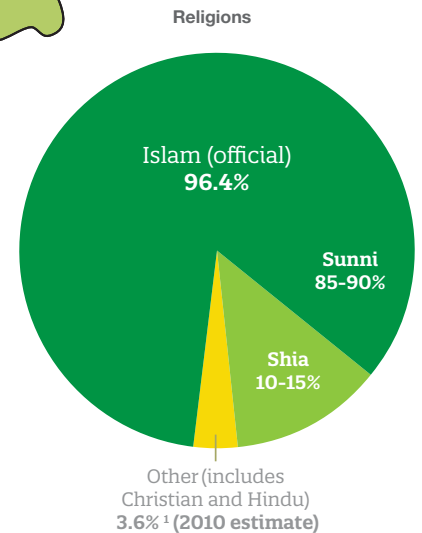
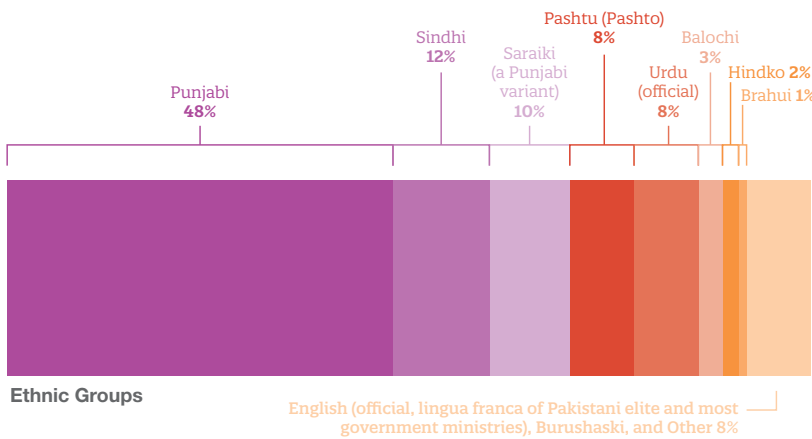




# Hindus in Pakistan

AN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF HUMAN RIGHTS, 2020



The modern state of Pakistan was created through the British partition of India in 1947. The demands of the Muslim League led to millions of Hindus and Sikhs fleeing from West Pakistan (modern Pakistan) and East Pakistan (Bangladesh) for India. Consequently, the number of Hindus in Pakistan declined from 15% in 1947 to 2% in 1951, 1.6% in 1998, and decreased by an additional 0.19% by 2017. Pakistan's widespread violation of the human rights of religious and ethnic minorities includes Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, Ahmaddiya Muslims, Shia Muslims, Baloch, Pashtun, and Sindhis. It is designated as a Country of Particular Concern under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998.

<sup>1</sup> There are no clear statistics on the Hindu population, but estimates put them anywhere between 1.6% to 5.5% according to Hindu community groups.

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## Status of Human Rights

The violations of Pakistani citizens' human rights are both tolerated by the state and actively committed by the state: Over 1,500 people have been charged and imprisoned under the blasphemy laws since 1987. In May 2019, a Hindu veterinarian was accused of blasphemy against Islam, resulting in riots in the veterinarian's neighborhood, the burning of Hindu shops, and the accused being taken into custody. Thousands of Hindu temples have been destroyed or converted into mosques in the years since 1947. The partially built wall of the first Hindu temple in Islamabad was destroyed by Islamists in July 2020. The Pakistani military establishment has long utilized terrorist/militant groups to pursue foreign policy interests in India and Afghanistan. The education system continues to teach

hatred towards religious minorities and promote violent jihad. Forced disappearances, extra-judicial killings, arbitrary detentions, and torture of political and ethnic rights activists across Pakistan continue.

More than 1,000 Hindu and Christian young girls across the country are stolen from their families and forced to convert to Islam annually. The common pattern of violence against abducted Hindu, Sikh, and Christian women, especially young girls, typically involves:

- › abduction and separation from family; abducted girls are often kept in shelters and denied access to family—some are sold into sexual slavery
- › forced conversion certified from a mosque
- › forced marriage usually sanctioned by a judge
- › rape

*On January 15, 2020, 15-year old student, Mehak Kumari was kidnapped and married to a Muslim man in Jacobabad district, Sindh. The court later nullified the marriage on grounds of Mehak Kumari being underage, ignoring the issues of kidnapping, rape, and forced conversion entirely.*

Consider the experience of a 15-year-old student, Mehak Kumari: On January 15, 2020, she was kidnapped and married to a Muslim man in Jacobabad district, Sindh. The court later nullified the marriage on grounds of Mehak Kumari being underage, ignoring the issues of kidnapping, rape, and forced conversion entirely. Mehak was then sent to a shelter home, not allowed to see her parents, and received death threats from religious clerics when she rescinded her prior statement saying she willingly accepted Islam.

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## Recommendations

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### UNITED STATES

- › The United States should impose targeted sanctions on Pakistan and Pakistani officials as a Country of Particular Concern under the International Religious Freedom Act.
- › Current USAID teacher training programs should require improvement of textbook curriculum and incorporate sensitivity training for teachers.
- › Civilian assistance should be focused on meaningful constitutional and legal reform to provide equality and religious freedom for minorities.

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### PAKISTAN

- › The number of reserved seats for religious minorities in both federal and provincial legislatures should be increased and directly elected from minority communities.
- › Train local law enforcement to better deal with: 1.) vigilante justice and mob attacks on individuals accused of committing blasphemy and 2.) kidnappings, forced conversions, and involuntary marriages of Hindu and Christian girls.
- › Pass the Sindh Criminal Law (Protection of Minorities) Bill to criminalize forced conversions and protect the rights of girls and women from religious and ethnic minorities.
- › Enhance the protection of Hindu and Sikh religious sites.
- › Remove inflammatory anti-minority content from public school textbooks.

