864]

In January 2026, Pakistan Press Foundation (PPF) expressed concern over arrest of the freelance journalist Muhammad Aslam Shah by the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA).[1865] Reportedly covering the topic of Karachi's water,[1866] journalist Aslam Shah was arrested under the 2025 Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA)[1867] and charged with allegedly 'defamation through social media'.[1868]

In 2025, Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) reported on widely documented kidnappings and forced disappearances of journalists in Pakistan, including the cases of Imran Riaz Khan and Sami Ibrahim, who were abducted in May 2023 and later released.[1869]

According to news outlet ANI News and CPJ, a Balochistan journalist, affiliated with the Barkhan Press Club, Asif Kareem Khetran allegedly forcibly disappeared in March 2025.[1870]

In 2024, RSF described Pakistan as one of the world's most dangerous countries for journalists.[1871] Out of a total of seven journalists killed, two journalists were killed by Tehrik-e-Taliban in Pakistan (TTP) in 2024.[1872] In the period between 1 January 2025 and 30 December 2025, three Pakistani journalists were killed in the line of duty according to IFJ.[1873] In October 2025, multiple sources reported on killing of the journalist Imtiaz Mir[1874] by a militant group Lashkar Sarullah, an offshoot the Zainabiyoun Brigade, an alleged Iranian-backed Shia militant group.[1875]

As noted by Balochistan coordinator for Freedom Network – an NGO working on journalist safety – Hameedullah Sherani, the situation in Balochistan remains hostile to journalists. Moreover, at least 40 journalists were killed in Balochistan since 2005.[1876] In May 2025, the journalist Latif Baloch was shot dead in Balochistan.[1877]

[1864] Voicepk.net, Pakistan's media under siege as worldwide journalist deaths reach 128 in 2025, 2 January 2025, url
[1865] PPF, PPF expresses concern over the arrest of Karachi-based journalist Muhammad Aslam Shah on defamation charges and the delay in his bail hearing, 13 January 2026, url
[1866] Dawn, Journalist Aslam Shah arrested over defamation charges, 7 January 2026, url
[1867] Dawn, Journalist held under Peca in Karachi sent to prison after NCCIA remand denied, 8 January 2026, url
[1868] Dawn, Journalist Aslam Shah arrested over defamation charges, 7 January 2026, url
[1869] CPJ, Exiled Pakistani journalist's brothers 'abducted,' another journalist disappears, 20 March 2025, url
[1870] ANI News, Balochistan journalist who alleged Pakistan army intimidation goes missing; "forcibly disappeared," claim rights activists, 16 March 2025, url; CPJ, Exiled Pakistani journalist's brothers 'abducted,' another journalist disappears, 20 March 2025, url
[1871] RSF, RSF 2024 Round-up: Journalists killed, detained, held hostage and missing, 2024, url, p. 6
[1872] RSF, RSF 2024 Round-up: Journalists killed, detained, held hostage and missing, 2024, url, p. 4
[1873] IFJ, Journalists and media workers killed since 01 January 2025, 2025, url, pp. 4, 6, 8
[1874] Dawn, Anchorperson Imtiaz Mir succumbs to injuries suffered during last week's Karachi gun attack, 28 September 2025, url; Journalism Pakistan, Journalist Imtiaz Mir shot in Karachi, dies during treatment, 29 September 2025, url; CPJ, Pakistani journalist Imtiaz Mir killed by militant group in Karachi, 31 October 2025, url
[1875] Dawn, Banned outfit targeted journalist Imtiaz Mir: home minister, 28 October 2025, url; CPJ, Pakistani journalist Imtiaz Mir killed by militant group in Karachi, 31 October 2025, url
[1876] Voicepk.net, Awaran journalist Abdul Latif Baloch shot dead, 24 May 2025, url
[1877] CPJ, Prominent Pakistani journalist Latif Baloch shot dead in Balochistan province, 27 May 2025, url

In December 2025, RSF reported on Pakistani government continuous harassment and persecution of a journalist and the founder of the investigative website Fact Focus, Ahmad Noorani, who has been living in exile since 2020.[1878]

In January 2026, a Pakistani anti-terrorism court sentenced several journalists and social media commentators to life imprisonment *in absentia* after convicting them of terrorism-related offences linked to online activity in support of jailed former prime minister Imran Khan.[1879] According to CPJ, the convicted persons were allegedly guilty of anti-state and terrorism offences under Pakistan's Penal Code and the Anti-Terrorism Act.[1880] Most of these convicted persons live outside Pakistan.[1881]

6.1.8. Education personnel

According to the scholar Samra Nazeer, in Pakistan, extremist groups have repeatedly targeted schools as part of a strategy 'aimed at stopping education, weakening communities, and spreading fear'. According to the same source, education systems in conflict-prone regions face additional burdens, including lack of resources, insecurity, teacher shortages, and disrupted learning. School attacks and their consequences on the communities and teachers affected the capacity to support children's education.[1882]

Some recorded attacks on schools, educational personnel, and students, carried out in the period between 2024 and 2026 in Pakistan, include *inter alia*:

- On 1 November 2024, an attack targeting police guarding a vaccination drive was carried out in Mastung (a town in Balochistan). At least nine people, including five school children were killed and 23 injured at a nearby girls' school.[1883]
- On 7 May 2025, the Masjid-e- Markaz Taiba religious school in Muridke, Punjab province, was attacked as India launched a military operation on Pakistan.[1884]
- On 21 May 2025, a suicide attack on a school was carried out in Balochistan[1885] with at least six people killed and dozens wounded.[1886]

[1878] RSF, Pakistan continues to persecute journalist in exile, issuing new arrest warrant, 24 December 2025, url
[1879] Reuters, Pakistan court sentences journalists to life over links to protests after Imran Khan's arrest, 2 January 2026, url; Al Jazeera, Pakistan court sentences journalists to life over 2023 pro-Khan protests, 2 January 2026, url; AP News, Pakistan sentences journalists, YouTubers and ex-military officers to life over inciting violence, 2 January 2026, url
[1880] CPJ, Harassed at home, convicted abroad: Pakistan steps up prosecution of overseas journalists, 19 January 2026, url
[1881] Reuters, Pakistan court sentences journalists to life over links to protests after Imran Khan's arrest, 2 January 2026, url; Al Jazeera, Pakistan court sentences journalists to life over 2023 pro-Khan protests, 2 January 2026, url; AP News, Pakistan sentences journalists, YouTubers and ex-military officers to life over inciting violence, 2 January 2026, url
[1882] Nazeer, Samra, When Education is Under Attack, 16 November 2025, url, pp. 2, 4
[1883] Al Jazeera, Five children among nine killed in attack on Pakistan polio vaccine drive, 1 November 2024, url
[1884] CNN, India launches attacks on Pakistan after Kashmir massacre, 7 May 2025, url
[1885] Al Jazeera, At least six killed in school bus blast in Pakistan's Balochistan, 21 May 2025, url; Guardian (The), Pakistan blames India for suspected suicide attack on school bus, 21 May 2025, url; Reuters, Suicide bomber kills five on school bus in Pakistan's Balochistan, 21 May 2025, url
[1886] UN Meetings Coverage and Press Releases, Security Council Press Statement on Terrorist Attack in Pakistan, 22 May 2025, url

- According to media sources, a vaccination team was attacked at a local school by a group of civilian men and women on 3 November 2025 in Lahore. Seven people involved in the attack were arrested by police.[1887]
- On 10 November 2025, a Pakistani militant group Jaish-ul-Hind (JuH) attacked Cadet College in Wana – South Waziristan district near the Afghan border – and captured more than 600 cadets and teachers.[1888] Two days later, all teachers and students were rescued by the Pakistan Army while the attackers were killed.[1889]
- On 11 December 2025, an explosion of a government primary school in the Khushali area of Ayaz Kot in North Waziristan was carried out by unidentified militants. The destroyed institution was the only functional primary school in the area for more than 600 students.[1890]
- On 15 December 2025, the Express Tribune reported on an attack on a girls' primary school by unidentified armed men in the village of Epi in North Waziristan.[1891]
- On 3 January 2026, a drone attack was carried out on Al-Fatah Public High School in the Huso Khel area of Mir Ali in North Waziristan, injuring the school principal and teachers.[1892]
- On 15 January 2026, a female teacher was shot dead by unidentified assailants outside a school's premises in Balochistan.[1893]

The attacks on schools and educational personnel resulted in school closures. For example, in December 2024, Pakistani authorities closed all private and public schools in Islamabad, Rawalpindi, and Lahore after receiving intelligence of possible suicide attacks by Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Jamaat-ul-Ahrar. Officials say the closures were set on the 10th anniversary of the 2014 Army Public School (APS) massacre in Peshawar.[1894] In May 2025, Al Jazeera reported that authorities in Pakistan-administered Kashmir closed more than 1 000 religious schools over fears of possible retaliatory military action from India over last week's deadly attack in the disputed region.[1895]

Since 2007, over 1 000 schools were destroyed, and more than 300 teachers were killed in Pakistan as part of the TTP's systematic campaign against education..[1896]

[1887] Dunya News, Seven arrested for roughing up polio team in Lahore, 4 November 2025, url; Daily Pakistan, Seven arrested for attacking polio team in Lahore, 4 November 2025, url
[1888] ACLED, Asia-Pacific Overview: December 2025, 8 December 2025, url; Express Tribune (The), Attack on Pakistani Cadet College Foiled, 11 November 2025, url
[1889] Dawn, All students, teachers safely evacuated from Cadet College Wana; operation ongoing against terrorists, 12 November 2025, url; Dawn, Terror attack at cadet college foiled, students, staff rescued, 12 November 2025, url
[1890] Dawn, Attack on school in Mir Ali leaves future of over 600 students at risk, 11 December 2025, url; Express Tribune (The), Over 600 students impacted as North Waziristan primary school destroyed in explosion, 11 December 2025, url
[1891] Express Tribune (The), Another girls' school blown up in North Waziristan, 15 December 2025, url
[1892] Express Tribune (The), Terrorists' war on education, 6 January 2026, url
[1893] Express Tribune (The), Female teacher shot dead outside school in Balochistan's Sibi, 15 January 2026, url; Neindia, Female Teacher Shot Dead in Balochistan as Rights Groups Flag Rising Violence Against Baloch Women, 15 January 2026, url
[1894] Media Line (The), Pakistan Shuts Schools as Terror Threat Looms on APS Anniversary, 17 December 2024, url
[1895] Al Jazeera, Fears of attack in Pakistan-administered Kashmir amid acute India tensions, 1 May 2025, url
[1896] Express Tribune (The), Terrorists' war on education, 6 January 2026, url

In November 2025, the Punjab School Education Department issued an urgent directive to tighten security across all government and private schools in the province.[1897] Furthermore, Punjab Health Minister and Chairman of the Cabinet Committee on Law and Order, Khawaja Salman Rafique, directed the School Education Department to introduce security measures, including enforced boundary walls, guard training, and other essential security procedures across educational institutions in the province.[1898] The new safety protocols for all schools in Punjab was issued in January 2026.[1899]

6.1.9. Trafficking in Human Beings (THB)

In August 2024, the Director of Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Lahore, Sarfraz Khan Virk, announced a comprehensive renovation of the national system, declaring severe measures against perpetrators of human trafficking among other crimes.[1900] The announcement was followed by the changes to the national laws related to human trafficking and smuggling. In February 2025, the senate passed amendments to three already existing laws, specifically on Prevention of Trafficking in Persons, Prevention of Smuggling of Migrants, and Emigration.[1901] Some amendments to the above-mentioned legislation include *inter alia*:

1. The amended Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act:[1902]
    - expands the definition of trafficking to include organised begging;
    - increases penalties for traffickers - raising prison sentences from a minimum of three years to up to 14 years for offenses involving women and children. Fines for trafficking crimes now range from Rs 1 million (3 075 EUR) to Rs 2 million (7 150 EUR);[1903]
    - increases sentences for traffickers from 3-5 years to 7 years, with fines rising from Rs. 0.5 million [around 1 538 EUR] to Rs. 3 million [around 9 225 EUR] and Rs. 5 million [around 15 376 EUR]. Repeat offenders will face 10-14 years of imprisonment, with fines increased from Rs. 1 million [3 075 EUR] to Rs. 10 million [30 752 EUR], along with the confiscation of property.[1904]
2. The amended Prevention of Smuggling of Migrants Bill:[1905]
    - increases penalties for offenders, raising the maximum prison term from five years to 10 years and raising fines from Rs1 million (3 075 EUR) to Rs 10 million (30 750 EUR);

[1897] Pakistan Today, Punjab issues strict orders for schools, 19 November 2025, url
[1898] APP, Punjab orders strict implementation of security SOPs in schools, 3 December 2025, url
[1899] Tawun, Punjab School Security Measures: New Safety Protocols for All Schools, 14 January 2026, url
[1900] Daily Times, Corruption & trafficking to face full force of law: FIA, 25 August 2024, url
[1901] Business Recorder, 15 February 2025, Human traffickers, individuals: Senate passes 3 bills with a view to strengthening crackdown, url; Arab News, 15 February 2025, Pakistan Senate passes tougher laws to curb human smuggling, illegal migration, url; Library of Congress, Pakistan: Parliament Passes Bills to Prevent Human Trafficking and Overseas Organized Begging, 31 March 2025, url
[1902] Pakistan, Senate of Pakistan, Prevention of Trafficking in Persons (Amendment) Act, 2025, url
[1903] Arab News, Pakistan Senate passes tougher laws to curb human smuggling, illegal migration, 15 February 2025, url
[1904] Daily Times, NA approves three bills to fight human trafficking in response to the growing migrant boat tragedy, 18 February 2025, url
[1905] Pakistan, Senate of Pakistan, Prevention of Smuggling of Migrants (Amendment) Bill, 2025, url

- targets individuals who harbour undocumented foreigners in Pakistan, increasing their prison term from three years to five years and doubling fines to Rs 2 million (7 150 EUR).[1906]

3. The amended Emigration Bill:[1907]
    - courts will have fines and jail sentences at their disposal as forms of punishments for offenders.[1908]

Trafficking in Human Beings is 'deeply entrenched in Pakistan'[1909] as the country serves as a source, transit route, and destination for trafficked victims.[1910] The most prevalent form of trafficking is bonded labour,[1911] specifically in the agriculture, brick kiln and textile industry.[1912] People are also trafficked for forced labour, sexual exploitation, and drug industry.[1913] Children, refugees, and stateless persons are particularly vulnerable to trafficking.[1914]

Pakistan is considered a country of a high prevalence of modern slavery according to Walk Free, an international human rights group focused on the elimination of modern slavery. The number of people in modern slavery in Pakistan is estimated at of 2.3 million.[1915]

In 2024, USDOS reported that the Pakistani government had not taken adequate action against officials allegedly involved in trafficking crimes. According to the same source, in Sindh province, local officials were allegedly engaged in bonded labour, specifically in brick kilns and agriculture.[1916]

In the period between 2025 and 2026, local media reported on a number of arrests in cases of trafficking and smuggling of people:

- On 6 February 2025, the Gujrat (Punjab) FIA reportedly claimed having arrested two human traffickers, who were accused of migrant smuggling.[1917]
- On 13 April 2025, FIA arrested two Pakistani nationals accused of being involved in human smuggling and for a case of a boat sinking off the coast of Libya in 2023. Media reported that, upon their arrival in Libya, the migrants were subjected to detention, torture, and inhumane treatment in secret locations.[1918]

[1906] Arab News, Pakistan Senate passes tougher laws to curb human smuggling, illegal migration, 15 February 2025, url
[1907] Arab News, Pakistan Senate passes tougher laws to curb human smuggling, illegal migration, 15 February 2025, url
[1908] Pakistan, Senate of Pakistan, Emigration (Amendment) Bill, 2025, url
[1909] Global Organized Crime Index, Pakistan, 2026, url
[1910] Global Organized Crime Index, Pakistan, 2026, url; Global Investigative Journalism Network, 'A Global Transit Point': Investigating Human Trafficking and People Smuggling in South Asia, 16 October 2025, url
[1911] Global Organized Crime Index, Pakistan, 2026, url
[1912] Global Organized Crime Index, Pakistan, 2026, url
[1913] Global Organized Crime Index, Pakistan, 2026, url
[1914] Global Organized Crime Index, Pakistan, 2026, url; Global Investigative Journalism Network, 'A Global Transit Point': Investigating Human Trafficking and People Smuggling in South Asia, 16 October 2025, url
[1915] Walk Free, Global Slavery Index, Global Findings on Modern Slavery, 2026, n.d., url
[1916] USDOS, 2024 Trafficking in Persons Report: Pakistan, url
[1917] Dawn, Two more human traffickers arrested in Punjab, 6 February 2025, url
[1918] Libya Observer, Pakistan arrests individuals involved in organizing migration to Europe via Libya, 13 April 2025, url

- On 24 November 2025, the FIA Faisalabad reportedly arrested two suspects with one of them allegedly linked to a human trafficking and forced beggary network.[1919]
- On 2 January 2026, FIA imposed penalty on 214 officials over corruption and human trafficking. The punishment included dismissal, demotion, and firing.[1920]
- On 4 January 2026, the FIA Islamabad arrested a visa fraud agent involved in human smuggling and overseas employment scams.[1921]
- On 18 January 2026, the FIA arrested four suspects in two separate operations for attempting to travel abroad through unlawful means, including the use of forged documents, fake residency cards and other migrant-smuggling channels.[1922]
- On 19 January 2026, FIA arrested six suspects involved in human smuggling.[1923]

In September 2025, the UN launched a migration network with the aim to strengthen migration management and governance, including combatting human trafficking and migrant smuggling 'with a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach.'[1924]

In January 2026, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi reiterated actions against organised criminal groups involved in human trafficking and illegal immigration and emphasised a zero-tolerance policy against people exploiting vulnerable individuals.[1925]

Observers reported that victims of trafficking often do not file complaints due to fear of retaliation and some are disinclined to participate in the criminal procedures due to the length of the process. Victims expressed reluctance to testify against traffickers due to threats of violence against them and their families.[1926] The provincial governments allocated funding to provide free legal aid for victims; however, there were no reports of victims receiving this assistance.[1927]

The Pakistan's Social Welfare Departments provided lawyers to assist victims at women shelters with free legal assistance; 5 031 victims received legal services, but the government did not specify if any were trafficking victims.[1928]

Based on the 2026 Global Organized Crime Index developed by the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, victim support services in Pakistan, specifically for survivors of human trafficking, are inadequate. Moreover, shelters for trafficking victims are underfunded, and witness protection programmes remain largely ineffective due to security concerns. Victims often refuse to testify against traffickers for fear of retaliation. The limited availability of

[1919] Dawn, Two 'human traffickers' arrested, 24 November 2025, url
[1920] Daily Times, FIA punishes 214 officials over corruption, human trafficking, 2 January 2026, url; Dawn, 214 FIA officers punished in four months for human trafficking, graft, 2 January 2026, url
[1921] Dawn, FIA arrests man for human smuggling, 4 January 2026, url
[1922] Express Tribune (The), Visa scam unraveled as FIA arrests suspects linked to migrant smuggling, 18 January 2026, url
[1923] Nation (The), FIA cracks down on human smuggling, arrests six suspects, 19 January 2026, url; Daily Times, FIA cracks down on human smuggling, arrests six suspects, 19 January 2026, url
[1924] IOM Pakistan, United Nations Launches Network on Migration in Pakistan to Strengthen Migration Management and Governance!, 1 September 2025, url; Dawn, UN launches migration network in Pakistan, 2 September 2025, url
[1925] Nation (The), Nation, Mohsin Naqvi orders crackdown on human trafficking mafias, 9 January 2026, url
[1926] USDOS, 2024 Trafficking in Persons Report: Pakistan, url
[1927] USDOS, 2024 Trafficking in Persons Report: Pakistan, url
[1928] USDOS, 2024 Trafficking in Persons Report: Pakistan, url

protection services leaves many at risk of re-victimisation, and, in some cases, drives them back into exploitative situations.[1929]

6.1.10. Land dispute and blood feud related violence

In October 2025, the Punjab government approved a new Protection of Ownership Ordinance with aim of safeguarding the property rights of citizens and taking firm action against land grabbers.[1930] Moreover, the ordinance set the precedent for land dispute cases in Punjab to be resolved by the newly formed Dispute Resolution Committees (DRCs).[1931] Set up at the district and *tehsil* levels, the DRCs are authorised to resolve land dispute cases within 90 days.[1932] In December 2025, the Lahore High Court (LHC) issued an interim order suspending the implementation of the newly enacted Punjab Protection of Ownership of Immovable Property Ordinance.[1933] The revocation of the Ordinance was demanded by the Pakistan Bar Council due to its 'unlawful nature', as reported by Dawn.[1934] Following the suspension of the Ordinance, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz expressed concern stating that the decision would benefit 'land-grabbing mafias'.[1935] With a disagreement between the Punjab government and LHC on the Ordinance, local media reported on the need of a prompt mechanism resolving land dispute cases.[1936]

In October 2024, a Special Court (Overseas Pakistanis Property) Act was unanimously approved by Senate and National Assembly[1937] and entered into force in November 2024.[1938] In January 2026, the government issued a guarantee to Pakistanis living overseas that their illegally occupied properties in Islamabad will be fully protected. Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi stated that any reported illegal occupation will be resolved within seven days.[1939] Moreover, the Islamabad district administration established a special complaint mechanism as part of the measures to address complaints by overseas Pakistanis regarding the land grabbing.[1940]

However, according to Human Rights Watch, Pakistan's blasphemy laws perpetuate religious discrimination and are used to target the poor and minorities in unlawful evictions and land

[1929] Global Organized Crime Index, Pakistan, 2026, url
[1930] Radio Pakistan, Maryam approves Punjab Protection of Ownership Ordinance, 31 October 2025, url; Nation (The), CM Maryam launches crackdown on land mafia across Punjab, 1 November 2025, url
[1931] Radio Pakistan, Maryam approves Punjab Protection of Ownership Ordinance, 31 October 2025, url; Dawn, Pera—a new hope for land dispute cases resolution, 3 November 2025, url
[1932] Dawn, Citizens briefed on new law aimed to curb land grabbing, 22 November 2025, url
[1933] Dawn, LHC CJ suspends operation of Punjab land protection ordinance, 22 December 2025, url; Nation (The), LHC CJ suspends much-hyped Punjab Property Ownership Act, 23 December 2025, url
[1934] Dawn, Pakistan Bar Council demands recall of Punjab property protection law, 28 December 2025, url
[1935] Dawn, Ruling on property law will benefit mafias: CM Maryam, 24 December 2025, url; Pakistan Today, LHC suspension of land law 'to aid land-grab mafias,' says Punjab CM, 23 December 2025, url
[1936] Dawn, Property disputes, 29 December 2025, url
[1937] Pakistan, Chaudhry Salik Hussain's Bill on Special Court for Overseas Pakistanis' Property Disputes Gets Senate and National Assembly unanimous Approval, n.a., u rl
[1938] Pakistan, The Gazette, Establishment of Special Court (Overseas Pakistanis Property) Act, 2024, 2 November 2024, url
[1939] Daily Times, Govt vows swift action on overseas Pakistanis' property, 27 January 2026, url
[1940] APP, ICT admin sets up 24/7 complaint cell for overseas Pakistanis, 27 January 2026, url

grabs.[1941] According to the same source, people often make blasphemy accusations for economic motivations, including forced evictions to acquire land that belongs to others.[1942]

Sources recorded cases of demolition of houses by the government and civilians. In October 2025, more than 1 200 houses of Afghan refugees were demolished in Karachi by the Pakistani government, in an operation targeting settlements described as 'illegal''.[1943] Demolitions were reportedly part of the government policy to remove illegal settlements from the state land.[1944] Sources recorded cases of private houses of economically disadvantaged residents being illegally demolished by groups of civilians in December 2025 in Punjab province.[1945]

Local media reported that property disputes, both within families and involving outsiders, led to killings, including family-related land conflicts in 2025. In July 2025, a man killed his parents and wife in Tehsil, Phalia.[1946] In December 2025, two men from the Brohi tribe were killed by the Jatoi tribe in the Shikarpur district over a land dispute. The attack was allegedly a revenge over the killing of two Jatoi men from the Nareja community by the Brohi tribe.[1947] Also in December 2025, Dawn reported on the killing of one man by his brothers in Pakpattan District in the Punjab province.[1948] Killings over property ownership between non-family members were recorded throughout 2025. On 8 April 2025, a suspect in a killing of a man in Kahuta (in Rawalpindi District) was arrested by police;[1949] in another case, four individuals were arrested for killing a pregnant woman in Millat (near Faisalabad) over a property dispute in May 2025.[1950] In the period between September 2025 and October 2025, local sources reported on a killing of a man in Chauntra over a land dispute,[1951] as well as on the killing of two people in Nangarpar area of Tharparkar, and the shooting of a person in Kandani in Tharo Shah area.[1952]

Killings over property dispute continued in the first quarter of 2026. In January 2026, a Hindu farmer was shot dead by a Pakistani landowner,[1953] while three individuals were killed and seven injured over a land dispute in Mirpur.[1954]

[1941] HRW, Pakistan: Blasphemy Laws Exploited for Blackmail, Profit, 8 June 2025, url
[1942] HRW, "A Conspiracy to Grab the Land", 9 June 2025, url
[1943] Afghanistan International, 1,200 Afghan Refugee Homes Demolished In Pakistan Within A Week, 20 October 2025, url; Express Tribune (The), Over 1,200 vacant houses of Afghan evacuees demolished, 20 October 2025, url
[1944] Khaama Press (The), Pakistan Demolishes Afghan Refugee Settlement in Karachi Amid Deportation Drive, 20 October 2025, url; Express Tribune (The), Over 1,200 vacant houses of Afghan evacuees demolished, 20 October 2025, url
[1945] Dawn, Case against 10 for demolishing homes, 26 December 2024, url; Nation (The), Influential land mafia demolishes homes in Muzaffargarh, 27 December 2024, url
[1946] Nation (The), Man kills 3 family members over land dispute: Police, 29 July 2025, url
[1947] Dawn, Advocate, relative shot dead over land dispute, 2 December 2025, url
[1948] Dawn, Three brothers kill younger sibling over property, 27 December 2025, url
[1949] Nation (The), Kahuta Police arrest accused in land dispute murder case, 8 April 2025, url
[1950] Pakistan Today, Four arrested for killing pregnant woman over property dispute, 20 May 2025, url
[1951] APP, Man killed in Chauntra land dispute firing, 5 September 2025, url
[1952] Nation (The), Three killed over land dispute in separate incidents, 15 October 2025, url
[1953] Sunday Guardian (The), Who was Kailash Kolhi? 25-Year Old Hindu Farmer Shot Dead in Pakistan, Triggering Widespread Protests in Sindh, 10 January 2026, url; Hindu (The), 23-year-old Hindu farmer shot dead by landlord in Pakistan's Sindh, 11 January 2026, url
[1954] 24 News, Three killed, seven injured in land dispute shooting in Mirpur, AJK, 25 January 2026, url

In 2025 and 2026, sources reported on cases of violent land disputes that resulted in arrests of the perpetrators.[1955]

There were also reported cases of resolved land disputes. In November 2025, the Supreme Court of Pakistan ordered re-examination of a land dispute case[1956] while in December 2025, seven land dispute cases were resolved by the DRC[1957] and in January 2026, a decades-old land dispute between two families was settled through a traditional *jirga* in the Mohmand district.[1958]

Despite the efforts to establish and implement a robust mechanism to promptly and fairly resolve land dispute cases, organised groups continue to engage in land grabbing[1959] as sources reported on absence of accountability of 'land mafias' in Pakistan in 2025.[1960]

[1955] Nation (The), Kahuta Police arrest accused in land dispute murder case, 8 April 2025, url; Pakistan Today, Four arrested for killing pregnant woman over property dispute, 20 May 2025, url; UrduPoint Network, Two Injured, three Arrested In Land Dispute, 30 July 2025, url; Dawn, Four arrested in Jamrud over land dispute, 15 February 2026, url
[1956] Nation (The), Land dispute doesn't end even after death, SC orders High Court to re-examine case, 29 November 2025, url
[1957] APP, Seven land dispute cases resolved, 19 December 2025, url
[1958] Dawn, Decades-old land dispute resolved in Mohmand, 12 January 2026, url
[1959] Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2025: Pakistan, 2025, 6 June 2025, url
[1960] Express Tribune (The), Guns, land mafias and fear grip Chauntra, 22 September 2025, url; Nation (The), Audit report reveals land mafia's grip on govt property, 23 September 2025, url; Pakistan Today, CM Maryam declares 'end of land mafia rule' as govt unleashes sweeping crackdown on land grabbers, 29 November 2025, url

7. Overview of the socio-economic situation including climate induced displacement

In the first half of fiscal year 2025-2026, Pakistan's public debt reached USD 290.6 billion [approximately EUR 253 billion].[1961] The combination of debt repayments and defence spending limits the government's ability to invest in sectors such as education, healthcare, and social welfare.[1962] The effects of floods plus the measures mandated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), have placed additional pressure on social security services.[1963]

81 % of Pakistan's labour force is employed in the informal sector,[1964] where most informal workers lack social protection.[1965] According to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics' 2024-25 Labour Force Survey (LFS),[1966] the unemployment rate[1967] has increased since the previous survey, rising from 6.3 % in 2020-21 to 6.9 % in 2024-25.[1968] Child labour and bonded labour are widespread in Pakistan,[1969] particularly in the brick kiln industry, agriculture, and domestic work.[1970]

Using the 'Cost of Basic Needs' approach,[1971] the Pakistani government estimated in 2024-25 that 28.9 % of Pakistanis lived below the poverty line, which was set at 8 484 Pakistani Rupees [approximately 25.7 EUR] per adult per month. This was an increase of 7 % since 2018-19. Rural areas were more affected by poverty, with 36.2 %, while urban poverty has also risen to 17.4 %. The Pakistani Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives (MOPDSI) attributes poverty figures to low GDP growth, high inflation as well as severe climate shocks, such as the floods of 2022 and 2025, which caused destruction worth several billion US dollars.[1972] By the end of September 2025, 1 039 people had been reported dead and around 4 million were temporarily displaced by the June-September 2025 floods, following rainfall that reached up to 50 % above usual monsoon levels and nearly doubled in some areas.[1973] According to an International Organization for Migration (IOM) Baseline Assessment of

[1961] Nation (The), Public debt reaches Rs81,374b in first half, 5 April 2026, url
[1962] CADTM, As the debt spiral speeds, half of Pakistan's budget goes to loan repayment., 16 June 2025, url
[1963] HRW, World Report 2026 – Pakistan, 4 February 2026, url
[1964] Pakistan, PBS, Pakistan Labour Force Survey 2024-2025, September 2025, url, p. IX
[1965] IPRI and OGDCL, An Appraisal of Pakistan's Informal Economy: Causes, Patterns, and Socioeconomic Footprints, October 2025, url, p. 5
[1966] Data for the LFS 2024-2025 was collected between July 2024 and July 2025. Pakistan, PBS, Pakistan Labour Force Survey 2024-2025, September 2025, url, p. IV
[1967] The PBS LFS defines 'unemployed' as 'all persons ten years of age and over who were without work during the reference period [...] but currently looking and available for work'. Pakistan, PBS, Pakistan Labour Force Survey 2024-2025, September 2025, url, p. VIII
[1968] Pakistan, PBS, Pakistan Labour Force Survey 2024-2025, September 2025, url, p. VIII
[1969] Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2026 Country Report - Pakistan, 2026, url, p. 37
[1970] FES, Breaking The Chains: How To Tackle Bonded Labour in Pakistan?, 14 August 2023, url
[1971] The Government of Pakistan uses the 'Cost of Basic Needs' (CBN) approach for poverty estimates. The CBN defines a poverty line representing the minimum monthly spending per person required to meet basic food and other needs. Pakistan, MOPDSI, Preliminary Report on Poverty Estimation 2024-25, February 2026, url, p. 2
[1972] Pakistan, MOPDSI, Preliminary Report on Poverty Estimation 2024-25, February 2026, url, pp. 4-6
[1973] Pakistan, MOPDSI, A Preliminary Assessment of Flood Damages in the Economy of Pakistan, October 2025, url, pp. ii, 1

Pakistan's floods, as of January 2026 there were 523 083 temporarily displaced persons (TDPs).[1974]

The country ranks 106th out of 123 countries in the Global Hunger Index and 40 % of children suffer from stunting.[1975]

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) reported that Pakistan's government health expenditures are alarmingly low.[1976] The Pakistan Medical Association (PMA) states that access to healthcare 'remains limited or dysfunctional' in rural areas and presents 'alarming' numbers of preventable deaths of children under five and pregnant women. High prices make medicines unaffordable for the poor[1977] and 80 vital, life-saving drugs such as insulin were short in supply in 2025.[1978]

7.1. Key socio-economic indicators with focus on Islamabad

The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) can be distinguished administratively from Islamabad city, Pakistan's capital, which is spatially integrated into the Capital Territory.[1979] According to official data from 2023, the total population of the ICT was 2.36 million, of which 1.1 million lived in Islamabad city.[1980]

7.1.1. Economic situation

As of January 2025, the per capita gross domestic product (GDP) in Islamabad stood at 2 996 US dollars.[1981] In 2023, the ICT accounted for 0.96 % of Pakistan's total population and contributed to approximately 1 % of the national GDP. Banks, TV channels, headquarters of telecommunication operators and state-owned enterprises were in the ICT. The Islamabad Stock Exchange (ISE) is Pakistan's third largest.[1982] Islamabad's economy has since 1959 been shaped by the presence of government establishments, political missions, and diplomatic institutions.[1983] Its economy has a strong service sector including call centres for foreign companies,[1984] but also involves agricultural production, including cotton and rice for export, software and telecommunications, handicraft and rug manufacturing. International aid packages, funding from the military and remittances contribute to the city's economy.[1985] While

[1974] IOM, IOM DTM - Baseline Assessment Flood Disaster – Pakistan, January 2026, url
[1975] WFP, Pakistan Country Brief, 19 January 2026, url, p. 1
[1976] MSF, Deadly Gaps: Don't turn away from saving lives, 15 May 2025, url, p. 15
[1977] PMA, Health of the Nation. PMA's health report 2025, February 2025, url, pp. 1, 4
[1978] Dawn, PMA presents bleak picture of country's health status, 13 February 2026, url
[1979] O'Donnel, M. R., Islamabad, Pakistan, EBSCO, 2025, url
[1980] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 – National Census Report, August 2024, url, pp. 5, 7, 103
[1981] Dunya News, Positive growth trajectory of Pakistan's Per Capita GDP, 9 January 2025, url
[1982] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census – 2023 – District Census Report Islamabad, n.d., url, p. 47
[1983] Abbasi, N. and Jawed, R., Urban Sprawl and Depreciating Eco Quality: Socio-Economic Marginalization of Islamabad Citizenry, 2 June 2025, url, p. 1387
[1984] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census – 2023 – District Census Report Islamabad, n.d., url, p. 47
[1985] O'Donnel, M. R., Islamabad, Pakistan, EBSCO, 2025, url

urbanisation has created economic opportunities, it has also exacerbated disparities, and the financial burden on lower-income groups has increased.[1986]

The National Science & Technology Park (NSTP) at the National University of Sciences & Technology (NUST) Islamabad was granted the status of Hi-Tech Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in October 2020, being the only one in the country.[1987] Islamabad's first industrial SEZ, the Islamabad Model Special Economic Zone (IMSEZ), was inaugurated in July 2023. It aims to promote low-carbon industries and enhance industrial output and export potential.[1988] SEZs are exempted from income taxes for a period of ten years.[1989]

7.1.2. Employment (formal and informal)

According to the most recent Population & Housing Census conducted in 2023,[1990] the unemployment rate in the ICT was 7.1 %.[1991] About 37.1 % of the population were employed - 59.2 % of men and 11.8 % of women. Out of those in employment, 55.7 % were paid employees, 4.4 % were self-employed in the sector of agriculture, 26.6 % were self-employed in the non-agricultural sector, 6.9 % were in the role of employers, 2.9 % were unpaid family helpers in the agricultural sector and 3.5 % were unpaid family helpers in the non-agricultural sector. 40.3 % of youth between the age of 15 and 24 were not in employment nor in education. With 53.1 %, more than half of Islamabad's young females were not in employment nor in education, compared to about one third of young males with 35.3 %.[1992] No information could be found on the formal and informal employment rate in Islamabad.

In August 2024, the Government of Pakistan Office of the Chief Commissioner Directorate of Industries & Labour Welfare ICT set the minimum wage for unskilled and juvenile workers in the ICT at 1 423 Pakistani rupees [approximately EUR 4.3[1993]] per day for 8 working hours or 37 000 Pakistani rupees [approximately EUR 122.1] per month.[1994] Reportedly, minimum rates of wages have not been raised since.[1995] However, according to data collected by Amnesty International between February and September 2024, domestic workers in Islamabad stated that they only earned 12 000 Pakistani rupees [45 US dollars] per month. In Islamabad, as in

[1986] Abbasi, N. and Jawed, R., Urban Sprawl and Depreciating Eco Quality: Socio-Economic Marginalization of Islamabad Citizenry, 2 June 2025, url, p. 1388
[1987] NUST, NUST receives Special Economic Zone (SEZ) Status for National Science & Technology Park (NSTP), 26 January 2021, url
[1988] STRAFASIA, Special Economic Zones of Islamabad, 16 December 2024, url
[1989] Pakistan, BOI, Special Economic Zone Framework in Pakistan, n.d., url
[1990] As defined in the Population & Housing Census 2023, 'Employment refers to an activity in which an individual works regularly for another person and gets remunerated in return.' The responses referred to one year preceding the survey period. Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census – 2023 – District Census Report Islamabad, n.d., url, p. 72
[1991] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census – 2023 – District Census Report Islamabad, n.d., url, p. 73
[1992] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census – 2023 – District Census Report Islamabad, n.d., url, pp. 72-73
[1993] All currency calculations in this report are based on the exchange rate from European Commission, Exchange rate (InforEuro), n.d., url
[1994] Pakistan, Office of the Chief Commissioner Directorate of Industries & Labour Welfare, 8 August 2024, url, pp. 1-2
[1995] Business Recorder, Minimum wage to remain unchanged at Rs37,000 in FY26, says Aurangzeb, 11 June 2025, url; TechJuice, Pakistan Minimum Wage 2025-26: Govt Ignores Inflation, Keeps Rates Unchanged, 12 June 2025, url

other larger cities, workers have repeatedly protested against delays in payment of their salaries.[1996]

A case study showed that women in Islamabad faced cultural stigmas, workplace harassment and biased hiring and promotion practices. They had no secure channels for reporting misconduct or raising concerns, and the lack of networking and mentorship opportunities hindered women from building the skills and connections necessary for leadership roles.[1997]

7.1.3. Poverty

In October 2025, the World Bank reported a poverty rate of 3.5 % in Islamabad, the lowest among Pakistan's districts.[1998] According to the District Vulnerability Index for Pakistan (DVIP) 2025, out of 129 districts, Islamabad ranked twelfth among Pakistan's least overall vulnerable districts. Ranking overall vulnerability was based on six categories: housing, communication & transportation, livelihoods, access to health services, access to public education and demographics.[1999] As of December 2025, the cost of living in Islamabad was 15 % above the Pakistani average and the average yearly salary was 1 880 829 Pakistani rupees [approximately EUR 5 696.7].[2000] Reportedly, the monthly salary of a young professional in Islamabad was the equivalent of 155 US dollars [approximately EUR 131.2], whereas his monthly cost of living could exceed 440 US dollars [approximately EUR 372.2]. Food prices, rent, transportation and, above all, electricity have all increased.[2001] Reasons for poverty in Islamabad's slums may have been people's low-salaried occupations, low expenditure on education and income and expenditure inequality.[2002]

7.1.4. Food security

According to a research paper from 2025, food prices in Islamabad were rising and had an adverse impact on food security. Only a few respondents reported that formal state or civil society safety nets provided them benefits amid food price stresses. Many sampled individuals from slums in Islamabad could not frequently afford nutrient-dense foods such as meat and fruits. The food security status of household females was significantly lower than that of household males.[2003]

In May 2025, the World Food Programme (WFP) announced plans to increase local food production and promote the use of fortified wheat flour in Islamabad.[2004] By September 2025,

[1996] Amnesty International, "Cut us open and see that we bleed like them": Discrimination and stigmatization of sanitation workers in Pakistan, July 2025, url, pp. 54, 57
[1997] KSBL, Barriers Towards Women's Leadership, 10 December 2024, url, p. 53
[1998] World Bank, Fragile Gains, Enduring Challenges: Charting Pakistan's Path Out of Poverty, 17 October 2025, url
[1999] Population Council, District Vulnerability Index for Pakistan (DVIP): Harnessing Multisectoral Data to Inform Equitable Policy and Climate Action, October 2025, url, pp. 32-34
[2000] ERI, Cost of Living Data in Islamabad, Pakistan, 23 December 2025, url
[2001] Pakistan Observer (The), Pakistan's real emergency: The crushing cost of living, 24 January 2026, url
[2002] Mansoor, H. and Iram, A., An Empirical Analysis of Well-being: A Case Study of Slum Area in Islamabad, 2023, url, p. 773
[2003] Anjum, K., Growing Urban Vulnerabilities: Comparative Rural–Urban Food Security Among Pakistan's Casual Wage Workers amid Food Price Hikes, 2025, url, pp. 59-60, 62
[2004] WFP, WFP Pakistan Country Brief, April 2025, 9 May 2025, url, p. 2

13 *chakkis* (small-scale flour mills[2005]) had been launched and trained to accept e-vouchers.[2006] The Capital Development Authority (CDA) organises subsidised markets, the so-called Sahulat Bazaars, at multiple locations offering affordable essential commodities such as vegetables and fruits, and grocery items for residents during Ramadan.[2007]

Islamabad is challenged with growing water needs as the city experiences rising temperatures and an insufficient water supply, leading to water rationing.[2008] As stated in October 2025, water supply in Islamabad was not only scarce but also alarming in view of health risks due to poor water quality.[2009] Waste dumping, runoff from construction and lack of waste treatment were putting Rawal Lake and Simly Dam, key sources of Islamabad's drinking water, under stress.[2010] The federal government decided in 2026 to address the water shortages by implementing the construction of joint dams for Islamabad and Rawalpindi.[2011]

7.1.5. Housing and living conditions

Islamabad was planned as a model city but has seen sprawling unregulated suburban zones since its construction in the 1960's.[2012] In the ICT, where planned upscale neighbourhoods coexist with slums ('colonies'),[2013] marginalised communities residing in informal and peri-urban settlements were disproportionally exposed to ecological risks[2014] such as sudden flash floods.[2015] Heat waves challenge those living in improvised or ineffectively ventilated housing structures.[2016] Air quality has reportedly deteriorated, affecting inhabitants' health.[2017]

According to the Population & Housing Census 2023, 97.4 % of housing units in Islamabad qualified as *pacca* housing units. *Pacca* is a permanent or concrete house, built from durable materials (bricks, cement and steel etc.) with roofs and walls made of cement concrete, burnt bricks, jack board, timber or stone. 1.4 % were categorised as *katcha* housing units, consisting of bamboo, mud, ply wood or card board walls and a cement, iron sheet, garder, T-iron or pre-fabricated roof. [2018] About 1.2 % of households were categorised as semi *pacca* - a mix

[2005] WFP, Chakki, 7 April 2025, url
[2006] WFP, WFP Pakistan Country Brief, September 2025, 16 October 2025, url, p. 2
[2007] Nation (The), Capital's Ramazan Sahulat Bazaars offer relief to masses, 4 March 2026, url
[2008] Islamabad Times, Green Yet Growing: Is Islamabad Losing Its Environmental Edge?, 24 June 2025, url
[2009] Fatima, S. B. et al., Water scarcity impact on water quality and implications for residents in Islamabad, Pakistan, 9 October 2025, url, p. 18
[2010] Islamabad Times, Green Yet Growing: Is Islamabad Losing Its Environmental Edge?, 24 June 2025, url
[2011] Pakistan Observer (The), Federal govt approves emergency plan to address water shortage in Islamabad, 10 January 2026, url; Pakistan Observer (The), Dotara, and Shahdara Dams cleared to Boost Water Supply in Islamabad, Rawalpindi, 10 January 2026, url
[2012] Abbasi, N. and Jawed, R., Urban Sprawl and Depreciating Eco Quality: Socio-Economic Marginalization of Islamabad Citizenry, 2 June 2025, url, pp. 1389, 1396
[2013] Unequal Scenes, Pakistan, n.d., url
[2014] Abbasi, N. and Jawed, R., Urban Sprawl and Depreciating Eco Quality: Socio-Economic Marginalization of Islamabad Citizenry, 2 June 2025, url, p. 1396
[2015] BBC, 'The water had no mercy': Hundreds killed as floods ravage north Pakistan, 18 August 2025, url; Dawn, Four swept away in Islamabad as heavy rain triggers flooding in nullahs, 23 July 2025, url; Geo News, Islamabad, Pindi face urban flooding with over 40 deaths in Punjab amid heavy rains, 17 July 2025, url
[2016] Abbasi, N. and Jawed, R., Urban Sprawl and Depreciating Eco Quality: Socio-Economic Marginalization of Islamabad Citizenry, 2 June 2025, url, p. 1390
[2017] Abbasi, N. and Jawed, R., Urban Sprawl and Depreciating Eco Quality: Socio-Economic Marginalization of Islamabad Citizenry, 2 June 2025, url, p. 1388; Islamabad Times, Green Yet Growing: Is Islamabad Losing Its Environmental Edge?, 24 June 2025, url; Dawn, Saving Islamabad, 14 January 2026, url
[2018] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census – 2023 – District Census Report Islamabad, n.d., url, p. 81

between the durable *pacca* and the less-durable *katcha* construction.[2019] The average household size was 5.52 persons living in 2-4 rooms.[2020] According to a study on four major slums in Islamabad from 2023, 43 % of residents lived in households of seven or more people. 46.3 % of households had 2 rooms.[2021] The Population &Housing Census 2023 showed that 58.7 % of households had access to drinking water within homes. 87.9 % of households had a separate washroom, while 3.7 % of households had no washroom. 99 % of households were equipped with a 'separate' or 'shared' toilet, but 1 % of households had none. The vast majority (96.7 %) of households in Islamabad relied on electricity for lighting.[2022] As reported in January 2026, family sizes in Islamabad were decreasing and smaller apartment units were preferred for reasons of affordability and rising cost of living.[2023] In downtown areas, the cost of lodging has become increasingly difficult to bear,[2024] particularly for the working class.[2025]

Most workers in the ICT live in slums[2026] (*katchi abadi*[2027]) or in low-income apartments.[2028] Slums emerge through informal housing markets, in which government officials and informal middlemen are involved.[2029] An estimated 24[2030] to 50[2031] slums are scattered across all parts of Islamabad, characterised by inequality and marginalisation.[2032] There, access to basic services, such as clean water, medical care, schooling, and transportation is limited.[2033] In November 2025, the CDA ordered the mass eviction of residents residing in the Abadi 'Muslim Colony', ignoring court-issued stay orders.[2034]

7.1.6. Education

According to the Population & Housing Census 2023, Islamabad had a literacy rate of 84 % among individuals aged 10 and above. It was higher for males (88.2 %) than for females (79.1 %).[2035] As shown in the ICT Child Labour Survey 2023-2024, the total school attendance rate of children was 89.7 % as stated by parents and 73.1 % as stated by children. Free education for children between 5 and 16 is guaranteed by the Pakistani constitution.[2036]

[2019] Britannica, Housing of Pakistan, last updated 30 March 2026, url
[2020] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census – 2023 – District Census Report Islamabad, n.d., url, p. 79
[2021] Mansoor, H. and Iram, A., An Empirical Analysis of Well-being: A Case Study of Slum Area in Islamabad, 2023, url, pp. 768-769
[2022] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census – 2023 – District Census Report Islamabad, n.d., url, pp. 86-87, 90
[2023] APP, Small family unit trend on rise in capital, 13 January 2026, url
[2024] Abbasi, N. and Jawed, R., Urban Sprawl and Depreciating Eco Quality: Socio-Economic Marginalization of Islamabad Citizenry, 2 June 2025, url, p. 1390
[2025] Dawn, Islamabad the ugly, 19 December 2025, url
[2026] Anjum, K., Growing Urban Vulnerabilities: Comparative Rural–Urban Food Security Among Pakistan's Casual Wage Workers amid Food Price Hikes, 2025, url, p. 53
[2027] Dawn, Islamabad the ugly, 19 December 2025, url
[2028] Unequal Scenes, Pakistan, n.d., url
[2029] Dawn, Islamabad the ugly, 19 December 2025, url
[2030] Abdul, L. et al., Urban and climate change resilience: A case of France colony, Islamabad, 14 June 2025, url, p. 1
[2031] Dawn, Islamabad the ugly, 19 December 2025, url
[2032] Solidar Suisse, Pakistan: supporting children in the slums of Islamabad, n.d., url
[2033] Abbasi, N. and Jawed, R., Urban Sprawl and Depreciating Eco Quality: Socio-Economic Marginalization of Islamabad Citizenry, 2 June 2025, url, p. 1989
[2034] Dawn, Islamabad the ugly, 19 December 2025, url
[2035] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census – 2023 – District Census Report Islamabad, n.d., url, p. 53
[2036] Pakistan, ICTA, Islamabad Capital Territory: Child Labour Survey, 2023-2024, June 2025, url, pp. 14, 78

There existed 579 primary schools, 474 middle schools, 364 high schools, 201 higher secondary schools and 29 colleges. Public schools mostly serve children living in rural and semi-rural areas from low-income households, offering free education, which is characterised by poor quality and learning materials. About one third of school children in Islamabad, mostly belonging to upper-middle class urban households, attended private schools. Religious schools (*Deeni Madrassas*), as a third stream of schooling, offered free religious education, free boarding and lodging.[2037] According to UNHCR, 47 % of school children in Islamabad and Karachi attended government or public schools and 39 % attended private religious or faith-based schools. The remaining 14 % attended private non-religious schools or schools termed as 'other'.[2038] Information by Solidar Suisse suggests that in Islamabad's slums, school facilities and adequately trained teachers are lacking.[2039] The Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (MOFEPT) lists three special education institutions from nursery to matric in Islamabad, serving children with physical, visual and hearing disabilities.[2040]

The independent Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (HEC) lists 27 recognised universities in the ICT.[2041]

7.1.7. Healthcare

Regarding access to health services, the DVIP ranks Islamabad 30th of 129 districts. The report further declares that residents of Islamabad were able to access a BHU within five kilometres, a private doctor within 8 kilometres, and maternal, neonatal and child health facilities within 9 kilometres.[2042] According to the Population & Housing Census 2023, primary healthcare facilities in Islamabad included Rural Health Centres (RHCs) and Basic Health Units (BHUs).[2043] These first-contact facilities handle vaccinations, routine checkups, minor ailments as well as maternal health, and are mostly operated by the ICT administration.[2044] The District Health Office Islamabad (DHO-ICT) lists 3 RHCs[2045] and 13 BHUs.[2046] The secondary health care Tehsil Head Quarters (THQs) and District Head Quarters (DHQs) hospitals provided emergency, obstetrics, diagnostics and inpatient services as well as services for patients referred by BHU's and RHCs. Tertiary healthcare hospitals – among them the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS), a National Reference Centre with 30 medical departments and 22 specialties, and the Shifa International Hospital with its renowned liver transplant centre - provided more specialised inpatient care. Bed capacities in Islamabad were 8 693 beds in total, of which 5 901 were in private and 2 792 in public facilities.[2047]

[2037] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census – 2023 – District Census Report Islamabad, n.d., url, pp. 52-53
[2038] UNHCR, Forced Displacement Survey, Pakistan 2024, 12 November 2025, url, p. 61
[2039] Solidar Suisse, Pakistan: supporting children in the slums of Islamabad, n.d., url
[2040] Pakistan, MOFEPT, Special Education, n.d., url
[2041] Pakistan, HEC, University Information, n.d., url. Set filters to province Islamabad Capital Territory and city Islamabad.
[2042] Population Council, District Vulnerability Index for Pakistan (DVIP): Harnessing Multisectoral Data to Inform Equitable Policy and Climate Action, October 2025, url, pp. 58-59
[2043] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census – 2023 – District Census Report Islamabad, n.d., url, pp. 50-51
[2044] Islamabad Business Directory, Islamabad Health Directory 2026 - All Hospitals, Labs & Clinics, 13 February 2026, url
[2045] Pakistan, DHO-ICT, RHC, n.d., url
[2046] Pakistan, DHO-ICT, BHU, n.d., url
[2047] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census – 2023 – District Census Report Islamabad, n.d., url, pp. 51-52

The Prime Minister's Health Card programme for free, cashless healthcare was revived in the ICT in January 2026[2048] and extended to 20 additional hospitals.[2049] The health cards covered inpatient healthcare services up to one million Pakistani rupees [approximately EUR 3 028.8] per year at participating hospitals and clinics.[2050] Khadija Anjum reported in an article from 2025 significantly higher accessibility to health care facilities for urban than for rural residents, but no gendered differences.[2051] However, Abbasi and Jawed stated greater difficulties in accessing medical care for women and children than men.[2052]

In the overall Service Coverage Index (SCI) for 2023, Islamabad ranked first,[2053] while it ranked second regarding service coverage of non-communicable diseases.[2054] The tuberculosis treatment rate was 42.9 % and 18 laboratories offered diagnostic services.[2055] The infant mortality rate was the lowest nationwide with 38 deaths per thousand live births.[2056] The HIV treatment rate was 14.7 %.[2057] By December 2024, the Federal Government Polyclinic and the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences offered antiretroviral therapy (ART) in the ICT.[2058]

7.1.8. Availability of state support mechanism for individuals without social network

In Islamabad, one in every five households received some form of social benefits, as reported by UNHCR in 2024, while overall social protection coverage remains limited, reaching an estimated 2–3 % of the total population and being characterised by fragmentation, and limited funding.[2059] Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM) is a semi-autonomous social welfare organisation[2060] that provides financial support for the poor and for vulnerable individuals.[2061] In the ICT, PBM operates five shelter homes,[2062] where clients find temporary overnight accommodation, daily meals and healthcare.[2063] The nationwide governmental Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), headquartered in Islamabad, offers financial support for poor households,[2064] with a

[2048] Pakistan Today, PM unveils health card for Islamabad, AJK & GB as govt reaffirms health as basic right, 16 January 2026, url; Dawn, PM Shehbaz relaunches Sehat Card health insurance scheme in ICT, AJK and GB, 16 January 2026, url
[2049] Pakistan Today, PM unveils health card for Islamabad, AJK & GB as govt reaffirms health as basic right, 16 January 2026, url
[2050] SFH, Pakistan: accès à divers traitements (HIV, hépatite B chronique) [Pakistan: access to various treatments (HIV, chronic hepatitis B)], 16 June 2025, url, p. 35
[2051] Anjum, K., Growing Urban Vulnerabilities: Comparative Rural–Urban Food Security Among Pakistan's Casual Wage Workers amid Food Price Hikes, 2025, url, p. 58
[2052] Abbasi, N. and Jawed, R., Urban Sprawl and Depreciating Eco Quality: Socio-Economic Marginalization of Islamabad Citizenry, 2 June 2025, url, p. 1390
[2053] Pakistan, PID, PR No. 122, 12 December 2024, url; Pakistan, NHSRC, Trend Analysis of the UHC Service Coverage Index (UHC SCI), December 2024, url, p. 2
[2054] Pakistan, PID, PR No. 122, 12 December 2024, url
[2055] Pakistan, MoNHSR&C, CMU, Annual Report 2024, n.d., url, p. 4
[2056] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census – 2023 – District Census Report Islamabad, n.d., url, p. 51
[2057] Pakistan, NHSRC, Trend Analysis of the UHC Service Coverage Index (UHC SCI), December 2024, url, p. 5
[2058] Pakistan, MoNHSR&C, CMU, Treatment, n.d., url
[2059] UNHCR, Forced Displacement Survey; Pakistan 2024, 12 November 2025, url, p. 112
[2060] GDP and Pakistan, MoHR, Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal - Head Office Islamabad, n.d., url
[2061] Pakistan, Bait-ul-Mal, Projects, n.d., url
[2062] Pakistan, PBM Shelter Home, Home, n.d., url; Pakistan, PBM Shelter Home, Contact Detail, n.d., url
[2063] Nation (The), PBM expands support for vulnerable communities with over Rs1.7b, 10 June 2025, url
[2064] GDP and Pakistan, MoHR, Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) – Islamabad, n.d., url

special focus on women.[2065] Under its Kafaalat programme, female beneficiaries receive a quarterly amount of 14 500 Pakistani rupees [approximately EUR 43.9].[2066] Access to BISP is based on a household poverty score ranging from 0 to 100, with eligibility set at 32 or below, and applies to low-income households, including widows, divorced women, single mothers, and persons with disabilities in eligible families.[2067]

Primarily funded by the EU and with the support of the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), Pakistan has established three Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs), one of them in Islamabad.[2068] MRCs provide free business, legal and reintegration counselling as well as psychosocial support to Pakistani returnees and deportees. Among arrival, MRCs help with registration and provide hygiene kits, water, food, medical assistance, onward transportation, shelter and communication facilities.[2069]

7.1.9. Mobility and internal travel

Islamabad International Airport (IIAP) offers domestic and international flight connections.[2070] The flight-tracking website FlightRadar24 listed several flight connections for ISB for the period 25 February 2026 to 4 March 2026, listed in Table 1, and Table 2.

[2065] Pakistan, BISP, Vision and Mission, n.d., url; GDP and Pakistan, MoHR, Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) – Islamabad, n.d., url
[2066] Balochistan.org.pk, BISP Kafaalat Payment Raised to Rs. 14,500 Quarterly In 2026, Confirmed by Chairperson Rubina Khalid, 19 February 2026, url
[2067] TechX, Benazir Kafaalat Program: Complete Guide 2026, 19 January 2026, url
[2068] MRC, Who we work with, n.d., url; ICMPD, Migrant Resource Centres in the Silk Routes and Central Asian Countries, 17 September 2024, url, pp. 1, 7
[2069] MRC, Counselling, n. d., url
[2070] O'Donnel, M. R., Islamabad, Pakistan, EBSCO, 2025, url

Islamabad International Airport (ISB), International Flights (25 February 2026 - 4 March 2026)			
International departures		International arrivals	
Destination	Number of departures to destination	From	Number of arrivals
Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates	24	Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates	24
Al Ain, United Arab Emirates	1	Al Ain, United Arab Emirates	1
Al-Qassim, Saudi Arabia	1	Al-Qassim, Saudi Arabia	1
Bahrain, Bahrain	7	Bahrain, Bahrain	7
Baghdad, Iraq	2	Baghdad, Iraq	2
Baku, Azerbaijan	2	Baku, Azerbaijan	2
Bangkok, Thailand	3	Bangkok, Thailand	3
Beijing, China	3	Beijing, China	4
Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan	2	Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan	2
Dammam, Saudi Arabia	8	Dammam, Saudi Arabia	9
Doha, Qatar	15	Doha, Qatar	16
Dubai, United Arab Emirates	36	Dubai, United Arab Emirates	37
Guangzhou, China	3	Guangzhou, China	3
Istanbul, Turkey	12	Istanbul, Turkey	11
Jeddah, Saudi Arabia	43	Jeddah, Saudi Arabia	45
Kabul, Afghanistan	8	Kabul, Afghanistan	8
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	2	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	2
Kuwait, Kuwait	4	Kuwait, Kuwait	4
London, United Kingdom	3	London, United Kingdom	3
Manchester, United Kingdom	2	Manchester, United Kingdom	2
Medina, Saudi Arabia	2	Medina, Saudi Arabia	2
Muscat, Oman	7	Muscat, Oman	7
Najaf, Iraq	1	Najaf, Iraq	1
Paris, France	2	Paris, France	2
Ra'sal-Khaymah, United Arab Emirates	1	Ra'sal-Khaymah, United Arab Emirates	1
		Rayong, Thailand	1
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia	29	Riyadh, Saudi Arabia	30
Sharjah, United Arab Emirates	19	Sharjah, United Arab Emirates	17
Tashkent, Uzbekistan	1	Tashkent, Uzbekistan	1
Toronto, Canada	1	Toronto, Canada	1
Urumqi, China	5	Urumqi, China	6

Table 1: International flight connections to and from ISB (25 February 2026 – 4 March 2026)[2071]

[2071] Table 1 lists international flights and is based on flight connections scheduled from 25 February to 4 March 2026. The data was obtained from FlightRadar24, Islamabad International Airport, url, accessed on 26 February 2026 and 2 March 2026. Listed flights include cancelled connections.

Islamabad International Airport (ISB), Domestic Flights (25 February 2026 - 4 March 2026)			
Domestic Departures		Domestic Arrivals	
Destination	Number of departures to destination	From	Number of arrivals
Gilgit	12	Gilgit	12
Karachi	53	Karachi	51
Quetta	5	Quetta	6
Skardu	5	Skardu	5
Sukkur	2	Sukkur	2

Table 2: Domestic flight connections to and from ISB (25 February 2026 – 4 March 2026)[2072]

Ongoing conflicts in the Middle East have led to 'widespread disruption' of Pakistan's air travel, due to flight cancellations.[2073]

In addition to the airport, transportation infrastructure includes railway (mostly transversing Rawalpindi)[2074] and road connections to other cities across Pakistan.[2075] Faizabad Interchange links Islamabad to Rawalpindi.[2076] Motorways and national highways connect to other provinces, including M1 motorway to Peshawar, M2 to Lahore,[2077] and M14 to Dera Ismail Khan.[2078]

Within the ICT, four metro bus lines link key areas of Islamabad[2079] and connect to Rawalpindi and Islamabad International Airport.[2080]

[2072] Table 2 lists domestic flights and is based on flight connections scheduled from 25 February to 4 March 2026. The data was obtained from FlightRadar24, Islamabad International Airport, url, accessed on 26 February 2026 and 2 March 2026. Listed flights include cancelled connections.
[2073] Express, Tribune (The), 92 flights cancelled as Middle East tensions disrupt Pakistan air travel, 18 March 2026, url
[2074] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census – 2023 – District Census Report Islamabad, n.d., url, p. 50; Pakinformation, Green Line Express Train Timings Information, n.d., url; Pakinformation, Pakistan Express Train Timings Information, n.d., url; Pakinformation, Tezgam Express Train Timings Information, n.d., url; Pakinformation, Islamabad Express Train Timings Information, n.d., url; Pakinformation, Subak Khram Express Train Timings Information, n.d., url; Pakinformation, Subak Raftar Train Timings Information, n.d., url
[2075] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census – 2023 – District Census Report Islamabad, n.d., url, p. 50; Dawn, Motorways to Islamabad opened as TLP protesters remain camped in Muridke, 12 October 2025, url; RSIL, Road Network, n.d., url; RSIL, Road Network, n.d., url
[2076] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census – 2023 – District Census Report Islamabad, n.d., url, p. 50
[2077] Dawn, Motorways to Islamabad opened as TLP protesters remain camped in Muridke, 12 October 2025, url; RSIL, Road Network, n.d., url; Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census – 2023 – District Census Report Islamabad, n.d., url, p. 50
[2078] RSIL, Road Network, n.d., url
[2079] ProPakistani, Key Routes and Stations: Islamabad Red, Orange, Blue, and Green Metro Lines, 5 December 2024, url
[2080] CMTA, Our Services, n.d., url

7.1.10. Access to airports and freedom of movement

The orange metro bus line,[2081] buses and a local van service offer public transportation to and from Islamabad International Airport (IIAP).[2082] People entering IIAP must hold either their CNIC, airline ticket or valid passport. Airport entry fees may apply.[2083] A valid Emergency Travel Document (ETD)[2084] issued by Pakistani Diplomatic Missions or Embassies is mandatory for a deportee to be accepted by authorities at IIAP.[2085] No information could be found on specific administrative requirements needed by Pakistani nationals to move between Islamabad and other provinces.

Political unrests can lead to disruptions of movement.[2086]

7.2. Key-socio economic indicators with focus on Karachi

7.2.1. Economic situation

As of 2023, Karachi, with approximately 20.3 million inhabitants, was the largest city in Pakistan[2087] and the capital of Sindh province.[2088] Karachi division, an administrative unit of Sindh, was subdivided into seven districts: Karachi Central, Karachi East, Karachi South, Karachi West, Keamari, Korangi, Malir.[2089] Karachi was the financial and commercial centre of Pakistan[2090] and the city accounted for almost 20 % of Pakistan's GDP.[2091] The industrial base included textile production, footwear manufacturing, chemicals, machinery, and petroleum, as well as food processing and fishery.[2092] Furthermore, major automobile companies had assembly plants in Karachi.[2093] Alongside Lahore, Karachi is one of the largest garment production hubs in Pakistan, with an estimated 2 500 to 4 000 textile and garment factories.[2094] Due to its economic significance and employment opportunities, Karachi has attracted large numbers of internal migrants from other provinces and cities.[2095] The city's population grows at around 5 % per year.[2096] The country's two principal ports, Karachi Port and Port Mohammed Bin Qasim, are located in Karachi, with Karachi Port providing cargo

[2081] Pakistan Live Metro Status, Islamabad Orange Line Metro Bus, n.d., url
[2082] IIAP, By Buses or Local Van Service, n.d., url
[2083] PAA, Security Checks at Entrance, n.d., url
[2084] The ETD is for Pakistani nationals only, for their 'Voluntary Repatriation' to Pakistan. Pakistan, Consulate General of Islamic Republic of Pakistan – Frankfurt am Main, Emergency Travel Document, n.d., url
[2085] Dawn, 106 Pakistanis deported from Europe to return today: interior ministry documents, 13 April 2025, url
[2086] Region Alert, Is Pakistan Safe in 2026? KPK, Balochistan & Safe Corridors Rated, updated March 2026, url
[2087] Pakistan, Commissioner Karachi Division, Census, n.d., url
[2088] Britannica, Karachi, last updated 19 March 2026, url
[2089] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 – Dashboard, n.d., url. Set filters to Karachi Division, accessed on 17 February 2026
[2090] Khalique, T., Karachi: From fishing village to financial powerhouse, Geo News, 25 April 2025, url
[2091] Flor, L. and Ashar, H., Improving mobility and jobs for women: The case of Karachi [Blog], 5 March 2025, url
[2092] Britannica, Karachi, last updated 19 March 2026, url
[2093] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census – 2023 – Provincial Census Report Sindh, n.d., url, p. 49
[2094] Arisa, Overworked and Underpaid: Excessive hours, wage theft and poor working conditions in Pakistan's garment export factories, July 2025, url, p. 6
[2095] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census – 2023 – Provincial Census Report Sindh, n.d., url, p. 86
[2096] Pakistan, Commissioner Karachi Division, Census, n.d., url

connections to Afghanistan, Central Asia and Western China.[2097] In addition, Jinnah International Airport, located in Karachi, is the largest international and domestic airport in Pakistan as of 2023.[2098]

7.2.2. Employment (formal and informal)

The Pakistan Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2024-2025 reported that the unemployment rate for Sindh province was at 5.3 %, with a higher rate among women (8.7 %) than men (4.6 %).[2099] Out of 17.5 million employed people in Sindh, 13.5 million (77 %) worked in the informal sector, while 4 million (23 %) people were in a formal sector employment. Furthermore, 32 % of youth in Sindh aged 15-24 were 'not in employment, education or training' (NEET), with the rate for females (51.6 %) higher than for males (14.7 %).[2100] At Karachi Division level, the 2023 Population & Housing Census, which uses a different definition of 'employment'[2101] and is based on a different reference period to the LFS, reported that out of 15.4 million working-age population (aged ten and above), approximately 6 million were employed and 950 000 unemployed. Of the 4.4 million paid employees 87 % were male, 13 % female.[2102] Furthermore, 3.4 million (67.1 %) of the age group 15-24 were neither employed nor in education in the urban areas of Karachi Division.[2103]

In July 2025, the government of Sindh set a new minimum wage at 40 000 Pakistani rupees [approximately EUR 121.2] per month for unskilled workers.[2104] The monthly minimum wage for semi-skilled workers was set at 41 380 Pakistani rupees [approximately EUR 125.3], for skilled workers at 49 628 Pakistani rupees [approximately EUR 150.3], and for highly qualified workers, the minimum wage was set at 51 745 Pakistani rupees [approximately EUR 156.7].[2105] According to the WFP, the daily wage for non-qualified labour was 1 478 Pakistani rupees [approximately EUR 4.5] as of February 2026.[2106] According to the Economic Survey 2024-25 of the Pakistani Ministry of Finance, between July 2024 and March 2025, the daily wage of an unskilled labourer working in construction was 1 430.09 Pakistani rupees [approximately EUR 4.3] per workday.[2107]

[2097] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census – 2023 – Provincial Census Report Sindh, n.d., url, pp. 49-50
[2098] Jinnah International Airport, Airport History, n.d., url
[2099] Pakistan, PBS, Pakistan Labour Force Survey 2024-2025, September 2025, url, p. 105
[2100] Pakistan, PBS, Pakistan Labour Force Survey 2024-2025, September 2025, url, pp. 54, 101-102
[2101] For example, employment is defined by the LFS as 'all persons ten years of age and over who worked at least one hour during the reference period [past week] and were either "paid employed" or "self-employed"' (Pakistan, PBS, Pakistan Labour Force Survey 2024-2025, September 2025, url, pp. VI-VII), whereas the 2023 Census defines it as 'an activity in which an individual works regularly [reference: past one year] for another person and gets remunerated in return' (Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census – 2023 – National Census Report, August 2024, url, p. 157).
[2102] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 – Detailed Results, Table 14 – Sindh, Province Wise, n.d., url
[2103] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 – Dashboard, n.d., url. Set filters to Karachi Division, accessed on 17 February 2026
[2104] Pakistan, DG Labour Government of Sindh, The Sindh Minimum Wages Board convened a meeting today, 24th July 2025, n.d., url; Dawn, Sindh fixes Rs40,000 as minimum wage, 8 July 2025, url
[2105] Pakistan, Government of Sindh Labour & H.R. Department, Notification, 28 July 2025, url; Pakistan, DG Labour Government of Sindh, The Sindh Minimum Wages Board convened a meeting today, 24th July 2025, n.d., url
[2106] WFP, Data Visualized, Pakistan-Prices, Commodities in the selected Market(s), last updated February 2026, url. Set filters to Karachi/ Wage
[2107] Pakistan, Ministry of Finance, Pakistan Economic Survey 2024-25, n.d., url, p. 147

According to a 2025 report on labour conditions in textile factories in Faisalabad and Karachi,[2108] the estimated monthly living wage in Pakistan varied between 47 416 Pakistani rupees [approximately EUR 143.6] and 75 321 Pakistani rupees [approximately EUR 228.1], while the legal minimum wage at the time of research (up to November 2024) was 37 000 Pakistani rupees [approximately EUR 112.1] and the average wage reported by the interviewed workers was 25 000 Pakistani rupees [approximately EUR 75.7]. A Karachi-based union leader reported that only an estimated five out of 100 factories complied with minimum wage laws. The study also found a gender pay gap, as female workers often received lower pay than male workers for the same numbers of working hours and the same tasks.[2109]

For another report on the working conditions at export-oriented garment manufacturers in Karachi and Lahore, published in 2025,[2110] 66 workers were interviewed in Karachi, of whom the majority declared that they worked between 57 and 70 hours a week, exceeding the legal limit of 56 hours.[2111]

7.2.3. Poverty

According to the report on Poverty Estimation covering 2024-25, the share of the population living below the poverty line in Sindh province rose from 24.5 % in 2018-19 to 32.6 % in 2024-25.[2112] In urban areas of Sindh the share more than doubled, from 10.4 % in 2018-19 to 22.2 % in 2024-25.[2113]

Regarding its 'overall vulnerability'[2114] the DVIP ranks four Karachi districts (Karachi Central, Karachi Korangi, Karachi South, Karachi East) among the four least vulnerable of 129 examined Pakistani districts.[2115]

Infrastructural deficits and climate hazards impacted low-income groups. For instance, prolonged power outages of 10 to 16 hours especially affected daily wage earners as it meant a lack of income. In Karachi, one of the fastest-heating cities globally,[2116] women in informal settlements were particularly vulnerable to extreme heat. Social norms restricting women's mobility in public spaces confine many to overcrowded, poorly constructed homes, where

[2108] For the report, 12 in-depth interviews and eight focus group discussions were conducted with factory workers in Faisalabad and Karachi in January-June 2023 and November 2024. Swedwatch and AwazCDS-Pakistan, Public Money, Private Harm: The Role of EU Procurement in Perpetuating Labour Violations: Lessons from Pakistan and Sweden, June 2025, url, p. 14
[2109] Swedwatch and AwazCDS-Pakistan, Public Money, Private Harm: The Role of EU Procurement in Perpetuating Labour Violations: Lessons from Pakistan and Sweden, June 2025, url, pp. 19-21
[2110] For the report interviews with 124 workers in Lahore and Karachi took place, of which 66 were workers in Karachi, between January and October 2024. Arisa, Overworked and Underpaid: Excessive hours, wage theft and poor working conditions in Pakistan's garment export factories, July 2025, url, pp. 6-7
[2111] Arisa, Overworked and Underpaid: Excessive hours, wage theft and poor working conditions in Pakistan's garment export factories, July 2025, url, pp. 27, 29
[2112] Pakistan, MOPDSI, Preliminary Report on Poverty Estimation 2024-25, February 2026, url, p. 5
[2113] Haider, S.A., Opinion: Poverty surges again, Business Recorder, 1 February 2026, url
[2114] Indicators of general vulnerability consider factors such as housing conditions, livelihoods, access to public education, and health care. Population Council, District Vulnerability Index for Pakistan (DVIP): Harnessing Multisectoral Data to Inform Equitable Policy and Climate Action, October 2025, url, pp. viii-ix
[2115] Population Council, District Vulnerability Index for Pakistan (DVIP): Harnessing Multisectoral Data to Inform Equitable Policy and Climate Action, October 2025, url, pp. 32-33
[2116] Khan, N. and Dilawar, I., As Karachi heats up, class and access divide city into a 'climate apartheid', Arab News, 5 July 2025, url

poor cooling options increase health risks.[2117] Houses of low-income groups in informal settlements located alongside water channels are also badly affected by floodings.[2118] For further information on living conditions in informal settlements, see section 7.2.5. Housing and living conditions.

7.2.4. Food security

Local communities' vulnerability to climate hazards has been evident in Sindh province in recent years. Droughts and water scarcity have contributed to reduced agricultural output and rising food prices.[2119] ACAPS identified drought as a 'critical driver' of food insecurity in Sindh in 2025. In addition, severe flooding in southern Pakistan between late 2024 and early 2025 resulted in the damage of crops in Sindh, which led to further food insecurity in the region.[2120] The Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported in its 2024-25 Household Integrated Economic Survey (HIES) that 29.42 % of households in Sindh were affected by 'moderate or severe' food insecurity, including 6.3 % experiencing severe food insecurity.[2121]

According to the Alert for Price Spikes (ALPS) [2122] price measuring system, *moong* lentils[2123] and sugar were classified as 'stressed' commodities in Karachi as of February 2026. Rice (coarse and broken Basmati), wheat and wheat flour were classified as 'alerted'. For instance, the price for wheat was 105 Pakistani rupees [approximately EUR 0.3] per kilogram and for coarse rice 171 Pakistani rupees [approximately EUR 0.5], while the average wage for non-qualified was 1478 Pakistani rupees [approximately EUR 4.5] per day.[2124] In January 2026, the news portal Minute Mirror reported about an intensifying 'wheat and flour price crisis' in Karachi.[2125]

[2117] Toheed, M., Heat Inequality: A big challenge for Karachi, Geo News, 30 May 2024, url; Khan, N. and Dilawar, I., As Karachi heats up, class and access divide city into a 'climate apartheid', Arab News, 5 July 2025, url
[2118] Anwar, N.H. et al., The 24-Hour Risk City: A Framework for Thinking About Building Infrastructures of Climate Repair in Nairobi and Karachi, August 2024, url, p. 25
[2119] Toheed, M. and Awan, J., Where the margins break first: Pakistan's unequal battle with climate change, Dawn, 20 May 2025, url
[2120] ACAPS, Pakistan: Key crises to watch, 12 June 2025, url, pp. 9, 12
[2121] Pakistan, PBS, Household Integrated Economic Survey (HIES) Provincial, 2024-25, December 2025, url, p. 270. The HIES survey was conducted between September 2024 and June 2025. The figures on food security in Pakistan are higher for rural areas than for urban areas at country level but are not broken down by province in this report. Pakistan, PBS, Household Integrated Economic Survey (HIES) Provincial, 2024-25, December 2025, url, p. II, 270
[2122] The Alert for Price Spikes (ALPS)-system is an indicator that measures monthly price levels against projected seasonal price patterns, to evaluate a commodity market according to how strongly it is affected by unusually elevated prices. Based on this comparison, commodities are assigned to one of four categories: normal, stress, alert, or crisis. WFP, Data Visualized, Pakistan-Prices, Commodities in the selected Market(s), last updated February 2026, url
[2123] *Moong* lentils are a small, yellow type of lentils.
[2124] WFP, Data Visualized, Pakistan-Prices, Commodities in the selected Market(s), last updated February 2026, url. Set filters to Karachi.
[2125] Minute Mirror, Karachi flour prices likely to rise further, 18 January 2026, url

7.2.5. Housing and living conditions

According to the 2023 Population & Housing Census, 94.2 % of the houses in Karachi Division were qualified as brick-build *pacca* houses.[2126] The DVIP report stated that Karachi South district had the lowest number of mud and sheet-build *katcha* or *semi-pacca* houses[2127] with 2.6 %, in contrast to Malir district, with 8.7 %.[2128] Furthermore the 2023 Population & Housing Census noted that 63.6 % of the households had access to drinking water inside the house.[2129] Around 2.7 million out of 3.4 million (79.9 %) households had a separate washroom, while 92 000 households (2.7 %) had no washroom. 81.2 % of households were equipped with a 'separate toilet', but 1.3 % of households did not have a toilet at all.[2130] Approximately 21 % of households had only one room.[2131] The percentage of households with only one room varied among the Karachi districts between 16.3 % (Karachi East) and 32.8 % (Malir).[2132] In each of Karachi's districts, 80 % or more households used electricity as a source of lightening.[2133]

Several articles described the impact of Karachi's population growth on the city's resources[2134] and access to affordable housing, which in particular affected low- and middle-income groups.[2135] 60 % of Karachi's residents lived in *katchi abadis* (informal settlements).[2136] In November 2024, the Public Accounts Committee of the Sindh Assembly declared that 582 *katchi abadis* (informal settlement) existed in Karachi.[2137]

The overcrowded living conditions in unsafe constructions have led to incidents of collapsing roofs and buildings.[2138] In May 2025, the Sindh government announced that Orangi Town, the largest informal settlement in Karachi, had been regularised and was no longer classified as *katchi abadis*, alongside a planned investment of 7 billion Pakistani rupees [approximately EUR 21.2 million] for its development.[2139]

[2126] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 – Detailed Results, Table 20 – Sindh, Province Wise, n.d., url
[2127] For a more detailed explanation of *pacca, semi pacca* and *katcha* see section 7.1.5. Housing and living conditions.
[2128] Population Council, District Vulnerability Index for Pakistan (DVIP): Harnessing Multisectoral Data to Inform Equitable Policy and Climate Action, October 2025, url, p. 59
[2129] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 – Detailed Results, Table 23 – Sindh, Province Wise, n.d., url
[2130] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 – Detailed Results, Table 24 – Sindh, Province Wise, n.d., url
[2131] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 – Detailed Results, Table 25 – Sindh, Province Wise, n.d., url
[2132] Population Council, District Vulnerability Index for Pakistan (DVIP): Harnessing Multisectoral Data to Inform Equitable Policy and Climate Action, October 2025, url, p. 59
[2133] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census – 2023 – Provincial Census Report Sindh, n.d., url, pp. 104-105
[2134] Ebrahim, Z.T., Unseen and unheard: Women in Karachi's *katchi abadis* remain outside discussion on climate change, Heinrich Böll Stiftung, 27 January 2025, url
[2135] Shakir, M. and Sarfaraz, S., The urban squeeze: How unregulated housing densification is destroying Karachi's neighbourhoods, Dawn, 30 May 2025, url
[2136] Ebrahim, Z.T., Unseen and unheard: Women in Karachi's *katchi abadis* remain outside discussion on climate change, Heinrich Böll Stiftung, 27 January 2025, url; Business Recorder, Affordable housing a 'distant dream' for Karachiites: PDP, 9 February 2026, url
[2137] Pakistan, Provincial Assembly of Sindh, Question details – Sitting on 1st November 2024, 1 November 2024, url
[2138] Shakir, M. and Sarfaraz, S., The urban squeeze: How unregulated housing densification is destroying Karachi's neighbourhoods, Dawn, 30 May 2025, url
[2139] Business Recorder, Orangi Town is no longer classified as 'slum': Rs7bn uplift package allocated by Sindh govt, 24 May 2025, url

According to a study on water and sanitation in informal settlements in Karachi, conducted in 2023,[2140] *katchi abadis* were characterised by poor or no access to piped water and sanitation. However, access to water and sanitation varied a lot among the settlements.[2141] All settlements had a high disease burden based on waterborne infections.[2142] Furthermore, informal settlements were reportedly more vulnerable to climate hazards such as flooding[2143] and heatwaves.[2144] Karachi's water infrastructure was outdated and in need of repair;[2145] some sources described the situation as a water 'crisis'[2146] or 'acute water shortage'.[2147] The city held a water deficit as the demand for water was at 1 200 million gallons (approximately 4.5 billion litres) daily as of December 2025, but received only 650 million gallons (approximately 2.4 billion litres) from the river Indus and Hub Dam.[2148] The governmental organisation Karachi Water and Sewerage Board is responsible for the allocation of water in the city.[2149] However, due to lacking water pipes and water theft, many residents could not rely on the public system but depended on private water tankers.[2150] The access to water varied among the districts. In some areas of the Shah Faisal Colony, water was accessible for one or two hours every three days, in most other Karachi settlements water did not arrive for six months or more.[2151]

7.2.6. Education

The total literacy rate for Karachi Division was reported to be 75.1 % for the population aged ten years and above in the 2023 Population & Housing Census. 77.2 % of men and 72.8 % of women were literate.[2152] Furthermore, the census estimated the rate of children aged between 5 and 16 years who have never attended school or who have dropped out, 'out of school children' (OOSC). Karachi Central had the lowest OOSC rate in Sindh province at 22.7 %. By contrast, Korangi, Karachi West, Keamari and Malir recorded higher OOSC rates falling in a range between 30.1 % and 45 %.[2153]
According to the DVIP, Karachi Central had the highest concentration of education facilities in

[2140] For the study 400 surveys were conducted in five different settlements in Karachi in January 2023. In addition, 12 semi-structured interviews with relevant actors were conducted. Khan, H.F., Why do some informal settlements fare better than others? A mixed-methods analysis of water and sanitation inequities across informal settlements, 19 February 2025, url, pp. 4-5
[2141] Khan, H.F., Why do some informal settlements fare better than others? A mixed-methods analysis of water and sanitation inequities across informal settlements, 19 February 2025, url, pp. 11-12, 14
[2142] Khan, H.F., Why do some informal settlements fare better than others? A mixed-methods analysis of water and sanitation inequities across informal settlements, 19 February 2025, url, p. 14
[2143] ACAPS, Pakistan: Key crisis to watch, 12 June 2025, url, p. 9
[2144] Khan, N. and Dilawar, I., As Karachi heats up, class and access divide city into a 'climate apartheid', Arab News, 5 July 2025, url; Toheed, M., Heat Inequality: A big challenge for Karachi, Geo News, 30 May 2024, url
[2145] Hashmi, M.S., Growing Water Scarcity and Climate Change in Pakistan: An Analysis of Urban Resilience and Water Infrastructure of Karachi, 6 March 2025, url, p. 1475
[2146] Express Tribune (The), Two decades on, Karachi still waiting for K-IV water supply, 16 December 2025, url
[2147] Dawn, Karachi mayor says water hydrant system to be 'abolished' soon, KSWC to develop alternative strategy, 14 January 2026, url
[2148] Express Tribune (The), Two decades on, Karachi still waiting for K-IV water supply, 16 December 2025, url
[2149] Janjua, S. et al., Ensuring Water Justice and Achieving Sustainable Development Goals in Megacities through Cooperative Bargaining Solutions, December 2025, url, p. 8271
[2150] Hashmi, M.S., Growing Water Scarcity and Climate Change in Pakistan: An Analysis of Urban Resilience and Water Infrastructure of Karachi, 6 March 2025, url, pp. 1475-1476
[2151] Toheed, M., The dry truth: Inside Karachi's failing water system, 13 September 2025, url
[2152] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 – Detailed Results, Table 12 – Sindh, Province Wise, n.d., url
[2153] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census – 2023 – Provincial Census Report Sindh, n.d., url, pp. 78-79

Pakistan, with 29.86 primary schools and 16.38 secondary schools per 10 square kilometres.[2154] As of 2023, Karachi Central was the district with the highest population density in Sindh at 55 396 persons per square kilometre,[2155] had 327 functioning schools in total,[2156] and a student teacher ratio of 18.[2157]
Karachi East had 180 functioning schools and the lowest student teacher ratio, at 16.[2158]
Karachi West had the highest student teacher ratio, at 29, and 179 functioning schools.[2159]

According to the 2023-2024 Annual School Census by the Sindh government, between 76.9 % and 98.6 % of the schools in the Karachi districts had washroom facilities, with the exception of Karachi West, where only 29.2 % of the schools had such facilities. The availability of electricity in schools varied between 62 % in Malir and 95 % in Karachi East. Regarding drinking water facilities in schools, Keamari had the lowest coverage at 57 %, while Korangi had the highest at 86 %.[2160] According to the HEC, Karachi had 12 public and 43 private universities.[2161]

7.2.7. Healthcare

According to the 2023 Population & Housing Census, usually each union council in Sindh has a healthcare clinic known as a Basic Health Unit (BHU) with two beds for a population of 10 000 to 25 000. Furthermore, primary health care at Sindh province level consisted of Rural Health Councils (RHC), which are better equipped than BHUs and usually had a 15-20 bed capacity for a population of 100 000.[2162]

The DVIP report declared that residents of Karachi were able to access a BHU within a kilometre, except from Malir District (within 34 kilometres), and Karachi West (within 15 kilometres). Maternal, neonatal and child health facilities had a similar distribution among the Karachi districts.[2163] According to the homepage of the Commissioner of Karachi, the city had in total 165 governmental, departmental, private and local bodies hospitals with a capacity of 14 350 beds. Furthermore, it counted 37 BHUs with 76 beds and 6 RHCs with 94 beds, 643 dispensaries, 85 mother and child health centres and 7 maternity homes.[2164]

[2154] Population Council, District Vulnerability Index for Pakistan (DVIP): Harnessing Multisectoral Data to Inform Equitable Policy and Climate Action, October 2025, url, pp. 58-61
[2155] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census – 2023 – Provincial Census Report Sindh, n.d., url, p. 58
[2156] Pakistan, Sindh Education & Literacy Department Government of Sindh, Annual School Census 2023-2024, n.d., url, p. 85; Including primary, elementary, middle, secondary and higher secondary schools.
[2157] Pakistan, Sindh Education & Literacy Department Government of Sindh, Annual School Census 2023-2024, n.d., url, p. 87
[2158] Pakistan, Sindh Education & Literacy Department Government of Sindh, Annual School Census 2023-2024, n.d., url, pp. 90, 92
[2159] Pakistan, Sindh Education & Literacy Department Government of Sindh, Annual School Census 2023-2024, n.d., url, pp. 100, 102
[2160] Pakistan, Sindh Education & Literacy Department Government of Sindh, Annual School Census 2023-2024, n.d., url, pp. 31-33
[2161] Pakistan, HEC, University Information, n.d., url. Set filters to province Sindh and city Karachi.
[2162] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census – 2023 – Provincial Census Report Sindh, n.d., url, pp. 50-51
[2163] Population Council, District Vulnerability Index for Pakistan (DVIP): Harnessing Multisectoral Data to Inform Equitable Policy and Climate Action, October 2025, url, p. 59
[2164] Pakistan, Commissioner Karachi, Social Economic Indicators, n.d., url

Media reporting indicated significant capacity constraints in Karachi's public hospitals. In March 2025, the Sindh health minister acknowledged shortages of public health facilities in Karachi.[2165] In August 2025, the Express Tribune reported that Karachi's public hospitals had only 6 500 beds and 250 ventilators. The former director of Health Services for Karachi described a 'severe shortage' of medical staff in public hospitals, compound by an influx of patients from rural Sindh due to limited treatment capacity in district hospitals. At Jinnah Hospital, around 50 % of required ICU technicians were reportedly lacking, rendering most ICU units inactive. Similar shortages of beds and medical staff were reported at several other public hospitals.[2166] Sindh's public hospitals were estimated to require an additional 15 000 nurses.[2167] The cost of qualified private health care was not affordable for most low-income patients.[2168]

The Health Department of Sindh province lists 44 public Tuberculosis health facilities and 39 private facilities.[2169] According to the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination (NHSRC), 13 hospitals in Karachi provided antiretroviral therapy.[2170] The Health Department of Sindh province listed 11 HIV treatment centres in Karachi of which seven are public facilities.[2171] According to a contact at a private hospital in Karachi, contacted by the Swiss Refugee Council (SFH) in June 2025, consultation fees at private hospitals such as Aga Khan University Hospital ranged between 4 500 and 7 000 Pakistani rupees [approximately EUR 13.6-21.2], while antiretroviral treatment and blood tests were provided free of charge.[2172] The Health Department of Sindh province lists 20 Hepatitis Sentinel and vaccinations facilities in Karachi.[2173] According to the former head of the Civil Hospital's cancer department, cited by the Express Tribune, cancer treatment in public facilities was limited.[2174] There was no dedicated public cancer diagnosis or treatment facility in Karachi available for low-income patients. Private radiation treatment was available at two to three private hospitals where one session costs 15 000 to 20 000 Pakistani rupees [approximately EUR 45.4-60.6].[2175]

7.2.8. Availability of state support mechanism for individuals without social network

The governmental social welfare organisation PBM (for information on PBM see section 7.1.8. Availability of state support mechanism for individuals without social network) has several facilities in Karachi districts.[2176] The nationwide social protection program BISP offers cash transfer mainly for women in poor households, with beneficiaries receiving between 13 500

[2165] News International (The), Karachi facing shortage of public health facilities, minister tells PA, 21 March 2025, url
[2166] Express Tribune (The), Public hospitals face bed, staff crisis in Karachi, 12 August 2025, url
[2167] Express Tribune (The), Nurses flee, hospitals left in lurch, 27 January 2025, url
[2168] Express Tribune (The), Private healthcare slips through the fingers, 13 January 2025, url
[2169] Pakistan, Communicable Disease Control Health Department Sindh, Tuberculosis (TB) Basic Management Units (BMU), n.d., url
[2170] Pakistan, MoNHSR&C, CMU, Treatment, n.d., url
[2171] Pakistan, Communicable Disease Control Health Department Sindh, List Of HIV Treatment Centers, n.d., url
[2172] SFH, Pakistan : accès à divers traitements (HIV, hépatite B chronique) [Pakistan: Access to various treatments (HIV, chronic Hepatitis B)], 16 June 2025, url, pp. 9, 17
[2173] Pakistan, Communicable Disease Control Health Department Sindh, List Of Hepatitis Sentinel and Vaccinations Sites, n.d., url
[2174] Express Tribune (The), Cancer treatment out of reach for the poor, 17 April 2024, url
[2175] Express Tribune (The), Cancer patients denied affordable treatment in Karachi, 14 August 2025, url
[2176] GDP and Pakistan, MoHR, Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal – (Karachi-I), Sindh, n.d., url

and 14 500 Pakistani rupees [approximately EUR 40.9-43.9] per quarter. Access to BISP is based on a household poverty score ranging from 0 to 100, with eligibility set at 32 or below, and applies to low-income households, including widows, divorced women, single mothers, and persons with disabilities in eligible families.[2177] The BISP has several facilities in every district of Karachi.[2178] The Woman Development Department (WDD) Women Complaint Cell in Sindh province, including a Women Complaint Cell in Karachi, provides protection to women in distress as well as basic legal, medical and counselling services.[2179] The Bint-e-Fatima foundation provides shelter for elderly mothers in Karachi and other cities.[2180] The governmental Sindh Child Protection Authority runs Child Protection Units in several Sindh districts, including Karachi, as well as a Sindh Child Helpline.[2181]

7.2.9. Mobility and internal travel

In 2025, Jinnah International Airport (KHI) handled the largest share of travellers of Pakistani airports.[2182] It is situated 14 kilometres east of Karachi's city centre.[2183] The flight-tracking website FlightRadar24 listed the following flight connections for KHI for the period 25 February 2026 to 4 March 2026. Flights to and from Skardu (Pakistan), Baghdad and Al Najaf (Iraq) operate irregularly.

[2177] TechX, Benazir Kafaalat Program: Complete Guide 2026, 19 January 2026, url
[2178] Pakistan, BISP, Regional Offices Contact Numbers, n.d., url
[2179] GDP and Pakistan, MoHR, Women Development Department (WDD) Women Complaint Cell – Sindh, n.d., url
[2180] Bint-e-Fatima Foundation, Home, n.d., url
[2181] GDP and Pakistan, MoHR, Sindh Child Protection Unit – Karachi West, n.d., url
[2182] ProPakistani, Pakistan's Busiest Airports Revealed, 16 February 2026, url
[2183] World Travel Guide, Karachi Jinnah International Airport, n.d., url

Jinnah International Airport (KHI), International Flights (25 February 2026 - 4 March 2026)			
International departures		International arrivals	
Destination	Number of departures to destination	From	Number of arrivals
Dubai , United Arab Emirates	50	Dubai, United Arab Emirates	49
Jeddah, Saudi Arabia	50	Jeddah, Saudi Arabia	48
Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates	22	Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates	23
Sharjah, United Arab Emirates	18	Sharjah, United Arab Emirates	18
Istanbul, Türkiye	11	Istanbul, Türkiye	10
Doha, Qatar	11	Doha, Qatar	11
Muscat, Oman	9	Muscat, Oman	8
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia	8	Riyadh, Saudi Arabia	9
Medina, Saudi Arabia	7	Medina, Saudi Arabia	4
Bahrain, Bahrain	6	Bahrain, Bahrain	6
Kunming, China	6	Kunming, China	6
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia	4	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia	4
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	4	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	4
Colombo, Sri Lanka	4	Colombo, Sri Lanka	4
Bangkok, Thailand	3	Bangkok, Thailand	3
Kuwait, Kuwait	2	Kuwait, Kuwait	2
Kashgar, China	2	Kashgar, China	0
Dammam, Saudi Arabia	1	Dammam, Saudi Arabia	1
Toronto, Canada	0	Toronto, Canada	2
Dhaka, Bangladesh	1	Dhaka, Bangladesh	1

Table 3: International flight connections to and from KHI (25 February 2026 – 4 March 2026)[2184]

[2184] Table 3 lists international flights and is based on flight connections scheduled from 25 February to 4 March 2026. The data was obtained from FlightRadar24, Karachi Jinnah International Airport, url, accessed on 26 February and 2 March 2026. Listed flights include cancelled connections.

Jinnah International Airport (KHI), Domestic Flights (25 February 2026 - 4 March 2026)			
Domestic Departures		Domestic Arrivals	
Destination	Number of departures to destination	From	Number of arrivals
Islamabad	51	Islamabad	54
Lahore	45	Lahore	47
Quetta	9	Quetta	9
Multan	7	Multan	6
Peshawar	7	Peshawar	7
Sukkur	5	Sukkur	5
Faisalabad	5	Faisalabad	5
Sialkot	4	Sialkot	4
Gwadar	2	Gwadar	2
Turbat	1	Turbat	3

Table 4: Domestic flight connections to and from KHI (25 February 2026 – 4 March 2026)[2185]

Ongoing conflicts in the Middle East have led to 'widespread disruption' of Pakistan's air travel, due to flight cancellations.[2186]

Karachi is connected to the rest of the country through motorways and national highways, including the motorways M-9 Hyderabad – Karachi, M-10 Karachi Northern Bypass, and the national highways N-5 Karachi – Torkham, N-10 Karachi – Gwadar, N-25 Karachi – Chaman.[2187] Pakistan Railway provides train connections from Karachi to major cities across Pakistan. The country's main railway line starts in Karachi and ends in Peshawar connecting among others Lahore and Islamabad.[2188] Public transport is primarily provided through the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system, which comprises two bus routes.[2189] In February 2025, the Sindh Government launched a new public transport service, 'Peoples Bus Service', operating 8 routes, including electric vehicles and buses dedicated to women.[2190] Depending on the length, a ride costs 80 or 120 Pakistani rupees [approximately EUR 0.2 or 0.3].[2191]

[2185] Table 4 lists domestic flights and is based on flight connections scheduled from 25 February to 4 March 2026. The data was obtained from FlightRadar24, Karachi Jinnah International Airport, url, accessed on 26 February and 2 March 2026. Listed flights include cancelled connections.
[2186] Express, Tribune (The), 92 flights cancelled as Middle East tensions disrupt Pakistan air travel, 18 March 2026, url
[2187] RSIL, Road Network, n.d., url
[2188] TrainTracking, Pakistan Railway Route Maps, n.d., url
[2189] Ndiaye, P. M., Combined Project Information Documents / Integrated Safeguards Datasheet (PID/ISDS), World Bank Group, 17 November 2025, url, pp. 3-4
[2190] Think Transportation, Karachi Bus Route Map, 1 January 2025, url
[2191] Think Transportation, New Red Bus Karachi (People Bus Service) Route Maps, 3 February 2025, url

7.2.10. Access to airports and freedom of movement

To enter Jinnah International Airport, it may be required to present either a passport, a CNIC or a valid airline ticket.[2192] Access to Jinnah International airport is available through several public bus routes.[2193] The platform Region Alert[2194] lists the national Highway M-9 between Karachi and Lahore with a 'low-moderate' security risk level, mentioning highway robberies in segments in Sindh. Furthermore, Region Alert mentioned that 'low risk' corridors could become impassable within hours if motorway access points are blocked by political protests.[2195]

7.3. Key socio-economic indicators with focus on Lahore

7.3.1. Economic situation

Lahore[2196] is the second-largest city in Pakistan, and the capital of Punjab,[2197] the country's second largest[2198] and wealthiest province. Punjab province accounts for approximately 60 % of Pakistan's GDP[2199] and houses more than half of Pakistan's population.[2200]

Lahore had approximately 13 million inhabitants in 2023, according to the latest Population & Housing Census.[2201] The city is a centre for political, cultural and economic affairs[2202] and a leading hub for industry, commerce and banking.[2203] It is a multicentric megacity with several business centres.[2204] Textile industry represents the most important industrial branch[2205] with an estimated 1 500 to 2 000 textile and garment factories.[2206] Other important sectors include rubber factories and iron and steel mills.[2207] Lahore's industrial base has fostered its commercial and banking sectors. The city provides an advanced telecommunication infrastructure and is home to numerous corporate headquarters. However, major challenges

[2192] Jinnah International Airport, Security Checks at Entrance, n.d., url
[2193] Jinnah International Airport, Public Transport, n.d., url
[2194] Region Alert is a private security intelligence platform that monitors local-language media, social media, and other open sources to provide real-time assessments of security and mobility risks. Region Alert, About, n.d., url
[2195] Region Alert, Is Pakistan Safe in 2026? KPK, Balochistan & Safe Corridors Rated, updated March 2026, url
[2196] All Lahore-specific information in this chapter refers to Lahore district, which was home to a population of 13 million, according to the latest census data. Lahore district is part of the larger administrative unit Lahore division (22.8 million inhabitans) and divided into several *tehsils*. Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 – Dashboard, n.d., url. Set filters to Lahore District, accessed on 23 March 2026.
[2197] Britannica, Lahore, last updated 1 March 2026, url
[2198] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 – Provincial Census Report Punjab, n.d., url, p. 27
[2199] Arab News, Pakistan's Punjab unveils $18.9 billion budget, increases development spending by 47%, 16 June 2025, url
[2200] Arab News, Pakistan's Punjab unveils $18.9 billion budget, increases development spending by 47%, 16 June 2025, url; Britannica, Punjab, last updated 15 February 2026, url
[2201] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 – Dashboard, n.d., url. Set filters to Lahore District, accessed on 23 March 2026.
[2202] Tabassum, H., Analysing Lahore through the Lens of Just City, April 2025, url
[2203] Britannica, Lahore, last updated 1 March 2026, url
[2204] CDPR, Lahore Beyond Boundaries – Not a Walled City Anymore [Blog], 12 July 2024, url
[2205] Britannica, Lahore, last updated 1 March 2026, url
[2206] Arisa, Overworked and Underpaid: Excessive hours, wage theft and poor working conditions in Pakistan's garment export factories, July 2025, url, p. 6
[2207] Britannica, Lahore, last updated 1 March 2026, url

such as poverty and income inequality persist, despite economic growth. The population of Lahore is growing fast, which, in combination with a shortage of economic opportunities for low-income residents, has led to the development of large, densely populated slums.[2208]

7.3.2. Employment (formal and informal)

The Pakistan LFS 2024-2025 reported the unemployment rate for Punjab province[2209] at 7.3 %, with a higher rate among women (9.6 %) than men (6.3 %). Out of 44.7 million employed people in Punjab, 36.9 million (82.6 %) worked in informal employment, while 7.8 million (17.4 %) were in formal employment.[2210]

At the district level in Lahore, the 2023 Population & Housing Census, which uses a different definition of 'employment' and is based on a different reference period compared to the LFS 2024-2025,[2211] reported that out of the 9.7 million working-age population (aged 10 and above), approximately 3.9 million were employed and 609 000 were unemployed. Of around 2.3 million paid employees, 85 % were male and 15 % were female.[2212] Furthermore, the census showed that 2.3 million (65.3 %) of the age group 15-24 were neither employed nor in education in Lahore district.[2213]

According to a labour market assessment of Punjab conducted by HCPL, Lahore was a 'central economic hub' and leading the province in terms of workforce demand. The basis for this workforce demand was driven by Lahore's various industries, such as manufacturing, services and trade. The assessment showed a high demand for skilled occupations in the textiles and manufacturing industries. Furthermore, both private sector housing societies and major public-sector infrastructure projects require workers with appropriate skills.[2214]

The Pakistani Ministry of Finance noted in its Economic Survey 2024-25 that an unskilled labourer working in construction earned 1 532.62 Pakistani Rupees [approximately EUR 4.7] per workday.[2215] As of June 2025, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) reported that the federal minimum wage in Punjab was 40 000 Pakistani Rupees [approximately EUR 121.2].[2216] However, it is reported that about 95 % of factories fail to pay their workers minimum wage.[2217] Furthermore, the HRCP advocates a 'living wage' of 75 000 Pakistani Rupees

[2208] Dziak, M., Lahore, Pakistan, EBSCO, 2024, url
[2209] As the source indicates, LFS data covers all four of Pakistan's provinces as well as Islamabad. Pakistan, PBS, Pakistan Labour Force Survey 2024-2025, September 2025, url, p. 3. However, the report does not provide separate data for Islamabad, so the figures for Punjab likely also include data collected in Islamabad.
[2210] Pakistan, PBS, Pakistan Labour Force Survey 2024-2025, September 2025, url, pp. 54, 105; The definition of employment used here limits 'employment to work performed for pay or profit mainly intended for others'. '[I]ndividuals engaged in subsistence agriculture or production mainly for their own use are excluded' from this definition of employment. Pakistan, PBS, Pakistan Labour Force Survey 2024-2025, September 2025, url, p. VI
[2211] For the different definitions of employment by the Pakistan Labour Force Survey 2024-2025 and the 7th Population & Housing Census 2023, see footnote 2101.
[2212] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 – Detailed Results, Table 14 – Punjab, District Wise, n.d., url
[2213] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 – Dashboard, n.d., url. Set filters to Lahore District, accessed on 23 March 2026.
[2214] HCPL, Labor Market Assessment – In Punjab, GIZ, 28 February 2025, url, pp. 16, 28, 55
[2215] Pakistan, Ministry of Finance, Pakistan Economic Survey 2024-25, n.d., url, p. 147
[2216] HRCP, HRCP demands living wage for workers, 18 June 2025, url
[2217] Dawn, Minimum wage, mass exploitation: A crisis of the Pakistani labour force, 14 July 2025, url

[approximately EUR 227.2] per month[2218] which according to HRCP is necessary to support a household of six.[2219] According to a report on working conditions in Pakistan's garment export factories based on interviews and focus group discussions with workers, respondents in Lahore mentioned that several members of a household had to contribute to make ends meet and that some workers had to buy food on credit due to rising electricity costs.[2220]

Half of all brick kilns in Pakistan are located in Punjab, an industry marked by severe worker exploitation.[2221] As of 2020, 277 brick kilns–typically situated on the outskirts of towns– were reported in Lahore alone.[2222] A March 2026 article in The Guardian noted that thousands of kilns operate in the areas surrounding Lahore.[2223]

7.3.3. Poverty

The 2023 provincial census reported relatively low poverty rates in Punjab.[2224] Based on the 'cost of basic needs approach',[2225] the estimated incidence of poverty in urban Punjab increased from 8.8 % in 2018-2019 to 15.4 % in 2024-2025.[2226]

Regarding its 'overall vulnerability'[2227] the DVIP ranks Lahore among the five least vulnerable of 129 Pakistani districts.[2228] Lahore faces a shortage of available housing, which is felt most sharply by the large urban poor population.[2229] Dawn reports of hundreds of homeless people, including children and elderly, sleeping on roadsides and pavements in Lahore. Among the homeless are wage workers who have migrated to Lahore in search of work as well as those living in chronic poverty.[2230] In July 2025, Pakistan Today reported that almost 1 700 homeless persons had died in Lahore within the previous three years.[2231]

7.3.4. Food security

Irfan Farooq and Jannat Rashid highlighted the 'impact of urbanization on food security in Lahore' in a 2024 research paper. They concluded that the decrease of agricultural land in

[2218] HRCP, HRCP demands living wage for workers, 18 June 2025, url
[2219] Dawn, HRCP calls for living wage amid soaring costs, 6 June 2025, url
[2220] Arisa, Overworked and Underpaid: Excessive hours, wage theft and poor working conditions in Pakistan's garment export factories, July 2025, url, pp. 6, 47
[2221] Pakistan, NCHR, Unveiling Exploitation and Abuse in the Brick Kilns of Punjab, August 2025, url, p. 3
[2222] Qeyas, M., Strengthening industrial emission control in Punjab's brick kilns: policy and financial pathways to address economic and technological barriers, 2025, url, pp. 11-12
[2223] Guardian (The), 'The whole country is doing it': how illegal kidney traders target Pakistan's desperate brick kiln workers, 24 March 2026, url
[2224] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 – Provincial Census Report Punjab, n.d., url, p. 44
[2225] The 'cost of basic needs approach' defines the monthly minimum amount necessary for a person 'to meet basic food and non-food needs' in Pakistan. As of 2024-2025, the benchmark stood at 8 508 Pakistani Rupees [approximately EUR 25.4] per adult per month. Haider, S.A., Opinion: Poverty surges again, Business Recorder, 1 February 2026, url
[2226] Haider, S.A., Opinion: Poverty surges again, Business Recorder, 1 February 2026, url
[2227] Indicators of general vulnerability consider factors such as housing conditions, livelihoods, access to public education, and health care. Population Council, District Vulnerability Index for Pakistan (DVIP): Harnessing Multisectoral Data to Inform Equitable Policy and Climate Action, October 2025, url, pp. viii-ix
[2228] Population Council, District Vulnerability Index for Pakistan (DVIP): Harnessing Multisectoral Data to Inform Equitable Policy and Climate Action, October 2025, url, p. 32
[2229] HRW, "I Escaped with Only My Life": Abusive Forced Evictions in Pakistan, May 2024, url, p. 14
[2230] Dawn, Unkind reality of Lahore winters, 26 January 2025, url
[2231] Pakistan Today, Homeless people struggle to survive as night shelters close, 17 July 2025, url

Lahore through urbanisation and large-scale rural to urban migration, as well as high demand for nutritious food have significantly increased pressure on food resources.[2232] Furthermore, according to The Express Tribune, the heavy 2025 monsoon floods also had a significant impact on agriculture, resulting in the destruction of crops and livestock. Consequently, staple food prices in Lahore spiked by 30-70 % by September 2025, and there were frequent shortages of vegetables, milk and meat.[2233]

As of February 2026, the WFP classified the following commodities in Lahore as 'stressed' as per the Alert for Price Spikes (ALPS) price measuring system: *ghee,*[2234] *moong* lentils, milk, cooking oil, sugar and wheat flour; rice (coarse and broken Basmati) and wheat were classified as alerted. For example, the monthly average price for wheat in Lahore was 117 Pakistani Rupees [approximately EUR 0.4] per kilogram, while the daily wage of a non-qualified labourer was listed as 1 547 Pakistani Rupees [approximately EUR 4.7].[2235] Pakistan Today's business magazine Profit reported in December 2025 that consumers in Lahore remained under inflationary pressure. Rising costs in other areas such as electricity and gas have made it more difficult to cope with higher food prices, according to consumers.[2236]

The Punjab government subsidises essential food items through so-called *Sahulat Bazaars*, markets, providing consumers with discounts of up to seven percent.[2237] As of December 2025, 10 *Sahulat Bazaars* had been launched in Lahore, offering commodities such as vegetables, poultry, fruits and grocery items.[2238]

7.3.5. Housing and living conditions

Around 96 % of housing units in Lahore district qualified as brick-built *pacca* housing units.[2239] Almost 2 % of households were categorised as *semi pacca* and mud and sheet-built *katcha* housing units respectively.[2240] Furthermore, 63.6 % of households had access to drinking water inside their homes.[2241] Some 1.6 million out of around 2 million (81.4 %) households had a separate washroom, while almost 84 000 households (4.2 %) had no washroom. 83.5 % of households were equipped with a 'separate toilet', but almost 2 % of households did not have a toilet at all.[2242]

[2232] Farooq, I. and Jannat, R., Urbanization and its impacts on Food Security: A Case study of District Lahore, April-June 2024, url, p. 469
[2233] Express Tribune (The), Floods to famine: how 2025 could trigger economic crisis, 15 September 2025, url
[2234] *Ghee* is clarified butter that is used for cooking.
[2235] WFP, Data Visualized, Pakistan-Prices, Commodities in the selected Market(s), last updated February 2026, url. Set filters to Lahore.
[2236] Profit, Inflation pressures persist as food prices in Lahore stay above official rates, 15 December 2025, url
[2237] Express Tribune (The), Subsidised food items delivered to 312k families, 18 January 2026, url
[2238] Dunya News, 'Sahulat on the Go Bazaars' transform street vendors into shop owners across Punjab, 28 December 2025, url
[2239] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 – Detailed Results, Table 20 – Punjab, District Wise, n.d., url; See
[2240] For a more detailed explanation of *pacca, semi pacca* and *katcha,* see section 7.1.5. Housing and living conditions.
[2241] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 – Detailed Results, Table 23 – Punjab, District Wise, n.d., url
[2242] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 – Detailed Results, Table 24 – Punjab, District Wise, n.d., url

City and regional planning expert Humaira Tabassum stated that Lahore's urban structure is uneven. On the one hand, official 'well-planned' developments offer standard infrastructure, public utilities, a good road network, and security arrangements. On the other hand, nearby informal settlements frequently appear slum-like.[2243] Reportedly, Lahore has 'significant' slum areas.[2244] Rapid population growth has led to a considerable increase in property values. Average property prices in Lahore increased by more than 50 % between 2019 and 2024,[2245] and low-income populations depended on informal settlements.[2246]

Lahore faces several environmental crises, namely flooding, toxic air and water shortages.[2247] Due to inadequate wastewater management, untreated sewage contaminates groundwater and the Ravi River in Lahore, leading to a rise in waterborne diseases.[2248] As of 18 January 2026, Lahore was among the world's top 10 most polluted cities, according to the Air Quality Index.[2249] In early 2024, a pneumonia outbreak with at least 5 000 children receiving medical treatment in Lahore was linked to dangerous air pollution levels.[2250]

7.3.6. Education

The total literacy rate for Lahore district was reported to be 79.6 % for the population aged ten years and above by the 2023 Population & Housing Census. 81.4 % of men and 77.6 % of women were literate. 3.27 million children and youths were reported to be enrolled from primary level up to graduation and above, while 718.199 (20.5 %) children between five and 16 were reported to be out of school in Lahore district. Among the population aged five years and above, 21.2 % of men, 24.2 % of women, and 62.1 % of transgender individuals had never attended school.[2251]

Lahore is an important centre for education and home to numerous higher educational institutions.[2252] According to the Population Council's DVIP, the density of primary schools in Lahore is 3.42, while that of high and higher secondary schools is 2.33 per 10 square kilometres. Regarding access to public education, Lahore ranks 8th out of 129 reviewed Pakistani districts.[2253] The Punjab annual school census for 2023-2024 reported 519 primary schools out of a total of 1 120 public schools up to the higher secondary level in Lahore as of

[2243] Tabassum, H., Analysing Lahore through the Lens of Just City, April 2025, url. Humaira Tabassum is Assistant Professor at the Department of City and Regional Planning of the University of Engineering and Technology, Lahore.
[2244] HBFC, National Policy on Housing in Pakistan, 27 March 2025, url
[2245] Nawaz, M. S. and Zulfiqar, M.U., Association of property values in Lahore with walkable proximity to employment subcenters, 12 October 2024, url, pp. 46, 57
[2246] HRCP, State of Human Rights in 2024, 2025, url, p. 54
[2247] Dawn, Lahore's urban disaster: From colonial sprawl to capitalist chaos, 17 March 2025, url
[2248] INP, Lahore's sewage crisis fuels health hazards and economic decline, 29 September 2025, url
[2249] IQ Air, January 18, 2026: Lahore among top 10 most polluted cities in the world, 18 January 2026, url
[2250] HRCP, State of Human Rights in 2024, 2025, url, p. 53
[2251] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 – Detailed Results, Table 12 – Punjab, District Wise, n.d., url
[2252] Britannica, Lahore, last updated 1 March 2026, url
[2253] Population Council, District Vulnerability Index for Pakistan (DVIP): Harnessing Multisectoral Data to Inform Equitable Policy and Climate Action, October 2025, url, pp. 59, 62

March 2024.[2254] The student-classroom ratio was 41 and the student-teacher ratio[2255] was 45 at public primary school level in Lahore as of March 2024.[2256] 53 school buildings were reported to be partially or critically dangerous.[2257] In February 2026, teaching was suspended in 133 government schools because the buildings were unsafe.[2258] Due to hazardous air pollution levels[2259] - the Air Quality Index in Lahore peaked at 1 165 - all educational institutions in Lahore, among several districts in Punjab, had to close for 11 days in November 2024.[2260] The HEC listed 17 public and 26 private universities in Lahore.[2261]

7.3.7. Healthcare

Regarding access to health services, the DVIP ranks Lahore second best out of 129 districts.[2262] The Punjab Provincial Census Report of the 2023 Population & Housing Census states that 'a number of government hospitals' are located in Lahore.[2263] An analysis of Punjab's public hospital management by Gallup Pakistan for the financial year 2023-2024 showed that, out of a total of 6.05 million hospital admissions in the province, Lahore accounted for 1.07 million. This high share reflected the large population as well as the concentration of tertiary hospitals in the city.[2264]

According to the latest Punjab Health Statistics, there were 50 government hospitals with 13 634 beds in Lahore district. 21 of these hospitals were Teaching Hospitals as of December 2023. Furthermore, Lahore district had 107 dispensaries, 12 Rural Health Centres (RHCs), 43 Basic Care Units (BHUs), 21 Tuberculosis Clinics and 50 Maternal & Child Health Centres. In relation to the population figures of the 2023 census—Lahore had a population of approximately 13 million at that time—the population per hospital ratio was 260 083:1 and the population to hospital bed ratio was 954:1.[2265] Lahore's major government hospitals provide several specialist departments, for example Jinnah Hospital has more than 20 departments, including orthopaedic surgery, psychiatry, cardiac surgery, paediatrics and medical oncology

[2254] Pakistan, Punjab School Education Department, Public Sector Education in Punjab: Key Trends & Insights. Annual School Census 2023-2024, n.d., url, pp. 5, 30
[2255] The student classroom ratio depicts the number of students per classroom. The student teacher ratio is the number of enrolled students divided by the number of employed teachers. Pakistan, Punjab School Education Department, Public Sector Education in Punjab: Key Trends & Insights. Annual School Census 2023-2024, n.d., url, p. 25
[2256] Pakistan, Punjab School Education Department, Public Sector Education in Punjab: Key Trends & Insights. Annual School Census 2023-2024, n.d., url, pp. 105-106
[2257] Pakistan, Punjab School Education Department, Public Sector Education in Punjab: Key Trends & Insights. Annual School Census 2023-2024, n.d., url, pp. 67-68
[2258] Nation (The), 133 Lahore schools closed over unsafe buildings, 25 February 2026, url
[2259] Air Quality Index levels from 301 and higher are considered hazardous. Air Now, Air Quality Index (AQI) Basics, n.d., url
[2260] Business Recorder, Schools in Punjab closed till Nov 17 as smog chokes province, 6 November 2024, url; Dawn, Schools, Colleges closed across 18 districts as smog reigns in Punjab, 7 November 2024, url
[2261] Pakistan, HEC, University Information, n.d., url. Set filters to province Punjab and city Lahore.
[2262] Population Council, District Vulnerability Index for Pakistan (DVIP): Harnessing Multisectoral Data to Inform Equitable Policy and Climate Action, October 2025, url, p. 62. The DVIP does not provide information regarding the distance to Basic Health units or private doctors for Lahore. Population Council, District Vulnerability Index for Pakistan (DVIP): Harnessing Multisectoral Data to Inform Equitable Policy and Climate Action, October 2025, url, p. 59
[2263] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 – Provincial Census Report Punjab, n.d., url, p. 57
[2264] Gallup Pakistan, Punjab's Public Hospitals Management. Gallup Pakistan Analysis of OPD Disease Burden in Punjab (FY 2023-24), 27 October 2025, url, pp. 4, 8
[2265] Pakistan, PND, BOS, Punjab Health Statistics 2024, n.d. url, pp. xii, 6, 13

departments.[2266] Six Lahore hospitals offer HIV treatment services.[2267] In addition to governmental healthcare facilities, there were 4 342 private hospitals with 20 826 beds registered in Lahore district as of December 2023.[2268]

In late June and early July 2025, several news sources reported that the Punjabi Universal Health Insurance named Sehat Sahulat Card Programme had been discontinued in public sector hospitals as of 30 June 2025[2269] to avoid overlapping coverage, because services in public hospitals had already been free of charge. The Sehat Sahulat Card would still be accepted in empanelled private hospitals but providing only limited coverage. Expensive medical treatments like transplants or heart surgeries were announced to be offered by new public health care programmes, according to the Chief Executive Officer of the Punjab Health Initiative Management Company.[2270]

7.3.8. Availability of state support mechanism for individuals without social network

According to the Punjab Workers Welfare Fund (PWWF), BISP-beneficiaries (for information on BISP, see section 7.1.8.) living in Punjab receive 13 500 Pakistani Rupees [approximately EUR 40.9],[2271] every three months.[2272]

The Punjab provincial government provides financial assistance to people with disabilities who are unable to work[2273] and are registered in Punjab. This support is provided as a quarterly stipend of 10 500 Pakistani Rupees [approximately EUR 31.8], accessed through the '*himmat card*' at designated *himmat card* ATMs that use biometric verification.[2274]

The Child Protection and Welfare Bureau – Lahore provides destitute and neglected children with food, shelter as well as education and offers a helpline.[2275]

Under the auspices of a federal ministry[2276] and the Labour and Human Resource Department Punjab, Lahore hosts a Migrant Resource Centre (MRC),[2277] which offers support to returnees.[2278] (For information on the services of MRCs see section 7.1.8.)

[2266] Graana, List of Government Hospitals in Lahore, 16 July 2023, url; Transparent Hands, 23 December 2024, url
[2267] Pakistan, MoNHSR&C, CMU, Treatment, n.d., url
[2268] Pakistan, PND, BOS, Punjab Health Statistics 2024, n.d. url, p. 51
[2269] Voicepk.net, Punjab cites 'financial inefficiencies' for closure of Sehat Card Programme, 1 July 2025, url
Health insurance closed at public hospitals to promote CM's initiatives, 30 June 2025, url
[2270] Voicepk.net, Punjab cites 'financial inefficiencies' for closure of Sehat Card Programme, 1 July 2025, url
[2271] PWWF Punjab.Com, BISP February 2026 Instalment Status Check – Rs. 13,500 Payment Confirmed via 8171 SMS & Web Portal, 20 February 2026, url
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[2273] Pakistan, Social Welfare & Bait-Ul-Maal Department, Government of The Punjab, Himmat Card, n.d., url
[2274] Ketifa, Himmat Card Phase II 2025 – Financial Relief for Persons with Disabilities in Punjab, 22 December 2025, url
[2275] GDP and Pakistan, MoHR, Child Protection and Welfare Bureau – Lahore, n.d., url
[2276] Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (MOPHRD)
[2277] MRC, About, Migrant Resource Centre, n.d., url
[2278] MRC, Services, n.d., url

7.3.9. Mobility and internal travel

Lahore is home to Pakistan's second largest civil airport, Allama Iqbal International Airport (IATA: LHE), located around 15 kilometres from the city centre. The airport has three terminals[2279] and handles both domestic and international flights.[2280]

The flight-tracking website FlightRadar24 listed the following flight connections for LHE for the period 25 February 2026 to 4 March 2026:

Allama Iqbal International Airport (LHE), International Flights (25 February 2026 - 4 March 2026)			
International departures		International arrivals	
Destination	Number of departures to destination	From	Number of arrivals
Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates	16	Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates	16
Bahrain	8	Bahrain	8
Baku, Azerbaijan	3	Baku, Azerbaijan	3
Bangkok, Thailand	5	Bangkok, Thailand	5
Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan	3	Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan	3
Colombo, Sri Lanka	4	Colombo, Sri Lanka	4
Dammam, Saudi Arabia	14	Dammam, Saudi Arabia	14
Doha, Qatar	13	Doha, Qatar	13
Dubai, United Arab Emirates	36	Dubai, United Arab Emirates	37
Ezhou, China	2	Ezhou, China	2
Guangzhou, China	3	Guangzhou, China	3
Istanbul, Türkiye	12	Istanbul, Türkiye	12
Jeddah, Saudi Arabia	38	Jeddah, Saudi Arabia	38
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	3	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	3
Kunming, China	6	Kunming, China	6
Kuwait, Kuwait	10	Kuwait, Kuwait	10
Medina, Saudi Arabia	1	Medina, Saudi Arabia	1
Muscat, Oman	5	Muscat, Oman	5
Nanning, China	4	Nanning, China	4
Ra'sal-Khaymah, United Arab Emirates	3	Ra'sal-Khaymah, United Arab Emirates	3
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia	20	Riyadh, Saudi Arabia	20
Sharjah, United Arab Emirates	13	Sharjah, United Arab Emirates	14
Tashkent, Uzbekistan	2	Tashkent, Uzbekistan	2
Toronto, Canada	3	Toronto, Canada	2

Table 5: International flight connections to and from LHE (25 February 2026 – 4 March 2026)[2281]

[2279] Allama Iqbal International Airport, History of Allama Iqbal International Airport, Lahore, n.d., url
[2280] Allama Iqbal International Airport, Flight Schedule, n.d., url
[2281] Table 5 lists international flights and is based on flight connections scheduled from 25 February to 4 March 2026. The data was obtained from FlightRadar24, Lahore Allama Iqbal International Airport, url, accessed on 26 February 2026 and 2 March 2026. Listed flights include cancelled connections.

Allama Iqbal International Airport (LHE), Domestic Flights (25 February 2026 - 4 March 2026)			
Domestic Departures		Domestic Arrivals	
Destination	Number of departures to destination	From	Number of arrivals
Karachi	48		45
Quetta	2		2

Table 6: Domestic flight connections to and from LHE (25 February 2026 – 4 March 2026)[2282]

Ongoing conflicts in the Middle East have led to 'widespread disruption' of Pakistan's air travel, due to flight cancellations.[2283]

In addition to the airport, Lahore's transportation infrastructure includes railway[2284] and road connections to Islamabad, Karachi[2285] as well as cities within Punjab.[2286] Reportedly, only 31 % of urban Lahore's population have decent access to local public transport.[2287]

7.3.10. Access to airports and freedom of movement

The Allama Iqbal International Airport can be reached by car,[2288] taxi, ride-hailing apps[2289] or by bus.[2290] Allama Iqbal International Airport can be entered through the Pedestrian Gate or the Main Vehicle Entrance Gate. At the entrance to airport premises, security measures such as under vehicle searches and body searches (in the case of pedestrians) take place. The following documents may be requested for entry: Computerised National Identity Card (CNIC), airline ticket and passport.[2291] When arriving at Lahore Airport on an international flight, Pakistani nationals are required to present a valid passport and, if arriving from a country with diseases identified by the World Health Organization (WHO), a vaccination certificate.[2292] No information on specific administrative requirements needed by Pakistani nationals to move or relocate to Lahore could be found among all sources consulted.

[2282] Table 6 lists domestic flights and is based on flight connections scheduled from 25 February to 4 March 2026. The data was obtained from FlightRadar24, Lahore Allama Iqbal International Airport, url, accessed on 26 February 2026 and 2 March 2026. Listed flights include cancelled connections.
[2283] Express, Tribune (The), 92 flights cancelled as Middle East tensions disrupt Pakistan air travel, 18 March 2026, url
[2284] Pakistan, MoR, Map of Pakistan Railways, n.d., url
[2285] Britannica, Punjab, last updated 15 February 2026, url
[2286] Pakistan, PBS, 7th Population & Housing Census 2023 – Provincial Census Report Punjab, n.d., url, pp. 51-52
[2287] ATO, Lahore: Urban Transport - State of Play, January 2025, url, p. 4
[2288] Allama Iqbal International Airport, Car Parking, n.d., url
[2289] Apni Ticket, Allama Iqbal International Airport Lahore – Arrivals, Departures & Compete Travel Guide (2025-2026), n.d., url
[2290] PK Buses, Speedo Bus Service Lahore 2026, 24 February 2026, url
[2291] Allama Iqbal International Airport, Security Checks at Entrance, n.d., url
[2292] Allama Iqbal International Airport, International Arrival, n.d., url

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Zia Ur Rehman, Pakistan-based journalist on security and human rights, email communication with EUAA, 18 March 2026. Zia Ur Rehman is a Pakistani journalist and researcher based in Pakistan whose reporting and analysis focus on security, organised crime, human rights, migration, and religion. He writes regularly for international and national outlets, including The New York Times, The News International, Dawn, Nikkei Asia, and DW.

Abdullah Khan, Managing Director at Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS), online interview with EUAA, 26 March 2026. Abdullah Khan is a counter terrorism expert, writer, and managing director at PICSS. The PICSS is a think tank based in Pakistan that conducts research on issues related to conflict, security, and peacebuilding. It aims to provide information on national security, terrorism, political instability, and regional conflicts.

International organisation working on Pakistan, email communication with EUAA, 30 March 2026. The source requested to remain anonymous for operational reasons.

Expert on Ahmadis in Pakistan, with extensive field experience regarding their situation. The expert is based outside Pakistan and regularly travels to the country for fieldwork. Email communication with EUAA, 1 April 2026. The source requested to remain anonymous for operational reasons.

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Annex 2: Terms of Reference

EUAA COI Country Focus report on Pakistan (2026)

The reference period is 1 November 2024 – 6 April 2026

Country overview

- Basic information such as geography, demography, ethnic groups and languages
- State structure (executive, legislative and judicial branches)

Background and political developments

- Recent political developments
  - Political developments in Pakistan since 1 November 2024
  - Situation of Pakistan Tehreek-e Insaf (PTI) members and supporters since November 2024

- Regional context
  - Relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan (and impact on internal security)
  - Relations between Pakistan and India (including cross border incidents at the Line of Control (LoC)
  - Relation with Iran

Main armed actors (capacity, areas of operation, motives/activities, methods)

- **Armed forces of Pakistan** including the Pakistani army, Federal Investigative Agency (FIA), Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), the Frontier Corps (FC), Levies and Khassadars, the Rangers, the Pakistani police, and pro-government armed militia

- **Main non-state armed** groups including Tehreek-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Lashkar-e Taiba (LeT), Jamaat-ul Ahrar (JuA), Al-Qaeda (AQ), Jamaat-ul Ansar Al-Sharia, Punjabi Taliban, Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP), Islamic State Pakistan Province (ISPP), Haqqani network, Sipah-e Sahaba Pakistan (SSP), Lashkar-e Jhangvi (LeJ), Sipah-e Mohammed Pakistan (SMP), Balochistan nationalist groups, other local/small militia groups

Security situation

- **Overall security trends and conflict drivers since November 2024**
  - Surge in militant violence: TTP attacks, ISKP, Baloch insurgency.
  - Impact of Afghanistan's Taliban on internal security.
  - Border security: incidents along the Durand Line, border fence, cross-border infiltrations.

- **Security situation per province**
  -> For each province and territory listed below, basic geography, population estimates, ethnicity and economy; presence and general activity of actors, recent security

incidents; impact on civilian population and infrastructure, displacement, including volume and causes of population movements, situation of IDPs and returnees:
  - Punjab
  - Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) (including former FATA and a description of the KP tribal districts in detail)
  - Balochistan
  - Sindh
  - Islamabad Capital Territory
  - Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan

Structure and functioning of the justice system

- Formal and informal systems
- Major judicial and constitutional reforms
- Applicable laws including the introduction of the 28th Constitutional Amendment bill, and the 26th Amendment, as well as sharia law
- Blasphemy law
- Anti-Terrorism Acts
- Punishments under the law
- Detention, including conditions and use of torture
- Death penalty (applicable law and execution of death sentences)
- Effectiveness and integrity of law enforcement and judiciary
- Legal remedies against human rights violations and support mechanisms for the victims and family members.

Treatment of certain profiles and groups of population

- Overview of human rights situation
- Information on targeting dynamics, perpetrators and types of targeting (e.g. threat, arrests, disappearance, killing, etc.) for specific groups:
  - Ethnic minorities, including Pashtuns, Baloch people, Sindhis, Mohajirs, Kashmiris, Hazaras, Kalash people
  - Religious minorities, including Ahmadiyya community, Zikris, Christians, Hindus and Sikhs, Shia Muslims
  - Individuals perceived as transgressing religious and moral codes including conversion, apostasy, atheism, blasphemy, interfaith marriages, consumption of alcohol
  - Situation of women and girls, including forced and child marriage, domestic and honour-related violence and access to justice
  - Children
  - LGBTIQ+ persons and activists for LGBTIQ+ rights
  - Members and supporters of opposition parties (including supporters of PTI, and supporters of Muttahida Qaumi Movement–London (MQM-L) and Muttahida Qaumi Movement–Pakistan (MQM-P)
  - Human rights defenders and activists (including the issue of Pashtun Tahafuz Movement/MTM elaborated – the current situation of its members and supporters)
  - Protesters
  - Journalists and media workers
  - Education personnel
  - Trafficking in human beings

- Land dispute and blood feud related violence (including by family and clan members)

Overview of the socio-economic situation including climate-induced displacement

Key-socio economic indicators with focus on Islamabad, Karachi and Lahore

- Economic situation
- Employment (formal and informal; access for women, youth, IDPs)
- Poverty (general trends, urban poverty, female-headed household, IDPs)
- Food security (prevalence, IDPs)
- Housing and living conditions
- Education
- Health care (overview, access to treatment; access for specific profiles; general situation of individuals with severe disabilities)
- Availability of state support mechanism for individuals without social network (women; orphans; IDPs and returnees)
- Mobility and internal travel (international and domestic flights)
- Access to airports and freedom of movement (incl. any legal entry and settlement requirements)

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