

## **Constitutionalized Lynching of Minorities**

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Another year has passed. Last year, regrettably, the sufferings of people on many places continued to be a challenge and seem to be unending. Silently and every now and then rhetorically, international community attempted to fix the problems but that was too late, too little and on some places, unfortunately, nothing at all. It looks obvious that Poverty, Wars, Violence, Displacements, abuse against women and children and ethnic oppressions will keep on haunting all of us during 2014.

In a recent study conducted by the Pew center “One third of 198 countries reviewed saw high or very high levels of internal religious strife, such as sectarian violence, terrorism or bullying in 2012, compared to 29 per cent in 2011 and 20 percent in 2010”. The 198 countries studied account for more than 99.5 per cent of the world's population.

Disappointingly, Pakistan's situation suffered a profound plunge during 2013. Appreciations poured in when first democratic transition took place in Pakistan in 2013, but the benefits of democracy or behind the shield of democracy, are shared only by 3% of this penurious nation. Crisis of Taliban, Human Rights, Energy, Education and Corruption persisted as stronger as ever before. Pakistan remained a killing ground for civilians including children and women, journalists, Police, Military, and minorities. None of the politicians resigned or stripped of ministerial powers despite this disgraceful failure to protect the innocent lives.

In the last issue, we proposed many things after a coward twin church bomb attacks on September 22, 2013, in Peshawar – Pakistan when 86 innocent church goers killed and many injured - nothing has changed. Real plotters are still at large, bereaved families still waiting for the compensation and the minorities are left at the mercy of terrorists – they can strike again, whenever they want. This is not that our beliefs and faiths are under attack, but this is about how serious the governments are to ensure the security of their citizens and minorities. It's also about how the civilised world reacting to such carnage.

In 2012, an estimated 450 members of the Shia Muslim community were killed in targeted attacks all over the country. Shia Hazara community was specifically targeted on many occasions and 125 were killed in Balochistan alone.

Human Rights Watch has painted a bleak picture of Pakistan in its 2013 World Report 2013. Report states “Pakistan's human rights crisis worsened markedly in 2012 with religious minorities bearing the brunt of killings and repression.” “Pakistan's religious minorities endured another year of persecution, insecurity, and fear,” Mr. Hasan of HRW Pakistan said. “The government's failure to reform or repeal the blasphemy law provides extremists with legal tools to impose bigotry and perpetrate abuse.” The persisting mass killing have overshadowed the small discriminations and single or double killings as people are used to double digit body count. There are many isolated and bloody occurrences that either goes unreported or underreported in this country. There is no place where victims can go for justice as police is unable to protect its own well protected high profile officers.

How long this modern world will act as a silent spectator against this state sponsored discrimination? We had suggested a number of strategies to pressurize the Government of Pakistan like repealing blasphemy laws and rewriting of The Constitution of Pakistan, Part III: Chapter 1, The Constitution of Pakistan, Notes for Part III: Chapter 3 and The Constitution of Pakistan, Part VII: Chapter 3A.

Human Rights Watch 2013 report about Pakistan reveals that the “abuses under the country’s blasphemy law continued as dozens were charged in 2012. At least 16 people remained on death row and 20 were serving life sentences for blasphemy.

Another minority declared non-Muslims with a constitutional amendment on Sept 6, 1974, are living under the cloak of fear and there are many cases where Ahmadis are killed, ransacked and harassed. Under the umbrella of The Ordinance XX which later came to be known as the Blasphemy Law. Members of the Ahmadi religious community have been major targets for blasphemy prosecutions and subjected to specific anti-Ahmadi laws. Militant groups forced the demolition or closure of Ahmadi mosques and vandalised Ahmadi graves across Punjab province”.

A US government-appointed panel, the US Commission on International Religious Freedom has also indicated that the risks to the minorities living in Pakistan have reached to a crisis level. The report has raised serious concerns about the killings of Shia Muslims and alongside Christians, Ahmadis and Hindus. Report says that blasphemy laws “are widely used to violate religious freedoms and foster a climate of impunity.” This report could place Pakistan under sanctions for failure to maintain Religious Freedom for minorities.

There are many instances where minorities are killed brutally in the name of blasphemy. Later, it’s revealed that the killing was caused by anger or personal enmity. The convicts still got away with a slap on the wrist.

This religious fervor has only proved lethal and devastating equally for the Muslims and minorities. Pakistani nationals abroad and the people of Pakistan origin are equally affected and hurt the same way like people residing in Pakistan. In fact, Pakistanis abroad feel highly embarrassed on what is going on in Pakistan because they have to answer their fellow citizens about inability of the government, killings and wellbeing of love ones living in Pakistan. They do what they can like Senior British Foreign Office Minister, Baroness Warsi, who always been deeply concerned about the situation in Pakistan and do the best she can. In her new year message to the people of Pakistan she said” I think of those killed at the All Saints Church in Peshawar in September. 2013 was again another year with too many attacks against minorities and innocent civilians”, make it clear that all of us standing by the victimized minorities and civilians killed during 2013.

The government of Pakistan is busy spending time and resources on the issues related to ego and revenge. Military, Intelligence Agencies, Taliban, banned outfits and armed wings of the political parties are rampant and many parallel governments are in place. Politicians are planning for tomorrow by introducing their progeny, fascinating slogans and religious shield. According

to an article published in the Washington Post on September 2, 2013, “the United States has delivered nearly \$26 billion in aid to Pakistan over the past 12 years”. Military, Intelligence Agencies, Taliban, banned outfits and armed wings of the political parties are knitted together by ideology, profit, sympathy or faith.