

HUMAN RIGHTS IN PAKISTAN

Religious Freedom and Rights of Religious Minorities



UPR Info Pre-sessions

Religious freedom and Rights of religious minorities



Four issues:

- Forced conversion and forced marriage
- Abuse of blasphemy laws
- Right to unbiased education
- Constitution of national commission for minority rights

1. Forced conversions and forced marriage

Issue and Developments

- Section 498 B PPC, Criminal Laws Amendment Act, 2017
- Drafts bills to criminalize forced conversions ignored

Recommendation

- Criminalize forced faith conversions through effective legislation, regulation of conversions, and stopping child marriages

2. Misuse of Blasphemy laws

Issue and Developments

- False accusations/ misuse of laws
- Prolong trials / disproportionate penalties
- Extra-judicial killings, Mob violence / lynching

Recommendation

- Take legal, administrative, and educational measures to introduce effective safeguards to prevent the misuse of blasphemy laws and address the religious intolerance as recommended by the Judicial Inquiry of the incident of Gojra in 2009 and UNGA Resolution 16/18 of 2011.

3. Right to Unbiased Education

Developments

- Supreme courts orders to develop tolerant curricula
- The Compulsory Teaching of the Holy Quran Act, 2017
- 2% admission quota for minorities in higher education
- Curriculum for subject 'religious education' for minorities, unimplemented

Recommendations

- Avoid introducing any legislation, or policy measures without due consultation with civil society, and in disregard to the constitutional protection of religious freedom and non-discrimination under articles 20, 22 (1), and 25 of the Constitution of Pakistan.
- Ensure the provision of teachers to teach minority students their respective religions

4. National Commission for minorities' rights

Developments

- Draft bills for establishing a minority rights body ignored
- Reconstitution of national commission for minorities without act of parliament
- Orders of the Supreme Court for setting up a statutory body

Recommendation

- Constitute an empowered, autonomous, resourceful, and effective **national commission for minorities' rights** through an act of parliament, conforming to UN Paris Principles.



Thank
you