

FAITH UNDER FIRE

*Documenting the Persecution of
Christians in Pakistan*



REPORT : SEPTEMBER 2026

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

Abduction/Forced Conversion/Marriage

S No.	Date	Victim	Religion	Place	Culprit
1.	03.09.26	Saba Mehboob	Christian	Rawalpindi	Adnan Butt
2.	15.09.26	Mother & Son	Christian	Sargodha	Markaz Ahl-e-Sunnat
3.	10.09.26	Saneeta	Christan	Gurjanwala	
4.	15.09.26	Arzu	Christian	Karachi	Zahoor Hussein Bashart
5.	11.09.26	Christian Boy	Christian	Faisalabad	

Murder/Target Attack

6.	08.09.26	Ashram Masih	Christian	Punjab	
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Harassment/ Torture/ Rape

7.	12.09.26	Maryam Hadayat	Christian	Punjab	
8.	10.09.26	Rambo	Christian	Multan	

Details of the incidents:

Abduction/Forced Conversion/Marriage

1. 03.09.26

On September 3, Saba Mehboob, 21, a Christian woman and mother of two, was shot dead in her Rawalpindi home by Muslim neighbour Adnan Butt for rejecting his advances. After the killing, Adnan abducted her teenage brother and threatened the family.



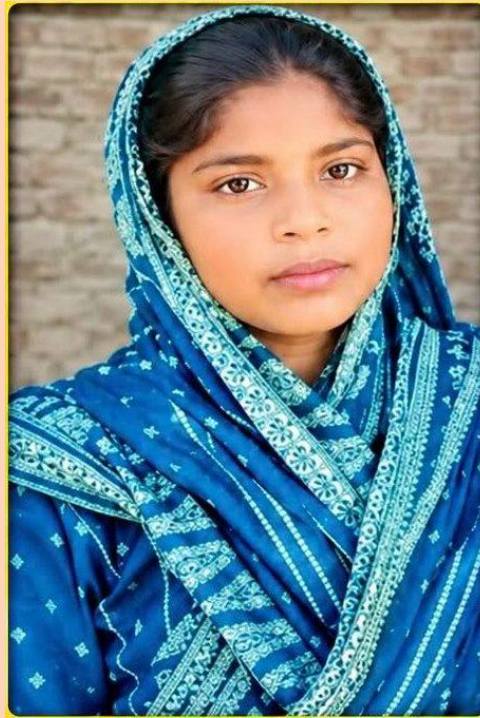
2. 15.09.26

A Christian mother and her son from bajwa Colony, Sargodha, were forcibly abducted and taken to Markaz Ahl-e-Sunnat Sargodha, where both were forcibly converted to Islam. The mother's name was changed to Zainab and the son's name to Muhammad Abdullah.



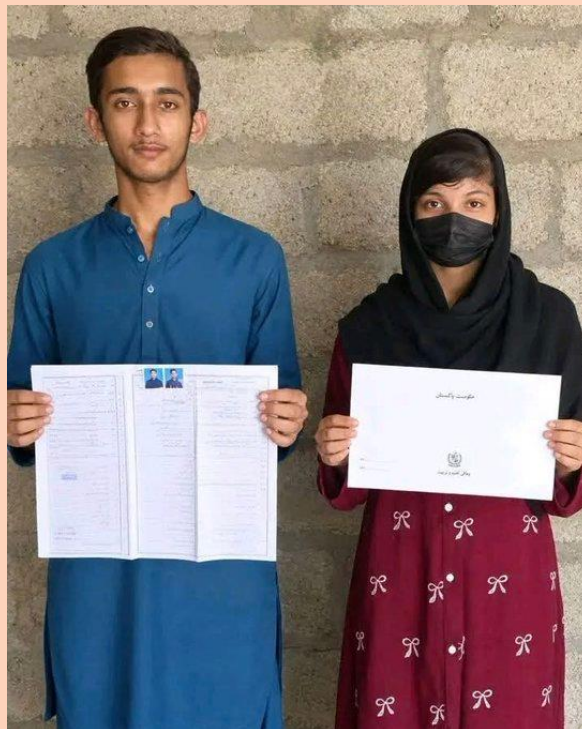
3. 10.09.26

Gujranwala: A 13-year-old Christian girl, Saneeta, was abducted on September 10, 2026, raped, forcibly converted to Islam, and married to a Muslim man.



4. 15.09.26

A Hindu girl name Arzu from Karachi was abducted, raped, forcibly converted to Islam and forced married to Zahoor Hussein Bashart.



5. 11.09.26

A 16-year-old Christian boy was kidnapped in Faisalabad on September 11 and has still not been found.



Murder/Target Attack

6. 08.09.26

A Christian man, Ashram Masih, was shot dead outside his home in the Ghaziabad area of Chichawatni by unknown attackers. According to reports, he was standing in front of his house when the attackers opened fire and shot him in the forehead.



Harassment/ Torture/ Rape

7. 12.09.26

A 9-year-old Christian girl, Maryam, is being pressured at her government school to convert to Islam. Teachers are said to have stayed silent, and the family claims they were threatened with her expulsion after they complained.



8. 10.09.26

A Christian sanitation worker, Rambo in Multan died because of the hazardous conditions under which sanitation workers across Punjab perform their duties, and because he had no safety gear. His family says he was ill and had not received his salary for three months, yet he still went to work. They also say he was mentally harassed.



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.