

## **PART I: CASE HISTORY**

### **1.1 Summary of my Case History**

As stated in my “Schedule 2” document, I was born in 1986 to a Christian family in Karachi, Pakistan, the eldest of four siblings: Pearl (1988), Sharon (1992), and Abner (1998). My father worked as a police officer in Bahrain from 1975 until returning to Karachi in 1984 for an arranged marriage. After I was born, we moved to Bahrain, and traveled back and forth between Bahrain and Karachi until 1992, when my third sibling was born. My father returned to Bahrain, and the rest of us stayed in my grandfather’s house in Baldia Town, Karachi. Meanwhile, my parents bought a house in Malir on installments.

In 1995, my mother became a nurse, and I attended Crescent Public School. In 1996, my father retired early due to a spinal injury. We moved into our house in Malir, unaware we were the only non-Muslim family in the area. Christians made up only 1% of Pakistan’s population, and we faced daily pressure to convert—my father at his tailor shop and I at school.

In 2000, we sold our house and shop in Malir and returned to Baldia Town. I started college in 2001 and worked with my father at his new shop in Hyderi Market. I completed college in 2004 but couldn’t afford university. In 2010, I started a printing shop in the Taj Paper Market with my friend, Khurram.

On September 20, 2013—my birthday—I received a threatening text from +92 334-3741-677 demanding 500,000 rupees. The caller, identifying himself as Mulla Akber, threatened me for extortion. I reported it to my father, and we approached the CPLC, police, and Rangers DG. We submitted documents, but by then offices were closed.

Fearing for my safety, I moved to my uncle Ilyas Bhatti’s house in Nazimabad. On September 21, Mulla Akber called again at 11 am. I ignored the calls. On September 23, my father and I submitted applications to the police and SSP offices. On the 24th, we also went to the Rangers DG office, who confirmed such extortion cases were common and rarely investigated.

With no protection and ongoing threats, my uncle advised me to leave Pakistan and apply for refugee status through the UNHCR in Thailand. My father contacted a travel agent, Arzoo, at Ahsan Travel, and we began preparing documents for a tourist visa to Bangkok.

On September 30, 2013, I applied for the visa at the Thailand Embassy in Karachi. On October 1, I returned home for clothes and went to my shop to collect 100,000 rupees to pay Arzoo. While on my way to deliver the money, I was attacked by four armed men. They identified themselves as Pashtuns, likely linked to Al-Qaeda, and raised their demand to 10 million rupees, accusing me of being a Christian who didn’t pay Zakat. I gave them the 100,000 rupees, and they left after firing a warning shot. I returned to my uncle’s house.

On October 2, my father and I went to file an FIR, but police delayed the process, giving us an appointment for October 4. That day, we met the investigation officer, who inspected the incident site but refused to lodge the FIR, citing the SHO’s absence. On October 7, the SHO

finally accepted the application but only under "unknown persons," warning us not to mention any group. He even suggested paying the extortionists like other businessmen. We realized no real help was coming. Extortionists in Pakistan often had political connections, and victims either paid or died.

On October 13, 2013, I departed Karachi via Thai Airways flight TG 508. I arrived in Bangkok on October 14, 2013, at Suvarnabhumi Airport. I have remained in Thailand since. The original funds for my journey were taken by the extortionists on October 1. My father paid Arzoo on October 7.

## **1.2 Confirmation of Convention Refugee Status (Sections 96 and 145 of IRPA)**

As outlined in Section 96 of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA)<sup>1</sup>, I qualify as a Convention refugee due to a well-founded fear of persecution on the grounds of religion (as a born Christian). I am a Pakistani national outside my country of nationality and, due to this fear, am unable and unwilling to avail myself of Pakistan's protection.

My fear is substantiated by documented threats and violence I faced in Karachi, Sindh Province, in 2013, when I encountered a near-death assault by extremists due to my Christian faith and operation of the Gospel Printing Press, which produced religious materials and cardboard boxes. This led to death threats from militants, who accused me of blasphemy and promoting apostasy for refusing to pay Jiziya—a demanded protection tax to allow my business to operate safely in their territory—culminating in a violent attack that forced me to flee for my life. Key evidence includes:

- Letters dated September 20–24, 2013, and October 4, 2013, to the Citizen-Police Liaison Committee (CPLC), Station House Officer (S.H.O.), Sindh Police, and Rangers Sindh, requesting protection due to extortion demands, assault, and death threats from extremists over my refusal to pay demanded protection money (akin to Jiziya) for operating my Gospel Printing Press as a born Christian (attached as Pages 13–18 of "AFZAL, Rahief - Supporting Documentation.pdf").
- A First Information Report (FIR) dated October 7, 2013, filed at Baldia Police Station, Karachi, detailing the assault and death threats for refusing to pay Jiziya—a demanded protection tax from extremists due to my Christian faith and operation of the Gospel Printing Press (attached as Pages 19–20, with certified translation).
- Bail documentation dated December 26, 2022, confirming ongoing legal proceedings related to the 2013 incident (attached as Pages 21–22, with certified translation).

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<sup>1</sup> *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA)*, Section 96. Government of Canada. Accessed October 10, 2025. <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/I-2.5/page-20.html#h-1153681>

These events forced my flight to Thailand in October 2013, where I initially entered irregularly due to the urgency. On October 16, 2013, I registered as an asylum seeker with UNHCR Thailand, received an asylum seeker document on February 1, 2014, underwent Refugee Status Determination (RSD) on October 14, 2016, and was granted refugee status on February 1, 2017 (attached as Pages 1–2 of "AFZAL, Rahief - Supporting Documentation.pdf" – UNHCR Card, front and back). This UNHCR determination aligns with Section 145 of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations,<sup>2</sup> confirming my status as a Convention refugee abroad.

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<sup>2</sup> *Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations*, Section 145. Government of Canada. Accessed October 10, 2025. <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-2002-227/page-30.html#h-1154173>

## PART II: CHRISTIANS IN PAKISTAN

### 2.1 As a Christian, I am at risk of violent persecution by extremists in Pakistan

Christians in Pakistan make up less than 2% of the population and face systemic discrimination, social exclusion, and violence.<sup>3</sup> We are often relegated to low-paying jobs and live in segregated communities. Religious extremists frequently target Christians with false accusations of blasphemy, which can result in imprisonment, mob violence, or extrajudicial killings.<sup>4</sup>

Pakistan's blasphemy laws, particularly Article 295 of the Penal Code, are notoriously vague and easily abused.<sup>5</sup> A mere accusation—often made without evidence—can lead to arrest, prolonged detention, or death. According to the BBC, at least 70 people have been murdered by mobs and vigilantes over blasphemy allegations since 1990.<sup>6</sup>

Ongoing risks in Pakistan further validate my claim. Extremist groups like Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) and Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) continue to operate in Karachi and Sindh. They often ally with the Afghan Taliban and factions of the Islamic State Khorasan Province (IS-K), creating symbiotic networks for urban recruitment and attacks on minorities.<sup>7</sup>

TTP cells in Karachi run extortion rackets targeting businesses, carry out kidnappings for ransom, and conduct target killings of police, political rivals, and perceived informants—activities that escalated after the Afghan Taliban's 2021 takeover, heightening threats in major cities like Karachi. For example, in June 2024, authorities killed a TTP operative in Karachi linked to kidnappings and extortion, and in December 2024, three TTP members were arrested there for planning attacks, with ties to murders.<sup>8,9</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Amnesty International. *Pakistan: Authorities Must Ensure Protection of Minority Christian Community*. August 16, 2023. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/08/pakistan-authorities-must-ensure-protection-of-minority-christian-community/>

<sup>4</sup> United States Commission on International Religious Freedom. *Issue Update: Assessing Blasphemy in Pakistan. December 2023*. <https://www.uscirf.gov/sites/default/files/2023-12/2023%20Pakistan%20Blasphemy%20Issue%20Update.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Human Rights Watch. “A Conspiracy to Grab the Land”: Exploiting Pakistan's Blasphemy Laws for Blackmail and Profit. June 9, 2025. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2025/06/09/conspiracy-grab-land/exploiting-pakistans-blasphemy-laws-blackmail-and-profit>

<sup>6</sup> BBC News. “Pakistan's Christians Living in Fear.” BBC News, March 30, 2016. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-35910331>

<sup>7</sup> Human Rights Watch. “Pakistan: Mob Attacks Christian Settlement.” *Human Rights Watch*, August 22, 2023. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/08/22/pakistan-mob-attacks-christian-settlement>

<sup>8</sup> Nazir Shah. “CTD Arrests Three ‘TTP Operatives’ Involved in Karachi Cop Killing.” *ARY News*, October 21, 2024. <https://arynews.tv/ctd-arrests-three-ttp-operatives-involved-in-karachi-cop-killing>

<sup>9</sup> Imtiaz Ali. “TTP Terrorist Involved in Kidnapping and Extortion Killed in Karachi.” *Dawn*, June 18, 2024. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1879345>

Similarly, AQIS-linked figures, including Sindh Emir Umar Jalal Chandio, orchestrated the 2015 Safoora Goth massacre near Karachi, killing 47 Ismaili-Shia civilians in coordination with IS-K operatives.<sup>10</sup>

In recent years, militant groups such as the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP) have undergone a resurgence and expansion of their activities, targets, and geographic reach through terrorist incidents and organized crime in Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, and Hyderabad.<sup>11</sup> This illustrates the volatile environment for religious minorities.

## **2.2 The threat of violence is real and ongoing**

Christians accused of blasphemy are often attacked before they can even reach a courtroom. In many cases, mobs burn down homes and churches, and the accused are lynched. Even if acquitted, the accused and their families must go into hiding or flee the country.<sup>12</sup>

My fear of returning to Pakistan is well-founded. The individuals who threatened me remain at large and are capable of fabricating new accusations. It would be easy for them to place Quranic pages at my doorstep and accuse me of desecration—a tactic that has led to deadly violence in other cases.<sup>13</sup>

## **2.3 Discrimination in Education and Employment**

Christians in Pakistan face systemic barriers in accessing quality education and employment opportunities. Christian children often attend underfunded schools in segregated neighborhoods and are subjected to religious discrimination and bullying. Curricula in public schools frequently include Islamic content, and non-Muslim students are sometimes forced to participate in religious activities.

“Christian students often attend under-resourced schools in segregated neighborhoods. Public school textbooks frequently contain derogatory references to religious minorities, and non-

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<sup>10</sup> *Pakistan Journal of Terrorism Research*. “IS and AQ Inroads in Pakistan.” Vol. I, Issue 1, National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA), 2021. <https://nacta.gov.pk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/IS-and-AQ-Inroads-in-Pakistan.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada. “Pakistan: The crime and security situation in Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, and Hyderabad.” PAK200859.E, 21 December 2021. <https://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/country-information/rir/Pages/index.aspx?doc=458520>

<sup>12</sup> Human Rights Watch. “A Conspiracy to Grab the Land”: *Exploiting Pakistan’s Blasphemy Laws for Blackmail and Profit*. June 9, 2025. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2025/06/09/conspiracy-grab-land/exploiting-pakistans-blasphemy-laws-blackmail-and-profit>

<sup>13</sup> Abid Hussain. “Local Tourist Killed in Pakistan’s Swat over Blasphemy Allegations.” *Al Jazeera*, June 21, 2024. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/6/21/local-tourist-killed-in-pakistans-swat-over-blasphemy-allegations>

Muslim students are sometimes compelled to participate in Islamic religious practices. Teachers often express negative views about Christians, which are then internalized by students.”<sup>14</sup>

In the job market, Christians are disproportionately represented in low-paying, menial labour positions such as sanitation work. They are often denied promotions and excluded from government jobs due to their religious identity.

#### **2.4 Forced Conversions and Abductions**

Christian women and girls in Pakistan face compounded discrimination due to both their gender and religion. Young Christian girls are often kidnapped, forcibly converted to Islam, and married to their abductors. These incidents are rarely investigated by authorities, and families face immense challenges in seeking justice. The lack of legal protections and societal indifference contribute to a climate of impunity for perpetrators of such crimes.

Social stigma and fear of retaliation often prevent victims from speaking out or seeking help. The intersection of religious and gender-based persecution severely limits their freedom, safety, and opportunities for advancement.

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), 2025 Annual Report, notes:

“In April, United Nations (UN) experts expressed concern about the worsening pattern of forced conversions among Pakistan’s minority Christian and Hindu women and girls. They noted that local authorities often dismiss forced marriages, in which women and girls are obliged to convert to Islam, and the court system likewise validates them.”<sup>15</sup>

As a Pakistani Christian, my daughters Ester and Liora are particularly at risk of these violations of their human rights and freedom of choice.

#### **2.5 Lack of Legal Recourse and Police Bias**

Christians in Pakistan frequently encounter bias and inaction from law enforcement agencies. When Christians report crimes, including threats or violence, police often refuse to register cases or conduct proper investigations.

“An entrenched bias in the criminal justice system results in miscarriages of justice against people accused of blasphemy. The authorities almost never hold those who commit violence in the name of blasphemy to account, while those accused under discriminatory and vague laws—

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<sup>14</sup> U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), *Connecting the Dots: Education and Religious Discrimination in Pakistan*, 2011. <https://www.uscirtf.gov/publications/connecting-dots-education-and-religious-discrimination-pakistan-2011>

<sup>15</sup> U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), *2025 Annual Report*. <https://www.uscirtf.gov/sites/default/files/2025-04/Pakistan%202025%20USCIRF%20Annual%20Report.pdf>

generally without evidence—suffer long pretrial detention, lack of due process, and unfair trials... In cases of vigilante attacks, police seldom take action to protect those targeted."<sup>16</sup>

In blasphemy cases, police are quick to arrest the accused without evidence, while failing to protect them from mob violence. This lack of legal recourse leaves Christian communities vulnerable and erodes trust in the justice system.

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<sup>16</sup> Human Rights Watch. "A Conspiracy to Grab the Land": *Exploiting Pakistan's Blasphemy Laws for Blackmail and Profit*. June 9, 2025. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2025/06/09/conspiracy-grab-land/exploiting-pakistans-blasphemy-laws-blackmail-and-profit>

<sup>17</sup> Human Rights Watch. "A Conspiracy to Grab the Land": *Exploiting Pakistan's Blasphemy Laws for Blackmail and Profit*. June 9, 2025. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2025/06/09/conspiracy-grab-land/exploiting-pakistans-blasphemy-laws-blackmail-and-profit>