

March 1, 2023

Ms. Elizabeth Shortino
Executive Director
International Monetary Fund
700 19th Street, N.W., HQ1-13-390F
Washington, D.C. 20431

Dear Executive Director Shortino,

We write as a diverse coalition of non-governmental organizations and individuals who are scholars, religious leaders, human rights advocates, and civil rights leaders to express our strong concerns regarding Pakistan's human rights record. Specifically, we respectfully urge you to require Pakistan to comply with the IMF's 2022 Gender Policies and its human rights obligations under international law in order to receive financial assistance.

According to the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, more than 1,000 Hindu and Christian girls, very often minors, are abducted and forcibly converted to Islam. Often, after being abducted, these girls are forcibly married to random men, raped, sold into human trafficking rings, or forced into prostitution. These girls suffer triple whammy of gender, poverty, and ethnic violence and are not protected by Pakistan's institutions.

Pakistan has shown a complete and utter disregard for human rights and religious freedom and was recently labeled as a Country of Particular Concern by the U.S. State Department for its "systematic, ongoing, [and] egregious violations of religious freedom" against its religious minorities including Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, Ahmadiyya Muslims, and Shia Muslims.

Religious minorities face systematic persecution and violence, and their religious freedom is severely restricted by the government through discriminatory laws. Pakistan's blasphemy laws have been used to charge and imprison nearly 2,000 people since the laws were incorporated into the Constitution. Extremists have also used the provisions as a pretext and justification to routinely attack religious minorities. The government's apathy toward large-scale anti-minority violence by radical militant organizations has allowed such groups to operate with impunity.

We appreciate the decision of the IMF Board of Directors to mainstream gender policies in its core functions of – surveillance, lending, and capacity development. We call upon the IMF to implement in its engagement with Pakistan the four key pillars of its gender strategy with particular focus on girls and women of minorities who suffer unspeakable atrocities. We urge the IMF to empower its Pakistan country team to track atrocities against girls and women of religious and ethnic minorities in its core functions and collaborate with international partners such as the World Bank Group and UN Women to leverage complementarities and maximize the impact on

the ground.

We firmly believe that defending human rights and promoting religious freedom must be a critical part of any engagement with Pakistan to ensure its stability. Accordingly, we urge you and the Board of Executive Directors to require Pakistan to comply with IMF's Gender Policies with special emphasis on girls and women of religious and ethnic minorities, and stop human rights violations as detailed in the attached report, in order for it to continue receiving international financial assistance.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. Please contact Samir Kalra, Esq., HAF Managing Director at samir@hinduamerican.org or 408.464.8715 should you need additional information or other materials on this subject.

Respectfully,

Samir Kalra, Esq.

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