

## News clippings of cases by Pakistan Dalit Solidarity Network - 2012

### ✓ [Another Hindu girl 'forced to convert'](#)

**March 01, 2012 – The News**

Karachi: Mangla Sharma of the Pakistan Hindu Council claimed on Wednesday that another Hindu girl had been kidnapped and forcibly converted a week ago in Mirpur Mathello.

This is not the first case of this nature as the community has been silently witnessing forcible conversion of their young girls for many months. Though the Pakistan Hindu Council does not have the latest figures, they believe that incidents of conversion are higher than reported in the media.

Rinkle, a 17-year-old girl as mentioned in the FIR, was kidnapped while going to school one day, claims her family. The girl was reportedly converted later and married off at a madrassa.

Three days ago, in her first statement after her kidnapping and conversion, Rinkle testified in front of the magistrate at a court in Deherki that she was forcibly converted and wanted to go back to her family. But Sharma says that rather than being sent to a Darul Aman, the girl was immediately sent to judicial custody until her statement was investigated.

What angered the family the most was that during her two days in judicial custody, she was not allowed to meet them, while the boy whom she was married off to was free to meet and speak to her.

Rochi Ram, a senior advocate of the Sindh High Court who has been witnessing the case for a week now, fears that Rinkle will eventually change her statement. He points out that such cases do not usually happen to people of, say, the Jatoi, Bugti or Marri clans. "It is always a poor man's daughter," and that is why he argues there is nothing anyone can do.

After observing the cases for a while now, Mangla Sharma says she waits for the same cycle to repeat itself. It is the same drill every time, she adds. A girl is kidnapped and converted at a madrassa and when the family creates an uproar the kidnappers produce a certificate that shows she has accepted Islam and 'wants' to be a Muslim.

Narrating the atmosphere at court, she says that as soon as the news of Rinkle's conversion and marriage came out, a crowd comprising clerics and armed men gathered outside the court. As the men fired in the air, the boy made a victory sign for them while coming out of the court.

"If there is consent on both sides, why the need to protect her with arms?" she asks. Sharma points out that the look on the girl's face shows that she is an unhappy bride. Minority MPA

Pitamber Sewani, whose attempts to pass a resolution on forced conversions in the provincial assembly were held back on 'legal grounds', says that one needed to speak on the issue before it explodes in our faces.

Amarnath Motumel of the HRCP says the concerns of the community centre around the fact that the good deed of converting a girl also hides the purpose of trafficking her outside the country for prostitution. "I, for one, do not want to question a girl if she wants to marry someone outside her community, but when a forced conversion is portrayed as a love marriage, it is highly inappropriate," he added. Twenty girls have been forcibly converted this month, according to the monthly report of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP).

✓ [CJ urged to help recover 'kidnapped' Hindu girl](#)

### **5th March, 2012 – Dawn**

KARACHI, March 4: An alliance of minority parties on Sunday appealed to Chief Justice of Pakistan Iftikhar Mohammad Chaudhry to take a suo motu notice of the kidnapping of a Hindu girl and order her immediate return to her parents to restore the waning sense of security in the minorities.

Speaking at a protest demonstration staged outside the Karachi Press Club, Pakistan Minority Leaders Alliance representatives said they would launch a protest movement and stage a sit-in on March 10 if the authorities failed to recover the girl, Rinkle Kumari.

According to an uncle of the girl, Raj Kumar, she was kidnapped from her house in Mirpur Mathelo over a week ago and forced to marry Naveed Shah and change her religion. He alleged that the case was heard by a civil judge in Ghotki, but he did not allow her relatives to enter the courtroom while giving a verdict in favour of the 'kidnapper', Mr Shah.

Speaking on the occasion, Jeay Sindh Mahaz chief Riaz Chandio expressed solidarity with the minority community members and demanded arrest of and punishment to culprits involved in her kidnapping.

He said those belonging to religious minority groups, including Hindus, Christians and Sikhs, were sons of the soil. They should not feel threatened by such acts, as all Sindhis were one and that they were equal citizens and had equal rights, he said.

He said it was unfortunate that the girl was given in police custody instead of being sent to Darul Aman.

Mr Chandio announced that if "the daughter of Sindh" was not rescued and returned and culprits were not arrested soon and punished according to law, a province-wide sit-it would be staged on Saturday.

Manohar Lal, Muttahida Qaumi Movement lawmaker in the national assembly, condemned the kidnapping and forced conversion of a young girl. He urged the president to take notice of the incident.

He said Islam guaranteed protection to minorities, but such people were giving a bad name to the religion. With such incidents, a sense of insecurity was growing in the community, he said. Earlier their sons were kidnapped for ransom, but now their daughters were being kidnapped and forcibly converted, he remarked.

Jeay Sindh Taraqi Pasand Party leader Gulzar Soomro said that forced conversions were a conspiracy against Islam, which preaches love and peace and opposes use of force. He said the culprits were agents of the establishment that wanted to divide the Sindhis.

“Our patience should not be mistaken as our weakness,” he warned, seeking her immediate recovery.

A Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf leader and former lawmaker, Michael Javed, said the Quaid-i-Azam had said that the minorities would be equal citizens in Pakistan, but over the years the Quaid’s message was being forgotten.

Amar Lal, a community leader, said he and the girl’s uncle had met US consulate general staff a few days back and political counsellor Junaid J. Muneer had assured him that the issue would be taken up with the authorities concerned. He said he had also received a call from a former political counsellor of the US embassy in Islamabad, L.K. Robinson, who was currently in Washington. He told him that he would take up the issue with human rights organisations there.

Mahesh Singh, Mangla Sharma, Ramesh Kumar, Vijay Kumar and others also spoke.

Raj Kumar, the girl’s uncle, earlier informed the gathering that on Feb 24, a few armed men barged into her home in Mirpur Mathelo and kidnapped her at gunpoint.

He said a case was filed in a Ghotki court where he said she gave a statement about the threats she had received to convert and marry Naveed Shah or she and her entire family would be killed. He quoted her as saying in the court that she wanted to return and live with her parents.

He also alleged that the judge, in the presence of gunmen in the court, sent her to police custody rather than to her parents’ home or to a shelter home. The next hearing was scheduled to be held at 11am on Feb 27, but the case was heard at 8.15am and the girl’s family was not allowed to enter the courtroom, he said, adding that the judge then gave a verdict in favour of Mr Shah.

Mr Kumar urged the chief justice to take a suo motu notice of the issue and order her safe return to her parents.

Earlier, the participants in the demonstration chanted slogans such as 'we want justice' and 'Rinkle be rescued'.

✓ [Rally against kidnapping of Hindus today](#)

**April 08, 2012 – The News**

Karachi: The Pakistan Hindu Council announced on Saturday that it will hold a rally outside the Karachi Press Club today to protest the kidnapping of a Hindu entrepreneur from Bela, Balochistan, and the failure of law enforcement agencies in recovering Ayesha Kumari of Jacobabad, who has been missing for more than a month.

"Injustices against the Hindu community are increasing by the day in the country," said Ramesh Kumar, a patron of the Pakistan Hindu Council. "It has been 40 days, but our daughter Ayesha is still missing, and we see no progress in this regard from the law enforcement agencies."

Kumar further said that the cases of kidnapping against the Hindu community in Sindh and Balochistan were on the rise. He cited the most recent case of Maharaj Gangaram Motiyani, an entrepreneur who was kidnapped on Friday night from the doorstep of his shop in Bela, Balochistan.

According to sources, at around 8 in the evening, Motiyani was closing his business to go home when two men, dressed in police uniform, began talking to him outside his shop. The sources claim that the men told Motiyani that the local district superintendent police wanted to see him, and then drove off with him in their private car.

Motiyani's son later called his father, who said that he was with policemen and that he would return shortly. His cell phone was turned off shortly after, and he has been missing since.

✓ ['143 minority members abducted in three years'](#)

**2nd October, 2012 - Dawn**

KARACHI, Oct 1: A total of 143 minority community members — 116 Hindus and 27 Christians — had been kidnapped in the province between March 1, 2008 and Nov 30, 2011, said Sindh Minorities Minister Mohan Lal on Monday.

Of these kidnap victims, 57 were women, he added while responding to a question asked by Pakistan People's Party lawmaker Saleem Khursheed Khokhar, who belongs to the Christian minority community, during the question hour in the Sindh Assembly.

The house was informed that more than half of these people, 76 to be specific, had been kidnapped in urban areas. Forty three of them had been abducted in Hyderabad and 33 in

Karachi — 19 in the district east, nine in the south and five in the district west, the data showed.

Naushahro Feroz, Sanghar, Tando Mohammad Khan, Tando Allahyar, Malir and central district of Karachi were the six districts where no minority community member had been kidnapped over the three and a half years, according to the data tabled by the minister in the assembly.

While 20 out of 33 people abducted in Karachi had been safely recovered, the status of 43 people kidnapped in Hyderabad was not available.

About the 57 women victims, 19 were Christians and 38 were Hindus, the data showed.

Five out of six questions mentioned in the order of day were asked by Mr Khokhar, while no supplementary question was asked.

The sixth question was to be asked by PML-F lawmaker Nusrat Seher Abbasi, but Speaker Nisar Khuhro did not allow her to ask the question as she along with some other legislators were sitting on the floor of the assembly to lodge their protest against the Sindh People's Local Government Ordinance (SPLGO 2012) bill that was tabled in the assembly and passed on Monday.

The question hour began over 1 hour and 45 minutes behind the scheduled time of 10am as printed in the order of the day and was completed shortly afterwards.

✓ [Hindus reject official figures on kidnapping](#)

### **7th October, 2012 - Dawn**

HYDERABAD, Oct 6: Representatives of the Hindu community have contested the figures presented in the Sindh Assembly on kidnapping of Hindus, saying the figure does not correctly reflect the situation as in most kidnapping cases the victim families do not involve the police.

The data contains figures reported from March 1, 2008 to Nov 30,2011 in which 143 minority community members were kidnapped and 116 of them were Hindus.

The figures have been brought on record by Sindh Minority Minister Dr Mohan Lal, but his community leaders who represent different organisations and forums contest the data. The community attributes the recent reported migration of Hindu families to such factors as kidnapping, forced conversion and extortion.

“There are two types of kidnappings: one for forced conversion and the other for ransom,” says MNA Kishanchand Parwani.

He refers to three kidnapping cases reported in Sanghar. "With such pace of kidnappings, who will believe that only 116 Hindus were kidnapped in three years?" he says, adding that since the Hindus are a weaker section of society, they are considered sitting ducks by kidnapers.

"When the government doesn't have its writ, it can't curb such crime which affects Muslims also. Since Hindus are weaker in society, they have to bear with such risks to their lives," he says. "The point is of genuine representation of the Hindus in parliament as mostly parliamentarians represent their parties...They are not elected directly by their community."

An independent figure of kidnapping for ransom cases of Hindus could not be obtained. Even minority community representatives do not have any such data. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan monitors kidnapping cases generally without segregating them. The 143 cases are only those that are reported to the police through FIRs.

"The actual figures of kidnapping are much higher, but it is certainly our fault that we don't have an independent confirmed data," says Jai Kumar Dheerani, patron of the Young Hindu Panchayat. He says he believes that in most cases Hindus avoid reporting kidnappings. "They don't want to risk the hostage's life and settle it on their own by paying ransom," he says and adds that the payment of ransom is the ultimate result for the community to ensure safe recovery of the hostage.

A ruling PPP member of the Sindh Assembly, who wishes not to be named, subscribes to his views. "The data presented in the house is not correct as the actual figure is much higher.

Our community doesn't get FIRs registered. It's understandable that when people are interested in securing safe recovery of their child, they will avoid taking police on board as it may threaten the hostage's life," he says, adding that only 29 cases of kidnapping of children were reported in upper Sindh, mostly in Kandhkot, Kashmore district, in three years.

"I'm confident that the real number of cases will be double than the actual reported cases presented in the house," he says.

Hindus mostly dominate the agriculture sector in upper and lower Sindh. They have strong presence in rice, cotton and other agriculture-based business, including fertilisers and pesticides, besides owning rice mills and cotton ginning factories.

Eshwar Lal Makhija, president of the Hindu Panchayat in Sukkur and custodian of the Sadh Belo temple, maintains that if the government acts sincerely, Hindus' issues can be resolved easily. "We don't trust the police because they too are subservient to powerful men.....Therefore, we say that locally influential people belonging to different parties should be entrusted with the responsibility of taking care of us," he says. For instance, if Khurshid Shah in Sukkur or Mian Mitho in Daharki is made responsible for protecting Hindus, there won't be any problem. According to him kidnapping cases started affecting the Hindu community in the 1980s. "We

accepted it as fait accompli, but it was then followed by the trend of young Hindus children's kidnapping," Makhija contends and says that there is a reason to it.

"Hindus are the backbone of Sindh's economy as the community is business oriented. In cotton growing areas, we dominate the cotton sector and in the rice producing belt, we are in a sound position. When it comes to fertilisers, it is almost entirely with our community. The community owns 60 to 70 per cent of rice mills. So I see that due to forced conversion, extortion and kidnapping for ransom cases, it is an attempt to destroy us economically," he says.

A senior police officer, Javed Odho, who hails from upper Sindh, says he believes that kidnappings of Hindus had been increasing in the late 1980s and onwards, but they now show a decline.

"The point is that while cases have declined, the hostage is now always a high-profile man. They settle for ransom quickly," he says. The Hindus have made their presence felt socially and politically.

"When there is a kidnapping, they get instant response and help....They have a strong political clout and contacts with the relevant quarters," he says. Until 20 years back the administration and police were not sensitised about such cases. "Police move swiftly due to the influence of Hindus and thanks to the fast-growing media. With such strong presence in business and politics, threat to their kidnappings has increased too", he says.

Yunus Chandio, another police officer of upper Sindh, agrees. Muslims and Hindus are kidnapped without any distinction, he says. "It is true that ransom is paid and in 90 per cent cases it is paid. Hindu families don't want police to go for an operation. So they tell us to continue our efforts and they use other channels to secure release," he says. The issue with the Hindus, however, is that since they are engaged in business, they don't like prolonging the matter and decide it quickly. "With police intervention, the bargaining position of the hostage's family gets stronger and dacoits agree to as low ransom as possible", he says.

✓ [Two Hindu women and children go missing, court told](#)

### **September 22, 2011 – The News**

Karachi : A Hindu woman has moved the Sindh High Court (SHC) to order the police to recover her two daughters and two grandchildren who went missing in the Bahadurabad area on September 2.

On Wednesday, the SHC issued notices to the advocate-general, Sindh, the New Town police, seeking an explanation as to why an FIR was not registered in the case.

Bhoori submitted in the petition that her daughters — Janta Kumari and Gita Kumari — along with her grandchildren — Bhavish and Sania — had been missing since September 2, the day when they had gone for shopping in the Bahadurabad area.

She complained that they had reported the incident to the police, who refused to register an FIR. She said that the family was receiving calls for ransom from an unidentified person.

A division bench of the SHC, headed by Chief Justice Mushir Alam, directed the advocate general, Sindh, to explain why an FIR was not registered in the case of such a serious nature. The court also directed the concerned police officer to submit comments within 10 days.

**NOTICE TO PRIVATE BANK CEO:** The Sindh High Court (SHC) issued notices to the chief executive of a private bank and its chief risk officer to explain as to why contempt proceedings may not be initiated against them for disobeying the court directives.

The court was hearing the petition of Humna Nadeem against harassment by bank officials. She said that she had lost a credit card issued by the bank, which was misused by some persons. However, instead of taking action, the bank officials started harassing her and her family members.

The court had directed the chief executive and the chief risk officer of the bank to appear before the court on Wednesday; however, both of them did not appear. The court issued notices to both bank officials, asking them to appear and explain why contempt proceedings may not be initiated against them for insubordination of the court directives.

The SHC also issued a notice to the State Bank of Pakistan to assist the courting understanding the regulatory mechanism for redressing grievances of bank customers regarding intimidation and harassment.

**DETENTION CASE:** The Sindh High Court directed the federal and provincial law officers to bring to the notice of law enforcement agencies the recovery of a missing person who was released after unlawful confinement of over eight months.

The court was hearing a petition of Malang Khan, who submitted that his son, Hafiz Babar Naseem, a seminary student, was taken into custody by the police and other LEAs from the Golimar area on December 25 last year. The counsel of the petitioner informed the court that the detainee had returned home and the purpose of the petition had been served.

The court directed the federal and provincial law officers to bring the recovery of the detainee to the notice of the law-enforcement agencies so that they could examine him and find out as to why he had to suffer such a fate.

The court observed that there was no justification to pick up a person without intimating his family as it caused great agony to the family.



✓ [She fell unconscious as a single Hindu](#)

**October 12, 2011 – The News**

**Karachi:** When 15-year-old Poonam Wasu — a Hindu girl from birth — left her house with friends on the afternoon of October 6, she could never have in her wildest dreams imagined that she would be drugged, only to wake up hours later as a married Muslim woman named Razia.

Although there are no official figures as cases of forced conversions and marriages are often hushed up, organisations like the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan believe that a large number of women had been abducted and forced to change their religion. Perhaps an even more distressing fact is that in many such instances, these women are sold to prostitution rings and as a result, lose all contact with their families.

But unlike the other women who chose to remain quiet after being threatened with dire consequences, Poonam broke the silence and took matters to court. Hailing from Lyari — where locals claim that as many as sixteen women have been abducted and forced to marry — Razia remains undaunted by the threats.

Talking about the fateful day that changed her life forever, this lean-framed girl recalls that she left her house with two friends named Saiba and Shazia, who asked her to apply some Mehndhi to relatives at a wedding. After she reached the house and sipped at the tea served to her, the rest was a blank.

“After drinking it, I fell unconscious. I don’t remember what happened after that. All I know is that when I woke up, I was a woman who has accepted Islam and performed a Nikkah with my friend’s brother, Raza Hussain, who I had never even spoken to before.”

Poonam added that she had known both the sisters for several months as one of them attended the same school as one of her siblings. Also, they would visit the same beauty parlour that Poonam would sometimes work for. “I never thought these two girls would do something like this. Both of them were so nice to me,” said the distressed teenager.

While Poonam was being drugged and forced to marry after changing her religion, back at her house, the hours ticked by and her family naturally became worried. “When it turned dark and my niece did not return, we went to her friend’s house, only to find that the door had been locked.”

The teenager’s family had registered FIR 166/2011, under section 365 at the Chakiwara police station and the law enforcers conducted a raid and recovered the abducted girl, who according to her aunt was drowsy and stumbled as she walked.

Showing the blue-inked print on her thumb, Poonam says that although the conversion certificate and the Nikkahnama have her imprints, she was unaware of what was happening with her. “Why would I put a thumb print on the documents when I can write my name in both Urdu and English?” she asked. “I was unconscious when my prints were taken. Neither have I changed my religion, nor have I married anyone.”

And that is exactly what she told the District Court South during the hearing of her case. She now hopes that the court will rule in her favour and yearns to be reunited with her family.

Taking notice of the incident, the Sindh Vice Chairperson of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, Amarnath Motumal, said, “Most of the time, criminals involved in kidnapping and forced conversion are influential and wealthy. Consequently, the victim is warned of dire consequences if she dares raise her voice. Therefore, many cases go unreported and other times, the families surrender. But Poonam is very brave and despite threats to her family that the teenager would be killed, she has decided to fight for her rights.”

The same stance is reiterated by Poonam. “My so-called husband should be severely punished. Why do people do such things? Thank God I was saved in the nick of time as I came to know later that my kidnappers were planning to shift me to another location. If they succeeded, I would have never seen my family again.”

#### ✓ A Hindu girl abducts

##### **Daily Kawish – 6, September 2012**

Tando Adam: A girl Meera, daughter of Gangumal , who belongs to Bhil community , has abducted from Tando Adam, district Sanghar.

The angry men of bhil community staged a protest and torched tyers on Latif road Tando Adam town. On this occasion, Meera’s father told to media that Fida Hussain Khaskhely and his friends have kidnapped his daughter on gunpoint from his home.

They alleged, after two days have passed but police has failed to trace his daughter and arrest the kidnappers yet. After complain Meera’s father, police has lodged FIR against Fida Hussain, Shahid Hussain Khaskhely and others two unknown persons.

According to reliable sources, , Meera has accepted Islam in a Maderssa at Hyderabab and married with Fida Hussain Khaskhely and photo copies of marriage documents has sent to Tando Adam press club.

#### ✓ A 14 years old Hindu girl abducts

##### **Daily Kawish – 8, August, 2012**

Jacobabad: A 14 years old Hindu Girl, Manisha daughter of Rawal Mal abducted from Jacobabad. After this abduction news, the leader of Hindu panchayat and SSP Jacobabad met with his parents and assured that Manisha would recover from the kidnappers as soon as possible.

While talking to media, Manisha's mother said that his daughter went to get her sisters from the tuition, but she did not reach there and abducted on the way. She appealed to authorities that recover his daughter from kidnappers.

While talking to media, leader of the Hindu panchayat, Mahish kumar said that someone considering us a weak community, due to this mindset, they are kidnapping our girls. While, propaganda are being made someone that Hindus migrating Sindh.

However, they would not leave their homeland because they are indigenous people of Sindh. He demanded that PPP government prepare a law to protect the rights of Hindu community in their own land and appealed to high ups for the early recovery of Manisha.

✓ **Two women of Joggy community kidnaps**

**Daily Kawish – 5, August, 2012**

Tando Mohammad Khan: From village Tando Saindad near Tando Mohammad Khan city, two women belongs to joggy community has been kidnapped by the Mangsi tribe.

The joggy community staged a demonstration and block up Tando Mohammad Khan, Badin road against the kidnapping and Mangsi tribe. While talking to media men, Sajjan joggy, Mitho Joggy and Walan Joggy said that Magsi tribe has kidnapped their two women, including 45 years old Tari wife of Walan Joggy, 22 years old Meera.

They alleged that someone of Magsi tribe men rapped their women then handover to Matli police station. They appealed to high up that they take action against those who have involved in this inhuman behavior to them. Matli police said that two women have been handed over to the police due to involvement of cheating in the pretext of Black Magic.

✓ **Unwelcome conversions**

**I.A Rehman - 22nd March, 2012 - Dawn**

**THE Hindu community, particularly in Sindh, has been in the grip of strong feelings of grief, anger and insecurity for several weeks. Unless its grievances are speedily addressed Pakistan stands to suffer incalculable harm in both material and moral terms.**

The issue of Hindu girls' conversion to Islam and marriage to Muslim men, both transitions alleged to be forced and often after abduction, is not new. Indeed, it has always been high on

the Hindu citizens' list of complaints. What is new is the scale and intensity of their reaction and the large number of their appeals for justice. It seems three recent cases involving Rinkal Kumari, Lata Kumari and Aasha Kumari have unleashed the Hindu community's long-brewing fears of loss of its religious and cultural identities.

The three cases are not identical in detail. Dr Murli Lal Karira, who belonged to Jacobabad and practised medicine at Suhbatpur, in Jafarabad district, was reported to have been abducted while travelling homeward. Some days later, his niece, Aasha Kumari Karira, who was taking lessons at a Jacobabad beauty parlour, did not return home after her work hours, and was believed to have been abducted. Her whereabouts are unknown.

Dr Lata Kumari, the 29-year old daughter of a medical practitioner from Jacobabad and employed at one of Karachi's premier medical institutions, was reported to have married a young Muslim man after converting to Islam. Her father alleged that her conversion and marriage took place under coercion after abduction and he moved the high court for redress. The lady denies these allegations. She came to the court when her husband applied for bail before arrest.

The brother of Rinkal Kumari (18) says she was abducted by unknown persons, allegedly backed by an influential MNA. Her family had difficulty in filing an FIR. The next day she and the young man she was said to have married after conversion to Islam were presented in a court at Mirpur Mathelo, while her family had been told to go to a court in Ghotki. The family was not allowed to see her. It is said that she told the magistrate she wanted to go with her family but the latter reportedly expressed his inability to allow a Muslim girl to go to a non-Muslim house and sent her to a Darul Aman. Subsequently she is said to have modified her statement.

One suspects that these cases have provoked an unusual wave of protest because unlike the poor and voiceless victims in earlier cases of forced conversion-marriage affairs, the women now involved come of socially noteworthy families who have some access to electronic means of communication.

Several non-Muslim citizens have argued that these women have been, or are being, forced to accept conversion and marriage under threats of dire consequences to their families if they refuse to surrender.

The state of the common Hindu citizens' mind is reflected in the e-mail Rinkal Kumari's brother addressed to the chief justice of Pakistan (copied to the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan). He says that Rinkal's abductors have told her that "if she wants to save her parents' life she should choose to convert [change] her religion and marry [an] unknown guy.... And yesterday [the] judge ordered that [the] girl wants to change her religion and want[s] to marry ...Naveed.... [The] judge even didn't allow [the] girl to meet ... her parents or anybody from her family. There were 500-700 people in [the] courtroom all with guns and there was nobody from [the] girl's family.... Now hundred[s] of people will take advantage of [the] 18-year-old girl and

after that they will sell her to somebody". Nobody with a reasonably sound heart will fail to be moved by the feelings of anguish and despair oozing from these words.

These cases raise several questions of a fundamental nature.

First of all, change of religion is a fundamental right but Islamic authorities do not accept a Muslim's right to convert to another faith, though the laws of the country are silent on the point. Non-Muslims sometimes demand a bar to any conversion, something no legal authority or human rights activist will agree to.

However, non-Muslims are on solid ground when they protest against organisations and groups of professional proselytisers who apparently make a living by inducing, if not forcing, non-Muslim Pakistanis to convert and who enjoy support in the majority community, in the police force and even in the judiciary (at least its subordinate part).

The proselytisers and matchmakers are facilitated in their task by a social environment in which a non-Muslim can be persuaded to escape from all-round discrimination and move from the ranks of second-class citizens into a privileged community by changing his religion. To make matters worse, the non-Muslims have to read reports of the exploits of a family that boasts of three or four daughters-in-law who have been converted from Hinduism or the plight of a Hindu family that has lost three girls in a row.

The complaint of foul play acquires additional strength when a non-Muslim woman is abducted and the state machinery shows little interest in recovering her until her marriage to a Muslim has been consummated. At that point another factor begins to worry these women. Some of them may be genuinely apprehensive of being killed by their families if restored to them and some others might consider themselves too impure to rejoin their parents. Further, the problems in registration of cross-faith marriages force parties to such unions to prefer secret compacts to open contracts.

This environment prevents most non-Muslim Pakistanis to accept the possibility that one of their girls could voluntarily and of her free will opt for cross-faith matrimony. They do not want to follow the majority community's practice of accepting a Muslim woman's decision to take a non-Muslim as her spouse if he becomes a Muslim in name only.

Thus, the real issues are, firstly, the growth of discrimination against non-Muslim citizens, especially their womenfolk, that makes them vulnerable to force and susceptible to temptation and make-believe about escape from misery and, secondly, the rise of intolerance and hypocrisy in the ranks of the majority community. These matters cannot be resolved so long as the state allows itself to remain hostage to orthodox forces.

Quite obviously, Pakistan's accession to a sane and tolerant society in which all its sons and daughters are equal before the law and by social standards is going to be a long haul. The process may be started with action against organised abduction-conversion marriage rackets,

offering guarantees of prompt and effective police action on complaints of abduction, and firm assurances of even-handed treatment by the courts of all parties regardless of belief, gender or social status.

All this is necessary to stop the loss of talent and skills that a spurt in non-Muslim migration to foreign lands is causing and to prevent the majority community from degenerating into a horde of morons capable of neither reason nor compassion. Above all, the distress caused to a minority community must be accepted as a serious national calamity.

✓ [SC allows three weeks for decision in forced conversion case](#)

**26th March, 2012 - Dawn**

**ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Monday allowed two Muslim convert girls to stay at a shelter house in Karachi for a period of three weeks enabling them to take a decision for their future independently and in a free atmosphere.**

A three-Judge comprising Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry, Justice Khilji Arif Hussain and Justice Tariq Parvez also ordered the police officers to escort both girls back to Karachi in safe custody.

The bench in its order observed that though undoubtedly both girls, Faryal Bibi (Rinkle Kumari) and Hafsa bibi (Dr Lata), had performed Nikah and joined their husbands but there were allegations of forced conversion.

It said that apparently there was a lot of pressure upon both girls by the parents and the courts, so after recording their statements in camera, they were of the opinion that they required time, free from pressures and take a decision for their future.

The bench allowed both girls to stay for three-weeks in shelter house named 'Panah' owned by Majeeda Rizvi, a senior lawyer.

The bench was hearing a constitutional petition moved by Pakistan Hindu Council.

During course of proceedings, the bench allowed applications of all parties for hearing.

The chief justice told Malik Qamar Afzal and Mujeeb Pirzada counsels for Syed Naveed Shah, husband of Faryal Bibi and Dr Khalid Ranjha, counsel for Nadir Baig, husband of Hafsa bibi, that these girls might require some time to think over their future in a free atmosphere.

He opined that under the charged atmosphere and pressure from parents, court and husbands, they would not be able to do so.

Justice Tariq Parvez observed that the issue should not be treated in the backdrop of religious affiliations but it was a common practice even in the non-Muslim families that girls and boys married without consent of their parents.

Dr Khalid Ranjha requested the bench to send them to shelter house which was already ordered by the Sindh High Court.

The chief justice on objection of counsel for parents of Faryal bibi observed that they were against all kinds of illegal confinement.

They would not compel anyone but for the sake of parents, they would write in their order, about granting of time to the girls to think over their future life.

Raising a query, the chief justice said that now the difficulty was that they had embraced Islam and solemnized their Nikah.

Faryal bibi was summoned by the bench to rostrum and questioned her about her education, to which she replied that she was Intermediate in science but later could not clearly respond to other questions.

Realising her difficulty, the chief justice requested all, counsels and media representatives to leave the courtroom to record her statement in camera.

After a brief period, all were allowed to re-enter the courtroom and the chief justice handed over a written statement of Faryal bibi to Mujeeb Pirzada to read.

The atmosphere in the courtroom grew a bit tense when Dr Ramesh, father of Hafsa bibi, stood up and in high pitched voice claimed that her daughter wanted to go with them but was forcefully held.

When he continued raising his voice continuously, the chief justice asked the security personnel to take him out of the courtroom.

Dr Ramesh Kumar of Pakistan Hindu Council requested the bench to correct the name of third girl who was identified as Asha instead Poja Devi.

Further hearing was adjourned till April 18.

Dr Ramesh Kumar, patron-in-chief, Pakistan Hindu Council, had moved a petition about recovery of three females belonging to Hindu community including Rinkle d/o Nandlal (Mirpur Mathello); Dr Lata d/o Dr Ramesh (Jacobabad), and Asha (Larkana).

✓ [Rimsha Masih Case](#)

**Imam in Rimsha Masih blasphemy case released**

**12th October, 2012**

**ISLAMABAD: A Pakistani cleric who accused a young Christian girl of blasphemy and had been arrested for framing evidence was released on Friday, a day after he was granted bail by a court, his lawyer said.**

The girl Rimsha Masih spent three weeks in an adult jail after she was arrested on August 16 for allegedly burning pages from the Quran, in a case that prompted worldwide condemnation.

She and her family remain in hiding for safety after Rimsha was released on bail and her case was sent to a juvenile court last month, following a medical report that said she was 14.

Hafiz Mohammed Khalid Chishti, the imam of the mosque in Rimsha's area, who first gave police the burned papers as evidence against her, was detained on September 1 for desecrating the Quran himself and tampering with evidence.

"My client has been released and he came out of Adiyala jail today," his lawyer Wajid Ali Gilani told AFP.

Chishti was granted bail on Thursday on one surety and a bond of 200,000 rupees (about 2,000 dollars) by the court in Islamabad, he said.

The cleric was arrested after his deputy Maulvi Zubair and two others told a magistrate Chishti added pages from the Quran to the burnt pages brought to him by a witness, investigators have said.

Zubair and the two others, Mohammad Shahzad and Awais Ahmed, said they had urged Chishti not to interfere with the papers but he told them it was the only way to expel the Christians from the area.

On August 24 Chishti told AFP he thought Rimsha burned the pages deliberately as part of a Christian "conspiracy" to insult Muslims, and said action should have been taken sooner to stop what he called their "anti-Islam activities" in impoverished Mehrabad neighbourhood of Islamabad.

✓ [Rimsha's plight](#)

**September 25, 2012, *The Express Tribune***

As news stories about the violence sparked by the anti-Islam film abound, there is a danger that the plight of the young Christian girl Rimsha Masih will be relegated to the inside pages. Rimsha was accused of blasphemy and released on bail when it emerged that her accuser may have planted the evidence. Bail, however, is not the same as complete exoneration, which is exactly what Rimsha deserves. Now that the police have submitted a written statement to the court



declaring that she is innocent and it was a set-up by cleric Khalid Jadoon Chishti, the judge needs to do the right thing and dismiss the case against Rimsha as being frivolous and unfounded. Then, Chishti needs to face trial for falsely accusing this helpless girl and probably putting her life in danger.

The idea of going on trial for Rimsha pales in comparison to the dangers she will likely face should she go back to her home. Those accused of blasphemy have often been targeted by enraged mobs and seldom found security thereafter. Rimsha's best shot at a normal life lies in a foreign country. Pakistan is no place to live even for those who have merely been accused without any basis of offending religious sentiments. It is now the government's job to provide her with foolproof security and arrange for her safe passage out of Pakistan. Meanwhile, the prosecution, which has already disgraced itself with its conduct, needs to let go of the case. The prosecutor is now claiming that Rimsha is 21 years old and not 12, as originally claimed. This is a mere smokescreen for bigotry as Rimsha's age has absolutely no bearing on her innocence.

Ideally, the next step taken by the government would be to repeal the blasphemy laws but that is simply not possible in the current climate. Instead, the laws need to be balanced a bit by making the punishment for false accusations tougher. Politicians, the police and courts need to start treating those who make false accusations of blasphemy with the same toughness they currently reserve for child minorities.

✓ [Rimsha being favoured: Accuser's lawyer](#)

**August 30, 2012**

**ISLAMABAD: A court adjourned on Thursday a bail hearing for a Christian girl accused of blasphemy, prompting human rights activists to make fresh calls for her release in a case that has drawn renewed criticism of the country's anti-blasphemy laws.**

The girl, named Rimsha, has been held since August 16 on suspicion of desecrating the Muslim holy book, an offence that can carry a life prison sentence under Pakistan's strict blasphemy laws.

Doctors and officials are "favouring" a young Pakistani Christian girl charged with blasphemy after allegedly burning papers containing Qurani verses, the lawyer for her accuser claimed today.

A medical report earlier this week said Rimsha was around 14 years old – her age had been in dispute – and appeared to be "uneducated" with a mental age below her true age.

But after a brief hearing in the case on Thursday, which Rimsha did not attend, Rao Abdur Raheem, the lawyer representing her accuser, rejected the doctors' assessment.

“The victim has admitted that she burned a chapter of the Holy Quran,” he told reporters outside court in Islamabad.

“The doctors are favouring the victim and the state is also supporting her.”

Raheem also objected to the medical examination because it was carried out a day before the court formally requested it. Judge Raja Jawad Abbas Hassan adjourned the case to Saturday to seek clarification on the report.

The lawyer said he did not want to see Masih’s case turned into another one focusing on changing the law, and he warned that to do so could again incite a violent reaction.

“There are many Mumtaz Qadris in this country and we will support them,” the lawyer said, referring to Governor Salmaan Taseer’s killer.

Activists demand release

Religious and secular groups worldwide have protested over the arrest this month of Rimsha Masih, accused by Muslim neighbours of burning Islamic religious texts.

“This will go on and on and this little minor girl will rot in jail,” said human rights activist Tahira Abdullah outside an Islamabad court. “We want her out of jail. We want her under protection.”

Rimsha’s case has prompted concern from Western governments and the Vatican and anger from human rights campaigners, who have warned the laws are often used to settle personal vendettas.

In July a mob of more than 2,000 snatched a mentally unstable man from a police station, beat him to death and torched his body after he was accused of burning pages from the Holy Quran.

✓ [Rimsha Masih case: Bhatti hopes abuse of blasphemy law will end](#)

**September 5, 2012, *The Express Tribune***

**ISLAMABAD: The arrest of a cleric for tampering with evidence against a Christian girl accused of blasphemy will help stop the abuse of blasphemy laws, said Minister for National Harmony Paul Bhatti on Tuesday.**

The young Christian, Rimsha Masih, has been in custody for nearly three weeks after she was accused of burning pages containing verses from the Holy Quran in a case that has prompted worldwide concern.

The affair took an unexpected twist on Saturday when the imam, Khalid Jadoon Chishti, who first gave police evidence against her was accused by the mosque muezzens of adding pages from the Holy Quran to the burnt papers taken from Rimsha.

“It is a good omen. The muezzens has revealed the truth and it will be helpful to deal with the future blasphemy cases,” Bhatti said in an interview on Monday. “The disclosure about tampering with the evidence will discourage future accusers from misusing this law.”

Bhatti’s brother and his predecessor Shahbaz was gunned down last year for speaking out against the blasphemy law.

Rimsha, who is “uneducated” and has a mental age of less than 14 according to a medical report, will remain in a high-security prison until Friday at the earliest – by which time she will have spent 22 days in custody.

Judge Muhammad Azam Khan, who has repeatedly delayed bail proceedings for Rimsha, again adjourned the matter on Monday after the lawyer for her accuser asked for a stay to show solidarity with a provincial lawyers’ strike.

Activists say the blasphemy laws are often abused to settle personal vendettas, and even unproven allegations can prompt a violent public response. But it is rare to see anyone investigated for making a false allegation or interfering with evidence of blasphemy.

Clarification

Meanwhile, a spokesperson for Bhatti contradicted parts of a news item that appeared in *The Express Tribune* titled “Interfaith Harmony Commission on anvil” on September 4, 2012. The story quoted him as saying that “the commission, if it is constituted, will also look into a possible elimination of the death penalty from Section 295-C of the Pakistan Penal Code, which criminalises the act of insulting the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and makes it punishable by life imprisonment.”

The spokesman said this quote is wrongly attributed to the minister. In fact the minister only talked about the misuse of the blasphemy law, he added.

✓ [Rimsha released from Adiala Jail, flown to unknown location](#)

**8th September, 2012, Dawn**

**RAWALPINDI: A Pakistani court granted bail and released a minor Christian girl Rimsha Masih, who had been accused of blasphemy, DawnNews reported on Saturday.**

Rimsha was released from Adiala Jail, where she had been kept under detention for more than two weeks, and flown to an unknown location in a government helicopter.

Rimsha was brought from the jail in an armoured vehicle to the nearest helipad, where the government chopper was waiting to fly her out. A large number of security personnel, along with members of the Christian community, were present outside Adiala Jail.

Paul Bhatti, Pakistan's minister for national harmony, told AFP that Rimsha was flown by helicopter to be reunited with her family.

"She has been freed from the jail and was transported by a helicopter to a safe place. Her family members received her," he said.

Pakistan private TV channels broadcast footage of the girl wearing a traditional baggy green shirt and dark green trousers stepping out of an armoured vehicle and sitting in a helicopter.

Rimsha's lawyer, Tahir Naveed Chaudhry, confirmed her release after two guarantors submitted a surety bond guaranteeing that the girl would reappear before court at the court's choosing.

Earlier, on Friday, the teenage girl was granted bail by the court of additional sessions against two sureties of Rs.500,000 each.

"I accept her bail application," Judge Mohammad Azam Khan had announced to a packed courtroom. "The bail application has been accepted against two sureties of 500,000 rupees each."

Earlier, the court had reserved its ruling after hearing the arguments made by the counsels of both the complainant and the defendant.

The lawyer for the accused girl had submitted before the court that the girl was entitled to bail as she was a minor and that the FIR lodged by the police did not say that she desecrated a copy of the holy Quran.

On the contrary, the complainant's counsel alleged that the girl had confessed to her guilt and hence was not entitled for bail.

The officer investigating the case told the court that Khalid Jadoon, the cleric who had been accused of tampering evidence, had deliberately added pages of the holy Quran to the plastic bag that the minor girl, who belonged to the Christian community, was carrying.

The prosecution lawyer alleged that the police, including the investigating officer, and doctors were manipulating the case to get the girl freed under international pressure, adding that, they feared the accused would be immediately sent abroad if bail was granted and that then the case would come to an end.

Moreover, the district attorney told the court that the blasphemy accused girl had stated her age to the magistrate as 16 years, adding that, the complainant in the case was receiving threats.

A large number of security personnel, members of civil society and international media persons were present outside the court as Judge Azam Khan heard the bail application of the accused girl whose case has made headlines in the international and local media.

The girl has been in custody since she was arrested in a poor Islamabad suburb more than two weeks ago after being accused of burning papers containing verses from the holy Quran.

Earlier on Monday, the case was adjourned until Sept 7 because of a lawyers' strike, following a request from the lawyer for the girl's neighbour Hammad Malik, who had filed the original complaint against her.

✓ **Blasphemy suspect: Vatican prelate says Rimsha can't read**

**August 26, 2012, *The Express Tribune***

**VATICAN CITY: French Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran rose to the defence of a young Pakistani Christian girl accused of blasphemy on Saturday, stressing that that she "cannot read or write."**

Interviewed on Radio Vatican, Tauran, who is in charge of interfaith dialogue in the Vatican, and was also the late pope John Paul II's foreign minister said, "Before asserting that a sacred text has been the object of scorn, it is worth checking the facts."

Rimsha, aged 11 to 16 according to different reports, is accused of burning pages from a children's religious instruction book inscribed with verses from the Holy Quran. She was arrested and remanded in custody last Thursday. Tauran said that Rimsha "is a girl who cannot read or write, and collects garbage to live on and picked up the fragments of the book which was in the middle of the rubbish." "The more serious and tense the situation, the more necessary it is to have dialogue," added the cardinal.

Talking to the staff of an Italian newspaper, Tauran said that he believed it was "impossible in the light of the facts that the girl had tried to express her scorn for the sacred book of Islam."

The youngster reportedly has Down's Syndrome, and her arrest has prompted outrage from rights groups and concern from Western governments.

Under the local blasphemy laws, insulting the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is punishable by death, while burning a sacred text leads to life imprisonment.

Rimsha was to appear in court on Saturday but police and her lawyer said on Friday that the hearing was put back to August 31.

### **Rinkal Kumari Case**

- ✓ [Rinkal's mother says 'kidnappers' threatening them](#)

**26th March, 2012 , Dawn**

**ISLAMABAD, March 25: For the last one month I have not seen my daughter. What kind of justice is this which does not allow a mother to meet her daughter?**

This was stated by Salchani Bai, the mother of Rinkal Kumari who was allegedly kidnapped from Dherki in Sindh over a month back.

Speaking at a press conference along with her lawyer here, she added: "The kidnapers are threatening us that if the court handed over the girl to her family they will kill us all. I just want to meet my daughter."

Advocate Qadir Khan Mandokhel alleged that at 4pm on February 24 Mian Aslam, Hassam Kalhore, Naveed Shah, Mehfooz Shah and three other persons kidnapped the 17-year-old girl from her house at gunpoint. He said an application was filed with the Mirpur Mathelo police but they refused to register a case.

Later, when the FIR was registered the police did not nominate Mian Aslam, who is son of Mian Abdul Haq alias Mian Mitthu, a PPP MNA.

Mr Mandokhel said on February 25, Ms Kumari was produced in the court of civil judge Hasan Kalhore, where she said she wanted to go with her mother. However, the judge handed her over to the police instead of sending her to the Darul Amaan.

On February 27, the police once again brought her to the court but her lawyers and family members were not allowed to enter the court and later the 'kidnapers' stated that Ms Kumari had converted to Islam and named as Faryal Bibi, adding she cannot live with her family members. She was shifted to a religious place at Bhar Chundi, he added.

"Section 144 was imposed during the hearing so we don't know what happened in the court. Article 36 of the law allows minorities to live without any fear but forced conversions are taking place in Dherki and other areas of Sindh. After Supreme Court's suo motu notice, the girl has been brought to Islamabad but we want that a judicial commission should be constituted to probe the matter. Seven millions Hindus have been living in Sindh for centuries but some elements now want to start riots there," he said.

Former federal minister Amar Lal said when the case was shifted to Sindh High Court, Ms Kumari was brought to Karachi Press Club where once again she said she had been kidnapped.

During the last nine years, 2,700 girls have been converted from Hinduism to Islam, he claimed.

When Ms Kumari was sent on judicial custody by the SHC, a deputy superintendent of police shifted her somewhere else and refused to arrange her meeting with her mother. I called President Asif Zardari who assured us that he would not allow any forced conversion but during the last few months 47 boys have been forced to convert to Islam. Army should be sent to Dherki because people have been threatening the Hindu community," he said.

Chairman Jiye Sindh Party Riaz Chandio said Hindus had been living in those areas for the last 5,000 years. They are sons of the soil and should be allowed to live without any interference.

They said Ms Kumari would be produced before the Supreme Court on Monday (today). Advocate Noor Naz Agha, Rasheed A. Rizvi and Akram Sheikh will defend the case, they said.

✓ [SHC orders to lodge Rinkal at shelter home](#)

**13th March, 2012, Dawn**

**KARACHI: Justice Anwar Zaher Bajwa of Sindh High Court (SHC) has ordered to lodge Rinkal Kumari (a Hindu girl), who has converted to Islam and named as Faryal Bibi at Pannah Shelter home and to produce her before Supreme Court on March 26.**

The bench after hearing the preliminary arguments in the petition filed by Raj Kumar against alleged abduction of her niece also ordered the Inspector General of Police Sindh to provide full protection to the girl and keep her in isolation during her stay in the shelter home and no one from either party should be allowed to meet her.

Rasheed A Rizvi Advocate appeared on behalf of the petitioner and referred to an order passed by SC on March 8 for production of the girl before the apex court on March 26.

Rizvi contended that the real question involving in the petition is whether the girl has been abducted and forced into conversion and marriage or her such acts were voluntary.

Ghulam Qadir Jatoi, counsel of one of the respondent Naveed Shah said that the girl is adult, therefore she is entitled to her liberties.

The bench in its order observed that "the atmosphere was extremely charged. When the alleged abductee was produced in the court, it appeared that at least score of almost out of control people were present in the court and repeated requests for maintaining order fell on

deaf ears. It would not be appropriate at this stage to record her statement and it would be in the fitness of things if she is kept away from both the contending parties.”

The petitioner alleged that Rinkal was kidnapped on February 23 while she was returning home from her college in Mirpur Mathelo, district Ghotki.

He maintained that after being kidnapped, she was taken to Bharchundi Shareef (a small village near Mirpur Mathelo and forcefully converted to Islam and then got married with Naveed Shah, a resident of the same area.

He prayed the court to order production of Rinkal Kumari and record her statement to ascertain the facts.

The alleged abductee in her statement before the Judicial Magistrate at Ghotki has denied her abduction and forceful conversion.