



# FAITH UNDER FIRE

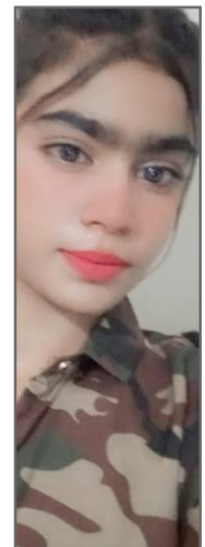
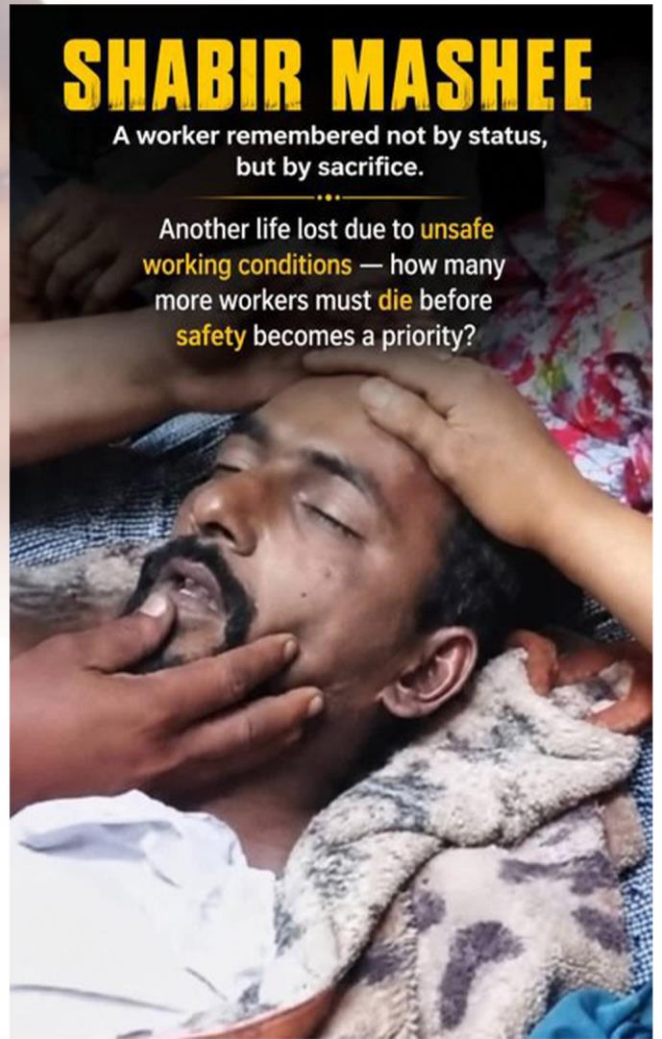
*Documenting the Persecution of  
Christians in Pakistan*

REPORT : MAY 2026

## SHABIR MASHEE

A worker remembered not by status,  
but by sacrifice.

Another life lost due to **unsafe  
working conditions** — how many  
more workers must **die** before  
**safety** becomes a priority?



# **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.

## May 2026

### **Abduction/Forced Conversion/Marriage**

S No.	Date	Victim	Religion	Place	Culprit
1	01.05.26	Tina Latif	Christian	Punjab	
2	03.05.26	Shamim Arooj	Christian	Islamabad	Imran Sapra
3	06.05.26	Bushra	Christian	Sargodha	
4	07.05.26	Nabeel Masih	Christian	Abbottabad	Muhammad
5	09.05.26	Waqas	Christian	Sargodha	Ahl-e-Sunnat Center
6	09.05.26	Rukhsar	Christian	Gulshan Jinnah, Okara	
7	10.05.26	Jia Liaqat	Christian	Punjab	Sohail Riaz
8	12.05.26	Adeel Masih	Christian	Sargodha	Ahle Sunnat Center
9	20.05.26	Sahil Masih	Christian	Sargodha	
10	20.05.26	Sonia Waheed	Christian		
11	24.05.26	Faza Imran Masih	Christian	Faisalabad	
12	24.05.26	Sanika	Christian	Sargodha	
13	23.05.26	Saba Ashfaq	Christian	Lahore	

### **Murder**

14	27.02.26	Salamat Masih	Christian	Raiwind	Muhammad Sajjad
15	03.05.26	Samar	Christian	Sahiwal	
16	07.05.26	Shabbir Masih	Christian	Faisalabad	
17	28.05.26	Silas	Christian	Peshawar	

### **Torture**

18	03.05.26	Adnan George	Christian	Faisalabad	
19	08.05.26	Sunny	Christian		
20	26.05.26	Taimar	Christian	Lahore	
21	28.05.26	Saniha Tariq	Christian	Lahore	

## Rape

22	25.05.26	Diya Bibi	Christian	Sargodha	Hasanat Ahmed
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## **Details of the Incident:**

### **1. Abduction/Forced Conversion/Marriage**

1. 01.05.26

A 16-year-old Christian girl, Tina Latif, was abducted from Punjab. Her parents claimed that the girl was raped and forcibly converted to Islam.



2. 03.05.26

A Christian girl Shamim Arooj was kidnapped by Imran Sapra from Islamabad. Then, he raped her, forcibly converted her to Islam, married her and given her new Islamic name Aden Fatima.



3. 06.05.26

A Christian woman Bushra was abducted from Sheikhpura, after she was raped, forcefully converted to Islam in Sargodha and got new Islamic identity Aisha.



4. 07.05.26

Nabeel Masih, a Christian has been forcibly converted to Islam from Abbottabad and married off to a Muhammad. Received new Islamic name - Muhammad Nabeel.



5. 09.05.26

A Christian man, Waqas was kidnapped and forcibly converted to Islam at the Ahl-e-Sunnat Center in Sargodha on May 9<sup>th</sup>. After conversion he got new Islamic name Muhammad Waqas.



6. 09.05.26

A 14-year-old Christian minor Rukhsar from Gulshan Jinnah, Okara, was abducted, raped, and forcibly converted to Islam. Local police refused to help recover the girl.



7. 10.05.26

Jia Liaqat, a 16-year-old Christian girl from Chak No. 505/WB village in Burewala, Vehari District, Pakistan, went missing on April 3. Her family alleges she was groomed online by Sohail Riaz, a Pakistani man based in the UAE, and taken by his relatives. They claim she was forcibly converted to Islam and married to him online on April 15. The family has accused police of not taking action after filing a missing-person report the same day she disappeared.



8. 12.05.26

Adeel Masih was forced to convert to Islam at the Ahle Sunnat Center in Sargodha, Pakistan. He was given the name Muhammad Adeel. He says he was threatened with death if he refused.



9. 20.05.26

Sahil Masih, a Christian man from Raza Garden in Sargodha, Pakistan, was forcibly converted to Islam and renamed Muhammad Ali.



10. 20.05.26

A 13-year-old Christian girl Sonia Waheed was kidnapped from her home in Pakistan, raped, and forcibly converted to Islam. Her family filed a police complaint, but authorities refused to help recover the minor.



11. 24.05.26

A 15-year-old Christian girl Faza Imran Masih was abducted from Chak No. 60 GB, Faisalabad. She was raped and forcibly converted to Islam.



12. 24.05.26

A Christian girl, Sanika from 49 Tail, Sargodha was abducted, raped, and forcibly converted to Islam, after which she was given the Islamic name Zil Ayesha.



13. 23.05.26

A 15-year-old Christian girl Saba Ashfaq from Lahore was abducted, raped and forcefully converted to Islam by her Muslim abductors.



## **2. Murder**

14. 27.05.26

In Raiwind, Salamat Masih, a Christian man (father of six children), was murdered by his own friend Muhammad Sajjad, who lured him to a garden and gave him poisoned water to drink.



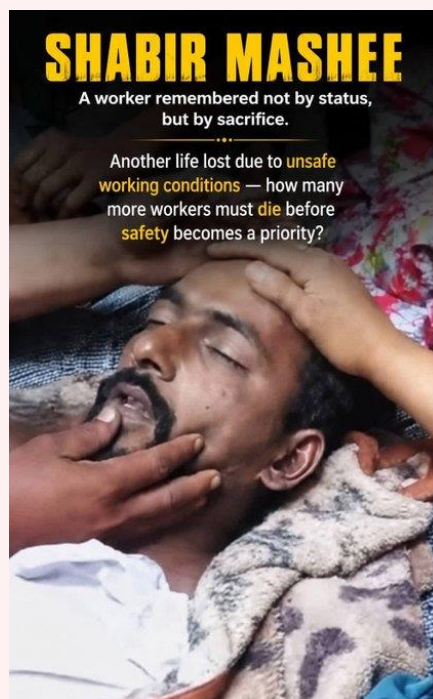
15. 03.05.26

Two Christian sewer workers, including Samar, died during a late-night sewer cleaning operation in Sahiwal, Pakistan, while a third survived. The work was unsafe, and WASA Sahiwal has been accused of trying to cover up the incident.



16. 07.05.26

In Bhutta Chowk, Nawabanwala, Satara Colony, Faisalabad, Pakistan, two Christian WASA sewerage workers, Shabbir Masih and Sanwal Masih, were sent into a sewer without protective equipment. Shabbir Masih died on the spot due to toxic gases, while Sanwal Masih was taken to hospital in critical condition.



17. 28.05.26

Silas, an 18-year-old Christian youth from Father Colony in Peshawar, Pakistan, was shot dead in broad daylight by unknown armed men who also opened fire on another Christian boy.



### **3. Torture**

18. 03.05.26

In Sangla Hill, Faisalabad, Pakistan, a Christian laborer Adnan George was assaulted and tortured on two separate occasions. The attacks were carried out by unidentified individuals, leaving him injured and causing severe distress to his family, including his mother.



19. 08.05.26

A Christian man named Sunny in Pakistan was abducted from his home by unidentified individuals and is being held in captivity. His family alleges that he is being tortured for refusing to renounce his faith.



20. 26.05.26

A 15-year-old Christian girl named Taimar was kidnapped in Lahore Cantt, Pakistan.



21. 28.05.26

A Christian girl, Sanika from 49 Tail, Sargodha, was abducted, raped, and forcibly converted to Islam, after which she was given the Islamic name Zil Ayesha.



#### **4. Rape**

22. 25.05.26

In Sargodha, 10-year-old minor Christian girl Diya Bibi was sexually abused by the influential elderly man Hasanat Ahmed.



## 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.