

UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW 2008

PAKISTAN

NGO: EUROPEAN CENTER FOR LAW AND JUSTICE
4, QUAI KOCH 67000 STRASBOURG FRANCE

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN PAKISTAN

SECTION 1: LEGAL FRAMEWORK

I. Pakistani Constitutional Provisions

Pakistan is an Islamic republic, and Islam is the official state religion.¹ Therefore, the “Constitution requires that laws be consistent with Islam.”² While the Constitution explicitly grants freedoms of religion³ and speech,⁴ and declares “adequate provisions shall be made for the minorities freely to profess and practise their religions,”⁵ “in reality the Government imposes limits on freedom of religion.”⁶ In addition, the right to freedom of speech is “subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interest of *the glory of Islam*.”⁷

The language of the Constitution provides that students may opt out of religious instruction, ceremony or worship at school if the student does not adhere to that religion.⁸ (But see, *infra*, Section II.C. regarding the Apostasy Act of 2006 (“Act”); if the Act passes, a student (considered an adult under the law, age 18 for males and age 16 for females) opting out of a religious program because he or she does not adhere to such religion could potentially be accused of apostasy and subject to the penalties thereunder).

A subsequent provision prohibits discrimination against any community that grants “tax exemptions or concessions” to religious institutions.⁹ The Constitution also provides that “no religious community or denomination shall be prevented from providing religious instruction for pupils of that community or denomination in any educational institution maintained wholly by that community or denomination,”¹⁰ and “no citizen shall be denied admission to any educational institution receiving aid from public revenues on the ground only of race, religion, caste or place of birth.”¹¹ In concluding article 22, however, the Constitution provides that

¹ U.S. Dep’t of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, *Int’l Religious Freedom Report 2007 Pakistan* (Sept. 14, 2007) [hereinafter, *Religious Freedom Report*], available at <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2007/90233.htm>. See also, Const. of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan part I, art. 2, available at http://www.nrb.gov.pk/constitutional_and_legal/constitution/.

² *Religious Freedom Report*, supra note 1.

³ Const. of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan part II, chapter 1, art. 20:

20. Subject to law, public order and morality:-

(a) every citizen shall have the right to profess, practise and propagate his religion; and

(b) every religious denomination and every sect thereof shall have the right to establish, maintain and manage its religious institutions.

⁴ Const. of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan part II, chapter 1, art. 19.

⁵ Const. of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan preamble.

⁶ *Religious Freedom Report*, supra note 1.

⁷ Const. of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan part II, chapter 1, art. 19 (emphasis added).

⁸ Const. of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan part II, chapter 1, art. 22(1):

No person attending any educational institution shall be required to receive religious instruction, or take part in any religious ceremony, or attend religious worship, if such instruction, ceremony or worship relates to a religion other than his own.

⁹ Const. of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan part II, chapter 1, art. 22(2):

In respect of any religious institution, there shall be no discrimination against any community in the granting of exemption or concession in relation to taxation.

¹⁰ Const. of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan part II, chapter 1, art 22(3)(a).

¹¹ Const. of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan part II, chapter 1, art 22(3)(b).

“nothing in [article 22] shall prevent any public authority from making provision for the advancement of any socially or educationally *backward* class of citizens.”¹²

II. Legislation

“Discriminatory legislation” in Pakistan has produced “religious intolerance, acts of violence, and intimidation against religious minorities.”¹³ “Specific laws that discriminate against religious minorities include anti-Ahmadi and blasphemy laws that provide the death penalty for defiling Islam or its prophets.”¹⁴ In Pakistan, the majority of the population is Muslim, and Islam is the legal foundation in the state. The Pakistani government does not restrict religious publishing *per se*. However, it restricts the right to freedom of speech with regard to religion. Speaking in opposition to Islam and publishing an attack on Islam or its prophets are prohibited. Pakistan’s penal code mandates the penalties for violation of the anti-blasphemy laws. Through these anti-blasphemy laws there are estimated that 55- 60 Christians have been arrested and charged by these laws since 2000.¹⁵

A. **Anti-Ahmadi Laws**

The anti-Ahmadi laws were implemented in 1974, and provide that Ahmadis are not Muslims.¹⁶ The anti-Ahmadi laws, provided in sections 298(b) and 298(c) of the Pakistan Penal Code, prohibit members of the Qadiani or the Lahori groups (whether calling themselves Ahmadis or another name) “from calling themselves Muslims, referring to their faith as Islam, preaching or propagating their faith, inviting others to accept the Ahmadi faith, or insulting the religious feelings of Muslims.”¹⁷ Violators of the provision may be sentenced to up to three years in prison, and may also be fined.¹⁸

As of September 14, 2007, “[o]ther religious communities were generally free to observe their religious obligations,” but “religious minorities are legally restricted from public display of certain religious images and . . . are often afraid to profess their religion freely.”¹⁹

B. **Blasphemy Laws**

In order to protect the “glory of Islam,”²⁰ Pakistan has restricted the freedom of speech and religion with harsh anti-blasphemy laws in its penal code.²¹ According to the Penal Code, anyone who “by words, either spoken or written, or by visible representation or by any imputation, innuendo, or insinuation, directly or indirectly, defiles the sacred name of the Holy Prophet . . . shall be punished with death, or imprisonment for life.”²² In addition, an individual who willfully defiles or desecrates the Qur’an may be imprisoned for life.²³

Additionally, the “religious feelings of any class of the citizens” are also protected by the Penal Code, and a person who, “with deliberate and malicious intention,” insults or outrages such feelings “shall” either be imprisoned for up to ten years or fined, or both.²⁴ A person who commits the lesser offense of deliberately “wounding the religious feelings of any person” can be punished by up to one year in prison.²⁵ Further, if someone speaks derogatorily about any holy

¹² Const. of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan part II, chapter 1, art 22(4) (emphasis added).

¹³ *Religious Freedom Report*, supra note 1.

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ Akbar S. Ahmed, *Pakistan's Blasphemy Law: Words Fail Me*, WASH. POST, May 19, 2002, at B1.

¹⁶ *Id.*

¹⁷ *Id.* See also, Pakistan Penal Code, Chapter XV, §§ 298-B, 298-C, available at http://www.punjabpolice.gov.pk/user_files/File/pakistan_penal_code_xlv_of_1860.pdf.

¹⁸ Pakistan Penal Code, Chapter XV, § 298-C.

¹⁹ *Religious Freedom Report*, supra note 1.

²⁰ Part II, Article 19 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

²¹ See Pakistan Penal Code, Chapter XV, §§ 295, 298.

²² Pakistan Penal Code, Chapter XV, § 295-C (emphasis added).

²³ Pakistan Penal Code, Chapter XV, § 295-B.

²⁴ Pakistan Penal Code, Chapter XV, § 295-A (emphasis added).

²⁵ Pakistan Penal Code, Chapter XV, § 298 (emphasis added).

personages, including any wife or family member of the Holy Prophet, he may be imprisoned for up to three years.²⁶

C. Apostasy Act 2006

The Pakistani National Assembly recently tabled a bill entitled “Apostasy Act 2006,”²⁷ which would severely punish people who convert from Islam. If passed, male converts would receive the death penalty, and female converts “imprisonment till penitence.”²⁸ Under the Apostasy Act, there would be two ways to attain a conviction: by confession of the accused or by the testimony of two adult witnesses.²⁹ The Apostasy Act provisions would override any other law. The apparent reason for proposing the Apostasy Act is that British “imperialists abrogated it during their rule, [and] . . . there is no justification of keeping in force this decision of imperialism. . . . Therefore, it is, imperative to introduce this bill . . . and enforce it immediately after its approval.”³⁰

The Apostasy Act, 2006 will directly contradict the UN human rights Charters, as well as Pakistan’s own Constitution that states, “every citizen shall have the right to profess, practise and propagate his religion.”³¹

D. Hudood Laws

Lastly, a body of law, known as the Hudood laws, seek to establish an Islamic system of justice.³² Violations of Hudood laws are heard by the Federal Shariat Court, which has exclusive jurisdiction.³³ These laws are very restrictive of civil liberties, human rights, and equal treatment of citizens.³⁴ Also, certain political parties in the Pakistan Parliament continually try to introduce bills that enforce the Shari’ah law.³⁵ Among other measures, these bills would require Pakistani media to solely promote Islamic values.³⁶

In sum, in order for religious freedoms to exist in Pakistan, constitutional changes as well as its legislative codes must be altered.

III. Pakistan High Court Rulings

Pakistan’s court system consists of multiple levels. There is one Supreme Court of Pakistan that sits above four High Courts, one in each of Pakistan’s four Provinces; other lower courts have been established by law.³⁷ The Supreme Court is located in Islamabad. The four High Courts are (1) Lahore High Court, (2) Sindh High Court, (3) Peshawar High Court, and (4) High Court of Baluchistan, Quetta. A fifth, the Islamabad High Court, has been approved but has not begun meeting, yet.³⁸ Each court may rule on matters relevant to religious freedom. The laws prohibiting blasphemy are used against Christians, Ahmadis, and members of other religious groups including Muslims.

²⁶ Pakistan Penal Code, Chapter XV, § 298-A (emphasis added).

²⁷ *Fails to Oppose Death for Apostasy Draft*, DAILY TIMES, May 9, 2007 [hereinafter *Fails to Oppose*], available at http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/print.asp?page=2007\05\09\story_9-5-2007_pg1_7. See also, Apostasy Bill 2006 (Proposed), <http://www.thepersecution.org/50years/apostasybill.html> (provides the text of the proposed bill); Qaiser Felix, *New Apostasy Bill to Impose Death on Anyone Who Leaves Islam*, ASIANEWS.IT, May 9, 2007, available at <http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=9218&size=A>; *Pakistan: Passage of Bill on “Apostates” Called Unlikely*, JOURNAL CHRETIEN, July 13, 2007, available at <http://www.spcm.org/Journal/spip.php?article13389>.

²⁸ *Fails to Oppose*, supra note 26. The article states that “[t]he government did not oppose the bill and sent it to the standing committee concerned. If passed, the bill will over-ride all other laws in force at present.” *Id.*

²⁹ *Id.*

³⁰ Apostasy Bill 2006 (Proposed), § 11, supra note 26.

³¹ Pakistan Constitution, Part 2, Chapter 1, section 20 (emphasis added)

³² Moeen H. Cheema, *Cases and Controversies: Pregnancy as Proof of Guilt Under Pakistan's Hudood laws*, 32 BROOKLYN J. INT’L L. 121, 122-23 (2006).

³³ *Id.* at 124.

³⁴ See *Id.* at 121.

³⁵ See Enforcement of Shari’ah Act, 1991, available at <http://www.pakistani.org/pakistan/legislation/1991/actXof1991.html>

³⁶ See Christopher Nadeem, *Pakistan: ‘Virtue Police’ is the Threat, Not ‘Shariah’ – Activists*, INTER PRESS SERVICE NEWS AGENCY, <http://ipsnews.net>.

³⁷ Pakistan Constitution, Part 7, Chapter 1, section 175, available at <http://www.supremecourt.gov.pk/judicature.htm>.

³⁸ President’s Order No. 7 of 2007, Islamabad High Court (Establishment) Order, 2007, Dec. 14, 2007, available at http://www.pakistani.org/pakistan/constitution/post_03nov07/po7_2007.html.

SECTION 2: RECENT RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION OR DISCRIMINATION

Numerous Christian leaders and media stories have recently expressed deep concern about the grave threat posed to Christians and other religious minorities in the wake of the assassination of former Prime Minister Benazir Benazir Bhutto, who had been a strong supporter of rights for religious minorities in Pakistan and had a great deal of support among Christians.³⁹

Selected Recent Incidents of Persecution or Discrimination

Note: Each incident detailed here has a web link to the news story. The full text of the news story can be found in the Appendix.

A. Blasphemy

According to a recent Associated Press story, the All Pakistan Minority Alliance says that more than 100 Christians are currently jailed on blasphemy charges.⁴⁰

1. January 22, 2007 – Christian mother jailed under blasphemy law⁴¹
2. May 9, 2007 – Elderly Christian Walter Fazal Khan charged with blasphemy⁴²
3. May 17, 2007 – Christian nurses charged with blasphemy⁴³

B. Anti proselytism

1. January 26, 2007 – 4 Christian evangelists beaten by Muslim mob⁴⁴

C. Anti and Forced conversions

1. October 2007 – 18 year old Christian girl kidnapped, raped, and forced to convert to Islam⁴⁵
2. October 2007 - Female Christian teachers and students told to wear burqa in all Swat district schools⁴⁶
3. August 2007 – Militants threaten death to Christians in Kohati area unless they convert to Islam⁴⁷
4. June 12, 2007 – Christians in Shanti Nagar village, attacked 10 years ago by militant Muslims, receive death threats warning them to convert to Islam or die⁴⁸

³⁹ See <http://ap.google.com/article/ALeqM5guse3kmCOLA20GA4f8GACkM6WWLAD8UCT0002>

⁴⁰ *Id.*

⁴¹ <http://www.persecution.net/news/pakistan84.html>

⁴² <http://www.persecution.net/news/pakistan89.html>

⁴³ <http://www.persecution.net/news/pakistan92.html>

⁴⁴ <http://www.persecution.net/news/pakistan83.html>

⁴⁵ <http://www.persecution.net/news/pakistan100.html>

⁴⁶ <http://www.releaseinternational.org/pages/posts/pakistan-female-teachers-and-students-told-to-wear-burqa-or-risk-death236.php>

⁴⁷ <http://www.releaseinternational.org/pages/posts/pakistan-christians-ordered-to-turn-to-islam-or-be-killed274.php>

D. Violence against religious minorities

1. January 22, 2008 – Christian Simon Emmanuel gunned down in Punjab by Muslim extremists after they apparently mistook him for his brother who was accused of blasphemy 10 years ago.⁴⁹
2. January 17, 2008 – Christian Pastor Sajid William murdered⁵⁰
3. December 2007 – Christian woman Mumtaz Bibi brutally attacked for attending Christmastime services⁵¹
4. October 2007 – 18 year old Christian girl kidnapped, raped, and forced to convert to Islam⁵²
5. October 10, 2007 – Muslim militants attack Christian church and beat children in Hadyara, Lahore⁵³
6. September 2007 - Mohan Shazad attacked by armed men after distributing Christian literature⁵⁴
7. August 2007 – Two Christian girls kidnapped and forced to marry Muslim men⁵⁵
8. June 27, 2007 – Christian murdered after refusing to convert to Islam⁵⁶
9. June 17, 2007 – Armed Muslims attack Christians in Bismillahpur, Kanthan⁵⁷
10. Easter, 2007 – 12 year old Christian girl raped⁵⁸
11. January 26, 2007 – 4 Christian evangelists beaten by Muslim mob⁵⁹
12. February 2006 – Radical Muslims burn down two Christian churches in Sukkur⁶⁰
13. September 2005 – Christian woman Esther brutally raped and beaten for evangelizing⁶¹

⁴⁸<http://www.releaseinternational.org/pages/posts/pakistan-christians-warned-convert-to-islam-or-die.-shanti-nagar-devastated-ten-years-ago-under-threat-from-militants-again--copy-of-death-threat-attached91.php>

⁴⁹<http://www.releaseinternational.org/pages/posts/pakistan-extremists-shoot-christian-in-punjab335.php?g=7>

⁵⁰<http://www.persecution.com/news/index.cfm?action=fullstory&newsID=585>;

<http://www.releaseinternational.org/pages/posts/pakistan-young-christian-evangelist-shot-dead-by-gunman341.php>

⁵¹http://www.cbn.com/CBNnews/CWN/030306Persecution_Pakistan.aspx

⁵²<http://www.persecution.net/news/pakistan100.html>

⁵³<http://www.persecution.net/news/pakistan98.html>

⁵⁴http://www.cbn.com/CBNnews/CWN/030306Persecution_Pakistan.aspx

⁵⁵<http://www.persecution.net/news/pakistan97.html>;

<http://www.releaseinternational.org/pages/posts/pakistan-christian-girls-abducted-and-foribly-converted-to-islam156.php>

⁵⁶<http://www.persecution.net/news/pakistan95.html>

⁵⁷<http://www.mnnonline.org/article/10074>

⁵⁸<http://www.persecution.net/news/pakistan86.html>;

http://www.christiantoday.com/article/christian_persecution_escalates_in_pakistan_as_12yearold_is_raped/10552.htm

⁵⁹<http://www.persecution.net/news/pakistan83.html>

⁶⁰http://www.cbn.com/CBNnews/CWN/030306Persecution_Pakistan.aspx

⁶¹http://www.cbn.com/CBNnews/CWN/030306Persecution_Pakistan.aspx

APPENDIX

Section 2

A. Blasphemy

1. Christian Woman Jailed under Pakistan's Blasphemy Law

January 22, 2007

<http://www.persecution.net/news/pakistan84.html>

Martha Bibi, a Christian woman from Kot Nanak Singg in Kasur district, Pakistan has been accused of defiling the name of Muhammad and has been charged under Pakistan's blasphemy law, Section 295C.

Bibi and her husband rent out construction equipment. They had recently rented out tools and supplies for the construction of the Sher Rabbani mosque. When the builders failed to pay, Martha went to the construction site on January 22 to collect the money. When the workers refused to pay, she tried to retrieve the equipment but was stopped before she entered the mosque. Three men, Muhammad Ramzan, Mohammad Akram and Muhammad Dilbar beat her until some people walking by intervened.

Later that night, the mosque's imam accused Martha of uttering blasphemous words about Muhammad and he urged local Muslims to attack Christians. Fearing for their lives, Martha and her family fled their home. Her husband, Boota Masih, and her six children escaped to a neighbour's house but Martha was captured and arrested. Martha is imprisoned at the Changa Manga police station awaiting trial. Her family remains in hiding for their protection.

2. Elderly Christian Charged Under Blasphemy Law

May 9, 2007

<http://www.persecution.net/news/pakistan89.html>

An 84-year-old Christian, Walter Fazal Khan, was charged under the blasphemy law and jailed for allegedly desecrating the Quran in Samanabad, Lahore on May 9, according to a May 11 report from the Center for Legal Aid Assistance and Settlement. The case against Khan was registered by his driver, who claimed to have seen him burning pages of the Quran. Khan's family says that the charge is part of a "conspiracy" against him by some Muslim businessmen who were angered by his refusal to sell them his land for 8 million rupees (\$215,377 CAD). Muslim militants have seized Khan's property.

3. Christian Nurses Accused of Blasphemy

May 17, 2007

<http://www.persecution.net/news/pakistan92.html>

Christian staff at the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences hospital in Islamabad face accusations of blasphemy, according to a June 1 report from All Pakistan Minorities Alliance. On May 17, Muslim nurses found lines drawn through Quranic verses posted on a notice board and told the nursing school administration that the Christians were responsible. On June 1, Muslims demonstrated against the Christians and demanded that they be charged with

blasphemy. In response, the school's administration has filed a complaint. The principal of the school, Ms. Stella, was suspended along with four student nurses. All five deny any involvement in the vandalism.

B. Anti proselytism

1. Evangelists Beaten at Muslim Festival

January 26, 2007

<http://www.persecution.net/news/pakistan83.html>

A team of four Pakistani Christian evangelists associated with The Voice of the Martyrs was attacked and beaten at a Muslim festival in Pakpattan, Pakistan on Friday, January 26.

After handing out more than 13,000 Christian tracts, three of the evangelists were beaten by Islamic militants. They were then taken to the police station where they were detained and questioned before being released. The fourth evangelist, who was the team leader, was beaten by a mob of more than 100 Muslims. They dragged him through the crowd before taking him to the local police station. He is reportedly passing blood in his urine and stool as a result of his injuries.

C. Anti and Forced conversions

1. Christian Girl Raped and Forced to Convert

October 2007

<http://www.persecution.net/news/pakistan100.html>

An 18-year-old Christian woman named Raiza was recently abducted for ten days by a Muslim man who repeatedly raped her and forced her to convert to Islam. According to a November 2 report from AsiaNews, Raiza went missing after visiting her aunt in Faisalabad on October 21. Her family contacted a Muslim man named Sajid who had harassed Raiza in the past but he claimed to know nothing of her whereabouts. On October 31, Raiza returned home and told her parents that Sajid had abducted her, assaulted her and pressured her into converting to Islam. Raiza's father filed a complaint with the police but no action has been taken to apprehend her abuser.

2. Pakistan: Female Teachers and Students Told to Wear Burqa or Risk Death

October 2007

<http://www.releaseinternational.org/pages/posts/pakistan-female-teachers-and-students-told-to-wear-burqa-or-risk-death236.php>

Female teachers and students at all schools in the Swat district of north-west Pakistan have been told to wear the burqa or risk death.

Swat's Executive District Officer (EDO) has issued a notice requiring even Christian women and girls to put on full-body Islamic dress, according to the regional newspaper Daily Mashriq. He said pressure from Taliban extremists had left him with no option.

The church-run Public High School in Sangota has already received threats of suicide bombings

unless its students wear burqas and its Christian and male teachers are dismissed. The girls school was forced to close for a week in September after more threats and accusations that it had been trying to convert students to Christianity. More than 99 per cent of its 950 students are Muslim, says Compass Direct.

Christians in Swat, of whom there are about 1,000, report that the situation has deteriorated since the government stand-off with Islamist extremists at the Red Mosque in Islamabad in July. Many Christian businesses and a Christian retreat centre have been forced to close.

3. Pakistan: Christians Ordered to Turn to Islam or Be Killed

August 2007

<http://www.releaseinternational.org/pages/posts/pakistan-christians-ordered-to-turn-to-islam-or-be-killed274.php>

Militants in Peshawar have apparently ordered Christians to turn to Islam or be killed. Police reinforcements have been sent to the Kohati area after letters making the death threats were delivered to several families in the inner city. The letters, which gave a deadline for compliance of August 10, read: 'Be ready as it is not only a mere threat. Our suicide bombers will kill you. Consider it a final call.' They were signed by a previously unknown group, Al-Jihad. The News, a Pakistani national daily paper, said that similar threats were received by local Hindus. Non-Muslim places of worship and residential areas are under tight police guard.

7x7 reported on May 29 that Christians in Charsadda and Mardan, North West Frontier Province, recently received similar letters warning them to convert to Islam or be bombed. Police have since claimed these threats were a child's prank but Christians remain anxious. Meanwhile, in Lahore, thousands of protestors gathered on August 11 to back a 'Charter of Demands' calling on the government of Pakistan to ensure equal rights for religious minorities. As well as pushing for the creation of a National Commission on Religious Tolerance, the charter demands that the government repeals the notorious blasphemy laws -- and takes a tougher line on religious extremism.

4. Pakistan Christians Warned: Convert to Islam or Die. Shanti Nagar, Devastated Ten Years Ago, Under Threat from Militants Again- Copy of death threat attached

June 12, 2007

<http://www.releaseinternational.org/pages/posts/pakistan-christians-warned-convert-to-islam-or-die.-shanti-nagar-devastated-ten-years-ago-under-threat-from-militants-again--copy-of-death-threat-attached91.php>

Christians living in the village of Shanti Nagar in Pakistan have received hand-written threats warning them to convert to Islam or die. Ten years ago a 30,000-strong mob of militant Muslims destroyed 13 churches and 800 houses belonging to Christians. The death threats raise fears they could strike again. 3,000 Christian families remain in the Christian enclave which is encircled by Muslim villages in the district of Khanewal in Southern Punjab.

Partners of Christian mission to the persecuted Church Release International say the chief reason for threats is rivalry over land. Christian lawyers say Muslim neighbours resent the Christians for having their own agricultural land. The death threats have been targeted at Christian pastors and leaders in the village. They are handwritten in Urdu (example attached).

One letter warns:

We invite you to accept Islam and you also bring your family into the circle Islam. Otherwise you'll face dire consequences. You and your family will be killed. Don't consider it as just a threat... Accept Islam otherwise, we will make you an example for the world...Accept Islam otherwise, Death!

A spokesman for Release International's partner, CLAAS, says: 'Christian in Pakistan is already living under the threat of death by Muslim militants. Now they have adopted a new way to harass innocent Christian villagers that has filled the Christians with the terror of death.' 24 Churches serve the Christians in Shanti Nagar. By targeting Christian leaders, CLAAS believes the militants aim to discourage those at the core of the community.

'They have chosen the people who are the source of encouragement for Christian community,' writes Joseph Francis, the national director of CLAAS (Centre for Legal Aid Assistance and Settlement). 'Their purpose is to weaken their leaders.'

'Please pray for Christians in Pakistan – especially the Christians of Shanti Nagar,' says Andy Dipper, the CEO of Release International. 'And pray that the government of Pakistan will defend the freedom – and the lives – of Christians, who make up less than three per cent of their population.'

Release International supports CLAAS in providing legal aid for Christians facing discrimination. With this support they are able to visit Christian prisoners who are in jail as a result of prejudice in their legal system. Release also supports the families of prisoners by providing education for their children, and provides business capital to help families support themselves while their relative - often the major bread-winner - is in jail. Through its partners Release also provides training and education for Christian women who are struggling to support themselves and their families as a result of their marginalised status in society; and Release helps produce and distribute Christian literature.

D. Violence against religious minorities

1. Pakistan: extremists shoot Christian in Punjab

January 22, 2008

<http://www.releaseinternational.org/pages/posts/pakistan-extremists-shoot-christian-in-punjab335.php?g=7>

Extremists have shot dead a Christian in Punjab after apparently mistaking him for his brother who was accused of blasphemy 10 years ago. Simon Emmanuel was shot in the neck in Gojara, Toba Tek Singh district, when gunmen confused him with his younger brother Younis Tasadaq, according to RI sources.

The gunmen had heard that Younis had recently returned to Pakistan from the US where he had claimed asylum for seven years, with the help of RI partners. And, even a decade on, they wanted their revenge for the alleged blasphemy, even though the case against Younis was dropped in 1999. When they saw Simon on January 9 this year, they thought vengeance was theirs.

Lawyers from RI partner CLAAS, the Centre for Legal Aid Assistance and Settlement, were involved in Younis' case in the 1990s and helped him find refuge in the States. Now they are involved in the seeking justice for Simon. CLAAS reports that the Pakistani authorities tried to persuade Simon's father not to press charges, and to consider it a 'suicide' not a murder. Despite this, CLAAS has succeeded in getting the case registered and is supporting the family, including Younis.

Younis was arrested in 1998 after Muslim clerics in Gojara received a letter, bearing Younis' name and address, making derogatory comments about the Prophet Mohammed. The case snowballed: religious leaders, politicians and police all became involved. But the charges against Younis were eventually dropped.

2a. Pakistani Pastor Martyred

January 17, 2008

<http://www.persecution.com/news/index.cfm?action=fullstory&newsID=585>

Pastor Sajid William was shot and killed by unidentified, masked gunmen on January 17. William, age 29, was on his way home in the city of Peshawar, in Pakistan's violent Northwest Frontier Province. VOM contacts report that Pastor Sajid was employed by a humanitarian relief agency and also involved in evangelistic work.

Unknown assailants were standing near a bend in the road along William's route on January 17. Because of the sharp corner, the pastor had to reduce the speed of the car. When the car came close to the attackers, they ordered William to stop the car. When he saw the attackers' weapons though, William tried to speed past them. The attackers open fired. Three shots were fired. Two bullets missed, but the third hit the pastor's back and passed through his chest. He was pronounced dead at the scene.

"The world watched following the assassination of Benazir Bhutto in December. We hope the world will also remember the death of this pastor, killed simply for being a passionate follower of Jesus Christ," said Todd Nettleton of The Voice of the Martyrs. "We pray for comfort for his wife and young daughter, and we pray that bold witnesses for Christ will be raised up in Peshawar and throughout Pakistan."

Pastor Sajid had worked with the Assembly of God Church in Peshawar for the past 10 years. He is survived by his wife and an 18-month-old daughter. Pray for his grieving family and church. Ask God to comfort and encourage believers in Peshawar and for opportunities for them to witness to those around them.

2b. Pakistan: Young Christian evangelist shot dead by gunman

January 17, 2008

<http://www.releaseinternational.org/pages/posts/pakistan-young-christian-evangelist-shot-dead-by-gunman341.php>

The gunman who shot dead a young Christian evangelist in Pakistan used his victim's mobile phone to tell his family he had been murdered.

Sajid William, who was in his 20s, was shot three times in the chest as he returned home from his office in Peshawar, North West Frontier Province, on January 17. His wife heard the news

shortly afterwards – from her husband's killer.

William managed the district office of Shelter Now International, a Christian relief and development agency. He was also an active member of his local Assembly of God (AOG) church – and father to an infant daughter.

A pastor of the AOG church in Peshawar told International Christian Concern: 'We believe that William was murdered for his faith and was a martyr.' William's family has reportedly registered a case with police but no arrests have yet been made.

Meanwhile, police in Punjab have successfully tracked down a young Christian girl abducted, forcibly converted to Islam and married to a Muslim man. This is a rare success story among many reported incidents of young Christian women being abducted by Muslim men – and then disappearing.

Tahira Salamat, 20, was discovered at her abductor's home four months after she vanished from Khanewal district. It took more than two weeks for Tahira's family to persuade police to open an investigation into her disappearance.□

3. Muslims Target Christian Evangelists

December 2007

http://www.cbn.com/CBNnews/CWN/030306Persecution_Pakistan.aspx

The Christian community in Pakistan faces danger every day. Christians are a tiny minority in the Muslim nation, and they're often the target of brutal attacks. But Christians say they're not going stop serving God. □□Muslims, outraged over offensive cartoons, began rampaging through Pakistani streets. This time their anger is directed against Denmark and the United States.

But more often than not, when radical Muslims take to the streets in violence, Pakistan's minority of Christians bear the brunt. This is what happened in February, in the town of Sukkur. Radical Muslims burned down two churches, St. Mary's Catholic Church and the St. Savior Church. False rumors that a Christian desecrated a Koran – Islam's holy book - triggered the attacks.

Pakistanis Mumtaz Bibi, Mohan Shazad, and a female evangelist we'll call Esther were all brutally assaulted because of their Christian faith.

Each has a story to tell of persecution at Pakistan's brick kilns. Poor and uneducated, many Pakistani Christians are forced to work in the kilns, and that is where much of the persecution is occurring. This is especially true for those who share their faith with their co-workers.

Eighteen-year-old Mohan Shazad grew up at the brick kilns. Like most workers there, his parents labor from sunrise to sunset making bricks. They earn the equivalent of about 5 U.S. dollars for every thousand bricks made. Each of them can make about 1,000 bricks per week. In a good week, the family will earn approximately 10 dollars.

Mohan says he longed to be used by God. At the urging of his pastor, he began to sell Christian

literature at the brick kilns. Both Muslims and Christians alike bought the publications. But the Muslim brick kiln owner didn't like Mohan's evangelistic outreach. Mohan told me, "He urged my father to stop me from selling the Christian literature and he threatened my father saying, 'If something happens to Mohan, you are responsible for that. I am not responsible.'"

Last September, at sunset, as Mohan returned home, two masked men jumped out from a sugar cane field. One sliced into Mohan's left arm with an axe. Mohan survived the attack, but his arm had to be amputated. He says the attack will not prevent him from continuing his ministry. Mohan said, "This is just a test from God. I've decided to sell Christian literature for the rest of my life – even if they cut off my other arm. If they cut off my legs and I cannot walk, I'll somehow find a way."

Mumtaz Bibi has a similar story. She was unable to walk for more than a year. This worker was brutally beaten when the son of another kiln owner attacked her because she and her family left work at Christmastime to attend church services.

Ray Thorne is with the Voice of The Martyrs. Thorne said "He did it to her because she was a Christian and did not want her worship Jesus Christ." In spite of this, she and her family made a conscious decision to go and worship God during Christmas. That is why she was beaten and had her leg broken.

Pakistani Christians are a small minority - only about 2 percent - in a nation dominated by Islam. But that dominance hasn't deterred another brick kiln worker named Esther from sharing the Good news with her Muslim co-workers. Esther started a Sunday school class in the courtyard of her home at the kiln. Muslim children were among those in attendance. Esther said, "Their parents agreed to send them. We taught them about Christianity. We also showed them the *Jesus* Film and they sang Christian songs."

The song Esther sings is a song of blessings. She sings it when she enters homes to pray and minister to the brick kiln villagers. She sings, "Greetings ... we come in peace, in the name of Jesus. We've given our lives and everything we have for Him." Esther's ministry angered the kiln owner. He repeatedly warned her to stop leading Bible study and prayers, because too many Muslims were being attracted to these events. Each time Esther refused. She said the Christians can not stop because daily prayer is a crucial part of their faith.

In September 2005, while Esther was home alone, the brick kiln owner abducted her. He said he would teach her a lesson and then proceeded to brutally beat and rape her. Despite her suffering, Esther remains firm in her Christian faith. She says she will continue to share the Gospel with Pakistani Muslims.

Esther told us, "God often tests the people He loves. He did that with Job and this is my test. And like Job, I will remain faithful in the midst of persecution." Esther is no longer working at the brick kilns. She has left the area and is ministering elsewhere. She says as long as there is more of this radical rioting and persecution in Pakistan, there'll be an even greater need for her to continue teaching the Gospel.

4. Christian Girl Raped and Forced to Convert

October 2007

<http://www.persecution.net/news/pakistan100.html>

An 18-year-old Christian woman named Raiza was recently abducted for ten days by a Muslim man who repeatedly raped her and forced her to convert to Islam. According to a November 2 report from AsiaNews, Raiza went missing after visiting her aunt in Faisalabad on October 21. Her family contacted a Muslim man named Sajid who had harassed Raiza in the past but he claimed to know nothing of her whereabouts. On October 31, Raiza returned home and told her parents that Sajid had abducted her, assaulted her and pressured her into converting to Islam. Raiza's father filed a complaint with the police but no action has been taken to apprehend her abuser.

5. Militants Desecrate Church, Beat Children

October 10, 2007

<http://www.persecution.net/news/pakistan98.html>

Armed Muslim militants attacked the New Apostolic Church in the city of Hadyara, Lahore on October 10. According to an October 11 report from Asia News, the militants beat several Christians present, including children, shouted abuses against the believers and damaged property. The militants then used a loudspeaker to call on Muslims from nearby villagers to gather for a "final attack" after Ramadan. They also urged local businesses and farmers not to let Christians on their properties or do business with them. The Muslims were allegedly angry because the Christians refused to stop using loudspeakers during morning church services, which were held at the same time as their Islamic prayers. Local Christians said that the tension between the two religious communities has been intensifying for several months and that it has increased since the start of Ramadan.

6. Muslims Target Christian Evangelists

September 2007

http://www.cbn.com/CBNnews/CWN/030306Persecution_Pakistan.aspx

The Christian community in Pakistan faces danger every day. Christians are a tiny minority in the Muslim nation, and they're often the target of brutal attacks. But Christians say they're not going stop serving God. □□Muslims, outraged over offensive cartoons, began rampaging through Pakistani streets. This time their anger is directed against Denmark and the United States.

But more often than not, when radical Muslims take to the streets in violence, Pakistan's minority of Christians bear the brunt. This is what happened in February, in the town of Sukkur. Radical Muslims burned down two churches, St. Mary's Catholic Church and the St. Savior Church. False rumors that a Christian desecrated a Koran – Islam's holy book - triggered the attacks.

Pakistanis Mumtaz Bibi, Mohan Shazad, and a female evangelist we'll call Esther were all brutally assaulted because of their Christian faith.

Each has a story to tell of persecution at Pakistan's brick kilns. Poor and uneducated, many Pakistani Christians are forced to work in the kilns, and that is where much of the persecution is occurring. This is especially true for those who share their faith with their co-workers.

Eighteen-year-old Mohan Shazad grew up at the brick kilns. Like most workers there, his parents labor from sunrise to sunset making bricks. They earn the equivalent of about 5 U.S. dollars for every thousand bricks made. Each of them can make about 1,000 bricks per week. In a good week, the family will earn approximately 10 dollars.

Mohan says he longed to be used by God. At the urging of his pastor, he began to sell Christian literature at the brick kilns. Both Muslims and Christians alike bought the publications. But the Muslim brick kiln owner didn't like Mohan's evangelistic outreach. Mohan told me, "He urged my father to stop me from selling the Christian literature and he threatened my father saying, 'If something happens to Mohan, you are responsible for that. I am not responsible.'"

Last September, at sunset, as Mohan returned home, two masked men jumped out from a sugar cane field. One sliced into Mohan's left arm with an axe. Mohan survived the attack, but his arm had to be amputated. He says the attack will not prevent him from continuing his ministry. Mohan said, "This is just a test from God. I've decided to sell Christian literature for the rest of my life – even if they cut off my other arm. If they cut off my legs and I cannot walk, I'll somehow find a way."

Mumtaz Bibi has a similar story. She was unable to walk for more than a year. This worker was brutally beaten when the son of another kiln owner attacked her because she and her family left work at Christmastime to attend church services.

Ray Thorne is with the Voice of The Martyrs. Thorne said "He did it to her because she was a Christian and did not want her worship Jesus Christ." In spite of this, she and her family made a conscious decision to go and worship God during Christmas. That is why she was beaten and had her leg broken.

Pakistani Christians are a small minority - only about 2 percent - in a nation dominated by Islam. But that dominance hasn't deterred another brick kiln worker named Esther from sharing the Good news with her Muslim co-workers. Esther started a Sunday school class in the courtyard of her home at the kiln. Muslim children were among those in attendance. Esther said, "Their parents agreed to send them. We taught them about Christianity. We also showed them the *Jesus* Film and they sang Christian songs."

The song Esther sings is a song of blessings. She sings it when she enters homes to pray and minister to the brick kiln villagers. She sings, "Greetings ... we come in peace, in the name of Jesus. We've given our lives and everything we have for Him." Esther's ministry angered the kiln owner. He repeatedly warned her to stop leading Bible study and prayers, because too many Muslims were being attracted to these events. Each time Esther refused. She said the Christians can not stop because daily prayer is a crucial part of their faith.

In September 2005, while Esther was home alone, the brick kiln owner abducted her. He said he would teach her a lesson and then proceeded to brutally beat and rape her. Despite her suffering, Esther remains firm in her Christian faith. She says she will continue to share the Gospel with Pakistani Muslims.

Esther told us, "God often tests the people He loves. He did that with Job and this is my test. And like Job, I will remain faithful in the midst of persecution." Esther is no longer working at the brick kilns. She has left the area and is ministering elsewhere. She says as long as there is more of this radical rioting and persecution in Pakistan, there'll be an even greater need for her to continue teaching the Gospel.

7a. Two Girls Kidnapped and Forced to Marry Abductors

August 2007

<http://www.persecution.net/news/pakistan97.html>

Two young Christian girls were kidnapped from their homes by Muslims in the city of Faisalabad in recent weeks, according to an August 22 report from Asia News.

Zunaira (11) was taken from her home in Warispura by a Muslim named Muhammad Adnan on August 5. She was then forced to convert to Islam and marry her kidnapper. Her mother, Abida, was informed of her daughter's situation by two local Muslims who acted as negotiators when the kidnappers demanded money in exchange for Zunaria's release. She offered them 12,000 Rupees (287 CAD) but they told her it was not enough. She then went to the police for help but was told that the kidnapping was "not a matter for the police."

In the second case, Shumaila Tabussum (16) was kidnapped from her home by a Muslim man named Mazher and some other unknown people on August 16. The kidnappers told her that her father had been injured in an accident. When they offered to take her to see him in the hospital, she got into their car. While they were driving, Shumaila saw two of her uncles and shouted the news about her father's alleged accident to them. Her uncles then went to the hospital but discovered no one there. Shumaila's father immediately reported her abduction to the police. He fears she might also be forced to convert to Islam and marry a Muslim man since such cases are increasingly common for Christian girls in Pakistan.

7b. Pakistan: Christian Girls Abducted and Forcibly Converted to Islam

August 2007

<http://www.releaseinternational.org/pages/posts/pakistan-christian-girls-abducted-and-foribly-converted-to-islam156.php>

Lawyers in Pakistan say that a growing number of young Christian girls are being abducted, forcibly converted to Islam and married to Muslim men.

The statement comes after the disappearance of two children from Faisalabad -- followed by the delivery of marriage certificates to their parents' homes.

Zunaira Rasheed, who is 11, vanished from her home on August 5. Her mother sold everything she owned to pay a man to trace her -- but all she got in return was a marriage certificate signed

by a Muslim cleric in Lahore. On it, Zunaira's age was given as 18.

Shamaila Tabassum, 16, was last seen in a car with several Muslim neighbours, on the way, she said, to see her father in hospital after a 'serious accident'. Her family smelled a rat when Shamaila's father came home, in perfect health -- and Shamaila did not. Some days later, a certificate arrived at her parents' home, announcing Shamaila's marriage to one of her Muslim neighbours. The document was dated August 4 -- 12 days before her disappearance. On both certificates, the girls had been given a Muslim name, suggesting they had converted to Islam.

The families' lawyer Khalil Tahir said forcible conversions to Islam are on the increase, but poverty usually prevents Christian families from reporting such cases to the police. He is acting pro bono on these two cases -- cases which the police have still to register under the penal code.

8. Christian Murdered by a Muslim

June 27, 2007

<http://www.persecution.net/news/pakistan95.html>

Patras Masih was shot and killed in Lahore in the early morning of June 27. According to a July 23 report from Sharing Life Ministry Pakistan, Masih was working overtime at a factory when he received a cell phone call. When he went to the main gate to meet with a Muslim colleague, he was gunned down. According to Masih's father, the Muslim man had pressured Masih to convert one month prior to his death. Masih is survived by his parents and was an only child.

9. Christian Future in Pakistan Reconsidered

June 17, 2007

<http://www.mnnonline.org/article/10074>

Current Pakistani protests over the British knighthood of author Salman Rushdie have raised fears over the future of Christians in the country. Pakistani Religious Affairs Minister Ejaz-ul-Haq told Parliament that the British honor contributes to "insulting Islam" and may lead to terrorism.

Meanwhile, a mob attack on evangelicals last week appears to be symptomatic of religious hatred which seemingly has heightened. On June 17, approximately forty Muslim men armed with guns, axes and wooden sticks attacked several believers while they were preparing for an evangelistic meeting at a Salvation Army church in the village of Bismillahpur Kanthan.

Glenn Penner of [Voice of the Martyrs-Canada](#) describes it as a matter of constant harassment. "Pakistani Christians face this on a daily basis--not being able to get decent work or facing discrimination in the workplace, if they can find jobs at all. Persecution isn't just incidents; it's an environment as well, and Pakistani Christians feel very much under pressure."

Christians injured in the attack were forced to leave the hospital after only a few hours of treatment, and doctors under-reported their wounds due to pressure from the militants. Police initially refused to file a complaint against the attackers and did so only after lobbying efforts from local Christians. Several Christians have fled the area in fear of further attacks.

Penner urges prayer that Christians in Pakistan will not give in to fear. "It's a symptom of Christians who were attacked because they were involved in evangelistic work. They had been threatened. They had been told to cancel this evangelistic meeting. When they refused to do so, they were attacked. This is, unfortunately, not uncommon in Pakistan."

10a. Girl Raped by Muslims

Easter, 2007

<http://www.persecution.net/news/pakistan86.html>

A 12-year-old Christian girl, Shaheena Masih, was kidnapped and raped by four Muslim men on Easter Day in the city of Lahore, Punjab province, Pakistan, according to an April 23 report from the All Pakistan Minorities Alliance.

Shaheena stayed home from an Easter prayer service at a local church, Kings Revival Church, in order to take care of her ailing father. At approximately 10: 00 a.m., her father asked her to go out and get him some juice. On her way to a shop, she was kidnapped by four armed men who placed a handkerchief on her mouth until she was unconscious and flung her into a car. The men took her to a factory and locked her in a room, where she was repeatedly raped by the four men over the span of two days. During one of the attacks, one of the perpetrators reportedly said to the others, "Don't hesitate to rape a Christian girl. Even if she will die, no one will get us. Her poor parents cannot pursue us." They eventually left Shaheena at a brothel run by a Muslim lady, who later dropped her off on a street near her home.

One of the attackers, Mohammed Safdar, was caught by police after they raided the factory. Under interrogation, he implicated the others. Only after pressure did the police register a case against the attackers. They are now being pressured to drop the charges and Shaheena's family has been threatened if the case proceeds.

10b. Christian Persecution Escalates in Pakistan as 12-Year-Old is Raped

Easter, 2007

http://www.christiantoday.com/article/christian_persecution_escalates_in_pakistan_as_12yearold_is_raped/10552.htm

A 12-year-old Christian girl was kidnapped and gang-raped by four Muslim men in Lahore, Pakistan, on Easter Day. Less than a week later, a Christian man in Jamshoro district was threatened by a mob following allegations of blasphemy, persecution watchdog Christian Solidarity Worldwide has learned.

According to a report from the All Pakistan Minorities Alliance, Shaheena Masih was kidnapped at around 10am on 8 April as she was going to a shop. The rest of her family were at church, but Shaheena and her elderly father had stayed at home because he was unwell.

On her way to the shops, four men grabbed Shaheena and placed a handkerchief over her mouth. She fell unconscious, but when she woke up she found herself in a factory. The four men raped her, and then locked her in a room, CSW reports.

One of the rapists allegedly told his accomplices: "Don't hesitate to rape a Christian girl. Even if she dies, no one will get us. Her poor parents cannot pursue us."

According to APMA, while in the locked room Shaheena found a mobile phone lying on the floor, and called her brother. However, while she was talking to him, her kidnappers entered the room, seized the telephone and beat her very badly. She was then taken to a brothel, CSW explains.

Shaheena was rescued by Nishtar colony police officers after her family traced the mobile phone call and located the address of the owner. He confessed to the kidnap, and assisted the police in returning Shaheena to her family.

APMA claims she returned to her home two days after she was kidnapped, “bleeding profusely and in a pathetic condition”. Shaheena was taken to Lahore General Hospital for a medical examination but the police refused to give her family the medical report.

The four men were arrested and the police registered a case against them under Article 496-A/376 of the Pakistan Penal Code. However, CSW has reported that the three were subsequently released and police are reportedly under pressure from the kidnappers not to pursue the case.

In a separate incident, Sattar Masih, aged 28, was charged under Pakistan’s blasphemy laws on 13 April 2007 after a piece of paper with his photograph and insulting words against the Prophet Mohammad in Urdu was allegedly found in the donation boxes outside the mosque in Kotri, Jamshoro district, following prayers.

A Muslim mob marched to Masih’s home and threatened to kill him, but local police intervened and took him to the police station.

Masih has allegedly been tortured into offering a confession, CSW has said, and a case of blasphemy under Sections 295A and 295C of the Pakistan Penal Code have been filed against him.

He told APMA: “How can I write this blasphemous note with my picture and name on it, when I know that the punishment for the blasphemer is death?”

Stuart Windsor, National Director of Christian Solidarity Worldwide, said: “We are deeply shocked and saddened by the rape of this 12 year old girl. We offer our deepest sympathies to Shaheena and her family, and we urge the Pakistani authorities to ensure that justice is done and the perpetrators of this crime be brought to justice. The rape of a little girl is terrible in any circumstances, but it is made all the more horrifying by the fact that she was repeatedly gang-raped on Easter Day, a day which for Christians should be one of celebration.

“We are also deeply disappointed that the Blasphemy law is again being used to target religious minorities in Pakistan, We hope the Pakistani authorities will repeal these unjust laws, which require almost no evidence and therefore are wide open to abuse.”

11. Evangelists Beaten at Muslim Festival

January 26, 2007

<http://www.persecution.net/news/pakistan83.html>

A team of four Pakistani Christian evangelists associated with The Voice of the Martyrs was attacked and beaten at a Muslim festival in Pakpattan, Pakistan on Friday, January 26.

After handing out more than 13,000 Christian tracts, three of the evangelists were beaten by Islamic militants. They were then taken to the police station where they were detained and questioned before being released. The fourth evangelist, who was the team leader, was beaten by a mob of more than 100 Muslims. They dragged him through the crowd before taking him to the local police station. He is reportedly passing blood in his urine and stool as a result of his injuries.

12. Muslims Target Christian Evangelists

February 2006

http://www.cbn.com/CBNnews/CWN/030306Persecution_Pakistan.aspx

The Christian community in Pakistan faces danger every day. Christians are a tiny minority in the Muslim nation, and they're often the target of brutal attacks. But Christians say they're not going to stop serving God. □□ Muslims, outraged over offensive cartoons, began rampaging through Pakistani streets. This time their anger is directed against Denmark and the United States.

But more often than not, when radical Muslims take to the streets in violence, Pakistan's minority of Christians bear the brunt. This is what happened in February, in the town of Sukkur. Radical Muslims burned down two churches, St. Mary's Catholic Church and the St. Savior Church. False rumors that a Christian desecrated a Koran – Islam's holy book - triggered the attacks.

Pakistanis Mumtaz Bibi, Mohan Shazad, and a female evangelist we'll call Esther were all brutally assaulted because of their Christian faith.

Each has a story to tell of persecution at Pakistan's brick kilns. Poor and uneducated, many Pakistani Christians are forced to work in the kilns, and that is where much of the persecution is occurring. This is especially true for those who share their faith with their co-workers.

Eighteen-year-old Mohan Shazad grew up at the brick kilns. Like most workers there, his parents labor from sunrise to sunset making bricks. They earn the equivalent of about 5 U.S. dollars for every thousand bricks made. Each of them can make about 1,000 bricks per week. In a good week, the family will earn approximately 10 dollars.

Mohan says he longed to be used by God. At the urging of his pastor, he began to sell Christian literature at the brick kilns. Both Muslims and Christians alike bought the publications. But the Muslim brick kiln owner didn't like Mohan's evangelistic outreach. Mohan told me, "He urged my father to stop me from selling the Christian literature and he threatened my father saying, 'If something happens to Mohan, you are responsible for that. I am not responsible.'"

Last September, at sunset, as Mohan returned home, two masked men jumped out from a sugar cane field. One sliced into Mohan's left arm with an axe. Mohan survived the attack, but his arm

had to be amputated. He says the attack will not prevent him from continuing his ministry. Mohan said, "This is just a test from God. I've decided to sell Christian literature for the rest of my life – even if they cut off my other arm. If they cut off my legs and I cannot walk, I'll somehow find a way."

Mumtaz Bibi has a similar story. She was unable to walk for more than a year. This worker was brutally beaten when the son of another kiln owner attacked her because she and her family left work at Christmastime to attend church services.

Ray Thorne is with the Voice of The Martyrs. Thorne said "He did it to her because she was a Christian and did not want her worship Jesus Christ." In spite of this, she and her family made a conscious decision to go and worship God during Christmas. That is why she was beaten and had her leg broken.

Pakistani Christians are a small minority - only about 2 percent - in a nation dominated by Islam. But that dominance hasn't deterred another brick kiln worker named Esther from sharing the Good news with her Muslim co-workers. Esther started a Sunday school class in the courtyard of her home at the kiln. Muslim children were among those in attendance. Esther said, "Their parents agreed to send them. We taught them about Christianity. We also showed them the *Jesus* Film and they sang Christian songs."

The song Esther sings is a song of blessings. She sings it when she enters homes to pray and minister to the brick kiln villagers. She sings, "Greetings ... we come in peace, in the name of Jesus. We've given our lives and everything we have for Him." Esther's ministry angered the kiln owner. He repeatedly warned her to stop leading Bible study and prayers, because too many Muslims were being attracted to these events. Each time Esther refused. She said the Christians can not stop because daily prayer is a crucial part of their faith.

In September 2005, while Esther was home alone, the brick kiln owner abducted her. He said he would teach her a lesson and then proceeded to brutally beat and rape her. Despite her suffering, Esther remains firm in her Christian faith. She says she will continue to share the Gospel with Pakistani Muslims.

Esther told us, "God often tests the people He loves. He did that with Job and this is my test. And like Job, I will remain faithful in the midst of persecution." Esther is no longer working at the brick kilns. She has left the area and is ministering elsewhere. She says as long as there is more of this radical rioting and persecution in Pakistan, there'll be an even greater need for her to continue teaching the Gospel.

13. Muslims Target Christian Evangelists

September 2005

http://www.cbn.com/CBNnews/CWN/030306Persecution_Pakistan.aspx

The Christian community in Pakistan faces danger every day. Christians are a tiny minority in the Muslim nation, and they're often the target of brutal attacks. But Christians say they're not

going stop serving God. □□Muslims, outraged over offensive cartoons, began rampaging through Pakistani streets. This time their anger is directed against Denmark and the United States.

But more often than not, when radical Muslims take to the streets in violence, Pakistan's minority of Christians bear the brunt. This is what happened in February, in the town of Sukkur. Radical Muslims burned down two churches, St. Mary's Catholic Church and the St. Savior Church. False rumors that a Christian desecrated a Koran – Islam's holy book - triggered the attacks.

Pakistanis Mumtaz Bibi, Mohan Shazad, and a female evangelist we'll call Esther were all brutally assaulted because of their Christian faith.

Each has a story to tell of persecution at Pakistan's brick kilns. Poor and uneducated, many Pakistani Christians are forced to work in the kilns, and that is where much of the persecution is occurring. This is especially true for those who share their faith with their co-workers.

Eighteen-year-old Mohan Shazad grew up at the brick kilns. Like most workers there, his parents labor from sunrise to sunset making bricks. They earn the equivalent of about 5 U.S. dollars for every thousand bricks made. Each of them can make about 1,000 bricks per week. In a good week, the family will earn approximately 10 dollars.

Mohan says he longed to be used by God. At the urging of his pastor, he began to sell Christian literature at the brick kilns. Both Muslims and Christians alike bought the publications. But the Muslim brick kiln owner didn't like Mohan's evangelistic outreach. Mohan told me, "He urged my father to stop me from selling the Christian literature and he threatened my father saying, 'If something happens to Mohan, you are responsible for that. I am not responsible.'"

Last September, at sunset, as Mohan returned home, two masked men jumped out from a sugar cane field. One sliced into Mohan's left arm with an axe. Mohan survived the attack, but his arm had to be amputated. He says the attack will not prevent him from continuing his ministry. Mohan said, "This is just a test from God. I've decided to sell Christian literature for the rest of my life – even if they cut off my other arm. If they cut off my legs and I cannot walk, I'll somehow find a way."

Mumtaz Bibi has a similar story. She was unable to walk for more than a year. This worker was brutally beaten when the son of another kiln owner attacked her because she and her family left work at Christmastime to attend church services.

Ray Thorne is with the Voice of The Martyrs. Thorne said "He did it to her because she was a Christian and did not want her worship Jesus Christ." In spite of this, she and her family made a conscious decision to go and worship God during Christmas. That is why she was beaten and had her leg broken.

Pakistani Christians are a small minority - only about 2 percent - in a nation dominated by Islam. But that dominance hasn't deterred another brick kiln worker named Esther from sharing the Good news with her Muslim co-workers. Esther started a Sunday school class in the courtyard

of her home at the kiln. Muslim children were among those in attendance. Esther said, "Their parents agreed to send them. We taught them about Christianity. We also showed them the *Jesus* Film and they sang Christian songs."

The song Esther sings is a song of blessings. She sings it when she enters homes to pray and minister to the brick kiln villagers. She sings, "Greetings ... we come in peace, in the name of Jesus. We've given our lives and everything we have for Him." Esther's ministry angered the kiln owner. He repeatedly warned her to stop leading Bible study and prayers, because too many Muslims were being attracted to these events. Each time Esther refused. She said the Christians can not stop because daily prayer is a crucial part of their faith.

In September 2005, while Esther was home alone, the brick kiln owner abducted her. He said he would teach her a lesson and then proceeded to brutally beat and rape her. Despite her suffering, Esther remains firm in her Christian faith. She says she will continue to share the Gospel with Pakistani Muslims.

Esther told us, "God often tests the people He loves. He did that with Job and this is my test. And like Job, I will remain faithful in the midst of persecution." Esther is no longer working at the brick kilns. She has left the area and is ministering elsewhere. She says as long as there is more of this radical rioting and persecution in Pakistan, there'll be an even greater need for her to continue teaching the Gospel.