

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	245
Land:	Pakistan
Kilde:	Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada
Titel:	Domestic violence, including effectiveness of the Protection of Women (Criminal Laws Amendment) Act, 2006; state protection and services available to victims
Udgivet:	14. januar 2013
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	2. juli 2013



Immigration and
Refugee Board of Canada

Commission de l'immigration
et du statut de réfugié du Canada

Pakistan: Domestic violence, including effectiveness of the Protection of Women (Criminal Laws Amendment) Act, 2006; state protection and services available to victims

Publisher [Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada](#)

Publication
Date 14 January 2013

Citation /
Document PAK104261.E
Symbol

Related
Document [Pakistan : information sur la violence conjugale, y compris sur l'efficacité de la loi de 2006 \(modifiant le droit criminel\) sur la protection des femmes \(Protection of Women \(Criminal Laws Amendment\) Act, 2006\); la protection offerte par l'État et les services offerts aux victimes](#)

Cite as Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, *Pakistan: Domestic violence, including effectiveness of the Protection of Women (Criminal Laws Amendment) Act, 2006; state protection and services available to victims*, 14 January 2013, PAK104261.E, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/51222ba42.html> [accessed 25 April 2013]

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1. General Situation

Sources indicate that domestic violence in Pakistan is a "serious problem" (US 24 May 2012, 1; Human Rights Watch Jan. 2012). Sources report on several forms of domestic violence, including torture (US 24 May 2012, 42; WEWA 18 Dec. 2012), forced marriages (ibid. 9 Dec. 2012; AHRC 25 Nov. 2011), physical disfigurement (US 24 May 2012, 42), amputation (HRCP 2012, 166), the denial of food (AHRC 25 Nov. 2011), rape (ibid.; WEWA 9 Dec, 2012), and shaving hair and eyebrows (US 24 May 2012, 42).

The Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) indicates that perpetrators of domestic violence can be the victim's husband, or men or women in the victim's family or her husband's family (25 Nov. 2011). The US Department of State *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2011* states that in-laws have abused and harassed the wives of their sons (US 24 May 2012, 43).

The AHRC states that victims are often stigmatized and blamed for the gender-based violence that they have experienced, and have often been labelled as the "false accuser" (2012, Sec. J.3). The

AHRC adds that when a woman is beaten, society portrays it as being because the woman cannot take care of her husband's needs (25 Nov. 2011). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

1.1 Prevalence

Country Reports 2011 states that domestic violence is "widespread" (US 24 May 2012, 42). In correspondence with the Research Directorate, the Secretary General of the Women Employees Welfare Association (WEWA), a Pakistani women's rights organization that provides, among other services, legal assistance and counselling to women, indicated that domestic violence is a "common practice" (9 Dec. 2012). The Thomson Reuters Foundation, a "charity committed to empowering people in need □ with trusted information and free legal assistance" (n.d.), indicates that, after consulting "213 gender experts from five continents to rank countries by overall perceptions of danger as well as by six risks: health threats, sexual violence, non-sexual violence, cultural or religious factors, lack of access to resources and trafficking," Pakistan was ranked in 2011 as the third most dangerous country for women after Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Reuters 15 June 2011). The UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office states that this ranking is due to the prevalence of domestic violence, "'honour' killings," forced marriage, rape and physical and sexual abuse (Apr. 2011).

The Thomson Reuters Foundation reportedly indicates that Pakistan has one of the world's highest rates of dowry-related murders (UN 28 Sept. 2011). According to *Country Reports 2011*, dowry and family-related disputes often resulted in the death or disfigurement of the victims by burning or acid (US 24 May 2012, 43). The AHRC indicates that dowry-related violence usually occurs when a husband or his family does not think a woman's family will provide the gifts promised, if a husband wants to re-marry, or if a husband will receive an inheritance upon the death of his wife (AHRC 2012, Sec. J.7).

Sources estimate that approximately 70 to 90 percent of women in Pakistan experience domestic violence (ibid.; *The Express Tribune* 11 Dec. 2012). The Aurat Publication and Information Service Foundation (Aurat Foundation, AF), a national women's empowerment civil society organization in Pakistan (n.d.), compiled statistics on violence against women, based on media reports from 113 districts for the period January-December 2011 (AF [2012], 1, 4). The statistics indicate that 8,539 women became victims of violence in 2011, which is an increase of close to seven percent from 2010 (ibid., 1). The AF says that it is an "open fact" that the majority of incidents of violence against women are not reported in the media, and that the statistics that they have compiled are the "'tip of the iceberg'" (ibid., 1). The AF study indicates that 610 of 8,539 cases of violence were categorized as domestic violence cases, and that other types of cases include abduction, murder, rape and gang-rape, suicide, "honour killing," sexual assault, burning, acid throwing, and "miscellaneous" (ibid., 4). However, the AF also states that most of the perpetrators of violence in the statistics compiled are relatives of the victims, such as a husband, brother, cousin, father, uncle, parents-in-law, son, or step son (ibid., 2). The Secretary General of WEWA stated that the types of cases included in the 8,539 cases are "actually all forms of domestic violence," noting that sexual assault and acid-throwing usually take place within families (18 Dec. 2012).

According to the AF statistics, from 2010 to 2011, there was a 25 percent increase in domestic violence cases, a 49 percent increase in sexual assault cases, and a 37.5 percent increase in incidents of acid-throwing ([2012], 2). The AF states that, of the 610 reported domestic violence cases, 348 took place in Punjab Province ([2012], 4).

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), a national, independent human rights organization (n.d.), reports that, based on its media monitoring, there were 366 domestic violence cases reported in 2011, and 357 of the victims were married women (2012, 166). The HRCP

indicates that the perpetrators were mostly husbands and other close relatives (2012, 166). According to the HRCP, in 2011, incidents of domestic violence "seemed to have increased" in Punjab, decreased in Sindh, and were "largely unmonitored and unreported" in Balochistan (2012, 156-157). The *News International*, a national newspaper in Pakistan, reports the following statistics from a survey conducted by the Women Rights Cell of Research and Development for Human Resources (RDHR), a Sindh-based organization that works with communities to achieve sustainable development (RDHR 25 June 2010): between January and March 2012, 66 women and 32 men were victims of "honour killings," while 49 women were killed in domestic disputes, and 30 women were killed over "other issues" (*The News International* 18 Apr. 2012). *Dawn*, a Karachi-based newspaper, reports that 8,000 violence-against-women cases were reported to Pakistani authorities in 2011, which constituted a 13 percent increase from 2008 (15 Jan. 2012).

1.2 Reporting Domestic Violence

Sources indicate that many cases of violence against women are not reported (AHRC 2012, Sec. J.3; *Dawn* 15 Jan. 2012). The AHRC indicates that domestic violence is the most under-reported crime in Pakistan (25 Nov. 2011).

The HRCP says that, at a discussion organized by "Insani Haqooq Ittehad," a conglomerate of civil society organizations in Islamabad, it was reported that, of the 80 percent of women subjected to physical or psychological domestic violence, five percent took "concrete steps" against the violence (2012, 166-167). The AHRC indicates that victims of gender-based violence are discouraged from lodging complaints (2012, Sec. J.3). The Secretary General of WEWA indicated that women often do not report domestic violence because this may incite more violence against them by their families (9 Dec. 2012).

According to *Country Reports 2011*, relatives of domestic violence victims were reluctant to report abuse because they did not want to dishonour the family (US 24 May 2012, 43). Sources indicate that domestic violence is considered to be a private matter (AHRC 25 Nov. 2011; Shirkat Gah 21 Dec. 2012).

According to the *Atlantic*, a Washington-based news magazine, if a woman speaks up about her physical or sexual abuse, she is considered to have lost her dignity and that of her family (9 Apr. 2012). Freedom House states that, at times, female victims of sexual violence have been urged to commit suicide by their families (2012). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

2. Legislation

2.1 The Protection of Women Act (Criminal Laws Amendment) Act, 2006

The *Protection of Women Act (Criminal Laws Amendment) Act, 2006*, was passed in order to "provide relief and protection to women against misuse and abuse of laws and prevent their exploitation" (Pakistan n.d.). Under this Act, rape is to be prosecuted under criminal law, rather than sharia law (Freedom House 2012). Also, the Act differentiates between the crimes of *zina* (extra-marital sex) and *zina-bil-jabr* (rape) (International Crisis Group 12 Oct. 2011, 20). For more information on the *Protection of Women Act (Criminal Laws Amendment) Act, 2006*, see Response to Information Request PAK103864 of 30 November 2011.

Country Reports 2011 states that, although rape is in the jurisdiction of criminal courts and is considered to be a criminal offense, prosecutions for rape were "rare" (US 24 May 2012, 41). Sources also state that spousal rape is not recognized as a crime (*ibid.*; Freedom House 2012). *Country Reports 2011* adds that, according to the Aurat Foundation, approximately 88 percent of women in prison were convicted of adultery, and "many" of these women were charged with this

crime after reporting rape (US 24 May 2012, 41). The AHRC indicates that "it is mainly the case" that rape victims must prove their innocence (2012, Sec. J.6).

In correspondence with the Research Directorate, a human rights activist and representative of Shirkat Gah, a multifaceted non-profit organization that works towards capacity building for women, as well as conducting research and awareness-raising on the empowerment of women (n.d.), indicated that although the *Protection of Women Act* has been "fully implemented all over Pakistan," only "very rare" cases are registered (Shirkat Gah 21 Dec. 2012). In a telephone interview with the Research Directorate, a representative of the HRCP who is in charge of complaints at the HRCP indicated that the *Protection of Women Act* is "not fully implemented," and that there is a "long way to go" for this Act to be implemented (19 Dec. 2012). He added that most people in Pakistan are not aware of this law, and that police and courts, which still have an "old mind-set," need to be more aware of it (19 Dec. 2012). Plus News Pakistan similarly stated that law enforcement agencies are "generally unaware of the laws" in Pakistan (9 Dec. 2011).

Country Reports 2011 indicates that the law requires rape victims to submit complaints to a sessions court (US 24 May 2012, 41). This requirement reportedly creates barriers for rape victims who may not have sufficient financial resources to travel to or access courts (ibid.).

2.2 Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill, 2009

The Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill, 2009, was drafted by the Sub-committee of the National Assembly Standing Committee on Women Development, in consultation with the Ministry of Women Development, Ministry of Law and Justice, and civil society organizations (Pakistan n.d.). According to Human Rights Watch, this bill attempts to "prevent violence against women and children with a network of protection committees and protection officers and prompt criminal trials for suspected abusers," requiring that court dates be set within three days of receiving complaints, that court proceedings take place within 30 days, and prescribing incremental punishments for successive breaches of a protection order (11 Jan. 2010).

Sources indicate that the Domestic Violence Bill was passed in the National Assembly in August 2009; however, the bill lapsed, as the Senate failed to pass it within the three months required by the Constitution (Human Rights Watch 11 Jan. 2010; *Dawn* 19 Dec. 2012). Sources indicate that the Senate passed the Domestic Violence Bill in early 2012 (*Pakistan Today* 22 Feb. 2012; *The Express Tribune* 13 Dec. 2012a). However, sources also indicate that, due to the "18th Amendment to the constitution," domestic violence is in the jurisdiction of the provinces of Pakistan (ibid.; *Weekly Cutting Edge* 15 Dec. 2012; *Dawn* 19 Dec. 2012). Sources indicate that the only jurisdiction to pass the bill has been Islamabad Capital Territory (ibid.; *The Express Tribune* 13 Dec. 2012a; *Weekly Cutting Edge* 15 Dec. 2012). In 21 December 2012 correspondence, the representative of Shirkat Gah indicated that the bill is still being discussed at the provincial level, where there is a debate about whether punishments for domestic violence should be included in the bill. The *Express Tribune*, a Pakistani newspaper that is affiliated with the *International Herald Tribune* (n.d.), reports that, according to the Aurat Foundation, "the law and home departments" in the provinces have drafted their own bill that excludes punishments for perpetrators of domestic violence (13 Dec. 2012b). On 18 December 2012, in correspondence with the Research Directorate, the Secretary General of WEWA stated that there is "no legal protection" for women from domestic violence.

Sources indicate that domestic violence is dealt with under the *Pakistan Penal Code* (WEWA 18 Dec. 2012; Shirkat Gah 21 Dec. 2012). For example, according to the Secretary General of WEWA, domestic-violence-related injuries may be charged under the *Pakistan Penal Code* as "broken bones" or "severe battery" (9 Dec. 2012). According to the representative of Shirkat Gah, however, only "extreme cases" actually result in charges under the penal code (21 Dec. 2012).

3. State Protection

A South Asia researcher at Human Rights Watch expressed the view in January 2010 that, for victims of domestic violence, there was "no protection from the government" (Human Rights Watch 11 Jan. 2010). According to a 2012 human rights report by the AHRC, although many laws related to women's rights have been passed by Parliament, there have been "no significant changes" in the status of women in Pakistan (AHRC 2012, Sec. J.3). The Secretary General of WEWA stated that domestic violence being viewed as an internal matter provides protection for perpetrators (9 Dec. 2012). Other sources speak similarly of impunity for perpetrators of violence against women (AHRC 2012, Sec. J.3; AI 2011).

3.1 Police

Country Reports 2011 indicates that women who reported abuse faced "serious challenges" (US 24 May 2012, 43). According to the representative of the HRCP, it is "very difficult" to lodge a complaint at a police station because police officers do not take domestic violence victims seriously, and, in the view of the representative, police believe that husbands have the right to beat their wives (19 Dec. 2012). *Country Reports 2011* states that "abused women usually were returned to their abusive family members" (24 May 2012, 43).

The AHRC reports that women have to deal with "corrupt" police and other justice officers who do not carry out their duties in an "ethical manner," adding that police accept bribes from suspected perpetrators to discourage victims from reporting (AHRC 2012, Sec. J.4). Sources report on victims being pressured by police to drop charges (US 24 May 2012, 42; Freedom House 2012). *Country Reports 2011* indicates that some police officers demanded bribes from victims before registering rape cases (US 24 May 2012, 42).

Sources indicate that sometimes police do not intervene in cases of domestic violence, as they consider this to be a private family matter (US 24 May 2012, 43; WEWA 9 Dec. 2012). The Secretary General of WEWA stated that there is no procedure in place for registering First Information Reports (FIRs) for domestic violence cases (18 Dec. 2012). Sources indicate that police are reluctant to register complaints (AI 2011; AHRC 2012, Sec. J.4; Plus News Pakistan 9 Oct. 2012) and the AHRC indicates that police "mis-record statements" (25 Nov. 2011). The AF says that FIRs are not lodged in "many" cases ([2011], 1). Amnesty International says that police are reluctant to investigate cases of domestic violence (AI 2011). Other sources have labelled investigations as "faulty," "intentionally carried out with feebleness" (AHRC 2012, Sec. J.4), and "sometimes superficial" (US 24 May 2012, 42). According to the AHRC, perpetrators rarely receive punishments because police are not effective (2012, Sec. J.3).

Sources indicate that police officers try to encourage settlement or reconciliation between the victim and the perpetrator (HRCP 19 Dec. 2012; US 24 May 2012, 43; AHRC 2012, Sec. J.4). *Country Reports 2011* indicated that "instead of filing charges, police typically responded by encouraging the parties to reconcile" (US 24 May 2012, 43). The AHRC indicates that some victims are "invited" to withdraw complaints through settlement offers (2012, Sec. J.4).

The Islamabad Capital Territory Police acknowledges on its website that there have been a "large number" of cases of police officers being violent against women in police stations. Other sources report that police officers have raped women (AHRC 2012, Sec. J; US 24 May 2012, 42). *Country Reports 2011* indicates that, during the reporting period, "rape by police officials was a problem" (ibid.), and the AHRC indicates that women have been raped in custody (2012, Sec. J). *Country Reports 2011* also indicates that security forces have been accused of raping women during interrogations (US 24 May 2012, 7).

3.2 Women's Police Stations

Sources note the existence of women's police stations that are staffed by female police officers (US 24 May 2012, 43; Punjab n.d.; Islamabad n.d.). *Country Reports 2011* states that these stations were created to address the stigma attached to reporting gender-based violence, and to provide a safe place for women to report complaints and file charges (US 24 May 2012, 43). *Country Reports 2011* also indicates that men can also seek the services of women's police stations (ibid.).

Sources differ on the number of women's police stations in Pakistan, varying from 9 (APP 21 Feb. 2011), to 12 (US 24 May 2012, 43), to 19 (Plus News Pakistan 9 Oct. 2012). The Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) reports that women's police stations have been established in Karachi, Larkana, Hyderabad, Peshawar, Abbottabad, Islamabad, Lahore, Rawalpindi and Faisalabad (21 Feb. 2011), while *County Reports 2011* indicates that there are three women's police stations in Karachi, and one each in Larkana, Hyderabad, Sukkur, Lahore, Faisalabad, Rawalpindi, Peshawar, Abbottabad, Quetta, and the Islamabad Capital Territory in Islamabad City (US 24 May 2012, 43). According to Plus News Pakistan, there are seven women's police stations in Gilgit-Baltistan, while in Balochistan there is a reporting centre but no women's police stations (9 Oct. 2012).

The Punjab police indicate that "full-fledged women police stations" exist in Lahore, Rawalpindi, and Faisalabad (Punjab n.d.). The Punjab police indicate that these stations help female victims of crime and domestic violence, and provide legal advice and counselling to women (ibid.). The Capital City Police Lahore indicate that the women's police station in Lahore was established in 1995 (Lahore n.d.). The Capital City Police Lahore also indicate that, although female officers are authorized to register and investigate cases in the women's police station, female police officers are not active investigation officers in police stations outside of the women's police station (ibid.).

The Islamabad Capital Territory Police indicate that they inaugurated their women's police station in 1994 (Islamabad n.d.). They also indicate that this police station conducts all police work, but that it is the only station with female staff (ibid.). According to the Islamabad Capital Territory Police, the women's police station is successful in handling cases "concerning female felons" (ibid.). The Islamabad Capital Territory Police state that women's police stations have been created to avoid the misbehaviour of male police officers towards female prisoners, and that Pakistani women are joining the police force to protect women from the violence and harassment that they face in police stations (ibid.).

The Lahore police indicate that there are women complaint centres in Gulberg, Muslim Town, Lower Mall, and Race Course Road, all of which are staffed with female police officers (Lahore n.d.). APP reports that ladies complaint units have been set up in two police stations in Islamabad (21 Feb. 2011). The Sindh government indicated on its website plans for the fiscal year 2010-11 to create women complaint cells in Karachi, Sukkur, Larkana, Hyderabad, and Shaheed Benazirabad (n.d.b). These complaint cells were being set up for the "appropriate and timely disposal of complaints and speedy access to justice" and to provide medical and legal aid (Sindh n.d.a). The Sindh Minister of Women Development was reported in February 2012 as saying that five centres had been set up (*Pakistan Observer* 9 Feb. 2012). Further information on women complaint centres in Sindh could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

According to the representative of the HRCP, women's police stations are "not very effective" (19 Dec. 2012). He indicated that there are not enough women's police stations and, therefore, they are very difficult to access (HRCP 19 Dec. 2012). *Country Reports 2011* similarly states that "due to restrictions on women's mobility and social pressures related to women's public presence, utilization of women's police centers was limited," but added that the use of these stations has been increasing (US 24 May 2012, 43). Sources report that women's police stations are understaffed (ibid.; HRCP 19 Dec. 2012), lack sufficient training for female police officers, and

have limited equipment (US 24 May 2012, 43). Plus News Pakistan indicates that buildings that were constructed to house women's police stations have been used for other purposes (9 Oct. 2012).

Plus News Pakistan reports that most women's police stations do not register FIRs (9 Oct. 2012). A station house officer at a women's police station in "district west" reportedly indicated that the station was built in 2009 but did not register its first FIR until September 2011 (Plus News Pakistan 9 Oct. 2011). The first station house officer in the Islamabad and Karachi women's police stations reportedly indicated that women's police stations are allowed to register FIRs but that the officers are "extra cautious" before registering them; she explained that this was because "we mostly get domestic violence complaints and if we listen to the wife and take to task the husband, the only people who really suffer are the children. So we try to hammer some sense into their heads before taking any harsh step" (ibid.). Plus News Pakistan also reports that male police officers have gone to women's police stations to register FIRs on rape (ibid.). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

3.3 Police Training

Sources report on training or awareness-raising workshops for law enforcement officers (Sindh n.d.a; Plus News Pakistan 12 Dec. 2012). The Sindh Women Development Department indicates that violence-against-women-awareness seminars were provided to civil society, law enforcement personnel and heads of district governments in Karachi, Sanghar, Tando Allahyar and Thatta districts (n.d.a). Further information on the abovementioned training could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response. According to Plus News Pakistan, in December 2012, seven police officers from the Federal Capital Police attended a training course on domestic violence, crimes against children, and human trafficking (12 Dec. 2012).

4. Judiciary

Sources say that the judicial system in Pakistan is biased against women (AHRC 2012, Sec. J; HRCP 19 Dec. 2012). The AHRC indicates that courts are made up mostly of men, and that judges often make decisions based on Sharia law (2012, Sec. J). According to the representative of the HRCP, it is "very hard" to get a perpetrator of domestic violence convicted (19 Dec. 2012). Plus News Pakistan reports that, according to a station house officer, although the women's police stations are committed to handling cases of violence against women, "major challenges" lie in the courts (9 Dec. 2011).

According to the AHRC, women who take cases of violence to the judicial system are "more likely to find further abuse and victimization" (25 Nov. 2011). The AHRC indicates that in a rape case, the victim herself may be prosecuted, and the sexual history of the victim will be "thrown around" in court (25 Nov. 2011). The Secretary General of WEWA indicates that most domestic violence cases are withdrawn due to threats or family pressure (9 Dec. 2012).

5. Shelters

Country Reports 2011 indicates that there are 26 government-funded Shaheed Benazir Bhutto centres for women, which provide temporary shelter, legal aid, medical treatment and psychosocial counselling (US 24 May 2012, 43-44). *Country Reports 2011* indicates that victims are later referred to one of 200 provincially-run *darul aman*, which provide shelter, access to medical treatment, limited legal representation, and some vocational training (ibid.). In the opinion of the Shirkat Gah representative, there should be more shelters (21 Dec. 2012). She also stated

that shelters provide shelter for women and their children for "at least three months" (Shirkat Gah 21 Dec. 2012).

Sources provided information on two NGO-run shelters, one in Lahore and one in Karachi (HRCP 19 Dec. 2012; Shirkat Gah 19 Dec. 2012). The representative of the HRCP identified the one in Lahore as Dastak and the one on Karachi as Panah (19 Dec. 2012). The Shirkat Gah representative indicated that the one in Lahore, Dastak, is privately owned (19 Dec. 2012). According to Cause of Death: Woman, an investigative project of the Swedish Association of Women's Shelters and Young Women's Empowerment Centres, which examined the situation of violence against women in 10 countries between 2010 and 2012 (Cause of Death: Woman n.d.b), Dastak accommodates 25 women and 45 children, but at times has housed 70 women and their children, as "no one is turned away" (ibid. n.d.a). Cause of Death: Woman also reports that most women stay at Dastak for at least three months, although some have stayed for several years (ibid.). Dastak is reportedly protected by armed guards (ibid.).

Panah has both private and public ownership (Shirkat Gah 19 Dec. 2012; Panah n.d.a). Panah houses 40-45 women and children (ibid.; Pulitzer Center 31 Aug. 2011) and has 10 bedrooms with 31 beds and 4 cribs (Panah n.d.b.). In 2008, 60 percent of the women that stayed at Panah went there through a court order, while 25 percent were sent by NGOs, 10 percent by lawyers, and 5 percent by the police (ibid. n.d.a). In 2010, Panah reported that it provided shelter and rehabilitation services to 229 women and 82 accompanying children for periods ranging from a few weeks to several months (ibid. n.d.c). According to the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting, a not-for-profit journalism organization that supports independent international journalism (n.d.), women are allowed to stay at Panah for three months and it is not a "permanent home" (31 Aug. 2011). Panah has "strict security," and provides a variety of services such as legal and medical aid (Panah n.d.b).

According to the representative of Shirkat Gah, these two shelter homes are in "good condition," but all other shelters are in "bad condition" (19 Dec. 2012). The HRCP representative indicated that NGO-run shelters are "better" than government-run shelters (19 Dec. 2012).

Sources say that there is abuse of women in shelters (WEWA 9 Dec. 2012; US 24 May 2012, 44). According to *Country Reports 2011*, this abuse has occurred at government-run shelters in "some cases" (ibid.). Sources also report on the restriction the movement of women living in shelters (ibid.; Shirkat Gah 19 Dec. 2012; Cause of Death: Woman n.d.a). Sources indicate that when women are sent to shelters by court-order, they are prohibited from leaving the premises (Shirkat Gah 19 Dec. 2012; Pulitzer Center 31 Aug. 2011). The founder of Panah was quoted by the Pulitzer Center as saying that Panah must restrict the movement of court-ordered women at the shelter unless the court gives permission for them to leave (31 Aug. 2011). Cause of Death: Woman indicates that "several women who have stayed at Dastak □ have been murdered by their families when they have dared to venture out" (ibid.).

The representative of Shirkat Gah indicated that women in shelters live in "miserable conditions" (19 Dec. 2012). According to *Country Reports 2011*, many government centres were "full beyond capacity and lacked sufficient staff and resources" (US 24 May 2012, 44). The HRCP representative similarly stated that government-run shelters are overcrowded, and added that they are old, not well-maintained, and do not have either proper facilities or adequately trained staff (19 Dec. 2012). He said that women are afraid to go to government-run shelters and prefer NGO-run shelters (HRCP 19 Dec. 2012).

Sources indicate that shelters, both government and NGO-run, try to reconcile victims with the perpetrator of domestic violence (ibid.; Shirkat Gah 19 Dec. 2012). According to the Shirkat Gah representative, this occurs "sometimes," as managers of shelters often believe that it is "safer" for women to go home (ibid.). She added that, depending on the nature of the case, such reconciliation attempts are also made at Dastak and Panah (ibid.). Approximately 70 percent of the women that

have stayed at Dastak reportedly return to their families after "mediation" (Cause of Death: Woman n.d.a). Panah's website indicates that they assess the viability of reintegrating victims, including through mediation with their families (n.d.b). According to the HRCP representative, reconciliation attempts are made by shelters because it is "next to impossible" for a single woman to live alone in Pakistan due to prejudices against women and economic dependence (19 Dec. 2012).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

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