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Pakistan

International Religious Freedom Report 2006

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The country is an Islamic republic. Islam is the state religion and the constitution requires that laws be consistent with Islam. The constitution states that "subject to law, public order and morality, every citizen shall have the right to profess, practice, and propagate his religion;" however, in practice the Government imposes limits on freedom of religion. Freedom of speech is constitutionally "subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interest of the glory of Islam." The country was created to be a homeland for Muslims, although its founders did not envisage it as an Islamic state.

The Government took some steps to improve the treatment of religious minorities during the period covered by this report, but serious problems remained. The Government failed to protect the rights of religious minorities. Discriminatory legislation and the Government's failure to take action against societal forces hostile to those who practice a different faith fostered religious intolerance and acts of violence and intimidation against religious minorities.

Due to the 1974 constitutional amendment declaring them non-Muslim, the Ahmadiyya community continued to face legal bars to the practice of its faith. While other minority religious communities generally were able to worship freely, their members faced governmental discrimination. Members of certain Islamic schools of thought also claimed governmental discrimination. While law enforcement personnel allegedly abused religious minorities in custody, there were no reports of deaths while in custody during the reporting period. Security forces and other government agencies did not adequately prevent or address societal abuse against minorities.

Specific government policies that discriminate against religious minorities include the use of the "anti-Ahmadi laws", the blasphemy laws, and the Hudood Ordinances. In 1984, the Government added Section 298(c), commonly referred to as the "anti-Ahmadi laws", to the penal code. The section prohibits Ahmadis from calling themselves Muslims or posing as Muslims, from referring to their faith as Islam, from preaching or propagating their faith, from inviting others to accept the Ahmadi faith, and from insulting the religious feelings of Muslims. The blasphemy laws provide the death penalty for defiling Islam or its prophets; life imprisonment for defiling, damaging, or desecrating the Qur'an; and ten years' imprisonment for insulting the religious feelings of any citizen. These laws are often used to intimidate reform-minded Muslims, sectarian opponents, and religious minorities, or to settle personal scores. The Hudood Ordinances impose elements of Qur'anic law on both Muslims and non-Muslims and different legal standards for men and women.

The provincial government in the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) continued to pass directives and legislation in accordance with the conservative Islamic vision of its supporters. Despite the Hisba Bill's passage by the NWFP Provincial Assembly in 2005, the Supreme Court overturned the bill, declaring it to be unconstitutional.

During the reporting period, the Government maintained its public calls for religious tolerance, worked with moderate religious leaders to organize programs on sectarian harmony and interfaith understanding, maintained its ban on and actively attempted to curb the activities of sectarian and terrorist organizations, implemented a registration scheme for Islamic religious schools known as madrassahs, and proceeded with reform of the public education curriculum designed to end the teaching of religious intolerance. On July 1, 2006, President Musharraf instructed the Council on Islamic Ideology (CII) to prepare a revised Hudood Ordinance that eliminates discriminatory treatment of women and minorities not later than August 2006. In addition, the president ordered the release of all women detained under the current ordinance. According to local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), approximately 700 women had been released by the end of the period covered by this report.

Relations between religious communities were tense. Societal discrimination against religious minorities was widespread and societal violence against such groups occurred. Societal actors, including terrorist and extremist groups and individuals, targeted religious congregations. More than 110 deaths accrued from sectarian violence, including terrorist attacks by Lashkar-i-Jhangvi (LJ), during the period covered by this report. Large numbers of victims came from both Sunni and Shi'a sects. The Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal (MMA), a coalition of Islamist political parties, continued in its political rhetoric to call for the increased Islamization of the government and society. At the end of the period covered by this report, the MMA led the opposition in the national assembly, held a majority in the NWFP Provincial Assembly, and was part of the ruling coalition in Balochistan.

However, some members of the MMA made efforts to eliminate their rhetoric against Christians, Sikhs, Hindus,

Buddhists, and Parsis. Under government pressure, many of its leaders joined various interfaith efforts to promote religious tolerance. Religious leaders, representing the country's six major Shi'a and Sunni groups, issued a religious injunction in May 2005 banning sectarian violence and the killing of non-Muslims. While there was a decline in sectarian violence during the previous reporting period, this reporting period's levels remained unchanged. Sectarian violence and discrimination continued despite contrary calls from the Government, Islamic religious leaders, and some parts of the MMA. Anti-Ahmadi and anti-Semitic rhetoric continued unabated, although rhetoric against Ismaili followers of the Aga Khan was largely abandoned.

The U.S. government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government as part of its overall policy to promote human rights. During the period covered by this report, U.S. embassy officials closely monitored the treatment of religious minorities and took a number of steps to improve their treatment. As part of its education reform initiative, the U.S. government continued to help the Education Ministry revise its curriculum, including eliminating the teaching of religious intolerance. Embassy officials remained engaged with all parties involved in madrassah reform to encourage similar changes. Embassy officials pressed members of parliament and the Government to revise blasphemy laws and the Hudood Ordinances to minimize abuses. The embassy also expanded contacts with all religious groups to promote moderation, end sectarian strife and religiously motivated violence, and support efforts at interfaith dialogue.

Section I. Religious Demography

The country has an area of 310,527 square miles, and its population was approximately 162 million. Official figures on religious demography--based on the most recent census, taken in 1998--showed that approximately 96 percent of the population or 148.8 million persons were Muslim, 2.02 percent or 2.44 million persons were Hindu, 1.69 percent or 2.09 million were Christian, and 0.35 percent or 539,000 were "other," including Ahmadis.

The majority of Muslims in the country were Sunni. Ten percent or approximately 14.9 million were Shi'a. The Shi'a claimed these figures were inaccurate and that at least 20 percent of the Muslim population were Shi'a followers, split between the Qom (approximately 40 percent) and Najaf (approximately 60 percent) schools of thought. Government estimates on Shi'a counted approximately 750,000 Ismailis, most of whom were spiritual followers of the Aga Khan. An estimated 80 thousand Ismailis belonged to the Bohra or other smaller schools of thought. Shi'as were found nationwide but had population concentrations in Karachi, Gilgit, and parts of Balochistan. Ismailis were found principally in Hunza, Karachi, and Baltistan. The majority Sunni Muslim community was divided into three main schools of thought (Brailvi, Deobandi, and Ahl-e-Hadith) and a socio-political movement, the Jamaat Islami (JI), which had its own theology, schools, and mosques. Ahl-e-Hadith adherents comprised, at most, 5 percent of Muslims, and were concentrated in Punjab. No reliable figures on JI adherents existed, as its membership always claimed adherence to another school. Its adherents, however, were generally found in urban centers. Brailvi and Deobandi leaders both claimed that their schools comprised up to 80 percent of the overall Muslim population. Most disinterested observers believed that the Brailvi remained the largest school, approximately 60 percent of all Muslims, with the Deobandi at approximately 20 percent but growing. The Brailvi were the dominant majority in Sindh and Punjab. Deobandi were generally found in the Pashtun belt from northern Punjab, across the NWFP, and into northern Balochistan, although there were increasing numbers in Karachi and the Seraiki areas of Punjab.

Several smaller self-described Muslim groups existed, most notably approximately 200 thousand Zikris found in Gwadar, Balochistan. Most Sunnis considered Zikris to be non-Muslims due to their unique religious ceremonies, including a separate Hajj held in Turbat, Balochistan. Ahmadis have been officially declared non-Muslim due to their belief that a prophet came after Prophet Muhammad to revive the religion. Ahmadis have boycotted the census since 1974, rendering official numbers inaccurate. They claimed at least 2 million adherents centered on their spiritual town of Chenab Nagar, Punjab (referred to as Rabwah by Ahmadis).

Non-Muslims were officially 4 percent of the population, although their leaders claimed the actual figure was approximately 10 percent. Christians, officially numbered at 2.09 million, claimed to have 4 million members, 90 percent of whom lived in Punjab. The largest Christian denomination was the umbrella Protestant Church of Pakistan, a member of the Anglican Communion. Roman Catholics were the second-largest group, and the remainder belonged to various evangelical denominations. The Catholic diocese of Karachi estimated that 120 thousand Catholics lived in Karachi, 40 thousand in the rest of Sindh, and 5 thousand in Quetta, Balochistan. A few tribal Hindus of the lower castes from interior Sindh have converted to Christianity. Hindus were officially numbered at 2.44 million adherents, but their leaders claimed an actual membership of approximately 4 million. Most Hindus lived in Sindh, where they comprised approximately 8 percent of the population. Parsis, Sikhs, and Buddhists each had approximately 20 thousand adherents, while the Baha'i claimed 30 thousand. The tiny but influential Parsi community was concentrated in Karachi. Some tribes in Balochistan and NWFP practiced traditional animist religions.

Less than 0.5 percent of the population was silent on religion or claimed not to adhere to a particular religious group. Social pressure was such that few persons would claim not to be affiliated with any religion.

No data were available on active participation in formal religious services or rituals. Religion often played an important part in daily life. Most Muslims offered prayers on Friday, Islam's holy day. Many also prayed at least once during the five prayer times each day. During the month of Ramadan, even many less observant Muslims fasted and attended services. Approximately 70 percent of English-speaking Catholics worshiped regularly; a much lower percentage of Urdu speakers did so.

Many varieties of Hinduism were practiced. Hindu shrines and temples were scattered throughout the country, although most of them were used as residences. Attendance at religious services was much greater during Hindu festivals, such as Diwali and Holi.

The Sikh community regularly held ceremonial gatherings at sacred places in Punjab. Prominent places of Sikh pilgrimage included Nankana Sahib (where the founder of the Sikh religion, Guru Nanak, was born in 1469), Hasan Abdal (a shrine where an imprint of his hand is kept), and Kartar Poora (also known as Daira Baba Nanak Sahib) in Narowal District (where Guru Nanak died).

Parsis, who practice the Zoroastrian religion, had no regularly scheduled congregational services except during a ten-day religious festival in August called Naurooz ("new day"). All Parsis were expected to attend these services; most reportedly did. During the rest of the year, individuals offered prayers at Parsi temples.

Foreign missionaries operated in the country. The largest Christian mission group engaged in Bible translation for the Church of Pakistan. An Anglican missionary group fielded several missionaries to assist the Church of Pakistan in administrative and educational work. Catholic missionaries, mostly Franciscan, worked with persons with disabilities.

Section II. Status of Religious Freedom

Legal/Policy Framework

The constitution establishes Islam as the state religion. It also states that adequate provisions shall be made for minorities to profess and practice their religions freely; however, in practice the Government imposes limits on freedom of religion, particularly on Ahmadis.

Due to Ahmadis not accepting that Prophet Muhammad was the final prophet of Islam, a 1974 constitutional amendment declares this self-described Islamic community to be non-Muslim. In 1984, the Government added Section 298(c), commonly referred to as the "anti-Ahmadi laws", to the penal code. The section prohibits Ahmadis from calling themselves Muslims or posing as Muslims, referring to their faith as Islam, preaching or propagating their faith, inviting others to accept the Ahmadi faith, and insulting the religious feelings of Muslims. The constitutionality of Section 298 (c) was upheld in a split-decision supreme court case in 1996. The punishment for violation of the section is imprisonment for up to three years and a fine. The Government has blocked similar movements to restrict both Zikris and Ismaili followers of the Aga Khan. Other religious communities were generally free to observe their religious obligations; however, religious minorities are, in some places, legally restricted from public display of certain religious images and, due to discriminatory legislation, are often afraid to profess their religion freely.

Freedom of speech is subject to "reasonable" restrictions in the interests of the "glory of Islam." The consequences for contravening the country's "blasphemy laws," are the death penalty for defiling Islam or its prophets; life imprisonment for defiling, damaging, or desecrating the Qur'an; and ten years' imprisonment for insulting another's religious feelings. To end the filing of frivolous charges, the Government enacted a law in January 2005 that requires senior police officials to investigate any blasphemy charges before a complaint is filed. In addition, any speech or conduct that injures another's religious feelings, including those of minority religious groups, is prohibited and punishable by imprisonment. However, in cases where the religious feelings of a minority religion were insulted, the blasphemy laws were rarely enforced and cases rarely brought to the legal system.

The Hudood Ordinances criminalize rape, extramarital sex, property crimes, alcohol, and gambling. They apply equally to Muslims and non-Muslims. Hudood violations can be tried on either Qur'anic or secular standards of evidence. If Qur'anic standards are used, Muslim and non-Muslim and male and female testimony carries different weight, and harsh Qur'anic punishments can be applied. No successful cases have been brought under this standard. Cases have been successfully prosecuted under secular standards, in which testimony has equal weight, and jail terms and fines have been applied. In January 2005, the Government adopted new legislation requiring a court order prior to detention of women on Hudood charges. Approximately 246 women were imprisoned under the Hudood Ordinances as of the end of the reporting period. On July 1, 2006, President Musharraf instructed the CII to prepare a revised Hudood Ordinance that would eliminate discriminatory provisions against women and minorities not later than August 2006. President Musharraf ordered the release of all women imprisoned under the Hudood Ordinances at the end of the reporting period.

Under the Anti-Terrorist Act, any action, including speech, intended to stir up religious hatred is punishable by up to seven years of rigorous imprisonment. Under the act, bail is not to be granted if the judge has reasonable grounds to believe that the accused is guilty; however, the law is applied selectively.

Pressure from societal, religious, or political leaders routinely prevented courts from protecting minority rights. These same pressures forced justices to take strong action against any perceived offense to Sunni Islamic orthodoxy. Discrimination against religious minorities was rarely placed before the judiciary. Courts would be unlikely to act objectively in such cases. Resolving cases is very slow; there is generally a long period between filing the case and the first court appearance. Lower courts are frequently intimidated and therefore, delay decisions, and refuse bail for

fear of reprisal from extremist elements. Bail in blasphemy cases is almost always denied by original trial courts on the logic that since defendants are facing the death penalty, they are likely to flee. Defendants can appeal the denial of bail (and many do), but bail is often times not granted by the high court or the supreme court in advance of the trial.

The country's penal code ostensibly incorporates a number of Islamic law (Shari'a) provisions, applying to all, Muslims and non-Muslims, that allow victims to carry out physical retribution. The judicial system encompasses several different court systems with overlapping and sometimes competing jurisdictions that reflect differences in civil, criminal, and Islamic jurisprudence. The federal Shari'a court and the Shari'a bench of the supreme court serve as appellate courts for certain convictions in criminal court under the Hudood Ordinances, and judges and attorneys in these courts must be Muslims. The federal Shari'a court also may overturn any legislation judged to be inconsistent with the tenets of Islam; however, in March 2005, the supreme court chief justice, issuing a stay in the Mukhtaran Mai rape case, ruled that the federal shari'a court had no jurisdiction to review a decision by a provincial high court even if the Shariat court should have had initial appellate jurisdiction, marking a blow to the power of the Shariat appellate benches.

The Government designates religion on passports and national identity documents. In November 2004 the Government began issuing new machine-readable passports without the religion column. A conservative backlash and Islamist party protests led the Government to reverse course and restore the column in March 2005. Those wishing to be listed as a Muslim on such documents had to swear a belief in the finality of the prophethood and denounce the Ahmadiyya movement's founder as a false prophet and his followers as non-Muslims.

The constitution provides for the "freedom to manage religious institutions." In principle, the Government does not restrict organized religious groups from establishing places of worship and training members of the clergy. In practice, however, religious minorities suffered from restrictions on this right.

State funding was provided for construction and maintenance of mosques and for Islamic clergy. The provincial and federal governments have legal responsibility for certain religious properties belonging to minority communities that were abandoned during partition. Minority communities claimed the Government did not spend adequate funds on their protection and upkeep. The Government collected a 2.5 percent tax on all Sunni Muslims, which was distributed to Sunni mosques and charities. No similar service was provided for other religious groups.

The Government nationalized all church schools and colleges in Punjab and Sindh in 1972. The Government of Sindh oversaw a piecemeal denationalization program from 1985 to 1995, and the Government of Punjab began a similar program in 1996. In 2001 the federal Government and the courts ordered the provincial governments to move forward with a complete denationalization process. Teachers' unions strongly objected, fearing for their job security, and have attempted to tie up denationalization in the court system. The 2003 denationalization of Forman Christian College, arguably the most prominent Christian-founded educational institution in the country, and its successful December 2003 handover to its original owners, the Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA), helped remove the legal hurdles. On May 9 and 10, 2005, the Sindh Government handed over St. Patrick's and St. Joseph's colleges to the Catholic Board of Education. The cases of Gordon College in Rawalpindi and Murray College in Sialkot (both PCUSA) remained unresolved.

Government policies do not afford equal protection to members of majority and minority religious groups. The Ministry of Religious Affairs, which is mandated to safeguard religious freedom, claims it spends 30 percent of its annual budget to assist indigent minorities, repair minority places of worship, set up minority-run small development schemes, and celebrate minority festivals. However, religious minorities questioned these figures, observing that localities and villages housing minority citizens go without basic civic amenities. The ministry had on its masthead a Qur'anic verse: "Islam is the only religion acceptable to God."

Sunni Muslims appeared to receive favorable consideration in government hiring and advancement. In addition, all those wishing to obtain government identification documents as Muslims had to declare an oath on belief in the finality of the prophethood, a provision designed to discriminate against Ahmadis. Initial voter registration no longer required such an oath, but the Election Commission claimed that any Muslim registrant whose religion was challenged by the public would have to take the oath. As a result, Ahmadis continued to boycott elections.

Several Muslim religious holidays were considered national holidays, including Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Azha, Ashura (the ninth and tenth days of the month of Muharram) and the Birth of the Prophet Muhammad. Most businesses had limited hours during the month of Ramadan. Non-Muslim holidays were not observed, although Mohammad Ali Jinnah's birthday was celebrated as a holiday on Christmas Day.

The constitution safeguards "educational institutions with respect to religion." No student can be forced to receive religious instruction or to participate in religious worship other than his or her own. The denial of religious instruction for students of any religious community or denomination is also prohibited.

"Islamiyyat" (Islamic studies) was compulsory for all Muslim students in state-run schools. Although students of other faiths legally were not required to study Islam, they were not provided with parallel studies in their own religions. In some schools, non-Muslim students could study "Akhlaiyyat," or Ethics. In practice, teachers induced many non-Muslim students to complete Islamic studies.

The constitution specifically prohibits discriminatory admission to any governmental educational institution solely on the basis of religion. Government officials stated that the only factors affecting admission to governmental educational institutions were students' grades and home provinces; however, students must declare their religion on application forms. Muslim students must declare in writing that they believe in the unqualified finality of the prophethood of Muhammad, a measure designed to single out Ahmadis. Non-Muslims must have their religion verified by the head of their local religious community.

Parents were free to send children to religious schools, at their expense, and many did.

Private schools were free to teach or not teach religion as they choose. Many private schools run by minority religious groups catered to students from both the Islamic and non-Islamic communities and therefore chose to teach Islamic studies as well as studies in a minority religion.

Islamic private schools known as madrassahs came to the forefront after September 11, 2001, due to their perceived use as training and recruiting grounds for extremist and terrorist organizations. Subsequent studies showed that only a small fraction of schools fell into this category. In accordance with the 2002 Madrassah Registration Ordinance, all madrassahs were required to register with the Government or with one of the five independent madrassah boards (*wafaqs*), cease accepting foreign financing, and accept foreign students only with the consent of their government. In July 2005, President Musharraf announced a deadline of December 31, 2005, for the expulsion of all foreign students from madrassahs and their direct registration with the Government. According to the Interior Ministry, 95 percent of foreign students had departed by the deadline, some following deportation proceedings organized by the ministry and registration of all schools remained in progress. According to the Religious Affairs Ministry, approximately 11 thousand out of an estimated 13 thousand to 15 thousand madrassahs had registered by the end of April 2006. No unregistered madrassahs were shut down at the end of the period covered by this report. In December 2005, President Musharraf issued a second amendment to the Societies Registration Act following negotiations between the Government and the five *wafaqs*. This amendment laid out the framework for cooperative registration of madrassahs with the Government, including provision of financial and educational data to the Government, and prohibited the teaching of sectarian or religious hatred and violence. The Government and the independent madrassah boards agreed to a phased introduction of modern subjects, including math, English, and science at all madrassahs. While the boards have required their affiliated madrassahs to move forward, disbursement of promised government funding to support the process has been slow. The *wafaqs* that oversaw most of the country's madrassahs had already agreed with the Government to undertake substantial reforms. All *wafaqs* mandated the elimination of teaching that promoted religious or sectarian intolerance and terrorist or extremist recruitment at madrassahs. They appointed inspectors to ensure compliance. All inspectors mandated that affiliated madrassahs supplement religious studies with modern subjects, including English, math, and science. Phased-in approaches were underway at each *wafaq's* members. Bureaucratic delay continued to stymie release of government funds for this purpose. *Wafaqs* also restricted foreign private funding of madrassahs. Examination concerns remained under active discussion with the Government. Some unregistered and Deobandi-controlled madrassahs in the FATA and northern Balochistan continued to teach extremism. Similarly, the Dawa schools run by Jamat-ud-Dawa continued such teaching and recruitment for Lashkar-e-Tayyiba, a designated foreign terrorist organization.

The MMA-led provincial government in NWFP continued to pass directives and legislation in accordance with the conservative Islamic vision of its supporters. If implemented, many of these initiatives would impose Islamic law on all citizens, regardless of religious affiliation. Existing laws include: antiobscenity measures, under which advertising has been torn down and stores have been fined for selling certain western recordings; a complete ban on alcohol; a requirement for civil servants to pray five times daily, which has never been enforced; bans on public displays of women's photos and dancing, also not enforced; and a Shari'a bill that mirrored one already in place at the federal level since 1991 which requires that all existing legislation, including in the education and financial sectors, be reviewed in light of Shari'a. On August 31, 2005, the supreme court declared unconstitutional large sections of a second MMA-sponsored provincial Hisba bill, under which a provincial authority is appointed and empowered to create, implement and enforce regulations to promote Islamic laws and values, and prohibited its implementation.

The Government, at its most senior levels, continued to call for interfaith dialogue and sectarian harmony as part of its program to promote enlightened moderation. It was instrumental in organizing the inaugural meeting of the World Council of Religions, an interfaith body of clerics and religious scholars devoted to interfaith dialogue. Clergy from all Islamic schools of thought and minority faith communities, with the exception of the Ahmadis, who were not invited, joined the council. The Religious Affairs Ministry and the Council on Islamic Ideology, a constitutionally mandated government body, continued to sponsor interfaith and inter-sectarian workshops and meetings. The Religious Affairs Ministry played an active role in negotiating the inter-sectarian injunction against sectarian violence and the killing of non-Muslims in the country issued in May 2005. The primary responsibility of the Religious Affairs Ministry is to organize participation in the Hajj and other Muslim religious pilgrimages and to distribute the *zakaat* (the religious tax on Sunni Muslims).

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

The Government discouraged and severely restricted public practice of the Ahmadiyya faith both by law and in practice. The 1974 constitutional amendment and 1984 changes to the Penal Code Section 298(c), commonly referred to as the "anti-Ahmadi laws", were used by the Government and anti-Ahmadi religious groups to target and harass

Ahmadis. The vague wording of the provision that forbids Ahmadis from "directly or indirectly" posing as Muslims enabled mainstream Muslim religious leaders to bring charges against Ahmadis for using the standard Muslim greeting form and for naming their children Muhammad. An Ahmadiyya Muslim community report claimed that during the period covered by this report, twenty-six Ahmadis faced criminal charges under religious laws or because of their faith: four under the blasphemy laws, seventeen under Ahmadi-specific laws, and four under other laws but motivated by their Ahmadi faith. At the end of April 2006, five Ahmadis were in prison on blasphemy charges and three were in prison on murder charges that the Ahmadiyya community claimed were falsely brought due to their religious beliefs.

The Government gave tacit endorsement to Islamic clerics' campaigns against the perceived dangers of the Ahmadiyya faith by permitting the annual conference on the finality of the prophethood. Ahmadis were prohibited from holding any public conferences or gatherings, and since 1983 they have been denied permission to hold their annual conference. Ahmadis were banned from preaching and were prohibited from traveling to Saudi Arabia for the Hajj or other religious pilgrimages. Since July 2003, anyone wanting to travel on the Hajj must denounce the founder of the Ahmadiyya faith as a "cunning person and an imposter" on a printed oath that is part of the government registration process, thereby effectively preventing Ahmadis from fulfilling this tenant of the Islamic faith. Additionally, Ahmadi publications were banned from public sale; however, Ahmadis published religious literature in large quantities for a limited circulation.

While the constitution guarantees the right to establish places of worship and train clergy, in practice, Ahmadis suffered from restrictions on this right. According to press reports, the authorities continued to conduct surveillance on the Ahmadis and their institutions. Several Ahmadi mosques reportedly have been closed; others reportedly have been desecrated or had their construction stopped. For example, on June 18, 2005, police ordered the Ahmadiyya community in Pindi, Bhatian, Hafizabad, Punjab to stop construction on a mosque on a site acquired for the purpose some twenty years previously. Police were reportedly acting on the request of the local Islamic cleric.

The Government did not prohibit, restrict, or punish parents for raising children in accordance with religious teachings and practices of their choice, nor did it take steps to prevent parents from teaching their children religion in the privacy of the home.

There was no law against apostasy; however, societal pressure against conversion from Islam was so strong that any conversion almost certainly would take place in secret.

There are no legal requirements for an individual to practice or affiliate nominally with a religion. The Government did not penalize or legally discriminate against those not affiliated with any religion. In practice, societal pressure was such that very few persons would admit to not belonging to a religious group since doing so would likely lead to significant discrimination.

Religious belief or specific adherence to a religion was not required for membership in the ruling party or the moderate opposition parties, which did not exclude members of any religion. The MMA had non-Muslim members of parliament; however, in practice, each of its constituent parties generally restricted membership to its sectarian adherents. It would be virtually impossible for Ahmadis or Jews to join the MMA or its constituent parties. In practice, neither Ismailis nor Zikris could join the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazlur Rehman, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Sami ul-Haq, or JI. Shi'a claimed they were not welcome in JI, although JI leadership denied the assertion. The political arm of the sectarian extremist group Sunni Tehrik accepted only Brailvi members.

The Government did not restrict the formation of political parties based on a particular faith, religious belief, or interpretation of religious doctrine. The Government monitored the activities of various Islamist parties and affiliated clergy due to prior links to terrorist and extremist organizations. Deobandi and Ahl-e-Hadith leaders claimed the Government harassed their members due to political stances. Brailvis and Ahl-e-Hadiths claimed the Government, hoping to appease political extremists, favored the Deobandis and JI for jobs in state mosques, Islamic studies faculties at state schools, and government jobs with religious responsibilities. The Government denied such charges.

Missionaries were allowed to operate in the country, and proselytizing, except by Ahmadis, was permitted as long as there is no preaching against Islam and the missionaries acknowledge that they are not Muslim; however, all missionaries were required to have specific visas, valid from two to five years and allowing only one entry into the country per year. Only "replacement" visas for those taking the place of departing missionaries were available, and long delays and bureaucratic problems were frequent.

The constitution allows "reasonable" restrictions on freedom of speech for the "glory of Islam." The penal code includes specific provisions that restrict speech and action against other religions. These "blasphemy laws", as they are collectively known, were often used to harass and intimidate reform-minded Muslims, sectarian opponents, and religious minorities. They were also used to settle personal scores and business rivalries. While no accused persons have been executed under this law, the accused often spend years in prison. Blasphemy suspects were not routinely granted bail and were often convicted by trial courts following threats to judges by extremists. In contrast to previous reporting periods, there was no record of deaths by inmates or security forces within prison. At the end of the reporting period, twenty-two remained in detention awaiting trial on blasphemy charges, and nine were in prison following conviction.

In 2005, the Government enacted a law that requires senior police officials to investigate any blasphemy charges before a complaint is filed. Human rights organizations had called for such changes since 2000. Initial indications on the law's impact were positive. There were only twenty-four blasphemy cases filed during the reporting period, a decline from fifty-four during the previous years' reporting period. According to figures compiled by local NGOs, between 1986 and April 2006, 695 persons were accused of blasphemy: 362 Muslims, 239 Ahmadis, 86 Christians, and 10 Hindus. In many cases filed during the year, the accused were either released on bail or charges were dropped. Of the 695 individuals accused of blasphemy at the end of the reporting period, 22 remained in detention awaiting trial on blasphemy charges, and 9 were in prison following conviction.

The Government does not restrict religious publishing in general; however, Ahmadi religious literature is banned. Publishing any criticism of Islam or its prophets or insults to another's religion is prohibited. Insults against minority religious groups were rarely prosecuted. For example, the weekly newspaper *Ghazwa* published in Azad Jammu Kashmir with the financial support of the terrorist organization Jamaat-ud-Dawa was not prosecuted for publishing offensive, insulting, and inaccurate articles about earthquake relief efforts undertaken by NGOs linked to the Ahmadiyya community. Christian scriptures and books are readily available, but Christians have reported concerns about pressure leading to self-censorship. While most Christian books are imported, there are Christian publishing houses operating within the country. Ahmadis charge that they suffer from restrictions on their press. For example, on August 7, 2005, the Punjab provincial government ordered two Ahmadi printing presses in Jhang, Punjab, shut down. Police took the editor of the Ahmadiyya community magazine *al-Fazl*, Sami Khan, into protective custody and later released him. The move followed complaints from a local Islamic leader that the publications insulted the religious sentiments of Muslims. The provincial home department ultimately gave permission for the presses to reopen.

In July 2003, Tanvir Ahmed Asif and Abdul Qadir were charged with blasphemy, as well as violating the anti-Ahmadi law, for writing a book which explained the situation of Ahmadis around the country. In November 2004, the Peshawar High Court overturned the blasphemy conviction of former Frontier Post copy editor Munawar Mohsin. Mohsin had published a letter to the editor in 2001 that was critical of the Prophet Muhammad. There have been no new developments in this case.

Publication of the Qur'an must include the original Arabic text. In May 2005, the Government confiscated Urdu translations of the Qur'an published in Canada that did not include the original Arabic.

Foreign books must pass government censors before being reprinted. Books and magazines may be imported freely but are subject to censorship for objectionable sexual or religious content. In November 2004, an Islamabad magistrate ordered the destruction of an issue of *Newsweek* containing objectionable photos alongside an article on the killing of Theo Van Gogh.

Many local and district governments restricted the distribution and display of certain religious images, such as the Holy Trinity and Jesus Christ; however, such images were readily available in other parts of the country.

The Government funded and facilitated Hajj travel but had no similar program for pilgrimages by religious minorities. In addition to prohibiting Ahmadi travel for the Hajj, the Government de facto prevented Baha'is from traveling to their spiritual center in Israel due to nonrecognition of that country.

The Government designates religion on passports and national identity documents. Those wishing to be listed as a Muslim on such documents had to swear a belief in the finality of the Prophethood and denounce the Ahmadiyya movement's founder as a false prophet and his followers as non-Muslims, resulting in further discrimination and harassment against the community.

Links with coreligionists in other countries were maintained relatively easily. The Catholic Church and the Church of Pakistan reported no difficulties. Ismailis communicated regularly with their headquarters; their officials, including Prince Karim Aga Khan, visited the country. Under reciprocal visa arrangements, Indian Hindu and Sikh leaders and groups traveled frequently to the country.

The constitution requires that the country's president and prime minister must be Muslims. All senior officials, including members of parliament, must swear an oath to protect the country's Islamic identity. Government employees are not prohibited from displaying or practicing any elements of their faith. In NWFP, provincial regulations require all civil servants to pray five times daily; however, this was not enforced.

Sunni Muslims appeared to receive favorable consideration in government hiring and advancement. Religious minorities, including Shi'a, contended that the Government persistently discriminated against members of their communities in hiring for the civil service and in admissions to government institutions of higher learning. Promotions for all minority groups appeared limited within the civil service. These problems were particularly acute for Ahmadis, who contended that a "glass ceiling" prevented them from being promoted to senior positions and that certain government departments refused to hire or retain qualified Ahmadis.

Religious minorities claimed the Government failed to provide their areas with equal public services and criticized the

Religious Affairs Ministry for failing to take adequate steps to improve their socioeconomic development. The ministry rejected these charges, claiming it spent 30 percent of its annual budget on minorities.

Ahl-e-Hadith and Brailvi leaders contended that their groups were underrepresented in the hiring of clergy for government mosques and on the Islamic faculties of government colleges. They charged that members of JI dominated both the Religious Affairs Ministry and the Islamiyyat wing of the Education Ministry. Ahl-e-Hadith complained of under-representation on government-sponsored religious boards such as the Zakat and Ush'r Council.

Ahmadis continued to contend that they were denied voting rights through requirements that they register as non-Muslims. Members of the public can challenge any Muslim on the voter rolls to take an oath swearing to the finality of the prophethood of Muhammad and denouncing the founder of the Ahmadiyya movement. For this reason, Ahmadis refused to register. There are reserved seats for religious minority members in both the national and provincial assemblies. Such seats are allocated to the political parties on a proportional basis determined by their overall representation in the assembly.

Members of minority religious groups volunteered for military service in small numbers, and there were no official obstacles to their advancement; however, in practice non-Muslims rarely, if ever, rose above the rank of colonel and were not assigned to politically sensitive positions. A chaplaincy corps provided services for Muslim soldiers, but no similar services were available for religious minorities.

The public school curriculum was Islamized during the 1980s. This included the adoption of a number of textbooks that included derogatory remarks against minority religious groups, particularly Hindus and Jews, and the generalized teaching of religious intolerance as acceptable. The curriculum continued to undergo a major revision to eliminate such teachings and to remove Islamic teaching from secular subjects. The Education Ministry cooperated with international donors and NGOs in this multiyear effort and professed its intention to proceed despite objections from conservative religious elements. Students were free to practice their faith. Many Ahmadis and Christians reported discrimination in applying to government educational institutions due to their religious affiliation. Christians and Ahmadis reportedly have been denied access to medical schools, and societal discrimination against Ahmadis persisted at many universities.

All religious groups experienced bureaucratic delays and requests for bribes when attempting to build houses of worship or to obtain land. These were similar to what nonreligious groups faced. Ahmadis were prevented from building houses of worship. Sunni Muslim groups built mosques and shrines without government permission and at times in violation of zoning ordinances.

The provincial and federal governments had legal responsibility for the upkeep of religious property abandoned during partition. Disputes with minority communities over the property and its upkeep may be reviewed by civil courts. While the Government funded the upkeep and repair of some properties, minority communities continued to charge that its efforts in many cases were inadequate.

Criminal law allows offenders to offer monetary restitution to victims and allows victims to carry out physical retribution rather than seek punishment through the court system. This supposedly Islamic provision applied to all. Minorities claimed that minority offenders faced far higher, and minority victims received far lower, amounts of monetary restitution than did Muslims.

Also supposedly based on Islamic law, a fact much in dispute, the Hudood Ordinances were used to discriminate against women. Women were often spuriously charged with extramarital sex under this law and forced to remain in detention for long periods awaiting trial. To address this issue, the Government adopted new legislation in January 2005, requiring a court order prior to detention of women on such Hudood charges. Human rights activists charged that this change was insufficient and continued to campaign for the repeal of the Hudood Ordinances. On July 1, 2006, President Musharraf instructed the CII to prepare a revised Hudood Ordinance to eliminate such discriminatory provisions against women not later than August. In addition, he ordered the release of all women detained under the current ordinance.

Civil marriages do not exist; marriages are performed and registered according to one's religion. The marriages of Hindu or Christian men remain legal upon conversion to Islam but are considered dissolved for marriages of Hindu or Christian women or of other non-Muslims that were performed under the rites of the previous religion. Children born to Hindu or Christian women who do not separate from their husbands, yet convert to Islam after marriage, are considered illegitimate unless their husbands also convert. Children of non-Muslim men who convert are not considered illegitimate. Under Islamic law, a Muslim man can marry a woman of the Book (Jews or Christians) but cannot marry a Hindu woman. Muslim women may only marry Muslim men. There is no law concerning the children of a Muslim man and a Muslim woman who convert to another religion, nor is there a law dealing with a Muslim woman whose husband converts to a minority religion.

Abuses of Religious Freedom

Police torture and mistreatment of those in custody remained a serious and common problem throughout the country and at times resulted in extrajudicial killings. It was usually impossible to ascertain whether religion was a factor in cases in which religious minorities were victims; however, both Christian and Ahmadi communities claimed their members were more likely to be abused. Prison conditions, except those for wealthy or influential prisoners, were extremely poor. Non-Muslim prisoners generally were accorded poorer facilities than Muslim inmates. There were no reports of police or inmates killing those accused of blasphemy in custody during the reporting period.

The policeman charged in the May 2004 death-in-custody of Samuel Masih, a Christian, remained in detention pending trial. Charges were pending against two officers charged in the July 26, 2004, torture of Manu Kholi, a Hindu.

While murder charges were pending against police officers involved in the August 2004 death-in-custody of Nasir Mukhtar, a Christian, no arrests were made during the period covered by this report.

Human rights groups charged that police in Nowshera severely mistreated Christian Yousaf Masih following his June 28, 2005, detention on spurious blasphemy charges. They contended that ongoing mistreatment in prison led to a severe deterioration in his health. Police released Masih on August 8, 2005, and charges against him were dropped.

On April 7, 2006, two prison staff at the central jail in Sahiwal, Punjab, joined Muslim inmates in attacking four Christian prisoners who had gathered for prayer and Bible study. Prison staff stripped the Christians of their clothing and physically tortured them. The four were then locked up in solitary confinement. No action was taken against the prison officials.

The Government was not responsible for disappearances based on a person's religion; however, police did not always effectively respond to complaints of disappearances of members of minority religious groups. Police made no arrests in the November 2004 kidnapping and killing of eight-year-old Samuel Sethi, a Christian, and in the February 2005 kidnapping of thirteen-year-old Fozia Zafar, also a Christian, who remained missing at the end of the period covered by this report.

There were no reports of security forces engaging in rape or mutilation based on religion.

Minority religious groups continued to complain of police inaction in cases of attacks by extremists against congregants and property belonging to minorities.

On November 4, 2005, after a dispute between Christians and Muslims in the village of Niale da Wara in the District of Sheikhpura, in Manawala, thirteen armed men attacked Pastor Indrias Masih, beating him severely. Women and children were also reportedly attacked. The police made no arrests in this case during the period covered by this report.

On the evening and night of November 12, 2005, a mob of approximately 2,500, urged on by local clergy, attacked and destroyed Christian churches, religious properties, and houses in the town of Sangla Hill. According to witnesses, police took no action to control or disperse the mob or to protect Christian property.

The blasphemy laws were routinely used to harass religious minorities and reform-minded Muslims and to settle personal scores or business rivalries. Individuals were detained and convicted on spurious charges. Judges and magistrates, seeking to avoid a confrontation with or violence from extremists, often continued trials indefinitely. As a result, those accused of blasphemy often faced lengthy periods in jail and were burdened with increased legal costs and repeated court appearances, before acquittal, generally at the appellate level. At the end of the reporting period, twenty-two remained in detention awaiting trial on blasphemy charges, and nine were in prison following conviction.

There were no developments during the reporting period in the case of Ranjha Masih, who continued to serve a life sentence on blasphemy charges.

In July 2004, a Christian girl was accused of throwing a copy of the Qur'an into a local dump. A Muslim mob threatened to burn down the family residence and tried to kill the girl. Local elders and police intervened and arrested the girl and her father. They were eventually released and the family moved to ensure their safety.

In October 2004, blasphemy charges were filed against Mohammad Ali, a Muslim and owner of a paper mill, for allegedly desecrating the Qur'an. Police dismissed the charges.

In November 2004, Muhammad Iqbal, an Ahmadi, received a life sentence following his conviction on blasphemy charges for allegedly referring to Prophet Muhammad as a false prophet. His appeal was pending at the end of the period covered by this report.

In December 2004, blasphemy charges were filed against Shahdat Ali, an Ahmadi, and his two alleged accomplices for allegedly setting fire to the Qur'an. Police dismissed the charges without trial.

In December 2004, Anwar Masih, a Christian, was acquitted of blasphemy charges. Upon his release, members of Lashkar-i-Mujahideen vowed to kill him. Masih remained in hiding at the end of the period covered by this report.

In April 2005, Ashiq Nabi was killed by a mob of approximately 400 individuals after an Islamic religious leader issued an edict declaring Nabi an infidel whose punishment for allegedly desecrating a copy of the Qur'an should be death. Police did not make any arrests in this case.

On June 29, 2005, police in Nowshera, NWFP, arrested illiterate Christian janitor Yousaf Masih on blasphemy charges. Witnesses claimed Masih had burned pages of the Qur'an while disposing of trash for his employer. Following his arrest, a mob of between 300 and 500 protesters destroyed a Hindu temple and houses belonging to Christian and Hindu families in the city. While police arrested some perpetrators after the fact, under the terms of a deal negotiated between Islamic religious leaders and the Hindu/Christian communities, police released all of them without charge. Police released Masih from custody on bail on August 6, 2005, and dropped charges against him. Human rights groups claimed that he and his family were in hiding for fear of Islamic extremist groups that threatened to kill him.

On September 2, 2005, in Gandalf, Swabi, NWFP, police arrested a Hindu couple, Chaman Lal and his wife Krishna Wanti, on charges of defiling the Qur'an. Locals alleged that they had seen the couple throw a Qur'an into a field near their home. Lal had converted to Islam seven years previously but readopted Hinduism at his wife's insistence. The Peshawar High Court granted bail to Lal after he converted to Islam in the presence of the chief justice. The Mardan Anti-Terrorism Court, on December 12, 2005, granted bail to Wanti after she made a similar conversion. The presiding Anti-Terrorism Court judge faced judicial reprimand from the supreme court for granting the bail under these conditions when Wanti had a bail petition pending with the supreme court.

On September 9, 2005, in Lahore, Younis Masih, a Christian, confronted a local Islamic cleric about loud music accompanying a night time religious ceremony. During the course of their altercation, Masih allegedly insulted the Prophet Muhammad. The cleric's supporters reportedly severely beat Masih before leaving him unconscious at his residence. The next morning, police arrested Masih on charges of blasphemy. In response to the blasphemy allegations, a mob of approximately 200 Muslims attacked the Christian community where Masih resided, damaging houses and a local church. Masih remained in detention, facing blasphemy charges at the end of the reporting period.

On November 11, 2005, in Sangla Hill, Nankana Sahib, Punjab, Yousaf Masih, a Christian, fought with a local Muslim over a gambling debt. In the course of the altercation, the Muslim accused Masih of setting fire to a warehouse containing copies of verses from the Qur'an. Masih departed the scene; however, the following day, the local Muslim demanded that police charge Masih with blasphemy in violation of established procedures. Local Islamic clerics began issuing announcements over their loudspeakers that a Christian had defiled the Qur'an and calling for retribution. In response, a mob of approximately 2,500 formed and attacked Christian areas of the town, forcing local residents to flee and burning 3 churches, 2 parish houses, a convent, a Christian high school, and the houses of 3 Christian families. Police reportedly took no action to disperse or subdue the mob. Islamic religious leaders issued death threats against local Christians should they return. Police ultimately arrested eighty-eight protesters on charges of destruction of property and Masih on charges of blasphemy. As part of an understanding that local officials negotiated, Christians were allowed to return, and those accused of the violence were released. On February 12, 2006, courts dropped all charges against Masih for lack of evidence.

On April 11, 2006, an appellate court acquitted Christian school teacher Pervez Masih of blasphemy charges and released him after five years in detention.

In addition to experiencing prosecution under the blasphemy laws, Ahmadis were often charged, detained, and convicted under the so-called anti-Ahmadi laws. According to Ahmadiyya publications, police charged seventeen Ahmadis under these laws during the year. All were released by the end of the reporting period. Ahmadi leaders also claimed that the Government used regular sections of the penal code against their members for religious reasons. They claimed three Ahmadis were in detention on such charges at the end of the reporting period. The three had been convicted of murder and sentenced to death. Their cases were under appeal at the end of the period covered by this report.

In July 2004, a Muslim mob attacked Ghulam Ahmad Tahir, an Ahmadi youth, following an anti-Ahmadi conference. Tahir was charged with assault and was later released. In August 2004, Muhammad Ehsan, a mentally ill Ahmadi, was charged with possession of Ahmadi literature and climbing the roof of a mosque. Ehsan was later released. In November 2004, Zulfiqar Goraya, an Ahmadi, was charged under the anti-Ahmadi law for posing as a Muslim by distributing wedding cards containing a common Islamic greeting printed on them. Goraya was also released.

On September 9, 2005, a local rickshaw driver in Faisalabad, Punjab, parked his vehicle in front of the home of the head of the local Ahmadiyya community. The vehicle was painted with insulting, anti-Ahmadi slogans. The two sons of the local community head confronted the rickshaw driver and told him to move his vehicle. The rickshaw driver physically attacked the two Ahmadis. Police intervened and charged the driver and the two Ahmadis with assault. Charges were pending at the end of the reporting period, but the Ahmadis were released on bail.

On October 12, 2005, in Mianwali, Punjab, police and postal officials jointly charged Irfan Ahmad, an Ahmadi subscriber to the community magazine *Khalid*, with receiving a banned publication. The community magazine is not, in fact, banned, although certain editions have been. Ahmad was released on bail pending trial.

According to media reports and local Ahmadi leaders, on June 23, 2006, in Mirpur Khas, Sindh, at the instigation of two mullahs, police registered a criminal case against five Ahmadis following a complaint by an individual that the accused had tried to convert him. Two of the accused, Maula Bakhsh and Muhammad Akbar, who were fresh converts, were arrested by police. The other three went into hiding and applied for bail before arrest. At a court hearing, Baksh and Akbar admitted that they had converted but denied that they had tried to convert the complainant, claiming that they had merely defended their own beliefs in a conversation on religious matters. The magistrate rejected the request for bail by Baksh and Akbar, an action local Ahmadis attributed to immense social pressure generated by the case; this decision was under review by the district court at the end of the period covered by this report. The other three accused applied for bail in the higher sessions court, which granted the plea. A hearing on their case was scheduled for September 5, 2006.

According to media reports, on June 24, 2006, a mob attacked an Ahmadi locality in Jhando Sahi Village in Daska near Sialkot and injured two persons following allegations that some Ahmadis had desecrated the Qur'an. The mob also set fire to a few vehicles, two shops, and a few houses belonging to Ahmadis. The district police arrived at the scene and arrested seven Ahmadis. They also removed approximately seventy-five Ahmadis from the village for fear of more attacks. Four Ahmadis were booked under section 295 C of the penal code for Qur'an desecration, and two were arrested and held in the Sialkot District jail. Later, hundreds of persons belonging to surrounding villages demonstrated against the alleged desecration and chanted anti-Ahmadi slogans and damaged an Ahmadiyya house of worship. The situation in the village remained tense and a large contingent of police was deployed to avert any more damage. Members of the Ahmadi community claim that the men were burning their own journals and papers.

The Government did not impose onerous financial penalties due to religion.

The Government did not abuse converts to minority religious groups. Converts to the Ahmadiyya community were often accused of blasphemy, violations of the anti-Ahmadi laws, or other crimes. The Government arrested and prosecuted such individuals. Conversion to other minority religious groups generally took place in secret to avoid a societal backlash.

Conservative Islamists (generally Deobandis or JI) claimed the Government unjustly searched their homes, schools, and mosques as part of its continued crackdown on extremist and terrorist groups. The Government denied such allegations, noting the complainants all had previous ties to banned groups, making them reasonable targets.

Minority communities charged the Government was complicit in seizures of their property by Muslims and that the government policy of dismantling illegal slum settlements disproportionately targeted minority communities. These groups also accused the Government of inaction in cases of attacks by extremist groups on places of worship belonging to minority groups.

In July 2004, local government officials in the Bahawalpur District allotted land occupied by twenty-six Hindu families to local Muslims. The Hindu families were evicted from the land.

Following July 2004 protests, police in Chenab Nagar (Rabwah) continued to retain property of the local Ahmadiyya community on which a makeshift mosque had once existed.

On November 29, 2005, Catholic Bishop Anthony Lobo of Islamabad-Rawalpindi alleged that the Government evicted approximately forty Christian families of approximately 200 persons from their homes in Joharabad, Sindh. The Government was giving these families' homes to victims from the October 8, 2005, earthquake.

The Government did not subject individuals to forced labor or enslavement based on religious beliefs; however, minority community leaders charged that the Government failed to take adequate action to prevent bonded labor in both the brick-making and agricultural sectors. Christians and Hindus were disproportionately victims of this practice. In June 2005, police raided sites in Sheikhpura district, Punjab Province, and freed more than 300 mostly Christian workers performing forced labor in brick kilns.

Islamists charged without proof that government forces damaged mosques and religious schools during military operations in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). The Government vigorously denied the allegations.

Forced Religious Conversion

Forced and coerced conversions of religious minorities to Islam occurred at the hands of societal actors. Religious minorities claimed that government actions to stem the problem were inadequate. Several human rights groups have

highlighted the increased phenomenon of Hindu girls, particularly in Karachi, being kidnapped from their families and forced to convert to Islam.

Kidnapping charges were pending against a Muslim man who abducted a fifteen-year-old Christian, Samina Ishaq, and forced her to convert in August 2004.

On September 2, 2005, Ghulam Abbas and Mohammad Kashif reportedly drugged and kidnapped Riqba Masih, a Christian woman, from the village of Chak, Punjab, and took her to Lahore. The kidnappers repeatedly raped Masih and threatened to kill her and her family if she did not convert to Islam but Masih refused. On September 3, 2005, another unidentified accomplice took Masih into custody and detained her until September 6, 2005, raping her repeatedly. Later that day, the kidnappers took Masih to Faisalabad and abandoned her at a bus stop from where she made her way to her parents' home. Police arrested Ghulam Abbas and Mohammad Kashif and charged them with kidnapping and rape. Following an October 24, 2005, hearing in which a Faisalabad court denied bail, Kashif escaped from the courtroom and remained at large at the end of the reporting period. Abbas remained in police custody, and police are attempting to find Kashif.

On October 18, 2005, Sanno Amra and Champa, a Hindu couple residing in the Punjab Colony, Karachi, Sindh returned home to find that their three teenage daughters had disappeared. After inquiries to the local police, the couple discovered that their daughters had been taken to a local madrassah, had been converted to Islam, and were denied unsupervised contact with their parents.

On February 16, 2006, six unknown assailants attacked well-known Christian singer A. Nayyar in Lahore. After beating and robbing him, they forced him to recite the prayer for conversion to Islam.

On March 3, 2006, a trial court convicted Maulvi Ghulam Rasool and Mohammed Tayyab on torture and murder charges, stemming from the 2004 abduction, torture, and death of student Javed Anjum, and sentenced them to twenty-five years in prison. Maulvi Rasool kidnapped Anjum and held, tortured, and killed him at his religious school in an attempt to convert him to Islam.

There were no reports of forced conversion of minor United States citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States. However, there were reports of the refusal to allow such citizens to return to the United States.

Persecution by Terrorist Organizations

There were several incidents involving the abuse of specific religious groups carried out by individuals or organizations designated as terrorist organizations by the secretary of state under Section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act and by armed sectarian extremist groups with strong links to such organizations.

Nationwide, the sectarian violence situation remained unchanged over the period covered by this report, except for notable improvements occurring in the Federally Administered Northern Areas.

Targeted assassinations of clergy remained a key tactic of several groups including, the sectarian organization Sipah-i-Sahaba (SSP), banned under the law, the terrorist organization Lashkar-i-Jhangvi (LJ), and the sectarian organizations Sunni Tehrike (ST) and Sipah-i-Mohammad (SMP). SSP and LJ targeted both Shi'as and Brailvis, whereas ST and SMP targeted Deobandis.

In October 2004 unknown gunmen in Karachi killed Deobandi Mufti Jameel Ahmed Khan and an associate in their vehicle. The assassination might have been linked to a Deobandi-versus-Shi'a cycle of violence playing out at the same time in Punjab.

On January 8, 2005, Deobandi extremists shot and killed Shi'a cleric Agha Ziauddin Rizvi in Gilgit, Federally Administered Northern Areas, leading to demonstrations in which Shi'a and Sunni sectarian opponents assaulted each other and Ismaili followers of the Aga Khan. SSP and SMP moved into the area following the demonstrations.

On May 30, 2005, unknown assailants kidnapped, severely tortured, and killed JI senior official Aslam Mujahid in Karachi. The motives were unknown, but the killing appeared to be linked to political violence.

On July 9, 2005, unidentified men believed to be linked with ST abducted, shot, and killed Deobandi cleric Maulana Shamsuddin in the Orangi Town area of Karachi, Sindh.

On July 17, 2005, unidentified, motorcycle-riding gunmen, believed to be linked to SMP, ambushed the vehicle of Deobandi cleric Mufti Muhammad Ahmed Madni in Karachi. Mufti Madni was seriously injured and his son Maulana Abdulla Ahmed Madni was killed.

On December 2, 2005, unidentified motorcycle-riding gunmen shot and killed Shi'a cleric Allama Badar-ud-Din in Dera Murad Jamali, Balochistan. LT claimed responsibility for the attack.

On April 18, 2006, unidentified motor-cycle riding gunmen, believed to be linked to SSP, ambushed the vehicle of Shi'a cleric Fazl Hussain Alvi and his driver in Faisalabad, Punjab. The assailants' gunfire caused the vehicle's tank to explode, killing both occupants.

Both LJ and SSP also continued attacks on houses of worship and religious gatherings during the period covered by this report.

In October 2004, a cycle of sectarian violence in the Punjab, which had not been seen for several years, broke out. LJ and SM attacked Shi'a and Deobandi places of worship, respectively, killing many and injuring hundreds.

On May 30 2005, a Shi'a mosque in Karachi was attacked; five persons were killed and at least thirty injured. The Government termed it a sectarian attack and blamed LJ. These cases have all been effectively closed. In addition, there appeared to be a new wave of attacks on celebrations at Sufi shrines in 2005, likely led by Deobandi extremists who long had termed the celebrations "idolatrous." In March and May 2005, many died and hundreds were injured when the shrine to Pir Syed Rakheel Shah and the Bari Imam Shrine were bombed.

On October 7, 2005, two armed assailants opened fire during Friday prayer at an Ahmadiyya mosque in Mong village, Punjab, killing eight and injuring nineteen. The Government attributed responsibility to LJ.

On February 9, 2006, a suicide bomber, linked with SSP, attacked a Shi'a religious procession commemorating the month of Muharram in Hangu, NWFP, killing at least forty and injuring at least fifty. Three more died in sectarian clashes that followed the attack on February 10 and 11.

On April 11, 2006, a suicide bomber attacked a Brailvi religious commemoration of the Prophet's birthday in Nishtar Park, Karachi, Sindh, killing fifty seven persons, including prominent Brailvi clerics and ST leaders, and injuring more than fifty. LJ and SSP have been implicated in the attack, despite unfounded assertions by JI attributing responsibility to its political rival the Muttahida Quami Movement.

Armed clashes between SSP and SMP in the Northern Areas' capital of Gilgit in July, August, September, and October 2005, left at least twenty-five dead, including two members of the Rangers paramilitary force, and at least forty-three injured. Following the final sectarian clash on October 13, 2005, the Government launched a major crackdown against both SSP and SMP in the region. Police and paramilitary forces arrested the leadership of both groups as well as clerics backing the respective organizations. These leaders remained in detention in Rawalpindi at the end of the reporting period. Violence in Gilgit has abated after the crackdown.

Unlike in the previous reporting period, there were no incidents of terrorist or extremist attacks against Ismaili followers of the Aga Khan. During the last period, Ismaili followers of the Aga Khan came under threat of societal violence for the first time. Deobandi extremist groups conducted attacks against community members in Gilgit and vandalized schools and health clinics in the Northern Areas and the neighboring Chitral district of NWFP that the Aga Khan Foundation had established. In addition, in December 2004, two Ismaili employees of the Aga Khan Health Service Office in Chitral were killed.

Al-Qa'ida-linked organizations maintained networks in the country, and its supporters periodically issued anti-Semitic statements. Hafiz Saeed, leader of Lashkar-e-Tayyiba, a designated foreign terrorist organization, consistently issued statements calling for holy war against Jews and Hindus. The Government placed Saeed under house arrest from February 17 to 20, 2006, and then restricted his travel within the country to prevent his agitation during protests against cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad published in a Danish newspaper.

On February 21, 2006, a court sentenced eleven members of Jandullah, an extremist group linked to al-Qa'ida, to death for their involvement in a June 2004 attack on the Corps Commander Karachi. The same individuals remained under trial for the January 2004 attack on the Pakistan Bible Society Office in Karachi.

In accordance with the Anti-Terrorist Act, the Government banned the activities of and membership in several religious extremist and terrorist groups. The Anti-Terrorist Act allows the Government to use special streamlined courts to try violent crimes, terrorist activities, acts or speech designed to foment religious hatred, and crimes against the state; however, many of the groups that the Government banned remained active.

Improvements and Positive Developments in Respect for Religious Freedom

The Government took steps to bolster religious freedom during the period covered by this report.

There was a significant decline in new blasphemy and Hudood cases, approximately 44 percent and 164 percent from

the previous reporting period, respectively. It appears that this decline could be due to the implementation of the 2005 revision to the procedures for the implementation of both the blasphemy laws and the Hudood Ordinances. Under the new procedures, senior police officials must investigate all blasphemy cases before charges are filed, and a court order must precede women's detention under the extramarital sex provisions of the Hudood Ordinances. Human rights campaigners had agitated for such changes since 2000 and continued to press for outright repeal of the laws. On July 1, 2006, President Musharraf instructed the CII to revise the Hudood Ordinances to address such concerns by August, and ordered the release of women detained under the ordinances. Approximately 700 women have already been released, many of whom were detained on Hudood charges.

The Government maintained its existing ban on terrorist and sectarian organizations known to be active in the country. The assets of such organizations remained frozen, and their identified leaders were under surveillance. Although most of the banned organizations continued to try and operate, the Government policies of monitoring, periodic raids on safe houses, periodic detention of leaders and activists, and denial of financial resources were effective in diminishing such groups' impact. During the period covered by this report, the Government launched another crackdown against such groups. On July 19 and 20, 2005, police detained approximately 320 individuals believed to have links to terrorist or extremist organizations. The Government released these individuals over the ensuing six-month period. On September 29, 2005, the Government dismantled the LJ Islamabad/Rawalpindi cell and arrested Asif Choto, a senior LJ leader. On March 29, 2006, the Government detained Maulana Fazal-ur-Rehman Khalil, head of the designated terrorist organization Harakat-ul-Mujahideen, after he checked into an Islamabad hospital for medical treatment.

The Government remained in active negotiations with the sectarian boards, or *wafaqs*, which oversee the vast majority of the country's Islamic religious schools, or madrassahs. During the period covered by this report, the Government expelled foreign students from the country's madrassahs and arrived at agreement on registration provisions that require madrassahs to share information on finances and curricula. The Government included in the registration ordinances a legal ban on the teaching of sectarianism, religious hatred, and/or militancy. While it was too early to measure the success of these reforms, it was generally held that the impact would be positive. Wafaqs oversaw an ongoing phase-in of modern subjects such as English, math, and science at the government's request and continued to utilize inspectors to ensure that their member madrassahs adhered to bans on the teaching of religious and sectarian hatred. Wafaqs complied with government reporting requirements on audited accounts. Despite these improvements, some challenges remain. The Religious Affairs Ministry and the *wafaqs* continued to discuss examination requirements without resolution, and the Madrassah Reform Committee failed to make progress in disbursement of \$100 million (approximately 5.8 billion rupees) in available funds to qualified madrassahs.

Draft legislation for the creation of a National Human Rights Commission remained with the national assembly. The Government continued to work with the international community to revise the draft legislation to ensure a strong, independent monitoring body.

The Government continued to include human rights awareness as part of its police training program.

The World Council of Religions in Islamabad continued with its efforts to promote increased interaction and dialogue among various religious groups. The council, assisted by leaders from Islamic, Christian, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, and Parsi communities and backed by President Musharraf, continued to organize sessions throughout the country with the support of local and provincial governments. In addition, the Religious Affairs Ministry and the Islamic Ideology Council continued to organize a number of smaller intersectoral and interfaith meetings and dialogue sessions. As a result of these meetings, Deobandi and JI religious and political leaders significantly toned down anti-Christian and anti-Hindu rhetoric.

Section III. Societal Abuses and Discrimination

Relations between the country's religious communities remained tense. Violence against religious minorities and between Muslim sects continued. Most believed that a small minority were responsible for attacks; however, discriminatory legislation and the teaching of religious intolerance in public schools created a permissive environment for attacks. Police at times refused to prevent violence and harassment or refused to charge persons who commit such offenses.

Mobs occasionally attacked individuals accused of blasphemy, their family, or their religious community prior to their arrest. When blasphemy and other religious cases were brought to court, extremists often packed the courtroom and made public threats against an acquittal. Judges and magistrates, seeking to avoid a confrontation with or violence from extremists, often continued trials indefinitely. As a result, those accused of blasphemy often faced lengthy periods in jail and were burdened with increased legal costs and repeated court appearances. Religious extremists continued to threaten to kill all those acquitted of blasphemy charges. High-profile accused persons often went into hiding or emigrated after acquittal.

Ahmadi individuals and institutions long have been victims of religious violence, much of which is instigated by organized religious extremists. Ahmadi leaders charged that militant Sunni mullahs and their followers sometimes staged marches through the streets of Rabwah, a predominantly Ahmadi town and spiritual center in central Punjab. Backed by crowds of between 100 and 200 persons, the mullahs reportedly denounced Ahmadis and their founder, a

situation that sometimes led to violence. The Ahmadis claimed that police generally were present during these marches but did not intervene to prevent violence.

In July 2004, unknown assailants attempted to shoot Shahid Ahmad Dar, an Ahmadi, in Lahore. No arrests were made.

In August 2004, following a mob attack, police issued a ban on the construction of a new house of worship for the Ahmadiyya community in Tatlay Aali, Gujranwala. The ban continued during the reporting period.

In August 2004, unknown assailants killed Barkatullah Mangla, an Ahmadi lawyer and president of the Sargodha Ahmadiyya community. Police did not arrest suspects.

In November 2004, Muhammad Ishaq Danish was killed after he became a member of the Ahmadiyya community. Police did not file charges.

In December 2004 a mob attacked the construction site of an Ahmaddiya house of worship in Sahiwal. Police did not file charges.

On September 10, 2005, in Quetta, Balochistan, unknown assailants shot and killed Wasim Ahmad, an Ahmadi, en route to his business. Witnesses claimed that one of the assailants appeared to be a member of a conservative religious organization based on his dress and conduct. Prior to his killing, Ahmad had received threats from various extremist organizations demanding that he convert to Islam.

On February 12, 2006, local Islamic clerics from Rahim Yar Khan, Punjab, held a procession against cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad that had been published in a Danish newspaper. As the protesters came to an electronics shop owned by two Ahmadi brothers, Shakil Ahmad and Tariq Mahmud, clerics pointed out the shop's ownership by Ahmadis and led a group of protestors in attacking the store, damaging glass and inventory. Police, who were present, did not intervene to stop the protestors.

On March 16, 2006, a local Islamic cleric in Chanda Singh Wala, Kasur, Punjab, demanded that police disinter the remains of the daughter of Muhammad Hanif, a member of the local Ahmadiyya community, from the community's Muslim graveyard. Although police initially refused the request, they ultimately complied after further pressure, disinterred the remains, and handed them over to the local Ahmadiyya community for reburial in the separate Ahmadi cemetery.

On March 19, 2006, two unidentified armed men attacked and killed a prominent member of the Ahmadiyya community in Manzoor Colony, Karachi, Sheikh Rafiq Ahmad, at his store. Community leaders believed that the killing was motivated solely by Ahmad's religion.

On April 10 and 11, 2006, the Government permitted the anti-Ahmadi organization Majlis Ahrar Islam to organize a conference in the Ahmadi spiritual center of Rabwah, Punjab. Islamic clerics addressing the conference repeatedly stated that Ahmadis were traitors to Islam and rebels against the country and its constitution. Shari'a law deemed all Ahmadis apostates, and they should therefore be killed. Following the conclusion of the conference, several anti-Ahmadi participating organizations marched through the streets of Rabwah demanding death to Ahmadis.

Ahmadis suffered from societal harassment and discrimination. Even the rumor that someone might be an Ahmadi or had Ahmadi relatives could stifle opportunities for employment or promotion. Most Ahmadis were home-schooled or went to private, Ahmadi-run schools. Ahmadi students in public schools often were subject to abuse by their non-Ahmadi classmates. The quality of teachers assigned to predominately Ahmadi schools by the Government reportedly was poor. In 2002, in response to a question from Islamic clerics, President Pervez Musharraf, who had been accused of favoring Ahmadis, declared that he believed Ahmadis to be "non-Muslims."

Acts of violence and harassment against Christians continued during the period covered by this report.

In August 2004, a portion of a Christian cemetery in Basti Bohar was seized by local Muslims who refused to return it.

In October 2004, unknown assailants twice attempted to bomb a Christian church in Rawalpindi. The police did not make arrests.

In November 2004, a local Muslim leader in Loghur, Kasur demolished Christian houses in violation of a court order. Police took no action in this case.

In March 2005, a mob of approximately 150 individuals attacked a gathering of women at a Christian church in Islamabad, beating the women and destroying property. The police made no arrests.

In March 2005, two assailants attacked Christians as they were leaving Easter services at a church in Lahore. Charges remained pending.

In April 2005, Pastor Shamoor Babar and his Catholic driver, Daniel Emmanuel, were kidnapped and killed. Police made no arrests.

In April 2005, Shahbaz Masih, a Catholic, was assaulted by unknown assailants. Police made no arrests.

On February 3, 2006, Muslim vandals attacked a Catholic church in Kawanlit, district Sialkot. Furniture, windows, and religious books were destroyed. The attack was prompted by a dispute between local Christians and Muslims over a piece of land. A court had issued an order in favor of the Christians immediately before the attack.

Islamic protesters angered over the publication of cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad in the Danish press attacked local Christian institutions. On February 13, 2006, protesters vandalized the missionary-run Edward's College in Peshawar, NWFP, by smashing windows in various buildings. On February 15, protestors in Peshawar, NWFP, damaged St. Michael's Convent School, St. Elizabeth Girls' College and a mission hospital run by the Church of Pakistan. Protesters also damaged a United Presbyterian girls' school in Kasur, Punjab and tried to attack the city's Catholic church but were stopped by police.

On February 16, 2006, Islamic clerics kidnapped Christian cleric Rev. Joseph Prait from the Full Gospel Assemblies. Rev. Prait's abductors held him for five days without food and water, during which time his captors severely beat him and threatened him with death. The kidnappers told Rev. Prait that they were torturing him because Christians had published derogatory cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad in Denmark.

On February 19, 2006, hundreds of Muslims ransacked and burned St. Mary's Catholic Church and St. Xavier Church in Sukkur, Sindh. The attack was reportedly in response to allegations that a Christian convert to Islam, Irfan Gill, had burned part of a Qur'an in an attempt to frame his father-in-law for blasphemy.

On March 1, 2006, a church was set on fire in Sargodha. The building suffered damages, but no one was injured. Minority groups called on the country's Muslim political and religious authorities to stop the violence and punish the culprits.

On March 30, 2006, unknown individuals attempted to burn down a Christian church in Mian Channu, Punjab. Local residents extinguished the fire, but it damaged some of the church's furnishings.

While many Christians belonged to the poorest socioeconomic groups and faced discrimination, the reason might have more to do with ethnic and social factors than with religion. Many poor Christians remained in the profession of their low-caste Hindu ancestors, most of whom were "untouchables." Their position in society, although somewhat better than in the past, did not reflect major progress despite more than one hundred years of consistent missionary aid and development. Christian students reportedly were forced to eat at separate tables in public schools that are predominately Muslim.

Hindus faced societal violence, often directed at their temples, during the period covered by this report. Criminals targeted Hindu businessmen for kidnap, particularly in Karachi. Hindus claimed they were forced to pay ransoms after police did little to recover kidnap victims.

In October 2004, unidentified persons occupied a Hindu temple in Hyderabad. Police took no action to oust the illegal occupiers.

In May 2005, unknown assailants killed Bhagat Mohan Bheel, the caretaker of a Hindu temple, and destroyed temple statues. Police made no arrests.

Societal violence against the Sikh community remained comparatively rare. Charges remained pending against several persons involved in the September 2004 attack on Sikh Gurdwara Junam Asthan in Nankana Sahib.

Ismailis reported that they were the objects of resentment of Sunni Muslims due to the comparative economic advances they had made. The Government did not harass Ismailis; however, they reported that they frequently were pressured to adopt certain practices of conservative Muslims or risk being ostracized socially.

Although there were very few Jewish citizens in the country, anti-Semitic press articles were common in the vernacular press. NGO sources pointed out that since India's 1992 establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel, the media, both mainstream and Islamic, sometimes referred to India as the "Zionist threat on our borders." Nonetheless, the attitude of the media was not reflected in the actions of the Government. In 2005, the Pakistani and Israeli Foreign Ministers met in Istanbul and President Musharraf greeted former Israeli PM Sharon at the United Nations in September 2005. President Musharraf has publicly discussed the possibility of diplomatic recognition of Israel after the

establishment of a Palestinian state. The Government also cooperated in the capture of those responsible for the 2002 abduction and killing of Wall Street Journal correspondent Daniel Pearl.

Some Sunni Muslim groups published literature calling for violence against Ahmadis, Shi'a Muslims, other Sunni sects, and Hindus. Some newspapers frequently published articles that contained derogatory references to religious minorities, especially Ahmadis, Hindus, and Jews. Sermons at mosques frequently railed against Ahmadis, other Muslim groups, and Hindus.

Proselytizing generally was considered socially inappropriate among Muslims; missionaries faced some difficulties due to this perception. For example, some Sunni Muslim groups opposed missionary activities and at times issued verbal threats against missionaries to discourage them from working.

Human rights groups claimed that rape was often used against women to humiliate and dishonor them. Minority rights groups claimed that Hindu and Christian women were especially vulnerable. Due to prosecutions under the Hudood Ordinances and the high social stigma attached to rape, very few cases are reported.

Discrimination in employment based on religion appeared widespread. In particular, Christians had difficulty finding jobs other than those involving menial labor, although Christian activists stated that the employment situation had improved somewhat in the private sector in recent years. Christians and Hindus also found themselves disproportionately represented in the country's most oppressed social group, bonded laborers; illegal bonded labor was widespread. Agricultural, brick-kiln, and domestic workers often were kept virtually as slaves. The majority of bonded laborers in those sectors were non-Muslim. All were subject to the same conditions, whether they were Muslim, Christian, or Hindu. In June 2005, police raided sites in Sheikhpura district, Punjab Province, and freed more than 300 mostly Christian workers performing forced labor in brick kilns. Although the Government removed colonial-era entries for religious affiliation from government job application forms to prevent discrimination in hiring, the faith of some, particularly of Christians and Hindus, often could be ascertained from their names.

Section IV. U.S. Government Policy

The U.S. government discussed religious freedom with the Government as part of its overall policy to promote human rights. U.S. government representatives met and spoke regularly with major Muslim and minority religious groups. Embassy officers also maintained a dialogue with government, religious, and minority community representatives to encourage religious freedom and to discuss problems. Chief concerns during this reporting period included the blasphemy laws, the Hudood Ordinances, curriculum reform in the public education and madrassah education systems, treatment of the Ahmadiyya and Christian communities, and sectarian violence. Embassy officials, including the ambassador, met with leaders from communities of all faiths and NGOs working on religious freedom problems.

The embassy continued to raise concerns about the abuse of the blasphemy laws and Hudood Ordinances with the Government, members of parliament, and officials. Embassy officials participated in a number of seminars that NGOs organized to discuss these concerns with a wide spectrum of stakeholders. During all of these discussions, embassy officials continued to stress the need for the Government to end abusive and excessively harsh implementation of these laws. The new legislation that the Government enacted in January 2005 represented an important positive step in this direction. In addition to general advocacy on the law, the embassy continued to monitor a number of high-profile ongoing blasphemy cases and appeals and provided information to interested parties in the United States.

As part of its overall public education reform program, valued at \$100 million (5.8 billion rupees), the United States provided substantial financial support to the Government's curriculum reform initiative, which included eliminating the teaching of religious intolerance.

Embassy officials regularly monitored progress on madrassah reform and encouraged such progress. During the period covered by this report, the ambassador met with the religious affairs minister to obtain his views on progress toward reform and to urge government cooperation. Senior officials from the U.S. Department of State and U.S. Department of Education also raised concerns about the need for swift reform of the madrassah system with the education minister. Embassy officials encouraged and facilitated study by those involved in madrassah reform of the relationship between religious schools and state authorities in the United States, as a possible model for the country.

The embassy carefully monitored treatment of the Ahmadiyya community. During discussions with Islamic religious leaders, embassy officials urged reconciliation with the Ahmadiyya community and an end to persecution of this minority group. Embassy officials also raised and discussed treatment of the Ahmadis with members of parliament, encouraging an eventual repeal of anti-Ahmadi laws and a less severe application in the interim.

Embassy officials regularly met with religious and political leaders from all major Islamic groups. During these meetings, they raised the need to end sectarian violence and to define a more cooperative relationship between the sects. Embassy officials encouraged interfaith and intersectorian dialogue initiatives, such as the World Council of Religions. In meetings with officials from the Islamic Ideology Council and the Ministry of Religion, embassy officials encouraged them to play an active role in promoting sectarian harmony.

The embassy continued to monitor developments in high profile violence against minorities, such as the Sangla Hills case, and provided information to interested parties in the United States. The embassy also assisted local and international human rights organizations to follow up specific cases involving religious minorities.

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