



Home Office

Country Policy and Information Note

Pakistan: Sufficiency of protection

Version 5.0

September 2026

Executive summary

In general, a person who has a well-founded fear of persecution or serious harm from a rogue state actor and/or a non-state actor is likely to be able to obtain protection from the state. The onus is on the person to demonstrate otherwise.

In the reported case of [AW \(sufficiency of protection\) Pakistan \[2011\]](#), the Upper Tribunal, having regard to the country guidance case [AH \(Sufficiency of Protection, Sunni Extremists\) Pakistan CG \[2002\] UKIAT 05862](#), found that ‘... it cannot be said that such a general insufficiency of state protection has been established.’

In general, Pakistan takes reasonable steps to prevent criminal acts by operating an effective legal system for the detection, prosecution and punishment of acts that could amount to persecution, and a person is largely able to access protection.

Pakistan has a legal framework that protects civil, political and economic rights, and domestic laws provide for the punishment of criminal acts. Federal and provincial police services have primary responsibility for law enforcement, supported by other agencies and paramilitary forces.

Police resources and accessibility vary by province. Estimated national police strength is about 624,390 against a population of around 241.5 million. Punjab province has the largest police force, and also the largest population.

Police effectiveness varies by region and can be affected by under-resourcing, a lack of equipment, low salaries and corruption. Pakistan has developed significant surveillance capabilities, including online, but these reportedly lack safeguards and have been used against critics of state institutions.

There are allegations of human rights violations involving law enforcement, security forces, intelligence agencies and other state actors. Reports refer to arbitrary arrest and detention, enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, and torture and ill-treatment.

While there is a functioning court system, sources raise concerns about judicial independence, fair trial rights and system effectiveness. Reported issues include political influence over senior judicial appointments and constitutional case management, extensive case backlogs, delays, low conviction rates, corruption, intimidation of judges and witnesses, under-resourced prosecution services and a shortage of judges.

Pakistan has federal and provincial witness protection laws and some legal aid provision. However, sources report limited implementation, ineffective protection, inadequate victim support, underfunded services, poor institutional capacity and witness intimidation. There are also several official oversight and complaint mechanisms, including human rights institutions, police complaint systems and the federal Ombudsman, but sources describe some bodies as dormant, limited or generally ineffective outside non-political or service-delivery matters.

Each case must be considered on its individual facts. The onus is on the person to demonstrate they face persecution or serious harm.

This CPIN does not specifically cover the self-administrative territory of Pakistan-administered Kashmir.

[Back to Contents](#)

Contents

Executive summary	2
Assessment	5
About the assessment	5
1. Material facts, credibility and other checks	5
2. Exclusion	5
3. Protection	6
Country information	10
About the country information	10
4. Legal Framework	10
4.1 Constitution	10
4.2 Penal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure	10
4.3 National human rights legislation	11
4.4 International covenants	11
5. Organisations responsible for law enforcement	11
5.1 Police service and paramilitary groups	11
5.2 Resources and accessibility	12
6. Capabilities of law enforcement agencies	15
6.1 First Information Reports (FIRs)	15
6.2 Crime rates	15
6.3 Efficacy	16
6.4 Corruption	18
7. Human rights violations	19
7.1 Arbitrary arrest and detention	19
7.2 Enforced disappearances	20
7.3 Extrajudicial killings	23
7.4 Torture and ill-treatment	25
8. Rule of law and the judiciary	27
8.1 Organisation	27
8.2 Independence and fair trial	28
8.3 Effectiveness and integrity	28
8.4 Double jeopardy	30
8.5 Death penalty	31
8.6 Informal justice systems and alternative dispute resolution	31
8.7 Witness protection and victim support	33
8.8 Legal aid	35
9. Oversight and complaint mechanisms	36
Annex A	38

Correspondence from British High Commission dated 12 April 2019, updated 3 September 2026	38
Terms of Reference	40
Bibliography	41
Sources cited	41
Sources consulted but not cited	45
Version control and feedback	46
Feedback to the Home Office	46
Independent Advisory Group on Country Information	46

Assessment

Section updated: 15 September 2026

About the assessment

This section considers relevant evidence – including [country information](#), refugee and human rights law and policy, and case law – to assess whether, **in general**:

- the state (or quasi state bodies) can provide effective protection
- if refused, a claim is likely or not to be certified as ‘clearly unfounded’ under [section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002](#).

Each case must be considered on its individual facts.

For details on how CPIT makes its assessments, gathers and presents country information, its research methodology and disclaimers and explainers on coverage, source selection, maps, translations and the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in developing CPIT products, see [About country policy and information notes](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

1. Material facts, credibility and other checks

1.1.1 Decision makers must:

- assess credibility (see the Asylum Instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#)).
- check if there has been a previous application for a UK visa or another form of leave. Asylum applications matched to visas should be investigated prior to the asylum interview (see the Asylum Instruction on [Visa Matches, Asylum Claims from UK Visa Applicants](#)).
- consider making an international biometric data-sharing check, when one has not already been undertaken (see [Biometric data-sharing process \(Migration 5 biometric data-sharing process\)](#)).
- consider language analysis testing, where available, in cases where there are doubts surrounding a person’s claimed place of origin (see the Asylum Instruction on [Language Analysis](#)).

Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – Start of section

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Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – End of section

[Back to Contents](#)

2. Exclusion

- ### 2.1.1
- Decision makers must consider whether there are serious reasons to apply one (or more) of the exclusion clauses. Each case must be considered on its

individual facts.

- 2.1.2 If the person is excluded from the Refugee Convention, they will also be excluded from a grant of humanitarian protection, which has a wider range of exclusions than refugee status.
- 2.1.3 For guidance on exclusion and restricted leave, see the Asylum Instruction on [Exclusion under Articles 1F and 33\(2\) of the Refugee Convention](#), [Humanitarian Protection](#) and the instruction on [Restricted Leave](#).

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[Back to Contents](#)

3. Protection

- 3.1.1 Where the person has a well-founded fear of persecution or serious harm from the state, they are unlikely to be able to obtain protection.
- 3.1.2 In general, a person who has a well-founded fear of persecution or serious harm from a rogue state actor and/or non-state actor is likely to be able to obtain protection from the state. The onus is on the person to demonstrate otherwise.
- 3.1.3 In the country guidance case of [AH \(Sufficiency of Protection, Sunni Extremists\) Pakistan CG \[2002\] UKIAT 05862](#), heard on 4 October 2002 and promulgated on 31 December 2002, the Upper Tribunal (UT) held that the state of Pakistan ‘... has a functioning system of criminal law and criminal acts are prosecuted albeit that there may be difficulties which will arise in individual cases in successfully doing so. The degree of protection which the state is required to provide to its subjects is clearly illustrated in the approach of the European Court in Strasbourg to the need to have regard to the difficulties involved in policing modern societies and resources’ (para 17).
- 3.1.4 In the reported case of [AW \(sufficiency of protection\) Pakistan \[2011\] UKUT 31 \(IAC\)](#), heard on 11 November 2010 and promulgated on 26 January 2011, the UT held that ‘The starting point in assessing whether the appellant would be given sufficient protection if returned to Pakistan is to consider whether there is systemic insufficiency of state protection’ (paragraph 34). Having regard to the case of [AH](#) and to the 2010 case of [KA and Others \(Domestic Violence – Risk on Return\)](#), the UT held that ‘... it cannot be said that such a general insufficiency of state protection has been established’ (paragraph 34).
- 3.1.5 In [AW](#), the UT held that ‘Notwithstanding systemic sufficiency of state protection, a claimant may still have a well founded fear of persecution if authorities know or ought to know of circumstances particular to his/her case giving rise to the fear, but are unlikely to provide the additional protection the

particular circumstances reasonably require...' (Headnote 2).

- 3.1.6 The UT in [AW](#) also held that 'In considering whether an appellant's particular circumstances give rise to a need for additional protection, particular account must be taken of past persecution (if any) so as to ensure the question posed is whether there are good reasons to consider that such persecution (and past lack of sufficient protection) will not be repeated' (Headnote 3).
- 3.1.7 The country evidence available since [AW](#) was heard indicates that state protection remains generally available. Pakistan takes reasonable steps to prevent criminal acts by operating an effective legal system for the detection, prosecution and punishment of acts that could amount to persecution, and a person is generally able to access protection. A person's reluctance to seek protection does not necessarily mean that it is not available.
- 3.1.8 Corruption, sympathy or weakness of some individuals in the system of justice does not mean that the state is unwilling to afford protection, and there may be various sound reasons why criminals may not be brought to justice.
- 3.1.9 For information on protection of minority groups, including ethnic and religious minorities, LGBT+ persons and women, see the relevant [Pakistan Country Policy and Information Note](#).
- 3.1.10 Pakistan is party to most major international instruments on human rights, and its constitution and legislature protect civil, political and economic rights. Domestic laws provide for the punishment of criminal acts (see [Legal framework](#)).
- 3.1.11 Pakistan's federal and provincial police services have primary responsibility for law enforcement, supported by agencies such as the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA), Counter Terrorism Departments, and paramilitary forces. Police are organised at federal, provincial and territorial levels, while paramilitary forces, including the Pakistan Rangers, Frontier Corps and Federal Constabulary, support border security, internal law-and-order operations and action against criminal gangs and smugglers (see [Police service and paramilitary groups](#)).
- 3.1.12 Police resources and accessibility vary by province. Estimated national police strength is about 624,390 against a population of around 241.5 million, equating to approximately 2.6 police officers per 1,000 people. Punjab province has the largest police force (and the highest overall population), with over 200,000 personnel and 720 police stations, while Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Balochistan and Islamabad have smaller forces, although Balochistan's police strength increased after the integration of Levies (paramilitary force) personnel. Women's access to police services has been supported through women's helpdesks, complaint cells, helplines, safe houses and women's police stations in some provinces. Islamabad launched a women-only digital police station in July 2025. However, the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) noted that, despite a 10% recruitment quota, women comprised only 3% of Pakistan's police force in 2023, with institutional and societal barriers affecting recruitment and progression (see [Resources and accessibility](#)).
- 3.1.13 Police effectiveness in Pakistan is limited by resource and capacity constraints, including poor training, low salaries and lack of equipment,

inconsistent police response and political influence. The Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) noted regional variation, with resource constraints affecting Islamabad, Karachi, Punjab and northwest Pakistan, although the Sindh Rangers had reduced the capacity of militant groups in the province and Punjab's Safe City project expanded CCTV surveillance in Lahore. Pakistan has developed significant surveillance capabilities, including online and telecommunications monitoring, but these often lack safeguards and are reportedly used against activists, journalists and political opponents critical of state institutions, though information on the scale and extent of this monitoring is limited. DFAT noted there is no nationwide coordination, common training standard or centralised criminal records database (see [Efficacy](#)).

- 3.1.14 Corruption in policing is reported as widespread. A 2025 survey by Transparency International Pakistan found that the police were perceived as the most corrupt public institution. Sources reported bribery, bias, political influence and poor responsiveness in police processes including First Information Report (FIR) registration, investigations and arrests (see [Corruption](#)).
- 3.1.15 There have been allegations of human rights violations involving law enforcement, security forces, intelligence agencies and other state actors. Pakistani law prohibits arbitrary arrest and detention but reports in 2025 referred to arbitrary arrests and detention of Afghan refugees (regardless of their documentation status), journalists, activists and minorities, although information on the scale and extent was limited (see [Arbitrary arrest and detention](#)).
- 3.1.16 Enforced disappearances were reported, particularly affecting Baloch, Pashtun and Sindhi activists and nationalists, human rights defenders and people working on missing-person cases. The Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances (COIED) registered nearly 10,600 cases between 2006 and August 2025, with over 1,800 unresolved as of August 2025, while a civil society organisation recorded 3,140 cases between 2006 and 2025. New cases were recorded in 2025, although numbers varied by source. Pakistan has not ratified the Convention on Enforced Disappearance and lacks specific domestic legislation criminalising the practice. The UN Committee Against Torture (UNCAT) raised concerns about impunity and the effectiveness of the COIED (see [Enforced disappearances](#)).
- 3.1.17 Extrajudicial killings, including alleged 'kill and dump' cases in Balochistan, police 'encounters' in Punjab and killings affecting Pashtuns and Sindhi nationalists, continued to be reported. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) recorded 1,696 suspect deaths in police encounters in 2025, with most fatalities attributed to the Crime Control Department (CCD) in Punjab (see [Extrajudicial killings](#)).
- 3.1.18 Pakistan criminalised torture under the Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention and Punishment) Act 2022, but torture and ill-treatment were described by civil society and UNCAT as widespread, particularly during arrest, interrogation and detention. Although sources noted gaps in the law and low prosecutions, the Government of Pakistan reported securing 57 convictions of public officials involved in custodial torture, death or rape between 2019 and 2025 (see [Torture and ill-treatment](#)).
- 3.1.19 There is a functioning judicial system, although sources reported concerns

about judicial independence, fair trial rights and system effectiveness. The 26th and 27th Constitutional Amendments changed senior judicial appointments, bench formation and constitutional case management, increasing political influence over the judiciary. The justice system is affected by extensive case backlogs (over 2.4 million nationwide as of September 2025), delays, low conviction rates, corruption, intimidation of judges and witnesses, under-resourced prosecution services and a shortage of judges. Pakistan ranked 130 of 143 countries in the 2025 World Justice Project (WJP) Rule of Law Index, with low scores for civil and criminal justice. Successful prosecutions for politically motivated or sectarian violence are reported to be rare, partly due to weak investigations, limited forensic capability, poor prosecution and judicial capacity, and threats against criminal justice actors (see [Independence and fair trial](#) and [Effectiveness and integrity](#)).

- 3.1.20 Pakistan has federal and provincial witness protection laws, including legislation in all 4 provinces and the federal Witness Protection, Security and Benefit Act 2017. Sources reported limited implementation, funding, victim support and effectiveness, and witness intimidation, particularly in trafficking and sexual violence cases. However, Balochistan approved amendments in 2026 to allow faceless courts and confidential testimony (see [Witness protection and victim support](#)).
- 3.1.21 Legal aid is available through the Legal Aid and Justice Authority and Sindh Legal Advisory Call Centre, with some state-funded initiatives for litigants without the means to pay. Equality Now reported that legal aid provisions under the Anti-Rape Act 2021 remain largely unimplemented (see [Legal aid](#)).
- 3.1.22 There are several official oversight and complaint mechanisms, including the Ministry of Human Rights helpline, national and provincial human rights institutions, parliamentary committees, the Supreme Court human rights cell, police internal accountability bodies, complaint cells, helplines, digital feedback systems and the federal Ombudsman. The National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) can investigate human rights complaints and review legislation, while provincial commissions mainly make recommendations. However, DFAT reported that some commissions are dormant or do not meet international standards, and sources stated that federal and provincial bodies are generally less effective in handling complaints that are politically sensitive or go beyond service-delivery matters (see [Oversight and complaint mechanisms](#)).
- 3.1.23 For further guidance on assessing state protection, see the Asylum Instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

Country information

About the country information

The COI provides the basis for the assessment and the executive summary. Decision makers must use relevant COI as the evidential basis for decisions.

The cut-off date for COI included in this note is **31 July 2026**.

For details on how CPIT gathers and presents country information, its research methodology and disclaimers and explainers on coverage, source selection, maps, translations and the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in developing CPIT products, see [About country policy and information notes](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

4. Legal Framework

4.1 Constitution

- 4.1.1 Pakistan's constitution provides for state protection, subject to law, of people's lives (Article 9), property (Articles 23 to 24), places of worship and religious beliefs (subject to law, order and morality – Article 20), and equal protection of law for each person (Article 25, including non-discrimination as per Articles 26 to 27). The constitution also provides for fair trial and due process (Article 10A and, with reference to protection against retrospective punishment, double punishment, and self-incrimination, Articles 12 to 13)¹.
- 4.1.2 The constitution prohibits torture during the extraction of evidence (Article 14), and provides for freedom of movement, assembly, and association (Articles 15 to 17, subject to law and other limitations tied to public order/national security, or, in the case of association, morality), and freedom of speech (Article 19, subject to limitations associated with incitement/public order/national security/defence, morality, contempt of court, and/or 'the glory of Islam')².

[Back to Contents](#)

4.2 Penal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure

- 4.2.1 [The Pakistan Penal Code](#) (PPC) of 1860 is the main criminal code of Pakistan and provides for the punishment of offences prescribed in the PPC³. It has been amended several times since its inception^{4 5}.
- 4.2.2 The [Code of Criminal Procedure](#) (CrCP), 1898, is the main legislation on criminal procedures in Pakistan. It sets out the processes for criminal investigations, arrests, collection of evidence, determination of guilt or innocence and the conduct of proceedings⁶. It has been amended several times⁷.
- 4.2.3 In January 2025, news agency Associated Press of Pakistan (APP)⁸

¹ Pakistan Code, [The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan](#) (Chapter 1), 1973

² Pakistan Code, [The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan](#) (Chapter 1), 1973

³ Pakistan Code, [Pakistan Penal Code](#), 1860

⁴ Senate of Pakistan, [Acts of Parliament](#) (search 'Penal Code' and 'Criminal Laws'), various dates

⁵ NA of Pakistan, [Acts of Parliament](#) (search 'Penal Code' and 'Criminal Laws'), various dates

⁶ Pakistan Code, [Code of Criminal Procedure](#), 1898

⁷ Senate of Pakistan, [Acts of Parliament](#) (search 'Code of Criminal Procedure'), various dates

⁸ APP, [About Us](#), no date

reported that the National Assembly introduced the Criminal Procedure Code (Amendment) Bill 2025, with approximately 108 proposed amendments intended to improve efficiency and transparency in the criminal justice system⁹.

[Back to Contents](#)

4.3 National human rights legislation

- 4.3.1 The National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) provided a list of Pakistan's federal and provincial '[pro-women laws](#)', although the list was broader than women's rights and included legislation relevant to children, disabled people, trans people, older people, and minorities¹⁰.
- 4.3.2 The Aurat Foundation, a women's rights organisation¹¹, also listed some of the main federal and provincial legislation, constitutional amendments and court judgements relating to human rights since 2002¹².

[Back to Contents](#)

4.4 International covenants

- 4.4.1 There are 9 core international human rights instruments¹³, of which Pakistan is a state party to 7¹⁴:

International human rights instrument	Ratification/ Accession
International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD)	1966
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)	2010
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR)	2008
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)	1996
Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)	2010
Convention on the Rights of the Child	1990
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)	2011

[Back to Contents](#)

5. Organisations responsible for law enforcement

5.1 Police service and paramilitary groups

- 5.1.1 The April 2025 Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) COI report on Pakistan, based on a range of sources, noted that, 'Federal and provincial police services have primary responsibility for

⁹ APP, [Criminal Procedure Code \(Amendment\) Bill 2025 introduced in NA](#), 22 January 2025

¹⁰ NCSW, [List of Federal and Provincial Pro-Women Laws](#), no date

¹¹ Aurat Foundation, [About AF](#), no date

¹² Aurat Foundation, [Legislation and Justice](#), no date

¹³ OHCHR, [The Core International Human Rights Instruments and their monitoring bodies](#), no date

¹⁴ OHCHR, [Status of ratification interactive dashboard](#) (Pakistan), no date

law enforcement, supported by other law enforcement agencies, including the FIA [Federal Investigation Agency] and National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA). Provincial and autonomous regional authorities are directly responsible for law and order, with the federal government having jurisdiction over police in Islamabad.’¹⁵

- 5.1.2 The European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA), which aims to ‘Support the national authorities of EU countries to implement the Common European Asylum System by providing operational and technical assistance’¹⁶, noted in their country report on Pakistan (EUAA Pakistan Country Focus), dated May 2026, compiled using multiple sources, that:

‘Police organisations in Pakistan are divided into those operating under federal control and those controlled by the administrations of their respective provinces and territories ... A CTD [Counter Terrorism Department] is found in each of the country’s four provincial police organisations and the Islamabad Capital Territory Police. Efforts were ongoing to also establish CTDs in AJK [Azad Jammu and Kashmir (Pakistan-Administered Kashmir)] and GB [Gilgit Baltistan]. The Frontier Constabulary, a federal paramilitary force mainly recruited from KP [Khyber Pakhtunkhwa] and initially tasked to maintain law and order in border and frontier zones, is now present across multiple areas of the country, with its duties including operations against criminal gangs and smugglers. In mid-2025, the government decided to convert the Frontier Constabulary into a nationwide force named the Federal Constabulary, with recruitment efforts, offices and jurisdiction to be expanded across Pakistan.’¹⁷

- 5.1.3 The April 2025 DFAT report stated that:

‘Several paramilitary forces operate in Pakistan, including the Pakistan Rangers, which mainly operate in Punjab and Sindh provinces. The Rangers are notionally under the authority of the Ministry of the Interior but are headed by an army general and are, in practice, under military control. The Rangers undertake border security operations along the Indian border, as well as internal law-and-order operations. The Frontier Corps perform a similar role to the Rangers in western border regions, including in Balochistan and KP.’¹⁸

- 5.1.4 For more information on the law enforcement agencies, including the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI – Pakistan’s principal intelligence agency), Frontier Corps, Pakistan Rangers and the former traditional paramilitary forces known as Levies and Khasadars, see section 3.1 of the May 2026 [EUAA Pakistan Country Focus](#)¹⁹.

[Back to Contents](#)

5.2 Resources and accessibility

- 5.2.1 The estimated number of police officers, drawn from academic sources dated 2023 and 2025, cited in the May 2026 EUAA Pakistan Country Focus,

¹⁵ DFAT, [Country Information Report Pakistan](#) (paragraph 5.10), 30 April 2025

¹⁶ EUAA, [Overview](#), no date

¹⁷ EUAA, [Pakistan Country Focus](#) (page 41), May 2026

¹⁸ DFAT, [Country Information Report Pakistan](#) (paragraph 5.6), 30 April 2025

¹⁹ EUAA, [Pakistan Country Focus](#) (Section 3.1), May 2026

was about 624,390²⁰. The total population of Pakistan was estimated to be around 241.5 million in 2023²¹ [equating to approximately 2.6 police officers per 1,000 people]. As of 31 March 2026, there were 2.36 officers per 1,000 resident population in England and Wales²².

- 5.2.2 The Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC), ‘a public-private partnership between security professionals from global US organisations and the US Department of State’s Diplomatic Security Service’²³, noted in January 2026 that the Punjab Police was the largest police force in Pakistan, with over 200,000 active members²⁴. In 2023, the population of Punjab was estimated to be around 127.68 million²⁵. A July 2025 report by Dr. Abdul Rauf Iqbal, Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for Strategic Studies, Research and Analysis (ISSRA²⁶) at the National Defence University, Islamabad, noted that ‘Punjab allocates the largest police budget ... and operates 720 police stations covering 53% of Pakistan’s population.’²⁷ Iqbal’s report noted that Punjab has ‘a police-to-population ratio of 1:583.’²⁸
- 5.2.3 In 2023, the total population of Sindh province was estimated to be about 55.69 million²⁹. According to digital news platform, Bol News³⁰, reporting in February 2023, there were 120,000 police officials in Sindh, though the number of personnel posted in police stations was only 36,000. The report noted that over 67% of police officers were posted on security for VIPs³¹. Dr Iqbal of the ISSRA noted that ‘Sindh’s 555 police stations serve 23% of the country’s population. It has the second-highest per capita police spending and a 1:436 police-to-population ratio.’³²
- 5.2.4 A 2023 academic article noted that the police force of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province (KP) numbered 70,000³³. In the same year, the population of KP was estimated to be 40.85 million³⁴. Dr Iqbal reported that ‘Khyber Pakhtunkhwa’s 297 police stations cover 17% of the country’s population. Although the per capita spending is relatively high, the police-to-population ratio is similar to that of Punjab.’³⁵
- 5.2.5 A June 2026 article by Pakistan news channel Hum news³⁶, on the merger of the Balochistan Levies [a provincial paramilitary force³⁷] into the police, stated that 32,942 Levies personnel were integrated into the Balochistan Police. The Inspector General of the Balochistan Police noted that this would increase the overall strength of the police force³⁸, but the article did not

²⁰ EUAA, [Pakistan Country Focus](#) (page 41), May 2026

²¹ PBS, [National Census Report 2023](#) (pages 3, 124), 2024

²² UK Home Office, [Police workforce, England and Wales: 31 March 2026](#), 22 July 2026

²³ OSAC, [About Us](#), no date

²⁴ OSAC, [Pakistan Country Security Report](#), 27 January 2026

²⁵ PBS, [National Census Report 2023](#) (page 124), 2024

²⁶ ISSRA, [Team ISSRA](#), no date

²⁷ Iqbal A R, [Conviction Rate in Pakistan: Challenges and Way Forward](#), 8 July 2025

²⁸ Iqbal A R, [Conviction Rate in Pakistan: Challenges and Way Forward](#), 8 July 2025

²⁹ PBS, [National Census Report 2023](#) (page 124), 2024

³⁰ Bol News, [About Us](#), no date

³¹ Bol News, [Over two-thirds of Sindh police posted on security of VVIPs](#), 24 February 2023

³² Iqbal A R, [Conviction Rate in Pakistan: Challenges and Way Forward](#), 8 July 2025

³³ Ullah W and others, [Reforming Khyber Pakhtunkhwa’s Police and Law ...](#), March 2023

³⁴ PBS, [National Census Report 2023](#) (page 124), 2024

³⁵ Iqbal A R, [Conviction Rate in Pakistan: Challenges and Way Forward](#), 8 July 2025

³⁶ Hum News, [About us](#), no date

³⁷ Arab News, [Balochistan sacks 15 Levies personnel for surrendering ...](#), 11 January 2025

³⁸ HUM News, [Levies force fully merged into Balochistan Police](#), 17 June 2026

provide the resulting total number of police personnel. The estimated population of Balochistan was 14.89 million in 2023³⁹. According to Dr Iqbal, Balochistan's 130 police stations covered 6% of the country's population and the province had a police-to-population ratio of 1:391⁴⁰.

5.2.6 There were 12,625 police personnel⁴¹, and 27 police stations across 5 zones (City, Saddar, Rural, Industrial Area, and Soan), administered by the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police⁴², for an estimated population in 2023 of 2.36 million⁴³. The population of the capital city, Islamabad, was 1.11 million⁴⁴.

5.2.7 The Government of Pakistan (GoP) commented in its second periodic report to the UN Committee against Torture (UNCAT), published 19 December 2022, that:

'Women friendly helpdesks have been established at 98% of all Police Stations across Punjab and there are three women police stations (at Lahore, Rawalpindi, and Faisalabad). All Islamabad police stations have women's helpdesks. Human rights and women rights desks have also been established in police stations in over 15 districts in KP. The KP Integrated Victim Support Network has also been set up to link up a network of relevant services providers (police, hospital, social welfare shelters, etc) which is to be introduced in five districts – Swat, Peshawar, Mardan, Charsadda, Abbottabad. Meanwhile in Sindh and Baluchistan, District Complaint Cells, Women Complaint Cells, Safe Houses, Police Helplines and Police Stations have mechanisms to deal exclusively with women related issues. Sindh also has a helpline (0800-70806) and the Sindh Legal Advisory Call Centre to provide legal advice to women and victims of gender-based violence. Meanwhile, in January 2021, the Baluchistan government launched 'Baluchistan Women Helpline: 1089' for registration of complaints against women harassment at home and work place. The women could register their complaints on the helpline regarding harassment, domestic violence, harassment at work place and property issues.'⁴⁵

5.2.8 In July 2025, Pakistan launched its first women-only digital police station in Islamabad, offering 24/7 support via a dedicated helpline 1815 to address domestic abuse, gender-based violence, and other crimes predominantly affecting women and children. The digital station, staffed by female police officers, allowed complainants to file First Information Reports (FIRs) via video calls and online chat, removing the need to visit a police station^{46 47}.

5.2.9 The April 2025 DFAT report noted, regarding female police officers, that:

'Police forces have a mandatory 10 percent quota for females to ensure all police departments actively recruit women. However, institutional barriers and societal prejudices impact the recruitment and career progression of females in the police force. Recruitment quotas are negated by restrictive

³⁹ PBS, [National Census Report 2023](#) (page 124), 2024

⁴⁰ Iqbal A R, [Conviction Rate in Pakistan: Challenges and Way Forward](#), 8 July 2025

⁴¹ ICT Police, [Our History](#), no date

⁴² ICT Police, [About Us](#), no date

⁴³ PBS, [National Census Report 2023](#) (page 124), 2024

⁴⁴ PBS, [National Census Report 2023](#) (page 109), 2024

⁴⁵ UNCAT, [Second periodic report submitted by Pakistan ...](#) (paragraph 107 (c)), 19 December 2022

⁴⁶ Gulf News, [Helpline 1815: Pakistan launches first women only digital police station](#), 24 July 2025

⁴⁷ WOW360, [Pakistan Launches First Women-Only Digital Police Station with 24/7 ...](#), 25 July 2025

screening processes (including height and physical fitness requirements) and written exams that can act as unofficial barriers to female recruitment. In 2023, women comprised only 3 per cent of Pakistan's police force. The inherent security risks faced by police officers in Pakistan are also a barrier to female employment.⁴⁸

[Back to Contents](#)

6. Capabilities of law enforcement agencies

6.1 First Information Reports (FIRs)

6.1.1 The May 2026 EUAA Pakistan Country Focus report stated:

'Lodging a First Information Report (FIR) has been described as the initial step in the investigation of a possible violation/criminal offence. The CrCP, 1898, stipulates in section 154 that "information relating to the commission of a cognizable offence", when given orally to a police officer, "shall be reduced to writing by him or under his direction, and be read over to the informant". Subsequently, the FIR "shall be signed by the person giving it" and recorded by the police officer. The informant lodging a FIR may be any individual who has knowledge of the commission of the cognizable offence and does not necessarily have to be the victim. In cases where police refuse to register a FIR, victims can, amongst others, take legal action by submitting a written complaint to the Superintendent of Police (SP) or refer to a magistrate to seek directions on registering the FIR. The law further provides for penal and civil remedies for individuals against whom a false FIR has been filed.'⁴⁹

6.1.2 For more information on FIRs, including the requirements and procedures for registering a FIR and obstacles to registration, see the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB) [Response to Information Request](#), covering the period 2012 to December 2025⁵⁰.

6.1.3 For information on obstacles relating to the filing of FIRs, see [Corruption](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

6.2 Crime rates

6.2.1 The April 2025 DFAT report noted that 'Violent crime occurs across Pakistan, including armed robbery, assault, carjacking and kidnapping. Pakistan had a homicide rate of 4.2 murders per 100,000 population in 2022, which was about average for the region of South Asia, and lower than the global average of 6.1 murders per 100,000 population.'⁵¹ The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) cited similar homicide rates in 2023 and 2024 for Pakistan, citing 4.3 murders per 100,000 population⁵².

6.2.2 The Global Organized Crime Index is a project of the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC) that assesses the level of criminality and resilience to organised crime in 193 countries⁵³. Its 2025 iteration, covering 2024, scored Pakistan 6.32 out of 10 (with a higher score indicating higher levels of criminality), and ranked it 45th out of 193 countries when assessing overall organised crime levels (with first indicating the

⁴⁸ DFAT, [Country Information Report Pakistan](#) (paragraph 5.14), 30 April 2025

⁴⁹ EUAA, [Pakistan Country Focus](#) (page 118), May 2026

⁵⁰ IRB, [Pakistan: First Information Reports \(FIRs\), including content, appearance ...](#), 8 January 2026

⁵¹ DFAT, [Country Information Report Pakistan](#) (paragraph 2.125), 30 April 2025

⁵² UNODC, [Data Portal: Intentional homicide](#) (Pakistan, Rate per 100,000), no date

⁵³ GI-TOC, Global Organized Crime Index, [About the Index](#), no date

highest level of criminality)^{54 55}.

6.2.3 The April 2025 DFAT report stated that:

‘In-country sources told DFAT the rate of violent and organised crime was lower than it had been in years, although crime rates were increasing in Lahore and Karachi due to rising unemployment and the poor state of the economy. As at the time of writing, Islamabad had a lower crime rate than other major cities due to its large security presence, high socio-economic status and relatively modest population size. In-country sources told DFAT the crime rate was increasing in Balochistan, but had not received much domestic media attention because of the media blackout in the province.’⁵⁶

[Back to Contents](#)

6.3 Efficacy

6.3.1 The April 2025 DFAT report noted that:

‘Police capacity and effectiveness in Pakistan are limited by a lack of resources, poor training, cultural attitudes ... and under-resourcing, as well as competing pressures from superiors, political actors, security forces and the judiciary. Provincial police forces operate independently. There is no nationwide coordination or training standards. There are no centralised or national law enforcement databases or criminal records, which makes it hard to track or locate offenders.’⁵⁷

6.3.2 The same report added:

‘Despite the release of the Revised National Action Plan for Countering Terrorism and Extremism in 2021 and increased measures introduced to curb violence across the country, successful prosecution for politically motivated or sectarian violence was rare. Local media reports this was due primarily to ineffective police investigations, a lack of forensic capabilities and prosecution and judicial legal understanding and threats against judges, lawyers, witnesses and their families.’⁵⁸

6.3.3 Regarding policing in specific cities and regions, the January 2026 OSAC report noted that:

‘While Islamabad has a large police force, resource constraints affect the efficacy of police operations. Low salaries and a lack of equipment are pervasive issues throughout the country. Despite these challenges, authorities devote significant resources to government buildings in Islamabad ...

‘The efficacy of police services in Karachi is diminished by a lack of training and resources; police also receive relatively low salaries. As a result, political influence and bribery may impact the conduct of investigations, arrests, and prosecutions. Nonetheless, the Sindh force of the Pakistan Rangers has significantly diminished the capabilities of militant groups in the province ...

‘The Punjab Police clearly lack funds, resources, and training along with the rest of the Pakistani Police Services ... As of 2026, approximately 8,000

⁵⁴ GI-TOC, [Global Organized Crime Index, Pakistan](#), 2025

⁵⁵ GI-TOC, [Global Organized Crime Index, About the Index](#), no date

⁵⁶ DFAT, [Country Information Report Pakistan](#) (paragraph 2.127), 30 April 2025

⁵⁷ DFAT, [Country Information Report Pakistan](#) (paragraph 5.12), 30 April 2025

⁵⁸ DFAT, [Country Information Report Pakistan](#) (paragraph 5.2), 30 April 2025

surveillance cameras monitor Lahore under the Punjab “Safe City” Project, to include a recent addition of 30 drone cameras, all part of a nationwide project. The system features a 24-hour command center where police officials monitor various areas of the city, looking for criminal or terrorist activities. These cameras also monitor traffic, with violators receiving mailed violations based on license plate numbers ...

‘The security agencies in northwest Pakistan comprise civilian and military forces. Security forces are largely professional but lack equipment, communications technology, and training. In general, police response to criminal incidents is inconsistent ... The local threat environment requires authorities to prioritize counterterrorism, force protection, and infrastructure security over routine law enforcement ... Resource constraints, including low salaries and lack of equipment, affect the efficacy of police operations throughout the province.’⁵⁹

6.3.4 According to the Global Organized Crime Index 2025, ‘Pakistan has made limited progress in crime prevention, with law enforcement agencies continuing to prioritize reactive measures over proactive strategies. Initiatives, such as the establishment of a national referral mechanism and the FIA’s integrated digital data collection system have been introduced.’⁶⁰

6.3.5 The May 2026 EUAA Pakistan Country Focus outlined the authorities’ surveillance capabilities:

‘The Pakistani authorities have built up considerable surveillance capabilities in recent years and their degree of control of online/social media content continued to expand. The state’s surveillance operations have been enhanced by advanced foreign-made surveillance and censorship tools and lacked or often ignored legal safeguards. According to a digital rights activist quoted by the Islamabad-based journalist Osama Ahmad, the lack of comprehensive legislation on data protection and rules regulating surveillance technologies hampers the effectiveness of existing laws protecting citizens’ rights.

‘Against this backdrop, state authorities have repeatedly used the 2016 Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) (amended in 2025), which contains vague wording on “hate speech”, defamation and “cyber terrorism”, as a means of targeting activists, journalists and the political opposition. PECA gave the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) “unchecked” discretionary powers to remove and block online material and obliged telecommunications providers to store traffic data for periods of one year or more upon request by the PTA. According to testimony given by the PTA, telecommunications providers are obliged to ensure that up to 2 % of their customers (i.e., over 4 million users across the country) can be surveilled at any given time through LIMS, a system used by the ISI and the armed forces to track calls, text messages and internet activity. Journalists interviewed by Amnesty International pointed to actual or attempted instances of hacking of their email, WhatsApp and X accounts and interceptions of phone calls and messages.’⁶¹

6.3.6 Arab News reported on 10 September 2025 that over 1,200 cases were

⁵⁹ OSAC, [Pakistan Country Security Report](#), 27 January 2026

⁶⁰ GI-TOC, [Global Organized Crime Index, Pakistan](#) (Civil Society and Social Protection), 2025

⁶¹ EUAA, [Pakistan Country Focus](#) (page 43), May 2026

registered under the PECA by the National Cybercrime Investigation Agency (NCCIA), including against 10 journalists for criticism of state institutions⁶². As of September 2025, at least 9 journalists had been prosecuted under the PECA, according to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and the Ministry of Interior⁶³. In January 2026, 2 prominent human rights lawyers were sentenced to 17 years imprisonment under the PECA for reportedly highlighting human rights violations in Pakistan^{64 65}.

[Back to Contents](#)

6.4 Corruption

- 6.4.1 The National Corruption Perception Survey 2025 (NCPS 2025), conducted by anti-corruption NGO Transparency International Pakistan (TI Pakistan)⁶⁶ through its partner organizations, was carried out from 22 to 29 September 2025 in 20 districts of Pakistan's 4 provinces among nearly 4,000 people. It measured how people perceive and experience corruption in their daily interactions with public institutions and services⁶⁷. The NCPS 2025 found that '... the police is perceived as the most corrupt sector in Pakistan (24%). At provincial level, the highest perception of corruption in police is in Punjab (34%), followed by Balochistan (22%), Sindh (21%) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (20%)'.⁶⁸ The perception that police were the most corrupt sector has persisted almost continually since 2002⁶⁹.
- 6.4.2 According to the January 2026 OSAC report, 'Police corruption is an issue throughout Pakistan, but is significantly less of a problem in Islamabad.'⁷⁰ The April 2025 DFAT report noted that 'Police are poorly paid and individual officers often augment their salaries with bribes.'⁷¹
- 6.4.3 The Freedom House report, Freedom in the World 2025, covering 2024 events, noted that 'Police have long been accused of biased or arbitrary handling of initial criminal complaints.'⁷²
- 6.4.4 An April 2025 report by Pakistani English-language newspaper, Dawn, referred to a 'recent report' by the Punjab Chief Minister's Special Monitoring Unit (SMU), a provincial monitoring body, which indicated that there was 'inefficiency and corruption at the police station level.'⁷³ An analysis by the SMU of 3,216 complaints to police station officials found that 'The primary issues highlighted included delays in service delivery, lack of responsiveness from concerned authorities/police officials, bribery and inadequate resolution of complaints ...'⁷⁴
- 6.4.5 According to the Global Organized Crime Index 2025, 'State-embedded actors in Pakistan exploit their official positions to facilitate organized crime. Corrupt law enforcement officials are involved in human trafficking, drug

⁶² Arab News, [Pakistan agency says over 1,200 cases filed under new ...](#), 10 September 2025

⁶³ RSF, [Pakistan: multiple journalists and a dozen YouTube channels targeted ...](#), 3 October 2025

⁶⁴ Front Line Defenders, [Pakistan: Imaan Zainab Mazari and Hadi Ali Chattha ...](#), 30 January 2026

⁶⁵ CIVICUS, [Pakistan: Lawyers and activists criminalised, protests disrupted and ...](#), 4 May 2026

⁶⁶ TI Pakistan, [Who we are](#), no date

⁶⁷ TI Pakistan, [National Corruption Perception Survey 2025](#) (page 1), December 2025

⁶⁸ TI Pakistan, [National Corruption Perception Survey 2025](#) (page 3), December 2025

⁶⁹ TI Pakistan, [National Corruption Perception Survey 2025](#) (page 6), December 2025

⁷⁰ OSAC, [Pakistan Country Security Report](#), 27 January 2026

⁷¹ DFAT, [Country Information Report Pakistan](#) (paragraph 5.13), 30 April 2025

⁷² Freedom House, [Freedom in the World 2025: Pakistan](#) (F2), 2025

⁷³ Dawn, [Punjab CM's monitoring unit highlights graft, inefficiency in police](#), 28 April 2025

⁷⁴ Dawn, [Punjab CM's monitoring unit highlights graft, inefficiency in police](#), 28 April 2025

smuggling and illicit trade often providing protection to criminal networks in exchange for bribes.’⁷⁵

- 6.4.6 In July 2026, the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), a network of human rights organisations in over 115 countries⁷⁶, and its member organisation in Pakistan, the NGO Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP)⁷⁷, published a report on corruption in the justice system. The report, based on interviews conducted in February and March 2026 with 30 interlocutors including lawyers, former/retired judges, journalists and civil society organisations (CSOs), alongside other supplementary research⁷⁸, found that:

‘Corruption in the form of bribery or extortion starts in the majority of cases at the police level. As one journalist told FIDH and HRCP: “Corruption in police has become a way of life and corruption is not reported as an exclusive story.” Interviewees reported that it was often, if not always, necessary to bribe police officers in order to file First Information Reports (FIRs), which are a necessary and preliminary step to any police investigation. Interviewees also told FIDH and HRCP that in many cases, people were reluctant, if not completely unwilling, to report such cases of corruption, because of the perception that there would be reprisals by the police, which would negatively harm the investigation.’⁷⁹

- 6.4.7 The same report noted:

‘While corruption at the police level is often limited to the payment of bribes to file FIRs or advance the investigation in other ways, such as the fabrication or alteration of evidence, corruption can also be a cause and consequence of much more acute situations. In the context of police encounters and raids, for example, there have been reports of police officers requesting bribes to avoid arrests, manipulating reports and criminal records and seizing private property.’⁸⁰

- 6.4.8 See also [First Information Reports \(FIRs\)](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

7. Human rights violations

7.1 Arbitrary arrest and detention

- 7.1.1 The US State Department (USSD)’s Country Report on Human Rights Practices, published in 2025 and covering events of 2024 (USSD HR Report 2024), noted that ‘The law prohibited arbitrary arrest and detention and provided for the right of any person to challenge the lawfulness of their arrest or detention in court, but authorities did not always observe these requirements. Corruption and impunity compounded this problem.’⁸¹ Comparable assertions were made in earlier USSD HR reports dating back to at least 2014⁸².

⁷⁵ GI-TOC, [Global Organized Crime Index, Pakistan](#) (Criminal Actors), 2025

⁷⁶ FIDH, [Under the Bench: Mapping corruption risks in Pakistan’s justice system](#), July 2026

⁷⁷ FIDH, [Pakistan: New report highlights widespread, systemic corruption...](#), 8 July 2026

⁷⁸ FIDH, [Under the Bench: Mapping corruption risks in Pakistan’s justice system](#) (page 6), July 2026

⁷⁹ FIDH, [Under the Bench: Mapping corruption risks in Pakistan’s justice system](#) (page 13), July 2026

⁸⁰ FIDH, [Under the Bench: Mapping corruption risks in Pakistan’s justice system](#) (page 13), July 2026

⁸¹ USSD, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2024](#) (section 2c), 12 August 2025

⁸² USSD, [Country Reports on Human Rights Practices](#), no date

- 7.1.2 There were reports in 2025 of arbitrary arrests and detention, especially of Afghan refugees, regardless of documentation status⁸³, journalists⁸⁴, activists⁸⁵, and ethnic and religious minorities^{86 87 88}, but CPIT was unable to locate any sources that quantified the number of such cases (see [Bibliography](#)).

[Back to Contents](#)

7.2 Enforced disappearances

- 7.2.1 The UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances provided a [definition](#) of an enforced disappearance⁸⁹. At the time of writing, Pakistan was not a signatory to the International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance⁹⁰. Neither was there any domestic legislation specifically criminalising enforced disappearances^{91 92}.
- 7.2.2 The USSD HR Report 2024 noted that:
- ‘There were widespread reports of enforced disappearances by or on behalf of government authorities across the country. Some officials from the intelligence agencies, police, and security forces reportedly held prisoners incommunicado and refused to disclose their location. In response to widespread protests against enforced disappearances, on August 2 [2024], Federal Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar announced a support package of five million rupees [around £13,395⁹³] per family of missing persons. The package aimed to provide legal and financial assistance to the affected families.’⁹⁴
- 7.2.3 The same report stated that ‘Human rights organizations reported authorities arrested and caused the disappearance of Pashtun, Sindhi, and Baloch human rights activists, as well as Sindhi and Baloch nationalists, without cause or warrant. They also alleged children were detained to pressure their parents ... State agencies routinely harassed activists working on missing-person issues, with some activists becoming victims of enforced disappearances themselves.’⁹⁵
- 7.2.4 The April 2025 DFAT report stated that:
- ‘Enforced disappearances have occurred in Pakistan for decades. Pakistan’s government previously acknowledged and defended the practice of enforced disappearances by authorities as necessary to counter threats to national integrity and security. In-country sources told DFAT enforced disappearances were more common in 2018 under former Prime Minister Imran Khan’s leadership, although the practice has gained increased

⁸³ Amnesty International, [Arrests, detention and harassment of Afghan refugees ...](#), 8 January 2025

⁸⁴ HRW, [World Report 2026](#) (Freedom of expression and attacks ...), 2026

⁸⁵ ANI News, [HRCP raises alarm over arbitrary arrests, enforced ...](#), 30 December 2025

⁸⁶ HRW, [World Report 2026](#) (Freedom of expression and attacks ...), 2026

⁸⁷ OHCHR, [Pakistan: Widespread impunity for violence and discrimination against ...](#), 24 July 2025

⁸⁸ Amnesty International, [The State of the World’s Human Rights: Pakistan 2025](#), 21 April 2026

⁸⁹ OHCHR, [About enforced disappearance](#), no date

⁹⁰ OHCHR, [Status of ratification interactive dashboard](#) (Pakistan), no date

⁹¹ Amnesty International, [Pakistan: Failure to address enforced disappearance ...](#), 30 August 2025

⁹² DHR, [Thematic Report on Enforced Disappearances and Memorialization](#), 5 March 2026

⁹³ Xe.com, [Currency converter](#), 31 July 2026

⁹⁴ USSD, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2024](#) (section 2c), 12 August 2025

⁹⁵ USSD, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2024](#) (section 2c), 12 August 2025

domestic and international attention since 2023.⁹⁶

- 7.2.5 A joint statement by Amnesty International and 7 other rights groups, dated 30 August 2025, said that enforced disappearances continued to be used 'routinely' to target dissidents and human rights defenders in Pakistan⁹⁷. One of the signatories of the statement, civil society organisation the Defence of Human Rights (DHR), documented 3,140 cases of enforced disappearance since 2006, with 1,362 victims remaining forcibly disappeared, and 32 new DHR cases in 2025. The statement also reported Baloch Yakjehti Committee (BYC) documentation of 546 cases between January [2025] and July 2025, Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) documentation of 133 cases, and Voice for Missing Persons of Sindh documentation of 40 cases in the same period.⁹⁸
- 7.2.6 The same statement cited data from the government-formed Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances (COIED), which recorded 10,592 registered cases from 2010 to August 2025 and 1,837 unresolved cases as of August 2025⁹⁹. However, the statement added that the COIED:
- '... has consistently failed to provide meaningful remedy to victims and their families. While the commission is empowered to issue production orders as formal directives instructing relevant state authorities to produce the individual before a court of law, these orders have rarely been enforced. Although over 700 production orders have been issued to date, only a handful have been complied with. In many cases, families have waited for years, some for as long as six years without any action taken to implement these orders. While the commission does not have powers to prosecute, it can direct the relevant authorities to file case against suspects. There have been no prosecutions in any of the cases reported to the commission, underscoring systemic impunity.'¹⁰⁰
- 7.2.7 The UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (WGEID) report, covering the period 11 May 2024 to 2 May 2025, noted that:
- 'The Working Group remains concerned at the continued reports received through its humanitarian procedure of abductions and enforced disappearances of civilians, particularly in Balochistan. Together with other special procedures, the Working Group has raised concerns over alleged human rights violations, including enforced disappearances, in Balochistan, as well as the use of force against peaceful demonstrators and the misuse of certain administrative and legal counter-terrorism measures against Baloch activists and organizations. The Working Group has also transmitted communications concerning the reported targeting of woman human rights defenders representing families of disappeared persons in Balochistan.
- 'While the Working Group continues to appreciate the cooperation of the Government in providing updates on outstanding cases, it regrets that the information received, which is conveyed by the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances, is often insufficient to clarify the cases. The Working Group has expressed concerns about the reported shortcomings in the functioning of the Commission of Inquiry through a general allegation

⁹⁶ DFAT, [Country Information Report Pakistan](#) (paragraph 4.8), 30 April 2025

⁹⁷ Amnesty International, [Pakistan: Failure to address enforced disappearance ...](#), 30 August 2025

⁹⁸ Amnesty International, [Pakistan: Failure to address enforced disappearance ...](#), 30 August 2025

⁹⁹ Amnesty International, [Pakistan: Failure to address enforced disappearance ...](#), 30 August 2025

¹⁰⁰ Amnesty International, [Pakistan: Failure to address enforced disappearance ...](#), 30 August 2025

transmitted to the Government on 6 June 2025. The Working Group hopes that the Government will reply to that and the other general allegations transmitted previously, and reiterates its readiness to continue its positive engagement with the State.¹⁰¹

- 7.2.8 The HRCP noted in their ‘State of Human Rights in 2025’ report that the COIED ‘... received 273 new cases, with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa reporting the highest number. The COIED traced 32 missing persons to prisons and 13 to internment centres. Additionally, 230 individuals returned home, and 16 dead bodies were found. However, HRCP maintains that these figures are vastly underreported and has continued to criticise the COIED for failing to hold perpetrators accountable.’¹⁰²
- 7.2.9 In August 2025, after a fact-finding mission to Balochistan, the HRCP reported a pattern of ‘... continued enforced disappearances, shrinking civic space, erosion of provincial autonomy and unchecked impunity ...’¹⁰³. The HRCP stated that state representatives acknowledged the existence of enforced disappearances but framed them within a security narrative. HRCP also called for independent investigations into alleged reprisals against those who speak out about enforced disappearances¹⁰⁴.
- 7.2.10 Paank, the human rights department of the [Baloch National Movement \(BNM\)](#), a political organisation dedicated to the rights and freedoms of the Baloch people in Balochistan¹⁰⁵, verified and documented 1,355 enforced disappearances in Balochistan in 2025, 785 of which occurred in the first 6 months of the year, while 407 were released from detention during the same period¹⁰⁶. The report also noted that 225 bodies of previously disappeared people were discovered in 2025, described as a ‘kill and dump’ policy¹⁰⁷.
See also [Extrajudicial killings](#).
- 7.2.11 According to the Paank report:
‘The standard operating procedure for enforced disappearances in 2025 typically involved joint raids conducted by uniformed personnel of the Frontier Corps and plainclothes operatives from the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) or Military Intelligence (MI). These operations are characterized by a total absence of legal safeguards: there are no warrants, no identification of the detaining authority, and no information provided regarding the destination of the suspect. Victims are frequently subjected to public beatings, blindfolded, and forced into unmarked double-cabin vehicles.’¹⁰⁸
- 7.2.12 Paank continued to document enforced disappearances in Balochistan in their [monthly reports](#), as did the Human Rights Council of Balochistan in their [periodical reports](#).
- 7.2.13 The UNCAT noted in their June 2026 concluding observations on Pakistan’s 2nd periodic report:

¹⁰¹ WGEID, [Report of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary ...](#) (page 20), 21 July 2025

¹⁰² HRCP, [State of Human Rights in 2025](#) (page 13), May 2026

¹⁰³ HRCP, [Political dialogue, human rights in Balochistan to restore trust, resolve ...](#), 6 August 2025

¹⁰⁴ HRCP, [Political dialogue, human rights in Balochistan to restore trust, resolve ...](#), 6 August 2025

¹⁰⁵ Paank, [About](#), no date

¹⁰⁶ Paank, [A Year of Repression: Balochistan 2025](#), 4 February 2026

¹⁰⁷ Paank, [A Year of Repression: Balochistan 2025](#), 4 February 2026

¹⁰⁸ Paank, [A Year of Repression: Balochistan 2025](#), 4 February 2026

‘The Committee remains concerned about reports of enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings allegedly perpetrated by members of the military and paramilitary forces, police officers and personnel of intelligence agencies, targeting human rights defenders, lawyers, journalists, civil society activists, public officials, political opponents and members of ethnic and religious minorities, particularly in the Sindh and Balochistan Provinces. It is also concerned about the reported lack of effective investigations and prosecutions of and accountability for those allegedly responsible for extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances, including in connection with the 9 May 2023 protests and the November 2024 crackdown on protesters. It is further concerned about reports that the National Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances is not sufficiently independent and lacks the resources to carry out its mandate, that recently, it “disposed of” more than 9,000 of the over 10,000 cases of alleged enforced disappearance registered between 2010 and August 2025, and that its work to date has not resulted in any criminal convictions in cases of enforced disappearance.’¹⁰⁹

- 7.2.14 In January 2026, Dawn news reported that Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti said, during a cabinet meeting, that, from 1 February 2026, ‘... no enforced disappearance would take place under the authority of the state or the government.’¹¹⁰ The report added that under the Balochistan Prevention of Detention and De-radicalisation Act, 2025, ‘... designated centres have been established where suspects will be investigated under the supervision of authorised police officers, along with counselling aimed at countering extremism and anti-state indoctrination. Families of those under investigation will be informed within 24 hours, allowed visitation and provided medical facilities. No individual will be shifted outside these centres.’¹¹¹

[Back to Contents](#)

7.3 Extrajudicial killings

- 7.3.1 The USSD’s 2023 Country Report on Human Rights practices, published in 2024 and covering 2023 events, stated that:

‘There were numerous reports the government or its agents committed arbitrary or unlawful killings during the year.

‘According to human rights organizations, security forces continued the policy of “kill and dump” in Balochistan, where dissidents were kidnapped, tortured, and killed. There were reports members of marginalized racial and ethnic communities were overrepresented among the victims of some abuses. Security forces reportedly committed extrajudicial killings in connection with conflicts throughout the country. Government entities generally investigated whether security force killings were justifiable and whether to pursue prosecutions via an order either from the inspector general of police or through the NCHR [National Commission for Human Rights].’¹¹²

- 7.3.2 A fact-finding report by HRCP found that Punjab’s Crime Control Department (CCD), a specialist police unit formally established in April 2025 to combat

¹⁰⁹ UNCAT, [Concluding observations on the 2nd periodic report of ...](#) (paragraph 20), 15 June 2026

¹¹⁰ Dawn, [New framework to ‘end enforced disappearances from Feb 1’ ...](#), 21 January 2026

¹¹¹ Dawn, [New framework to ‘end enforced disappearances from Feb 1’ ...](#), 21 January 2026

¹¹² USSD, [Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2023](#) (section 1a), 22 April 2024

serious and organised crime, had adopted a deliberate policy of staged encounters, in many cases resulting in extrajudicial killings of suspected criminals¹¹³. From data obtained from media reports, HRCP documented at least 670 CCD-led encounters between 15 April and 15 December 2025, resulting in 924 suspect deaths and 2 police deaths¹¹⁴. It stated that the casualty imbalance, frequency and similar operational patterns indicated a systemic pattern rather than isolated incidents¹¹⁵.

- 7.3.3 The HRCP described an encounter as ‘... a euphemism for extrajudicial killings, where the deaths of citizens during clashes with the police and other security forces are viewed with suspicion.’¹¹⁶
- 7.3.4 HRCP noted in their State of Human Rights in 2025 report that:
 ‘According to HRCP’s media monitoring, a total of 1,696 suspects were killed in 1,155 police encounters throughout the country. The Crime Control Department in Punjab accounted for most of these fatalities, conducting 707 encounters that resulted in the deaths of 977 suspects out of a tracked total of 1,128 deaths in 826 incidents. Additionally, 289 suspects were killed in 162 police encounters and CTD operations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, while 205 suspects were killed in 137 encounters in Sindh.’¹¹⁷
- 7.3.5 English and Urdu news channel, Dunya News, reported in January 2026 that Punjab Police submitted a report to the Lahore High Court denying allegations of fake encounters by the CCD. The police report reportedly described the allegations as false and stated that CCD operations were conducted according to law. It also reported police claims of reductions in certain crime categories after the CCD was established¹¹⁸.
- 7.3.6 Paank recorded 225 extrajudicial killings in Balochistan in 2025, of individuals who had been forcibly disappeared. Paank described the discovery as the ‘... ongoing and brutal reality of the “kill and dump” policy’, which ‘... involves the execution of detainees in custody, followed by the abandonment of their mutilated remains in desolate areas, often accompanied by labels designating them as “terrorists” or “insurgents” to retroactively justify their deaths.’¹¹⁹
- 7.3.7 Paank continued to document extrajudicial killings in Balochistan in their [monthly reports](#), as did the Human Rights Council of Balochistan in their [periodical reports](#).
- 7.3.8 The May 2026 EUAA Pakistan Country Focus noted ‘Pashtuns have continued to be subjected to enforced disappearance in the country, and human rights organisations documented a significant rise in extrajudicial killings in KP over the past six years, including more than 600 targeted killings by the state and its proxies.’¹²⁰
- 7.3.9 The April 2025 DFAT report noted that ‘In Sindh, in-country sources told DFAT several civilians and Sindhi nationalists had been extrajudicially killed

¹¹³ HRCP, [The CCD’s role in Punjab](#) (pages 1 and 3), February 2026

¹¹⁴ HRCP, [The CCD’s role in Punjab](#) (pages 1 and 3 to 5), February 2026

¹¹⁵ HRCP, [The CCD’s role in Punjab](#) (pages 3 and 10), February 2026

¹¹⁶ HRCP, [State of Human Rights in 2018](#) (pages 66 to 67), March 2019

¹¹⁷ HRCP, [State of Human Rights in 2025](#) (page 13), May 2026

¹¹⁸ Dunya News, [Punjab Police deny allegations of fake encounters by CCD ...](#), 22 January 2026

¹¹⁹ Paank, [A Year of Repression: Balochistan 2025](#), 4 February 2026

¹²⁰ EUAA, [Pakistan Country Focus](#) (page 123), May 2026

for their anti-establishment political views and opposition to the government.’¹²¹ The EUAA also noted that ‘In September 2025, the Unrepresented Nations & Peoples Organization (UNPO) denounced the wide range of human rights abuses faced by Sindhis in Pakistan, including arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, political repression, and religious based targeting, including Hindu Sindhis.’¹²²

[Back to Contents](#)

7.4 Torture and ill-treatment

- 7.4.1 A civil society submission to the UNCAT, dated January 2025, stated that torture by law enforcement in Pakistan was ‘... so common that it is largely an endemic practice, with police officials regularly accused of abusing their powers with impunity, including against vulnerable groups such as women, children and religious/ethnic minorities.’¹²³
- 7.4.2 The World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), a network of 200 member organisations working to end torture and ill-treatment¹²⁴, compiled the Global Torture Index, which assessed the risk of torture and ill-treatment across several countries¹²⁵. Its 2025 iteration classified Pakistan as ‘high risk’ for torture and ill-treatment, based on 2023 and 2024 data. It stated that torture was widespread and systemic, especially within law enforcement and detention facilities, and that police regularly employed torture during arrests and interrogations¹²⁶. The Global Torture Index 2026 noted that torture and ill-treatment continued, and that this was ‘... driven by confession-led investigations, excessive use of force in policing, and the lack of independent oversight.’¹²⁷
- 7.4.3 In December 2025, it was reported that the Sindh High Court’s Constitutional Bench ordered the provincial police chief to close, with immediate effect, ‘all torture cells in police stations working under the garb of “investigation” [cells].’¹²⁸
- 7.4.4 In its reply to the list of issues raised in relation to its second periodic report to the UNCAT, received 26 September 2025, the Government of Pakistan (GoP) stated that:

‘The Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention and Punishment) Act, 2022 criminalizes torture, custodial death and custodial rape by public officials. It bans the use of evidence obtained through torture. These crimes are non-bailable and non-compoundable. Investigations are carried out by the FIA under the oversight of the NCHR. The Act sets strict penalties, including imprisonment and fines payable to victims or their families. It holds officials accountable for committing torture and for failing to prevent it.’¹²⁹
- 7.4.5 The OMCT noted in its 2025 Global Torture Index that the Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention and Punishment) Act, 2022, had ‘... critical

¹²¹ DFAT, [Country Information Report Pakistan](#) (paragraph 4.7), 30 April 2025

¹²² EUAA, [Pakistan Country Focus](#) (page 127), May 2026

¹²³ JPP and The Advocates, [Civil Society Submission in Advance of the ...](#) (page 2), 13 January 2025

¹²⁴ OMCT, [Who we are](#), no date

¹²⁵ OMCT, [Global Torture Index 2025: Pakistan Factsheet](#), 2025

¹²⁶ OMCT, [Global Torture Index 2025: Pakistan Factsheet](#), 2025

¹²⁷ OMCT, [Global Torture Index 2026: Pakistan](#), 2026

¹²⁸ Dawn, [High court orders closure of ‘torture cells’ at all police stations](#), 16 December 2025

¹²⁹ UNCAT, [Replies of Pakistan to the list of issues in relation to its ...](#) (paragraph 1), 15 October 2025

deficiencies, falling short of international standards¹³⁰, and the UNCAT noted in its June 2026 Concluding Observations that the Act omitted severe mental pain and suffering from the definition of torture¹³¹.

- 7.4.6 The GoP stated in its September 2025 reply, regarding mental suffering, that ‘Section 337-L of the PPC provides punishment for causing hurt not specifically categorized elsewhere in the Code to cover instances of severe mental pain and suffering inflicted unlawfully.’¹³² The report added:

‘Courts have consistently interpreted the prohibition of torture broadly, encompassing both physical and psychological harm. Article 14(2) of the Constitution, which expressly prohibits torture for the purpose of extracting evidence, has been read to cover severe mental pain and suffering as well as physical abuse. As a common law country, decisions of the superior judiciary are binding on lower courts, thereby reinforcing the recognition of mental torture as equivalent to physical torture. This approach reflects Pakistan’s commitment to implementing the definition of torture holistically and in line with the Convention against Torture.’¹³³

- 7.4.7 In its June 2026 Concluding Observations, the UNCAT expressed its concern about:

‘Consistent reports indicating that persons in custody are subjected to torture or ill-treatment by law enforcement officers, prison guards, military personnel, paramilitary forces and staff of intelligence agencies in police stations, prisons, national security detention centres and military bases and internment centres, in particular during the arrest, interrogation and investigation phases, often as a method of coercion to extract confessions or to punish or intimidate persons accused of terrorism or real or perceived political opponents and critics of the Government.’¹³⁴

- 7.4.8 According to the GoP, 57 convictions of public officials involved in custodial torture, death or rape were secured between 2019 and 2025¹³⁵. The UNCAT remained concerned at the low number of prosecutions since the adoption of the Torture and Custodial Death Act 2022 and the lack of detailed information about any convictions and penalties¹³⁶.

- 7.4.9 In its June 2026 Concluding Observations, the UNCAT also noted its concern about:

‘... reports according to which human rights defenders, journalists, lawyers, political opponents, civil society activists, protesters and other critics of the Government, as well as their family members, have been subjected to torture and ill-treatment and other forms of retaliation, such as intimidation, threats, harassment, physical attacks, excessive use of force, arbitrary arrest and detention, prosecution on trumped-up and politically motivated charges, including before military courts, enforced disappearance and extrajudicial execution. It is also concerned about the State Party’s inadequate efforts to provide such persons with the protection they need, to conduct prompt, effective and impartial investigations and to punish the perpetrators

¹³⁰ OMCT, [Global Torture Index 2025: Pakistan Factsheet](#), 2025

¹³¹ UNCAT, [Concluding observations on the 2nd periodic report of ...](#) (paragraph 8), 15 June 2026

¹³² UNCAT, [Replies of Pakistan to the list of issues in relation to its ...](#) (paragraph 6), 15 October 2025

¹³³ UNCAT, [Replies of Pakistan to the list of issues in relation to its ...](#) (paragraph 7), 15 October 2025

¹³⁴ UNCAT, [Concluding observations on the 2nd periodic report of ...](#) (paragraph 28a), 15 June 2026

¹³⁵ UNCAT, [Replies of Pakistan to the list of issues in relation to its ...](#) (paragraph 5), 15 October 2025

¹³⁶ UNCAT, [Concluding observations on the 2nd periodic ...](#) (paragraphs 28b, 28g), 15 June 2026

8. Rule of law and the judiciary

8.1 Organisation

8.1.1 The April 2025 DFAT report described the judiciary:

‘The Supreme Court of Pakistan sits at the apex the judicial system, followed by five provincial and regional high courts and numerous district courts. There are a variety of specialist courts, including banking courts, drug courts, GBV [gender-based violence] courts and children’s courts. Judicial proceedings are usually conducted in Urdu, which stenographers transcribe into English. Supreme Court judgements are published in English ...

‘Although technically subordinate to the Supreme Court, the Federal Shariat Court (FSC) is a parallel court responsible for ensuring laws are consistent with Islamic principles. The Council on Islamic Ideology is also influential, with the power to make recommendations for legislative reform.’¹³⁸

8.1.2 The May 2026 EUAA Pakistan Country Focus stated that:

‘... the Federal Constitutional Court, established in 2025, has exclusive jurisdiction to adjudicate constitutional matters as well as inter-provincial disputes and disputes between a province and the federal government. The Supreme Court, until 2025 competent for constitutional matters, is currently the country’s highest appellate court in civil and criminal cases; its jurisdiction has been largely limited to appeal cases that do not touch upon constitutional issues ...

‘The provincial High Courts hear appeals from civil and criminal cases that have been adjudicated by the courts in their respective province. Under the oversight of the provincial High Courts, there are district-level courts handling civil cases (‘District Courts’) and criminal matters (‘Sessions Courts’, adjudicating particularly serious crimes). Cities and towns have magistrates’ courts for criminal cases relating to offences that do not carry the death penalty and thus serve as first-instance courts for all but the most serious criminal cases ...

‘... there are various specialised administrative courts and tribunals at both federal level (handling federal matters) and provincial level. These include Anti-Corruption Courts, Anti-Terrorism Courts (ATCs) and Anti-Narcotics Courts, as well as courts dealing with customs, taxation and matters relating to civil servants.’¹³⁹

8.1.3 The July 2026 FIDH report noted the gender imbalance within the judiciary: ‘As of early 2024, only 40,000 (or 17%) of the 230,879 lawyers enrolled in Provincial Bars were women ... women remain drastically underrepresented in the superior judiciary. Only seven (or 5%) of 126 judges in the upper judiciary (including the Supreme Court, the Federal Shariat Court and the five High Courts) are women.’¹⁴⁰ The same report noted that there were only

¹³⁷ UNCAT, [Concluding observations on the 2nd periodic report of ...](#) (paragraph 32), 15 June 2026

¹³⁸ DFAT, [Country Information Report Pakistan](#) (paragraphs 5.15 to 5.16), 30 April 2025

¹³⁹ EUAA, [Pakistan Country Focus](#) (pages 109 to 110), May 2026

¹⁴⁰ FIDH, [Under the Bench: Mapping corruption risks in Pakistan’s justice system](#) (page 30), July 2026

2 female Supreme Court judges¹⁴¹.

[Back to Contents](#)

8.2 Independence and fair trial

8.2.1 The April 2025 DFAT report noted that

‘In October 2024, Pakistan’s government passed the 26th Constitutional Amendment, changing the process of senior judicial appointments and granting the federal government the power to select the Chief Justice, often the final arbiter in significant cases. The changes also allow parliament to appoint “constitutional” benches to hear certain cases. The International Commission of Jurists stated the 26th Constitutional Amendment was a “blow to judicial independence, the rule of law, and human rights protection”.’¹⁴²

8.2.2 The July 2026 FIDH report noted that:

‘Against a backdrop of longstanding systemic issues, two recent Constitutional amendments have had a significant negative impact on judicial independence and the protection of fair trial rights in Pakistan. In October 2024, the 26th Constitutional Amendment fundamentally changed the composition of the Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP), which appoints judges to the Supreme Court and provincial High Courts, by adding Members of Parliament (MPs) to the JCP. It also empowered the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) to remove judges on grounds of “inefficiency in the performance of duties” as well as for failing to accept a transfer.

‘In November 2025, the 27th Constitutional Amendment created the Federal Constitutional Court (replacing a Constitutional Bench at the Supreme Court created under the 26th Amendment), granting the Prime Minister the authority to nominate its Chief Justice and judges.

‘These developments mark a regressive shift in Pakistan’s legal and constitutional order, by completely stripping the limited independence previously enjoyed by the judiciary. Judicial appointments, bench formation and high-level case management are now subject to political influence in ways that contradict international standards for judicial independence. Moreover, these structural distortions at the top impact the lower judiciary, where judges are influenced by higher courts regarding their own conduct and decision-making, and where the potential to be influenced by external pressures is greater.’¹⁴³

[Back to Contents](#)

8.3 Effectiveness and integrity

8.3.1 The World Justice Project (WJP)’s Rule of Law Index measures the rule of law based on the experiences and perceptions of the general public and in-country legal practitioners and experts worldwide¹⁴⁴. For its 2025 iteration relating to Pakistan, experts were surveyed in 2025 and a nationally representative sample of 1,000 members of the public was surveyed in

¹⁴¹ FIDH, [Under the Bench: Mapping corruption risks in Pakistan’s justice system](#) (page 30), July 2026

¹⁴² DFAT, [Country Information Report Pakistan](#) (paragraph 5.15), 30 April 2025

¹⁴³ FIDH, [Under the Bench: Mapping corruption risks in Pakistan’s justice system](#) (page 8), July 2026

¹⁴⁴ WJP, [Methodology](#), no date

2019¹⁴⁵. Overall, Pakistan ranked 130 out of 143 countries (where position 143 indicates the weakest adherence to the rule of law) and scored 0.37 out of 1, where 1 signifies the strongest adherence to the rule of law and 0 signifies the least¹⁴⁶.

- 8.3.2 The WJP Rule of Law Index also measured the country's civil and criminal justice systems, including perceptions of their effectiveness, accessibility, impartiality and level of corruption. In 2025, WJP ranked Pakistan 129 out of 143 countries with a score of 0.38 for civil justice, and 101 out of 143 countries with a score of 0.35 for criminal justice¹⁴⁷.
- 8.3.3 The July 2026 FIDH report noted that corruption was addressed under Articles 161 to 165 of the PPC, supplemented by the Prevention of Corruption Act (PCA) 1947, which was complemented by provincial-level laws. The National Accountability Ordinance (NAO) 1999 builds upon the PPC and PCA¹⁴⁸. The FIDH report added that 'In practice, the PPC and the PCA are typically used in petty bribery cases and those involving low level officials, whereas the NAO tends to be used in cases of grand corruption and/or cases involving high-level officials or politicians.'¹⁴⁹
- 8.3.4 Various agencies, including the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), FIA, Anti-Corruption Establishments (ACEs) and Member Inspection Teams (MITs), and the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC), were legally mandated to address corruption¹⁵⁰. Despite enacted legislation, agencies and initiatives, the FIDH report stated that corruption was '... widespread and normalised at all levels of the Pakistani judiciary.'¹⁵¹
- 8.3.5 The FIDH report noted that:
'Due process and fair trial rights violations are compounded by the backlog in the Pakistani justice system, which remains immense. In September 2025, the Minister for Law and Justice, Azam Nazeer Tarar, stated that there were 2.4 million cases pending in courts nationwide, including over 300,000 before the High Courts and 1.8 million before the District Courts. Although measures have been put in place to reduce the backlog at the Supreme Court level, there were 56,169 pending cases before the Supreme Court, as of October 2025.'¹⁵²
- 8.3.6 The HRCP State of Human Rights in 2025 report noted that 'According to the Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan, pending cases in the Supreme Court decreased to 33,787 by the end of 2025 – a 40.7 percent reduction from over 57,000 in 2024. Similarly, high court case pendency fell to 212,537 cases – a 39.1 percent decrease from 348,987 in 2024.'¹⁵³ As of June 2025, there was a shortage of nearly 1,200 judges against sanctioned strength¹⁵⁴.
- 8.3.7 As noted in the April 2025 DFAT report:
'The judicial system suffers from a backlog of cases. The timeline between a

¹⁴⁵ WJP, [Methodology](#) (pages 4, 14), no date

¹⁴⁶ WJP, [WJP Rule of Law Index | Pakistan](#) (Overall score), 2025

¹⁴⁷ WJP, [WJP Rule of Law Index | Pakistan](#) (7: Civil justice and 8: Criminal justice), 2025

¹⁴⁸ FIDH, [Under the Bench: Mapping corruption risks in Pakistan's justice system](#) (page 10), July 2026

¹⁴⁹ FIDH, [Under the Bench: Mapping corruption risks in Pakistan's justice system](#) (page 11), July 2026

¹⁵⁰ FIDH, [Under the Bench: Mapping corruption risks in Pakistan's justice ...](#) (pages 11, 12), July 2026

¹⁵¹ FIDH, [Under the Bench: Mapping corruption risks in Pakistan's justice ...](#) (page 13), July 2026

¹⁵² FIDH, [Under the Bench: Mapping corruption risks in Pakistan's justice](#) (page 8), July 2026

¹⁵³ HRCP, [State of Human Rights in 2025](#) (page 12), May 2026

¹⁵⁴ Pakistan Observer, [Alternative dispute resolution in Pakistan](#), 21 May 2026

police FIR being filed at the local level and the case going to court can take approximately two years. Criminal cases sometimes take between five to ten years to reach conclusion. More complex cases can take decades before a sentence is handed down, with the accused confined to pre-trial detention during this time. In-country sources told DFAT conviction rates were very low, around four to five per cent, and as low as two per cent in sexual assault cases. According to in-country sources, media pressure was often required to resolve pending cases in a timely manner. In-country sources reported corruption was common in the judicial system, as was intimidation of judges, particularly in religiously sensitive cases such as those involving blasphemy.¹⁵⁵

- 8.3.8 The May 2026 EUAA Country Focus Pakistan noted regarding the effectiveness and integrity of the judiciary that ‘In broad terms, the court system was “marred” by endemic corruption, intimidation, lack of security, low rates of conviction for serious offences, as well as lengthy trials coupled with significant backlogs of cases. Moreover, the prosecution system was reported to have limited authority and independence, being under-financed, undertrained, and subject to political pressure.’¹⁵⁶
- 8.3.9 The Pakistan NCPS 2025 found that ‘... the Judiciary ranks third nationally in perceived corruption (14%). Provincially, in Sindh and Balochistan, public perception of corruption in judiciary is relatively lower at 12% each, whereas in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa it is (18%) and Punjab (17%).’¹⁵⁷

[Back to Contents](#)

8.4 Double jeopardy

- 8.4.1 The principles of double jeopardy are dealt with under Article 13 of the Constitution¹⁵⁸ and Section 403 of the Code of Criminal Procedure¹⁵⁹.
- 8.4.2 In correspondence with the Country Policy and Information Team, dated April 2019, an advisor on criminal justice at the British High Commission (BHC), Islamabad, indicated, whilst stressing that their research was not exhaustive, that ‘... the double jeopardy principles are upheld where a decision has been reached in a foreign jurisdiction (as long as the court reaching the decision is considered to be one of competent jurisdiction – we have not found an example of a court in Pakistan concluding that a foreign court was not of competent jurisdiction for these purposes).’¹⁶⁰ The adviser from the BHC confirmed via email on 3 September 2026 that the principles on double jeopardy remained unchanged¹⁶¹.
- 8.4.3 When considering whether a UK court is deemed to be one of competent jurisdiction, the BHC advisor gave regard to a case in which the Supreme Court of Pakistan upheld the validity of a sentence passed in a UK Crown Court and reiterated the principle of comity [where one jurisdiction recognises the validity and effect of an order / act of another

¹⁵⁵ DFAT, [Country Information Report Pakistan](#) (paragraph 5.18), 30 April 2025

¹⁵⁶ EUAA, [Pakistan Country Focus](#) (page 117), May 2026

¹⁵⁷ TI Pakistan, [National Corruption Perception Survey 2025](#) (page 3), December 2025

¹⁵⁸ Pakistan Code, [The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan](#) (Chapter 1), 1973

¹⁵⁹ Pakistan Code, [Code of Criminal Procedure](#), 1898

¹⁶⁰ BHC [correspondence](#), 12 April 2019, updated 3 September 2026

¹⁶¹ BHC [correspondence](#), 12 April 2019, updated 3 September 2026

jurisdiction^{162]}¹⁶³.

- 8.4.4 Section 188 of the Code of Criminal Procedure provides for offences committed outside the jurisdiction of Pakistan and provides that the Federal Government must sanction such cases¹⁶⁴. The BHC advisor referred to a UK extradition case, noting that ‘... the Islamabad High Court held that where the Federal Government had not granted permission under s.188 (and no such permission had been granted in that case) there could be no proceedings in Pakistan for an offence committed in the UK.’¹⁶⁵
- 8.4.5 For more detail, see the [BHC correspondence](#).

[Back to Contents](#)

8.5 Death penalty

- 8.5.1 According to UN reporting, as of January 2026, Pakistan retained the death penalty for 29 criminal offences¹⁶⁶. In 2021, the Supreme Court ruled against the execution of prisoners with a mental illness¹⁶⁷.
- 8.5.2 The HRCP State of Human Rights in 2025 report noted that press reports monitored by HRCP ‘... indicated a significant increase in death sentences in 2025, with at least 225 handed down (primarily by the lower courts), compared to 174 in 2024. At least 15 individuals received the death penalty for blasphemy-related offences.’¹⁶⁸ The report added that ‘... no executions were reportedly carried out during the year, with the de facto moratorium in place since 2020 continuing through 2025.’¹⁶⁹
- 8.5.3 According to a report by Justice Project Pakistan (JPP), an NGO representing vulnerable prisoners¹⁷⁰, and NCHR, there were 3,394 prisoners on death row as of July 2025, down from 3,646 in 2024¹⁷¹. Nearly 68% (2,307) of death row prisoners were in Punjab, which has a larger population and higher volume of criminal cases¹⁷². Most death sentences were handed down for murder¹⁷³.

[Back to Contents](#)

8.6 Informal justice systems and alternative dispute resolution

- 8.6.1 A 2025 research report on the informal justice system, written by academics including Muhammad Faiq Butt, a lecturer at the University of Okara in Pakistan¹⁷⁴, noted that:
- ‘... Informal justice in Pakistan is typified by various forms of community-based dispute resolution that are outside the formal legal system, mostly addressing civil litigation and minor crimes. These are the jirgas in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan and the panchayats in Punjab and Sindh as

¹⁶² LexisNexis, [Glossary](#), no date

¹⁶³ BHC [correspondence](#), 12 April 2019, updated 3 September 2026

¹⁶⁴ Pakistan Code, [Code of Criminal Procedure](#), 1898

¹⁶⁵ BHC [correspondence](#), 12 April 2019, updated 3 September 2026

¹⁶⁶ OHCHR, [Alarming trends in executions in 2025 raise serious human rights ...](#), 19 January 2026

¹⁶⁷ Amnesty International, [Pakistan: Supreme Court judgement bans executions ...](#), 10 February 2021

¹⁶⁸ HRCP, [State of Human Rights in 2025](#) (page 12), May 2026

¹⁶⁹ HRCP, [State of Human Rights in 2025](#) (page 12), May 2026

¹⁷⁰ JPP, [About](#), no date

¹⁷¹ JPP, [The Death Penalty in Pakistan 2025](#) (pages 6, 17), 10 October 2025

¹⁷² JPP, [The Death Penalty in Pakistan 2025](#) (page 20), 10 October 2025

¹⁷³ JPP, [The Death Penalty in Pakistan 2025](#) (page 6, 20), 10 October 2025

¹⁷⁴ Butt, M.F and others, [Parallel Paths to Justice: Evaluating the ...](#) (page 116), 2025

well as local councils or elders' forums in Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu & Kashmir. Even though these forums differ regionally, they are similar in terms of construction, processes, and normative trappings.¹⁷⁵

8.6.2 The May 2026 EUAA Pakistan Country Focus reported that, 'Community-based forms of dispute resolution such as jirgas and panchayats are frequently sought by residents of rural and peri-urban areas as an alternative to the formal justice system. While controversial due to their disregard of constitutional provisions and patriarchal structures, they are valued for their accessibility and the swiftness and cultural acceptability of their decisions in disputes linked to family, honour, and land.'¹⁷⁶

8.6.3 The 2025 research report by Butt added that:

'One of the most contentious aspects of Pakistan's informal justice system is its treatment of gender and human rights. While jirgas and panchayats are often praised for resolving disputes efficiently, they have repeatedly been condemned for perpetuating patriarchal norms, excluding women from decision-making, and issuing rulings that violate national and international human rights standards ...

'Women are almost universally excluded from participation in informal justice forums, either as adjudicators or as active parties. In most jirgas and panchayats, only male elders deliberate and decide cases, regardless of whether the dispute involves female complainants. This structural exclusion is rooted in conservative interpretations of shari'ah, tribal codes, and customary practices that conflate justice with patriarchal authority. As a result, decisions involving women often reflect regressive gender norms, such as the prioritization of family honor over individual rights, or the use of women as instruments of reconciliation.'¹⁷⁷

8.6.4 International human rights group, Equality Now¹⁷⁸, reported in March 2026 that:

'In 2019, the Supreme Court of Pakistan declared the assumption of judicial functions by jirga and panchayats to settle criminal or civil disputes as amounting to a violation of the constitutional guarantees of due process of law and of Pakistan's international obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and CEDAW.

'Following the Supreme Court's decision in 2019, reports on panchayat/jirga-directed compromises in rape cases are rare. However, given the general underreporting in sexual violence cases, the possibility of such occurrences cannot entirely be ruled out.'¹⁷⁹

8.6.5 For more information on women in the informal justice system, see the [Country Policy and Information Note on Pakistan: Women fearing gender-based violence](#).

8.6.6 As noted in the 2026 EUAA Pakistan Country Focus:

'While jirgas in the former tribal districts were officially abolished in 2018 together with the Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR) that regulated them, they

¹⁷⁵ Butt, M.F and others, [Parallel Paths to Justice: Evaluating the ...](#) (page 119), 2025

¹⁷⁶ EUAA, [Pakistan Country Focus](#) (page 110), May 2026

¹⁷⁷ Butt, M.F and others, [Parallel Paths to Justice: Evaluating the ...](#) (pages 121 to 122), 2025

¹⁷⁸ Equality Now, [What we do](#), no date

¹⁷⁹ Equality Now, [Legal response to sexual violence in Pakistan ...](#) (page 41), March 2026

continue to operate in some of these areas where formal courts have difficulties exercising their authority. To overcome the respective limitations of formal and informal justice systems, the State has sought to formalise community dispute resolution through government-led Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) initiatives, but their implementation has been reported to be slow.¹⁸⁰

- 8.6.7 Online newspaper The Pakistan Observer reported on 11 May 2026 that Supreme Court Justice, Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb, said mediation could help reduce the backlog of court cases and that a court-annexed mediation centre was being established at the Supreme Court with UN Development Programme (UNDP) support. The article stated that judges and court officials were being trained as mediators and that parties unable to afford mediation services would be referred to the Supreme Court mediation centre for free dispute resolution. It also reported that the law ministry had prepared a draft bill on mandatory mediation¹⁸¹.
- 8.6.8 In June 2026, Dunya News reported that the Research Society of International Law (RSIL) and the Legal Aid Society (LAS) launched a reform package proposing legal and institutional reforms to strengthen implementation of the Alternative Dispute Resolution Act 2017. The report stated that Supreme Court Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb called for a “mediation before litigation” approach, while the Minister of State for Law and Justice supported the concept and referred to the more than 2.26 million pending cases¹⁸².

[Back to Contents](#)

8.7 Witness protection and victim support

- 8.7.1 All 4 provinces of Pakistan have dedicated witness protection legislation, enacted between 2013 and 2021, in addition to the federal Witness Protection, Security and Benefit Act 2017:
- Sindh Witness Protection Act, 2013¹⁸³
 - Balochistan Witness Protection Act, 2016¹⁸⁴
 - Punjab Witness Protection Act, 2018¹⁸⁵
 - Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Witness Protection Act, 2021¹⁸⁶
 - Witness Protection, Security and Benefit Act, 2017¹⁸⁷
- 8.7.2 In January 2026, the provincial government of Balochistan approved the Balochistan Witness Protection (Amendment) Bill, 2025¹⁸⁸. Dawn news reported that ‘Under the new reforms, witnesses will testify through faceless courts, with their identities kept fully confidential, a measure expected to significantly improve convictions.’¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁰ EUAA, [Pakistan Country Focus](#) (page 110), May 2026

¹⁸¹ Pakistan Observer, [Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb calls for stronger ...](#), 11 May 2026

¹⁸² Dunya News, [Govt, judiciary back mediation reforms to tackle case backlog](#), 9 June 2026

¹⁸³ PAS, [Sindh Witness Protection Act, 2013](#), 30 October 2013

¹⁸⁴ Government of Balochistan, [Balochistan Witness Protection Act, 2016](#), 29 March 2016

¹⁸⁵ ADB, [Punjab Witness Protection Act, 2018](#), 21 May 2018

¹⁸⁶ PAKP, [The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Witness Protection Act, 2021](#), 3 September 2021

¹⁸⁷ Pakistan Code, [Witness Protection, Security and Benefit Act, 2017](#), 2 June 2017

¹⁸⁸ Dawn, [New framework to ‘end enforced disappearances from Feb 1’ ...](#), 21 January 2026

¹⁸⁹ Dawn, [New framework to ‘end enforced disappearances from Feb 1’ ...](#), 21 January 2026

8.7.3 The Global Organized Crime Index 2025 noted that:

‘Victim support services in Pakistan are inadequate, particularly for people who use drugs and survivors of human trafficking. Shelters for trafficking victims are underfunded, and witness protection programmes remain largely ineffective due to security concerns. Victims often refuse to testify against traffickers for fear of retaliation. The limited availability of protection services leaves many at risk of re-victimization, and, in some cases, drives them back into their exploitative situations.’¹⁹⁰

8.7.4 An academic article on victim-centred justice, published in 2026 and written by 2 academics from universities in Pakistan, and the deputy director of Pakistan’s water and sanitation agency and a prosecutor based in Punjab¹⁹¹, noted that:

‘One of the most important obstacles to the implementation of the victim-centered justice in Pakistan is its institutional deficiencies. The police agencies, judicial systems, prosecution and correction agencies do not have special training on procedures sensitive to victims. To illustrate, police officers simply do not offer the victims the necessary help at the reporting stage, which leads to delays, evidence mishandling, and even intimidation of complainants ... In the same manner, the judiciary is congested and delays in trials are normal thus demotivating the victims to seek the services of the law. The absence of proper witness protection programs and victim assistance services makes the situation worse, as now the victims are vulnerable to threats and social pressures of the perpetrators or their families.’¹⁹²

8.7.5 LexForm, a cross-border law firm operating in Pakistan, the UK, Poland and the US¹⁹³, published a blog on the gaps in witness protection law in Pakistan. Referring to the Witness Protection, Security and Benefit Act, 2017, which applies to the Islamabad Capital Territory, and noting similar laws were enacted in some provinces, the blog noted that: ‘On paper, the [legal] framework is reasonable. In practice, implementation is almost non-existent. There is no dedicated witness protection unit. The police lack the resources and training to provide effective protection. Relocation programmes are underfunded. And the cultural reality is that witnesses in small communities cannot simply disappear. Everyone knows where they live, who their family is, and where they work.’¹⁹⁴

8.7.6 A series of workshops in 2025, led by the UNODC with European Union (EU) support, trained criminal justice stakeholders on witness protection laws and practices for counter-terrorism officials in Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan and KP, aiming to support victims of terrorism^{195 196 197 198}. Further workshops on identifying, protecting and supporting victims of trafficking and smuggled migrants took place, which aimed to ‘enhance the capacity of law enforcement officers and victim support professionals, particularly the Victim

¹⁹⁰ GI-TOC, [Global Organized Crime Index, Pakistan](#) (Civil society and social protection), 2025

¹⁹¹ Khan M.S. and others, [Victim-Centered Justice in Pakistan: Legal Gaps ...](#) (page 9), 2026

¹⁹² Khan M.S. and others, [Victim-Centered Justice in Pakistan: Legal Gaps ...](#) (page 14), 2026

¹⁹³ LexForm, [About](#), no date

¹⁹⁴ LexForm, [Witness Protection in Pakistan: The Law and the Gap](#), March 2026

¹⁹⁵ UNODC, [UNODC Enhances National Capacity on Witness Protection ...](#), 24 January 2025

¹⁹⁶ UNODC, [Strengthening Justice through Protection: Third National Workshop ...](#), 6 February 2025

¹⁹⁷ UNODC, [From Policy to Practice: Provincial Workshop on Victim Support ...](#), 21 April 2025

¹⁹⁸ UNODC, [From Policy to Practice: Provincial Workshop on Victim Support ...](#), 24 April 2025

Support Officers (VSOs) of Punjab Police’ to recognise and protect victims of trafficking and smuggling¹⁹⁹.

8.7.7 In October 2025, senior prosecution officials met at the 23rd Pakistan Prosecution Forum in Lahore. One theme of discussion was enhancing witness protection measures, with provinces sharing progress, challenges and next steps for safer environments for witnesses and victims participating in criminal proceedings²⁰⁰. The session also reviewed the Anti-Rape Act (2021) and emphasized how the law was improving survivor protection²⁰¹.

8.7.8 Equality Now reported in March 2026 that:

‘The Anti-Rape (Investigation and Trial) Act, 2021 empowers the State to institute a mechanism for victim/witness protection through measures including concealment of the victim’s identity, relocation and provision of special security, shelter and financial assistance. Although earlier legislation already criminalised the disclosure of the identity of the rape victim, such disclosures are often made. The provincial governments have, from 2013–2021, passed witness protection legislation, none of which has been effectively implemented. The absence of witness protection measures leaves victims/witnesses vulnerable to intimidation and threats, leading to out-of-court settlements and witness/victim recanting.’²⁰²

[Back to Contents](#)

8.8 Legal aid

8.8.1 The Legal Aid and Justice Authority (LAJA), a statutory body under the Ministry of Law and Justice, provided legal assistance to ‘... any applicant including minors and persons of unsound mind who is charged with a criminal offense and lacks the means to afford legal help. In all our operations, the Authority grants special preference to disadvantaged women and children, particularly those involved in cases related to sexual offenses.’²⁰³

8.8.2 The Sindh Legal Advisory Call Centre (SLACC), an initiative of the Legal Aid Society (LAS), ‘... operates five days a week via a toll-free number (0800-70806), providing advice on civil, criminal, and public service matters from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., with recorded assistance available after hours. Since its inception [in 2018²⁰⁴], SLACC has received over 500,000 calls and registered more than 295,000 legal queries from individuals in over 600 cities across the country.’²⁰⁵

8.8.3 In July 2025, it was reported that the Chief Justice launched a legal aid initiative to assist poor litigants in hiring legal representation at state expense. It stated that assistance would apply at all judicial levels and that remuneration of up to Rs50,000m [£132²⁰⁶] would be provided through

¹⁹⁹ UNODC, [Strengthening Victim Support: Tahaffuz Markaz Officers Trained ...](#), 12 February 2025

²⁰⁰ UNODC, [Prosecution leaders advance witness protection and justice ...](#), 30 October 2025

²⁰¹ UNODC, [Prosecution leaders advance witness protection and justice ...](#), 30 October 2025

²⁰² Equality Now, [Legal response to sexual violence in Pakistan ...](#) (page 41), March 2026

²⁰³ LAJA, [About us](#), no date

²⁰⁴ LAS, [Sindh Legal Advisory Call Center Annual Progress Report 2024 to 2025](#) (page 7), 2025

²⁰⁵ LAS, [Sindh Legal Advisory Call Center Annual Progress Report 2024 to 2025](#) (page 7), 2025

²⁰⁶ Xe.com, [Currency converter](#), 31 July 2026

District Legal Empowerment Committees^{207 208}.

8.8.4 Equality Now noted that the Anti-Rape Act 2021:

‘... provides for the establishment of a fund to, in part, finance the provision of legal aid to victims of sexual violence. No such fund has been formed thus far. Neither has any panel of pro bono lawyers been approved or notified for each district as provided for in the law. Legislation for the provision of legal aid exists at the provincial and federal levels, but remains unimplemented. In fact, funds dedicated by the state to provide legal aid to women in the past remained unutilised. Some lawyers provide pro bono assistance on an ad hoc basis, but no comprehensive database of lawyers or organisations providing such services exists.’²⁰⁹

[Back to Contents](#)

9. Oversight and complaint mechanisms

9.1.1 The Ministry of Human Rights (MoHR) noted that it was the focal point for ensuring the protection of rights²¹⁰, and that it provided a free national ‘Helpline for Legal Advice on Human Rights Violations’, which had received nearly 1.5 million calls from November 2015 up to May 2025²¹¹.

9.1.2 In their ‘National Policy Framework on Human Rights 2022 to 2027’ the MoHR noted that functioning National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) included:

- National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR)
- National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW)
- National Commission on the Rights of Children (NCRC)
- National Commission for Minorities (NCM)
- Council of Rights of Person with Disabilities (CRPD)
- Directorate General of Special Education (DGSE)
- Human Rights Directorates in the provinces²¹²

9.1.3 The April 2025 DFAT report noted that there were several official human rights commissions but ‘... some are dormant or do not meet international standards.’²¹³ The report added, ‘The NCHR’s primary functions are to conduct investigations into allegations of human rights abuses, review existing and proposed legislation in relation to human rights principles, and act as a court when required. Other specialised human rights commissions at the federal level include the National Commission for the Status of Women (NCSW), the Commission on Minority Rights and the National Commission on the Rights of the Child.’²¹⁴

9.1.4 Regarding the mandate of human rights commissions, the DFAT report

²⁰⁷ Express Tribune, [State-funded legal aid for poor launched](#), 15 July 2025

²⁰⁸ News International, [State to fund legal representation for the poor under LJCP ...](#), 15 July 2025

²⁰⁹ Equality Now, [Legal response to sexual violence in Pakistan ...](#) (page 42), March 2026

²¹⁰ MoHR, [National Policy Framework on Human Rights 2022-2027](#) (paragraph 5.4), no date

²¹¹ MoHR, [Helpline](#), no date

²¹² MoHR, [National Policy Framework on Human Rights 2022-2027](#) (paragraph 5.4), no date

²¹³ DFAT, [Country Information Report Pakistan](#) (paragraph 2.68), 30 April 2025

²¹⁴ DFAT, [Country Information Report Pakistan](#) (paragraph 2.68), 30 April 2025

noted that:

‘Provincial governments fund local human rights commissions with ostensibly independent mandates. Similar to federal commissions (except for the NCHR), provincial commissions are recommendary bodies that are able to raise human rights concerns reported to them but must rely primarily on influencing authorities to achieve outcomes due to procedural limitations on enforcement actions. For example, under the Sindh Protection of Human Rights Act (2011), the Sindh Human Rights Commission is responsible for monitoring human rights violations, and although it could investigate complaints, it was limited to recommending remedial measures to Sindh’s government.

‘In-country sources from across Pakistan told DFAT government-funded human rights commissions at both the federal and provincial levels were ineffective at handling human rights complaints outside of matters related to working conditions. In-country sources told DFAT provincial human rights commissions pragmatically tended to focus on “non-political issues” relating to service delivery at the municipal level.’²¹⁵

9.1.5 The MoHR noted in its 2022-2027 policy framework that:

‘The Supreme Court of Pakistan has also established a vibrant human rights cell that addresses the complaints relating to human rights violations. Similarly, Parliamentary Standing Committees are functioning as over-sight bodies. This initiative and drive is encouraging for the rights holders and demonstrate the state’s commitment to fulfill, protect and respect human rights in the country. Human rights are becoming more central to the Government’s agenda and finding good share in public debate as well as political manifestos.’²¹⁶

9.1.6 In their October 2025 replies to the UNCAT, the GoP stated that:

‘At the operational level, all police departments maintain Internal Accountability Bureaus and disciplinary units to investigate complaints of torture, custodial violence and abuse of authority. District-level complaint redressal cells, the Helpline 8787, Police Access Service, digital feedback platforms and the Central Monitoring and Complaint Cell provide accessible avenues for citizens to file complaints. Oversight is further strengthened through inspections by senior officers, judicial officers and Home Department representatives, while complaints are monitored through hotlines, digital systems and CCTV surveillance.’²¹⁷

9.1.7 The Office of the Wafaqi Mohtasib (Ombudsman) provided a free service to carry out ‘... independent investigations into complaints about “maladministration” in any Federal Government agency.’²¹⁸

[Back to Contents](#)

²¹⁵ DFAT, [Country Information Report Pakistan](#) (paragraphs 2.69 to 2.70), 30 April 2025

²¹⁶ MoHR, [National Policy Framework on Human Rights 2022-2027](#) (paragraph 5.4), no date

²¹⁷ UNCAT, [Replies of Pakistan to the list of issues in relation to its ...](#) (paragraph 2), 15 October 2025

²¹⁸ Office of the Wafaqi Mohtasib, [What we do](#), no date

Annex A

Correspondence from British High Commission dated 12 April 2019, updated 3 September 2026

Diplomatic Enclave
Ramna 5
P.O. Box 1122
Islamabad

Dear Country Policy & Information Team,

You have included the following enquiries:

Are there any facts and figures related to the willingness of the Pakistan authorities to pursue overseas offences? You have made it clear that this is to be considered in the context of cases where there has already been a conviction in the UK. You ask whether the UK courts are considered to be courts of 'competent jurisdiction'. You have also asked about whether there is any information as to the range of sentence passed with respect to rape cases.

Double jeopardy

Principles of double jeopardy are dealt with under Article 13 of the Constitution and s.403 of the Criminal Procedure Code. I am not aware of any equivalent to China's Article 10 CL. Such research as we have been in a position to conduct would suggest that the double jeopardy principles are upheld where a decision has been reached in a foreign jurisdiction (as long as the court reaching the decision is considered to be one of competent jurisdiction – we have not found an example of a court in Pakistan concluding that a foreign court was not of competent jurisdiction for these purposes). In the case of *Rashid Hassan v The State* 2010 Pr.CR.L J. 1902 the Sindh High Court examined and upheld an acquittal rendered by the Royal Court of Jersey. Article 13 and s.403 were specifically addressed. Further, with respect to consideration of the question whether a UK court is considered to be one of competent jurisdiction, regard can be had to the case of *Javed Akhtar v The State* 2017 SCMR 1514. In that matter the Supreme Court upheld the validity of a sentence passed in a UK Crown Court and reiterated the principle of Comity.

Offences committed outside of Pakistan

s.188 Criminal Procedure Code provides for the jurisdiction of criminal courts and tribunals to extend to offences committed by a citizen of Pakistan abroad. Most of the case-law concerning this provision deals with offences committed in the tribal and administered territories which do not otherwise fall within the jurisdiction of the Pakistani courts. In *Abdul Qadir Shah v Muhammad Qasim* PLD 2014 Balochistan 28, the High Court held that in an instance where an offence of murder was committed outside of the territorial restrictions of Pakistan (in a border town in Afghanistan) by Pakistani citizens, the court did have the jurisdiction to proceed in trying the case so long as the procedural requirement of s.188 was fulfilled by the Federal Government authorising the courts to do so. This was allowed in this instance because evidence was available in the territory of Pakistan and not

Afghanistan. In *Muhammad Zubair v Government of Pakistan* 2014 PLD 31 Islamabad (a UK extradition application) it was argued on behalf of the Requested Person that he had a right to be tried in Pakistan where he would have certain rights not provided for in UK law. The Islamabad High Court held that where the Federal Government had not granted permission under s.188 (and no such permission had been granted in that case) there could be no proceedings in Pakistan for an offence committed in the UK.

Practical considerations & opinion

From the above it could be taken that the 'appetite' to reconvict for offences committed outside of Pakistan and subject to proceedings elsewhere does not appear to be high and would in any event be severely constrained by the provisions referred to. As I have previously indicated, I do not have access to any facts or figures and would not claim that the above in any way amounted to anything approaching exhaustive research. Over and above the legal restraints which would need to be overcome, there are clearly also practical considerations which would be relevant to the viability of any renewed proceedings. This is a system in which rape convictions (for example) are difficult to achieve. There is significant emphasis on a contemporaneously given ocular account (hence in part my query about where the victim may reside) and there is also an expectation of forensic evidence. Where that evidence has been acquired in the UK, it seems improbable in the extreme that it would be supplied to the Pakistan for proceedings here – both because the individual had already been convicted and because of death penalty concerns.

Sentence

There is no information available as to the actual sentences passed in these types of cases. However, it [is] worthy of note that strict conditions are required to be fulfilled before a court could take the view that a death sentence could be considered. Section 375 of the Pakistan Penal Code defines the constituent elements of rape and Section 376 provides for sentencing possibilities, which includes imprisonment of not less than 10 years up and up to 25 years and the death penalty. Under Section 376, the death penalty is applicable in aggravated cases falling under any of the following descriptions:

1. When rape is committed by two or more persons in furtherance of common intention of all.
2. When the rape is committed of a minor or a person with mental or physical disability.
3. When the rape is committed by a public servant including a police officer, medical officer or jailor, taking advantage of his official position.
4. Where the rape is committed resulting in grievous bodily harm that involves loss of any part of the victim's body or impairment or disfigurement of such part as defined under sections 333, 335 and 337 of the Pakistan Penal Code.

It may also be worthy of note that, although we have no data to support this, it is our observation that courts are extremely reluctant to consider a death penalty in the absence of a judicial confession.

Regards

CPS CJA Pakistan

[Back to Contents](#)

Terms of Reference

The 'Terms of Reference' are the main topics and issues relevant to the scope of this note and provides the framework for the country information. In this note, they were:

- Legal framework
 - constitution, penal code, code of criminal procedure
- Security apparatus (police and paramilitary)
 - size, structure, crime statistics, efficiency, corruption
- Human rights violations
 - arbitrary arrest and detention, enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, torture and ill-treatment
- Judiciary, including size, structure, corruption
 - organisation, fair trial, independence
 - juvenile justice
 - alternative dispute resolution and informal justice systems
 - double jeopardy
 - witness protection
- Oversight bodies, remit, power and effectiveness
 - avenues of redress

[Back to Contents](#)

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[Back to Contents](#)

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[Back to Contents](#)

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[Back to Contents](#)

Changes from last version of this note

Renamed Sufficiency of protection, updated country information and assessment

[Back to Contents](#)

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[Back to Contents](#)

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[Back to Contents](#)