

## Pakistan

Violations	International Data 2022	Outcome of the research (2022-first months 2023)
Killing and maiming	20 (3 killed and 17 maimed)	19 (3 killed and 16 maimed)
Recruitment	N/A	
Sexual violence	32 % of women have experienced physical violence and 40% of ever-married women have suffered from spousal abuse at some point in their life	15-25% of children experiencing violence on average 32% of women between 15 and 49 experienced physical violence since the age of 15
Abduction	N/A	N/A
Attack on schools and hospitals	3 on schools	3 on schools
Denial of humanitarian access	0	0
Child marriage	21% married before the age of 18; 3% before the age of 15	
Child labour	11% of boys and 7.7% of girls aged 5 to 17 years	
Child trafficking		2,181 boys; 269 girls and 3 gender unknown (in 2022)
Acid attacks		150

## Challenges met during the research

Typology	Challenges	Comment
Quantitative	Data collection	Access to data is extremely challenging due to the fact that there is no national database and the reluctance of national/ international organisations/stakeholders in the field to share information.
Qualitative	Cross reference and verification of data	See comment supra.

### 1. Country Analysis

From 1893, modern Pakistan was part of the British Indian Empire until independence in 1947. The country was divided into the Sind Division, Punjab Province, and the Baluchistan Agency. There were various princely states, of which the largest was Bahawalpur.<sup>24</sup>

#### 1.1. Conflict

After independence in 1947, Jinnah, the President of the Muslim League, became the nation's first Governor-General, as well as the first President-Speaker of the Parliament, but he died of tuberculosis on 11 September 1948. Pakistan's founding fathers agreed

<sup>24</sup> For this section see also : Ziring, L. and Burki, Shahid Javed (2024). Pakistan. Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Pakistan>.

to appoint Liaquat Ali Khan, the secretary-general of the party, as first Prime Minister. From 1947 to 1956, Pakistan was a monarchy within the Commonwealth of Nations, and had two monarchs before becoming a republic. Until 1970, Pakistan was ruled by the military with Yahya Khan as President from 1969 to 1971.

In 1970 the first democratic elections were held. The East Pakistani Awami League won against the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), but Yahya Khan and the military refused to hand over power. Operation Searchlight, a military crackdown on the Bengali nationalist movement, led to a declaration of independence and the waging of a war of liberation by the Bengali Mukti Bahini forces in East Pakistan. In response to India's support for the insurgency in East Pakistan, pre-emptive strikes on India by Pakistan's air force, navy, and marines sparked a conventional war in 1971 that resulted in an Indian victory and East Pakistan gaining independence as Bangladesh (Dilip, 2015).

With Pakistan surrendering Yahya Khan was replaced by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto as president; the country worked towards promulgating its constitution (1973) and achieve democracy. The period between 1972 and 1977 was characterised by self-consciousness, intellectual leftism, nationalism, and nationwide reconstruction. In 1972 Pakistan embarked on an ambitious plan to develop its nuclear deterrence capability with the goal of preventing any foreign invasion, inaugurating; the country's first nuclear power plant in that same year. The program was completed in 1979.

Democracy ended with a military coup in 1977 which saw General Zia-ul-Haq becoming the president in 1978. From 1977 to 1988, Zia's corporatisation and economic Islamisation initiatives led to Pakistan becoming one of the fastest-growing economies in South Asia.

President Zia died in a plane crash in 1988, and Benazir Bhutto was elected as the country's first female Prime Minister. The

country's situation worsened; economic indicators fell sharply, in contrast to the 1980s. The period was marked by prolonged stagflation, instability, corruption, nationalism, geopolitical rivalry with India, and the clash of left wing-right wing ideologies.

Military tensions between Pakistan and India in the Kargil district led to the Kargil War of 1999, and turmoil in civic-military relations allowed General Pervez Musharraf to take over through a bloodless *coup d'état*. Musharraf governed Pakistan as chief executive from 1999 to 2001 and as President from 2001 to 2008.

After the assassination of Benazir Bhutto in 2007, the PPP secured the most votes in the elections of 2008, appointing Yousaf Raza Gillani as Prime Minister. In 2018, Imran Khan won the 2018 Pakistan general election and became the 22<sup>nd</sup> Prime Minister of Pakistan. In April 2022, Shehbaz Sharif was elected as Pakistan's new prime minister, after Imran Khan lost a no-confidence vote in the parliament (Ziring, Javed Burki, 2023).

### 1.2. Post-conflict situation

According to the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Pakistan has the sixth-largest diaspora in the world. Statistics gathered by the Pakistani government show that there are around 7 million Pakistanis residing abroad, with the vast majority living in the Middle East, Europe, and North America.

Pakistan continues to face multiple sources of internal and external conflict. Extremism and intolerance of diversity and dissent have grown, fuelled by a narrow vision of Pakistan's national identity, and are threatening the country's prospects for social cohesion and stability. The inability of state institutions to reliably provide peaceful ways to resolve grievances has encouraged groups to seek violence as an alternative. Devastating flooding across Pakistan in 2022 has caused billions in damage, strained

the country's agriculture and health sectors, and laid bare Pakistan's vulnerability to climate disasters and troubling weaknesses in governance and economic stability.

Regionally, Pakistan faces a resurgence of extremist groups along its border with Afghanistan, which has raised tensions with Taliban-led Afghanistan. Despite a declared ceasefire on the Line of Control in Kashmir in 2021, relations with India remain stagnant and vulnerable to crises that pose a threat to regional and international security. The presence and influence of China, as a great power and close ally of Pakistan, has both the potential to ameliorate and exacerbate various internal and external conflicts in the region.

Grave human rights violations continued, including enforced disappearances, torture, crackdowns on peaceful protests, attacks against journalists and violence against religious minorities and other marginalized groups. A backlash against legal gains in transgender rights led to growing violence against transgender people (Amnesty, 2022).

With a population of around 208 million, Pakistan is the world's sixth most populous country with around 39% of population comprising children (under 18-17) while 12% in the 0–4-year age bracket (early childhood) and 21% between the ages of 10 and 19 (adolescents). While the proportion of children and adolescents in the total population is expected to decline to 41% by 2022, their absolute number is projected to rise by 3.347 million, an increase of 4%.<sup>8</sup> These figures pose serious challenges in terms of the provision of adequate services, education, and jobs.

Violence against children is widespread and exists with a high degree of impunity in Pakistan. Violence at the household and community levels is generally accepted, as is violence by authority figures. Prevailing social attitudes tend to view violence as a form of acceptable discipline. Harmful exploitative practices such

as early marriage, child marriage and child labour are similarly socially acceptable. The available data paints a sobering picture, reflecting the great efforts that will have to be made to achieve decent targets on child protection. Poverty and vulnerability are the two key reasons for limited compliance with child protection rights. Neglected, deprived and vulnerable children tend to suffer the most. Communities may often appear to be insensitive to the needs of children, especially to issues of protection and exploitation. Child sexual abuse and exploitation are generally not accepted as a problem in Pakistani society or dismissed as being very rare. Cultural and religious attitudes make it difficult for victims to seek help. Denial, stigma, and social taboos exist around physical, psychological, and sexual violence. In turn, this often leads to abusive incidents not being reported. A general lack of awareness of the available protection system is exacerbated by issues of trust. At the same time, harmful practices such as child marriage are widely accepted in rural areas due to cultural norms, indicating the acceptability of social norms over legislative initiatives. In addition, challenges related to the effective implementation of applicable laws for the protection of children are compounded by a lack of data to support accurate and evidence-based planning, budgeting, coordination, and accountability among relevant actors. Budgetary allocations in support of child protection are disparate and difficult to identify and monitor. Supply-side challenges include the lack of operational coordination between sectors – particularly the sectors of social, health and justice – as well as an insufficient number of specialized social welfare and justice professionals. These issues are especially acute in Federally Administrated Tribal Areas (FATA), where *jirgas* (traditional assemblies of community elders) are widely appointed to address injustices. There is inadequate financial support for vulnerable parents and children's education and health needs. Protection

concerns are compounded by the fact that legal assistance and defence are not guaranteed for all children in conflict with the law, as well as by the absence of a public child protection case management and referral system. In terms of policy, there is no national strategy/policy on child protection issues. National and provincial frameworks and systems for reporting child protection concerns have yet to be adopted. Furthermore, there are no dedicated budget allocations for child protection programmes, which themselves lack minimum quality standards.

### *1.3. Social, cultural and religious aspects*

Though the country is commonly characterised on the global stage as part of ‘the Middle East’, Pakistanis tend to consider themselves more South Asian. The national identity of Pakistan is heavily influenced by its recent modern history. It only became a nation in 1947 when it gained independence from British rule and separated from India (known as Partition). The formation of the country bore with it an idea of what Pakistani society should look like and embody, enticing millions of people to immigrate from India. Since then, there have been constant negotiations of space and identity, leading to changes such as the secession of East Pakistan as Bangladesh. Contemporary world events have also exacerbated differences between some of the diverse lifestyles and cultures that have previously co-existed harmoniously. In turn, Pakistan has become troubled by inter-religious tensions, ethnic conflicts and terrorism.

As a result, Pakistan has an ever-evolving culture and its people have had to be flexible; the past century has been unstable and involved constant compromise on their behalf. Today, the country also has an exceedingly young age structure that may present difficulties in the future. Drastic demographic shifts and turbulent

politics have meant that the social security afforded to the average Pakistani citizen is minimal. Instead, adaptability, resilience and self-reliance have become important qualities. The land that Pakistan occupies has hosted many vast civilisations dating back to the Neolithic and Bronze Age of the Indus Valley Civilisation. A variety of ethnic cultures have arisen from this rich history, with identities and values specific to them. Among the rich ethno-linguistic diversity of the country, there are overarching values common to all Pakistanis. For example, much behaviour is noticeably influenced by people’s perceptions of pride, honour and shame. The concept of honour (known as ‘*izzat*’ in Hindi-Urdu) is deeply embedded in Pakistani culture. A person’s honour, or *izzat*, is affected by their personal actions as well as the behaviour of those they are associated with (i.e. their family, community or any group they belong to). Therefore, if an individual does something dishonourable, their origins (i.e. family, region or ethnicity) may be implicated as the cause. In this way, there is a cultural pressure for individuals to protect their personal reputation and the image of those around them. This may require people to give a public impression of dignity and integrity by stressing their positive qualities, emphasising their family member’s achievements and adhering to social expectations. It is worth noting that the expectations regarding what is ‘honourable’ and ‘shameful’ can vary significantly between different ethnicities, family backgrounds and social attitudes. Pakistan is an Islamic Republic, meaning Islam is the official religion and laws are written to be consistent with its teachings. The state religion is central to daily life in Pakistan; mosques are in almost every neighbourhood and the call to prayer is heard throughout urban areas five times a day. While not all these people may practice Islam on a regular basis, the religion’s moral beliefs and tenets are widely recognised and respected. The family forms the foundation of society in Pakistan and encompasses a wide breadth of

relationships. One's extended relatives have great significance on a daily basis and a vast majority of Pakistanis live in multigenerational households whereby three, four or sometimes five generations reside together (including grandparents, uncles, siblings and cousins). Due to the low socioeconomic condition of most of Pakistan's population, family ties are essential for people to survive economically. The concept of '*wasta*' – relationship forming – becomes central to this family dynamic. People generally rely on their relatives more than anyone else for financial, social and employment opportunities. Generally, only the privileged elite classes or families who have migrated to cities have adopted the nuclear family setup. Even then, most people's relatives live close to each other and rely on one another for financial support. Traditionally, Pakistani families are patriarchal and patrilineal. In this way, the senior male is the head of the household, followed by the senior female, and finally, the children. Individuals are associated with their father's family primarily and, upon marriage, a woman will move in with her husband's family and be considered one of them. Men are generally the main source of income in households throughout Pakistan. According to Islamic custom, in the case that both a husband and wife are employed, the woman's income is rightfully her own and does not necessarily have to be spent on the upkeep of the home. In traditional homes, it is believed to be a man's sole responsibility to provide for his wife, children and any extended family who reside with them or live elsewhere. This will depend on the economic status of the family, but generally across Pakistan, men are expected to earn for the family while women look after the home and general well-being of the family. Some families still practise the seclusion of women (*purdah*) by which females can only leave the domestic realm when veiled and accompanied by a man. This custom varies significantly between ethnicities and social backgrounds. However, women generally

still occupy a subordinate status in Pakistani society. Ultimately, a woman's independence and freedom to make choices for herself (i.e. to work, get an education, marry, divorce, bear children or not) varies significantly depending on the attitude of her husband or closest male relative. While stratification between the genders is visible, the increase in education is playing a large role in changing this. Through the prevalence of education in urban areas, there is an increase in female employment, and it is more common to see both husband and wife heading the household. Many women are among the country's leading politicians and journalists.

#### *1.4. Implementation of human rights*

Significant human rights issues include reports of unlawful or arbitrary killings, including extrajudicial killings by the government or its agents; forced disappearance by the government or its agents; torture and cases of cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment by the government or its agents; harsh and life-threatening prison conditions; arbitrary detention; political prisoners; transnational repression against individuals in another country; arbitrary or unlawful interference with privacy; serious restrictions on free expression and media, including violence against journalists, unjustified arrests and disappearances of journalists, censorship, and criminal defamation laws, and laws against blasphemy; serious restrictions on internet freedom; substantial interference with the freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of association, including overly restrictive laws for the operation of nongovernmental organizations and civil society organizations; severe restrictions of religious freedom; restrictions on freedom of movement; serious government corruption; lack of investigation of and accountability for gender-based violence; crimes involving violence or threats of violence targeting mem-

bers of racial and ethnic minorities; crimes involving violence or threats of violence targeting lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or intersex persons; the existence or use of laws criminalizing consensual same-sex sexual conduct between adults; restrictions on workers' freedom of association; and existence of the worst forms of child labour. There was a lack of government accountability, and abuses, including corruption and misconduct by security services, often went unpunished, fostering a culture of impunity among perpetrators. Authorities seldom investigated or punished government officials for reported human rights abuses or acts of corruption. Rape is a criminal offense, with punishment for conviction that ranges from a minimum of 10 to 25 years' imprisonment and a fine to the death penalty. The penalty for conviction for rape of two or more persons is death or life imprisonment. The law does not explicitly criminalize spousal rape and defines rape as a crime committed by a man against a woman. Although rape was frequent, prosecutions were rare. The government did not effectively enforce the Women's Protection Act, which brought the crime of rape under the jurisdiction of criminal rather than Islamic courts. All provinces and the Islamabad Capital Territory had enacted domestic violence bills as of 2021, but observers reported implementation was slow due to lack of resources and awareness, gender and cultural biases, and weak federal and provincial coordination. There were no reliable national, provincial, or local statistics on rape due to underreporting, and no centralized law enforcement data collection system existed.

According to reports compiled by the Sustainable Social Development Organization and the Centre for Research, Development and Communication, at least 557 women were kidnapped, 381 were subjected to physical assault, 304 were raped, and 47 women killed in so-called honour killings across the country from May to August 2022. Women who attempted to report abuse often faced

serious obstacles. Police and judges were sometimes reluctant to act in domestic violence cases, viewing them as family problems. Instead of filing charges, police often responded by encouraging the parties to reconcile. Authorities routinely returned women to their abusive family members. Women faced legal and economic discrimination. The law prohibits discrimination based on sex, but authorities did not enforce it. Women also faced discrimination in employment, family law, property law, and the judicial system. Child abuse was widespread. The NGO Sahil said a total of 2,211 cases of child abuse were reported across the country from January to June 2022. Employers, who in some cases were relatives, abused young girls and boys working as domestic servants by beating them and forcing them to work long hours. Many children who worked as domestic servants were human trafficking victims. In some circumstances, trafficked children were forced to beg to gain money for their employers. Local authorities subjected children to harmful traditional practices such as treating girls as chattel to settle disputes and debts (US. Dep. Of State, Reports on Human Rights Practices, 2023).

## 2. Level of adequacy to international law

Pakistan joined the United Nations in 1947. It signed the International Bill of Human Rights in November 2004 and ratified it in April 2008 but did not sign the protocols related to civil and political rights and the abolition of the death penalty. Pakistan has also not signed the Convention on the Prevention of Discrimination on the Basis of Race, Religion or Belief and the Protection of Minorities. Pakistan agreed to accession of the Convention related to all forms of discrimination against women in March 1996, and signed and ratified the convention against

transnational organised crime in December 2010 and January 2010 respectively. Whilst being a signatory to the Geneva Convention in 1949, the country has not signed the additional protocols. Pakistan has not signed but has agreed to accession of most of the protocols related to terrorism and human rights; namely the convention against taking hostages, the suppression of terrorist bombing and the suppression of financing terrorist groups (2000, 2002 and 2009 respectively).

Further, Pakistan has ratified most of the major human rights treaties, including:

- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD);
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and its additional Protocols on the involvement of children in armed conflict and on the sale of children, child prostitution and pornography (CRC-OP-AC and CRC-OP-SC);
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW);
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR);
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT);
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD);
- Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime. (U.N. Treaty Body Database, 2023).

Pakistan is also party to key ILO Conventions, including the Minimum Age Convention (ratified in 2006), the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (ratified in 2001) and the Equal Remuneration Convention (ratified in 2001).

The depth and breadth of Pakistan's engagement with international law, as evidenced by the number of international instruments to which it is a party, would suggest that international law should not be underestimated. Pakistan's domestic legal framework, including the Constitution, indicates that international law is a valid source of law to be considered in enforcing the rule of law (art. 268(7) of the Constitution). Enshrined in the country's Constitution of 1973 are principles of policy for the state to 'promote international peace and security, foster goodwill and friendly relations among all nations and encourage the settlement of international disputes by peaceful means'.

With regards its international law obligations, Pakistan operates as a dualist state: the Rules of Business of 1973 empower the Cabinet to sign and ratify international treaties and agreements on behalf of the state, following which the Parliament is tasked with their incorporation via implementing legislation (Oxford Handbook of International Law in Asia and Pacific, 2023).

Pakistan has partaken in forty-one UN Peacekeeping missions in twenty-three countries, being the Leading Troop Contributor since 2009. Pakistan presided over the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) for two terms in 1962 and 1963. It has also remained an active member of the Committees of the UNGA, serving as the main sponsor for the Resolution on the Universal Realization of the Right of Peoples to Self-determination (adopted by the Third Committee on 19 November 2016), and as the Vice-Chairperson of the Bureau of the 71<sup>st</sup> session of the Sixth Committee, adopting resolutions and decisions pertaining to the responsibility of states for internationally wrongful acts, diplomatic protection, the rule of law at national and international levels, as well as measures to eliminate international terrorism.

Regionally, Pakistan was one of the founding members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), and also one of the

founding members of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)

Pakistan's legal system derives from its British common law history, the post-colonial Constitution 1973, and Islamic *sharia* law. Pakistan follows the principle of separation of powers, allowing for a clear distinction between the executive, legislative, and judicial organs of the state, within a federal structure. Article 40 of the Constitution indicates the state to 'endeavour to...promote international peace and security, foster goodwill and friendly relations among all nations and encourage the settlement of international dispute by peaceful means'. Additionally, after the 18<sup>th</sup> amendment in 2010, the Constitution delegates certain subjects to the provinces, while authority pertaining to '[i]nternational treaties, conventions and agreements and International arbitration' rests with the federal government.

The legislative organ primarily relies upon the Treaty Implementation Cells (TICs), created in 2013 at both the provincial and federal levels at the initiative of the Ministry of Law, Justice and Human Rights. The TICs' objective 'is to enable the Government [to effectively implement] conventions and obligations arising there from'. A private member's bill was proposed in the Senate in 2016 to discuss the establishment of a 'National Commission for International Law and Commitments', but it was not passed.

At the federal level, the National Commission on Human Rights is mandated to work towards the protection and promotion of human rights for all, including children. However, its provincial chapters remain weak. The National Commission for Child Welfare and Development, within the Ministry of Human Rights, monitors, reviews and oversees the implementation of CRC Committee recommendations and Pakistan's overall commitment to the Convention. Pakistan has made efforts to harmonize its domestic legislation with its international human rights obligations, as well to insti-

tutionalize the frameworks for human rights protection. For instance, in 2012 Pakistan established the National Commission on the Status of Women to help safeguard women's rights, as well as the National Commission for Human Rights. However, the full implementation of Pakistan's obligations is a work in progress. In July 2017, the UN Human Rights Committee, in its Concluding Observations on Pakistan, appreciated Pakistan's ongoing efforts to advance human rights, and encouraged Pakistan to further enhance human rights protections with respect to, *inter alia*, violence against women, abortion, sexuality-based discrimination, and child marriages (OHCHR, 2017).

Even the Federal Shariat Court, often criticized for being 'conservative' or 'backward', reminded Pakistan of its commitment to the international community—as under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, and others—for equal and indiscriminate treatment of its women. In 2008, the Court declared article 10 of the Pakistan Citizenship Act 1951 discriminatory, finding it to be in violation of the principle of gender equality (Oxford Handbook of International Law in Asia and Pacific, 2023).

### 3. National legislation

The constitution guarantees fundamental rights to all citizens (Articles 8-28). An individual's rights to life, liberty and dignity are considered inviolable (Articles 9 and 14). It discourages all kinds of racial, tribal, sectarian, and provincial prejudices among citizens (Article 33). The Constitution outlines specific prohibitions against torture and the elimination of all forms of exploitation (Article 3). It affirms that the state will not formulate any law which removes or restricts the fundamental rights enshrined in



the Constitution, specifying that any such law will be rendered void (Article 8). Articles 34 and 35 avow the full participation of women in all spheres of national life, alongside the protection of marriage, family, mothers, and children. Article 11(1) forbids slavery, declaring that no law shall permit human trafficking. Article 11(3) outlaws the employment of children under the age of 14 in any factory, mine, or form of hazardous employment. In 2010, Pakistan amended its Constitution to ensure the right to free and compulsory education to all children between the ages of 5 and 16 (Article 25A). The country has also made great strides in translating international pledges into national commitments. For instance, a unanimous parliamentary resolution in 2015 adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) as Pakistan's own national development agenda, making it the first country in the world to do so. However, Pakistan has yet to adopt a uniform definition of a 'child' as any person under the age of 18, in line with Article 1 of the CRC.

Article 35 of Pakistan's Constitution explicitly lays out the state's obligation to ensure the protection of mothers, children, marriage, and the family. However, government allocations for child protection are minimal. In many cases, laws, and policies to protect children often are not fully aligned with the CRC.

In 2015, the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act has incorporated several CRC obligations into national legislation, specifically the ones articulated by CRC's Second Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child pornography and child prostitution. This Act raised the age of criminal responsibility from 7 to 10 years. Courts also have the discretion to assess the mental capacity of accused children, and to raise the age of criminal responsibility to a maximum of 14 years, where appropriate.

In 2016, the Prohibition of Corporal Punishment Bill was passed. In 2022, a law entered into force banning corporal punishment

across the country's capital. The bill imposes penalties on educators, caregivers or other perpetrators exercising any form of physical punishment and reverses an earlier provision of the penal code which allowed teachers and guardians to administer such punishment "in good faith" or "for the benefit" of the child. This marks an important step towards protecting children from violence, changing attitudes towards corporal punishment, and better ensuring children's dignity and rights.

In 2017 the National Commission on the Rights of Child Act was adopted and the National Commission on the Rights of Child (NCRC) was created. It is an independent statutory body established by the Government for the promotion, protection, and fulfilment of children's rights in Pakistan. NCRC has the mandate to examine and review policies, laws, practices, and proposals, inquire into violations of child rights, conduct research, raise awareness, build capacities, provide technical support, and advise the Government on legislative and policy matters.

The current legislative framework also encompasses the Juvenile Justice System Ordinance 2000 (amended in 2012). However, implementation remains weak, as highlighted by the Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2009 and 2016. The National Judicial Policy (NJP) 2009, introduced by the Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan (LJCP), centres on the speedy resolution of juvenile offenders' cases. The minimum age of criminal responsibility in Pakistan is just 10 years old, which leads to children being treated like adults by the justice system. Data on the number of juveniles in pre-trial detention is extremely limited, ostensibly as many juvenile detainees are officially recorded as adults. The right to free legal assistance and defence is not guaranteed for all children in conflict with the law. Many remain in pre-trial detention for extended periods when they cannot afford to pay for legal assistance. Data is unavailable on victims of violence perpetrated

by authorities, or on un-sentenced detainees as a proportion of the overall prison population.

Provisions concerning the rights of the child appear in several laws, acts, and policy documents. Various legislative and policy-level initiatives are also worth highlighting in areas that affect children's well-being, such as education, nutrition, health, and child protection.

The main instruments against child labour are the Employment of Children Act 1991 and the Employment of Children Rules 1995. Following the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment in 2010, responsibility for labour issues has been devolved to the provinces. While the provinces have begun to develop province-specific child labour laws, existing federal legislation continues to govern issues of child labour. Both the Constitution and national labour laws prohibit the employment of children under the age of 14 for hazardous work, while several additional laws address matters related to the employment of children.

Efforts to curb gender inequality are manifest in the Prevention of Anti-Women Practices (Criminal Law Amendment) Act of 2011, the Acid Control and Acid Crime Prevention Act of 2012, the Protection Against Harassment at the Workplace Act (PHWA) of 2010, the National Plan of Action (NPA) to Combat Human Trafficking and the Punjab Gender Policy, approved in 2017.

A longstanding concern is that the jurisdiction of laws in Pakistan does not include Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), and no laws covering the rights of the child have been passed specifically for these areas. This situation places the children of these regions at a disadvantage and may lead to their fundamental rights not being observed. Where laws already exist, they are seldom implemented owing, in many cases, to the inadequate provision of resources and/or low administrative capacity.

Pakistan's main national planning instrument is Vision 2025, prepared by the Planning Commission in 2014. It establishes a uniform direction for development at the provincial and federal levels, outlining the country's key priorities and goals. With its conception of "a state based on justice, dignity, security, and prosperity, without prejudice and discrimination", Vision 2025 prioritizes economic growth and development grounded upon improving social indicators. Although Vision 2025 pre-dates the formal adoption of the SDGs by UN Member States in September 2015, its seven pillars are aligned with the SDGs. Links between Vision 2025 and the SDGs are explicitly mapped within the Vision 2025 document, with direct references to the global goals included as part of this policy framework (Ministry of Planning Development & Reform, Pakistan Vision 2025).

Pakistan is beset by challenges that hamper efforts to make the right to protection a reality for all children. These include the country's low levels of birth registration, averaging 34% among children under-5. Birth registration, a fundamental right of all children and a basic function of all governments, is legal proof of a child's existence and identity as a permanent and universal record of a child's birth within the civil registry, or equivalent system. Its absence significantly compromises the right of the child to protection. As an accurate record of age, birth registration can help to prevent child labour, mitigate child marriage, and protect children from being treated as adults by the justice system. In times of disaster, undocumented children are at even greater risk if they are separated from their parents or caregivers.

Overall, the implementation of child-related laws in Pakistan needs to be enhanced. A lack of trained professionals in fields related to children (e.g. child protection, child participation, etc.) poses a critical government challenge. The need for capacity development and the provision of adequate financial resources to

relevant ministries and departments at the federal, provincial and district levels cannot be over-emphasized. Furthermore, greater coordination is required between different stakeholders and government institutions. To improve the situation of children in Pakistan, institutional structures need to be strengthened, with an effective mechanism put in place for collaboration. Key initiatives will need to include capacity building for stakeholders working with and for children, as well as the allocation of adequate resources.

#### 4. Judicial system

There is a Supreme Court in Pakistan and a High Court in each province, and other courts exercising civil and criminal jurisdiction. The Supreme Court and High Courts have been established under the Constitution and other Courts have been established by or under the Acts of Parliament or Acts of Provincial Assemblies. The Supreme Court is at the apex of the judicial systems. It consists of a Chief Justice known as Chief Justice of Pakistan and several judges as may be determined by the Act of Parliament. The Chief Justice of Pakistan is appointed by the President. Other Judges are also appointed by the President after consultation with the Chief Justice. The Supreme Court has original, appellate, and advisory jurisdiction.

Under its Original Jurisdiction, the Supreme Court pronounces declaratory judgments in any dispute between the Federal Government or a provincial government or between any two or more provincial governments. The Supreme Court has the power to make any appropriate order for the enforcement of fundamental rights. Under its Appellate Jurisdiction, the Supreme Court has jurisdiction to hear and determine appeals from judgments, decrees,

final orders or sentences passed by a High Court, the Federal Shariat Court and the Services Appellate Tribunals. The Advisory Jurisdiction is activated if the President considers that it is desirable to obtain the opinion of the Court on any question of law which he considers of public importance. Any decision of the Supreme Court to the extent it decides a question of law or is based upon or enunciates a principle of law is binding on all courts in Pakistan. The Supreme Court has the power to review any judgment pronounced by it or any order made by it.

There is a High Court in each of the four provinces of Pakistan. A High Court consists of a Chief Justice and as many other Judges as may be determined by law or as may be fixed by the President. A High Court has extensive appellate jurisdiction against the judgments, decisions, decrees and sentences passed by the civil and criminal court. Each High Court supervises and controls all courts subordinate to it and any decision of a High Court binds all courts subordinate to it.

The Federal Shariat Court comprises eight Muslim Judges including the Chief Justice to be appointed by the President. Of the Judges, four are the persons qualified to be the Judges of the High Courts, while three are *Ulema* (scholars well-versed in Islamic Law). It has original and appellate jurisdiction. Under its Original Jurisdiction, the Court may examine and decide the question of whether any law or provision of law is repugnant to the injunctions of Islam as laid down in the Holy Quran and Sunnah of the Holy Prophet. If the Court decides that any law or provision of law is repugnant to the injunctions of Islam, it sets out the extent to which such law or provision of law is so repugnant and specifies the day on which the decision shall take effect. Where any law is held to be repugnant to the injunctions of Islam, the President in the case of Federal law or the Governor in the case of a Provincial law is required to take steps to amend the law to bring it in con-

formity with the injunctions of Islam, and such law ceases to have effect from the specified day. The Court has exclusive jurisdiction to hear appeals from the decision of criminal courts under any law relating to the enforcement of Hudood Law i.e. laws pertaining to offences to intoxication, theft, Zina (unlawful sexual intercourse) and Qazf (false imputation of Zina).

In every district of a Province, there are civil and criminal courts. Special Courts and Tribunals are constituted to deal with specific matters such as recovery of bank loans, customs, traffic, Commerce, labour, etc. Appeals from the Special Courts lie to the High Courts, except in the case of Labour Courts and Special Traffic Courts, which have separate forums of appeal.

Pakistan has a Ombudsman (*Wafaqi Mohtasib*). *Mohtasib* is an ancient Islamic concept and many Islamic States have established such an office to ensure that no wrong or injustice is done to the citizens. In Pakistan, the establishment of the institution was advocated on several occasions. Article 276 of the Interim constitution of 1972 provided for the appointment of a Federal Ombudsman, as well as Provincial Ombudsmen for the first time. Subsequently, the Constitution of 1973 included the Federal Ombudsman. The Office of Wafaqi Mohtasib was established by an Order in 1983. The Wafaqi Mohtasib is appointed by the President of Pakistan and holds office for a period of four years. It has jurisdiction to diagnose, investigate, redress, and rectify any injustice done to a person through maladministration on the part of a Federal Agency or a Federal Government official. The primary objective of the office is to institutionalise a system for enforcing administrative accountability.

Finally, there exist the *jirga* (a Persian word meaning a gathering, or a consultation). Tribes had recourse to *jirga* to solve their multifarious problems and hence it is now commonly known as the tribal justice system. These problems covered a broad spectrum of

subjects from an informal, community-based body that was meant to settle small claims, the 'jirga', or council of tribal elders, has in Pakistan been allowed to emerge as a powerful force.

## 5. Crimes against and affecting children: qualitative and quantitative results

In Pakistan, the most pervasive forms of violence against children include neglect, corporal punishment; child sexual abuse, acid attacks on girls, child marriages, killing and suicide, kidnapping and trafficking and recruitment of children in armed conflict (WHO, 2020).

No reliable official data is available at the national level on violence against children. While the Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) cover some aspects of such violence, consistent data is lacking since these surveys are conducted at different times in different regions. These surveys are the main source for analysing the violence on children in Pakistan. Some 81% of children between the ages of 1 and 14 in Punjab and Sindh, and 85% in GB, report having experienced psychological aggression, physical punishment, or other violent behaviour as a form of discipline. More children in Sindh (35% overall, encompassing 37.2% of boys and 32.5% of girls) than in Punjab (26.6% overall, including 28.4% of boys and 24.8% of girls) or GB (24.7% overall, spanning 25.1% of boys and 24.4% of girls) have experienced a severe form of physical punishment, such as hitting or slapping on the face, head, or ears, or being hit repeatedly. Most children in Sindh and Punjab have experienced psychological aggression, and well over half have endured physical punishment. Only a very small proportion (8% and 6%, respectively) reported experiencing only non-violent forms of discipline.

Evidence shows that psychological aggression, physical punishment, or violent behaviour as forms of discipline for children are pervasive in Punjab and Sindh, cutting across all socio-economic cohorts and geographic locations. 86% of children in Sindh's poorest households experience violent discipline, compared to 75% in the richest households. In Punjab, 82% of children in the second, third and fourth wealth quintiles experience violent discipline, compared to 78% in both the poorest and richest households. In both provinces, physical and psychological aggression in both urban and rural settings is comparable – 84% of Sindh's rural children experience violent discipline, as opposed to 78% in urban centres. The rate for Punjab is the same in both rural and urban settings (81%). It is worth recalling that the use of physical and psychological violence is legally condoned under Section 89200 of Pakistan's Penal Code for children under the age of 12 (Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, 2016).

While the use of corporal punishment has been banned in several provinces starting in 2005, the use of corporal punishment on children remains widespread across Pakistan: in workplaces, homes, educational institutions, and *madrassahs* (religious seminaries). In this context, many cases are reported from educational institutions (public/ private schools and *madrassahs*) where corporal punishment is institutionally ingrained. However, despite considerable evidence on the harmful impact of corporal punishment, teachers in schools and *madrassahs* across Pakistan continue to use it as a tool for disciplining children. Despite the obligation to register religious seminaries came into effect in 2005, it is estimated that many *madrassahs* remain unregistered. In this context, government laws regarding prevention of corporal punishment remain unenforced in religious seminaries. This lack of government regulation makes *madrassah* students increasingly vulnerable to violence and abuse.

### 5.1. Sexual violence

No reliable or official data exists on sexual violence against children in Pakistan. Unofficial studies suggest that 15-25% of girls and boys in Pakistan have endured some form of sexual abuse. There are not explicitly formulated, specialized laws for the prevention of child sexual abuse in Pakistan. Sexual abuse of children is recognized as a form of violence in the clauses of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC). In this context, any form of consent given by a child (under 12 years of age) leading to sexual contact with an adult is invalid under Section 90 of the PPC. Furthermore, child molestation is recognized as an act for terrorism by the Anti-Terrorism Act of 1997.

One of the major reasons behind the failure of successive governments to enact a specialized law preventing child molestation is a lack of one definition regarding what constitutes child sexual abuse. This makes legislation on child sexual abuse a highly complex issue. Furthermore, social, and familial constraints impede the arrest and prosecution of child molesters especially when the victim is sexually abused by a member of the family. The enactment of effective anti-child sexual abuse laws can be instrumental in curbing the instances of child sexual abuse in the country. Furthermore, educational campaigns can help in bringing the issue of child sexual abuse in the mainstream allowing for increased social sensitization on the issue.

Women and girl children remain largely at risk and at peril due to increasing violence. Common gender-based violence in Pakistan are honour killings, domestic violence (39% of women between the ages of 15 and 49 are physically and emotionally abused by their spouses. 70% of married women in Pakistan have experienced some form of physical or sexual violence from their husbands), acid attacks, sexual violence including rape (approximate-

ly 5,000 instances of sexual violence, including rape, gang-rape, and other types of sexual assault reported in Pakistan in 2020), women trafficking, genital mutilation, child marriage, the trafficking of girls and giving up girl children as compensation. Vulnerable communities remain silent in most cases due to stigma and the non-co-operation of legal authorities. The lack of investigation and apathy of gender-based violence in Pakistan also leaves the LGBTQIA+ community in the country in danger of extreme violence. Lack of government accountability fosters a culture of impunity amongst perpetrators.

Limited data are available on violence against women and girls in Pakistan at the national and provincial levels – an explicit focus of SDG 5. The data which exists only refers to the specific issue of domestic violence against, rather than disaggregated data on physical, sexual, or psychological violence. Some 32% of young women between the ages of 15 and 49 have experienced physical violence since the age of 15, while 19% of those surveyed had experienced physical violence in the last 12 months. Prevalence rates of physical violence varied across age groups. Women and girls aged 15-24 were found to be less likely than older women to have experienced physical violence since the age of 15. However, adolescent girls aged 15-19 are more likely than older women to have experienced physical violence during the past 12 months. Rural and impoverished women and girls appear especially susceptible to violence. More rural women and girls (34%) have experienced physical violence in their lifetimes than those in urban settings (28%). The former also experienced a higher rate of physical violence in the past 12 months (21%) than their urban counterparts (16%). Women in the lowest wealth quintile experienced highest rates of violence (25%) those in the highest wealth quintile (11%). KP has the highest proportion of women who have ever experienced physical violence (57%), followed

by Balochistan (43%), Punjab (29%) and Sindh (25%). Violence against women and girls appears less prevalent in GB (12%). Child abuse cases reveal that this issue is a cause for serious concern. In response, the Government enacted the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2015. Thereby, a number of obligations articulated by the CRC's Second Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child pornography and child prostitution have, to some extent, been incorporated into national legislation (ICRW and Plan International, 2016).

The Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill was not enacted by the National Assembly, despite being passed by the Senate in 2021.

### *5.2. Recruitment and Use of Children*

Children in Pakistan have been deeply afflicted by armed conflicts especially in the conflict-ridden zones of FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In this context, children were not only victims of the conflict but were also recruited as child suicide bombers by various extremist groups. The NGO Child Soldiers International reports that Pakistan lacks the legislation that explicitly prohibits and criminalizes the recruitment of children and their use in hostilities, which increases the risk of their exposure to such exploitation. Nonetheless, Pakistan's ratification of the CRC prohibits the recruitment and deployment of children under the age of 15 in armed combat (Article 38).

The accuracy and consistency of data with regards to children affected by armed conflict remains a challenge. Conflict displacement is difficult to record in Pakistan because there is no centralised reporting system and media reporting tends to be politicised. Most displacement has historically tended to occur in the disputed Kashmir region, but a February 2021 agreement be-

tween Pakistan and India led to a significant reduction in violence along the line of control and in particular cross-border shelling, which is the primary trigger of displacement in the region. An increase in armed conflict in Pakhtunkhwa province triggered 680 displacements in the Tirah Valley in September 2022, the only recorded figure for the country that year.

### *5.3. Killing and maiming*

Child suicide and killing of children by family members is becoming increasingly common in Pakistan. Suicide is mostly instigated by domestic problems which place undue stress on children thereby forcing them to take their lives. Moreover, poverty and acts of impulsive nature appear as the main contributing factors resulting in the murder of children. In this context, the growing economic crisis in Pakistan has created conditions of extreme hardships for families, sometimes forcing parents to commit suicide after killing their children. Child suicide can be prevented by providing children with a platform to address their grievances especially at the household level (SPARC, 2023).

In the lack of reliable data about the situation of children in Pakistan, the only consistent source is the UNSG Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict which in 2023 reported a total of 23 grave violations against 20 children (3 boys, 17 sex unknown). Children were reportedly killed (3) and maimed (17) by unidentified armed elements. Incidents included casualties caused by explosive remnants of war (9), improvised explosive devices (6) and gunshots (5). Three attacks on schools were also reported, including an attack involving the use of improvised explosive devices against a girls' middle school (UNGA SG, 2023).

### *5.4. Other forms of abuse*

Pakistan's children are also subject to alarmingly high levels of exploitation. Exploitation in the form of child labour, and child marriage affects both girls and boys.

The minimum legal age for admission to hazardous employment is 14 years. However, many younger children work in family establishments or non-hazardous occupations, yielding a high prevalence of child labour across the country. The persistence of child labour has multi-layered roots such as poverty, lack of decent work for adults, need for strengthened social protection, and the lack of a system that can ensure all children attend school rather than engaging in economic activities while they are under-age. Pakistan's first and only National Child Labour Survey 1996 estimated that 3.3 million children between the ages of 5 and 14 were economically active. 46% of them were active beyond the standard 35 hour working week. Boys accounted for 73% (2.5 million) of working children in this age group, and girls for 27% (0.8 million). The survey also revealed that children in rural areas were eight times more likely to be economically active than those in urban settings. The lack of a more recent survey points to the urgent need for data on children engaged in work across the country – this will be indispensable for setting a baseline to gauge progress against SDG 8 and for developing evidence-based policies that protect children from exposure to exploitation.

The 2017 Census and Pakistan's Labour Force Survey (LFS) are the country's two primary sources for manpower statistics. However, these set the standard minimum age for labour force participation at 10 years old. The current labour force participation rate for children aged 10-14 in Pakistan is 9.58%, down from 11.4% in 2013. A little over 11% of boys and 7.7% of girls are engaged in child labour. The incidence of child labour is higher in rural areas

(12.6%) than in urban (3.78%) settings. MICS data has been used to analyse child labour in Pakistan's provinces, as the surveys conducted before 2014 report on children aged 5-14 and MICS conducted in and after 2014 report on children aged 5-17.195 GB has the highest proportion of children and adolescents between the ages of 5 and 17 engaged in labour (45%), followed by Sindh (26%) and Punjab (16%) (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, Pakistan Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2013-14; ILO 2015).

In Pakistan, the legal age for marriage under the Child Marriage Restraint Act is 18 years for boys and 16 years for girls. Though underage marriage is a punishable offence according to the Pakistan Penal Code, little has been done to enforce the law as child marriages are still rampant in major parts of the country especially in the provinces of Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. In 2020, approximately 14% of young women aged 15-19 were married. Some 21% of women aged 20-24 were married before the age of 18, and 3% before they were 15 years old, while 6% of women between the ages of 20 and 49 married before they were 15. There is still a long way to go, however, before attitudes change and child marriage is no longer considered socially acceptable. The incidence of child and early marriage is higher in rural regions and within the poorest wealth quintiles. Given various cultural and tribal customs, in certain rural areas, child marriage is an accepted practice. These areas include rural Sindh, where 22% of young women aged 15-19 are currently married and 40% of women aged 20-49 were married before they turned 18.201 In FATA, 3 out of 4 women between the ages of 20-49 married before they were 18 years old, and 1 in 5 of those aged 15-49 married before the age of 15. Similarly, over 1 in 3 women in Balochistan married before turning 18, with no significant disparities between rural and urban areas, or between the poorest and Balochistan. According to the latest MICS 2016, 42.6% of

the women in GB aged 20-49 married before the age of 18. The region's median age for first marriages is 17.7 years, the lowest in the country (UNICEF, 2017).

**Acid attacks** have grown exponentially in Pakistan. There are no reliable statistics available, but experts claim that around 150 victims of acid attacks are reported from different parts of the country every year. In majority of the cases, children were victimized because they were accompanying a female who was the primary target of the attacker.

Corporal punishment is lawful in the home and prohibited in some but not all schools. Reliable data are not available but the phenomenon has become a culturally acceptable norm in Pakistan. Between 2017 and 2019, some students died in school as a result of injuries sustained while being punished.

No data currently exists on **child trafficking**. However, UNODC noted that Pakistan is a source, transit, and destination country for men, women and children trafficked for the purposes of forced labour and sexual exploitation. Reports suggest that the trafficking of women, children, and young men for the purposes of prostitution occurs in and through Pakistan, but trafficking for forced labour is likely to be even more widespread (UNICEF, 2017). According to UNODC, approximately 300,000 people are trafficked from Pakistan each year. The worst form of trafficking among humans is the trade of children, who are bought, sold, and kidnapped for work in begging rings, domestic servitude, and prostitution. Babies too are kidnapped, to be sold to childless couples or used for trading across inter- and intra-regional boundaries. It is also reported that girls from underdeveloped countries such as Bangladesh and Burma are trafficked into Pakistan for sale. The Trafficking in Persons Report 2021 declares Pakistan as a source, transit and destination country for men, women and children subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking (SPARC, 2022). In November



2022, Pakistan ratified the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons.

## 6. Conclusions and Recommendations

The research shows that children remains seriously affected by violence and abuse in the country. With 39% of Pakistan's population under 18 years, children are the key for the country's future prosperity. This makes it imperative for programmes, interventions and policies to champion the rights of the child effectively. This is reflected in Vision 2025, Pakistan's national development framework, in which the Government commits to developing cognitive capital – an elemental building block of the country's economic growth strategy. The Government of Pakistan shall ensure that all girls and boys grow up healthy, well-nourished, well-educated, protected from violence and exploitation, with adequate water and sanitation, and in an environment marked by gender equality and greater equity across geographic and socio-economic lines.

Pakistan has the unfortunate distinction of being second on the global ranking of out-of-school children. To ensure that all children learn, Pakistan will need to focus on getting out-of-school children into school, keeping students in school (especially girls in rural areas) and strengthening all aspects of its education sector, looking beyond issues of access alone to considerations of equity and the quality of education. Concerted efforts are required at every level from expanding and bolstering Early Childhood Education (ECE) as a means of preparing young children for learning and holistic growth, to improving enrolment, retention and completion rates in primary, middle and secondary schools.

The country's low levels of birth registration (34%) are a hurdle

for child protection, as are high levels of violence and exploitation experienced by children – the focus of SDG target 16.2. While significant disparities do not appear to exist between girls and boys, birth registration rates in urban centers are far higher than rural areas (59% vs. 23%). Disparities are also clear across wealth quintiles. To protect all children from violence and exploitation, it is necessary to spearhead birth registration while addressing corporal punishment, violent discipline by caregivers, violence against girls and women, sexual violence, child labour, child marriage, child trafficking and the neglect of vulnerable children, such as those with disabilities.

Disparities related to gender, geographic location and poverty are manifest. These especially reinforce deprivations for girls and boys with disabilities and special needs. To ensure that all children benefit from gender equality and greater equity, there is a need to focus on redressing disparities in such diverse spheres as education, health and immunization, food and nutrition security, child protection and access to resources. It is equally vital to address structural impediments to gender equality and challenge 'systems of discrimination', including inequitable gender norms, often justified in the name of culture, tradition, history, or group identity.

### *Recommendations:*

- Enhance the legislation protecting children's rights in relation to physical punishment/aggression; child marriage; child exploitation and child trafficking.
- Raise awareness amongst the community members, parents, teachers, religious leaders about children's rights and the prohibition of practices such as physical punishment/aggression; child marriage; child exploitation and child trafficking.

- Strengthen the judicial capacity to respond to children's violations.
- Strengthen social services to support children via counselling and psychological support.
- Create educational programs to explain their rights to children.
- Enhance gender equality in education.
- Create mechanisms to collect data about children's violations to be able to monitor the situation and design adequate responses.

## REFERENCES

- Amnesty International. (2022/2023). *Report on Pakistan*. [online] Available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/asia-and-the-pacific/south-asia/pakistan/report-pakistan/>
- Chesterman S.; Owada H.; Saul B. (2019). *The Oxford Handbook of International Law in Asia and the Pacific*. Oxford Public International Law - Handbooks, pp. 605 ff. [online] Available at: <https://opil.ouplaw.com/display/10.1093/law/9780198793854.001.0001/law-9780198793854>
- Global Initiative to End Corporal Punishment of Children (2016). *Corporal Punishment of Children in Pakistan*. [online] Available at: <https://endcorporalpunishment.org/>
- Hiro, D. (2015). *The Longest August: The Unflinching Rivalry Between India and Pakistan*. Bold Type Books: New York.
- Human Rights Watch. (2017). *Dreams Turned into Nightmares: Attacks on Students, Teachers and Schools in Pakistan*. [online] Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/03/27/dreams-turned-nightmares/attacks-students-teachers-and-schools-pakistan>
- International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW) & Plan International (2016). *Are Schools Safe and Gender-Equal Spaces? Findings from a Baseline Study of School-Related Gender-Based Violence in Five Countries in Asia*. [online] Available at: <https://www.icrw.org/publications/are-schools-safe-and-gender-equal-spaces/>

Government of Pakistan. Ministry of Planning, Development & Reform. (2014). *Pakistan 2025. One nation - One Vision*. [online] Available at: <https://www.pc.gov.pk/uploads/vision2025/Pakistan-Vision-2025.pdf>

NGO SPARC. (n.d.). *Violence against children, SPARC - Child Labor*. [online] Available at: <https://www.sparcpk.org/>

OHCHR. (2017). *CCPR/C/PAK/CO/1: Human Rights Committee discusses the initial report of Pakistan. UN Human Rights Committee, Concluding Observations on Pakistan*, paras. 9–48. [online] Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/concluding-observations/ccprepakco1-human-rights-committee-concluding-observations>

Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (2014). *Pakistan Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2013-14*, Government of Pakistan, Islamabad. [online] Available at: <https://www.pbs.gov.pk/publication/labour-force-survey-2013-14-annual-report>

UNICEF (2017). *Situation of Children in Pakistan*. [online] Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/pakistan/media/596/file/Situation%20Analysis%20of%20Children%20in%20Pakistan.pdf>

United Nations Development Programme (2015). *Five Years of The 18th Amendment: Lessons Learnt, Milestones Achieved', Development Advocate Pakistan*, vol. 2, no. 1, 205. [online] Available at: <https://www.undp.org/pakistan/publications/development-advocate-pakistan-volume-2-issue-1>

United Nations Security Council. (5 June 2023). *Children and armed conflict Report of the Secretary-General*. Accessible at: [https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S\\_2023\\_363.pdf](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S_2023_363.pdf)

United Nations Security Council. (5 June 2023). *Children and*

*armed conflict Report of the Secretary-General*. Accessible at: [https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S\\_2023\\_363.pdf](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S_2023_363.pdf)

Ziring, L., & Burki, S. J. (2023). *"Pakistan" in Encyclopaedia Britannica*. [online] Available at: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Pakistan>