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## COI QUERY

**Country of Origin**

**PAKISTAN**

**Title**

**Information on the Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP), including areas of operation; treatment of Shia Muslims and (Shia) educators by the TTP, particularly in Punjab; availability of state protection for people perceived as opposing the TTP, particularly in Punjab**

**Reference period**

January 2022 to 31 October 2023

**Topics**

1. [Areas of operation](#)
2. [Treatment of Shia Muslims and \(Shia\) educators by the TTP, particularly in Punjab](#)
3. [Availability of state protection for people perceived as opposing the TTP, particularly in Punjab](#)

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## COI QUERY RESPONSE - Pakistan

### Information on the Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP), including areas of operation; treatment of Shia Muslims and (Shia) educators by the TTP, particularly in Punjab; availability of state protection for the TTP opponents, particularly in Punjab

#### 1. Areas of operation

##### 1.1 Background information on TTP

The origin of the Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP), also referred to as the Pakistani Taliban, goes back to 2007<sup>1</sup> when it was established as an umbrella organisation uniting Islamist militant groups<sup>2</sup> in the former Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA<sup>3</sup>) of Pakistan.<sup>4</sup> The TTP's goal was to fight Pakistani military operations in the region and to establish a rule under Islamic law in Khyber Pankuthwa and eventually in all of Pakistan.<sup>5</sup> The TTP was banned by the government of Pakistan in August 2008 under the Anti-Terrorism Act.<sup>6</sup> The TTP has had a close links the Afghan Taliban<sup>7</sup> to which it has publicly declared its allegiance<sup>8</sup>, as well as to Al-Qaeda.<sup>9</sup>

The TTP's capabilities were seen as largely limited after anti-militant operations of the Pakistani army in 2014<sup>10</sup>, but sources reported that the group has become more active after

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<sup>1</sup> CIA, The World Factbook, Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), [updated in 2023], [url](#); CFR, Instability in Pakistan, updated 10 August 2023, [url](#); International Crisis Group, The Pakistani Taliban Test Ties between Islamabad and Kabul, 29 March 2023, [url](#)

<sup>2</sup> Pak Institute for Peace Studies has described TTP as 'an assemblage of more than 42 terrorist groups from both the settled and the former tribal districts of Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province'. See: PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2022, 24 February 2023, [url](#), p. 102

<sup>3</sup> FATA has been officially a part of the province Khyber Pankuthwa since 2018. See: ACLED, The Merger of the FATA and KP: Political Ploy or Positive Change?, 30 May 2018, [url](#)

<sup>4</sup> CIA, The World Factbook, Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), [updated in 2023], [url](#)

<sup>5</sup> CIA, The World Factbook, Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), [updated in 2023], [url](#)

<sup>6</sup> Dawn, Tehrik-i-Taliban banned, 26 August 2008, [url](#)

<sup>7</sup> CFR, Instability in Pakistan, updated 10 August 2023, [url](#); International Crisis Group, The Pakistani Taliban Test Ties between Islamabad and Kabul, 29 March 2023, [url](#); UNSC, Letter dated 23 May 2023 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011) addressed to the President of the Security Council, S/2023/370, 1 June 2023, [url](#), pp. 3, 5, 10; WION, Afghanistan, Pakistani Taliban 'collaborated' on attacks targeting Pak law enforcement: Report, 16 April 2023, [url](#)

<sup>8</sup> Brookings, Pakistan's ambivalent approach toward a resurgent Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, 11 February 2022, [url](#); Carnegie Endowment for International Peace The Evolution and Future of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, 21 December 2021, [url](#)

<sup>9</sup> Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, The Evolution and Future of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, 21 December 2021, [url](#); RFE/RL, The Rise Of The New Pakistani Taliban, 18 May 2021, [url](#); UNSC, Letter dated 23 May 2023 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011) addressed to the President of the Security Council, 1 June 2023, [url](#), p. 14, 17

<sup>10</sup> CFR, Instability in Pakistan, updated 10 August 2023, [url](#); RFE/RL, Pakistani Taliban Attempts Land Grab To Boost Insurgency Against Islamabad, 16 September 2023, [url](#)



the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021,<sup>11</sup> and the group has since increased a number of its attacks.<sup>12</sup> According to the Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS), a Pakistani think-tank focusing on the security situation in the country, the TTP was ‘a major actor of violence’ in 2022 responsible for 89 ‘terrorist attacks’ in Pakistan during the same year.<sup>13</sup>

According to Australia’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) report on Pakistan from January 2022, ‘[b]esides conducting terrorist attacks, the TTP acts as an ‘alternative state’ in some parts of Pakistan, collecting taxes and customs duties, and acting as police and courts’.<sup>14</sup>

In June 2022, the TTP extended ‘an indefinite ceasefire’ agreement with the Pakistani government<sup>15</sup>, which was called off by the group on 28 November 2022 and the TTP leadership called on their fighters to carry out attacks in all of Pakistan.<sup>16</sup> According to an article published by a Turkish news provider Anadolu Agency (AA) on 15 June 2023, ‘Kabul and Islamabad have agreed on a plan to relocate members of the Pakistani Taliban, also known as the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), to western Afghanistan, according to a source’.<sup>17</sup> Sources reported that due to the increased number of attacks by the TTP in Pakistan, the Pakistani government announced a deportation plan of around one million Afghan refugees living in the country, perceived as a security threat,<sup>18</sup> if they do not leave the country by the end of October 2023.<sup>19</sup>

## ***1.2 Areas of operations***

After the Afghan Taliban took over Kabul in August 2021, ‘the Pakistani Taliban have been more capable of conducting operations across the porous mountain frontier between the two countries [Pakistan and Afghanistan]’, according to the International Crisis Group’s March 2023 report, which added that the TTP have become ‘much more visible’ in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where it set up checkpoints in the province to extort fees.<sup>20</sup> In the annual

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<sup>11</sup> Brookings, Pakistan’s ambivalent approach toward a resurgent Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, 11 February 2022, [url](#); CFR, Instability in Pakistan, updated 10 August 2023, [url](#); PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2022, 24 February 2023, [url](#), p. 102; RFE/RL, Pakistani Taliban Attempts Land Grab To Boost Insurgency Against Islamabad, 16 September 2023, [url](#)

<sup>12</sup> Australia, DFAT, DFAT Country Information Report Pakistan, 25 January 2022, [url](#); p. 15; Germany, BAMF, Briefing Notes Summary, 30 June 2023, [url](#), pp. 2-3; International Crisis Group, Watch List 2023; Pakistan: At the Tipping Point?, 12 May 2023 [url](#), p. 35; RFE/RL, Deepening Political Crisis Pushes Pakistan Toward The Breaking Point, 12 May 2023, [url](#)

<sup>13</sup> PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2022, 24 February 2023, [url](#), pp. 7, 23

<sup>14</sup> Australia, DFAT, DFAT Country Information Report Pakistan, 25 January 2022, [url](#), p. 15

<sup>15</sup> Al Jazeera, Pakistan Taliban says ceasefire with gov’t in Islamabad extended, 3 June 2022, [url](#); Diplomat (The), Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan Declares Unilateral Ceasefire, 13 June 2022, [url](#)

<sup>16</sup> Al Jazeera, Pakistan Taliban ends ceasefire with gov’t, threatens new attacks, 28 November 2022, [url](#); Diplomat (The), Pakistan Taliban Ends Ceasefire With Govt, Vows New Attacks, 29 November 2022, [url](#); Reuters, Taliban militants in Pakistan end ceasefire with government - spokesman, 28 November 2022, [url](#)

<sup>17</sup> AA, Islamabad to relocate outlawed Pakistani Taliban to western Afghanistan, 15 June 2023, [url](#)

<sup>18</sup> AA, ‘Nothing out there for us’: Afghan refugees begin reluctant exodus after Pakistan eviction order, 5 October 2023, [url](#); ISW, CTP, Salafi-Jihadi Movement Weekly Update, October 4, 2023, 4 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>19</sup> AA, ‘Nothing out there for us’: Afghan refugees begin reluctant exodus after Pakistan eviction order, 5 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>20</sup> International Crisis Group, The Pakistani Taliban Test Ties between Islamabad and Kabul, 29 March 2023, [url](#)

report on Pakistan covering 2022, Freedom House reported that the TTP ‘reemerged in the Swat Valley and other Pashtun-majority areas along the frontier with Afghanistan in 2022, engaging in extortion and intimidation’.<sup>21</sup> Sources continued reporting on a presence of the TTP in Swat, which is a part of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, in February and March 2023.<sup>22</sup>

According to the PIPS’ annual security situation report for 2022, ‘[g]eographical spread and statistics of the attacks perpetrated by the TTP in 2022 indicate that while the group had carried out most of the attacks in the tribal districts or former FATA, it was also successful in showing its presence in northern Balochistan, and twin cities of Rawalpindi-Islamabad’.<sup>23</sup>

According to the 2022 DFAT report on Pakistan, ‘[a]reas of particular TTP influence include (but may not be limited to) Waziristan and surrounding districts, Tank, Quetta, Kuchlak Bypass, Pashtun Abad, Ishaq Abad, Farooqia Town and parts of Karachi’.<sup>24</sup>

Sources reported in 2023 that a part of the TTP leadership is based in Afghanistan.<sup>25</sup> In a report published in February 2023, the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) noted that ‘[m]uch of the TTP’s political leadership and capability is based in Afghanistan. In Pakistan, the TTP has regained some territorial influence in southern districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, like South Waziristan, North Waziristan, Tank, Bannu and Lakki Marwat. The TTP is able to fundraise through extortion inside Pakistan as well as in Afghanistan — across provinces, there are fundraising drives for the group’s so-called jihad’.<sup>26</sup>

In an article on security situation in Pakistan updated on 10 August 2023, Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) noted that while attacks by TTP mostly occurred in (former) FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, the group ‘targets major cities throughout the country’.<sup>27</sup>

An article by Jamestown Foundation published in July 2023 reported on the group’s presence in the Balochistan province, noting that it is ‘not new, but in the past the group was confined to the province’s Pashtun areas. However, the group’s recent inroads are in the Baloch-dominant zones’.<sup>28</sup> German news provider Deutsche Welle (DW) reported in July 2023 that the TTP is one of the militant groups active in Balochistan.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2023 - Pakistan, 2023, [url](#)

<sup>22</sup> Defense Post (The), How Did a Crippled TTP Reemerge in Pakistan?, 10 March 2023, [url](#); Jamestown Foundation, The Pakistani Taliban’s Reemergence in Swat, 9 February 2023, available at: [url](#)

<sup>23</sup> PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2022, 24 February 2023, [url](#), p. 75

<sup>24</sup> Australia, DFAT, DFAT Country Information Report Pakistan, 25 January 2022, [url](#), p. 15

<sup>25</sup> CFR, Instability in Pakistan, updated 10 August 2023; International Crisis Group, The Pakistani Taliban Test Ties between Islamabad and Kabul, 29 March 2023, [url](#); USIP, Is Pakistan Poised to Take on the TTP?, 14 February 2023, [url](#)

<sup>26</sup> USIP, Is Pakistan Poised to Take on the TTP?, 14 February 2023, [url](#)

<sup>27</sup> CFR, Instability in Pakistan, updated 10 August 2023, [url](#)

<sup>28</sup> Jamestown Foundation, Questions Surround Pakistani Taliban’s Inroads into Balochistan: Organizational Expansion or Propaganda Stunt?, 11 July 2023, [url](#)

<sup>29</sup> DW, Pakistan warns Afghan Taliban against harboring militants, 14 July 2023, [url](#)

### ***1.3 Overview of reported security incidents indicating the presence of TTP in Pakistan<sup>30</sup>***

Regarding the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, according to the above-mentioned 2022 PIPS report, '[t]he Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police is suffering casualties on daily basis because of the unrelenting TTP offensive in the southern and central districts'.<sup>31</sup> Attacks on security personnel or police forces in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by the TTP were reported, for example, on 16 November 2022<sup>32</sup>, on 30 January 2023 (which is considered 'the deadliest ever' attack on police in Pakistan, killing over 80 people)<sup>33</sup>, or on 11 September 2023.<sup>34</sup> In the period of January to June 2023, in North Waziristan, clashes between security forces and the TTP were reported on 15 March 2023, and the TTP claimed attacks on security personnel on 4 May and 24 May 2023.<sup>35</sup> Cross-border attacks from Afghanistan into the city of Chitral, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, were reported in the period of 9-11 September 2023.<sup>36</sup> On 11 September 2023, a vehicle with soldiers was attacked by the TTP in Peshawar, the provincial capital.<sup>37</sup>

Regarding the Balochistan province, on 25 February 2022, two policemen were killed in Quetta, the provincial capital.<sup>38</sup> In November 2022, the TTP attacked a police vehicle that was accompanying a polio vaccination team.<sup>39</sup> On 25 December 2022, 6 security personnel were killed during several TTP attacks in Balochistan.<sup>40</sup> On 5 February 2023, five people were injured after an attack on the police.<sup>41</sup>

Regarding the Sindh province, on 3 January 2022, the TTP attacked a policeman with a grenade in the provincial capital of Karachi, injuring him.<sup>42</sup> On 17 February 2023, the TTP attacked a police office in Karachi, killing five people, including members of the security forces.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> The research has looked into the following administrative units of Pakistan: four provinces, namely Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, and Sindh; Islamabad Capital Territory; and the two administrative regions: Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan. For more on the administrative divisions of Pakistan, see: EASO, Pakistan Security situation, Country of Origin Information Report, October 2021, [url](#)

<sup>31</sup> PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2022, 24 February 2023, [url](#), p. 103

<sup>32</sup> Al Jazeera, TTP kills six police officers during ambush in northwest Pakistan, 16 November 2022, [url](#)

<sup>33</sup> International Crisis Group, The Pakistani Taliban Test Ties between Islamabad and Kabul, 29 March 2023, [url](#). According to an Al Jazeera article on the same incident from 31 January 2023, this suicide bombing attack on a mosque in Peshawar left over a hundred people dead, mostly policemen. TTP first claimed the responsibility and later distanced itself from it. See: Al Jazeera, Death toll from Pakistan mosque bombing rises to 100, 31 January 2023, [url](#)

<sup>34</sup> RFE/RL, Blast In Northwestern Pakistan Kills Soldier, Wounds 10, 11 September 2023, [url](#)

<sup>35</sup> Germany, BAMF, Briefing Notes Summary, 30 June 2023, [url](#), pp. 9, 11

<sup>36</sup> ISW, CTP, Salafi-Jihadi Movement Weekly Update, September 29, 2023, 29 September 2023, [url](#)

<sup>37</sup> AA, 1 killed, 8 injured in roadside blast in northwest Pakistan, 11 September 2023, [url](#)

<sup>38</sup> PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2022, 24 February 2023, [url](#), p. 51

<sup>39</sup> Insecurity Insight, Pakistan: Violence against health care in conflict 2022, 24 July 2023 [url](#); Tribune, 4 dead in Quetta suicide blast targeting police, 30 November 2022, [url](#)

<sup>40</sup> Hindu (The), Pakistan Taliban kill 6 security personnel in multiple attacks in Balochistan, 25 December 2022, [url](#)

<sup>41</sup> Daily Times, Five injured in explosion near Quetta Police Lines, 6 February 2023, [url](#)

<sup>42</sup> PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2022, 24 February 2023, [url](#), p. 53

<sup>43</sup> International Crisis Group, The Pakistani Taliban Test Ties between Islamabad and Kabul, 29 March 2023, [url](#); Germany, BAMF, Briefing Notes Summary, 30 June 2023, [url](#), p. 4



Regarding the Punjab province, on 31 January 2022, a policeman was found dead in Rawalpindi. Both, the TTP and Islamic State group have claimed the attack.<sup>44</sup> An attack on a police station in Mianwali was reported on 1 February 2023. According to Dawn, a Pakistani news provider, the attack was ‘repulsed’, and it was ‘significant’ because the TTP ‘have set their sights on a police station in Punjab for the first time since the resurgence of terrorism in the country’.<sup>45</sup>

In January 2022, TTP claimed an attack on police in Islamabad, killing one and injuring three policemen.<sup>46</sup>

Information on incidents indicating a presence of the TTP in the territories of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit–Baltistan could not be found among the sources consulted by EUAA within time constraints.

## **2. Treatment of Shia Muslims and (Shia) educators by the TTP, particularly in Punjab**

According to the annual report on religious freedom covering 2022 by the United States Department of State (USDOS), armed groups in Pakistan, including the TTP, ‘continued to perpetrate violence and other abuses against religious minorities’.<sup>47</sup> According to a May 2022 report on Pakistan by the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA), ‘militant groups under the TTP umbrella, [...] have a record of attacks against Shia Muslims in Pakistan’.<sup>48</sup>

Sources reported that TTP targeted Shia Muslims<sup>49</sup>, for example, in the 2010s.<sup>50</sup> According to the 2022 DFAT report, ‘Shi’a have historically been targeted by sectarian terrorist groups such as the TTP’, noting that ‘[t]he frequency of these attacks has steadily declined since 2013’.<sup>51</sup>

The TTP page in the World Factbook’s list of terrorist organisations by the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) lists Shia Muslims as one of the targets of the TTP, noting that the group has targeted civilian objects such as mosques, schools, and ‘entire neighborhoods of Shia Muslims’.<sup>52</sup> The same source stated that ‘however, after MEHSUD [leader of the TTP Mufti Noor Wali Mehsud] took command in 2018, the group reportedly issued new targeting guidelines restricting attacks on civilians’.<sup>53</sup> According to the Australian DFAT report on Pakistan from January 2022, ‘[u]nder the leadership of Mehsud, the TTP has moved away from targeting civilians – which was undermining its popular support – to focus on attacks against

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<sup>44</sup> PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2022, 24 February 2023, [url](#), p. 55

<sup>45</sup> Dawn, TTP attack on Mianwali police station ‘repulsed’, 1 February 2023, [url](#)

<sup>46</sup> Dawn, Terror has come to the capital, interior minister fears Munawer Azeem Published, 19 January 2022, [url](#)

<sup>47</sup> USDOS, 2022 Report on International Religious Freedom: Pakistan, 15 May 2023, [url](#), p. 39

<sup>48</sup> EUAA, Pakistan - Situation of Afghan refugees, Country of Origin Information Report, May 2022, [url](#), p. 47

<sup>49</sup> Australia, DFAT, DFAT Country Information Report Pakistan, 25 January 2022, [url](#), p. 26; Diplomat (The), What Role Does the State Play in Pakistan’s Anti-Shia Hysteria?, 17 September 2020, [url](#); War on the Rocks, Who’s killing Pakistan’s Shia and why?, 20 May 2014, [url](#)

<sup>50</sup> Diplomat (The), What Role Does the State Play in Pakistan’s Anti-Shia Hysteria?, 17 September 2020, [url](#)

<sup>51</sup> Australia, DFAT, DFAT Country Information Report Pakistan, 25 January 2022, [url](#), p. 26

<sup>52</sup> CIA, The World Factbook, Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), [updated in 2023], [url](#)

<sup>53</sup> CIA, The World Factbook, Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), [updated in 2023], [url](#)

the Pakistani military and other government representatives. It has also continued to assassinate political and religious leaders and to target religious minorities, including Shi'a, Ahmadis and Christians'.<sup>54</sup> Information about the TTP moving away from civilian targets has also been reported by other sources.<sup>55</sup> Sources indicated that the change has resulted in fewer attacks on civilians and less civilian deaths after 2018.<sup>56</sup> Violence targeting civilians in general has been named as one of the reasons for a decline of the TTP, in particular an attack on the Army Public School in Peshawar in 2014<sup>57</sup>, killing 150 people, mostly children, in what has been described as 'the deadliest terrorist attack in Pakistan's history'.<sup>58</sup>

Regarding targets of the TTP, the annual security situation report by PIPS covering 2022 noted that the group 'reportedly also threatened political leaders, elders, and businessmen to extort money from them'.<sup>59</sup> International Crisis Group reported that 'over summer of 2022', the TTP targeted police and army officers for kidnapping and government officials, 'as well as political and tribal leaders who spoke out against them' for killing.<sup>60</sup> The annual USDOS report on Pakistan covering 2022 reported that '[t]he TTP particularly targeted girls' schools to demonstrate its opposition to girls' education but also destroyed boys' schools'.<sup>61</sup>

On 29 September 2023, BBC News reported on a suicide attack near a mosque in Mastung, Balochistan, as well as on another attack in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, stating that the TTP denied its involvement in the attacks and quoting TTP which 'vehemently condemned' the attack in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, adding that 'mosques, schools, and public gatherings are not part of our targets'.<sup>62</sup>

Information on treatment of (Shia) educators by the TTP within the reference period could not be found among the sources consulted by EUAA within time constraints.

### **3. Availability of state protection for people perceived as opposing the TTP, particularly in Punjab**

Information on availability of state protection for TTP opponents in the reference period could not be found among the sources consulted by EUAA within time constraints.

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<sup>54</sup> Australia, DFAT, DFAT Country Information Report Pakistan, 25 January 2022, [url](#), p. 15

<sup>55</sup> Brookings, Pakistan's ambivalent approach toward a resurgent Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, 11 February 2022, [url](#); Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, The Evolution and Future of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, 21 December 2021, [url](#); CFR, Instability in Pakistan, updated 10 August 2023, [url](#)

<sup>56</sup> Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, The Evolution and Future of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, 21 December 2021, [url](#); Sayed, A., Hamming, T., The Revival of the Pakistani Taliban, in: CTC Sentinel, April/May 2023, n.d., [url](#), p. 32

<sup>57</sup> Sayed, A., Hamming, T., The Revival of the Pakistani Taliban, in: CTC Sentinel, April/May 2023, n.d., [url](#), p. 29

<sup>58</sup> CFR, Instability in Pakistan, updated 10 August 2023, [url](#)

<sup>59</sup> PIPS, Pakistan Security Report 2022, 24 February 2023, [url](#), p. 23

<sup>60</sup> International Crisis Group, The Pakistani Taliban Test Ties between Islamabad and Kabul, 29 March 2023, [url](#)

<sup>61</sup> USDOS, 2022 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Pakistan, 20 March 2023, [url](#), p. 20

<sup>62</sup> BBC News, Pakistan: More than 50 killed and dozens injured in Mastung blast, 29 September 2023, [url](#)



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