



Blue Mountains Refugee Support Group

A project of the Blue Mountains Family Support Service Inc.
ABN 48 765 203 957

Post: PO Box 197 Katoomba NSW 2780
Email: bmrsg@aapt.net.au
Website: www.bmrsg.org.au
Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/BlueMountainsRefugeeSupportGroup>
Chairman: Dr Hal Ginges
chair@bmrsg.org.au
Secretary: George Winston 4782 7866

Update on the plight of the Shia population of Pakistan - December 2015

By Graeme Swincer OAM¹, 02 December 2015 for Blue Mountains Refugee Support Group

Introduction and Summary

It is two years since publication of my most recent update on the plight of the Shia population of Pakistan². Earlier reports were published in December 2012³ and April 2013⁴. Since then the situation has deteriorated, especially for the Hazara ethnic group. My summary of the situation at that time certainly holds true:

“No city in Pakistan is safe anymore for Shias. Furthermore the plight of such identifiable historic enemies of the Sunni extremists as the Hazaras and the Turis is even more dire than that of the ‘average’ Pakistani Shia.”

In the past two years there have been many further reports of targeted violence. The number of deaths in that time has reached several hundred in more than 80 incidents and the injuries, especially from bombing attacks, is of the same order.

The following table shows statistics gathered over the past 15 years⁵. There is a clear picture of the escalation of violence against Shias in Pakistan.

¹ Retired agricultural scientist, international development programs coordinator, and cross cultural consultant, trainer and researcher.

² <http://www.bmrsg.org.au/compassion/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/SupplementaryUpdatePlightShiaPakistan1312.pdf>

³ http://www.bmrsg.org.au/compassion/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Plight_Hazaras_Pakistan1.pdf

⁴ http://www.bmrsg.org.au/compassion/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Safety_Shias_Pakistan.pdf

⁵ http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/pakistan/database/Shias_killed_Pakistan.htm

Targeted violence against Shias in Pakistan

	Incidents	Killed	Injured
2001	0	0	0
2002	4	6	0
2003	4	24	17
2004	8	129	466+
2005	10	86	223
2006	9	60	61
2007	28	258+	195+
2008	23	150	371+
2009	17	183	455
2010	34	245	693
2011	24	136	199
2012	115	399	439
2013	81	504	965
2014	45	116	116
2015*	37	226	254
Total*	439	2522	4454

**Includes data up to 15 November 2015*

The peak year was 2013, and there seemed to be a lull in 2014, but the violence has increased again in 2015.

When Shias gather for significant celebrations they are an easy target for the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), the Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) aka Ahl-e-Sunnat Wal Jamaat (ASWJ), the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and related extremist organisations. But even as individuals they are also vulnerable wherever they may go or try to hide; the national identity card system betrays their ethnicity and religious affiliation whenever they need to negotiate a commercial transaction – anything from purchasing a train ticket to buying a house. Particular groups, professions and families are especially vulnerable. The Hazaras, historic

refugees from persecution in Afghanistan, are especially defenceless because of their easily recognised appearance. But members of other groups such as the Turis, long-standing enemies of the Taliban, while not as immediately recognisable on sight, can soon be identified and pursued wherever they go. The LeJ, formed in 1996, openly vows to eliminate all Shiites from Pakistan.

The agenda of the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi

The Lashkar-e-Jhangvi issued the following proclamation⁶ in 2011:

“All Shia are worthy of killing. We will rid Pakistan of unclean people. Pakistan means ‘land of the pure’ and the Shia have no right to live in this country. We have the edict and signatures of revered scholars, declaring the Shia infidels. Just as our fighters have waged a successful jihad against the Shia Hazara in Afghanistan, our mission in Pakistan is the abolition of this impure sect and its followers from every city, every village, and every nook and corner of Pakistan.”

“As in the past, our successful jihad against the Hazara in Pakistan and, in particular, in Quetta is ongoing and will continue in the future. We will make Pakistan the graveyard of the Shia Hazara and their houses will be destroyed by bombs and suicide-bombers. We will only rest when we will be able to fly the flag of true Islam on this land of the pure. Jihad against the Shia Hazara has now become our duty.” [emphasis added]

This agenda can only become a reality if other key factors are in place. Unfortunately it seems that these contextual factors are indeed operating with the result that the Hazaras of Pakistan face extreme danger on a daily basis. Raza Rumi, senior fellow at the United States Institute of Peace, has identified the following 8 factors⁷:

- Successive governments have considered the existence of the LeJ and related groups to be an essential part of the larger ‘national security’.
- A majority of Pakistanis supported the Taliban government in Afghanistan in the 1990s on ideological grounds and that ideology, which included persecution of Hazaras, is still being promoted across Pakistan.
- The capacity of the criminal justice system has weakened during the past two decades with the result that a culture of impunity has turned become the norm.
- Regional conflicts since 2001 have fed into sectarian conflict. Al Qaeda, on retreat from Afghanistan and Pakistan’s tribal territories, has found reliable allies in sectarian militant networks. Therefore, today, al Qaeda, the Taliban and sectarian outfits have metamorphosed into a violent trinity, with growing grass roots strength.
- Pakistan has an enduring material-ideological alliance with Saudi Arabia and its regional agenda; the generous Saudi donations to Pakistan’s state bank do not come without an ideological alliance.
- Since the late 1990s the state has chosen to adopt a policy of non-intervention against “hate speech” and other ways of promoting sectarian hatred. The result is that many mosques across the country preach sectarianism.
- Radicalisation of law enforcement officials is now a palpable reality. Across the country, the police, judges and other state functionaries demonstrate signs of bias, ideological posturing, and in rare cases, direct violence.
- The media has become increasingly supportive of the extremist Sunni agenda against minority groups.

⁶ As quoted in “Hunting The Hazara”, Khaled Ahmed, 11 March 2014, <http://newsweekpakistan.com/hunting-the-hazara/>

⁷ “Pakistan’s beleaguered Hazaras”, The Express Tribune, Pakistan, November 16, 2014, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/791727/pakistans-beleaguered-hazaras/>

It is therefore no surprise that the Pakistan government is ineffective in curbing the killings and lesser forms of persecution and, furthermore, that there is general acceptance of the widespread allegations of government complicity.

Focus on plight of the Hazaras

The Hazaras are a well-defined ethnic group whose recent roots are in Afghanistan. They usually have distinctive mongoloid features which clearly differentiate them from most of the other ethnic groups of the region. They are overwhelmingly Shiite Muslims, but in general their religion is expressed rather liberally and would probably qualify as folk religion in contrast to the strict observance of Shia Islam in Iran and traditional Pakistan, and certainly in contrast to the Sunni Islam practised by most of the other ethnic groups in Afghanistan and by 80% of the 200 million people in Pakistan. They are found in large numbers in other countries because they or their ancestors have been persecuted repeatedly over the past century and more. Four million Hazaras can be found scattered in 70 different countries. Perhaps a third of these are in Iran to the west of Afghanistan and Pakistan to the east; these two countries have been obvious first countries of refuge. Hazara refugees are no longer accepted as citizens in Pakistan, and only ever received temporary residence status in Iran. In both countries they are increasingly oppressed and persecuted. A total of at least 600,000 Hazaras now live in Pakistan, mainly in two or three enclaves in the south-western city of Quetta. There are smaller enclaves in other cities including Karachi and the north-western border town of Parachinar (Kurram Agency), the nearest border point from Kabul, capital of Afghanistan.

Almost daily there are reports of Hazaras living in Pakistan being targeted for violent treatment by extremist groups who regard Shiites as infidels and therefore worthy of death, and Hazaras as especially contemptible because their alleged religious laxity. While violence is a pervasive part of life in Pakistan, the majority of the population accommodate to this and accept it as an unavoidable component of their reality. However the situation is far more difficult for the Hazaras, especially the young men. Being recognisable on sight, they are in constant danger of being attacked. They are not protected by the security forces nor by application of the law. The extremist groups are allowed to operate without restriction or sanction throughout Pakistan.

In contrast to the situation even a decade ago, there are now no safe places of refuge for Hazaras in Pakistan. Those Hazaras who are economically poor — the majority — are doomed to a life of constant fear. Other options are only available to those who can access substantial resources — to either pay excessive protection bribes on a continuing basis or seek asylum in other countries. The latter choice is proving increasingly alluring but also increasingly difficult.

British historic concerns

For several years the British Government has paid particular attention to the plight of Pakistan's Hazaras and has sought to find ways of pressing the Pakistan government to intervene on their behalf. I drew attention to this fact in my December 2012 paper, noting that early in 2012 the House of Commons had decried Pakistan's official discrimination against Hazaras and the Pakistan government's neglect of the Hazaras' acute need for protection. The House denounced the slowness of the international community to take effective remedial action. One speech declared:

"The attacks are intensifying. Hazaras are murdered when they stay in Quetta and killed when they try to leave."

A subsequent parliamentary conference, held in November 2012, highlighted a report from

the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office which affirmed the conclusion that Pakistani government officials had supported the killing of hundreds of Hazara Shias in Quetta:

“ . . . there was absolutely no doubt that there was some kind of official sanction to what was happening in Quetta city, that there were elements in government and security forces, who were sympathetic to the people who were murdering and killing Hazara people.”

Unfortunately any ensuing efforts of the UK government on this matter have been so far unfruitful. A further effort was made in September 2014, led by Labour MP John Denham, himself an expert on the subject. Denham's debate-leading speech⁸, proposing a submission to the imminent NATO summit, supported the cause of Hazaras in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. The submission *“The Forgotten Victims of Terror”*⁹ merits quoting at some length:

“Ethnic and religious minorities have faced appalling violence from ISIL forces in Iraq and Syria. But another community has suffered at the hands of very similar ideologues for far too long.”

“The Hazara are an indigenous people of Afghanistan, with a small community in Quetta, Pakistan, established over 100 years ago by Hazaras fleeing religious persecution.”

“In Pakistan, the once prosperous community has now been reduced to about 500,000 people living in just four square miles of Quetta. 1,500 people have been killed since 1999 and more than 3,500 injured. Perhaps 55,000 people have fled to Australia or Europe, though of course, not all survived the journey. The community is isolated, with travel restrictions imposed by the Pakistani Government.”

Just occasionally, the violence in Quetta makes the international news: in June 2012, when a university bus was bombed, killing four and injuring 72; and in early 2013, when two bombings killed 180 Hazaras. Continuing violence has been well documented in the recent Human Rights Watch report "We are the Walking Dead", published in June 2014.

Shockingly, in the past 16 years, not one person has been brought successfully to justice. *The al-Qaeda-affiliated organisation Lashkar-e-Jhangvi has openly claimed responsibility for the killings, while leading members have been seen associating with public figures and politicians in Pakistan.* [emphasis added]

The Pakistan Government are clearly in breach of their international obligation to protect their people. [emphasis added]

Summary

The following information, obtained over the past two years, highlights the deteriorating situation of the Hazara population of Pakistan. A consistent picture is apparent and this may be summarised as follows.

- The 600,000 Hazaras of Pakistan live in daily danger of persecution at the hands of the Taliban, the LeJ and other extremist groups who all embrace the Sunni form of Islam, in contrast to the Shiite form adhered to by most Hazaras.

⁸ <http://www.theyworkforyou.com/debates/?id=2014-09-01a.123.0&s=speaker%3a10167#g136.0>

⁹ John Denham, Labour MP for Southampton, Itchen, 04 September 2014,

http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/john-denham/nato-summit-afghanistan_b_5765136.html

- Suicide bombing of Hazara enclaves, places of worship and cultural festivals is augmented by individual and small group executions by gunshot.
- The Pakistani authorities do not provide effective protection to Hazaras and indeed they are now being implicated by credible sources as complicit in the oppression of Hazaras.
- A suite of causative factors have been identified, providing clear rationale for the lack of effective remedial action by the Pakistan government. Perhaps most significant is the close dependency relationship between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.
- While previously it may have been arguable that safe havens for Hazaras might be identifiable, this is no longer the case. No place in Pakistan is safe for a Hazara; their enemies are ubiquitous, mobile and out of control.
- As a consequence, thousands of Hazaras are leaving the traditional enclaves located in Quetta, Parachinar and elsewhere and seeking asylum abroad.
- These are overwhelmingly young men who are (a) the specific target of the LEJ, the Pakistan Taliban and others as the keys to effective genocide and ideal hostages for ransom (b) the hope of the future for Hazara families, and (c) the sub-group with the best chance of successful travel on precarious journeys.
- Hazaras fleeing from Afghanistan now regard Pakistan not as a refuge (as was previously the case) but as, at best, a very temporary transit point from which they can arrange their onward journey to longed-for safety.
- For several years a range of observers have been describing what is happening as genocide.

Key reports

Human Rights Watch report of June 2014

Several recent analytical reports by acknowledged experts provide useful summaries and insights. Perhaps the most significant was the Human Rights Watch report of June 2014: **“We are the Walking Dead: Killings of Shia Hazaras in Balochistan, Pakistan”**¹⁰. The following quotations require little or no comment. Original source links have been omitted.

*“This report documents Sunni militant attacks on the mostly Shia Hazara community in Pakistan’s southwestern province of Balochistan from 2010 until early 2014. The Hazara in Balochistan, numbering about half a million people, find themselves particularly vulnerable to attack because of their distinctive facial features and Shia religious affiliation. **More than 500 Hazaras have been killed in attacks since 2008**, but their precarious position is reflected in the increasing percentage of Hazara among all Shia victims of sectarian attack. Approximately one-quarter of the Shia killed in sectarian violence across Pakistan in 2012 belonged to the Hazara community in Balochistan. **In 2013, nearly half of Shia killed in Pakistan were Hazaras.** [emphasis added]*

The sectarian massacres have taken place under successive governments since Pakistan’s return to democratic governance in 2008. To many Hazara, the persistent failure of the authorities at both the provincial and national levels to apprehend attackers or prosecute the militant groups claiming responsibility for the attacks suggests that the authorities are incompetent, indifferent, or possibly complicit in the attacks. While there is no evidence indicating official or systemic state patronage of the LeJ, the country’s law enforcement agencies, military, and paramilitary forces have done little to investigate them

¹⁰ <https://www.hrw.org/report/2014/06/29/we-are-walking-dead/killings-shia-hazara-balochistan-pakistan>

or take steps to prevent the next attack.”

“In recent years, Pakistan’s Shia community, which constitutes some 20 percent of the country’s overwhelmingly Muslim population, has been the target of an alarming and unprecedented escalation in sectarian violence. Armed Sunni militants have conducted numerous shootings and bombings across Pakistan, killing thousands of Shia citizens. Militants have targeted Shia police officers, bureaucrats, and a judge, Zulfiqar Naqvi, who was killed by motorcycle-riding assassins in Quetta on August 30, 2012. Human Rights Watch recorded at least 450 killings of Shia in 2012, the community’s bloodiest year; at least another 400 Shia were killed in 2013. While sporadic sectarian violence between Sunni and Shia militant groups has long persisted in Pakistan, attacks in recent years have been overwhelmingly one-sided and primarily targeted ordinary Shia going about their daily lives.”

“Increasingly, members of the Hazara community have been compelled to live a fearful existence of restricted movement that has created economic hardship and curtailed access to education. That oppressive situation has prompted large numbers of Hazara to flee Pakistan for refuge in other countries.”

“The rhetoric of the LeJ is both anti-Shia and anti-Iran.”

“While Pakistan and Balochistan authorities claim to have arrested dozens of suspects in attacks against Shia since 2008, only a handful have been charged. Virtually all members of the LeJ leadership operate with impunity, continuing to play leadership roles even when in custody awaiting trial. A number of convicted high-profile LeJ militants and suspects in custody, including its operational chief in Balochistan, Usman Saifullah Kurd, have escaped from military and civilian detention in circumstances the authorities have been unable to explain.”

“While some enhanced security cover in Quetta’s Hazara neighborhoods and to Shia pilgrims travelling to Iran has been in evidence since a new provincial government assumed office in Balochistan in June 2013, the situation of the Hazara and other Shia in Balochistan has not improved.”

“The Hazara have been targeted to be killed, sometimes blown up by bombs, while participating in religious processions, praying in mosques, going to work, or just going about daily life. Hounded into virtual ghettoization in the Hazara neighborhoods of Quetta, they have then suffered the same fate in the ghettos or when going to and returning from pilgrimages to Iran, and staying in hotels along the way. There is no travel route, no shopping trip, no school run, no work commute that is safe.”

“Meanwhile, Pakistani authorities have responded, at best, by suggesting that the Hazara accept open-ended ghettoization, ever increasing curbs on movement and religious observance, and ongoing economic, cultural, and social discrimination as the price for staying alive. Yet the LeJ still finds ways to attack and kill.” [emphasis added]

*The fact that repeated attacks on Hazaras go investigated and unpunished and that elements within the security services and elected officials alike display discriminatory attitudes and hostility toward them generates **a belief among many Hazara we interviewed that the military, Frontier Corps, and other state authorities in Balochistan are at best indifferent and at worst complicit in the attacks.*** These views

gain traction from the fact that attacks and impunity continue despite the presence of significant military, paramilitary, and civilian security forces and intelligence agencies in Balochistan. [emphasis added]

The message is clear: the plight of the Hazaras of Pakistan shows no sign of improvement and every sign of continuing deterioration.

Other reports from the period January 2013 to June 2014

The message of the June 2014 Human Rights Watch report is affirmed by a number of other reports published in the period leading up to it. Most of these reports focused on events in Quetta. Several examples are cited below. Again, the selected quotations require little or no additional comment.

- January 2013 ***"It's time we recognised the plight of a people facing genocide in Pakistan"***¹¹
"The LeJ has vowed to kill all Hazaras who do not flee the city this year."
- July 2013 ***"Hazaras' Endless Massacre and Indifferent Government"***¹²
"Death pursues unfortunate Hazaras everywhere, in avenues, markets, highways, university routes and in local carriages. They are not even spared in their residential enclaves, Hazara town and Alamdar Road, have been the victim of multiple bombs with tones of explosives. The peace-loving community is besieged by vicious perpetrators of Lashkari Jangvi (LeJ) the operational wing of Ahali Sunnat Wal Jamaat (ASWJ) formerly known as Sipahi Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) serving as a strategic asset and enjoys politico-economical support from some institutions. Mualana Rafeeq Mengal heads Baluchistan chapter of Ahali Sunnat Wal Jamaat (ASWJ) continuously incites hatred and violence against Hazara Shia, serving a firm basis of their butchery, the state seems indifferent to his activities."

"Till date over 1300 Hazaras are subjected to mass butchery. Thousands have fled the country fearing persecution. The gateway to every life sustaining and propelling activities are irreversibly closed."

"Persecution is one of decade long panic, Hazaras are passing through - kidnapping for ransom is another agony hunting them. Large number of Hazara employees and businessmen has been kidnapped for ransom; some are tortured to death whilst others go on missing till date."
- January 2014 ***"The Relentless War Against The Hazara: Pawns In a Deadly Game Between Pakistan, Iran, Balochs And Taliban"***¹³
*"The motivations for the mass murder of Hazara in Pakistan are complex and confounding. Some believe it is a case of fanatic Sunni Muslims killing Shias, other think it is simply a matter of ethnic prejudice, but some Hazara leaders say they are being wiped out due to geo-strategic issues engulfing both Pakistan and Afghanistan. **'The Hazaras are being systematically killed because they are anti-Taliban'**, said Tahir*

¹¹ David Costello, The Courier-Mail, January 28, 2013, <http://www.couriermail.com.au/news/opinion/its-time-we-recognised-the-plight-of-a-people-facing-genocide-in-pakistan/story-e6frerdf-1226563024670>

¹² Asmatyari, 22 July 2013, http://outlookafghanistan.net/topics.php?post_id=7902

¹³ Palash Ghosh January 23 2014, <http://www.ibtimes.com/relentless-war-against-hazara-pawns-deadly-game-between-pakistan-iran-balochs-taliban-1547108>

Khan Hazara, a political activist.” [emphasis added]

“Dr. Michael Kugelman, an expert on South Asian affairs at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, believes the attacks on the Shia Hazara are driven by one single factor: sectarian hatred. Sunni extremist groups operate with impunity in Pakistan, he said in an interview, and they are bent on eliminating Pakistan’s Shias, who comprise 20 percent of the population. ‘There are large representations of Shia in Balochistan (which borders Shia-dominated Iran), and hence they pose a convenient target for Pakistani Sunni sectarian militants’, Kugelman noted.” [emphasis added]

“Meanwhile, Kugelman lamented that the Pakistani state has shown little interest in curbing sectarian violence--in marked contrast to anti-state violence practiced by the likes of the Pakistani Taliban, which the military has tackled through offensives in the tribal areas. ‘Until Pakistan cracks down more on sectarian strife and its perpetrators, sadly the Hazara will suffer many more attacks,’ he concluded. ‘It makes for a very troubling state of affairs.’ ”

- **March 2014 “Hunting The Hazara”¹⁴**

“If there ever was a sign of the demise of the Pakistani state, it is the killing of the Hazara community of Quetta.”

“In the past months, the Hazara were repeatedly offloaded from buses by gun-toting men, stood before a firing squad, and executed as the non-Hazara passengers stood aside and cowered.” [emphasis added]

“But this year’s massacre recalled the biggest act of mass murder in the city of Quetta. On Jan. 10, over a hundred Hazara, including women and children, died after a vehicle full of a quantity of explosives not seen in the country before destroyed a market town where the Shia have become ghettoized.”

“From 2008 to 2012, Balochistan witnessed 758 Shia killed in 478 incidents. Of these, 338 victims belonged to the Hazara community, indicating that the Hazara remain the prime target of this violent schism.”

“Hazara and the Afghan War

Lashkar-e-Jhangvi issued the following proclamation in 2011: “All Shia are worthy of killing. We will rid Pakistan of unclean people. Pakistan means ‘land of the pure’ and the Shia have no right to live in this country. We have the edict and signatures of revered scholars, declaring the Shia infidels. Just as our fighters have waged a successful jihad against the Shia Hazara in Afghanistan, our mission in Pakistan is the abolition of this impure sect and its followers from every city, every village, and every nook and corner of Pakistan.”

“As in the past, our successful jihad against the Hazara in Pakistan and, in particular, in Quetta is ongoing and will continue in the future. We will make Pakistan the graveyard of the Shia Hazara and their houses will be destroyed by bombs and suicide-bombers. We will only rest when we will be able to fly the flag of true Islam on this land of the pure. Jihad against the Shia Hazara has now become our duty.” [emphasis added]

¹⁴ Khaled Ahmed, 11 March 2014, <http://newsweekpakistan.com/hunting-the-hazara/>

“ . . . With a population of about 2 million, Quetta . . . has a small-town feel. It is easy to predict where the attacks will take place. Many occur on Spini Road, which links Mehrabad to Hazara Town, the other main Hazara enclave which lies on the other side of Quetta. The assassins roar up on motorbikes, open fire, and are gone. They are never caught. It is a measure of their confidence that they do not bother to wear masks.”

“Balochistan’s then inspector-general of police, Shoaib Suddle, also put his finger on another cause of the Shia extermination: The Hazara were an upwardly mobile community; their children were more motivated to acquire good education and did well at school and college levels and ended up winning the best government jobs specially in the education sector. The community was comparatively prosperous and inward-looking, thus arousing envy and hatred.” [emphasis added]

“The lives of 50,000 Hazara are under threat in Quetta. **There are over 13,000 members of the community living in Karachi, too.** In Hussain Hazara Goth, where their Imambargah is located, **they fear for their lives**, often pointing out that “our community, especially in Balochistan, is among the most literate and educated; they envy us, our people are in the police, government and everywhere; and out of the four female pilots in Pakistan, one is from our community.” The pride in being Pakistani is irrepressible in this dying community.” [emphasis added]

- **March 2014, “DFAT Thematic Report on Hazaras in Afghanistan and Pakistan”, 26 March 2014**¹⁵

This report, containing mainly background and summary information adds little that is not brought up to date by the Human Rights Watch report published 3 months later. The relevant sections related to Pakistan are quoted in an attachment to the current paper. Particularly pertinent excerpts are as follows. The original source links have been omitted.

2.9 There are estimated to be between 600,000 and 900,000 Hazaras living in Pakistan—less than one per cent of the population. Most live in and around the city of Quetta in Balochistan Province. There are also small Hazara communities in the Kurram Agency of Pakistan’s Federally-Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and in large urban areas, including in Karachi, Lahore, Multan, Islamabad and Peshawar.

2.11 Within Quetta, Hazaras live predominantly within their own two communities—Hazara Town (also known as Brewery Road) and along Alamdar Road towards Mehrabad. These tend to be lower and middle-income areas on the outskirts of Quetta.

2.12 There are estimated to be 1200 to 1500 Hazaras living in Parachinar who are integrated into the broader Shia community, rather than living in a segregated community as they do in Quetta. Parachinar is in Kurram Agency, in the FATA, adjacent to the border with Afghanistan. FATA is nominally under the control of Pakistan’s Federal Government, but in practice the tribes largely operate independently.

2.13 Although no reliable information is available on the size of particular communities, there are Hazara communities in Karachi (up to 15,000), and smaller communities in Lahore, Multan, Islamabad and Peshawar.

¹⁵ This report seems to be no longer available on the internet. However I was able to use my personal archival copy to obtain relevant excerpts.

3.7 Although they are generally free to practice their religion, DFAT assesses that the greatest threat for Hazara Shias in Pakistan is in the form of targeting by militants or, at times, sectarian clashes in the community.

4.16 DFAT assesses that the major threat to Shias in Pakistan (including Hazaras) comes from anti-Shia and militant groups, including Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) and Jundullah. Because they are ethnically distinct, Hazaras are readily identifiable as Shia Muslims and have been targeted by sectarian militants on this basis.

4.19 As a result of these attacks, Hazaras have retreated into the two predominantly Hazara enclaves in Quetta where they enjoy a greater degree of security. However, DFAT has observed that, during daylight hours, Hazaras are generally able to move about within Quetta. To defend their communities, some Hazaras maintain their own licensed weapons.

4.21 A number of Hazaras have been killed in both targeted and random attacks in Karachi in the context of a high level of generalised violence. This is often related to clashing business, political and criminal interests—sectarian violence has been just one feature of the political landscape in the city.

4.36 Although DFAT is not able to verify this information, Hazara community leaders have reported that travel by road to Zhob or through Bolan in Balochistan and to Dera Ghazi Khan in Punjab is dangerous for Hazaras. As a result of these risks, many Hazaras able to afford the cost choose to fly out of Quetta to reach other destinations in Pakistan. This is considered to be a safer alternative to road travel.

5.5 However, Pakistani authorities face capacity constraints. A lack of resources limits the federal and provincial governments' respective abilities to protect the Hazara community at all times and in all places. DFAT has also observed that while Pakistan has made efforts to capture and prosecute members of sectarian outfits such as the LeJ, conviction rates remain low. The capacity of Pakistani authorities to provide effective state protection is highest in major urban areas and well-protected cantonments. Many Hazaras are themselves members of the Balochistan Police.

5.9 Some Hazaras in Quetta and Parachinar have relocated to other parts of Pakistan, including Lahore and Karachi, although the journey and the destinations were not without their own security risks. To mitigate these risks, many Hazaras able to afford the cost choose to fly from Quetta or Parachinar to other destinations in Pakistan.

Reports published since June 2014

Since the Human Rights Watch report was published in June 2014 there have been many more reports of violence against the Hazaras of Pakistan. In chronological order, the following are among the most significant. The report of the submission of the UK government to the September 2014 NATO summit has been cited above and is not included again. The following quotations hardly need embellishment.

- **July 2014, UK Home Office Country Information and Guidance Pakistan: Fear of the Taliban and other militant groups**¹⁶

¹⁶ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/331611/Pakistan_CIG.

This report is cited for the sake of completeness but in terms relevance to our subject it appears not to add anything significant to the other reports.

- August 2014, “Hazara Persecution in Balochistan”¹⁷

“According to locals over 1,000 Hazara have been gunned down in and around Quetta from the last 10 years. In the most recent incidents, in June at least 24 people were killed when gunmen stormed a hotel and opened fire indiscriminately in an outskirt area of Quetta.”

“On the other hand widespread fear of harassment, discrimination and killings has prompted some Hazara community members living in Quetta to consider leaving the country, even through illegal means. With detail reports available approximately 30,000 Hazara have fled in the last five years.”

“It is worth mentioning here that extremist Sunni Muslims and a particular mind set in Pakistan continue to treat Shia Muslims as non-Muslims declaring them as kafir (A derogatory, blasphemous term for those who don't believe in Allah and his last prophet Muhammad). Under this discriminatory system, a large number of Shia Muslims particularly those belonging to Hazara community in Pakistan's Southwestern province of Balochistan are forbidden from traveling, studying and working.”

- November 2014, “Pakistan's beleaguered Hazaras”¹⁸

The attack on the Hazara community in Quetta last month, which left 10 dead and many injured, comes amidst the recent spate of violence against an intensely vulnerable and ghettoised community. Pakistan's new theatre of sectarian killings, the troubled province of Balochistan, is turning into a parable of disastrous policies that are being pursued ostensibly to bolster Pakistan's national security. Since 2009, such attacks have become the norm and the worse impunity of attackers underlines state complicity.

Most of this report has been summarised above as the 8 factors contributing to the dangers faced by Pakistan's Hazaras — under the heading “The agenda of the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi”

- December 2014, “Pakistan's Hazara: 'It's like living in jail': Surge in sectarian violence puts Pakistan's minority Hazara community in state of fear and frustration.”¹⁹

“There has been an undercurrent of change taking place within the Hazara community after the kidnapping, torture and killing of a 6-year-old Hazara girl, Sahar Batool.

Fear_Taliban.2014.07.16.v1.0.pdf

¹⁷ Shah Meer, Human Rights Activist, August 4, 2014, <http://www.sharnoffsglobalviews.com/hazara-persecution-balochistan-367/> (Shah Meer completed a master's in International Relations from the National University of Modern Languages and Sciences, Islamabad and is an active human rights activist.)

¹⁸ By Raza Rumi, The Express Tribune, Pakistan, November 16, 2014, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/791727/pakistans-beleaguered-hazaras/> (The writer is affiliated with Express TV and an editor at The Friday Times. Currently, he is a senior fellow at the United States Institute of Peace. Views expressed here are his own)

¹⁹ Purvi Thacker, 14 Dec 2014, <http://www.aljazeera.com/humanrights/2014/12/pakistan-hazara-it-like-living-jail-2014123114655754509.html>

Sahar, the daughter of a gardener, was taken from outside her home on October 28 and murdered. Her body was later found in a garbage dumpster. The event has left an already vulnerable community clamouring for justice.”

“Routinely, “non-Hazaras” wishing to enter Alamdar Road and Hazara Town are checked for paperwork before being allowed entry to either enclave. Given the brutality of Sahar’s death, the community is sceptical about the effectiveness of such basic security checks.

“In Quetta, most Hazara men keep a low profile and are discreet in their movements, especially outside the enclave area where they are easy targets.

Asma Jahangir, chairperson of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), tells Al Jazeera: “The Hazaras are under severe threat. The government seems to be helpless, as sectarian hardliner outfits have taken root in Balochistan.”

- **February 2015 “UK Home Office Country Information and Guidance Pakistan: Shia Muslims February 2015”²⁰**

This report cites several of the other reports mentioned above, especially the Human Rights Watch Report. In general it affirms the conclusions of those reports. The following quotations are selected on the basis of providing supplementary information not covered in the other reports, or possible qualifying information. The original source links have been omitted.

2.7.2 Amnesty International reported in its 2013 annual report, covering 2012, that ‘Security forces continued to act with impunity and were accused of widespread human rights violations, including arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, torture, deaths in custody and extrajudicial executions targeting political activists, journalists, and suspected members of armed groups.

3.2.2 DFAT further noted that ‘Shias in Pakistan are often employed in Government and hold high offices. Notable examples include former Presidents and Prime Ministers. Shias are well represented in Parliament, the police, judiciary and other institutions. Shias are represented on Pakistan’s Council of Islamic Ideology, the Constitutional body that provides advice to the Government of Pakistan on issues of Islamic jurisprudence and practice. Shias also have representation in the Shariat Courts.’

4.1.2 **In 2013, the South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP) recorded more Shia deaths in Pakistan than since their records began in 2001.** The SATP listed 81 incidents in which 504 people died, and 965 were injured. Types of violence included sectarian clashes, militant attacks and targeted assassinations. The SATP recorded attacks against Shias resulting in death or injury from 2001 to the present in its database of Shias killed in Pakistan since 2001, last updated 1 February 2015. [emphasis added]

4.1.5 **The US Commission on International Religious Freedom Annual Report 2013 reported grossly inadequate state protection for Shia Muslims and that ‘the government has proven unwilling or unable to crack down on groups that repeatedly plan, conduct, and claim credit for attacks, or prevent future violence.’** However, some media sources reported police protection during times of sectarian tension. [emphasis added]

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https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/402592/cig_pakistan_shias_v1_0_2015_02_10.pdf

4.1.6 Attacks against Shias escalate during the Muslim holy month of Moharram, particularly on Shia processions marking Ashura, the 10th day of Moharram. In 2012 the TTP claimed responsibility for a number of attacks during Moharram that killed more than 30 Shias and wounded around 200. 18 At least eight people were killed and 30 injured when a Shia procession was attacked in Rawalpindi on 15 November 2013. Aside from the incident in Rawalpindi, Ashura passed peacefully in most of the country on account of the security measures put in place by Pakistan's law enforcement authorities. Several suspected militants were arrested in Karachi, and security cameras helped prevent terrorist activity in Lahore.

4.1.7 According to sources, attacks against Shia Muslims occur in all regions across Pakistan but are particularly prominent in Quetta, Balochistan. Other areas with notable levels of violence include Karachi, Gilgit Baltistan, and some cities in Pakistan's north west tribal areas. Shia pilgrimage routes between Pakistan and Iran, travelling through Balochistan, were subject to attack. In January 2014, Dawn reported that, following a suicide bomb attack against Hazara Shia pilgrims travelling to Iran, security forces escorted the pilgrims' coaches on their return journey. When the road between Quetta and the Iranian border was closed due to the attack, the Pakistan Air Force airlifted 215 pilgrims back to Quetta. [emphasis added]

- May 2015, "Attacks on Hazaras"²¹

THE message for the Shia Hazara community in Balochistan is clear. There is no place for them outside the walls of their guarded enclaves in Quetta; for outside those walls lurks death at the hands of sectarian terrorists who operate with seeming impunity. [emphasis added]

On Monday, there were two attacks targeting Hazaras in various parts of the provincial capital, the first one in a central bazaar in the presence of scores of people. The modus operandi was identical: gunmen on motorcycles — their faces uncovered — picking off Hazaras going about their daily business, running a roadside tea stall, waiting to see a doctor outside a medical complex, etc.

Take a look: Three Hazara people among four killed in Quetta [emphasis added]
A protest by members of the community turned violent and resulted in further casualties. Four people died in the shootings — three of whom were Hazara — and eight were injured, including two women.

Enraged Hazaras demonstrating outside the office of the IG dispersed only after senior police officials gave assurances of the killers' arrest. [emphasis added]

Chief Minister Abdul Malik Baloch called a meeting of law-enforcement officials and relevant ministers to review the situation. It was decided that pillion-riding would be banned in the city and that steps would be taken to ensure that "nobody challenged the writ of the government".

That there can be such a tepid response, replete with mealy-mouthed clichés and token gestures, to the problem of sectarianism in Balochistan, is revealing.

Apparently, as long as massive attacks that cause devastating loss of life are kept at bay,

²¹ EDITORIAL — UPDATED MAY 27, 2015, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1184415>

the target-killing of a few Hazaras here or there is of no consequence. When Usman Saifullah Kurd, head of the Lashkar-i-Jhangvi's Balochistan chapter, was killed earlier this year in Quetta, it was hoped that it signalled the beginning of a crackdown against religious extremists in the province.

However, the infrastructure that supports such groups is obviously still intact, and the myopic policies that give them succour remain in play. **The beleaguered Hazaras, meanwhile, continue to pay the price with their lives.** [emphasis added]

- June 2015, "Hazara Shia genocide and the evils we don't see"²²

"The Hazara genocide often frequents headlines, but the situation is yet to improve or even change. In Pakistan, being a Shia is often enough for an unofficial, yet persistent, death warrant."

"Since the beginning of 2015 there have been 42 attacks on the Shia communities resulting in hundreds dead and injured. Freedom to practice one's religion without fear of intimidation is a fundamental right," International Association of Human Rights Chair Rubab Mehdi H. Rizvi said while speaking to Pakistan Today." [emphasis added]

She added that **there is a genocide happening right now and the government seems to be doing nothing about it.** Over 22,000 Shias have been killed since 1968 simply for their faith."

"Banned militant groups are banned in name only. They are free to carry out genocidal campaigns where they are calling people not only infidels but worthy of being killed. The Government must be held accountable and provide security to its citizens," said Rizvi.

Acclaimed Human Rights defender Ali Raza shared figures with Pakistan Today which showed that from November 2012 till July 2014 there were 359 terrorist attacks in the country that targeted 2,054 Shias, of which 833 Shias were killed and 1,221 were injured.

Of these figures around 40 per cent of the people were gunned down, and another 35 per cent lost their lives in suicide attacks, while 24 per cent were killed in bombings."

"43 Shias are killed every month on average, and these figures are high enough to fall in the definition of a 'systematic genocide'," said Raza.

He added that **the cities in which Shias are targeted the most include Karachi, Quetta and Peshawar.** These are the places where the attackers easily manage to attack the besieged community without any fear of law enforcement agencies." [emphasis added]

"These attacks are well-planned as more than 87 per cent of these attacks were target killings and the victims included some very talented professionals like doctors, professors, educationists and engineers," Raza told Pakistan Today.

In January, a blast was carried out at a Shia Imambargah in the Shikarpur district of Sindh which left 60 dead.

In February, a Shia Imambargah in Peshawar was attacked with grenades, which

²² Hassan Naqvi, JUNE 6, 2015, <http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2015/06/06/national/hazara-shia-genocide-and-the-evils-we-dont-see/>

resulted in at least 20 deaths.

On February 18, 2015, another bomber killed three people as he tried to enter the main hall of an Imambargah in Islamabad.”

- June 2015, “**It Is War Against The Hazaras In Quetta**”²³

“Unknown gunmen killed five people belonging to Pakistan’s minority Hazara community, as they opened fire in Quetta’s Bacha Khan Chowk area on Sunday evening.”

“ . . . The gravity of the situation is evinced by the fact that half a dozen Hazaras have been killed in similar fashion in Quetta in the last few days alone. In the most recent incident, two Hazara men who own a cloth shop were gunned down, before which three people belonging to the Hazara community were gunned down in a separate attack.

The attacks, although brutal, are by no means a rare occurrence in Pakistan, which is gaining a notorious reputation regarding the safety (or rather lack of) of the country’s minorities. Shias — which include Hazaras — are the worst targeted. **In the last few months, suicide attacks on Shia mosques in Peshawar and Shikarpur killed dozens of people. The attack on the Shia mosque in Shikarpur in fact is the deadliest sectarian attack in Pakistan in over a year, claiming 60 lives.**” [emphasis added]

“The problem with data sets relating to violence in Pakistan is that they are largely provisional based on newspaper reports, and hence, there is variation in the numbers. That said, **the security situation in Pakistan does seem to be reflecting a dangerous trend toward the worse, no matter which data set is employed in the analysis.**” [emphasis added]

- July 2015, “**Why the Hazaras are massacred in target killings in Quetta**”²⁴

Hazaras persecution in Pakistan

“Most of the Hazaras are Shiite Muslims. **Due to a vast majority of Sunni Muslims in Pakistan, Hazaras have been isolated and victimized because of their beliefs and traditions.**” [emphasis added]

“Since 1999, thousands of Hazara people have been massacred and more than 3500 have been wounded in brutal terrorist attacks. Jaish-e-Islam, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), and Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), fundamentalist Islamic movements have persistently claimed to have been behind the massacre of Hazara people in Quetta of Baluchistan. Lashkar-e- Jhangvi self-declared to have been behind most of the terrorist assaults in Federal Administrative Tribal Areas (FATA). Lashkar-e- Jhangvi members have stated they are operating in Pakistan in order to eliminate impurities in this country, and that’s why have been repeatedly targeting the Hazara Shiite folks. **In 2013, Lashkar-e- Jhangvi distributed threatening letters addressing Hazara people: leave Quetta by the end of the year or face death**, Amnesty International has reported the deaths of approximately five hundreds Hazaras in various attacks within Pakistan.” [emphasis added]

²³ By The Citizen Bureau, June 8, 2015, <http://www.hazarapeople.com/2015/06/08/it-is-war-against-the-hazaras-in-quetta/>

²⁴ M. Iqbal Dawari, Conflict and Security Analyst, KHAAMA PRESS, July 05 2015
<http://www.khaama.com/why-the-hazaras-are-massacred-in-target-killings-in-quetta-1248>

“Some fighters of the Lashkar-e- Jhangvi have been arrested by the Pakistani government. But after a short period of time they fled or released by paying them bribe.”

- July 2015, “Unending killings”²⁵

*“Four unidentified gunmen on motorcycles opened fire on people standing in line outside a passport office in Quetta. Two civilians, believed to be Hazara Shias, and a police constable were killed during the attack and eyewitnesses say that the shooters escaped on their motorbikes unchallenged. The Hazara Shia community in Quetta has been the target of bomb blasts, killings and other hate crimes for several years now. By some estimates, over 1,400 Hazara have been killed since 1999. This is not merely a sectarian conflict; it is a genocide. **It is shameful for Pakistan that despite so many anti-terrorism efforts, the killing of the Hazara community is continuing.** The fact that the Hazara genocide has gone on for so many years unchecked is in itself a failure of the state to protect its people and particularly the minorities. The Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), the main organisation responsible for these attacks, and its affiliates, are still operational. The leader of LeJ, Malik Ishaq was released by the Supreme Court in July 2011, after spending 12 years in jail. Despite the fact that the brutal attacks against Hazaras in Balochistan continue to occur and the LeJ claims responsibility for most of them, Ishaq has still not been rearrested. **There have been reports that militants patrol the streets of the two main Hazara neighbourhoods in Quetta, killing any Hazara that they see.** The Deputy Inspector General of Quetta Police, Abdul Razzaq Cheema, admitted that the attack on Monday was a targeted sectarian killing and said that there was evidence that two banned terrorist groups, the LeJ and Jaish-ul-Islam, were behind it. He said, ‘Both the groups are separate entities but their aim is the same’.” [emphasis added]*

Conclusion

It is clear that Pakistan is an increasingly unsafe situation for its 40 million Shia Muslims. However it is the Hazara population which continues to be especially vulnerable to targeted persecution and indeed genocide at the hands of extremist Sunni groups. For Hazaras there is now no safe haven anywhere in the country.

²⁵ Daily Times, July 08, 2015, <http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/editorial/08-Jul-2015/unending-killings>

Appendix

DFAT Thematic Report on Hazaras in Afghanistan and Pakistan, 26 March 2014²⁶

Quotations relevant to the topic of the plight of Hazaras in Pakistan

(N.B. The original source links have been omitted.)

2.9 There are estimated to be between 600,000 and 900,000 Hazaras living in Pakistan—less than one per cent of the population. Most live in and around the city of Quetta in Balochistan Province. There are also small Hazara communities in the Kurram Agency of Pakistan's Federally-Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and in large urban areas, including in Karachi, Lahore, Multan, Islamabad and Peshawar.

2.11 Within Quetta, Hazaras live predominantly within their own two communities—Hazara Town (also known as Brewery Road) and along Alamdar Road towards Mehrabad. These tend to be lower and middle-income areas on the outskirts of Quetta.

2.12 There are estimated to be 1200 to 1500 Hazaras living in Parachinar who are integrated into the broader Shia community, rather than living in a segregated community as they do in Quetta. Parachinar is in Kurram Agency, in the FATA, adjacent to the border with Afghanistan. FATA is nominally under the control of Pakistan's Federal Government, but in practice the tribes largely operate independently.

2.13 Although no reliable information is available on the size of particular communities, there are Hazara communities in Karachi (up to 15,000), and smaller communities in Lahore, Multan, Islamabad and Peshawar.

3.1 DFAT assesses that there are no legal restrictions on freedom of religion for Shias, including Hazara Shias, in Afghanistan or Pakistan. There are no laws or Government policies that discriminate against Shias (i.e. 'official' discrimination). Further, broadly speaking, there is little community prejudice (i.e. societal discrimination) that would limit opportunities for Shias in daily life on the basis of their Shia religion. Any incidents of discrimination would likely be cases of local nepotism, favouritism or patronage, rather than evidence of a broader trend of societal attitudes.

3.7 Although they are generally free to practice their religion, DFAT assesses that the greatest threat for Hazara Shias in Pakistan is in the form of targeting by militants or, at times, sectarian clashes in the community.

3.24 In Pakistan's Balochistan province, there are relatively few employment opportunities for Hazaras or other ethnic groups. Many Hazaras are self-employed in small businesses. Some are employed in banking and telecommunications, reflecting their higher levels of education.

3.25 Some Hazaras are employed in the civil service of the Government of Balochistan and serve in Balochistan's police force. In 1972, the Government of Balochistan introduced a quota system for appointments to positions in the civil service in Balochistan. The replacement of the previous merit-based system resulted in the reduction in the number of Hazaras in the civil service from 50 per cent in the 1970s to five per cent in 2011, despite Hazaras' consistently high entrance exam scores.

4.15 Long-term demographic changes in Quetta have also resulted in ethnic, sectarian and politically-motivated violence. This affects not just the Hazara community, but also Pashtuns, Punjabis and Balochis. Internal migration from other parts of Pakistan to Karachi has occasionally brought Hazaras into conflict with Pashtuns, regularly resulting in violence.

²⁶ This report seems to be no longer available on the internet. However I was able to use my personal archival copy to obtain relevant excerpts.

4.16 DFAT assesses that the major threat to Shias in Pakistan (including Hazaras) comes from anti-Shia and militant groups, including Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) and Jundullah. Because they are ethnically distinct, Hazaras are readily identifiable as Shia Muslims and have been targeted by sectarian militants on this basis.

4.18 There have been frequent attacks against the Hazara community in Balochistan. Most attacks on Shias in Balochistan have been against the Hazara community. . . . For example, on 17 February 2013, at least 86 people, mostly Hazaras, were killed when a bomb exploded in a vegetable market in Quetta. A series of bombings in January 2013 targeted Hazaras in Quetta and claimed more than 90 lives. Responsibility for both these attacks was claimed by the anti-Shia LeJ.

4.19 As a result of these attacks, Hazaras have retreated into the two predominantly Hazara enclaves in Quetta where they enjoy a greater degree of security. However, DFAT has observed that, during daylight hours, Hazaras are generally able to move about within Quetta. To defend their communities, some Hazaras maintain their own licensed weapons.

4.20 The visibility of Shias increases when they are engaged in Shia religious festivals, including Moharram (a one-month mourning period) and during pilgrimages to Iran. During Moharram, a number of Shias participate in Ashura processions, which have been specifically targeted by militant groups and triggered communal violence. However, there have been no major incidents during Ashura processions in Quetta since 2004.

4.21 A number of Hazaras have been killed in both targeted and random attacks in Karachi in the context of a high level of generalised violence. This is often related to clashing business, political and criminal interests—sectarian violence has been just one feature of the political landscape in the city.

4.35 Pakistani media frequently report on Hazaras being attacked on roads in and around Quetta. Representative incidents include an attack in September 2011 in which 26 members of the Hazara community travelling by bus to Iran to visit Shia holy sites were forced to disembark by gunmen near the town of Mastung and shot dead. Three others were killed as they took the injured to a hospital. Anti-Shia militant group Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) claimed responsibility for this attack. A suicide attack in June 2012 on a bus carrying pilgrims returning from Iran, also claimed by LeJ, killed 15 Hazaras and wounded 30 others.

4.36 Although DFAT is not able to verify this information, Hazara community leaders have reported that travel by road to Zhob or through Bolan in Balochistan and to Dera Ghazi Khan in Punjab is dangerous for Hazaras. As a result of these risks, many Hazaras able to afford the cost choose to fly out of Quetta to reach other destinations in Pakistan. This is considered to be a safer alternative to road travel.

5.4 Pakistan's laws and Constitution provide for state protection of people's property, lives and religious beliefs and places. Though implementation of human rights legislation has been slow, broadly DFAT assesses that there is a willingness by Pakistani authorities to protect Hazaras. During Muharram for example, provincial authorities and the Ministry of Interior are known to provide security for participants in Ashura processions.

5.5 However, Pakistani authorities face capacity constraints. A lack of resources limits the federal and provincial governments' respective abilities to protect the Hazara community at all times and in all places. DFAT has also observed that while Pakistan has made efforts to capture and prosecute members of sectarian outfits such as the LeJ, conviction rates remain low. The capacity of Pakistani authorities to provide effective state protection is highest in major urban areas and well-protected cantonments. Many Hazaras are themselves members of the Balochistan Police.

5.9 Some Hazaras in Quetta and Parachinar have relocated to other parts of Pakistan, including Lahore and Karachi, although the journey and the destinations were not without their own security risks. To mitigate these risks, many Hazaras able to afford the cost choose to fly from Quetta or Parachinar to other destinations in Pakistan.

5.10 Afghan Hazaras may choose to stay in Pakistan rather than return to Afghanistan because of better economic prospects and uncertainty about the security situation in Afghanistan ahead of the International Security Assistance Force drawdown in 2014.

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