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Home Office

Country policy and information note

Pakistan: Hazaras

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Preface

This note provides country of origin information (COI) and policy guidance to Home Office decision makers on handling particular types of protection and human rights claims. This includes whether claims are likely to justify the granting of asylum, humanitarian protection or discretionary leave and whether – in the event of a claim being refused – it is likely to be certifiable as ‘clearly unfounded’ under s94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

Decision makers must consider claims on an individual basis, taking into account the case specific facts and all relevant evidence, including: the policy guidance contained with this note; the available COI; any applicable caselaw; and the Home Office casework guidance in relation to relevant policies.

Country Information

The COI within this note has been compiled from a wide range of external information sources (usually) published in English. Consideration has been given to the relevance, reliability, accuracy, objectivity, currency, transparency and traceability of the information and wherever possible attempts have been made to corroborate the information used across independent sources, to ensure accuracy. All sources cited have been referenced in footnotes. It has been researched and presented with reference to the [Common EU \[European Union\] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information \(COI\)](#), dated April 2008, and the [European Asylum Support Office’s research guidelines, Country of Origin Information report methodology](#), dated July 2012.

Feedback

Our goal is to continuously improve our material. Therefore, if you would like to comment on this note, please email [the Country Policy and Information Team](#).

Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

The Independent Advisory Group on Country Information (IAGCI) was set up in March 2009 by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration to make recommendations to him about the content of the Home Office’s COI material. The IAGCI welcomes feedback on the Home Office’s COI material. It is not the function of the IAGCI to endorse any Home Office material, procedures or policy. IAGCI may be contacted at:

Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration,
5th Floor, Globe House, 89 Eccleston Square, London, SW1V 1PN.

Email: chiefinspector@icinspector.gsi.gov.uk

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Policy guidance

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1. Introduction

1.1 Basis of claim

- 1.1.1 Fear of persecution or serious harm by the state or non-state actors on account of the person's ethnicity or religion because the person is Hazara.
- 1.1.2 Hazaras are a homogeneous ethnic group, the majority of whom are Shia Muslim (see [The Hazara community in Pakistan](#) and also the country policy and information on [Pakistan: Shia Muslims](#)).

2. Consideration of issues

2.1 Credibility

- 2.1.1 For information on assessing credibility, the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).
- 2.1.2 Decision makers must also check if there has been a previous application for a UK visa or another form of leave. Asylum applications matched to visas should be investigated prior to the asylum interview see the [Asylum Instruction on Visa Matches, Asylum Claims from UK Visa Applicants](#).
- 2.1.3 Decision makers should also consider the need to conduct language analysis testing see the [Asylum Instruction on Language Analysis](#).

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2.2 Assessment of risk

i. Treatment by the state

- 2.2.1 There are no discriminatory laws, policies or action by the authorities against the Hazara in Pakistan, either on account of their ethnicity or religion, but difficulties in Hazaras obtaining passports and identity cards has been reported, limiting their access to government services (see State response, treatment and attitudes – [Discrimination](#), and [Legal rights](#)).
- 2.2.2 In general Hazara in Pakistan are not at risk of persecution or serious harm from the state. Decision makers should consider each case on its facts. The onus will be on the person to demonstrate that they would be at risk from the authorities.

ii. Non-state actors

- 2.2.3 The greatest risk for Hazaras in Pakistan is sectarian violence and targeting by militants, predominantly the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), although the intensity and frequency may vary from region to region. The majority of attacks have occurred in Balochistan. Up to 27 November 2015, approximately 1,400 Hazaras have been killed and about 3,500 injured in Pakistan in at least 189 attacks by sectarian militants since 1999. Sources indicated between 16 and 34 Hazaras were killed in 2015. In 2016, 2 apparent sectarian attacks in Quetta, in August and October, killed 6 Hazaras (see [Sectarian attacks](#) and [Lashkar-e-Jhangvi \(LeJ\)](#)).

- 2.2.4 Whilst Hazara have been targeted by militants, the number of sectarian attacks has been decreasing in recent years and the number of casualties compared with the size of the Hazara community, does not suggest that there is a general risk (see [The Hazara community in Pakistan](#)). Decision makers should consider each case on its facts. The onus will be on the person to demonstrate why, in their particular circumstances, they would be at real risk from non state actors.

iii. Societal treatment

- 2.2.5 There is little societal discrimination that would restrict Hazaras in their daily life, although there may be some restrictions in freedom of movement outside of the 2 Hazara enclaves in Quetta. Incidents of discrimination are likely be cases of local nepotism, favouritism or patronage, rather than evidence of a broader trend of societal attitudes (see [Societal treatment and attitudes](#) and [Employment and education](#)).
- 2.2.6 In general the level and nature of societal discrimination faced by Hazara in Pakistan will not amount to persecution or serious harm.
- 2.2.7 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.3 Protection

- 2.3.1 Where the person's fear is of persecution/serious harm at the hands of the state, they will not be able to avail themselves of the protection of the authorities.
- 2.3.2 Where the person's fear is of persecution or serious harm from non-state actors, effective protection may be available.
- 2.3.3 Capacity constraints and a lack of resources may hamper the state's ability to protect Hazaras. However there is evidence that the Pakistan authorities provide a degree of protection to Hazaras. For example, during the Islamic sacred month of Muharram law enforcement agencies provide security for participants in Ashura processions. The 2 main Hazara communities in Quetta are protected by high walls and security checkpoints, provided by the security forces. The police are known to provide escorts to Hazara groups who wish to travel to and from their workplaces in Quetta. The Pakistan authorities continue to implement counter-terrorism strategies across the country to protect civilians (see [State response, treatment and attitudes](#)). Decision makers should consider each case on its facts. The onus will be on the person to demonstrate why, in their particular circumstances, they would be able to seek protection from the authorities.
- 2.3.4 Further information on protection can be found in the country policy and information on [Pakistan: Background information including actors of protection and internal relocation](#).
- 2.3.5 For further guidance on assessing the availability or not of state protection, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.4 Internal relocation

- 2.4.1 Where the person's fear is of persecution or serious harm at the hands of the state, they will not be able to relocate to escape that risk.
- 2.4.2 Where the person's fear is of persecution or serious harm at the hands of non-state actors, in general they will be able to relocate to escape that risk. There are a significant number of Hazara communities across Pakistan and relocation will normally be a viable option (see [Hazaras living outside of Quetta](#) and [Hazaras living in Quetta](#)).
- 2.4.3 For further guidance on internal relocation, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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2.5 Certification

- 2.5.1 Where a claim falls to be refused, it may be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.
- 2.5.2 For further guidance on certification, see [Certification of Protection and Human Rights claims under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 \(clearly unfounded claims\)](#).

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3. Policy summary

- 3.1.1 There are no discriminatory laws, policies or action by the authorities against Hazaras in Pakistan, either on account of their ethnicity or religion.
- 3.1.2 Whilst there has been sectarian violence directed at the Hazara community in general, the number of sectarian attacks has been decreasing in recent years and there is no evidence that particular individuals are targeted. The level of attacks does not create a real risk simply by virtue of being Hazara.
- 3.1.3 In general, the state is willing to provide effective protection to Hazaras, though its ability to do so may be hampered.
- 3.1.4 Internal relocation may be both relevant and reasonable. There are a significant number of Hazara communities across Pakistan and relocation is normally a viable option.
- 3.1.5 Where a claim falls to be refused, it may be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

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4. Legal rights

- 4.1.1 In its report Freedom in the World 2016, covering the year 2015, Freedom House noted, for Pakistan, that 'Constitutional guarantees of freedom of religion and protection of minorities have not provided effective checks to discriminatory legislation, social prejudice, and sectarian violence.'¹
- 4.1.2 In its 2014 report on Hazaras, DFAT assessed that there were no legal restrictions for Hazara Shias to practice their religion. DFAT also considered that no laws or Government policies discriminated against Shias.²
- 4.1.3 The DFAT 2014 reported noted that 'The Government [of Pakistan] recognised the Hazara tribe as "local" in 1962 and Hazara residents at that time became citizens of Pakistan.'³ However, in its 2016 report DFAT noted that 'Recent Hazara arrivals from Afghanistan are unable to legally acquire CNICs [Computerised National Identity Cards] because they are not Pakistani citizens. This can limit their access to government and other services.'⁴

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5. Demography

5.1 The Hazara community in Pakistan

- 5.1.1 Pakistan has not conducted a census since 1998.⁵ The country's population was estimated at nearly 202 million in July 2016⁶, of whom approximately 95 percent are Muslim. Sunnis represent about 75 per cent of the Muslim population and Shia 25 per cent.⁷ In January 2014, Syed Mehdi Hassan Moosa, chief of the Hazara tribe in Pakistan, was reported as saying there were one million Hazaras, the majority of whom were settled in Karachi and

¹ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2016 - Pakistan, 25 July 2016, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/579f48bc15.html>, date accessed 9 September 2016.

² Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 'DFAT Thematic Report: Hazaras in Afghanistan and Pakistan', paragraph 3.1, 26 March 2014. Copy available on request.

³ Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 'DFAT Thematic Report: Hazaras in Afghanistan and Pakistan', paragraph 3.14, 26 March 2014. Copy available on request.

⁴ Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 'DFAT Thematic Report: Shias in Pakistan', paragraph 3.6, 15 January 2016. Copy available on request.

⁵ Human Rights Watch, "We are the Walking Dead": Killings of Shia Hazaras in Balochistan', Pakistan, page 9, 30 June 2014, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/53b2748e4.html>, date accessed 7 September 2016.

⁶ CIA World Factbook, Pakistan: People and society, updated 28 September 2016, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/pk.html>, date accessed 7 October 2016.

⁷ US Department of State, 'International Religious Freedom Report for 2015', Pakistan, section I, 10 August 2016, <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/religiousfreedom/index.htm?year=2015&dliid=256315>, date accessed 7 September 2016.

Quetta.⁸ According to a Human Rights Watch report of 30 June 2014, 'The small Hazara Shia community is concentrated in the south-western province of Balochistan, largely in the capital city of Quetta; it is estimated to be around 500,000.'⁹ However, Australia's Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) noted in its report on Shias in Pakistan, dated January 2016, that there were up to 900,000 Hazara living in Pakistan, with approximately 700,000 living in and around Quetta.¹⁰ (See [Hazara living outside of Quetta](#) and [Hazara living in Quetta](#)).

- 5.1.2 The overwhelming majority of ethnic Hazaras are Shia Muslim¹¹, mostly of the Twelver Sect.¹² An estimated 5 percent are Sunni and 1 percent are Ismaili.¹³
- 5.1.3 As cited in the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) report on Pakistan, dated August 2015, 'Those living in rural areas speak Hazaragi, an eastern dialect of the Persian (Farsi) language, while many Hazara in urban areas of Pakistan also speak other languages including standard Persian, Urdu and English.'¹⁴
- 5.1.4 A BBC News report of May 2013 noted that the Hazaras 'are ethnically Mongolian, with oriental features and light skin, different from much of Pakistan's population.'¹⁵
- 5.1.5 EASO reported:

'Historically, Hazara migrated to Pakistan from central Afghanistan. Some Hazara families' origins in Quetta can be traced back to the late 19th century, though the majority of the community immigrated in two waves – the first during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan from 1979 onwards, and the second in 1996, when the Taliban regime in Afghanistan began to target the Hazara. Existing local networks enabled the Afghan Hazara to avoid staying in refugee camps and to integrate better into Pakistani society.'¹⁶

⁸ The Express Tribune, 'Alleged discrimination: SHC elicits comments on denial of passports to Hazaras', 18 January 2014, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/660118/alleged-discrimination-shc-elicits-comments-on-denial-of-passports-to-hazaras/>, date accessed 13 September 2016.

⁹ Human Rights Watch, 'We are the Walking Dead': Killings of Shia Hazaras in Balochistan', Pakistan, page 9, 30 June 2014, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/53b2748e4.html>, date accessed 7 September 2016.

¹⁰ Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 'DFAT Thematic Report: Shias in Pakistan', paragraph 2.9, 15 January 2016. Copy available on request.

¹¹ European Asylum Support Office (EASO), 'Country of Origin Information Report. Pakistan Country Overview', page 101, August 2015, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/55e061f24.html>, date accessed 7 September 2016.

¹² Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 'DFAT Thematic Report: Shias in Pakistan', paragraph 2.9, 15 January 2016. Copy available on request.

¹³ Canfield, R., Encyclopedia of World Cultures Supplement: Hazara', undated <http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Hazara.aspx>, date accessed 7 September 2016.

¹⁴ European Union: European Asylum Support Office (EASO), 'Country of Origin Information Report. Pakistan Country Overview', page 101, August 2015, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/55e061f24.html>, date accessed 7 September 2016.

¹⁵ BBC News, 'Hell on Earth': Inside Quetta's Hazara community', 1 May 2013 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-22248500>, date accessed 7 September 2016.

¹⁶ European Asylum Support Office (EASO), 'Country of Origin Information Report. Pakistan Country

- 5.1.6 The Hazara community in Balochistan is represented by two political parties, the Hazara Democratic Party–HDP (which fielded candidates in the 2013 general election and the Balochistan and Punjab provincial elections, but did not win any seats)¹⁷; and the Majlis Wahdat-e-Muslimeen Pakistan (MWM), which in 2013 won a seat in the Balochistan Assembly.¹⁸

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5.2 Hazaras living outside of Quetta

- 5.2.1 The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), an NGO, stated in its 2015 Annual Report, 'Media reports indicated that some families belonging to sectarian minorities, especially the Hazara community in Balochistan, continued to shift to Pakistan's major cities, which they considered more secure.'¹⁹
- 5.2.2 Estimates of the number of Hazaras living outside of Quetta and/or Balochistan vary widely. An article published in March 2014 in 'Dawn' stated, 'Of the 600,000 Hazara community members, 100,000 have left their hometown [Quetta] ... Around 80,000 people migrated from Quetta to Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore and Karachi.'²⁰ The Vice-Chairperson of the HRCP told the Express Tribune in April 2014 that, given a surge of violence, 30,000 Hazaras had left Balochistan, for other parts of the country, in the past five years.²¹
- 5.2.3 In correspondence with the UK Home Office Country Policy and Information Team on 5 May 2016, an official at the Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS) stated:
- 'It is [...] difficult to trace the distribution of Hazara population in Pakistan as after sectarian killings in Quetta, many families migrated to different parts of the country, especially Karachi, which already has a sizeable Hazara population, estimated 25,000 families live there. They are concentrated in areas of Hussain Hazara Goth and Mughal Hazara Goth of the city. Those who afford the expensive living of Islamabad also relocated in the capital but

Overview', page 101, August 2015, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/55e061f24.html>, date accessed 7 September 2016.

¹⁷ Pakistan News Day, 'Election 2013: Party Wise Total Vote Bank', undated, <http://www.pakistannewsday.com/election-2013-party-wise-total-vote-bank/>, date accessed 7 September 2016.

¹⁸ Provincial Assembly of Balochistan, Members directory - By Party Affiliation, 2013 to date, http://www.pabalochistan.gov.pk/index.php/members/party_pos/en/27, date accessed 7 September 2016.

¹⁹ Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, 'State of Human Rights in 2015: Freedom of Freedom of thought, conscience and religion', pages 12-13, 1 April 2016, <http://hrcp-web.org/hrcpweb/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/freedom-of-thought.pdf>, date accessed 7 September 2016.

²⁰ Dawn: 'A tough life for the displaced Hazaras in twin cities' 9 March 2014 <http://www.dawn.com/news/1091921>, date accessed 7 September 2016.

²¹ The Express Tribune, 'Losing Ground: 30,000 Hazaras fled Balochistan in five years', 12 April 2014 <http://tribune.com.pk/story/694559/losing-ground-30000-hazaras-fled-balochistan-in-five-years/>, date accessed 7 September 2016.

their numbers are small. Reportedly, [a] few families have also migrated to Lahore and [are] living among [the] Shia population.’²²

- 5.2.4 According to the internet blog ‘Hazaras in Karachi’: ‘Over 13,000 members of the Hazara community lives in Karachi. Around 600 live in Hussain Hazara Goth, where the Main Imambaragh is located ... Hazaras living in Karachi comprise small amount [sic] in numbers out of Karachi’s whole population but they have managed to keep their own identity, language, beliefs and culture discrete and distinct amongst tens of other ethnicit[ies] dwelling in Karachi Metropolitan city.’²³
- 5.2.5 The DFAT report stated ‘An estimated 1200-1500 Hazaras are integrated with the broader Shia community in Parachinar, Kurram Agency. There are also Hazara communities in large urban areas including Karachi (up to 15,000), Lahore, Multan, Islamabad and Peshawar.’²⁴
- 5.2.6 A Hazara man who had left Quetta for Islamabad told Dawn that “Islamabad is very costly as compared to Quetta” and that “It is not possible for the poor people to get a house on rent in big cities like Rawalpindi or Islamabad.” He said that ‘thousands’ more Hazaras in Quetta wanted to move but poverty prevented them from doing so.’²⁵
- 5.2.7 A [Google map](#), maintained by the Hazara Organization for Peace and Equality (HOPE) ²⁶ indicated that at least four violent attacks against Hazaras have occurred in Karachi, including repeated attacks on an Agha Juice Centre in Karachi (which occurred up to January 2014) in which at least 5 Hazara people were killed.²⁷ The HOPE map also documented a targeted killing of a Hazara in Lahore in October 2013.²⁸ (See [Sectarian attacks](#)).

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²² Pak Institute for Peace Studies, correspondence with Country Policy and Information Team, 5 May 2016, [Annex A](#).

²³ Hazaras in Karachi, ‘About Us’, undated, <https://hazarasinkarachi.wordpress.com/about/>, date accessed 7 September 2016.

²⁴ Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, ‘DFAT Thematic Report: Shias in Pakistan’, paragraph 2.9, 15 January 2016. Copy available on request.

²⁵ Dawn: ‘A tough life for the displaced Hazaras in twin cities’ 9 March 2014 <http://www.dawn.com/news/1091921>, date accessed 7 September 2016.

²⁶ Hazara Organization for Peace and Equality, ‘Hazara genocide in Pakistan’, undated, <https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?ll=30.159377%2C66.96579&spn=0.296847%2C0.410614&hl=en&msa=0&z=10&source=embed.&ie=UTF8&mid=1RMsmrHZL7uHaszMI7SQfQU52dxY>, date accessed 7 September 2016.

²⁷ Hazaras in Karachi, ‘Second terrorist attack in a week on Hazaras in Karachi: 3 murdered, 2 in critical condition’, 4 January 2014, <https://hazarasinkarachi.wordpress.com/2014/01/04/second-terrorist-attack-in-a-week-on-hazaras-in-karachi-3-murdered-2-in-critical-condition/>, date accessed 7 September 2016.

²⁸ Hazara Organization for Peace and Equality, ‘Hazara genocide in Pakistan’, undated, <https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?ll=30.159377%2C66.96579&spn=0.296847%2C0.410614&hl=en&msa=0&z=10&source=embed.&ie=UTF8&mid=1RMsmrHZL7uHaszMI7SQfQU52dxY>, date accessed 7 September 2016.

5.3 Hazaras living in Quetta

5.3.1 The EASO report of August 2015 noted:

'Within Quetta, Hazara live predominantly within their own two communities – Hazara Town (also known as Brewery Road) and along Alamdar Road towards Mehrabad [also referred to as Mariabad]. These tend to be lower and middle-income areas on the outskirts of Quetta. Within these areas, Hazara have access to medical and educational facilities, generally provided from within their own communities. ... Hazara in Quetta are integrated in the local community and work alongside members of other ethnic groups. Many are employed in the civil service of Balochistan, in the Balochistan police force, or with private businesses.'²⁹

5.3.2 An article published in March 2014 in 'Dawn' cited a member of the Balochistan Assembly, Agha Raza, as stating that 'the Hazara community in Quetta was concentrated on its western and eastern sides. When they need to go from one side to the other they travel through the city amid fear.'³⁰

5.3.3 Hazara Town and Mariabad are both protected by high walls and security checkpoints guarded by federal paramilitary troops³¹ (see also State response, treatment and attitudes – [Provision of security](#)). Human Rights Watch referred to this as "ghettoization" in its June 2014 report, adding that 'There is no travel route, no shopping trip, no school run, no work commute that is safe.'³² However, in its 2014 report, DFAT noted that it had '...observed that, during daylight hours, Hazaras are generally able to move about within Quetta. To defend their communities, some Hazaras maintain their own licensed weapons.'³³

5.3.4 An article in Pakistan Today in June 2015 referred to 300 shops run by Hazaras being located outside of the two main enclaves, in the 'main city areas'.³⁴ Hazaras, however, were reportedly wary of travelling around Quetta owing to their being easily identifiable.³⁵

²⁹ European Asylum Support Office (EASO), 'Country of Origin Information Report. Pakistan Country Overview', page 101, August 2015, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/55e061f24.html>, date accessed 7 September 2016.

³⁰ Dawn, 'A tough life for the displaced Hazaras in twin cities', 9 March 2014 <http://www.dawn.com/news/1091921>, date accessed 7 September 2016.

³¹ The Express Tribune, 'Losing ground - 30,000 Hazaras fled Balochistan in five years', 12 April 2014, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/694559/losing-ground-30000-hazaras-fled-balochistan-in-five-years/>; Dawn, 'Hazaras – Fault in their Faces', 24 October 2014, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1139997/situationer-hazaras-fault-in-their-faces>, date accessed 7 September 2016.

³² Human Rights Watch, "'We are the Walking Dead': Killings of Shia Hazaras in Balochistan, Pakistan", page 5, 30 June 2014, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/53b2748e4.html>, date accessed 7 September 2016.

³³ Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 'DFAT Thematic Report: Hazaras in Afghanistan and Pakistan', paragraph 4.19, 26 March 2014. Copy available on request.

³⁴ Pakistan Today, 'Three 'most wanted terrorists' arrested in Quetta' 2015, 8 June 2015, <http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2015/06/08/national/three-most-wanted-terrorists-arrested-in-quetta/>, date accessed 7 September 2016.

³⁵ The Express Tribune, 'Parkour – The other side of Hazara Town', 16 June 2014, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/722445/parkour-the-other-side-of-hazara-town/>, date accessed 7 September 2016.

5.3.5 The US State Department Human Rights report for 2015 noted:

‘Members of the Hazara ethnic minority, who are Shi’a, continued to face discrimination and threats of violence in Quetta, Balochistan. According to press reports and other sources, they were unable to move freely outside of Quetta’s two Hazara-populated enclaves. Consumer goods in those enclaves were available only at inflated prices, and Hazaras reported an inability to find employment or pursue higher education. They also alleged government agencies discriminated against Hazaras in issuing identification cards and passports. To avoid sparking violent incidents, authorities confined Shi’a religious processions to the Hazara enclaves. Anti-Shi’a graffiti was common in Quetta.’³⁶

5.3.6 The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) reported that ‘In search of safety, large numbers of Hazara citizens in Quetta have relocated to enclaves exclusive to their community over the years.’³⁷

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6. Sectarian attacks

6.1 Overview

6.1.1 Statistics relating to attacks on the Hazara community tend to vary from one source to another.

6.1.2 The European Asylum Support Office (EASO) report of August 2015 stated, as regards the Hazara, that ‘... since they are the only community that are visibly distinguishable and almost exclusively Shia, they have borne the brunt of sectarian terrorist attacks in Pakistan in recent years with a big rise in such attacks in 2013. Sunni extremists killed more than 400 Shiite Hazara since the beginning of 2013.’³⁸

6.1.3 The Hazara Organization for Peace and Equality reported that, as of 27 November 2015, approximately 1,400 Hazaras had been killed and about 3,500 injured in Pakistan in at least 189 attacks by sectarian militants since 1999; the locations of these attacks are indicated on a [Google map](#).³⁹

6.1.4 Human Rights Watch (HRW) stated in a report of 30 June 2014:

September 2016.

³⁶ US Department of State, ‘Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015’, Pakistan, section 6, 13 April 2016, <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2015&dliid=252973>, date accessed 7 September 2016.

³⁷ Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, ‘State of Human Rights in 2015: Freedom of Freedom of thought, conscience and religion’, pages 13-14, 1 April 2016, <http://hrcp-web.org/hrcpweb/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/freedom-of-thought.pdf>, date accessed 7 September 2016.

³⁸ European Asylum Support Office (EASO), ‘Country of Origin Information Report. Pakistan Country Overview’, page 101, August 2015, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/55e061f24.html>, date accessed 7 September 2016.

³⁹ Hazara Organization for Peace and Equality, ‘Hazara Genocide In Pakistan: Facts & Figures’, last updated 27 November 2015, <http://www.hazara.net/hope/>, date accessed 7 September 2016.

'The Hazara in Balochistan...find themselves particularly vulnerable to attack because of their distinctive facial features and Shia religious affiliation. More than 500 Hazaras have been killed in attacks since 2008, but their precarious position is reflected in the increasing percentage of Hazara among all Shia victims of sectarian attack. Approximately one-quarter of the Shia killed in sectarian violence across Pakistan in 2012 belonged to the Hazara community in Balochistan. In 2013, nearly half of Shia killed in Pakistan were Hazaras...

'The Lashkar-e-Jhangvi [LeJ] has claimed responsibility for most of the attacks and killings. It has also killed with increasing impunity members of the Frontier Corps or police assigned to protect Shia processions, pilgrims, or Hazara neighborhoods. [See [Lashkar-e-Jhangvi \(LeJ\)](#) and [State response, treatment and attitudes](#)]

'The bloodiest attacks, resulting in the highest death tolls recorded in sectarian violence in Pakistan since independence in 1947, occurred in January and February 2013, when bomb attacks in Quetta killed at least 180 Hazaras. The LeJ claimed responsibility for both attacks ... On January 10, 2013 the suicide bombing of a snooker club [in Quetta] frequented by Hazaras killed 96 and injured at least 150 ... On February 17, 2013, at least 84 Hazara were killed and more than 160 injured when a bomb exploded in a vegetable market in Quetta's Hazara Town ... In January 2014, 28 Hazara were killed in a suicide bombing attack in Mastung [a town south of Quetta] on a bus carrying pilgrims returning from Iran ... On June 9, 2014, at least 24 Shia pilgrims from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province were killed in a gun and suicide attack on a transit hotel in the Balochistan border town of Taftan. The attackers were killed in retaliatory fire by FC [the Frontier Corps state paramilitary] personnel ... The Hazara have been targeted to be killed, sometimes blown up by bombs, while participating in religious processions, praying in mosques, going to work, or just going about daily life.'⁴⁰

- 6.1.5 Not all attacks against Hazaras were perpetrated by the LeJ. In August 2015, The Friday Times reported on the arrest of a group of university students who confessed to targeted attacks against the Hazara community in Quetta.⁴¹
- 6.1.6 The South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP) observed in its Pakistan Assessment for 2015, 'Shias in particular and all religious minorities in general, are under relentless attack across Pakistan ... Through 2014, out of a total of 1,781 civilian fatalities [in terrorism related incidents], Shias (identities confirmed) accounted for 116, as against 504 Shias killed out of a total of 3,001 civilian fatalities in 2013.' The SATP did not specify how many of the Shia casualties were Hazaras.⁴² In its 2014 report, DFAT noted 'A

⁴⁰ Human Rights Watch, "'We are the Walking Dead': Killings of Shia Hazaras in Balochistan', Pakistan, pages 2, 3 and 38, 30 June 2014, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/53b2748e4.html>, date accessed 7 September 2016.

⁴¹ The Friday Times, 'Killings in Quetta', 21 August 2015, <http://www.thefridaytimes.com/tft/killings-in-quetta/>, date accessed 10 October 2016.

⁴² South Asia Terrorism Portal, 'Pakistan Assessment 2015', undated,

number of Hazaras have been killed in both targeted and random attacks in Karachi in the context of a high level of generalised violence. This is often related to clashing business, political and criminal interests – sectarian violence has been just one feature of the political landscape in the city.’⁴³

6.1.7 The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan observed in its Annual Report for 2015:

‘The scourge of sectarian violence continued to wreak havoc during the year under review [2015], although the number of attacks and casualties decreased somewhat compared to previous years, apparently because of some long-delayed action under a national strategy to counter terrorism and militant extremism.

‘According to a report by the Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies, there had been a decline in militant attacks since the National Action Plan was launched in December 2014. A report by the Islamabad-based research organisation Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS) noted that 58 incidents of sectarian violence [affecting not only Hazaras or Shia, but Muslim sects in general] had been reported from across Pakistan in 2015. All of those were sectarian-related terrorist attacks and no clashes between Muslim sects were reported during the year. This represented a 59 per cent decrease compared to the year 2014, when 144 incidents of sectarian violence had occurred.’⁴⁴

6.1.8 The US Department of State’s Human Rights report noted that in 2015 ‘According to multiple media reports, assailants killed at least 16 persons in attacks against Hazara Shi’as during the year. Media reported that on July 6, gunmen killed two Hazaras and a police officer in front of a passport office in Quetta; on July 17, a suicide bomber attempting to enter a Hazara neighborhood in Quetta blew himself up, killing two; and on July 28, gunmen on a motorcycle killed two Hazaras in Quetta.’⁴⁵ The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) stated in its 2015 Annual Report ‘Religious and sectarian minorities were targeted by militants across Pakistan in 2015. In most cases, the perpetrators enjoyed impunity.’⁴⁶

6.1.9 In its State of the World’s Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2016 report covering events in 2015, Minority Rights Group International (MRG) stated

<http://www.satp.org/satporqtp/countries/pakistan/assesment2015.htm>, date accessed 7 September 2016.

⁴³ Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, ‘DFAT Thematic Report: Hazaras in Afghanistan and Pakistan’, paragraph 4.21, 26 March 2014. Copy available on request.

⁴⁴ Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, ‘State of Human Rights in 2015: Freedom of Freedom of thought, conscience and religion’, pages 12-13, 1 April 2016, <http://hrcp-web.org/hrcpweb/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/freedom-of-thought.pdf>, date accessed 7 September 2016.

⁴⁵ US Department of State, ‘Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015’, Pakistan, section 6, 13 April 2016, <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2015&dliid=252973>, date accessed 7 September 2016.

⁴⁶ Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, ‘State of Human Rights in 2015: Freedom of Freedom of thought, conscience and religion’, page 2, 1 April 2016, <http://hrcp-web.org/hrcpweb/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/freedom-of-thought.pdf>, date accessed 7 September 2016.

'Living mostly in Quetta, Baluchistan, in recent years Hazara have increasingly been targeted by Sunni militant groups such as the LeJ and TTP [Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan]. In late May, five members of the community in Quetta were killed in two separate shootings, followed by the deaths of five more Hazara in June. In early July two brothers were shot and killed when queuing at a passport office in Quetta.'⁴⁷ The HRCP reported that on 25 May 2015, unidentified gunmen on motorbikes launched three separate attacks against Hazaras in Quetta, killing four people and injuring nine.'⁴⁸

- 6.1.10 The PIPS 2015 security report recorded 12 sectarian-related attacks by the LeJ in Balochistan (11 in Quetta, 1 in Bolan), mostly against Shia Hazaras, which killed 34 people and wounded 25 others. Providing further detail, the same source noted:

'Two Hazara men were killed and another was injured in a gun attack on the booking office of a bus service in Satellite Town, Quetta, on April 27. Four other members of Hazara community were killed in two separate incidents of targeted killing reported from the city, on May 25 and 27, respectively. On June 7, four masked men riding two motorcycles opened fire at the people inside four shops owned by Hazara community members. Four people were killed on the spot while the fifth victim succumbed to his injuries on the way to hospital. On July 6, two brothers belonging to the Shia Hazara community were entering the passport office along with their parents when the waiting gunmen opened fire, killing them both. A policeman who was passing by the site was also killed, after he shot and wounded one of the attackers. Later, on July 17, a suicide bomber in women's clothes attempted to enter Hazara Town, largely populated by the Shia Hazara minority community. When intercepted by security guard, he detonated his explosives, killing the guard and himself.'⁴⁹

- 6.1.11 In January 2016, DFAT assessed that, in Balochistan, '... despite a decline in the number of sectarian attacks, Hazara Shias remain segregated and are a key target of militant groups.'⁵⁰ In a timeline of incidents and statements involving the LeJ in 2016, as of 25 August, the SATP did not refer to any attacks by the LeJ against Hazaras, citing only the deaths of LeJ members killed during encounters with the security forces. Whilst the same source recorded that 23 sectarian attacks had occurred across the country in 2016 (up to 18 September), killing 67 people, only 2 of those deaths were reported

⁴⁷ Minority Rights Group International, 'State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2016', page 137, July 2016, <http://minorityrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/MRG-SWM-2016.pdf>, date accessed 9 September 2016.

⁴⁸ Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, 'State of Human Rights in 2015: Freedom of Freedom of thought, conscience and religion', pages 13-14, 1 April 2016, <http://hrcp-web.org/hrcpweb/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/freedom-of-thought.pdf>, date accessed 7 September 2016.

⁴⁹ Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS), 'Pakistan Security Report 2015', pages 18, 21 and 30, 3 January 2016, <http://san-pips.com/app/newsletter/lt.php?c=87&m=91&nl=3&s=ca94a10e4ec4ad612a143bd76ba10d19&lid=243&l=-http-pakpips.com/download.php--Q-f--E-282.pdf>, date accessed 16 September 2016.

⁵⁰ Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 'DFAT Thematic Report: Shias in Pakistan', paragraph 4.25, 15 January 2016. Copy available on request.

to be Hazaras.⁵¹ Reporting on the deaths of the 2 Hazaras, Dawn cited it as an apparent sectarian attack in Quetta, which occurred on 1 August 2016, after the men, travelling in a rickshaw, were shot dead by gunmen riding a motorcycle.⁵² Jamaat-ul-Ahrar (JuA), the breakaway faction of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) reportedly claimed responsibility for the killing.⁵³ According to the SATP 1 sectarian attacks against a mosque had occurred in 2016 (up to 25 September 2016).⁵⁴

- 6.1.12 Dawn reported that on 4 October 2016, 'At least four women belonging to the ethnic Hazara Shia community were killed and one injured when unidentified assailants opened fire on a bus on Kirani road near Pud Gali Chowk area of the provincial capital [Quetta]...."The bus was stopped and the women were shot because of their ethnicity," said provincial government's spokesman Anwarul Haq Kakar.'⁵⁵

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6.2 Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ)

- 6.2.1 Human Rights Watch (HRW) related in June 2014 that Lashkar-e-Jhangvi is 'a militant extremist Sunni Deobandi group formed in 1996 as a breakaway faction of the [anti-Shia party] Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP). The LeJ views Shia Muslims as heretics and their killing as religiously justified.' HRW stated:

'The rhetoric of the LeJ is both anti-Shia and anti-Iran. The LeJ long enjoyed a close relationship with Pakistan's military and intelligence agencies, which encouraged it in the 1990s to forge strong links with armed Islamist groups fighting in Kashmir and Afghanistan. Almost the entire leadership of the LeJ fought alongside the Taliban in Afghanistan. In 1998 it aided the Taliban in the massacre of thousands of Hazaras living in Mazar-e-Sharif .

'However, in recent years that relationship appears to have fractured in some parts of the country and generally become more complicated as the LeJ joined the network of the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (the Pakistani Taliban, TTP) and has been involved in high profile attacks on Pakistani military personnel and installations, government officials, infrastructure, and

⁵¹ SATP, 'Incidents and Statements involving Lashkar-e-Jhangvi: 2016', data up to 25 August 2016, http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/pakistan/terroristoutfits/LEJ_tl2016.htm; 'Sectarian Violence in Pakistan: 1989-2016', data till 18 September 2016, <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/pakistan/database/sect-killing.htm>, date accessed 23 September 2016.

⁵² Dawn, 'Two Hazara men shot dead in Quetta', 1 August 2016, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1274638>, date accessed 16 September 2016.

⁵³ The Express Tribune, 'Two Hazara men shot dead in Quetta', 1 August 2016, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/1153383/two-hazara-men-shot-dead-quetta/>, date accessed 16 September 2016.

⁵⁴ SATP, 'Sectarian attacks in mosques in Pakistan, 2000-2016', data till 25 September 2016, <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/pakistan/database/sect-attack.htm>; date accessed 23 September 2016.

⁵⁵ Dawn, 'Four Hazara women killed as gunmen open fire on Quetta bus', 5 October 2016 <http://www.dawn.com/news/1287981/four-hazara-women-killed-as-gunmen-open-fire-on-quetta-bus> date accessed 5 October 2016.

civilians. As the TTP has intensified attacks on Pakistan, the LeJ has emerged as its principal militant partner in Balochistan and, more crucially, in Pakistan's powerful and prosperous Punjab province, where it is deeply entrenched and has its origins...

'Military ruler General Musharaf banned the LeJ in 2002, but the ban has not hobbled the LeJ's ability to perpetrate sectarian attacks across Pakistan. They include attacks against the Hazara community in Quetta carried out in collaboration with the Taliban.'⁵⁶

- 6.2.2 According to the US Department of State's Country Report on Terrorism 2015, the LeJ's membership was said to be in the "low hundreds", operating mainly in Pakistan's Punjab province, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, Karachi, and Baluchistan.⁵⁷ The International Crisis Group (ICG) cited, in a May 2016 report, that:

'LeJ's modest core membership is anywhere between 500 and 1,000, and its operations are conducted by small groups, at times as few as two to three explicitly trusted members. These figures, however, exclude a large network of sympathisers, sustained by the mosque and madrasa sector, who both facilitate such attacks by providing on-the-ground intelligence and perpetuate sectarian divisions and anti-state sentiment. As LeJ has evolved and expanded beyond southern Punjab, including to Balochistan, FATA and, albeit to a lesser extent, Afghanistan, its formerly centralised structure has afforded far more autonomy to local commanders and factions, both in the interests of flexibility in planning and conducting attacks and to evade law-enforcement.'⁵⁸

- 6.2.3 Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) stated in its report on Shias in Pakistan, dated January 2016, that the LeJ 'has claimed responsibility for a large number of attacks upon the Shia community, particularly Hazaras in Quetta... In an open letter in November 2012, LeJ leaders declared their intention to "abolish the impure sect" of "Shias and Hazara Shias".'⁵⁹

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⁵⁶ Human Rights Watch, "'We are the Walking Dead': Killings of Shia Hazaras in Balochistan', Pakistan, pages 4 and 13, 30 June 2014, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/53b2748e4.html>, date accessed 7 September 2016.

⁵⁷ US Department of State, 'Country Reports on Terrorism 2015 - Foreign Terrorist Organizations: Lashkar I Jhangvi', 2 June 2016, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/57518d4a29.html>, date accessed 7 September 2016.

⁵⁸ International Crisis Group, 'Pakistan's Jihadist Heartland: Southern Punjab', page 4, 30 May 2016, <https://d2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net/279-pakistan-s-jihadist-heartland-southern-punjab.pdf>, date accessed 8 September 2016.

⁵⁹ Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 'DFAT Thematic Report: Shias in Pakistan', paragraph 4.5, 15 January 2016. Copy available on request.

7. State response, treatment and attitudes

7.1 Discrimination

- 7.1.1 The European Asylum Support Office (EASO) report of August 2015 stated 'The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade considers Pakistan's Hazara community not to be subject to official discrimination and there is little discrimination at community or societal level.'⁶⁰
- 7.1.2 In January 2014, Syed Mehdi Hassan Moosa, chief of the Hazara tribe in Pakistan took the federal government to the Sindh High Court over the alleged denial of passports to the Hazara community, 'He alleged that the director of the immigration and passport department for Sindh and its subordinate staff were humiliating and debasing the people over lame excuses and red herrings to get illegal gratification by creating hurdles and impediments in issuance of their passports.'⁶¹ (see [Legal rights](#)).
- 7.1.3 Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported in June 2014 that 'The Pakistani military maintains that it has no links, formal or informal, with the LeJ, and that there is no anti-Hazara or anti-Shia sentiment within the FC [Frontier Corps] or other military agencies operating in Balochistan.'⁶² (see [Lashkar-e-Jhangvi \(LeJ\)](#)). According to DFAT, many Hazaras work in the Balochistan police force.⁶³

7.2 Provision of security

- 7.2.1 DFAT reported in 2014 that during Muharram (a one-month mourning period) '...provincial authorities and the Ministry of Interior are known to provide security for participants in Ashura processions.'⁶⁴ Hazara Town and Mariabad in Quetta are both protected by high walls and security checkpoints guarded by federal paramilitary troops.⁶⁵ In 2014 it was reported that security forces provided a police escort to some Hazara groups, such as students and traders, who needed to travel to other areas of the city of

⁶⁰ European Asylum Support Office (EASO), 'Country of Origin Information Report. Pakistan Country Overview', page 101, August 2015, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/55e061f24.html>, date accessed 7 September 2016.

⁶¹ The Express Tribune, 'Alleged discrimination: SHC elicits comments on denial of passports to Hazaras', 18 January 2014, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/660118/alleged-discrimination-shc-elicits-comments-on-denial-of-passports-to-hazaras/>, date accessed 13 September 2016.

⁶² Human Rights Watch, '“We are the Walking Dead”: Killings of Shia Hazaras in Balochistan', Pakistan, page 4, 30 June 2014, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/53b2748e4.html>, date accessed 7 September 2016.

⁶³ Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 'DFAT Thematic Report: Hazaras in Afghanistan and Pakistan', paragraph 5.5, 26 March 2014. Copy available on request.

⁶⁴ Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 'DFAT Thematic Report: Hazaras in Afghanistan and Pakistan', paragraph 5.4, 26 March 2014. Copy available on request.

⁶⁵ The Express Tribune, 'Losing ground - 30,000 Hazaras fled Balochistan in five years', 12 April 2014, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/694559/losing-ground-30000-hazaras-fled-balochistan-in-five-years/>; Dawn, 'Hazaras – Fault in their Faces', 24 October 2014, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1139997/situationer-hazaras-fault-in-their-faces>, date accessed 7 September 2016.

Quetta.⁶⁶ Reporting in January 2016, DFAT stated they had been informed by credible sources that 'security forces continue to escort Hazaras travelling to and from their workplaces in Quetta.'⁶⁷ (See [Hazara living in Quetta](#))

- 7.2.2 The US Department of State noted that in its 2015 report on Human Rights Practices that 'Police often failed to protect members of religious minorities – including Christians, Ahmadiyya Muslims, Shi'a Muslims, and Hindus – from attacks. There were improvements, however, in police professionalism and instances of local authorities protecting minorities from discrimination and communal violence.'⁶⁸

7.3 Law and order

- 7.3.1 The 2015 US Department of State International Religious Freedom Report stated that 'Members of religious minority communities said there continued to be inconsistent application of laws safeguarding minority rights and enforcement of protections of religious minorities at both the federal and provincial levels by the federal Ministry of Law, Justice, and Human Rights, and its provincial counterparts'.⁶⁹ An article published in March 2014 in 'Dawn' cited Director of Human Rights Watch, Ali Dayan Hasan, as stating that '... the state and its security agencies were criminally incompetent and incapable of providing basic security to their own citizens.'⁷⁰ An article in Pakistan Today in June 2015 reported that '... two constables who were deputed on circular road Quetta for security of Hazara traders have been arrested for negligence of duty as they did not take action against the targeted killers who shot [and] killed Hazara traders.'⁷¹

- 7.3.2 According to the Human Rights Watch 2014 report:

'The sectarian massacres have taken place under successive governments since Pakistan's return to democratic governance in 2008. To many Hazara, the persistent failure of the authorities at both the provincial and national levels to apprehend attackers or prosecute the militant groups claiming responsibility for the attacks suggests that the authorities are incompetent, indifferent, or possibly complicit in the attacks...

⁶⁶ Dawn, 'Hazaras – Fault in their Faces', 24 October 2014, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1139997/situationer-hazaras-fault-in-their-faces>, date accessed 7 September 2016.

⁶⁷ Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 'DFAT Thematic Report: Shias in Pakistan', paragraph 4.24, 15 January 2016. Copy available on request.

⁶⁸ US Department of State, 'Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015', Pakistan, section 1d and 1e 13 April 2016, <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2015&dliid=252973> date accessed 7 September 2016.

⁶⁹ US Department of State, 'International Religious Freedom Report for 2015', Pakistan, Section II, 10 August 2016, <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/religiousfreedom/index.htm?year=2015&dliid=256315>, date accessed 7 September 2016.

⁷⁰ Dawn: 'A tough life for the displaced Hazaras in twin cities' 9 March 2014 <http://www.dawn.com/news/1091921>, date accessed 7 September 2016.

⁷¹ Pakistan Today, 'Three 'most wanted terrorists' arrested in Quetta' 2015, 8 June 2015, <http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2015/06/08/national/three-most-wanted-terrorists-arrested-in-quetta/>, date accessed 7 September 2016.

[Following the attack on the snooker club on 10 January 2013], 'Initial government indifference and apathy was met by the Hazara community's refusal to bury its dead in protest, sparking country-wide demonstrations in solidarity. Three days after the attack, Pakistan's government suspended the provincial government [of Balochistan] and imposed federal rule in response to demands of the Hazara community.

'[The situation is] compounded by elements within Pakistan's security agencies who appear to view the Hazara community with suspicion. Speaking on condition of anonymity, retired members of the paramilitary Frontier Corps, Balochistan's principal security agency, described the Hazara to Human Rights Watch as "agents of Iran" and "untrustworthy". One former official even suggested, without evidence, that the Hazara "exaggerated" their plight in order to seek asylum abroad and "gain financial and political support from Iran to wage its agenda in Pakistan."

'[Lashkar-e-Jhangvi] has...killed with increasing impunity members of the Frontier Corps or police assigned to protect Shia processions, pilgrims, or Hazara neighborhoods.

'While Pakistan and Balochistan authorities claim to have arrested dozens of suspects in attacks against Shia since 2008, only a handful have been charged. Virtually all members of the LeJ leadership operate with impunity, continuing to play leadership roles even when in custody awaiting trial. A number of convicted high-profile LeJ militants and suspects in custody, including its operational chief in Balochistan, Usman Saifullah Kurd, have escaped from military and civilian detention in circumstances the authorities have been unable to explain.

'Pakistani authorities have responded, at best, by suggesting that the Hazara accept open-ended ghettoization, ever increasing curbs on movement and religious observance, and ongoing economic, cultural, and social discrimination as the price for staying alive. Yet the LeJ still finds ways to attack and kill.

'The fact that repeated attacks on Hazaras go uninvestigated and unpunished and that elements within the security services and elected officials alike display discriminatory attitudes and hostility toward them generates a belief among many Hazara we interviewed that the military, Frontier Corps, and other state authorities in Balochistan are at best indifferent and at worst complicit in the attacks. These views gain traction from the fact that attacks and impunity continue despite the presence of significant military, paramilitary, and civilian security forces and intelligence agencies in Balochistan...

'Balochistan's civilian law enforcement authorities expressed to Human Rights Watch what they said was their helplessness and inability to deal with the issue of extremist attacks and sectarian militancy.'

'Similarly, Capital City Police Officer (CCPO) Mir Zubair Mehmood, the head of the police department in Quetta, conceded to Human Rights Watch that the police had not had "any significant successes in combatting extremist violence and attacks by the LeJ." He explained that factors that had made

the police ineffective included the force being targeted itself by the LeJ.⁷² (See [Lashkar-e-Jhangvi \(LeJ\)](#)).

7.3.3 In May 2015 Human Rights Watch reported that:

‘The Pakistani government’s response to extremist violence against the country’s religious minorities reflects incompetence, indifference, or possible complicity by the state security forces and other agencies. The authorities have repeatedly failed to apprehend or prosecute members of militant groups that have claimed responsibility for such attacks. While the authorities claim to have arrested dozens of suspects linked to attacks against Shia since 2008, only a handful have actually been charged with any crimes.’⁷³

7.3.4 In an August 2016 submission to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Minority Rights Group International reported that:

‘The government’s response to the situation of Hazara in Pakistan has fallen short of its commitments, particularly Articles 2(2) and 5(b) of the Convention concerning right to life, security, and adequate protection of the Convention. Failure to effectively investigate and then apprehend those perpetrating attacks has heightened the sense of vulnerability of Hazara, and has led to the assumption amongst some that authorities are not only unable or unwilling to adequately address the situation, but possibly also complicit. While there is no strong evidence to support this, it points to the almost total impunity of perpetrators and the lack of sense of protection Hazara feel from local and national level authorities.’⁷⁴

7.4 Counter-terrorism

7.4.1 The US State Department 2015 Country Report on Terrorism reported that Pakistan continued to implement the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) of 1997 and other laws, which empowered the government to counter terrorism with enhanced law enforcement and prosecutorial powers.. However, the ‘judiciary moved slowly in processing terrorism and other criminal cases’, ‘the majority of courts face long backlogs’, and ‘law enforcement personnel and judicial officers involved in terrorism cases can face threats and intimidation from terrorist groups.’ The report added that:

‘In January [2015], the [National] Assembly passed the 21st Amendment of the Pakistani Constitution and amended the Pakistan Army Act to allow military courts to try civilians for “offenses relating to terrorism, waging of war or insurrection against Pakistan, and prevention of acts threatening the

⁷² Human Rights Watch, “‘We are the Walking Dead’: Killings of Shia Hazaras in Balochistan”, Pakistan, pages 2-5 and 47-48, 30 June 2014, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/53b2748e4.html>, date accessed 7 September 2016.

⁷³ Human Rights Watch, ‘Pakistan: Arrest, Prosecute Sectarian Killers’, 13 May 2015, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/05/13/pakistan-arrest-prosecute-sectarian-killers>, date accessed 5 October 2016

⁷⁴ Minority Rights Group International, Alternative Report to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), Minority Rights Group International: Review of the Periodic Report of Pakistan, paragraph 17, July 2016, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/578f95234.html>, date accessed 5 October 2016.

security of Pakistan by any terrorist group using the name of religion or a sect and members of such armed groups, wings, and militia”.

‘At the federal level, Pakistan’s law enforcement and national security structures need improvement. Although the various security agencies attempted to detect, deter, and respond to terrorist incidents, the government’s institutional framework is not conducive to interagency cooperation and coordination. There was only sporadic interagency information sharing, no comprehensive integrated database capability, and specialized law enforcement units lacked the technical equipment and training needed to implement the enhanced investigative powers provided in the 2012 Investigation for Fair Trial Act. Prosecutors have a limited role during the investigation phases of terrorism cases. Jurisdictional divisions among and between military and civilian security agencies continued to hamper effective investigation and prosecution of terrorism cases. Intimidation by terrorists against witnesses, police, victims, prosecutors, defense lawyers, and judges, as well as insufficient evidence gathering in investigations, contributed to the high acquittal rate in cases filed in the Anti-Terrorism Courts.’⁷⁵

- 7.4.2 In July 2015 the founder of Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, Malik Ishaq, was killed along with 13 other people in a gunfight with police in Muzaffargarh.⁷⁶ Other senior LeJ leaders, such as Usman Kurd and his deputy, Dawood Badini, had previously been arrested and convicted for attacks on Hazaras. In February 2015 the Frontier Corps killed Usman Kurd in Quetta, following his escape from prison. Amir Mir, a Pakistani journalist with The News International who focuses on militant groups, wrote at the time that Kurd’s death was ‘a major blow to LeJ’ and had ‘literally broken the back of Lashkar-e-Jhangvi as far as Balochistan is concerned’.⁷⁷
- 7.4.3 For further information on counter-terrorism strategies, see the country policy and information on [Pakistan: security and humanitarian situation](#).

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8. Societal treatment and attitudes

- 8.1.1 In 2014 DFAT assessed that there was little societal discrimination against Hazaras, either because of their ethnicity or religion, at a community level, adding that ‘Any incidents of discrimination would likely be cases of local nepotism, favouritism or patronage, rather than evidence of a broader trend of societal attitudes.’⁷⁸ In its human rights report covering the year 2015, the

⁷⁵ US Department of State, ‘Country Reports on Terrorism 2015’, Chapter 2. Country Reports: South and Central Asia Overview, Pakistan, 2 June 2016, <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2015/257518.htm>, date accessed 7 September 2016.

⁷⁶ Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, ‘State of Human Rights in 2015: Freedom of Freedom of thought, conscience and religion’, pages 13, 1 April 2016, <http://hrqp-web.org/hrqpweb/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/freedom-of-thought.pdf>, date accessed 7 September 2016.

⁷⁷ The News International, Mir, A, ‘Killing of Usman Kurd a major blow to LeJ’, 17 February 2015 <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-2-302120-Killing-of-Usman-Kurd-a-major-blow-to-LeJ>, date accessed 7 September 2016.

⁷⁸ Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, ‘DFAT Thematic Report: Hazaras

US Department of State noted that ‘Societal discrimination against national, ethnic, and racial minorities persisted...’⁷⁹

- 8.1.2 In its State of the World’s Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2016 report, covering events in 2015, Minority Rights Group International (MRG) stated that ‘Particularly vulnerable to attack and with limited government protection are Pakistan’s Shi’a Hazara, who suffer intersectional discrimination as a visible ethnic minority as well as for their faith.’⁸⁰

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9. Employment and education

- 9.1.1 Australia’s DFAT stated in its report on Shias in Pakistan, dated January 2016, that ‘Many Hazaras in Quetta are self-employed or work for small businesses, although those with higher levels of education are sometimes employed in the banking, telecommunications or public sectors.’⁸¹
- 9.1.2 In 2014 DFAT reported:
- ‘Some Hazaras are employed in the civil service of the Government of Balochistan and serve in Balochistan’s police force. In 1972, the Government of Balochistan introduced a quota system for appointments to positions in the civil service in Balochistan. The replacement of the previous merit-based system resulted in the reduction in the number of Hazaras in the civil service from 50 per cent in the 1970s to five per cent in 2011, despite Hazaras’ consistently high entrance exam scores.’⁸²
- 9.1.3 The DFAT report noted that ‘Many Afghan Hazara children attend one of at least 18 private schools in Quetta... While the provincial government does not formally recognise these schools, they are accredited by the Afghan Consulate-General in Quetta.’ Whilst not specifically mentioning the educational facilities for Pakistani Hazara children, DFAT noted that ‘Sunni and Shia students attend the same public and private educational institutions.’⁸³
- 9.1.4 In its 2014 report Human Rights Watch noted that:
- ‘The LeJ’s numerous attacks on Quetta’s Shia Hazara has had a profound impact on the social, cultural, and economic life of that community. Since

in Afghanistan and Pakistan’, paragraphs 3.1 and 3.14, 26 March 2014. Copy available on request.

⁷⁹ US Department of State, ‘Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2015’, Pakistan, Executive summary, 13 April 2016, <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2015&dldid=252973>, date accessed 7 September 2016.

⁸⁰ Minority Rights Group International, ‘State of the World’s Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2016’, page 137, July 2016, <http://minorityrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/MRG-SWM-2016.pdf>, date accessed 9 September 2016.

⁸¹ Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, ‘DFAT Thematic Report: Shias in Pakistan’, paragraph 3.9, 15 January 2016. Copy available on request.

⁸² Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, ‘DFAT Thematic Report: Hazaras in Afghanistan and Pakistan’, paragraph 3.25, 26 March 2014. Copy available on request.

⁸³ Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, ‘DFAT Thematic Report: Shias in Pakistan’, paragraph 3.11, 15 January 2016. Copy available on request.

2012, Quetta's Hazara have been compelled to limit their activities to the Hazara-dominated neighborhoods of Marriabad and Hazara Town. As a result, they face increasing economic hardship, little safe access to education, and severe limits on their freedom of movement.⁸⁴

- 9.1.5 In its August 2016 submission to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Human Rights Watch reported that 'Ethnic Hazaras face great difficulties and risk to commute to Quetta to attend universities since those routes have been the location of a very large number of sectarian killings. Public transport operators no longer allow Hazara students to ride on buses since they believe this makes the entire bus vulnerable to attacks by armed groups.'⁸⁵
- 9.1.6 In an August 2016 submission to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Minority Rights Group International similarly reported that: 'While previously known to have been the most educated community in Quetta, figuring prominently in public life in Balochistan, Hazaras' freedom of mobility has been heavily restricted due to threat of attack. At present the Hazara community in Quetta has been effectively ghettoized to two predominantly Hazara areas, namely Hazara Town and Alamdar Road. Insecurity has in turn impacted other areas of everyday life for Hazara Shi'a in Pakistan, including access to education and employment, thereby constraining their opportunities, which in turn impacts their level of development including poverty levels. This insecurity also manifests along gendered lines, with the mobility of Hazara women particularly restricted.'⁸⁶

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⁸⁴ Human Rights Watch, "'We are the Walking Dead': Killings of Shia Hazaras in Balochistan', Pakistan, 30 June 2014, III. Impact of Violence on Quetta's Hazara Community p.42 <http://www.refworld.org/docid/53b2748e4.html>, date accessed 7 September 2016.

⁸⁵ Human Rights Watch, Submission on Pakistan to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 31 August 2016, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/08/31/submission-pakistan-committee-economic-social-and-cultural-rights>, date accessed 5 October 2016

⁸⁶ Minority Rights Group International, Alternative Report to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), Minority Rights Group International: Review of the Periodic Report of Pakistan, paragraph 16, July 2016, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/578f95234.html> date accessed 5 October 2016.

Annex A: Correspondence with Pak Institute for Peace Studies

On Wed, May 4, 2016 at 8:13 PM, [REDACTED]
<[REDACTED]@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk> wrote:

Dear [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I am conducting some research into Hazaras living in Pakistan, specifically looking for information on Hazaras living outside of Quetta – including the estimated numbers of Hazaras in each province/district; how well integrated into the community they are; and how they are treated there by society in general/the authorities?

I'm not sure if this is a subject area you cover, but I would be grateful for any help you can offer.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]@gmail.com

Sent: 05 May 2016 08:58

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: Re: FW: Request for information - Hazaras living outside Quetta

Dear [REDACTED],

[REDACTED] It is bit difficult to trace the distribution of Hazara population in Pakistan as after sectarian killings in Quetta, many families migrated to different parts of the country, especially Karachi, which already has a sizeable Hazara population, estimated 25000 families live there. They are concentrated in areas of Hussain Hazara Goth and Mughal Hazara Goth of the city. Those who afford the expensive living of Islamabad also relocated in the capital but their numbers are small. Reportedly, few families have also migrated to Lahore and living among Shia population.

[REDACTED]

My best regards

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Clearance

Below is information on when this note was cleared:

- version **1.0**
- valid from **7 November 2016**

Changes from last version of this note

First version.

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