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## Freedom in the World 2011 - Pakistan

**Capital:** Islamabad

**Population:** 180,808,000

Political Rights Score: 4 \*

Civil Liberties Score: 5 \*

Status: Partly Free

### Explanatory Note

The numerical ratings and status listed above do not reflect conditions in Pakistani-controlled Kashmir, which is examined in a separate report.

### Overview

In 2010, tensions between President Asif Ali Zardari and the judiciary continued, as did efforts by the civilian government and Parliament to exert more control over policy formulation in the face of sustained military interference. A constitutional amendment passed by Parliament in April curtailed the powers of the executive branch over the judiciary, the legislature, and the military, among other provisions. The army's campaigns against Islamist militants led to a range of human rights abuses, displacement of civilians, and retaliatory terrorist attacks across the country. Societal discrimination and attacks against religious minorities and women, as well as the weak rule of law, remained issues of concern.

Pakistan was created as a Muslim homeland during the partition of British India in 1947, and the military has directly or indirectly ruled the country for much of its independent history. As part of his effort to consolidate power, military dictator Mohammad Zia ul-Haq amended the constitution in 1985 to allow the president to dismiss elected governments. After Zia's death in 1988, successive civilian presidents cited corruption and abuse of power in sacking elected governments headed by prime ministers Benazir Bhutto of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) in 1990 and 1996, and Nawaz Sharif of the Pakistan Muslim League (PML) in 1993.

Sharif, who returned to power in the 1997 elections, was deposed in a military coup after he attempted to fire the army chief, General Pervez Musharraf, in 1999. Musharraf appointed himself "chief executive" (and later president), declared a state of emergency, and suspended democratic institutions. The 2002 Legal Framework Order (LFO) gave Musharraf effective control over Parliament and changed the electoral rules to the detriment of opposition parties. The regime also openly promoted progovernment parties, such as the newly formed Pakistan Muslim League Quaid-i-Azam (PML-Q), which

captured the largest share of seats in the 2002 parliamentary elections and led the new government.

While he managed to contain the secular opposition over the next several years, Musharraf was less willing to rein in radical Islamist groups, with which the military traditionally had a close relationship. These groups gradually extended their influence from outlying regions like the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) to major urban centers, carrying out attacks on both military and civilian targets.

Tensions between Musharraf and the increasingly activist judiciary came to a head in 2007 when he suspended Iftikhar Chaudhry, the chief justice of the Supreme Court, sparking mass protests by lawyers and wider political unrest. When the court attempted to rule on the validity of Musharraf's victory in the October presidential election, he again took preemptive action and imposed martial law on November 3, suspending the constitution, replacing much of the higher judiciary, and arresting more than 6,000 civil society activists, political leaders, and lawyers. The state of emergency was lifted in mid-December and an amended version of the constitution was restored, but some restrictions on the press and freedom of assembly remained in place, as did the emasculated judiciary. Following the December 27 assassination of former prime minister Bhutto, parliamentary elections planned for early January 2008 were postponed until February, and Bhutto's widower, Asif Ali Zardari, assumed de facto leadership of the PPP.

The PPP led the February voting with 97 out of 272 directly elected seats in the National Assembly, followed by Nawaz Sharif's PML-N with 71. The ruling PML-Q was routed, taking only 42 seats, and the Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal (MMA), an alliance of Islamic parties, was also severely weakened. At the provincial level, the PML-N triumphed in its traditional stronghold of Punjab, the PPP dominated in Sindh, and the Awami National Party (ANP), a secular and ethnic Pashtun group, won the most seats in North-West Frontier Province (NWFP).

In March 2008, the PPP and PML-N reached a power-sharing deal – under which PPP-backed candidate Yousuf Raza Gilani was elected prime minister – and agreed to the key priorities of reinstating the ousted judges and stripping the president of his power to dissolve Parliament and dismiss the prime minister. Musharraf resigned as president in the face of impeachment efforts in August. Less than a week later, the PML-N ended its coalition with the PPP, accusing it of breaking a promise to immediately reinstate all of the judges after Musharraf's exit; several of the judges were reappointed that month, but Chaudhry was not included. Zardari was thought to oppose the chief justice's return because it could lead to the revival of long-dormant corruption cases against him. In September, Zardari won the indirect presidential election with 481 of the 702 votes cast; 368 national and provincial lawmakers abstained or boycotted the vote. The PML-N candidate received 153 votes, and the PML-Q took 44. In addition, the PPP and its allies gained a plurality in the March 2009 Senate elections.

Zardari, under pressure from the military, the United States, and the PML-N, reinstated Chaudhry as chief justice in March 2009. The Supreme Court soon began dismantling the actions taken by Musharraf, declaring them illegal and calling on Parliament to "regularize" them through ordinary legislation.

During 2010, tensions between the civilian government, the judiciary, and the military persisted. The government faced pressure from the military to replace Zardari, and the judiciary repeated its calls for Zardari's old cases to be reopened. In a number of cases, the military and intelligence agencies attempted to undercut the government's policies and decision making. In a step intended to strengthen the democratic process, Parliament in April unanimously passed the 18th Amendment to the constitution, which among provisions rescinded the power of the president to dismiss Parliament and reduced executive power over appointments to the judiciary, the electoral commission, and the military leadership. At the end of the year, both houses of Parliament also passed the 19th Amendment, strengthening the role of the senior judiciary in making appointments to superior courts and thus neutralizing a potential source of conflict between the executive and judiciary.

Although the military had stepped up its operations against Islamist militants in the FATA and NWFP in 2008, terrorist attacks and other violence continued to be a major concern.

During 2009, the government and militants affiliated with the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP, or Pakistani Taliban) network traded control over Swat and other districts in NWFP, as well as portions of the FATA, with government forces making gains during the year. There was further fighting on the ground in 2010, and substantially accelerated missile attacks by U.S. drone aircraft – aimed at militant leaders – resulted in numerous civilian casualties as well as increasing resentment among the inhabitants of the affected areas. A range of Islamist militant groups continued to stage regular and devastating suicide attacks throughout Pakistan, targeting official buildings, prominent politicians and military personnel, and religious ceremonies and places of worship. Security and governance were also tested by massive floods in August that killed approximately 1,900 people and displaced or otherwise affected around 20 million people. The government struggled to react expeditiously to the disaster, but the military's reputation was strengthened as it took a leading role in providing flood relief.

### **Political Rights and Civil Liberties**

Pakistan is not an electoral democracy. A civilian government and president were elected in 2008, ending years of military rule, but the military continues to exercise de facto control over many areas of government policy. The political environment is also troubled by corruption, partisan clashes, and Islamist militancy, among other problems.

The lower house of the bicameral Parliament is the 342-seat National Assembly, which has 272 directly elected members and additional seats reserved for women (60 seats) and non-Muslim minorities (10 seats), all with five-year terms. The upper house is the 100-seat Senate, most of whose members are elected by the four provincial assemblies for six-year terms, with half up for election every three years. The president is elected for a five-year term by an electoral college consisting of the national and provincial legislatures. The Constitution (18th Amendment) Act unanimously passed by both houses of Parliament in April 2010 dramatically curtails the power of the president by rescinding his right (granted by the 2002 LFO) to unilaterally dismiss the prime minister and the national and provincial legislatures and to impose a provincial state of emergency. The president also loses the power to appoint the head of the army and the chief election commissioner. The reforms were intended to strengthen the premiership and Parliament.

The 2008 parliamentary elections were not completely free and fair. A European Union observer mission noted the abuse of state resources and media, inaccuracies in the voter rolls, and rigging of the vote tallies in some areas. Opposition party workers faced police harassment, and more than 100 people were killed in political violence during the campaign period. However, private media and civil society groups played a significant watchdog role, and despite the irregularities, the balloting led to an orderly rotation of power that reflected the will of the people.

A certain number of legislative seats are reserved for women and religious minorities at the national, provincial, and local levels. In some parts of the country, women have difficulty voting and running for office due to objections from social and religious conservatives, though women won an additional unreserved 16 National Assembly seats in the 2008 elections. At least 17 seats in the Senate are reserved for women, and religious minorities were allotted four seats in the Senate as part of the 18th Amendment. Members of the heterodox Ahmadiyya sect, who consider themselves Muslims but are deemed a non-Muslim religious minority by the constitution, largely boycotted the 2008 elections to protest this official designation. A requirement that all candidates hold either a bachelor's degree or madrassa (Islamic school) qualification was eliminated in following the 2008 elections, though controversy erupted in 2010 over accusations that dozens of sitting politicians had lied about their qualifications to gain office. Several politicians stepped down from their seats, and others faced court cases brought by the Election Commission, none of which had reached a verdict by year's end.

The FATA are governed by the president through unelected civil servants. Elected councils, set up in 2007 with the intention of increasing local representation, have not altered the established decision-making structures. President Asif Ali Zardari in 2009 announced a reform package that would lift a ban on political parties in the tribal areas and rein in the arbitrary judicial and financial powers of the FATA's administration, but the changes had not been implemented at the end of 2010.

Pakistan's government operates with limited transparency and accountability, though this has improved with the resumption of civilian rule. The military has a stake in continuing to influence both commercial and political decision-making processes, in addition to its traditional dominance of foreign policy and security issues. Serving and retired officers have received top jobs in ministries, state-run corporations, and universities, and they enjoy a range of other privileges. Although several thousand active-duty officers were withdrawn from civilian posts in 2008, a tenth of all civilian jobs remain reserved for officers. In a move that some saw as strengthening the army's influence, the government extended the term of the incumbent army chief, General Ashfaq Kayani, by three years in July 2010. The military's Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) has a particularly strong hold over all security-related decision making. However, the new Parliament has functioned more effectively than its predecessor, holding important policy debates and overturning key decisions of the former government.

Corruption is pervasive in politics and government. Under the National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) of 2007, Zardari and more than 8,000 other politicians, diplomats, and officials were granted immunity in ongoing corruption cases, allowing them to participate in the 2008 elections. The Supreme Court revoked the NRO in December 2009, and a government petition to review the decision was subsequently rejected. Though Zardari himself still enjoyed presidential immunity, several high-ranking ministers faced the threat of reopened cases or prosecution. In May 2010, Zardari pardoned Interior Minister Rehman Malik on a corruption conviction dating to 2004. The National Accountability Bureau (NAB), established in 1999 to combat corruption, was slated to be abolished in 2009 amid claims that it had become politicized under military ruler Pervez Musharraf. It remained in place in 2010, but was criticized for failing to act on the judiciary's calls for it to reopen hundreds of cases. Pakistan was ranked 143 out of 178 countries surveyed in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index. In general, Pakistan has an extremely low level of tax collection, as many of the country's wealthiest citizens, including members of Parliament, use legal loopholes to avoid paying taxes. In October 2010, the Election Commission suspended 141 members of Parliament after they failed to disclose their assets; 15 of the lawmakers were reinstated several days later when they filed the required paperwork.

Pakistan's outspoken newspapers and a growing number of private television stations present a diverse range of news and opinion. However, powerful figures, including military officials and members of the higher judiciary, restrict media freedom by attempting to silence critical reporting, and there is a high level of violence against journalists. The constitution and other laws authorize the government to curb speech on subjects including the armed forces, the judiciary, and religion. Blasphemy laws are occasionally used against the media. In 2010, broadly defined contempt laws were increasingly used to curb reporting on particular court cases or judges. Additional restrictions associated with the imposition of martial law in 2007 were routinely flouted after civilian rule was restored, and they were formally nullified in April 2010 as part of Parliament's passage of the 18th Amendment, but the government continued to engage in sporadic efforts to temporarily suspend certain broadcasts or programs under other media regulations, including an official code of conduct. Websites addressing sensitive subjects, particularly Balochi separatism, are periodically blocked. In 2010, the government moved to block "blasphemous" internet content – leading to the blanket obstruction of access to several major sites in May – but refrained from cracking down on Islamist groups' online calls for violence.

According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, at least eight journalists were murdered because of their work in 2010, making Pakistan one of the world's deadliest countries for members of the press. Intimidation by the security forces – including physical attacks and arbitrary, incommunicado detention – continues to occur, as do harassment and attacks by Islamic fundamentalists and hired thugs working for feudal landlords or local politicians. A number of reporters covering the conflict in the FATA were detained, threatened, expelled, or otherwise obstructed in 2010, by either government forces or militants.

Pakistan is an Islamic republic, and there are numerous legal restrictions on religious freedom. Violations of blasphemy laws draw harsh sentences, including the death penalty, and injuring the "religious feelings" of individual citizens is prohibited. Incidents

in which police take bribes to file false blasphemy charges against Ahmadis, Christians, Hindus, and occasionally Muslims continue to occur, with several dozen cases reported each year. In November 2010, Asia Bibi, a Christian woman, was sentenced to death in a blasphemy case that was condemned by both local and international rights groups; an appeal was pending at year's end. No executions on blasphemy charges have been carried out to date, but the charges alone can lead to years of imprisonment, ill-treatment in custody, and extralegal persecution by religious extremists. For example, in July 2010, two brothers accused of blasphemy were killed by gunmen inside a courtroom. As reformers pressed for either repeal or amendment of the laws, on the grounds that they are discriminatory and frequently misapplied, religious hard-liners alleged that even questioning the laws themselves constituted an act of blasphemy.

The penal code severely restricts the religious practice of Ahmadis, who comprise about 2.5 percent of the population, and they must effectively renounce their beliefs to vote or gain admission to educational institutions. Authorities occasionally confiscate or close Ahmadiyya publications and harass their staff, and dozens of Ahmadis faced criminal charges under blasphemy or other discriminatory laws in 2010.

Religious minorities also face unofficial economic and social discrimination, and they are occasionally subject to violence and harassment. In a growing trend, particularly in Sindh province, Hindu girls are kidnapped, forcibly converted to Islam, and compelled to marry their kidnappers. Terrorist and other attacks on places of worship and religious gatherings occur frequently, leading to the deaths of dozens of people every year. In a TTP attack against two Ahmadiyya mosques in Lahore in May 2010, almost 100 people were killed and many more were injured. There was a notable upsurge in violence between members of the Sunni Muslim majority and the Shiite Muslim minority in 2009. Recent waves of attacks on Christians have also been attributed to the spread of Sunni extremist ideology. In April 2010 the Ministry of Minorities Affairs established an emergency telephone hotline for minorities to report incidents of violence.

The government generally does not restrict academic freedom. However, university student groups with ties to political parties or radical Islamist organizations intimidate students, teachers, and administrators; aim to impose "Islamic" moral codes by blocking certain types of classes or behavior; and try to influence university policies. In April 2010, members of the Islami Jamiat Talaba assaulted and seriously injured a professor in Lahore, leading to a protest strike by fellow teachers that lasted several weeks. Schools and female teachers, particularly in the FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (as NWFP was renamed in 2010), face threats and attacks by Islamist militants, with dozens of schools blown up during the year.

The rights to freedom of assembly and association are selectively upheld. Authorities sometimes restrict public gatherings, disperse protests with excessive force, and use preventive arrest to forestall planned demonstrations. However, such tactics were employed less in 2010 than in previous years. Some Islamist leaders have been held under house arrest or in preventive detention under the Maintenance of Public Order Act, which allows three months' detention without trial.

Authorities generally tolerate the work of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and allow them to publish critical material. However, NGOs that focus on female education and empowerment, and female NGO staff in general, have faced threats, attacks, and a number of murders by radical Islamists, particularly in the FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Citing security concerns, the government has at times prevented aid groups from operating in Balochistan, exacerbating the province's humanitarian situation. Pakistan is also home to a large number of charitable or cultural organizations, such as the Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JD), that have links to Islamist militant groups.

The 2008 Industrial Relations Act (IRA) allowed workers to form and join trade unions, but also placed restrictions on union membership, the right to strike, and collective bargaining, particularly in industries deemed essential. According to an International Trade Union Confederation report, hundreds of workers have been fired for union activity since the act was passed. The constitutional amendment passed in April 2010 placed labor law and policy under the purview of the provinces, despite local groups' concerns about the devolution of issues such as labor standards and a minimum wage, as well as the capacity of the provinces to effectively implement labor laws. By year's end the 2008

IRA had lapsed and all provinces had passed their own versions of the act without addressing its shortcomings. Illegal bonded labor is widespread, particularly in Sindh province, and is generally used in agriculture or the brick and carpet industries. News reports have described a growing trend in which bonded laborers sell their organs to repay debts and escape servitude. Provincial authorities made some efforts during 2010 to better regulate the brick-kiln industry, mostly through the registration of workers and amelioration of working conditions. The enforcement of child labor laws remains inadequate; recent surveys have indicated that there are at least 10 million child workers in Pakistan.

The judiciary consists of civil and criminal courts and a special Sharia court for certain offenses. Lower courts remain plagued by corruption, intimidation, and a backlog of some 1.5 million cases that leads to lengthy pretrial detention. A new National Judicial Policy that took effect in June 2009 aims to tackle all three problems, and appeared to have had some positive effects in 2010, with case backlogs dramatically reduced in certain areas.

The Supreme Court was brought under the control of the executive during military rule. Increasing activism by the court, particularly by Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry, led Musharraf in late 2007 to dismiss a majority of superior court judges (13 from the Supreme Court and 30 from provincial courts) and order the detention of Chaudhry as well as other judges, lawyers, and legal activists who opposed the executive's actions. After a protracted political standoff involving both main parties, Chaudhry and the remainder of the ousted judges were reinstated in March 2009, but tensions between the judiciary and President Zardari persisted. The two engaged in a spat in February 2010 over Zardari's proposed judicial appointments, and the Supreme Court continued to push for the revival of a money-laundering case against Zardari. Provisions of the 18th Amendment would strengthen the judiciary and potentially reduce politicization by granting power over judicial appointments to a judicial commission rather than the president, and the 19th Amendment passed in December further strengthened the role of the chief justice and other senior judges in the commission and appointments process.

Other parts of the judicial system, such as the antiterrorism courts, operate with limited due process rights. The Sharia court enforces the 1979 Hudood Ordinances, which criminalize extramarital sex and several alcohol, gambling, and property offenses. They provide for Koranic punishments, including death by stoning for adultery, as well as jail terms and fines. In part because of strict evidentiary standards, authorities have never carried out the Koranic punishments. The justice system in the FATA is governed by the Frontier Crimes Regulation, which allows collective punishment for individual crimes and preventive detention of up to three years. It also authorizes tribal leaders to administer justice according to Sharia and tribal custom. In designated parts of the Provincially Administered Tribal Areas and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sharia is imposed under the 2009 Nizam-e-Adl regulation, and judges are assisted by Islamic scholars.

Feudal landlords and tribal elders throughout Pakistan adjudicate some disputes and impose punishments – including the death penalty and the forced exchange of brides between tribes – in unsanctioned parallel courts called jirgas. Human rights groups have noted that hundreds of death sentences are handed down each year, the majority to women, by such jirgas. Militants in several tribal areas and districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have reportedly set up their own parallel courts, imposing a strict interpretation of Islamic law and dispensing harsh penalties with little regard for due process.

Police routinely use excessive force, torture, and arbitrary detention; extort money from prisoners and their families; accept bribes to file or withdraw charges; rape female detainees; and commit extrajudicial killings. Concern over extrajudicial executions resurfaced in October 2010, when the media aired a video ostensibly showing soldiers executing civilians in Swat during 2009 counterinsurgency operations; the army agreed to conduct a probe into the incident, but at year's end no further action had been taken. Conditions in the overcrowded prisons are extremely poor, and case backlogs mean that the majority of inmates are awaiting trial. Feudal landlords, tribal groups, and some militant groups operate private jails where detainees are regularly maltreated. Progress on creating an official human rights body empowered to investigate cases and redress

grievances has been slow, and while a number of cases are investigated and some prosecutions do occur, impunity for human rights abuses remains the norm.

Although cases of politically motivated detention and disappearance have declined under civilian rule, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) – an NGO – estimated that as of November 2010 at least 1,100 people were being illegally detained by state agencies. Some were suspected of links to radical Islamist groups, but such detainees have also included Balochi and Sindh nationalists, journalists, researchers, and social workers. The ISI, which operates largely outside the control of civilian leaders and the courts, has faced intermittent pressure from the Supreme Court to end the practice of secret detentions. In 2010, the court continued to hold hearings on the issue, and in June it ordered the ISI to explain the disappearance of Akash Mallah, a Sindh political leader. In March the federal government appointed a three-member commission tasked with compiling a comprehensive list of the disappeared and identifying those responsible.

Tens of thousands of armed militants belonging to radical Sunni Islamist groups – including the TTP, Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT), Lashkar-i-Jhangvi, the JD, and the Sipah-i-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) – have varying agendas and carry out terrorist attacks against foreign, government, and religious minority targets, killing hundreds of civilians each year. Sunni and Shiite groups engage in tit-for-tat sectarian violence, mostly bomb attacks against places of worship and religious gatherings. The New Delhi-based South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP) reported that 509 people were killed and 1,170 were injured in sectarian violence in 2010, more than double the number the previous year. In April, seven LeT members went on trial for allegedly planning a 2008 terrorist attack in Mumbai, India's financial capital, but the alleged mastermind of the attack, JD leader Hafiz Mohammad Saeed, was released from preventive custody in May.

The military's campaigns against Islamist fighters in the tribal areas since 2002 have been accompanied by human rights abuses including arbitrary detention, property destruction, killing or displacement of civilians, and extrajudicial executions. Missile strikes attributed to U.S. drone aircraft have also reportedly killed or injured civilians. The authorities are sponsoring tribal militias, or lashkars, to help control the FATA, creating yet another unaccountable armed force. Islamist militants' expanding influence over territory in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the FATA has led to severe practical restrictions on local inhabitants' dress, social behavior, educational opportunities, and legal rights. The militant groups also target political leaders (particularly from the ANP), tribal elders, teachers, and aid workers in their quest for control over local populations. At year's end, more than a million civilians remained displaced in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa alone as a result of the conflict. The SATP reported that 7,435 people were killed nationwide in terrorist- or insurgent-related violence in 2010, including 1,796 civilians, 469 security force personnel, and 5,170 militants, a substantial decrease from the previous year.

A low-level insurgency continued in Balochistan, with ethnic Balochi activists demanding enhanced political autonomy as well as more local control over the province's natural resources. Militants carried out a number of attacks on security forces as well as non-Balochi teachers and educational institutions in 2010. The army's counterinsurgency operations have led to human rights violations and the displacement of civilians. Thousands of activists, political leaders, and other locals with suspected separatist sympathies have been detained, according to the International Crisis Group, with dozens killed in unexplained circumstances. A package of reforms intended to address Balochi demands was passed in 2009, but civilian authorities struggled to implement the reforms amid the ongoing struggle between local groups and the military.

Ethnic tensions escalated in Karachi in 2010, with dozens killed in a surge of violence in October. Much of the bloodshed was instigated by the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), a party representing refugees from India who settled in Karachi in 1947, against ethnic Pashtun migrants from other areas of Pakistan. Dozens were also killed in clashes and riots following the murder of a leading MQM politician in August.

Pakistan hosts approximately 1.6 million registered Afghan refugees, as well as more than a million undocumented Afghans, with the majority living in urban areas rather than refugee settlements on the border. They face societal and official discrimination as well as economic exploitation, since even registered refugees are not allowed to work legally.



Traditional norms, discriminatory laws, and weak enforcement contribute to a high incidence of rape, domestic abuse, and other forms of violence against women. According to the HRCP, up to 80 percent of women are victims of such abuse during their lifetimes. Female victims of sexual crimes are often pressured by police not to file charges, and they are sometimes urged by their families to commit suicide. Gang rapes sanctioned by village councils to punish the targeted woman's relatives continue to be reported, even though perpetrators in some cases have receive harsh sentences. Under the 2006 Women's Protection Act, judges are required to try rape cases under criminal law rather than Sharia. However, extramarital sex is still criminalized, and spousal rape is not recognized as a crime.

According to the HRCP, at least 740 women were killed by family members in so-called honor killings in 2010, but many such crimes may go unreported. Activists have cast doubt on the authorities' willingness to enforce a 2005 law that introduced stiffer sentences and the possibility of the death penalty for honor killings. The incidence of acid attacks on women has been on the rise, with several hundred cases noted in 2010. Illegal forms of child and forced marriage remain problems. Most interfaith marriages are considered illegal, and the children of such unions would be illegitimate.

Pakistani inheritance law discriminates against women, who also face unofficial discrimination in educational and employment opportunities. Two laws were enacted in 2010 to criminalize sexual harassment in the workplace and institutionalize related codes of conduct and mechanisms for complaints. The trafficking of women and children remains a serious concern, with female victims used for forced labor or sexual exploitation.

*\* Countries are ranked on a scale of 1-7, with 1 representing the highest level of freedom and 7 representing the lowest level of freedom.*

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