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## Pakistan: Country Dossier

February 2020 update



**OpenDoors**

Serving persecuted **Christians** worldwide

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# Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	3
World Watch List 2020 .....	3
Copyright notice .....	4
Brief note on sources and definitions .....	4
<b>WWL 2020: Persecution summary / Pakistan</b> .....	5
Brief country details .....	5
Dominant persecution engines and drivers .....	5
Brief description of persecution situation .....	6
Specific examples of persecution in the reporting period .....	6
External Links - WWL 2020: Persecution summary .....	6
<b>WWL 2020: Keys to understanding / Pakistan</b> .....	7
Link for general background information .....	7
Recent history .....	7
Political and legal landscape .....	7
Religious landscape .....	9
Economic landscape .....	10
Social and cultural landscape .....	11
Technological landscape .....	11
Security situation .....	12
Trends analysis .....	12
External Links - WWL 2020: Keys to understanding .....	13
<b>WWL 2020: Church information / Pakistan</b> .....	16
Christian origins .....	16
Church spectrum today .....	16
External Links - WWL 2020: Church information .....	17
<b>WWL 2020: Persecution Dynamics / Pakistan</b> .....	18
Reporting period .....	18
Position on World Watch List (WWL) .....	18
Persecution engines .....	18
Drivers of persecution .....	20
Geographical hotspots of persecution .....	23
Christian communities and how they are affected .....	23
The Persecution pattern .....	24

Pressure in the 5 spheres of life.....	25
Violence.....	30
5 Year trends .....	32
Gender profile of persecution.....	33
Persecution of other religious minorities.....	35
Future outlook for the church.....	35
External Links - WWL 2020: Persecution Dynamics .....	36
<b>Additional reports and articles .....</b>	<b>38</b>
WWR in-depth reports.....	38
World Watch Monitor news articles.....	38
Recent country developments .....	38

# Introduction

## World Watch List 2020

Rank	Country	Private life	Family life	Community life	National life	Church life	Violence	Total Score WWL 2020	Total Score WWL 2019	Total Score WWL 2018	Total Score WWL 2017	Total Score WWL 2016
1	North Korea	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	11.1	94	94	94	92	92
2	Afghanistan	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	10.0	93	94	93	89	88
3	Somalia	16.5	16.7	16.6	16.6	16.5	9.4	92	91	91	91	87
4	Libya	15.3	15.5	15.8	16.0	16.4	11.3	90	87	86	78	79
5	Pakistan	14.0	13.9	15.0	14.9	13.7	16.7	88	87	86	88	87
6	Eritrea	14.5	14.9	15.9	15.9	15.4	10.9	87	86	86	82	89
7	Sudan	14.2	14.6	14.5	15.7	16.1	10.4	85	87	87	87	84
8	Yemen	16.6	16.4	16.4	16.7	16.7	2.6	85	86	85	85	78
9	Iran	14.1	14.3	14.1	15.8	16.5	10.4	85	85	85	85	83
10	India	12.9	13.0	13.5	15.0	13.5	14.8	83	83	81	73	68
11	Syria	13.5	14.2	13.0	13.9	14.4	12.6	82	82	76	86	87
12	Nigeria	12.2	11.9	13.5	12.8	13.0	16.7	80	80	77	78	78
13	Saudi Arabia	15.1	14.9	14.1	15.5	16.5	2.4	79	77	79	76	76
14	Maldives	15.4	15.6	14.0	15.9	16.6	0.7	78	78	78	76	76
15	Iraq	14.0	14.6	13.9	14.5	13.6	5.6	76	79	86	86	90
16	Egypt	12.1	13.1	10.7	13.2	10.5	16.1	76	76	70	65	64
17	Algeria	13.5	14.3	10.4	12.8	13.2	9.3	73	70	58	58	56
18	Uzbekistan	15.1	12.9	14.1	12.2	15.7	3.0	73	74	73	71	70
19	Myanmar	11.8	11.9	13.5	12.5	12.2	10.7	73	71	65	62	62
20	Laos	12.8	9.9	14.1	14.4	14.9	5.6	72	71	67	64	58
21	Vietnam	12.3	8.5	12.9	13.6	14.5	9.8	72	70	69	71	66
22	Turkmenistan	14.5	11.2	13.8	13.3	15.7	1.9	70	69	68	67	66
23	China	11.6	8.4	11.6	12.8	15.1	10.2	70	65	57	57	57
24	Mauritania	13.9	14.0	13.0	13.7	13.4	0.2	68	67	57	55	50
25	Central African Republic	10.1	9.1	13.1	9.8	10.2	15.6	68	70	61	58	59
26	Morocco	12.4	13.3	10.8	11.7	14.1	4.1	66	63	51	49	47
27	Qatar	13.6	13.4	10.8	12.2	14.1	2.2	66	62	63	66	65
28	Burkina Faso	9.4	9.7	10.2	9.4	11.8	15.6	66	48	-	-	-
29	Mali	9.2	8.2	12.8	10.0	11.7	13.7	66	68	59	59	55
30	Sri Lanka	11.5	9.0	11.0	10.9	9.6	13.1	65	58	57	55	53
31	Tajikistan	13.9	12.3	11.9	12.4	13.1	1.1	65	65	65	58	58
32	Nepal	12.4	10.8	9.9	12.1	12.2	7.0	64	64	64	53	53
33	Jordan	13.1	14.1	10.7	11.7	12.5	1.7	64	65	66	63	59
34	Tunisia	12.0	12.8	10.3	10.8	12.3	5.4	64	63	62	61	58
35	Kazakhstan	13.2	11.5	10.7	12.4	14.0	1.7	64	63	63	56	55
36	Turkey	12.6	11.8	10.7	13.3	11.3	3.7	63	66	62	57	55
37	Brunei	13.8	14.3	10.7	10.3	13.5	0.6	63	63	64	64	61
38	Bangladesh	11.1	9.9	12.7	11.1	8.9	9.3	63	58	58	63	57
39	Ethiopia	10.0	9.2	10.6	10.8	10.4	11.9	63	65	62	64	67
40	Malaysia	12.1	14.6	12.7	12.0	9.6	1.5	62	60	65	60	58
41	Colombia	8.9	7.8	11.9	9.8	8.9	15.0	62	58	56	53	55
42	Oman	12.7	13.1	10.0	11.5	12.7	2.0	62	59	57	53	53
43	Kuwait	13.2	13.1	9.9	11.5	13.4	0.7	62	60	61	57	56
44	Kenya	11.7	10.5	10.9	8.3	10.9	9.1	61	61	62	68	68
45	Bhutan	12.8	10.9	11.8	11.6	13.9	0.0	61	64	62	61	56
46	Russian Federation	12.2	8.3	10.7	10.4	12.1	6.9	60	60	51	46	48
47	United Arab Emirates	12.9	13.0	9.5	11.1	12.6	1.1	60	58	58	55	55
48	Cameroon	8.8	7.2	11.6	7.0	10.4	15.0	60	54	38	-	45
49	Indonesia	10.9	11.1	11.6	10.2	9.5	6.5	60	65	59	55	55
50	Niger	9.4	9.5	13.3	7.2	11.1	9.3	60	52	45	47	53
51	Palestinian Territories	12.2	13.0	9.2	10.2	11.9	3.1	60	57	60	64	62
52	Mexico	8.4	6.8	12.2	10.6	10.0	11.5	60	61	59	57	56
53	Azerbaijan	13.0	10.0	9.3	11.1	12.4	1.5	57	57	57	52	57
54	Comoros	11.7	11.5	9.1	9.9	13.9	0.9	57	56	56	56	56

55	Kyrgyzstan	12.9	10.3	11.1	9.4	11.9	1.1	57	56	54	48	46
56	Djibouti	12.3	12.3	10.3	10.0	11.2	0.2	56	56	56	57	58
57	Democratic Republic of the Congo	5.6	6.7	10.6	7.4	10.4	15.6	56	55	33	-	53
58	Chad	11.5	8.2	10.2	9.6	10.3	5.9	56	48	40	-	51
59	Bahrain	12.1	12.3	9.1	10.1	10.5	0.9	55	55	57	54	54
60	Tanzania	9.3	10.8	10.3	8.6	8.7	7.0	55	52	53	59	57
61	Cuba	9.6	5.6	9.5	11.8	12.0	3.5	52	49	49	47	42
62	Uganda	8.1	4.6	6.7	6.7	9.1	13.0	48	47	46	53	45
63	Burundi	5.1	5.8	9.7	9.2	9.6	8.7	48	43	-	-	-
64	Guinea	10.3	7.5	8.3	7.0	8.1	3.7	45	46	-	-	-
65	South Sudan	5.7	1.5	7.0	6.3	7.8	15.6	44	44	-	-	-
66	Mozambique	6.9	4.6	7.1	5.2	8.0	11.7	43	43	-	-	-
67	Gambia	8.3	8.2	8.7	8.3	8.8	1.1	43	43	-	-	-
68	Angola	6.4	3.6	7.0	8.7	10.4	6.7	43	42	-	-	-
69	Venezuela	3.8	4.4	10.6	9.3	9.5	4.8	42	41	34	-	-
70	Ivory Coast	9.8	8.6	8.2	5.5	6.6	3.5	42	43	-	-	-
71	Rwanda	5.3	4.4	6.7	7.8	10.1	7.2	42	41	-	-	-
72	Nicaragua	5.8	4.2	8.5	9.8	9.0	4.1	41	41	-	-	-
73	Togo	8.6	6.7	8.5	7.1	8.4	1.1	41	42	-	-	-

## Copyright notice

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## Brief note on sources and definitions

This country report is a collation of data and analysis based around Open Doors World Watch List (WWL) and includes statistical information on world religions, Christian denominations and people groups prepared by the World Christian Database (WCD). The highlighted links in the text can be found written out in full at the conclusion of each main section under the heading “External links”. The WWL 2020 reporting period was 1 November 2018 - 31 October 2019.

The definition of persecution used in WWL analysis is: “Any hostility experienced as a result of one’s identification with Christ. This can include hostile attitudes, words and actions towards Christians”.

This broad definition includes (but is not limited to) restrictions, pressure, discrimination, opposition, disinformation, injustice, intimidation, mistreatment, marginalization, oppression, intolerance, infringement, violation, ostracism, hostilities, harassment, abuse, violence, ethnic cleansing and genocide.

The latest update of WWL Methodology including appendices can be found on the [World Watch List Documentation](#) page of the Open Doors Analytical website (password: freedom).

# WWL 2020: Persecution summary / Pakistan

## Brief country details

Pop 2019	Christians	Chr%
Pakistan		
204,596,000	4,015,000	2.0

Data source: Johnson T M and Zurlo G A, eds., *World Christian Database* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed April 2019).

World Watch List Pakistan	Points	WWL Rank
WWL 2020	88	5
WWL 2019	87	5
WWL 2018	86	5
WWL 2017	88	4
WWL 2016	87	6

Scores and ranks are shown above whenever the country scored 41 points or more in the WWL 2016-2020 reporting periods.

## Dominant persecution engines and drivers

Pakistan: Main Persecution engines    Main drivers	
Islamic oppression	Government officials , Non-Christian religious leaders, Political parties, Revolutionaries or paramilitary groups, Violent religious groups, Ideological pressure groups, One's own (extended) family, Citizens (people from the broader society), including mobs, Ethnic group leaders
Clan and ethnic antagonism	Government officials , Political parties, Revolutionaries or paramilitary groups, Citizens (people from the broader society), including mobs, Ethnic group leaders, Non-Christian religious leaders, Violent religious groups, Ideological pressure groups
Dictatorial paranoia	Government officials , Political parties, Non-Christian religious leaders, Violent religious groups, Revolutionaries or paramilitary groups
Organized corruption and crime	Revolutionaries or paramilitary groups, Government officials , Organized crime cartels or networks, Multilateral organizations (e.g. UN, OIC etc.) and embassies, Political parties, Citizens (people from the broader society), including mobs, Non-Christian religious leaders

Engines and Drivers are listed in order of strength. Only Very strong / Strong / Medium are shown here.

## Brief description of persecution situation

In 1947, the year of the country's independence, the situation for the Christian minority became more complicated as Pakistan officially became a Muslim state. Historic churches have relative freedom for worship and other activities, however, they are heavily monitored and have regularly been [targeted](#) for bomb attacks (the last large bomb attack so far having happened on 17 December 2017 in Quetta). Christian churches more active in outreach and youthwork face stronger persecution in society. All Christians suffer from institutionalized discrimination, illustrated by the fact that occupations seen as low, dirty and derogatory are reserved for Christians by the authorities, as can be seen e.g. in job announcements. Many Christians are anyway poor and several are [victims of bonded labor](#). On the other hand, there are Christians belonging to the middle class as well, but this does not save them from being marginalized or persecuted. The country's notorious blasphemy laws target religious minorities (including Muslim minorities), but affect the Christian minority in particular given their overall percentage of population, not just the poor.

## Specific examples of persecution in the reporting period

- In May 2019, a landlord killed a Christian worker because he dared to work for another employer, according to a [report](#) by Morning Star News. This case illustrates the low social status of most Christians and stands for similar cases, which often go unreported.
- Although there have been no major (bomb) attacks against church buildings in the WWL 2020 reporting period, dozens of smaller "every day attacks" against churches and cemeteries occur. One example is the desecration of the [Christian cemetery of Okara](#) on 12 May 2019.
- The Christian brothers Qaisar and Amoon Ayub have been sentenced to death for alleged blasphemy committed in 2010 by a district judge in Lahore on 13 December 2018.

## External Links - WWL 2020: Persecution summary

- Brief description of persecution situation: targeted - <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/04/pakistan-prevents-another-easter-attack-christians/>
- Brief description of persecution situation: victims of bonded labor - <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/07/pakistani-christians-mother-says-son-killed-for-asking-for-an-end-to-his-slavery/>
- Specific examples of persecution in the reporting period: report - <https://mailchi.mp/morningstarnews/muslim-employer-in-pakistan-kills-christian-farmhand-for-working-elsewhere-relatives-say?e=7633765c31>
- Specific examples of persecution in the reporting period: Christian cemetery of Okara - [http://www.fides.org/en/news/66051-ASIA\\_PAKISTAN\\_Christian\\_cemetery\\_devastated\\_by\\_vandals\\_an\\_attempt\\_to\\_sow\\_terror](http://www.fides.org/en/news/66051-ASIA_PAKISTAN_Christian_cemetery_devastated_by_vandals_an_attempt_to_sow_terror)

# WWL 2020: Keys to understanding / Pakistan

## Link for general background information

BBC country profile: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-12965779>.

## Recent history

Pakistan became an independent nation separate from India at the end of British colonial rule in 1947. In 1971 East Pakistan became the independent nation Bangladesh. The territory of Kashmir remains disputed with India to this day and in February 2019 both countries were involved in a violent skirmish across the unofficial (but in practice accepted) "Line of Control". The conflict flared up, when Pakistani militants from Jaish-e-Mohammed, which claimed immediate responsibility, attacked an Indian military convoy on 14 February 2019 and killed 40 people (Pulwama incident). India retaliated, but both sides stopped short of letting the conflict escalate further.

Pakistan has suffered from an unstable government system with three prolonged phases of military rule, with the last phase ending in 2008. In 2013 Nawaz Sharif became prime minister for the third time after his Muslim League party won parliamentary elections. The attacks in December 2014 on an army school in Peshawar, leaving 141 dead, led to a hasty amendment of the Constitution, re-introducing the death penalty and setting up special military courts for terrorism-linked cases, fulfilling the army's long-standing demands. Army and government are still executing a plan allegedly targeting Islamic militants.

The army has been accused of being behind the downfall and sentencing of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif due to corruption back in the 1990s as well as of meddling in the country's most recent elections on 25 July 2018. These saw former cricket star Imran Khan as winner, although he is struggling to keep Pakistan on track as far as economic development is concerned. Due to the increasingly strained relationship with the USA, the latter refused to bail the country out as it has done before. As a result, Khan had to accept an offer from the IMF, which comes with very strong controls and expected hardships, especially for the middle class. Consequently, his first year "[at the bat](#)" has been evaluated as having mixed results at best.

The very courageous decision of the Supreme Court on the very last day of the WWL 2019 reporting period, 31 October 2018, to dismiss the blasphemy case against Christian woman Asia Bibi and to acquit her from the death penalty, led to an outcry from radical Islamic groups, with Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) at the forefront. As they had done before, they blocked major intersections in the big cities and demanded a reversal of the finding. However, on 8 May 2019, Asia Bibi was finally able to leave the country for Canada (for the political implications see "Political and legal landscape").

## Political and legal landscape

In Pakistan, Islam plays a dominant role in every aspect of life. For example, according to the Constitution, every citizen has the right of free speech, which is, however, subject to the restrictions necessary in the interest of "the glory of Islam". Pakistan has a long history of trying to distinguish between "good" and "bad" jihadists. It fights the latter and courts the former.

In the protests against the acquittal of Asia Bibi, the radical Islamic groups (headed by TLP) made a mistake (although it will be most likely not lethal, as such groups have the ability to hibernate, re-structure and re-emerge after a while): They would have been forgiven for just calling for the downfall of the government and the killing of the judges. However, they also called for an uprising against the army and its chief as well. The army is seen as the fourth main force in Pakistan (or fifth, if the media is counted) and is arguably the strongest one. Consequently, the government did not release Asia Bibi immediately, but put her in protective custody and even granted an extra-legal appeal against the final court decision - being heard by the same bench.

At the same time, the government put two leaders of the TLP in protective custody and with them some 5,000 of their fighters, who had obstructed infrastructure and damaged thousands of items of private property. Such a "[crackdown](#)" was new and sent a clear warning to other Islamist groups as well. In May 2019, Khadim Hussein Rizvi, the leader of the TLP and his deputy were [released from protective custody](#). It is too soon say whether it is correct to speak of a [downfall of the TLP](#). As long as the army (and with it, the government), tries to use radical Islamic groups for their own purposes and sees them thus as "good", more such groups will emerge.

The army has been challenged on a very different front as well. Supreme Court judge, Justice Qasi Faez Isa, presented his findings of an investigation concerning an earlier blockade by the TLP in 2017 and [openly accused](#) not just the army of supporting and even orchestrating the event, but also Pakistan's untouchable Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). He called upon the military chiefs and minister of defense to take action against all servicemen involved in politicking. Such a direct challenge is unheard of and, not surprisingly, the findings were sent back for review. However, according to the law, this review will be heard by the same judges. The fact that an accusation of corruption has been filed against Justice Isa in the meantime, is seen by many in Pakistan as an attempt to get rid of him before the review is heard. However, this accusation of corruption has angered many people, not just those in the legal sphere. It remains to be seen whether the army will be forced to backpaddle.

At the beginning of his government, Prime Minister Imran Khan had given in two times to radical Islamic groups and parties, especially to the demands of the TLP. In September 2018, a member of the Ahmadi minority was [removed](#) from a top economic adviser post. As international experts have widely acknowledged, Atif Mian is one of the top experts in economic affairs in Pakistan. However, he is a member of the Ahmadiyya, a Muslim sect not recognized as Muslim in Pakistan and especially not by radical Sunni groups. The TLP succeeded in their policy of holding the country captive to their demands once more. But the more illustrative example was the countrywide blockade after the Supreme Court had acquitted Asia Bibi of charges of blasphemy. The radical Islamic groups and parties not only called for the judges and lawyers to be held to account, they also called for mutiny as they concluded - rightly - that such a verdict would not be issued without having first checked with the powerful Pakistani army.

The latter remained surprisingly silent, unlike Imran Khan. In his first reaction in a TV speech, he publicly challenged the radical groups, but behind the scenes his minister for religion was soon forging a compromise with them and promising to check if Asia Bibi could be put on a no-fly list, until another - extra-ordinary - appeal against her acquittal could be decided by the Supreme Court. However, the call of the radicals to even attack and disobey the army was obviously a cry too far. In an effort to win back the upper hand, the government took one of the leaders of the TLP, Khadim Hussein Rizvi, in "[protective custody](#)" on 24 November 2018 and reportedly detained more than five thousand TLP members, who had damaged or destroyed large amounts of private property.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Imran Khan, faces enormous challenges in keeping the economy afloat. More than one year into his term, he is struggling politically as well. This can be seen by the fact that out of his government's 48 ministers and advisers only five come from his own party, the PTI. The ruling majority in parliament is thin and Pakistan looks set to remain a volatile country. Further, Prime Minister Imran Khan has acknowledged in several speeches that Pakistan does have official [links with Islamic militant groups](#). This is the first time that Pakistan's leaders have officially mentioned such links, which include the training of jihadist groups.

In another surprising movement, the Supreme Court [questioned the extension of the Army Chief's tenure](#) by the government in a decision from 28 November 2019 and only granted a six-months-extension in order to enable the parliament to draft laws on a possible extension and to decide about it.

## Religious landscape

While Muslims make up more than 96% of the total population, by far the majority of them follow the Sunni tradition; Shiites make up less than 10% and the Ahmadi around 0.2% (the exact percentages between Sunni and Shia are hotly debated).

Christian pastors can get [arrested](#) when they do not abide by the authorities' wishes. This acts as a warning to the Christian minority and intimidates them further. They are considered second-class citizens and are discriminated against in every aspect of life.

Religious Context: Pakistan	Numbers	%
Christians	4,015,000	2.0
Muslim	197,227,000	96.4
Hindu	2,676,000	1.3
Buddhist	123,000	0.1
Ethnoreligionist	219,000	0.1
Jewish	1,000	0.0
Bahai	101,000	0.0
Atheist	9,700	0.0
Agnostic	166,000	0.1
Other	58,500	0.0

Data source: Johnson T M and Zurlo G A, eds., *World Christian Database* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed April 2019). OTHER includes Chinese folk, New religionist, Sikh, Spiritist, Taoist, Confucianist, Jain, Shintoist, Zoroastrian.

A new census was conducted in 2017, the first for 19 years. It included religious affiliation, but the detailed results have not been published yet. The question of religion is a highly sensitive one and is very political. One decision connected to the census will be if and how far political representation of religious minorities will be increased at the national and state level; the most recent elections in July 2018 were still conducted according to the old system with poor representation. Radical Islamic groups will oppose every change of the status quo, just as they have already violently opposed all efforts to open discussions about reviewing the country's notorious blasphemy laws. Since the introduction of the blasphemy laws in 1986, Christians have come under increasing pressure and are victims of roughly a quarter of all blasphemy accusations.

## Economic landscape

Economically, the country increasingly relies on China and its willingness to invest in Pakistan in its "New Silk Road" framework ("One Belt, One Road"). After his election, Prime Minister Imran Khan immediately announced that he may strengthen the country's relationship with China, although he returned from his first trip to Beijing reportedly rather empty-handed. China is investing 57 billion USD in the so called "China-Pakistan Economic Corridor" (CPEC) and the port city of Gwadar is one of the hubs the Chinese are using; in 2017 it was leased by the Pakistan government for 40 years. Doubts about these dealings with China continue to be voiced since Pakistan may well end up [heavily in debt](#) and become dependent on Chinese government policy. Additionally, the [killing of two Chinese Christians](#) in Pakistan in May 2017 (close to the CPEC construction site) illustrates how volatile and challenging the situation is.

Pakistan has sought economic assistance (i.e. credits) from various countries after the USA refused to step in and save its long-term ally. In the end, the government turned back to the IMF, seeking a bailout of 6.6 billion USD on harsh terms of domestic reform. This has led observers to question whether Pakistan will ever [be able to end the cycle](#) of repeated bailouts and accept the demands for genuine reform.

Pakistan has a strong population growth, most recently reflected by the nation's census in 2017, which put the annual growth at 2.4%. This comes with big challenges as well as especially the youth lack any economic perspectives. While the youth unemployment rate, as given by the UNDP, is not particularly high at 7.7%, the percentage of youth aged 15-24 neither being in school or in employment stands at 30.4%. This especially affects ethnic and religious minorities. Child labor is rampant, although numbers are hard to establish. One NGO gives a total number of [12.5 million](#), but this cannot be verified. The whole population suffers greatly from these poor conditions, but minority groups (such as Christians) even more so. Many of them are day-laborers (for example in brick kilns) with treatment from employers often being arbitrary and violent. Women and children are especially vulnerable groups.

## Social and cultural landscape

Although the issue of ethnicity is not as dominant in Pakistan as in many other countries, it should not be ignored. This becomes immediately clear when Pakistan is seen together with Afghanistan: The Pashtun minority in particular covers large areas on both sides of the border. The Pashtuns are one of the largest minorities worldwide without a nation state of its own. (It is frequently stated that the Kurdish people - numbering under 40 million - are the largest people without a nation. Pashtuns however number around 45 million.)

According to the [UNICEF Pakistan Annual Report](#) published in July 2019, Pakistan still has the second-highest out-of-school rate in the world, although the numbers are improving. At primary level, five million children are out of school, 60% of which are girls. The rate grows to more than 17.7 million children out of school between age 10-16, 51% of which are girls. The country's literacy rate according to UNDP stands at 57%. The state's low investment in education over recent decades has led to a growth in the number of Islamic madrassas. An estimated 11,000 of these (out of a total of roughly 35,000) follow the strict teachings of Deobandi Islam. Exact student numbers are unknown. While some madrassas may make pupils literate and teach them mathematics, many others simply offer Quran reading, Islamic Studies and nothing else. As these madrassas are not registered and supervised, the authorities have no real idea what is going on in them. Various governments have tried to at least register them in the past but encountered fierce opposition. The Khan government has also publicized a plan to [register](#) madrassas. Education Minister Shafqat Mahmood has apparently made a deal with the madrasa umbrella organization, Wafaq-ul-madaris, which allows the madrassas to keep full responsibility for all religious instruction. It thus remains unclear how the government hopes to prevent radical Islamic teaching and its consequences from continuing, the effects of which are felt by Christians and other minorities.

According to the UNDP, Pakistan's poverty rate (working poor at 3.10 USD PPP) stands at 31.2%.

## Technological landscape

According to the UNDP, the Internet penetration rate stands at 15.5%, the mobile phone subscription at a meagre 70.6 per 100 citizens. The IMF, quoting a World Bank Report from 2016, states in its [2018 report](#) that 200 million people in Pakistan did not have access to the Internet. Pakistan has one of the highest [gender gaps](#) in terms of mobile phone usage in the world. It is marked as "[Not free](#)" in Freedom House's "Freedom on the Net 2019" report. According to this report, quoting different sources, just 30% of the population own a smartphone and 16% of the population had access to the Internet as of 2017, the most recent data available. The report goes on to say: "The digital divide between men and women in Pakistan is among the highest in the world as a result of religious, social, and cultural restrictions on women owning devices."

## Security situation

Pakistan has always been a very volatile country. Although the army has declared war against Islamic radicals it continues to follow a policy of trying to distinguish between “good” and “bad” jihadists. While it fights the latter, it courts the former (eg. *Lashkar-e-Toiba*, now *Jamaat-ud-Dawah*, and the *Haqqani* network) and uses them as a proxy to reach its goals in neighboring countries such as Afghanistan and India. (Another way of influencing neighboring countries – in this case Afghanistan - is to send back hundreds of thousands of Afghan refugees, who have lived in Pakistan for more than two decades, knowingly causing immense social and economic challenges for an already struggling country.) Given that several of the radical groups named above fielded candidates in the recent elections and that this led observers to claim that mainstream politics have radicalized as a result, it seems fair to say that the army is interested in extending its policy of distinguishing good and bad jihadists into national politics as well. The army does [act against](#) insurgent groups affiliated with the Islamic State group (IS) which observers say has a [growing presence](#) in Pakistan, as illustrated by a suicide attack on election day in July 2018. The increasing presence of militant groups specifically naming Christians as their targets has worsened the situation for Christians in the region, examples are internationally known groups like al Qaeda and the Islamic State Khorasan, but also local groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammed and others.

The simmering conflict between Pakistan and India over Punjab turned briefly hot in the WWL 2020 reporting period, as already mentioned under "Recent History". Also, jurisdiction over the federally administered tribal areas (FATA) is limited. This volatile region bordering Afghanistan is still ruled according to a colonial law called "Frontiers Crime Regulation" dating back to 1901, which effectively bans intervention from police and courts and adds to the local peoples' alienation. In this region, Pakistan's Constitution seems to be effectively abrogated. However, in May 2018, the government decided to [merge](#) the FATA with neighboring [Khyber Pakhtunkhwa](#) Province (KP). Elections [took place](#) in July 2019, but it is still too early to know if this is just another ineffective attempt by the government to get a firmer grip on this unruly province. It is already clear, however, that this decision was taken due to public pressure and will be [fraught with challenges](#).

## Trends analysis

### 1. The government continues not to dare to change the blasphemy laws

In 2017, the government announced a new focus on combatting blasphemy occurring in [social media](#) blogs. Consequently there have been an increased number of arrests of people allegedly committing blasphemy (on Facebook etc.). This would seem to contradict government efforts to limit the devastating impact of blasphemy laws on religious minorities in particular. However, Imran Khan publicly defended the blasphemy laws, showing where the country may be headed towards in the next years. Although he has shown firmness against one particular radical Islamic group, there are countless others and even a ban will only make them re-organize, re-brand and re-emerge.

The fallout from the Asia Bibi case can still be strongly felt in Pakistan and any changes on the blasphemy laws, no matter how badly needed they may be seen to be, will not come to pass. The government will not dare to make any changes as they know they would be faced with strong opposition. In fact, the Islamic TLP has teamed up with opposition parties in an attempt - currently [unsuccessful](#) - to bring the government down and make Prime Minister Khan resign. It is not clear what the position of the army in this is, as it is said that no protests can take place without the army at least [tacitly giving approval](#). In any case, Asia Bibi is living in Canada now, but not just her prison-cell has been swiftly occupied by other (Christian) blasphemy victims, a further series of blasphemy charges has been brought against Christians, which goes to show how sensitive this issue is. Given the growing strength of radical groups, and the TLP in particular, no relaxation of these laws can be expected anytime soon, leading one commentator to say that Imran Khan is trying to [ride the tiger](#), a claim more true than ever.

## 2. Political stability remains allusive

Instability occurred when Prime Minister Sharif was ousted, but even more so when radical Islamic groups and parties like TLP set up their city blockades. Although not elected, they enjoy a disproportionately high influence in society and politics. Another important source of unrest is likely to be the publication of the country's most recent census results. The authenticity of the first statistics since a census took place in 1998 have already been challenged by opposition politicians and certain provincial authorities. The fact that Pakistan's total population of well over 200 million has increased by 60% since the last census in 1998 and [continues to grow](#) at a rate of 2% annually, shows what challenges Pakistan is facing. This is especially true for the urban areas, illustrated by Lahore, the country's second biggest city, which grew in population by 53% in this time span. If these rates of growth continue, the country's population could double again over the next decades. The fact that the statistics for religious affiliation have not yet been released, two years after the census took place, shows how sensitive these numbers are; they could support religious minorities in their [fight for political representation](#).

There is a [further development](#) worth noting here as well: The proportion of voters from religious minorities is growing faster than the proportion of Muslim voters. Hindus make up the largest minority group, but proportionally, the number of voters from the Christian community (who make up the second-largest minority group) grew even faster - by almost one third - to 1.64 million. Even though these numbers only show registered voters and does not correspond to any growing political representation, they are still surprising.

## External Links - WWL 2020: Keys to understanding

- Link for general background information: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-12965779>. - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-12965779>
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- Political and legal landscape: links with Islamic militant groups. - <https://thediplomat.com/2019/09/why-imran-khan-acknowledged-pakistans-role-in-training-jihadists/>
- Political and legal landscape: questioned the extension of the Army Chief's tenure - <https://www.dawn.com/news/1519326/gen-bajwa-to-stay-on-as-coas-for-6-more-months-sc>
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- Economic landscape: heavily in debt - [http://www.eurasiareview.com/18052017-one-belt-one-road-plan-chinese-dominance-authoritarianism-analysis/?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Feed:+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+\(Eurasia+Review\)](http://www.eurasiareview.com/18052017-one-belt-one-road-plan-chinese-dominance-authoritarianism-analysis/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed:+eurasiareview%2FVsnE+(Eurasia+Review))
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- Security situation: growing presence - [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx\\_ttnews\[tt\\_news\]=45065&tx\\_ttnews\[backPid\]=7&cHash=25f16c3408310b0463d32443ddcd6ec3](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=45065&tx_ttnews[backPid]=7&cHash=25f16c3408310b0463d32443ddcd6ec3)
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- Trends analysis: fight for political representation - <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2017/11/what-makes-pakistans-small-religious-minorities-so-significant/>
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## WWL 2020: Church information / Pakistan

### Christian origins

According to the Church historian, Eusebius, writing in the 4th century AD, the apostles Thomas and Bartholomew were assigned to Parthia (modern Iran) and India. By the time of the establishment of the Second Persian Empire (AD 226), there were bishops of the Church of the East in northwest India, Afghanistan and Baluchistan (which includes parts of Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan), with laymen and clergy alike engaging in [missionary activity](#).

Roman Catholic missionary work took off on the Indian continent with the arrival of the Portuguese in the 16th century and became [established in Lahore](#) from about 1579 onwards. In more modern times, Christianity became firmly established through Protestant missionary work in the late 18th and 19th centuries and has continued to grow ever since. However, due to the strongly increasing pressure in recent years, many Christians have fled abroad to countries like Sri Lanka or Thailand.

### Church spectrum today

Church networks: Pakistan	Christians	%
Orthodox	0	0.0
Catholic	1,118,000	27.8
Protestant	2,517,000	62.7
Independent	605,000	15.1
Unaffiliated	20,500	0.5
Doubly-affiliated Christians	-246,000	-6.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,014,500</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<i>(Any deviation from the total number of Christians stated above is due to the rounding of decimals)</i>		
Evangelical movement	988,000	24.6
Renewalist movement	892,000	22.2

Data source: Johnson T M and Zurlo G A, eds., *World Christian Database* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed April 2019).

*Orthodox: Eastern (Chalcedonian), Oriental (Pre-Chalcedonian, Non-Chalcedonian, Monophysite), Nestorian (Assyrian), and non-historical Orthodox. Roman Catholics: All Christians in communion with the Church of Rome. Protestants: Christians in churches originating in or in communion with the Western world's 16th-century Protestant Reformation. Includes Anglicans, Lutherans and Baptists (any of whom may be Charismatic) and denominational Pentecostals, but not Independent traditions such as Independent Baptists nor independent Charismatics. Independents: Believers who do not identify with the major Christian traditions (Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Protestant). Unaffiliated Christians: Persons professing publicly to be Christians but who are not affiliated to churches. Doubly-affiliated Christians: Persons affiliated to or claimed by 2 denominations at once. Evangelical movement: Churches, denominations, and individuals who identify themselves as evangelicals by membership in denominations linked to evangelical alliances (e.g., World Evangelical Alliance) or by self-identification in polls. Renewalist movement: Church members involved in Pentecostal/Charismatic renewal.*

## External Links - WWL 2020: Church information

- Christian origins: missionary activity - <http://www.christiansinpakistan.com/christianity-in-pakistan/>
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# WWL 2020: Persecution Dynamics / Pakistan

## Reporting period

1 November 2018 – 31 October 2019

## Position on World Watch List (WWL)

With a score of 88 points, Pakistan ranked 5 in WWL 2020.

In WWL 2019, the country scored 87 points at rank 5. Pakistan remains one of the countries where it is most difficult to live as a Christian. The basically unchanged very high and extremely high scores for pressure in the individual spheres of life confirm this and even increased slightly. The violence score has stayed at the maximum level too. (Very few WWL countries ever achieve maximum score in this category.) Although for almost two years now there have been no major attacks against churches or gatherings of Christians, Pakistan continues to score the maximum for killings and attacks against church buildings. The country's notorious blasphemy laws continue to claim their victims as well and whoever plays even with the thought of changing them, plays with his life.

## Persecution engines

Persecution engines: Pakistan	Abbreviation	Level of influence
Islamic oppression	IO	Very strong
Religious nationalism	RN	Not at all
Clan and ethnic antagonism	CEA	Strong
Christian denominational protectionism	CDP	Very weak
Communist and post - Communist oppression	CPCO	Not at all
Secular intolerance	SI	Not at all
Dictatorial paranoia	DPA	Strong
Organized corruption and crime	OCC	Strong

*The scale for the level of influence of Persecution engines in society is: Not at all / Very weak / Weak / Medium / Strong / Very strong. For more information see WWL Methodology.*

### Islamic oppression (Very strong):

Pakistan is experiencing an increasingly Islamizing culture and is home to a plethora of radical Islamic groups. One country expert counted 65 different Islamist groups of varying size and influence, the most recent one entering the public sphere and claiming the headlines being Tehreek-e-Labaik. The Christian community feels increasingly trapped between these radical groups and the Islamic culture of Pakistani society. There are politicians, judges and religious leaders who are considering (or even advocating for) an amendment to the country's notorious blasphemy laws.

However, all such well-meaning attempts are openly threatened by those who hold a radical perspective based on *Wahhabi* ideology and who continue to buy into the caliphate theology and treatment of "infidels", firmly identifying themselves with supporters of the Islamic State group (IS) and the Taliban. Radical Islamic groups are flourishing - despite a continued crackdown on some of them by the army - and are used by various political groups as allies. Their power to mobilize hundreds of thousands of predominantly young people and take them to the streets remains a political tool and offers strong leverage for enforcing political goals.

Banned radical Islamic groups do not simply dissolve into nothing; in most cases they simply re-brand and build charity fronts or [go online](#). Or, as far as elections are concerned, they simply join other existing radical parties, if the ones they had chosen or founded are banned from participating. They woo the general populace with social services and the youth with the offer of good future perspectives (which are otherwise badly lacking in the country). The majority of the population are below 25 years old (and almost one third even below 14 years of age) and so there is a great need for the state to be able to offer this younger generation good future prospects.

While life expectancy is not very high at 68.1 years, the total fertility rate stands at 2.62. Although these figures are changing very slowly, they illustrate huge social challenges. If the fertility rate remains at this level, Pakistan will become the largest Muslim country in the world, overtaking Indonesia, in approximately 2030. This social structure means that there will be huge numbers of young people leaving school, dreaming of a better future. But as the country struggles to give even well-educated youth any hope for good employment, social unrest is likely to build up which in turn paves the way for Islamic militants to lure young people into their groups, where they are given a feeling of worth that they have never had before.

#### **Organized corruption and crime (Strong):**

Corruption is rampant in Pakistan at all levels of administration and in the army. The army is deeply entrenched in the country's economy and is a strong competitor in many economic fields. It enjoys unfair advantages which a popular joke about the army illustrates well: "All countries have armies, but here, an army has a country". Although it is difficult to access details, estimations say that the army holds assets valued at around 10 billion USD, including around 5 million hectares of farmland. The fact that President Nawaz Sharif was ousted and finally sentenced to 10 years imprisonment by the Supreme Court due to corruption (revealed through the [Panama Papers](#)), shows that corruption is by no means limited to the army.

Organized crime affects Christians in particular since many of them are poor and without defense, especially in blasphemy cases. This was shown in [March 2018](#) when a court acquitted 20 suspects in a case where a Christian couple had been killed in a brick oven because of alleged blasphemy on 4 November 2014. Bonded labor is an old form of slavery and is still widespread in certain parts of Pakistan, especially in rural areas. These laborers depend completely on the mercy of their employers and have no way out since they will never be able to pay their loans back due to the high interest rates. They have no legal way of registering complaints and are left without any defense or hope for change in the future.

**Clan and ethnic antagonism (Strong):**

Pakistan suffers from ethnic fragmentation, not only in society but also in the country's administration. Baluchistan Province and the central Sindh regions are traditionally perceived as being beyond the reach of the state authorities. Feudal landowners maintain their own private militias, courts and prisons in parts of rural Sindh and Punjab. Corruption is rampant across the country. All this affects the generally unprotected Christian minority in Pakistan. Jurisdiction over the federally administered tribal areas (FATA) is limited - the restricted intervention from police and courts adds to the local peoples' alienation.

**Dictatorial paranoia (Strong):**

Pakistani politics have always shown a mixture of *Islamic oppression* and *Dictatorial paranoia*. Every government has had to struggle with opposition, radical groups, a strong independent army and corruption charges; as a result they try everything possible to hold on to power, especially as Pakistan politics has often meant family politics: the PML-N is run by family Sharif (the N in the party's name stands for Nawaz), PPP is run by family Bhutto. When Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was sentenced to 10 years in prison on corruption charges in July 2018, his brother had already stepped in as candidate to take over his role. Nawaz Sharif and his daughter were arrested just twelve days prior to the General election. Imran Khan (Chairman of the PTI party and not linked to any of the big families) had filed a case against Prime Minister Sharif because of the leaked Panama Papers pointing to irregularities in the prime minister's personal financial affairs. As Imran Khan then became prime minister in July 2018, this does not bode well for the country's minorities since he has made it clear in many statements that they are of no great importance to him.

**Drivers of persecution**

Drivers of Persecution: Pakistan	IO	RN	CEA	CDP	CPCO	SI	DPA	OCC
	VERY STRONG	-	STRONG	VERY WEAK	-	-	STRONG	STRONG
Government officials	Very strong	-	Very strong	-	-	-	Strong	Very strong
Ethnic group leaders	Medium	-	Medium	-	-	-	-	-
Non-Christian religious leaders	Very strong	-	Medium	-	-	-	Medium	Medium
Religious leaders of other churches	-	-	-	Very weak	-	-	-	-
Violent religious groups	Very strong	-	Medium	-	-	-	Medium	-
Ideological pressure groups	Very strong	-	Medium	-	-	-	-	-
Citizens (people from the broader society), including mobs	Strong	-	Very strong	-	-	-	-	Medium

One's own (extended) family	Very strong	-	Very weak	-	-	-	-	-
Political parties	Very strong	-	Very strong	-	-	-	Strong	Medium
Revolutionaries or paramilitary groups	Very strong	-	Very strong	-	-	-	Medium	Very strong
Organized crime cartels or networks	-	-	-	-	-	-	Weak	Strong
Multilateral organizations (e.g. UN, OIC etc.) and embassies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Medium

The scale for the level of influence of Drivers of persecution in society is: Not at all / Very weak / Weak / Medium / Strong / Very strong. Please note that "-" denotes "not at all". For more information see WWL Methodology.

### Drivers of Islamic oppression:

- **Government officials (Very strong):** In Pakistan the situation of law and order from local to national level is poor, especially where Christians are concerned. Empty and false promises are often made and Christians feel particularly vulnerable. A ray of hope, however, was seen in the Supreme Court's acquittal of Asia Bibi despite pressure from radical Islamic groups.
- **Non-Christian religious leaders, violent religious groups and revolutionaries or paramilitary groups (Very strong):** In Pakistan, several radical Islamic groups are gaining in influence and are expanding due to being courted by political parties, the army and the government. Some are even forming their own political parties. Especially the army continues to follow a policy of distinguishing between good Taliban and bad Taliban, which is copied by the government. As long as this does not change, radical Islamic groups will increase their influence, not least by running thousands of madrassas (with no state authority knowing exactly what they are teaching or how they are financed). Increasingly, new quasi-government 'advisory bodies' to the state are completely made up of religious (Islamic) scholars who can direct and influence the government and laws.
- **Political parties and ideological pressure groups (Very strong):** Ideological pressure groups, frequently connected with political parties and Islamic religious groups, exercise enormous pressure and gained influence in Pakistan's most recent election in July 2018, although political parties directly run by Islamist groups did not receive many votes.
- **Extended family (Very strong):** Christians with a Muslim background are facing these hostile forces as well, but for them, their own families are the greatest danger since leaving Islam brings great shame to both family and community.
- **Normal citizens (Strong):** Radical Islamic groups are able to stir up citizens all across the country, especially the youth, encouraging them to demonstrate against government decisions and stirring them up to act against religious minorities, including Christians.
- **Ethnic leaders (Medium):** Although most Christians and Muslims in Pakistan come from the same ethnicities and persecution normally is related to the religious identity, ethnicity can play into it as well.

### Drivers of Organized corruption and crime:

- **Government officials (Very strong):** As a small and weak group in society, Christians are face double vulnerability when it comes to Organized corruption and crime. Thousands of Christians are still living in bonded labor conditions without having any perspective that this could ever end. Many Christians are prone to exploitation as they are poor and bonded labor is a fate that is a reality for many of them, bringing their masters great profit. Rich landlords collude with politicians and local dignitaries (both from religious and political circles), benefitting greatly from this system.
- **Revolutionaries or para-military groups (Very strong):** Organized crime is frequently connected to violent Islamic militancy and impacts the electoral and political process in Pakistan and affects the life of Christians. The Haqqani Network, IS, Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan, Jamaatul Ahrar (TTP-JA), Lashkar E Jhangvi, al-Qaeda (among others) can be named in this context. Local organized crime is a big problem in urban parts of Pakistan and in the tribal areas. In Karachi, gangs, extortionists, land mafia, are all part of the landscape. These organizations also have political connections and therefore political patronage. Massive corruption, especially in terms of patron-client relationship, is also rampant in Pakistan and permeates almost every segment of society including the police, courts and politicians.
- **Organized crime cartels or networks (Strong):** Pakistan has a long history of corruption; it is partly driven by the army but has multiple other drivers. On the Corruption Perception Index 2018, Pakistan holds rank 117 out of 180. Churches are not only attacked and pressurized for political gains, but also out of financial motives. Especially the historical churches often own property in strategic areas like city centers, making them prone to attacks from developers using criminal gangs. Additionally, the continued destruction of church property means that churches are forced to sell property to cover damage expenses.
- **Non-Christian religious leaders, political parties, normal citizens (Medium):** As described above, Pakistan suffers from a closely-knit web of corruption, in which its benefactors help one another, while the weakest pay the price. The weakest are normal citizens, including Christians in particular due to their double vulnerability.
- **Multilateral organizations and embassies (Medium):** In 2017, then Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan called a meeting of ambassadors from Muslim country embassies in Islamabad in order to discuss and tackle the issue of blasphemy on social media as a united *ummah*. International organizations in Pakistan tend to follow the country's discriminatory politics for hiring staff.

### Drivers of Dictatorial paranoia:

- **Government officials and political parties (Strong):** As already stated above, for many years politics in Pakistan has been family business, a trend which was only recently broken. However, whoever is in power in Pakistan tends to cling to it and will do whatever is needed to gain enough support. One strong driver in this is a political player which seldom operates openly: The army. The way the army courts some radical Islamic groups to use them as a tool leads to Christians being targeted by such groups as well. Although the targeting of Christians is not army policy, it is considered as necessary collateral damage.

- **Non-Christian religious leaders, violent religious groups and revolutionaries or para-military groups (Medium):** Insofar as religious leaders and groups are courted by the government, political parties and the army, they will support them in their struggle to stay in power. If they consider it necessary to act against the Christian minority - or simply continue to discriminate against them - they will do so. Christians quickly become scapegoats or are simply used as a bargaining chip in the political system.

#### **Drivers of Clan and ethnic antagonism:**

- **Government officials and political parties, revolutionaries or para-military groups (Very strong):** Ethnic and religious motives are inextricably tied together, so what was stated above for Islamic oppression, applies here as well.
- **Normal citizens (Very strong):** As ethnic affiliation is very strong and serves as a means for self-identification and self-assurance, changing religion puts oneself outside this strong social fabric and as a result society will put strong pressure on converts to return to Islam.
- **Ethnic group leaders and non-Christian religious leaders (Medium):** Ethnic leaders demand uncompromising obedience, so deviations - such as turning to another religion - are seen as betrayal. They will put pressure on converts themselves and call others to increase their pressure as well.
- **Violent religious groups and ideological pressure groups (Medium):** These groups will simply use every leverage they have to enforce their own agenda and to act against minorities. If ethnic undertones are helping in this goal, they will happily use them.

### **Geographical hotspots of persecution**

While there are many political hotspots in Pakistan, particular hotspots of persecution for Christians are not so obvious. Since by far the most Christians are living in Punjab Province, many incidents of persecution occur there. However, next to Punjab, the province of Sindh is also notorious for being a hotspot for bonded labor, affecting many Christians as well.

### **Christian communities and how they are affected**

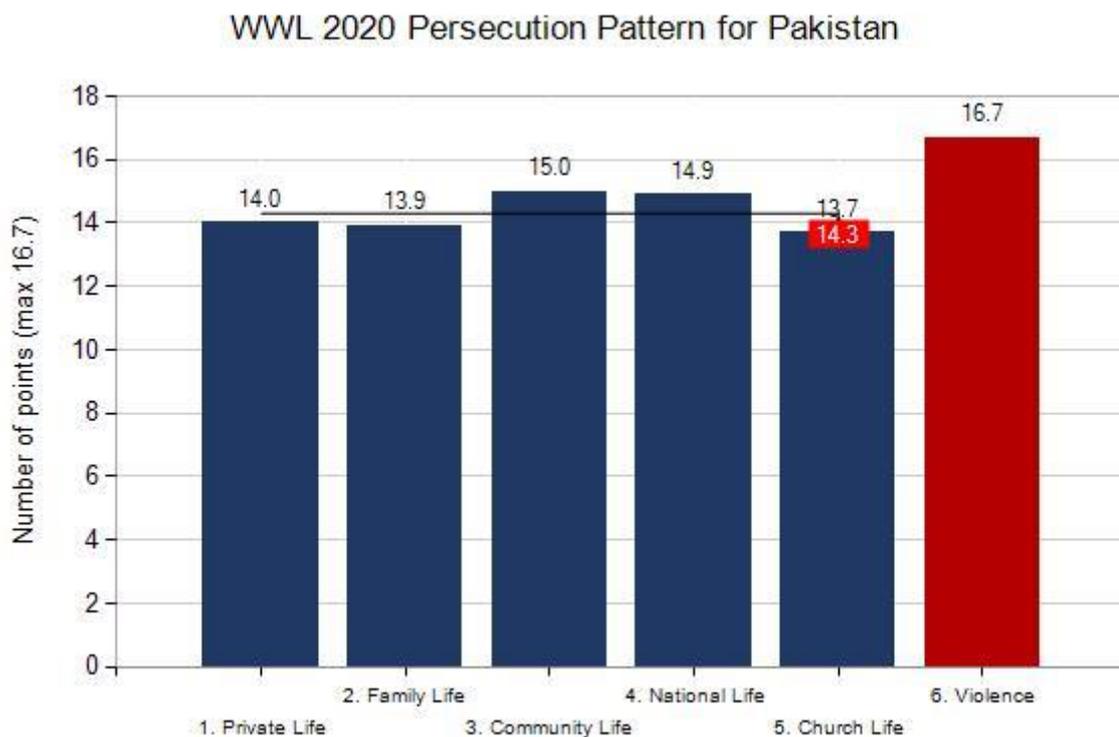
**Communities of expatriate Christians:** Expatriate Christians are not forced into isolation. This category is therefore not scored in WWL analysis.

**Historical Christian communities:** The Roman Catholic Church and Anglican Church are examples. They increasingly face hostilities and experience difficulties in getting permits for certain meetings. They have to put up with strong control and monitoring.

**Converts to Christianity:** Christians with a Muslim background suffer the brunt of persecution both from radical Islamic groups (who see them as apostates) and from families, friends and neighbors who see conversion as a shameful act of betrayal to family and community.

**Non-traditional Christian communities:** Evangelical, Baptist and Pentecostal groups have come under closer scrutiny and are frequently harassed and attacked, especially when they are active in outreach among Muslims.

## The Persecution pattern



The WWL 2020 Persecution pattern for Pakistan shows:

- Overall, the pressure on Christians in Pakistan is at an extreme level with the average pressure rising to 14.3 in WWL 2020 (from 14.1 in WWL 2019).
- Pressure remained the same in the National sphere (extreme level) and increased slightly in the Church sphere (very high level), reflecting among other things how Christians continue to suffer from the country's blasphemy laws and other laws such as the NGO law. Pressure remains at an extreme level in the Private and Family spheres, and increased in the Community sphere. Converts are facing the strongest pressure but Christians in general are regarded as second-class citizens, face attacks and have their rights ignored on a regular basis. The blasphemy laws and the Islamist groups "defending" them remain a major threat to all Christians.
- Violence against Christians continues to be at the maximum level of 16.7 points as has been the case consistently since WWL 2016. Although there have been no major attacks in the headlines, the WWL 2020 reporting period has seen many small-scale attacks against Christians communities, congregations and individuals - including the abduction of women, rape, forced marriages, evictions from homes and displacements in-country and abroad.

## Pressure in the 5 spheres of life

In each of the five spheres of life discussed below, details are shown from four of the highest scoring block questions, with those items scoring highest listed first. In some cases, an additional paragraph per sphere is included to give further information deemed important. (To see how individual questions are scored on a scale 0 – 4 points, please see the “WWL Scoring example” in the WWL Methodology, available at: <http://opendoorsanalytical.org/world-watch-list-documentation/>, password: freedom).

### Private sphere:

- ***It has been risky for Christians to discuss their faith with those other than immediate family members (Block 1.8 / Score: 4 points):*** Many Christians avoid talking about their faith with Muslims because it can have dangerous consequences. While this is particularly the case for converts, it is true for other Christians as well, especially in the light of the blasphemy laws. Any such discussion could attract a religiously motivated attack against them, their community and their church.
- ***It has been risky for Christians to reveal their faith in written forms of personal expression (Block 1.4 / Score: 3.75 points):*** It is dangerous when the written content is seen as opposing or challenging the established teachings and values of Islam. All personal statements - for instance on Facebook - can also be used (and tampered with) in cases concerning the blasphemy law.
- ***It has been dangerous to privately own or keep Christian materials (Block 1.3 / Score: 3.5 points):*** While expatriate Christians can basically have any material they want, it is dangerous for Pakistani Christians to keep materials beyond their immediate personal use, as this could be viewed as a tool for advertising and reaching out to Muslims. Books, especially with an apologetic content, can be declared anti-State and anti-Muslim and owning them punished. For converts, it is very risky to openly possess any Christian materials.
- ***It has been risky for Christians to display Christian images or symbols (Block 1.5 / Score: 3.5 points):*** Displaying a Christian symbol is a visible trigger and can be a starting-point for the everyday discrimination Christians experience. Even just having a Christian name is enough for this to start. Additionally, Christians often face damage to their personal property where they display Christian symbols, e.g. on cars etc. Reports of Christians wearing a cross being spat at and targeted aggressively in the streets, in traffic or at the work-place, are indicators that the situation is becoming more difficult.

*Converts from Islam always have to be very careful in the way they worship, especially if they are the only Christians in their family. Bibles and other Christian materials may be taken away by family, friends or neighbors. While house-arrest by families is another form of punishment for privately conducting worship, a milder form is for Christian converts to be put under surveillance. Converts sometimes have to go into hiding as well.*

### Family sphere:

- ***Christian children have been pressed to attend anti-Christian or majority religion teaching (Block 2.8 / Score: 4 points):*** In small towns and remote villages, all Christian families are forced to make their children attend Islamic teaching at the local madrassa while Christian teaching is restricted to the Sunday service once a week. The majority of Christian children face pressure to "come back" to Islam at an early age, therefore parents try to prevent their children from speaking or sharing about their faith with non-Christian peers. Christian children are regularly forced to participate in Islamic practices and events. They are also under constant pressure to convert to Islam, and parents are often visited to pressure them into sending their children to Islamic events and teaching them Arabic on the pretense of bettering their grades. This confuses children and makes them vulnerable to "involuntary" conversion. A detailed [report](#) about what children and youths experience was published by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan in March 2019.
- ***Children of Christians have been harassed or discriminated against because of their parents' faith (Block 2.9 / Score: 4 points):*** At school, Christian children are often not allowed to use the same water fountain as their Muslim classmates to avoid "defiling" the drinking-water, and they are often bullied. Some schoolbooks incite hatred against Christians. Even in some Christian institutions, some non-Christian students would not like to socialize or even eat with Christians. This attitude is not always purely religious but also has its background in caste considerations since a majority of Christians come from low caste and even previously untouchable backgrounds. As the IRF Report 2018 of the US State Department on page 20 noted: "Religious minority community members stated public schools gave Muslim students bonus grade points for memorizing the Quran, but there were no analogous opportunities for extra academic credit available for religious minority students."
- ***Christian couples have been hindered in adopting children or serving as foster parents because of their faith (Block 2.6 / Score: 3.5 points):*** Generally speaking, in Pakistan there is no formal adoption. There is no law regulating adoption, the only legal form is becoming someone's 'ward' which is not exactly adoption. If a couple informally adopts a child, the expectation is that the child should follow the religion of the real parents, and if that is unknown, the default is Islam. Christians can only adopt or become wards by using a Christian adoption institution which are monitored to ensure they are not giving away children of non-Christian background.
- ***Parents have been hindered in raising their children according to their Christian beliefs (Block 2.7 / Score: 3.5 points):*** Not least due to the prevailing pressure from society and the situation Christian children find themselves in when attending school, it is hard to raise children according to the Christian faith and withstand the pressure exerted. Due to fearing blasphemy accusations, parents even teach their children to be completely silent about their faith.

*Registering one's conversion to the Christian faith is not possible. A child will be automatically registered as "Muslim" if his or her father was registered as "Muslim", no matter if in reality the religious affiliation has changed. Once converts are discovered, they face the threat of divorce (if married) and are likely to lose their inheritance rights. The IRF Report 2018 of the US State Department explains on page 8: "The government considers the marriage of a non-Muslim woman to a non-Muslim man dissolved if she converts to Islam, although the marriage of a non-Muslim man who converts remains recognized. Children born to a non-Muslim couple are considered illegitimate and ineligible for inheritance if their mother converts to Islam. The only way to legitimize the marriage and the children is for the husband also to convert to Islam. The children of a Muslim man and a Muslim woman who both convert to another religious group are considered illegitimate, and by law the government may take custody of the children."*

*Organizing a Christian wedding or funeral can be difficult or even impossible in some communities. Christians with a Muslim background face either being physically attacked and discriminated against by the surrounding Islamic community and their own family, or they may be placed under a curse through black magic, potions, amulets and other occult practices. From the moment a convert from Islam decides to be baptized, he or she is put under particular pressure since baptism is seen as the ultimate form of rejecting Islam. Even if it is a Pakistani of Christian background getting baptized, there will often be guns firing from roofs and aggressive shouting against Christians, even though it is not a crime for a Pakistani of Christian background to be baptized. Baptism is simply hated as it is a visible sign of the Christian presence growing.*

#### **Community sphere:**

- ***Christians have been monitored by their local communities or by private groups (Block 3.2 / Score: 4 points):*** Christians are monitored by the state, but increasingly by non-state actors as well. As the monitoring is ubiquitous and attacks have to be expected at any moment, Christians regularly inform the state authorities (e.g. the police) about their gatherings. This is a two-edged sword: It gives protection but adds monitoring as well.
- ***Christians have been pressured by their community to renounce their faith (Block 3.7 / Score: 4 points):*** Even expatriates have reported that they have been called by the local 'panchayat' (village council) to explain why they believe in Christ and to be compelled into accepting Islam. This is even more so the case for Pakistani Christians and converts.
- ***Christians have been discriminated against in public or private employment for faith-related reasons (Block 3.10 / Score: 3.75 points):*** In work places, the pressure against the Christian minority is often so great that Christians are forced to change their jobs multiple times to avoid being made to convert to Islam. Christians are frequently forced to do menial work like sweeping or carrying water. And even access to these jobs gets more and more restricted as reports show that new cleaning companies in the country are increasingly hiring only Muslims.
- ***Christians have been harassed, threatened or obstructed in their daily lives for faith-related reasons (Block 3.1 / Score: 3.75 points):*** Christians are associated with being unclean and so their use of shared facilities is thought to defile Muslims, a [heritage of the caste system](#) haunting many Christians in Pakistan. This is how the Asia Bibi case started. Christians are discriminated against daily in many other ways too.

Many hospitals, pharmacies and other facilities have welfare schemes, which are being increasingly denied to Christians. Christians are also often told to pay exorbitant fees for health care. Such costs are unpayable and hence block access to medical treatment. In government hospitals, Christians are not allowed to have access to the free medicines which have been supplied through Zakat funding (Islamic donations). Often people in wards in hospitals do not like to share with Christians, so Christians must often wait in hallways and corridors. Bonded laborers are tied to their employers by contracts which burden them with unpayable and ever increasing debts.

#### National sphere:

- **The Constitution (or comparable national or state law) limits freedom of religion as formulated in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Block 4.1 / Score: 4 points):** The Islamic Republic of Pakistan adopted an Islamic Constitution in 1973 and Sharia law in its civil code. The current Prime Minister, Imran Khan, stated that the government system in place in the days of Mohammed should be seen as the perfect governing system for Pakistan. Another example of how human rights are restricted can be seen in Article 19 on freedom of expression. This right can be limited "in the interest of the glory of Islam", which is open to subjective interpretation.
- **Christians have been discriminated against when engaging with the authorities (local administration, government, army, etc.) for faith-related reasons (Block 4.5 / Score: 4 points):** Discrimination and challenges for Christians are prevalent at every level of government and even in secular environments. This is true for the army as well, although Christians continue to serve in it.
- **Christians have been accused of blasphemy or insulting the majority religion, either by state authorities or by pressure groups (Block 4.13 / Score: 4 points):** The recent process of Islamization started in the 1980s, when General Zia introduced the infamous laws on blasphemy in 1986. Blasphemy soon became one of the main issues the Christian minority had to face. According to a press report from 2010 (more recent data is not available), 801 of the 1,031 people imprisoned under blasphemy laws were Muslims (the vast majority of cases most likely affecting Islamic minorities). Of the remaining 230 prisoners, 162 were Christians (70.4%), 15 were Sikh (6.5%), 28 were Buddhist (12.2%), while 25 adhered to other religions. The blasphemy laws are well known for being used for settling personal scores, making personal gains or for satisfying grudges one neighbor may have against another. The fact that Asia Bibi, arguably the worldwide best known victim of the blasphemy laws, was acquitted by the Supreme Court on 31 October 2018, is a positive sign. However, there are other Christians charged with blasphemy too; in December 2018, two brothers were even sentenced to death by a subordinate court.
- **Christians have been hindered in expressing their views or opinions in public (Block 4.8 / Score: 4 points):** Along with high levels of self-censoring among Christians (and withdrawal from the public sphere), Christian views are commonly ignored since they are seen as opposing Islamic teachings and values and are hence unacceptable. There are still entities speaking out, but the example of the National Commission on Minorities and the under-representation of religious minorities in the political arena are clear signs of how little their opinion is valued.

As the US State Department's IRF 2018 Report stated on pages 23/24: "The status of a National Commission for Minorities remained unclear at year's end. Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony representatives said the commission continued to exist and met yearly. Minority activists stated this commission's effectiveness was hindered by the lack of a regular budget allocation and the lack of an independent chairperson, as well as resistance from the ministry. NGOs and members of the National Assembly put forth various proposals and bills to establish a new independent National Commission for Minorities' Rights, as directed by the Supreme Court in 2014. The ministry also proposed its own bill that would establish a 'National Commission for Interfaith Harmony', and stated that minority affairs had been devolved to the provinces since 2010. According to media reports, a subcommittee of the National Assembly's Standing Committee on Religious Affairs met in April to merge bills for the new commission's development. The ministry pledged to work with parliamentarians to combine the bills, and sources reported that work was ongoing at year's end. A similar bill in the Sindh Provincial Assembly was also pending at year's end."

#### Church sphere:

- ***Churches have been hindered from organizing Christian activities outside church buildings (Block 5.5 / Score: 4 points):*** In most cases, churches simply do not dare to organize activities outside their secure church compounds. Church activities are regularly watched. Security is provided for many churches by the authorities, but these very security personnel monitor what is going on in the churches and make regular detailed reports. It is suspected that such intelligence is being passed on to radical Islamic organizations and militants. Cases have been reported in the past of security personnel turning militant and attacking local church leaders. Church buildings frequently resemble fortresses with high walls and narrow gates. Despite the fact that the state has promised to protect churches, over the years there have been several church attacks with dozens of victims.
- ***Churches have been hindered from openly integrating converts (Block 5.7 / Score: 4 points):*** Since conversion from Islam to Christianity is so strongly opposed and fought against by family, society, government and radical groups, it would be highly dangerous if a church would dare to accept converts onto their premises. If a convert does attend a church service, this needs to happen without anyone, including the church, knowing that he or she is a convert.
- ***Christian preaching, teaching and/or published materials have been monitored (Block 5.8 / Score: 4 points):*** Government and radical Islamic groups alike monitor church teaching for any content perceived as anti-government or anti-Islam. One means of monitoring is through providing guards for church buildings. While they may indeed be acting as guards, they also listen, monitor and report.
- ***Pastors or other Christian leaders, or their family members, have been special targets of harassment for faith-related reasons (Block 5.11 / Score: 4 points):*** Church leaders are the very first targets for harassment, as they are the most visible representatives of the despised Christian minority. This does not mean that all are attacked, but it means that the drivers of persecution realize very well that harming a church leader means harming the church as well. Many pastors and Christian workers have received warnings that their activities are being watched by the authorities and pressure groups in the neighborhood.

*Churches require registration and permission to proceed with new building projects. This is a long process as churches often have to wait for more than ten years to receive registration and get discouraged from proceeding with their building plans. There is high demand for bribes, and letters from influential members of parliament and governing bodies are needed. While there is no law against the building of churches as such, the process is made hard in order to discourage Christians. The NGO law introduced on 1 October 2015 allows the government to monitor and close down NGOs at their wish. Any church not registered as an NGO is immediately considered illegal and faces the threat of being closed down. The law was introduced to protect the country against terrorist organizations operating in the guise of charities. Hence, churches are now listed alongside terrorist organizations. In October 2018, Pakistan's Minister of the Interior ordered 18 NGOs to [leave the country](#) and cease all operations within 60 days, including World Vision and the Catholic Relief Agency. This policy has not been revised.*

*While the pressure against churches reaching out to youth increases, there have been no reported cases of outright obstruction. Apart from the Bible Society of Pakistan, all other Christian organizations are strongly discouraged from owning printing presses. Also, the work of the Bible Society is closely monitored and each Bible has a serial number that can be tracked. Since October 2016, only two (of originally 13) Christian TV channels have registration permits. Christians also continue to worry about Internet restrictions set out in the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act of [August 2016](#), which has the potential to limit one of the last available ways of spreading the Christian message. The debate on Christian family law has also continued. Christians are being encouraged/compelled to allow divorce in more cases than purely on grounds of adultery and the law will be amended without a significant contribution by Christian leaders in Pakistan.*

## Violence

In Pakistan, Christians are seen as second-class citizens and so violence against them is often not seen as being important enough for media reporting, it is just ubiquitous. Churches are attacked, Christians are detained and arrested (e.g. under the notorious blasphemy laws), abducted, raped and forcefully married (especially girls), brutalized and driven out of the country. And each year, Christians are killed because of their faith. Because of this, the score for violence has been the maximum possible since WWL 2016.

*The following table is based on reported cases as much as possible. Since many incidents go unreported, the numbers below must be understood as being minimum figures. In cases where it has been impossible to count exactly, a symbolic round figure (10, 100 or 1000) is given. (A symbolic number of 10 could in reality even be 100 or more but the real number is uncertain. A symbolic number of 100 could go well over 1000 but the real number is uncertain. A symbolic number of 1000 could go well over 10,000 but, again, the real number is uncertain.) In cases where it is clear that (many) more Christians are affected, but a concrete number could be given according to the number of incidents reported, the number given has to be understood as being an absolutely minimum figure.*

Pakistan	Reporting period	Christians killed	Christians attacked	Christians arrested	Churches attacked	Christian-owned houses and shops attacked
WWL 2020	01 Nov 2018 - 31 Oct 2019	20	1231	71	58	200
WWL 2019	01 Nov 2017 - 31 Oct 2018	28	1467	56	28	407
WWL 2018	01 Nov 2016 - 31 Oct 2017	15	1533	110	168	169

*Christians killed refers to the number of Christians killed for faith-related reasons (including state-sanctioned executions). Christians attacked refers to the number of Christians abducted, raped or otherwise sexually harassed, forced into marriage to non-Christians or otherwise physically or mentally abused (including beatings and death-threats) for faith-related reasons. Christians arrested refers to the number of Christians detained without trial or sentenced to jail, labor camp, sent to psychiatric hospital as punishment or similar things for faith-related reasons. Churches attacked refers to the number of churches or Christian buildings (schools, hospitals, cemeteries, etc.) attacked, damaged, bombed, looted, destroyed, burned down, closed or confiscated for faith-related reasons. Christian-owned houses and shops attacked refers to the number of houses of Christians or other property (including shops and businesses of Christians) attacked, damaged, bombed, looted, destroyed, burned down, closed or confiscated for faith-related reasons.*

- **Christians killed:** In May 2019, a landlord killed a Christian worker because he dared to work for another employer, according to a [report](#) by Morning Star News. This case illustrates the low social status of most Christians and stands for similar cases, often even going unreported. Amir Masih was detained, tortured and [killed in police custody](#) on 2 September 2019 in Lahore. Killings are spread over the country, with an emphasis on Punjab, where more Christians live, perpetrators have been radical Islamic groups, mobs and the police.
- **Christians attacked:** Overt violence tends to conceal the daily violence behind the scenes against Christian girls and women who are often abducted, raped and forcefully married and converted.
- **Christians arrested:** As an example, the Christian brothers Qaisar and Amoon Ayub have been sentenced to death for alleged blasphemy committed in 2010 by a district judge in Lahore on 13 December 2018.
- **Churches attacked:** Attacks on churches take place frequently, although the buildings are not always destroyed or have to be closed. However, according to interviews with many pastors, there have been frequent fires laid, windows broken, property damaged and other minor harassments such as power-cuts and water restrictions targeting churches. Although there have been no major (bomb) attacks against church buildings, these smaller "every day attacks" against churches and cemeteries are frequent.
- **Christian homes/shops attacked:** In blasphemy cases, the homes of Christians are frequently attacked, forcing them and their families to go into hiding.

## 5 Year trends

The following three charts show how pressure and violence has developed over the last five reporting periods.

### Chart 1:

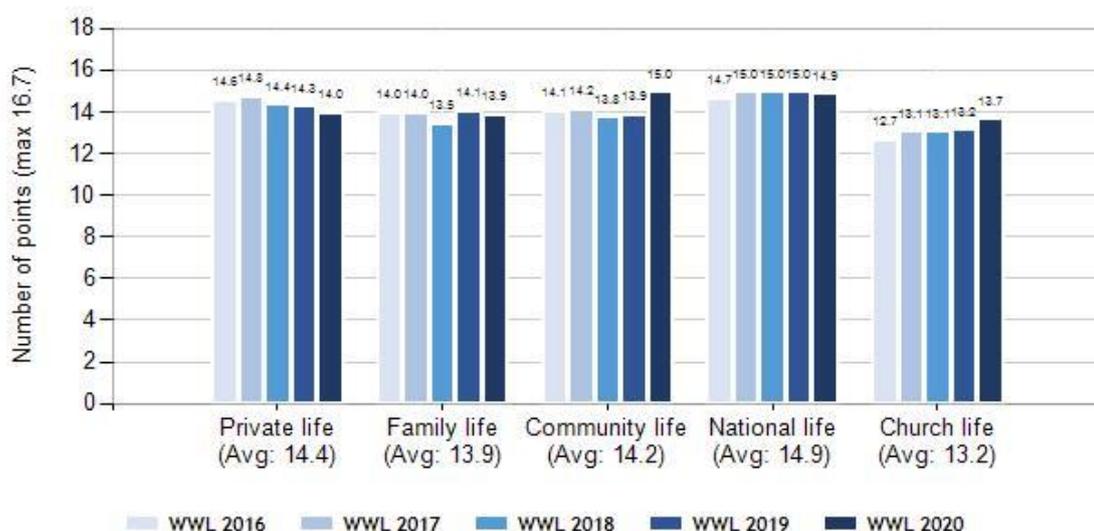
The chart below shows that the average score for pressure has plateaued and even slightly increased at an extremely high level.

WWL 2016 - WWL 2020 Persecution Pattern history: Pakistan	Average pressure over 5 Spheres of life
2020	14.3
2019	14.1
2018	14.0
2017	14.2
2016	14.0

### Chart 2:

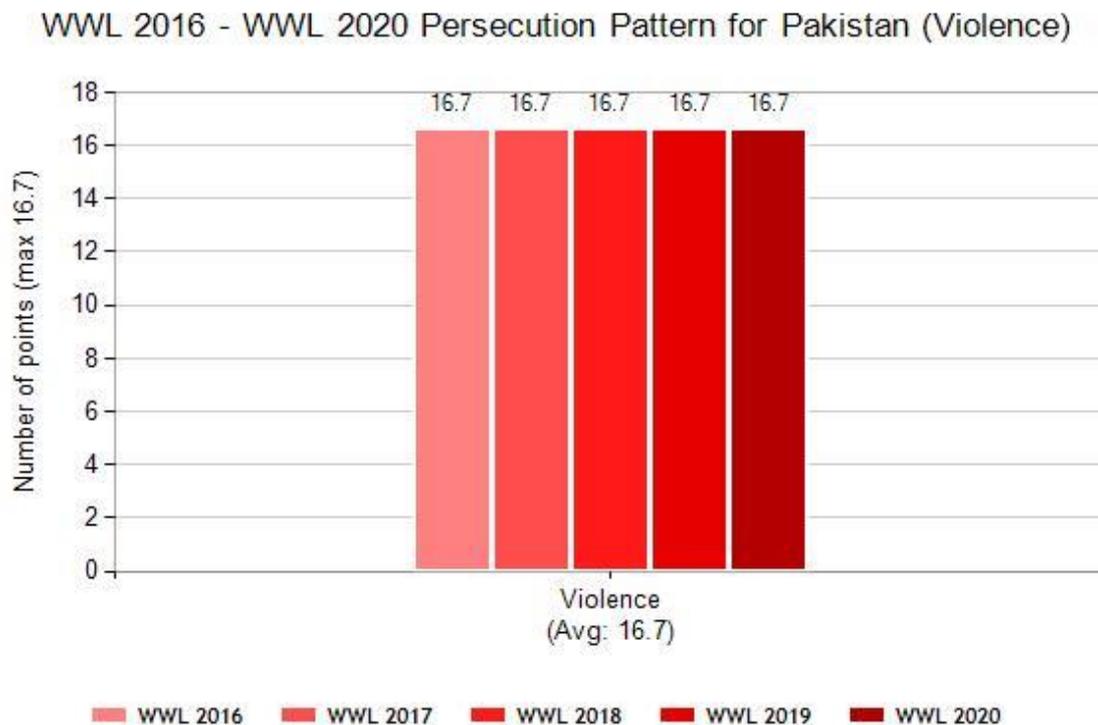
Since WWL 2016 Christians in Pakistan have been experiencing increasing pressure in the communities they are living in. This is because radical Islamic groups have gained more influence and have caused society to take on a strongly conservative attitude and tone, both in urban and rural areas. Hence, the level of pressure in Community life now matches the level in National life. Corresponding to this, Church life has come under more pressure since churches are being closely watched, often with suspicion and outright hostility, and the score for National life has levelled off at an extremely high level since it is not only society and radical Islamic groups who make life for Christians complicated, but also the authorities (at local, regional and national levels).

WWL 2016 - WWL 2020 Persecution Pattern for Pakistan (Spheres of life)



**Chart 3:**

The score for violence has been the maximum possible for five WWL reporting periods in a row, which is exceptional. Even though no deadly bomb attacks targeting a church or a gathering of Christians have occurred since December 2017, there have still been many individual killings and attacks.



## Gender profile of persecution

**Female Pressure Points:**

- ***Abduction***
- ***False charges***
- ***Forced marriage***
- ***Trafficking***
- ***Violence – physical***
- ***Violence – sexual***

Christian (and Hindu) girls and young women, especially ages 13-20, are particularly vulnerable in Pakistan. Christians report that their girls are often abducted, raped, forced to marry their abductor, and converted by force. The authorities do not take any action; on the contrary, usually they side with the Muslim families abducting the girls. Consequently, parents of such victimized women and girls begin to feel it is pointless to take legal action. Even when a case comes to the courts, the girls are forced to testify that they converted voluntarily.

Human Rights Watch 2018 reports: "A report by the Movement for Solidarity and Peace in Pakistan found that at least 1,000 girls belonging to Christian and Hindu communities are forced to marry Muslim men every year." If a Christian family is bold enough to challenge the abduction and marriage, they often face accusations of harassing the "voluntarily converted" girl and her new family. This is particularly the case for young Christian girls in Punjab province. While child marriage is banned, the legal age for marriage is 16 and although forced marriage is a criminal offense and many cases were filed (according to a [2015 report](#)), prosecution remained a problem. Further setting the stage for impunity of violence against Christian women is that, in general, a [woman's testimony](#) in court does not carry the same weight as a man's.

There have also been reports of the targeted trafficking of Christian girls for both bonded labor and a 'prostitution ring' smuggling Christian girls into China.

Once married, a woman has little protection against those who would punish her for maintaining her chosen religion.

Being part of a Christian family does not protect women from religious persecution, either. She may be subject to false charges for breaking blasphemy laws, beaten and/or sexually harassed.

#### **Male Pressure Points:**

- ***Abduction***
- ***Discrimination/Harassment via education***
- ***False charges***
- ***Incarceration by government***
- ***Trafficking***
- ***Violence – death***
- ***Violence – sexual***
- ***Violence – physical***
- ***Violence – psychological***

Christian men face many forms of violence in Pakistan. Blasphemy laws continue to provide the structure for much of the persecution of Christian men in Pakistan. There are hundreds of cases against them purporting blasphemy but all too often having their foundation in a tenancy or work situation or even a cricket match. Christian men live in constant fear of blasphemy allegations, destruction of their property, arrest, imprisonment, beatings, torture and execution. There are also reports of Christian boys being subject to sexual abuse.

Christian men and boys are compelled to take lower status jobs and are considered impure. They are often referred to as "Chura," a derogatory word meaning "filthy" and which is used for road sweepers or sewage cleaners. Whereas there is also a Christian middle class and not all hold lower status jobs, discrimination and social inferiority are ubiquitous. Islamic law and practices promote an attitude of Muslim superiority in society; thus, Muslims are encouraged not to accept Christian men being in more senior positions to them in workplaces. This can translate into a lack of employment opportunities and discrimination after a job is found.

## Persecution of other religious minorities

Besides Christians, other religious minorities have also been victims of the blasphemy laws and attacks. The Hindu minority suffers at the hands of radical Sunni militants as do Islamic minorities such as Ahmadis, Shiites and Sufis, since these are not regarded as being true Muslims. For example: In February 2017 an [attack on a Sufi shrine](#) in Sindh province claimed 75 lives or more. In November 2018, an attack [near a Shia Prayer Hall](#) claimed 33 lives. Responsibility for both attacks was claimed by the Sunni Islamic State group (IS).

The Ahmadi are targets of persecution by a plethora of radical Islamic groups, just as the Christian and the Hindu minorities are. However, the challenge for the Ahmadi is that they are not allowed to call themselves "Muslims", which is what they are according to their own understanding. In most dealings with the government, from attending school to being employed by the state, Ahmadis have to sign documents which declare the finality of the Prophet Mohammed, which goes against their faith. Attacks against these minorities occur with a sickening frequency.

One prominent example of discrimination against the Ahmadi minority took place in the government sphere. As stated in the US State Department's IRF 2018 Report on page 9: "The constitution prohibits discriminatory admission based on religious affiliation to any governmental educational institution. According to regulations, the only factors affecting admission to government schools are students' grades and home provinces; however, students must declare their religious affiliation on application forms. This declaration is also required for private educational institutions, including universities. Students who identify themselves as Muslims must declare in writing they believe the Prophet Muhammad is the final prophet. Non-Muslims are required to have the head of their local religious communities verify their religious affiliation. There is no provision in the law for atheists."

Alleged atheists are also targeted by the country's blasphemy laws as was shown when a university student in the city of Mardan [was lynched](#) by an enraged mob in April 2017. In this case, which caused much unrest in Pakistan, the killer was [sentenced to death](#) in February 2018.

A report published in August 2019 highlighted again that not just Christian girls and women suffer from abductions and forced conversions, following the lack of interest by authorities and courts, but [Hindu girls](#) as well.

## Future outlook for the church

The outlook for Christians as viewed through the lens of:

- **Islamic oppression:** Competition between the Taliban and IS increases the pressure on both groups to recruit followers. Their recruitment strategy requires each group to appear closer to the heart of Islam than the other. In their efforts to appear more Islamic, one strategy has been to attack the "dhimmi" as they are most vulnerable to the ideology of "pure Islam". This competition is beginning to affect politics too, so that observers say that Christians and other minorities may well be facing [tougher times](#) ahead.

Striving for a stronger Islamic identity (as carried out by the radical Islamic groups) therefore includes more persecution of Christians and the removal of as many of their rights as possible at a time when the government is not particularly interested in granting rights to minorities. This in turn fits well into wider society's negative attitude towards Christians. Islamic oppression will thus most likely remain strong in Pakistan.

- **Organized corruption and crime:** Christians will continue to be discriminated against and often exploited. The increasing media coverage about their dire working environments and the basis of discrimination in the caste system, is hardly likely to bring any change.
- **Clan and ethnic antagonism:** To which ethnic group one belongs will continue to play an important role in the political and social fabric of Pakistan, although interwoven with (and increasingly dominated by) religious motives.
- **Dictatorial paranoia:** Whereas the old political parties are no longer in power and the influential political families experienced a setback with the sentencing of former Prime Minister Sharif, this Persecution engine will not necessarily become weaker. Pakistan's politicians have a track record for clinging to power and causing religious minorities to suffer and be used as scapegoats. Prime Minister Imran Khan might prove to be no exception, if he sees himself under pressure from groups like the TLP and/or opposition parties. It will be especially interesting in the future to see if the army (as one of the main drivers of this engine) will continue to play a major role.

## External Links - WWL 2020: Persecution Dynamics

- Persecution engines: go online. - [https://www.apnews.com/8ef62cab253941ec8169427bdac62886/Many-organizations-banned-in-Pakistan-thrive-online?utm\\_source=Pew+Research+Center&utm\\_campaign=d2519be1c5-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2017\\_07\\_11&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_3e953b9b70-d2519be1c5-399904105](https://www.apnews.com/8ef62cab253941ec8169427bdac62886/Many-organizations-banned-in-Pakistan-thrive-online?utm_source=Pew+Research+Center&utm_campaign=d2519be1c5-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2017_07_11&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_3e953b9b70-d2519be1c5-399904105)
- Persecution engines: Panama Papers - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-36092356>
- Persecution engines: March 2018 - <https://mailchi.mp/morningstarnews/court-in-pakistan-acquits-20-muslims-suspected-in-brick-kiln-killing-of-christian-couple?e=7633765c31>
- Pressure in the 5 spheres of life : report - <http://hrp-web.org/hrpweb/9422-2/>
- Pressure in the 5 spheres of life : heritage of the caste system - <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/11/untouchable-caste-identity-haunts-pakistani-christians-like-asia-bibi/>
- Pressure in the 5 spheres of life : leave the country - <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-pakistan-ngos/pakistan-tells-18-international-ngos-to-leave-actionaid-idUSKCN1ME1N3>
- Pressure in the 5 spheres of life : August 2016 - <http://www.ucanews.com/news/internet-restrictions-a-further-blow-to-church-mission-in-pakistan/77686>
- Violence: report - <https://mailchi.mp/morningstarnews/muslim-employer-in-pakistan-kills-christian-farmhand-for-working-elsewhere-relatives-say?e=7633765c31>
- Violence: killed in police custody - <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Lahore,-a-Christian-dies-of-torture-in-police-custody-47971.html>

- Gender profile of persecution: 2015 report - <https://photos.state.gov/libraries/pakistan/231771/PDFs/pakistan-2015-hr-report.pdf>
- Gender profile of persecution: woman's testimony - <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/926401524803880673/pdf/125804-PUB-REPLACEMENT-PUBLIC.pdf>
- Persecution of other religious minorities: attack on a Sufi shrine - <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/feb/16/thirty-killed-100-injured-isis-bomb-sufi-shrine-pakistan-sindh>
- Persecution of other religious minorities: near a Shia Prayer Hall - <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/pakistan/terrorists-target-shia-seminary-kill-30-in-pakistan/articleshow/66777800.cms>
- Persecution of other religious minorities: was lynched - <https://www.dawn.com/news/1327118/of-indifference-and-empathy>
- Persecution of other religious minorities: sentenced to death - [http://http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-42970587?utm\\_source=Pew+Research+Center&utm\\_campaign=976e4b6508-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2018\\_02\\_07&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_3e953b9b70-976e4b6508-399904105](http://http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-42970587?utm_source=Pew+Research+Center&utm_campaign=976e4b6508-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2018_02_07&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_3e953b9b70-976e4b6508-399904105)
- Persecution of other religious minorities: Hindu girls - <http://hrcp-web.org/hrcpweb/forced-conversions-in-ghotki-eng/>
- Future outlook for the church: tougher times - [https://www.reuters.com/article/us-pakistan-election-religion/hardline-islamists-push-religion-to-center-of-pakistan-election-idUSKBN1KC04X?utm\\_source=Pew+Research+Center&utm\\_campaign=b10ec7a8f5-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2018\\_07\\_23\\_02\\_13&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_3e953b9b70-b10ec7a8f5-399904105](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-pakistan-election-religion/hardline-islamists-push-religion-to-center-of-pakistan-election-idUSKBN1KC04X?utm_source=Pew+Research+Center&utm_campaign=b10ec7a8f5-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2018_07_23_02_13&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_3e953b9b70-b10ec7a8f5-399904105)

## Additional reports and articles

### WWR in-depth reports

A selection of in-depth reports is available at: <http://opendoorsanalytical.org/reports/>  
(password: freedom).

At the time of publication there were no items specifically for Pakistan.

### World Watch Monitor news articles

Articles are available at: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/countries/pakistan.>

### Recent country developments

Up-to-date articles are available at: <http://opendoorsanalytical.org/?s=Pakistan>  
(password: freedom).