



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)
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Information on whether there is state protection from non-state agents of persecution in Pakistan and the effectiveness of police protection for owners of shops targeted by Islamic extremists

The Executive Summary of an *International Crisis Group* report on the Pakistani police force states:

“After decades of misuse and neglect, Pakistan’s police force is incapable of combating crime, upholding the law or protecting citizens and the state against militant violence. With an elected government taking over power after more than eight years of military rule, the importance of reforming this dysfunctional force has assumed new importance. Elected representatives will be held accountable if citizens continue to see the police, the public face of government, as brutal and corrupt.” (International Crisis Group (14 July 2008) *Reforming Pakistan’s Police*)

The Introduction to this report states:

“After almost a decade of neglect, it is not surprising that the police have proved incapable of maintaining internal security. Considered a soft target by extremists of every hue, scores of poorly equipped personnel have been killed in terror attacks, deeply demoralising the force.” (ibid, p.1)

In a section titled “Countering Extremism” this report states:

“It is hardly surprising that this under-staffed, illequipped, deeply politicised, and pervasively corrupt force has failed to counter the growing extremist menace that is undermining the stability of the Pakistani state, claiming hundreds of lives in terror attacks.” (ibid, p.14)

This section of the report also states:

“Police officers concede that elements within their ranks have links with jihadi and sectarian groups. ‘When the state itself has consciously promoted extremism and sectarianism for almost three decades, it’s not surprising that these tendencies have managed to establish roots inside the police force, just like they have within the military’, said a police official. Yet, police connivance or inaction is not the primary factor behind the rise of terrorist violence. In Punjab, for instance, the police maintain updated lists of sectarian activists with criminal records, but intelligence agencies only take action after a terror attack has occurred.” (ibid, p.15)

A *Daily Times* article refers to the lack of police protection for video shops as follows:

“The shopkeepers did not give up continuing their business until the local police expressed ‘helplessness’ to protect them against any possible attack from militants. ‘We went to the local police and they disappointed us by saying that we better close down our business if there was a direct threat,’ the DVD shop owner told *Daily Times*. Police, however, cited its problems in protecting the businessmen. ‘Everyone is seeking protection, but we do not have the required number of policemen to provide it,’ Nisar Khan, station house officer at the University Town Police Station, told *Daily Times*.” (*Daily Times* (5 December 2007) *Militants’ threats shut video shops to give way to ‘Islamic business’*)

A *New York Times* article states:

“The police are left alone to stop the advance. But in Punjab, as in much of the rest of Pakistan, they are spread unevenly, with little presence in rural areas. Out of 160,000 police officers in Punjab, fewer than 60,000 are posted in rural areas, leaving frontier stations in districts virtually unprotected, police officials said.” (*New York Times* (14 April 2009) *United Militants Threaten Pakistan’s Populous Heart*)

A *Christian Science Monitor* article states:

“‘We have to invest in the police,’ says RAND analyst Christine Fair, who plans to bring this same message before Congress in testimony on Tuesday. ‘The police are thoroughly exposed, they are poorly equipped, they are outgunned, they are undermanned, they are poorly trained, and they are sitting ducks for the insurgents.’” (*Christian Science Monitor* (4 May 2009) *Next Taliban conquest? A view from Pakistan’s frontline*)

In a section titled “Innocents detained” a *BBC News* report on operations by the security forces in the Swat valley states:

“‘The security forces are continuing to conduct operations in the Swat valley,’ points out a local journalist. ‘While many militants have been arrested in these raids, a lot of innocent people have also been detained,’ he says. ‘The security forces often storm into houses from whose perimeter they have been fired upon. Most of these houses are used by the Taliban without the consent of the poor owner. But what happens is that when they [security forces] arrive, the militants have already left. The people in the household are then the focus of their wrath and the male members are usually dragged off,’ he said. Reports says that many of those taken away have not been heard from since. For this reason, while the locals are generally glad to be rid of the Taliban, the presence of the security forces is not altogether welcome. Families are, reportedly, still made to wait for hours at checkpoints and security forces still allegedly detain people without giving reasons. But the army denies the charges. ‘We are here to help and protect the civil population. I can tell you we take strong notice of any abuse of power,’ Gen Abbas says. ‘We have carried out investigations and I can assure you there is no basis for such views. But you should understand the army is

conducting an operation and we cannot go around investigating every baseless accusation.' For the people in Swat though there is no real end to the bloodshed." (BBC News (3 September 2009) *Killings continue bloodshed in Swat*)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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