

FAITH UNDER FIRE

Documenting the Persecution of Christians in Pakistan



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Faith Under Fire: Documenting the Persecution of Christians in Pakistan

Introduction

Christians in Pakistan constitute one of the country's largest religious minority communities, yet they remain among its most vulnerable and marginalised groups. Recent census data and independent estimates suggest that Christians number just over 3.3 million people, accounting for roughly 1.4 per cent of Pakistan's population, with the majority residing in Punjab and, to a lesser extent, in urban centres of Sindh. Within this demographic, many Christians occupy the lowest rungs of the socio-economic hierarchy, employed disproportionately in sanitation work, domestic labour and other low-paid, insecure sectors. Their position at the intersection of minority religious status, entrenched class divisions and, in some cases, caste-based prejudice creates a structural environment in which discrimination and abuse are both more likely and less likely to be effectively remedied.

Despite constitutional guarantees of equality before the law and freedom of religion, the everyday reality for many Christians is marked by systematic exclusion and an elevated risk of targeted violence. Over the past several decades, human rights organisations and local monitoring groups have documented hundreds of incidents involving attacks on churches, Christian neighbourhoods and individual believers, alongside routine reports of discrimination in education, employment and access to justice. These incidents range from threats and social boycotts to large-scale mob violence that has devastated entire communities.

A central driver of this vulnerability is the misuse of Pakistan's blasphemy provisions, particularly sections 295-B and 295-C of the Penal Code, which prescribe severe penalties, including life imprisonment and mandatory death sentences, for certain forms of alleged sacrilege. Since the late 1980s, civil society monitoring has recorded at least 2,793 individuals of various faiths accused under blasphemy laws, with Christians constituting around 11 per cent of these cases despite their small share of the population. Over this period, at least 104 people have been killed in extra-judicial incidents linked to blasphemy allegations, including lynchings and mob attacks.

This report is situated within that broader context of structural vulnerability and escalating risk. It is intended to support efforts to ensure that Christians in Pakistan can live and worship as equal citizens, enjoying the full protection of the law and the fundamental rights guaranteed in the country's constitutional framework.

February 2026

Abduction/Forced Conversion/Marriage

S No.	Date	Victim	Religion	Place	Culprit
1	26.02.26	Jameel Masih	Christian	Sheikhupura	Muhammad Boota
2	22.02.26	Mishal Masih	Christian	Punjab	Ali Haider
3	19.02.26	Christian youth	Christian	Sargodha	Qazi Nigah Mustafa Chishti
4	18.02.26	Anisha Masih	Christian	Sheikhupura	Muhammad Hasnain
5	16.02.26	A widow and her 4 children	Christian	Punjab	
6	09.02.26	Elian Masih	Christian	Gujranwala	Allama Siddiq Ullah Jalali
7	07.02.26	Aroosh Masih and her 3 children	Christian	Punjab	
8	02.02.26	A minor girl	Christian	Punjab	

Murder

9	27.02.26	Naveed Masih	Christian	Lahore	
10	17.02.26	Haroon Masih	Christian	Kasur	

Torture/Attack

11	25.02.26	Yousaf Masih	Christian	Kasur	
12	17.02.26	Chand and Robin Masih	Christian	Lahore	
13	09.02.26	Shehbaz	Christian	Kasur	

		Masih			
14	08.02.26	Liaqat Masih	Christian	Kasur	Hasnain, Akbar & Zohaib
15	02.02.26	Tanveer Masih	Christian	Sialkot	

Harassment

16	24.02.26	Marqus Masih	Christian	Gujranwala	
17	23.02.26	Christian Family	Christian	Gujranwala	
18	17.02.26	Christian Family	Christian	Nankana Sahib	Muhammad Javed Alam Mahli

Rape

19	15.02.26	Minor girl	Christian	Punjab	Muhammad Sajjad
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Details of the Incident:

1 - Abduction/Forced Conversion/Marriage:

1. 26.02.26

A minor Christian boy, Jameel Masih from Kotla Sharif village, Sheikhpura, Punjab, was abducted by Muhammad Boota and his companions and forcibly converted to Islam.



2. 22.02.26

Christian girl, Mishal from Punjab, Pakistan, was abducted by Ali Haider, raped and forcibly converted to Islam. Later, she was forcibly married to her abductor, living a life of torture and abuse.



3. 19.02.26

A Christian man from Hayat Colony 47 North Sargodha has been forcibly converted to Islam and given the Islamic name Muhammad Ramiz by Qazi Nigah Mustafa Chishti.



4. 18.02.26

A minor girl, Anisha Masih from Sheikhpura, was abducted, raped and forcibly converted to Islam by Muhammad Hasnain. Anisha and her mother used to work at the culprit's house. Muhammad had previously been harassing the poor girl and even after they quit working, he continued to trouble them on the way.



5. 16.02.26

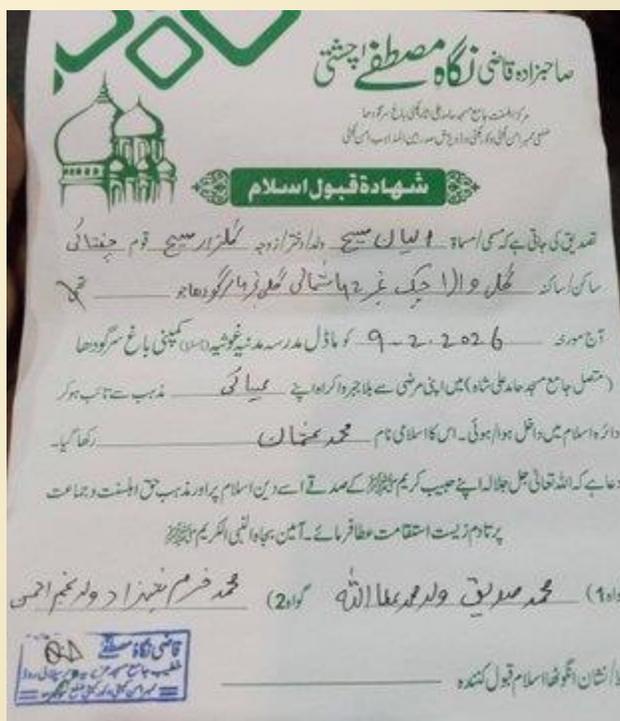
A Christian Widow and her Children compelled to accept Islam – Boys Renamed Muhammad Daniyal, Muhammad Sheroz, Muhammad Danish; Girl Now Called Narma Noor.)



6. 09.02.26

A Christian man, Elian Masih from Gujranwala, was taken by Allama Siddiq Ullah Jalali, who later brainwashed him and converted him to Islam. Elian's new Islamic name is now Muhammad Usman.





7. 07.02.26

On Feb 7, 2026, in Chak No. 37 North, Pakistan, a Christian mother named Aroosh and her children were reportedly forcibly converted to Islam. Aroosh was renamed Kainat Zahra, her son Muhammad Zeeshan, and her daughters Neha and Muqaddas.



8. 02.02.26

A 12-year-old minor Christian girl was abducted, forcibly converted and married off to a man thrice her age.



2 – Murder:

9. 27.02.26

Naveed Masih, a Christian sanitary worker employed at the Punjab Assembly, was found fatally shot inside the Members of Provincial Assembly (MPA) Hostel sending shockwaves across Pakistan. The killing has drawn widespread condemnation from civil society, human-rights organizations, and minority advocacy groups, all demanding a swift and impartial investigation.

According to authorities, the incident occurred in a room associated with provincial legislator Sabtain Shah at the Lahore assembly hostel. Masih was discovered with a lethal gunshot wound and was pronounced dead at the scene.



10. 17.02.26

In Raja Jang, Kasur, Christian shopkeeper Haroon Masih was brutally murdered for daring to demand repayment for goods taken on credit. His brother Sohail was beaten and left injured trying to save him. Haroon died at the hospital after leaving behind a wife of only 10 months.

3 – Torture/Attack:

11. 25.02.26

The brutal assault on Yousaf Masih, a Christian sanitation worker serving under the Suthra Punjab program, in the Francis Abad area of UC No. 69, Pasrur Road, Jandian Bagh Wala, Gujranwala, Punjab.

According to eyewitnesses, Yousaf Masih was allegedly attacked by four Muslim fruit vendors who struck him with a two-kilogram iron weight stone commonly used on commercial scales. He was left severely injured and covered in blood.



12. 17.02.26

In Manga Mandi, Lahore, Christian brothers Chand and Robin Masih, hardworking brick-kiln laborers were viciously attacked with knives while returning home from work. Chand is fighting for his life after suffering severe abdominal wounds.

13. 09.02.26

In Kasur, Pakistan: Shehbaz Masih, a Christian father of four battling illness, and his wife were brutally beaten and threatened with death by their brick kiln owner—for missing work while sick.



14. 08.02.26

In Batel Pur village near Raiwind Road, Kasur, a Christian man, Liaqat, and his family were brutally attacked in their own home by Hasnain, Akbar & Zohaib simply for their faith.



15. 02.02.26

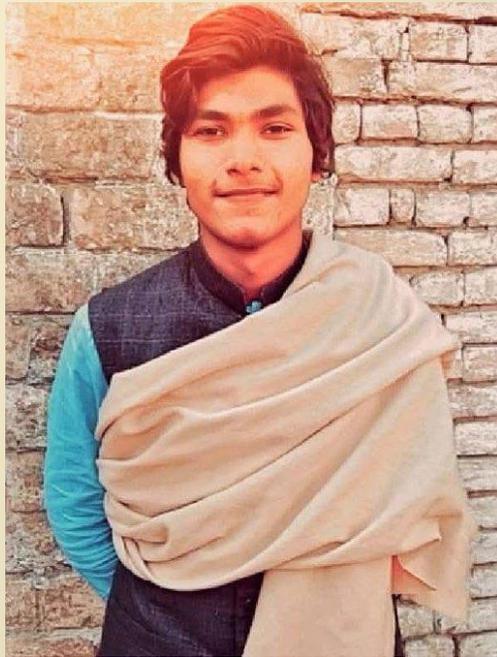
Sialkot: A 24-yr-old Christian farm worker Tanveer Masih, with an intellectual disability, was brutally beaten by his employer for being late then left to suffer, while police refused to register an FIR to protect the powerful.



4 – Harassment:

16. 24.02.26

In the Sohdra area of Gujranwala District, a false FIR for 1840 grams of hashish has been registered against the Christian youth Marqus Masih by a Muslim police officer. The Muslims who are actually selling this hashish are still freely roaming around as criminals.



17. 23.02.26

In Gujranwala, a Christian family's home was reportedly seized. Quranic verses and Kaaba images were placed inside, a trap for false blasphemy charges. All under police watch.



18. 17.02.26

In Gillan Wala Chak-114, Tehsil Sangla Hill (Nankana Sahib), local Christian families say they're facing systematic persecution by Muhammad Javed Alam Mahli. He's accused of threats, false theft charges & forcing families into unpaid labor with alleged backing from local authorities.

5 – Rape:

19. 15.02.26

A minor Christian girl went to learn sewing instead, she was raped and left pregnant by Muhammad Sajjad, the husband of her Muslim instructor. A case is filed, yet he roams free.



Conclusion

The evidence reviewed in this report shows that the persecution of Christians in Pakistan is rooted in a combination of discriminatory laws, deep-seated social prejudice and a persistent climate of impunity, rather than in isolated or exceptional incidents. Christians, who constitute a small minority of the population, experience a disproportionate exposure to blasphemy allegations, mob violence and systematic discrimination in education, employment and access to justice, leaving them structurally vulnerable in almost every sphere of public life. The data on blasphemy cases and extra-judicial killings, together with recent episodes of large-scale mob attacks on Christian neighbourhoods and churches, highlights how quickly hostility can escalate into collective punishment when inflammatory rhetoric and weak law-enforcement responses intersect. At the same time, the testimonies and case studies presented here demonstrate that this persecution is experienced not only in spectacular episodes of violence, but also in the quiet, daily erosion of dignity, opportunity and **security**.

Addressing this situation requires more than ad hoc relief or symbolic gestures; it demands sustained legal, institutional and social reforms that tackle the drivers of persecution at their source. Key priorities include revisiting and reforming blasphemy provisions and their procedures, strengthening accountability for officials who fail to prevent or respond to anti-Christian violence, and ensuring effective protection mechanisms for at-risk communities and individuals. Equally important are initiatives to challenge hateful narratives, promote interfaith solidarity and amplify Christian voices in local and national decision-making. If these steps are pursued with political will and broad-based support, they can begin to dismantle the structures that enable persecution and open the space for Christians in Pakistan to live and worship as equal citizens. In doing so, Pakistan would move closer to fulfilling its constitutional promises of freedom of religion and equality before the law, and to honouring the inherent **dignity** of all its people.