

## **Report: ‘Thousands of Christians, Ahmadis, and Hindus’ Fleeing Pakistan to Survive**

**Date :** 22nd January 2018



**Christians and other minorities in Pakistan are bolting away from the predominantly Muslim nation by the “thousands” as Islamabad ignores harassment at the hands of Islamic extremists, reports *Asia Times*.**

“Thousands of Christians, Ahmadis, and Hindus are fleeing as the government turns a blind eye to Islamic groups’ harassment of other faiths and beliefs; even atheists have now gone quiet,” notes the news outlet, adding “A closer look at the situation reveals that religious minorities and atheists are at a higher risk than ever.”

The report comes soon after U.S. President Donald Trump’s administration placed Pakistan on a U.S. watchlist for countries of “particular concern” over “severe violations of religious freedom” after the commander-in-chief blasted Islamabad for harboring jihadists.

“This is only going to get worse,” Ibn Abdur Rehman, secretary-general of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, told *Asia Times*, referring to the persecution of religious minorities. “The state has surrendered to the radical Islamists and plans on gradually taking away every last bit of freedom from its citizens.”

Pakistan reportedly uses its controversial anti-blasphemy law, which carries a harsh sentence of life in prison or death, to target religious minorities, namely Christians.

In 2017, a judge in the Islamabad High Court decreed that “blasphemers are terrorists,” reports *Asia*



*Times.*

“Islamabad’s capitulation to the radical Islamist mob has endangered the Ahmadiyya [Muslim] community, which has been the target of death threats made openly since the party besieged the capital a few months ago,” it adds.

*Asia Times* learned from Pakistani Senator Ramesh Kumar that “around 5,000 Hindus leave Pakistan every year” because of religious persecution.

“This includes forced marriages and kidnapping for ransom, as well as attacks on Hindu temples,” notes the news outlet.

Pakistan and the Open Doors group also accuse “Hindu extremists” in India of persecution against Muslims and Christians. India and Pakistan are regional rivals.

Despite adding Pakistan to the U.S. “Special Watch List,” the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) argues that the Trump administration’s move “does not go nearly far enough,” reports *Newsmax*.

“While the Trump administration earlier this year put Pakistan on its ‘Special Watch List’ for countries that ‘engage in or tolerate severe violations of religious freedom, it stopped short of slapping Pakistan with the much more serious Country of Particular Concern designation (CPC),” it reports, citing USCIRF.

As mandated by law, the U.S. Secretary of State deems a nation as a Country of Particular Concern when it is guilty of “particularly severe violations of religious freedom, including torture or inhuman treatment.”

“USCIRF, an independent U.S. federal government commission dedicated to defending global religious freedom, has been pushing the State Department to designate Pakistan a Country of Particular Concern for 15 years,” notes *Newsmax*.

“Given the strong stance that President Trump has taken on Pakistan recently,” USCIRF chairman Daniel Mark reportedly said, “the failure to designate Pakistan as a CPC this year comes as a surprise and disappointment.”

Pakistan has also begun to target atheists in the country. An unnamed atheist who organizes underground meetings for local skeptics and appeared in the BBC documentary *Pakistan’s Secret Atheists* told *Asia Times*:

After the social media crackdown, many of us deactivated our profiles fearing abduction, especially after secular bloggers were abducted in January last year. But there’s also a reluctance among atheists about meeting up at homes. Our homes and the internet used to be our safe spaces to share ideas, but even those have been taken away from us.



Nevertheless, the news outlet acknowledges, “While local atheists can pass off as Muslims – if that is their birth religion in Pakistan, Hindus and Christians are more visible targets [for jihadists].”

Read the original post [HERE](#).