



HUMAN RIGHTS FOCUS
Struggling For Peace, Empowerment and Self Reliance

Joint NGO submission to the United National Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review of Pakistan on the situation for minorities in Pakistan

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GHRD is an international human rights organisation with general consultative ECOSOC status. It was founded in 2003 and is committed to promote and advocate human rights in areas where minorities and marginalised groups are targets of regular human rights violations and global attention for these abuses is lacking.

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HRFP is a minority rights organisation based in Faisalabad run by minorities for minorities with a track record of over 15 years promoting human rights at the national level and a network of volunteers and representatives working in 16 Districts of Pakistan and in Pakistan Administered Kashmir.

Introduction

This is a joint submission prepared by GHRD and HRFP on Pakistan for consideration as part of Pakistan's second cycle Universal Periodic Review(UPR).

This submission is a compilation of the key minority rights issues observed and publicised by HRFP and GHRD since 2008. The following observations are the direct result of collaboration between the two organisations on minority issues and with other community and religious leaders and human rights activists in Pakistan. The information has come directly from fact finding investigations, interviews with victims and consistent monitoring of the situation for religious minorities.

GHRD and HRFP are concerned that the pervasive presence of terrorist organisations in Pakistan, combined with a lack of the rule of law, police corruption, impunity and state tolerance of persecution at all levels of authority (government, executive, judiciary and law enforcers alike) has contributed to a culture of extremism throughout the country and a consequently large number of human rights violations against minority individuals and communities. Across all investigations, our findings have indicated that the lack of political will or ability to safeguard minority rights in practice has led to a failure to implement legislative or policy measures to protect marginalised groups in practice.

This submission specifically raises the following concerns in relation to minority rights:

1. Legal developments and legislative restrictions on freedom of religion

- 1.1. Blasphemy laws
- 1.2. Abductions, forced conversions and marriages
 - 1.2.1. Hindu Marriage Bill 2017
 - 1.2.2. The Criminal Laws (Amendment) Act 2016
 - 1.2.3. Sindh Criminal Law (Protection of Minorities) Act, 2015

2. Deterioration of the human rights situation for religious minorities since the 2012 UPR:

- 2.1. Discrimination against religious minorities: No burial rights for minorities
- 2.2. Discrimination against religious minorities: No rights for celebrating festivals for minorities
- 2.3. Discrimination against religious minorities in Pakistan Administered Kashmir ("PAK")

3. Protection of Human Rights Defenders

1. Legal developments and legislative restrictions on freedom of religion

Discrimination against religious minorities and restrictions on freedom of religion and belief are embedded in several laws and in the Pakistan Constitution.

Article 2 of the Constitution declares Islam as the State religion and Article 41 states that only a Muslim can become President of the country.

Article 260(3) of the Constitution makes a distinction between 'Muslims' and 'non-Muslims' (the provision refers to the latter being Christian, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Parsi, 'Qadani' or 'Lahori' groups who call themselves Ahmadis, and Bahai), effectively relegating religious minorities to a status as second class citizens.

Sections 298B and 298C of the Pakistan Penal Code ("PPC") refer specifically to Ahmadis, prohibiting them from calling themselves Muslims and using Muslim practices in worship or in the propagation of their faith.

Though some legislative measures do exist to support minorities (e.g. minority quotas in federal employment and in the National Assembly and Senate), effective implementation of such measures in practice has been lacking and the fundamental discriminatory provisions in the Pakistani Constitution remain. The absence of connection between legislative measures and actual implementation and enforcement is inconsistent with the Government of Pakistan's (GoP) expressed resolve to safeguard minority rights and ensure minority representation through affirmative action.

1.1. Blasphemy laws

Since the 2012UPR, the use of blasphemy laws continued on many occasions as a tool to persecute religious minorities.

The GoP has reneged on its stated commitment to review the blasphemy laws, a series of provisions in the PPC introduced in the 1980s which punish those who "by words or visible representation or by an imputation or insinuation, directly or indirectly, defile the name of the Hazrat Muhammad". Under these laws, anyone accused as a blasphemer against the Holy Quran can be awarded sentences up to life imprisonment or even death under section 295C of the PPC.

While the blasphemy laws apply to members of minority religious communities and majority Muslims alike, they are commonly used as a tool to target members of minority religious communities and have traditionally had the greatest impact on religious minorities, particularly Ahmadiyyas, Christians and Hindus.

Key concerns with the blasphemy laws:

- No proof of intent required.
- Maximum sentence is the death sentence or life imprisonment.
- People can be charged with blasphemy on the basis of hearsay and immediately taken into police custody.
- No evidence is required to be presented following any accusations of blasphemy.
- Accused individuals are imprisoned without adequate investigation or proof and many spend years in incarceration without trial.
- The laws are abused by religious extremists - a large number of accused individuals have been killed by various societal actors taking the law into their own hands.
- Attackers enjoy impunity.

Below are two examples of how minority communities have become targets of blasphemy laws with no prospects to justice.

Attack on Christian Joseph Colony (2013 and on-going)¹

In March 2013, an enraged mob attacked houses located in a Christian-dominated neighbourhood in Lahore. The attack on Joseph Colony was triggered by a blasphemy accusation against a Christian man, Sawan Masih. On 29 January 2017, Pakistan's Anti-terrorism Court acquitted 115 people accused of violence and the burning of over 100 homes in the Colony.

Till date there is no justice for the victims of the mob attack. On March 30, 2014, Masih was convicted and sentenced to death for making derogatory remarks against the Prophet Muhammad. It's shocking that due to citing lack of evidence, an anti-terrorism court acquitted all 115 people charged with burning the Christian houses.

¹<http://www.ucanews.com/news/no-justice-for-pakistans-christian-minority/78324>

Asia Bibi case (2009 and on-going)

Aasiya Noreen, better known as Asia Bibi, is a Pakistani Christian women, is convicted of blasphemy. In June 2009, Asia was involved in an argument with a group of Muslim women. She was accused of insulting the Islamic prophet Muhammad, a charge she denies, and was arrested and imprisoned. In November 2010, a judge sentenced her to death. Her case got tremendous international attention but till date did not have any positive effect, as she is still in prison.

The Aisa Bibi case is an on-going case since 2009, who received a lot of international attention, but didn't make any difference. Four years later another Christian, Sawan Masih, was accused and sentenced to death. Since the last UPR in 2012, the GoP hasn't taken any serious actions of repealing or amending the blasphemy laws. Since, March 2017, there are discussions going on that the Pakistan's government wants social media networks to remove material deemed insulting to Islam or the Prophet Muhammad and will punish social media companies that fail to take action against online blasphemy. The question that raises is what will this changes mean for the on-going cases of blasphemy.

Recommendations:

Encourage the GoP to:

- enact legislation ensuring freedom of religion and belief for all religious groups. Repeal, or at the very least to honour its commitment to review the blasphemy laws. In particular, amend the laws related to sentencing by reducing the maximum penalties of death and life imprisonment, include a requirement of intent in the law, and provide clearer terminology in relation to standards of proof.
- ensure that there is no impunity for those who commit hate crimes.
- ensure that cases of blasphemy are properly and impartially investigated and release those who have been imprisoned without adequate investigation or trial.
- Ensure action is taken to reduce lengthy trial cases.

1.2. Abductions, forced conversions and marriages

HRFP local observers have reported a number of cases of kidnapping and forced conversion of young minority (particularly Hindu and Christian) women to Islam, particularly in Sindh and Punjab provinces, where cases of kidnappings and conversion to Islam are increasingly reported.

With the cultural and social forms of discrimination minority women in particular, are doubly subject to discrimination for being a woman as well as being a minority. Minority women of lower castes are particularly vulnerable to kidnapping and forced conversion due to perceptions that they are 'sexually available' by men of Muslim dominated communities. The issue is further complicated by cultural norms (such as the practice of arranged marriage) and legal issues, such as the lack of legal divorce available to minorities. Such complications make it difficult in some cases to determine whether marriage was by conversion or free will.

Nevertheless, GHRD and HRFP are concerned at the systematic nature of these human rights abuses – cases are repeatedly reported in the news and by human rights organisations and all adhere to a similar pattern, whereby a young Christian or Hindu girl is kidnapped and isolated from her family, friends and community elders, and coerced to testify in court that she willingly converted to Islam and this is where the cases are let lie. Often coercion and intimidation by the police and the girl’s captors give her no choice but to testify that she willingly converted. In the majority of cases observed, the girl is not allowed to see her family, friends, or her community elders and is accompanied by her captors at every moment. She is subject to intimidation, sexual violence and rape as a consequence.

The numbers reported vary and are dependent on the women or their families publicly reporting the cases; however, NGO reports estimate that upwards of 1000 Hindu and Christian women and girls are kidnapped and forced to convert to Islam every year.

Since the last UPR in 2012 the GoP has taken some actions to tackle the problem of abductions, forced conversions and marriages, however, the taken actions does not serve the problem that is faced on the ground.

1.2.1. Hindu Marriage Bill 2017

Mid-March 2017, Pakistan has adapted the Hindu Marriage Bill. The Act will protect Hindu marriages and family rights. The law will be applicable in the provinces of Baluchistan, Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Sindh who had introduced its own version of the Hindu marriage law has faced many obstacles.

1.2.2. The Criminal Laws (Amendment) Act 2016

The Pakistani Parliament has passed a new law: The Criminal Laws (Amendment) Act 2016. This new Act, among other changes Pakistan’s criminal legislature, increases the punishment for forced marriages of all children and for minority women.

Based on our experiences and also indicated by other ngo’s the severity of punishment may not help to address the situation faced by these young girls and women as a majority of the cases do not come to court and in case they made it to the court the lengthy of judicial procedure and financial obstacles faced by families are compelled to give up.

Making amendments in the criminal law is a good first step, but not the solution to the problem. The real problem that minorities are facing on the ground are not being tackled by these amendments. Increasing punishment doesn’t have added value if the abductors are not arrested or punished and walks free due to the lengthy judicial process that families are facing.

1.2.3. Sindh Criminal Law (Protection of Minorities) Act, 2015

In November, 2016, the provincial assembly of Pakistan’s Sindh Province passed a new law called the Criminal Law (Protection of Minorities) Act, 2015, which prohibits forced religious conversions. The Bill was addressing the growing complaints against increasing incidents of abduction and forced conversion of underage minor Hindu girls. The Sindh Assembly had unanimously adapted the

forced conversion bill. However, recent discussion has led that the Sindh government has decided to review the protection of minorities bill, after religious scholars objected to some of its clauses. This is a setback to minority religious communities in Pakistan as the Sindh Governor has sent the Bill back to the provincial Assembly for reconsideration. Repealing of the law will mean that abductions and forced conversions of minor girls and boy will continue without legal support for the victim and their family.²

Key concerns on abductions, forced conversions and marriages:

1. Not able to register a First Information Report (FIR) due to unwillingness and refusal of the police.
2. Families are forced to agree with a settlement under pressure (threats).
3. Families are forced to petition the court to have the FIR registered. In such cases time is crucial. As families are forced to petition the court, it gives abductors additional time to threat, forcefully convert and marry the victim.
4. Court hearings are being deferred over and over, whereas the victim is in the custody of the abductors or staying in a shelter home. While staying in a shelter home abductors can visit the victim and pressurize her.
5. Families are forced to drop the legal case due to the lengthy judicial process and financial constraints.
6. No justice for the victims, and abductors enjoy impunity.

An example of such an case is the [Kajal Bheel case \(November 2015 till December 2015\)](#)

*The 12 year old Pakistan Hindu girl Kajal Bheel was forcefully abducted and converted to Islam in November 2014. After the 9th Court hearing, Kajal's parents decided not to pursue the case since the lengthy judicial process has shown that they would not be able to seek and obtain remedy for their grievance: abduction and forced conversion and marriage of their daughter. They lost their hope in getting back their daughter and their trust in the justice system. The extended trial period also put pressure on the parents due to their financial constraints.*³

In the Kajal Bheel case the UN Human Rights Council and the Working Group on the issue of Discrimination against Women in law and in practice; the special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief; the Special Rapporteur on minority Issues; and the Special Rapporteur on violence against women raised question to the Pakistani government, with no reply from the Pakistani government.⁴

Mehwish Tanveer a Christian girl aged 14 is abducted, forcefully converted & married of with a Muslim boy, Zahid Iqbal, since 12th March, 2016. Since then she has not been released nor returned back home. This case has been submitted the District & Session Court in Faisalabad.

On 19th March, 2016 Tanveer Masih, father of Mehwish Tanveer, shared the happening with the local community and relatives about the kidnapping of Mehwish

²<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/177439-Sindh-governor-returns-forced-conversion-bill>

³ More details about the case: <http://www.ghrd.org/get-involved/petitions/save-kajal/the-case/>

⁴https://spdb.ohchr.org/hrdb/29th/public_-

http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session29/Documents/A_HRC_29_50_en.docx

by Zahid Iqbal and his family. 15 to 20 members of the local community with HRFP team went to the house of Zahid Iqbal and demanded to return of Mehwish without any success.

Since that day the family was receiving threats and were told not make any efforts to get their daughter back. Tanveer Masih was only able to register a First Information Report (FIR) at Razabad Police Station, Faisalabad against Zahid Iqbal and his family on 10th May, 2016 as the police was not willing to register the FIR and they were not cooperative towards the Masih family.

On 30th May, 2016 a panchayat (Local Counsel to resolve community issues) arranged a meeting to resolve the issue. During the panchayat meeting, Zahid Iqbal said that Mehwish has converted into Islam and got married to him, so there was no way that Mehwish could return back to her parents. A conflict of harsh words erupted between Tanveer Masih and Zahid Iqbal. The father of Zahid Iqbal, Mohammad Iqbal, Ayub and Umar Daraz promised Tanveer that they would return Mehwish to them very soon. Mohammad Iqbal agreed to meet Tanveer on 31st May near Jhang Bazar in the evening to sign a stamp paper (confirmation letter as proof) to return their daughter.

On 31st May, 2016 at around 6:30 pm Tanveer Masih along with his wife Najma Bibi on his bike No. 7223/FDM & friends named Sabar Masih and Baber Masih on another bike were on the way to Jhang Road near Chak 74 GB, when suddenly two motorcycle came near to the bike of Tanveer Masih. Zahid Iqbal and Tahir Iqbal were sitting on the motorcycle and they shouted loudly to kill Tanveer Masih.

Zahid Iqbal and Tahir Iqbal opened fire on Tanveer Masih and Tanveer died on the spot while Najma got injured. On 31st of May 2016, Najma Bibi filed a FIR against Zahid Iqbal, Tahir Iqbal, Mohammad Iqbal, Ayub s/o unknown and Umar Daraz s/o unknown and some unknown person at Thekri Wala Police Station, Faisalabad.

Since the FIR has been registered. Najma and her three daughters are receiving threats to withdraw the case otherwise they will face the same punishment as given to Mehwish and Tanveer Masih. Najma and her daughters have also been "advised" to convert to Islam and in that regards enjoy a safe and happy life.

Through media and advocacy efforts by HRFP both cases (Mehwish abduction, forced conversion and marriage case and Tanveer Masih murder case) were submitted to the District & Session Court in Faisalabad. Through all the efforts, Zahid Iqbal and his allies were arrested, unfortunately due a fake investigation report that was presented by the police, the culprits but were shortly released in the murder case. Till date Mehwish is in the custody of Zahid Iqbal.

Recommendations:

Encourage the GoP to:

- take effective measures to prevent forced or early marriage, in particular with a view to ending forced conversions and marriages of minority girls.
- ensure that the perpetrators of violence are brought to justice.
- encourage support and cooperation from police and judges (courts) by sensitising the issues of minorities by providing training to police and judiciaries.

- encourage the speedy process of legislation in Sindh to regulate marriage and divorce of people from minority religions.
- initiate a formal inquiry into the issue of kidnapping and forced conversion of minorities, including:
 - (1) the creation of a specially trained taskforce to investigate the number and prevalence of kidnapping and forced conversions of minority women and the factors that lead to such conversions.
 - (2) initiate a governmental mechanism who is monitoring the whereabouts of the abducted girls.
- Take deterrent measures to combat discrimination against women, girls and religious minorities and work towards eliminating poverty among those groups.

2. Deterioration of the human rights situation for religious minorities since the 2012 UPR:

GHRD and HRFP have observed and investigated a large number of occasions of violence against religious minority communities, businesses, homes and places of worship since 2012. Religious minorities in Pakistan have not only been marginalised but have are also facing outright persecution on a regular basis. Inadequate investigation and prosecution for such human rights crimes enables perpetrators of such violent crime to benefit from impunity.

The fact finding investigations into communal violence against minority communities particularly demonstrate the culture of extremism and vigilantism in Pakistan today and the lack of will or ability of police authorities to stop violence.

Case examples

- 2.1. Discrimination against religious minorities: No burial rights for minorities⁵

No graveyards for Hindus (minorities) (2014 and on-going)

Lahore, May, 2014; The local Hindu community were forced to not lay their dead ones to rest close to their homes as land mafia in Lahore sealed a centuries old cemetery of Hindus before its inauguration.

Following the petition from Hindu representatives, the Supreme Court of Pakistan had ordered the provincial government of Punjab in August 2012 to get land vacated from the mafia. The court also ordered the authorities to construct a graveyard on 14,200 square feet of land for the Hindus by December 25, 2013.

On January 27, 2016, Rafiq Masih filed a suit before a civil court against the Hindus, claiming ownership of the graveyard. Civil Judge Asif Riaz had dismissed the suit.

After a legal battle of 25 years and having a decision in the favour of the Hindu community from the Supreme Court, Hindus in Lahore are forced to take the body to Quetta for burial due to the fear of unrest. Till date, Hindus cannot access the graveyard, where they are legally entitled.

⁵<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1302960/dead-bodies-hindus-helpless-graveyard-encroachment-despite-court-order/>

The orders from the Supreme Court (four) years ago and a (recent) decision by a civil court in their favour, the Hindu community is still running from pillar to post to take possession of their graveyard. The Pakistan government is failing over and over to provide proper security and possession of the graveyard to the minority community.

- 2.2. Discrimination against religious minorities: No rights for minorities for celebrating festival⁶

Sindh, March, 2017; On March 8, a group of students gathered at SU's mass communication department and threw coloured powder at each other in celebration of Holi. The students for the Sindh University were told to submit apologies in affidavits for celebrating Holi on campus.

2.3 Discrimination against religious minorities: Discriminatory ad in newspaper

The GoP has reserved five percent of all government positions for minority groups. However, the only type of employment allocated for minorities are generally low-skill janitorial "sweeper" jobs.

Recently advertisements was published in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and in Punjab in which jobs were available at government institutions (a government-run hospital known as the Punjab Institute of Cardiology in Lahore and at the Tehsil administration of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa) for only minorities, Christians, Hindus and Shias. The GoP has only allotted janitorial positions to fulfill the five percent quota for minorities. Such advertisements deliberately discriminates minorities and can be seen as a ploy to maintain minorities in poverty and low-paying jobs.

PESHAWAR, March 2017: An advertisement placed by the tehsil administration of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) in District Bannu for certain vacant posts has hurt the religious sensibilities of minorities.

The column in the ad stated that religious minorities such as 'Christians, Hindus and Shias' are eligible to apply⁷.

Recommendations:

- Support religious minorities in their endeavours to safely and peacefully practice their religion and encourage public tolerance of religions other than Islam – including increased efforts to fully and impartially investigate and prosecute crimes, and instigating public information campaigns on religious tolerance.
- Ensure graveyards for minorities.
- To fulfil the job quota for minorities by not only offering low skilled jobs to them but also on high ranking positions.
- Take serious measures to combat poverty under minorities.

⁶<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1365482/sindh-university-students-told-submit-written-apologies-celebrating-holi/>

⁷<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1360587/discriminatory-ad-k-p-newspaper-draws-public-outrage/>

2.3. Discrimination against religious minorities in Pakistan Administered Kashmir

In the Pakistan Administered province of Kashmir ("PAK"), poverty, caste and religious discrimination mean that religious minorities have little or no choice or control over their lives and face challenges in access to justice, access to education, freedom of expression, and freedom of religion. Isolation of the province from the rest of Pakistan and lack of external scrutiny has meant that minority communities in PAK have not had a voice.

Key human rights issues in the PAK province identified through interviews conducted in 2017 with minorities include:

- *Denial of citizenship and the right to vote:* despite living in the province for 40 – 60 years, many minorities who migrated to PAK from other provinces within Pakistan are not considered citizens of PAK and as a result are unable to get a National Identity Card ("NIC"). Without an NIC, their names are not included on voter lists and they therefore have no right to cast their vote, and are essentially left out of all democratic processes.
- *Denial of the right to freely practice religion:* Religious minorities live in fear of religious extremists and vigilantes that take the law into their own hands – open practice or declaration of a religion other than Islam can lead to intimidation, harassment, beatings, property damage or death. Currently, minority religious communities in PAK practice their religion in secret in private homes. Minorities are pressurized by the army to convert to Islam, minorities are threatened the marry their daughters to Muslims, otherwise family members will be killed.
- *Denial of right to equal employment:* All of those interviewed by HRFP had the same employment: working as sanitary workers sweeping and cleaning toilets (known as *choora* in Pakistan and considered to be the lowest and most 'dirty' position in Pakistani society). Even those lucky enough to gain some form of education have no other choice than to work as choora as Muslims refuse to employ them in any other position.
- *Denial of the right to bury the dead:* despite living in the province for 40 – 60 years, minorities are forced carry the bodies across the hill and to other provinces, as they don't have a land for a graveyard.

Recommendations:

- Encourage the Government of Pakistan Administered Kashmir to create a process whereby those who live in PAK can follow a process to gain citizenship, registration and the ability to vote.
- Take deterrent measures to combat discrimination against religious minorities and work towards eliminating poverty among those groups.
- Encourage quotas for minorities in government employment and promote religious tolerance in PAK through public information campaigns.
- Ensure graveyards for minorities.

3. Protection of Human Rights Defenders (HRD's)

Human rights activists working on the ground for religious minorities are facing difficulties in doing their work. Threats, false allegations, attacks and killings (from fundamentalist and state agencies) are the problems that they are facing on a regular basis. With no mechanism to protect them they are left for their fate. The Pakistani government aware of the situations hasn't taken any actions to secure the protection of the human rights defenders.

There is an absolute unrest and frightening environment all over the society and with the increasing anti-human rights practices and various forms of brutal violence incidents against the vulnerable communities throughout the country, the important role of HRD's in highlighting, monitoring and reporting the violent incidents has elevated unlike ever before and has gained immense importance. These HRD's are individuals and groups that non-violently promote and protect universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms without discrimination of color, race, religion and creed. Due to the drastic increase of violent practices, the risk pertaining to their work had become greater. The security of their lives, their family lives, their livelihoods and the safe conditions of their workplace is also under the question. Their work of opposing the brutal acts of extremists and government decisions that are against human rights exposed them to harassment, detention, interrogations, torture, and the threat of being killed. In recent years the violation of human rights defenders especially those who are working at grass-root level remains widespread and unfortunately they continued to be the victims of attack.

The most concerning factor related to the security of human right defenders who are working at grass root level is they are untrained in terms of maintaining their safety and precautionary measures at workplace and field visit. It is observed by HRFP that human rights organization/defenders who are working at grass root level are at high risk and they lack capacity of their own protective measures. Particularly in those major cities where cases of human rights violations occurred on regular basis. While doing field visits and fact finding they are subjected to different forms of anticipated and unanticipated risks. It is also found that majority of human rights organizations/defenders lack capacity of maintaining their security. On the other hand the Government also seems reluctant in creating favorable working conditions for human right defenders.

At one side the government is failed to expose the perpetrators of the violation cases and on the other side it is unable to make risk free situation for the human right defenders. There is a high reservation of human rights defenders towards the unsupportive role of the Government.

HRFP in this regard has conducted a survey of different human rights organizations who are working at grass root level to assess their security situation and determined the following facts:

- Lack of essential security knowledge and information to HRD's
- Lack of Government impassiveness towards ensuring proper safety measures for HRD's
- Ignorance of Civil Society groups to work for the safety of Grass root HRD's.
- Reluctance of Government in prosecuting the perpetrators of Violation.
- Lack of initiative focused on ensuring safe working condition for HRD's

HRFP feels that the identified concerning areas needs to be targeted in order to contribute in minimizing the insecure plight of HRD's at grass root level. HRFP also believes that if constructive efforts are not being made for enabling safe working condition for human rights defenders than the process of human rights promotion and protection will get badly affected.

Since 2012, the following HRD's are assassinated;

1. Transgender Alisha, an activist of Transgender rights was assassinated on 25th May 2016.
2. Mr. Zaman Mehsud, a Journalist belonging to the tribal community was assassinated on 2nd November 2015
3. Ms. Sabeen Mehmood, Director of The 2nd Floor(T2F) organization, was assassinated on 24th April 2015 in Karachi.
4. Mr. Rashid Rehman, Lawyer in blasphemy case was assassinated on 7th May 2014.
5. Ms. Perveen Rehman, Director of Organi Pilot Project was assassinated on 13th March 2013.
6. Mr. Malik Jrar Advocate, Former Vice Chairman of HRCP KP Chapter, belonging to Shia sect was assassinated on 8th February 2013.

Recommendations:

- Implement measures to protect the right to life and freedom of expression of human rights defenders, and ensure that the perpetrators of violence are brought to justice.
- Take measures to stop the culture of impunity against offenders that physical/psychologically threatens human rights defenders due to their work.
- Guarantee and protect the physical, digital and psychological security and integrity of human rights defenders in Pakistan.
- Carry out an effective, thorough, and impartial investigation into the killings, abductions, threats and attacks faced by human right defenders of Pakistan in order to identify all those responsible; bring them before a civil, competent, and impartial tribunal; and apply to them the penal sanctions provided by Pakistani law and in line with international human rights law.
- To form new legislations at provincial and national level to promote and protect the rights of human right defenders. It should form a Comprehensive "Legal and Policy Framework "to protect human rights defenders while doing work at workplace and field visits.
- recognize the role of human rights defenders in protecting and promoting human rights situation and provide special Government assistance to them.
- To formulate a National Policy for protection of human rights defenders.