

FORCED CONVERSIONS OF HINDU SINDHI GIRLS IN PAKISTAN





The World Sindhi Congress (WSC) is one of the most prominent human rights education and advocacy organizations for Sindh and Sindhis. The main objective of WSC is to establish an infrastructure to teach and disseminate educational material to the public, including, but not limited to, material relating to the culture and literature of Sindhi people, their persecuted status in Pakistan, and their peaceful struggle for the human rights including the right to self-determination through publications, lectures, media and otherwise.

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Introduction

Forced Conversions

Forced conversions are seen in the realm of civil society as a significant issue facing non-Muslim minorities in Pakistan. Generally, forced conversions refer to the adoption of a different religion under duress. The sort of violence that is thereby threatened or inflicted can be, among others, physical, emotional, or physiological.

The Sindh Region

Presently, Sindh is one of four provinces of Pakistan, and its capital is Karachi. The province of Sindh was historically seen as a transition zone between Afghanistan, Balochistan, and Iran and "India proper". In 1947, with the Indian Independence Act, and the partition along religious lines, Sindh merged with the newly formed state of Pakistan.ⁱ As of today, Sindh is, with 47.8 million people and a rising population, the second largest province of Pakistan.ⁱⁱ

Its geographical position as a frontier, as well as its isolation from the main Indian political and ideological centre helped to shape its singular character as a state of immigrants, marked by cross-cultural influences and constant changes in civilisation, which fostered religious practices that were in their nature eclectic and now-textualized.ⁱⁱⁱ

Hinduism in Pakistan

The Hindu population comprises around 1.6-2.9 percent of Pakistan's overall population. Approximately 90 percent of them live in rural areas of the Sindh province; there are concentrations of Hindus in two districts of Sindh i.e., Sanghar and Tharpakar. Next to the Sindh province, there is also a small concentration of Hindus in Baluchistan.^{iv}

Prejudice against Hindus is ingrained in Pakistan. Hindus living in Pakistan often face systematic discrimination and marginalization in all aspects of life – education, jobs, and housing.^v Among others, Hindus in Pakistan have dealt with false blasphemy accusations, forced conversions, forced marriages, and continuous harassment by religious extremists.^{vi}

Violence against women and girls in Pakistan

It has been found that 32 percent of women in Pakistan have faced physical violence at least once in their lives.^{vii} However, the actual number is much higher, one in two, Pakistani women, who have been a victim of gender-based violence, have not reported it or have not talked about it to anyone.^{viii}

Yet, gender-based violence in Pakistan is experienced much more adversely and frequently by religious minorities, who generally face discrimination and violence regardless of their gender in the Muslim-dominated Pakistani society.^{ix} In particular, there has been a growing number of cases in which Hindu and Christian women in Pakistan are forced to convert to Islam.^x It is estimated that, on average, 1,000 women and girls in the age group of 12-25 from various religious minority communities, most of them living in the Sindh province, are kidnapped and forcibly converted by their abductors.^{xi} More than 20 Hindu girls are kidnapped and converted in Pakistan every month.^{xii}

Indeed, forced conversions have predominantly been prevalent in the Sindh province of Pakistan, in which the majority of Hindu minorities of the country reside.^{xiii} Although women from all religious minority communities experience forced conversions, most victims have been Hindu girls in the Sindh province.^{xiv} As a result, Hindu girls and women, who already severely suffer from a lack of access to education and healthcare and discrimination in private and public spheres, live with the fear of being abducted and forced to convert from their religion to Islam.^{xv} The cities in the Sindh province with the most cases of Hindu girls undergoing forced conversions are Ghotki, Sanghar, and Jacobabad.^{xvi}

Forced marriages have been one of the most common ways to convert religious minorities to Islam.^{xvii} Female victims of forced conversion are often compelled to convert to Islam after being kidnapped and forcibly married off to their abductors.^{xviii} Furthermore, the age of young girls undergoing forced marriage and conversion is often misstated in marriage certificates in order to conceal the unlawfulness of the marriage.^{xix} Families of victims usually refrain from reporting the abduction as perpetrators often intimidate them with death threats.^{xx}

After being abducted from their homes or schools, girls and women from religious minorities are held in madrassas – Muslim seminaries.^{xxi} Family members of victims are often prevented from meeting their daughters and do not have any information on their whereabouts.^{xxii} Following the marriage, the abductor – the husband, continues his everyday life. At the same time, the victim stays at home and cannot go out in public.^{xxiii} Moreover, there are allegations that some victims are trafficked and sold by their abductors,

which is why there is no information about them following the forced conversion.^{xxiv}

In addition, victims also stay with their abductors as they fear they will not be re-accepted by their families.^{xxv} It is generally a common custom in Pakistan that parents do not support their daughters' separation from their spouses and do not welcome their return to the family home, as they believe this would bring shame to their family.^{xxvi}

While reporting their cases to local authorities, many victims of forced conversions do not have access to support from police and justice as it entails high financial costs.^{xxvii} Yet, those with access to these services do not receive adequate support and attention to their issues either. One of the primary reasons is that law enforcement agencies and judicial organs in Pakistan neglect women's issues and often advise them to return to their husbands.^{xxviii} In particular, the justice system often favours the position of abductors and makes judgments that do not support the victims.^{xxix}

Moreover, Pakistani police officers and lawyers often refuse to work on these cases because of the fear of being threatened by influential families of the perpetrators.^{xxx} Consequently, victims do not receive any legal counselling, and thus, do not continue with the process of reporting their cases.^{xxxi} Besides being pressured by their abductors, victims often declare in the court that they entered into the marriage based on their voluntary consent and make statements in favour of their abductors.^{xxxii} Also, in many instances, victims are left in the custody of their kidnapper during trial processes. They are raped and assaulted so that they will not make any statement against their abductor.^{xxxiii}

Above all, during the court or trial, judges are often strongly influenced by Islamic religious groups or individuals that advocate the conversion of Hindu girls to Islam.^{xxxiv} Very often, police officers and jury members have personal ties with influential Islamic groups who convince them to apply Sharia law during trial processes.^{xxxv} Moreover, courtrooms are usually full of individuals shouting slogans that advocate Islamic principles as well as the conversion of victims.^{xxxvi}

The situation in the country continues to aggravate as the governmental response and actions remain minimal.^{xxxvii} Islamic groups have also been preventing the enforcement of laws brought up by the National Assembly of Pakistan and the provinces like Sindh.^{xxxviii} Furthermore, due to the influential position of Islamist groups, political parties in the country have commonly been reluctant to raise the issue within the Parliament.^{xxxix} The lack of measures taken by Pakistani authorities to support minorities has overall left religious minorities, regardless of their gender, unprotected.

Pakistan National Law

The Constitution of Pakistan, 1973

The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan guarantees under Article 9, "no persons shall be deprived of life or liberty [..]"^{xi} Article 20 states "[s]ubject to law, public order and morality, - (a) every citizen shall have the right to profess, practice and propagate his religion; [..]"^{xli} Article 25A states, "[a]ll citizens are equal before the law and are entitled to equal protection of the law."^{xlii} Article 25A states "nothing [..] shall prevent the State from making any special provision for the protection of women and children." Article 35 states "[t]he State shall protect the marriage, the family, the mother and the child."^{xliii} Article 36 states "[t]he State shall safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of minorities [..]"^{xliv}

The Pakistan Penal Code, 1860

The Pakistan Penal Code Article 90 states, "consent is not a consent [..] if the consent is given [..] under fear of injury [..] and consent of a child means a person who is under 12 years of age."^{xlv} Article 362 states, "[w]hoever by force compels, or by any deceitful means induces, any person to go from any place, is said to abduct that person."^{xlvi} Article 365B states, "[w]hoever kidnaps or abducts any woman with the intent that she may be compelled, [..] to marry any person against her will."^{xlvii} Article 366A states, it is a criminal offense to induce "any minor girl under the age of [18] years" to participate in any act knowing that she will be "forced or seduced to illicit intercourse". Article 375 states "[a] man is said to commit rape" when he "has sexual intercourse with a woman [..] (i) against her will; (ii) without her consent; [..] (v) [..] without her consent when she is under [16] years of age."^{xlviii} Article 498B states, "whoever coerces or in any manner whatsoever, compels a woman to enter into marriage shall be punished."^{xlix} Article 498C states "whoever compels or arranges or facilitates the marriage of a woman with the Holy Quran." Article 498A states, "[w]hoever takes or entices away any woman with the intent that she may have illicit intercourse with any person, or conceals or detains with that intent any woman."^{li}

The Majority Act, 1875

The Pakistan government has not enforced a standard definition of age of majority.^{lii} The Act states that a child cannot enter into a marriage below the age of 16 years for a female and 18 years for a male, and any premarital sex is prohibited.^{liii}

Sindh Child Marriage Restraint Act, 2013

Section 2 (a) states a child means a "person male or female who is under [18] years of age", and (g) a minor means a "person of either sex who is under [18] years of age". Section 3 states "[w]hoever, being a male above [18] years of age, contracts a child marriage shall be punished with rigorous imprisonment. Section 4 states "[w]hoever performs, conducts, directs, brings about or in any way facilitates any child marriage shall be punished [..]".^{liv}

The Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929

The Act sets the legal age to marry a girl at 16 years and 18 years for a boy. It states that a child means a person who, if male, is under 18 years, and if female, is under 16 years. The Act states that whoever, being a male above 18 years, contracts a child marriage shall be punished.^{lv}

The Hindu Marriage Act, 2017

The Hindu Marriage Act sets the legal age of marriage at 18 years; stating "[..] both parties are not below the age of [18] years." The Act attempts to offer such protection by formal registration of Hindu marriages which creates evidence and consequently makes forced conversion more difficult.^{lvi} However, it allows for divorce when one party has ceased to be Hindu by conversion to another religion, which has become a legal route for forced conversions to occur.^{lvii}

3.1 Does Pakistan adhere to its national laws?

The Pakistan government has stated that its national law "strictly forbids forced conversions," as does Islam. The Government has stated that the SC has "actively pursued" cases of forced conversions and allowed victims to express themselves in "complete privacy and safety".^{lviii} The US State Department, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRC), the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ), think differently. In 2020, the US State Department declared Pakistan "a country of particular concern" for violations of religious freedoms, which the Pakistan government rejects. The department based this on an appraisal by the US Commission on International Religious Freedom that underage girls in the minority Hindu, Christian, and Sikh communities were "kidnapped for forced conversion to Islam [..] forcibly married and subjected to rape."^{lix} The HRC reported in 2019 that around 1,000 girls in the southern province of Sindh

were subjected to forced conversions and forced marriage to older Muslim men.^{lx} The CSJ reported in 2020 that at least 159 such cases were registered between 2013 and 2019.^{lxi} These cases often involve abduction, violence, rape, human trafficking and extortion.^{lxii}

The Pakistan government does not adhere to its national laws as such. Which is further demonstrated with how the police force often turn a blind eye to reports of forced conversion by refusing the victim's family to record a First Information Report (FIR);^{lxiii} despite its obligations under Article 25A of the Constitution to provide all citizens equal protection. To make matters worse, the girls are often left in the custody of their abductor, where they are subjected to rape and forced to claim that the conversion was consensual.^{lxiv} Furthermore, under Article 36 of the Constitution the Pakistan government has to safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of minorities^{lxv} but in 2021, the SC Justice Mushir Alam rejected an appeal by a senior church leader for a constitutional petition to protect girls from forcible conversions to Islam.^{lxvi}

Neither the majority groups, nor the minority groups, can impose their own religious will on other citizens^{lxvii} but in 2021, a parliamentary committee rejected an anti-forced conversion bill because the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony rejected it stating it "clashes with Islamic Sharia" law.^{lxviii} The failure to pass the bill highlights the State's inability to guarantee citizens protection and freedom.^{lxix} In 2019, the Provincial Assembly of Sindh (PAS) province rejected a bill criminalising forced conversions and in December 2016, the PAS had a similar bill, however, the governor did not assent to it under pressure from Islamic extremists. The Pakistan government is, therefore, not adhering to its national laws to protect above all, its citizens.^{lxxi}

International law and obligations - Nicola

This section will focus on the international legal obligations providing forcible conversion of Hindu girls and women as a criminal offense. The Islamic Republic of Pakistan has ratified several international human rights treaties, which contain guarantees of protection of individuals belonging to minorities, gender equality, and non-discrimination. The most important ones, in this case, are enclosed in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC),^{lxxii} the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR),^{lxxiii} and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).^{lxxiv}

Starting with the latter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was signed by Pakistan in 1948.^{lxxv} It is essential to underline that the UDHR is not a legally binding instrument. However, it encloses a series of dispositions that are considered based on human rights standards. Additionally, this Convention was even adopted by consensus in the General Assembly, which represents a strong commitment by State parties to its implementation.^{lxxvi} Article 18 strongly resembles the same Article enclosed in the ICCPR that declares that "everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship, and observance."^{lxxvii}

The CRC is considered the first universal instrument to recognise that a child has rights that must be enormously respected by State Parties. Indeed, State Parties must provide special protection for children in the exercise of their rights under the Convention and submit periodical reports to the CRC Committee on national implementations in the practice of these rights.^{lxxviii} Specifically, according to Article 14 CRC, State Parties must respect a "child's right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, making clear that Governments should not interfere with children's religious freedoms, beliefs, and identities."^{lxxix} Recognition of the rights of the child to "freedom of thought, conscience, and religion" in accordance with this international Convention is considered a fundamental human rights value.^{lxxx} Moreover, the CRC does not only establish these assurances but also gives children the right to seek these rights before national courts.^{lxxxi} Furthermore, it implies that Governments cannot interfere negatively in the enjoyment of these rights. However, they should guide parents - or legal guardians - on the development of the religious beliefs

and identities of their children. More than that, the Government should even take an active role in divulging the rights enclosed in this primary Convention; thus, children and adults may fully enjoy them.^{lxxxii} Pakistan ratified the Convention on November 12, 1990, and by approving it, it is committed to promoting children's rights.^{lxxxiii}

Pakistan has also ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which recognises individuals "freedom of thought, conscience and religion."^{lxxxiv} Article 18 states:

1. "Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion.

This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice, and teaching".

2. "No one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice."

Paragraph 4 of Article 18 is particularly relevant because half of the victims of forced conversion concern minors, according to the collected data by the CSJ.^{lxxxv} It holds that: "The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their convictions".^{lxxxvi} Also, the American Convention on Human Rights (ACHR) recognized the right of the parents and guardians to provide for the religious and moral education of their children or wards that is in accord with their own convictions.^{lxxxvii} In the case of minors, therefore, it seems that the freedom of "thought, conscience, and religion" is subject to the parents/legal guardians' right to provide religious and moral education to their children in accordance with their own convictions.^{lxxxviii} Nevertheless, forcing a minor to keep a certain belief system or to convert to another is a clear violation of the IHRL obligations.

4.1 Does Pakistan adhere to its international obligations?

In Pakistan, the ratification of international treaties must pass through an executive act.^{lxxxix} Therefore, an

international agreement cannot be applied as law unless the Parliament passes a specific conversion law addressing that Treaty, which gives full enforcement power within its jurisdiction.^{xc} When this does not take place, the Member State, in this case, Pakistan, would be in violation of its international agreements. It is indeed fundamental to note that, under International Law (IL), State Parties have positive duties to protect children and individuals not only from their agents but also against acts committed by private persons or entities that would impair the enjoyment of these human rights.^{xcii} In other words, they have positive obligations to prevent human rights violations from occurring within their jurisdiction.

In the case of forced conversion, and more specifically regarding Article 18 enclosed on the ICCPR, Pakistan made a broad reservation.^{xcii} Specifically, Pakistan wanted to reserve the application of Article 18 to the respect of the Constitution law, which has an Islamic character, and/or of the Sharia law, which is widely applied in national Courts.

Of course, this reservation caused a massive dispute among States, which raised several objections. Many argued that according to the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, and specifically according to Article 27, a party may not invoke the provisions of its internal law as justification for its failure to perform a treaty".^{xciii} Indeed, at the moment, a State ratifies an international agreement, it must be "prepared to undertake any legislative changes necessary to comply with their obligations under the treaties".^{xciv} Otherwise, as the HRC also underlined, if the domestic law nullifies the disposition of the Covenant, "no real international rights or obligations have (...) been accepted."^{xcv} Therefore, as codified under Article 19(c) of the Vienna Convention of the Law of Treaties, reservations incompatible with the object and the purpose of the Treaty are prohibited. This object and purpose are also found in Article 18 of the ICCPR, which has been defined as "one of the essential provisions of the Covenant."^{xcvi} After a substantial discussion that triggered 22 objections to the reservation raised by Pakistan, the Islamic country narrowed its scope, not referring to Article 18 anymore.

Consequently, Pakistan is fully obliged to respect the norm and protect "the Freedom of thought, conscience, and religion." In practice, however, as this research demonstrates, the Muslim States, like Pakistan, use the Sharia Law, or Constitution, to bypass their international human rights obligations.

This vision was also confirmed during the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam. Regarding the freedom of thought, the Cairo Declaration states that "Islam is the religion of true unspoiled nature. It is prohibited to exercise any form of pressure on man or to exploit his poverty or ignorance in order to force him to change his religion to another religion or atheism".^{xcvii} Nevertheless, the Declaration does not contain any positive right on freedom of thought, conscience, and religion - as instead included in the ICCPR – but it further states that all the rights are subject to the Islamic Sharia as the only source of truth.^{xcviii} Although a cross-cultural dialogue is necessary to achieve respect for human rights around the world, it cannot be the primacy of Islamic Law over International Law. Therefore, by covering the forced conversion of girls and women through the application of the Sharia Law, Pakistan is undoubtedly in violation of those international obligations enclosed in those treaties the same country ratified.

List of alleged conversions and related crimes against minority girls/women (2017-2019)

2017

- Hindu girl named Raveeta Meghwar, age 16, converted in June of 2017.
- Hindu woman named Arti Kumari, age 19, converted in 2017.
- Hindu girl named Sugran Mai, age unknown, converted in August of 2017.
- Hindu girl named Taloka Ram and Family, age unknown, converted in September 2017.
- Hindu girl named Roshan bibi, age unknown, converted in December 2017.
- Hindu woman named Jatna Bheel, age 22, converted in November 2017.
- Hindu woman named Khato, age 32, converted in April 2017.
- Hindu named Marvi, age unknown, converted in September 2017.
- Hindu girl named Kesri, age 18, converted in December 2017.
- Hindu girl named Sita, age 16, converted in May 2017.
- Unknown Hindu, age unknown, converted in 2017.
- Hindu Anooshi, age unknown, converted in 2017.
- Hindu Reshma, age unknown, converted in July 2017.
- Unknown Hindu, age unknown, converted in 2017.
- Hindu woman named Ayesha, age 22, converted in 2017.
- Hindu woman Rani, age 22, converted in July 2017.
- Hindu girl named Jatna, age 14, converted in November 2017.
- Hindu Roshan Bibi, age unknown, converted in December 2017.
- Hindu Sugran Mai, age unknown, converted in August 2017.

2018

- Hindu girl named Nisha (daughter of Deewan Mal), age unknown, converted and married off to abductor in February 2018.
- Hindu girl named Virsha, age 18, converted in September 2018.
- Hindu girl named Kamini, age 18, kidnapped, married off and converted to Islam in September 2018.
- Hindu girl named Monika Kishore, age 11, abducted, raped, facing forced conversion and marriage in October 2018.
- Hindu named Rimsha Chand, age unknown, converted in November 2018.

- Hindu girl named Kavita Bai, age 18, converted in November 2018.
- Hindu woman named Sonia, age 20, converted in November 2018.

2019

- Hindu girl named Anusha Kumari, age 16, converted in January 2019.
- Hindu woman named Sameenza Gulzar, age 20, converted in February 2019.
- Hindu girl named Reena, age 15, converted March 2019.
- Hindu girl named Raveena (sister of Reena, see above), age 13, converted in March 2019.
- Hindu girl named Mala Kumari, age 14, converted in March 2019.
- Hindu girl named Permila Maheswari, age 16, converted in March 2019.
- Hindu girl named Sonia Meghwar, age 14, converted in March 2019.
- Hindu girl named Komal Meghwar, age 14, converted in March 2019.
- Hindu girl named Mala Meghwar, age 16, converted in March 2019.
- Hindu woman named Zeenat Meghwar, age 28, converted in March 2019.
- Hindu girl named Aneela Kohli, age 18, converted in April 2019.
- Hindu woman named Priya, age 23, converted in April 2019.
- Hindu woman named Kajol, age 20, converted May 23 2019
- Hindu girl named Anita Kohli, age 14, converted in June 2019.
- Hindu girl named Gulnaz, age 18, converted in June 2019.
- Hindu girl named Sangeeta Bibi, age 14, converted in 2019.
- Hindu woman named Pooja, age 19, converted in July 2019^{xcix}.

2020

- Hindu girl named Mehak Kumari, age 15, kidnapped and converted to Islam in January 2020.
- Hindu girl named Shahbaz, a minor, abducted, forcefully married off and converted to Islam, in April 2020.
- Hindu girl named Panja Saheb, age 17, abducted, family fears she has been converted to Islam, in September 2020.
- Hindu girl named Muskan, age unknown, converted and married off to Muslim man in October 2020.
- Hindu girl named Arzoo Masih, age unknown, converted and married off in October 2020.
- Hindu girl named Sonia Kumari, age 13, abducted and converted to Islam in November 2020.

- Hindu girl named Arzoo Masih, age unknown, converted and married off in October 2020.
- Hindu girl named Sonia Kumari, age 13, abducted and converted to Islam in November 2020.

2021

- Hindu woman named Aarti Bai, age 22, abducted and forcibly converted to Islam and married off, in April 2021.
- Hindu girl named Roshni, daughter of Khameeso Meghwar, age 10, abducted, converted and married off, in October 2021.

2022

- Hindu girl named Najma Kolhi, age 15, forcibly converted and married off, in January 2022.
- Hindu girl named Eshwarya Rai, age 17, abducted and forcibly converted, subsequently sold off, in February 2022.
- Hindu girl named Pooja Kumari, age 18, was killed after she resisted abduction for alleged forced marriage and conversion, in March 2022.
- Hindu girl named Rajkumari Megwar, age 13, converted in February 2022.
- Hindu girl named Anita Oad, age 15, converted after being informed of marrying a Muslim youth, in March 2022°.

Recommendations

Given the above-mentioned situation in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the World Sindhi Congress and Global Human Rights Defence urges the Government of Pakistan to consider the following recommendations:

- To urge the United Nations and other international bodies to express their concern over the human rights situations and ongoing violations in Pakistan, pressing its Government to ensure the implementation and adherence to signed rules, namely Article 14 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), urging the Government of Pakistan to comply with the object and the purpose of those Treaties, which have already been ratified.
- Ensure that the judiciary branch in Pakistan and the lawyers, working either independently or as part of the Pakistan Bar Council, conduct their work independently of outside interference and influence. This can be realised by having background checks, to be done by the Pakistan Government.
- Ensure that there are lawyers or other law enforcement officials that are specialised in dealing with cases of forced conversions to best help the victims and their families during difficult times.
- Ensure that the Pakistani police and law enforcement forces apply strict rules and receive guidelines and training to adequately deal with cases of forced conversions, to help victims and survivors in their best efforts.
- To independently raise awareness, through education and training, to be done independently and without government control, but close enough to the schools of children and society as a whole that they can benefit from it. Raise awareness among girls, parents, and boys about the situation of forced conversions and how best to handle their case.
- To hold discussions with the governor of the Sindh province on ways of passing and enforcing a bill criminalising forced conversions in the province.
- Creating shelter and call centres in cities in the Sindh province in cooperation with other NGOs. Spreading the information on these e.g., via visiting schools or sharing their flyers in local hospitals.
- Urge the Government of the Sindh Province to organize workshops for girls and their mothers, raise awareness of the issue of forced conversions, and educate society on how best to handle and recover from these violations.
- Ensure the victims can safely practice their right to have a proceeding in a court of law, preferably to be

closed off from the public, to ensure the safety and privacy of both victims, their families, and the perpetrators.

- The Government of Pakistan must proceed with the anonymity of forced conversion cases at local and national courts in order to preserve the psychological health of the victim and her/his privacy, and ease public pressure on judges, therefore guaranteeing a fair and impartial process.
- Establish a system to fight against forced, unlawful documents, i.e., marriage certificates created by the perpetrators with the intention of forcibly converting and marrying a Hindu girl or a girl of any other minority religion in Pakistan. Hereby indirectly making sure that wealthy, powerful Muslim families cannot set the proceedings and outcomes to their own hands and wishes.

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