A photograph of a makeshift settlement. In the foreground, a young child in a blue shirt and dark pants is walking on a dirt path. To the right, a woman in a red sari is partially visible, leaning over a wall made of stacked white stones. In the background, there are more stone walls, a brick building, and some trees. The overall scene suggests a poor, possibly refugee, settlement.

# VICTIMS OF HISTORY:

## THE UNTOLD STORY OF PAKISTANI HINDU REFUGEES IN INDIA

**A Report Published by the Hindu American Foundation**

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Director/Senior Fellow for Human Rights

March 31, 2013



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## INTRODUCTION

The Hindu American Foundation (HAF) is a 501(c)(3) advocacy and human rights organization for the Hindu American community. The Foundation educates the public about Hinduism, speaks out about issues affecting Hindus worldwide,

### **HAF visited the city of Jodhpur in India's northwestern state of Rajasthan, where a number of Pakistani Hindus have settled due to its close proximity to the Indo-Pakistani border.**

and builds bridges with institutions and individuals whose work aligns with HAF's objectives. HAF focuses on human and civil rights, public policy, media, academia, and interfaith relations. Through its advocacy efforts, HAF seeks to cultivate leaders and empower future generations of Hindu Americans.

Since its inception, HAF has made human rights one of its main areas of focus, publishing an annual human rights report surveying religious persecution against Hindus in countries where they are minorities. Similarly, the Foundation has actively engaged in international religious freedom fora, published policy briefs, and hosted human rights briefings on Capitol Hill to highlight the plight of Hindu minorities worldwide.

The small Hindu minority in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, in particular, has encountered systematic violence, rampant discrimination, and widespread restrictions on religious freedom in recent years, leading more than 100,000 Hindus to seek refuge in India.

With human rights organizations and media outlets widely reporting on this growing phenomenon, the Foundation sought to conduct its own independent fact-finding mission<sup>1</sup>, in order to explore the on-the-ground realities and circumstances confronting this displaced population. Consequently, earlier this year, HAF visited the city of Jodhpur in India's northwestern state of Rajasthan, where a number of Pakistani Hindus have settled

due to its close proximity to the Indo-Pakistani border.

Specifically, from January 14 to January 19, 2013, HAF's Director/Senior Human Rights Fellow, Samir Kalra, Esq., accompanied by a team of Hindu American doctors, toured three Pakistani Hindu refugee settlements in Jodhpur. The visit was hosted by Hindu

Singh Sodha, Chairman of Seemant Lok Sangathan (SLS), the primary community-based organization assisting Pakistani Hindu refugees in Jodhpur and western Rajasthan.

HAF's medical team comprised of Dr. Arvind Chandrakantan (Assistant Professor, Department of Anesthesiology

### **Pakistani Hindus have not been formally recognized as "refugees" by the Indian government or UNHCR...**

at Stony Brook University Medical Ctr in New York), Dr. Aseem Shukla (Director of Minimally Invasive Surgery, Division of Pediatric Urology, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia), Dr. Umesh Gidwani (Assistant Professor of Medicine in Cardiology and Pulmonary, Critical Care and Sleep Medicine at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York), and India-based physician, Dr. Dhiren Srivastava (Assistant Professor, Department of Pediatric Surgery at Gandhi Medical College in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh), conducted medical camps at each settlement, serving more than 400 patients.

This report examines the human rights, legal, socioeconomic, and medical conditions facing the Pakistani Hindu population living in Jodhpur and provides recommendations for their rehabilitation. The report's findings and conclusions represent data collected over a six day period and are based on first-hand observations and documentation,

more than thirty individual and group interviews<sup>2</sup>, medical assessments, and discussions with SLS volunteers and camp leaders. While the focus is on the migrants in Jodhpur specifically, it illustrates larger trends reflective of the status of Pakistani Hindus in western Rajasthan and India in general.

At the outset, it is important to note that Pakistani Hindus, with the exception of those arriving during the 1971 Indo-Pakistan War, have not been formally recognized as "refugees" by the Indian government or the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).<sup>3</sup> Despite the absence of this official recognition, however, they meet the criteria for refugee status under international law due to their well-founded fear of persecution and Pakistan's failure to protect them.<sup>4</sup> Consequently, they will be referred to as "refugees" for the purposes of this report.

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## HISTORY/ BACKGROUND

The modern Pakistani state was created by partitioning the Indian subcontinent in 1947, following the British withdrawal from India. Partition and the accompanying violence forced millions of Hindus to flee Pakistan for the safety of India, leading to a drastic decline in the country's Hindu population.

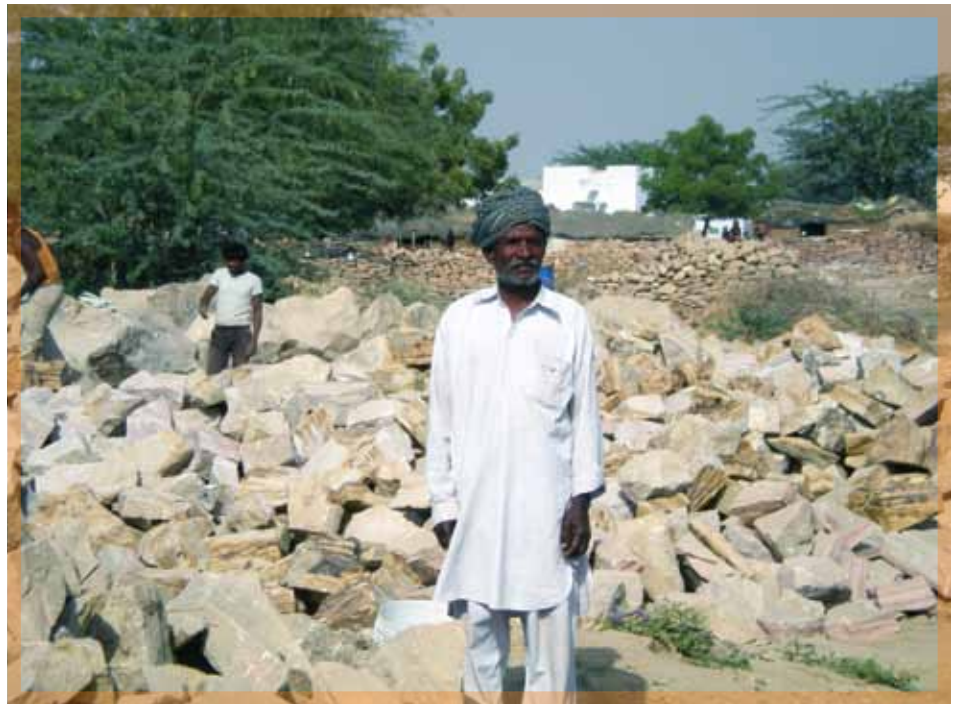
The adoption of discriminatory Islamic laws and constitutional injunctions, the rapid growth of Islamic extremism, and pervasive religious intolerance have all resulted in a further reduction in the number of Hindu citizens.<sup>5</sup> For instance, at the time of Partition in 1947, the Hindu community in Pakistan was approximately 25% of the total populace, but today comprises just under 2%.<sup>6</sup>

## The upsurge in kidnappings and forced conversions of Hindu girls, in particular, has created an atmosphere of terror and insecurity amongst Pakistan's Hindu community, compelling many to leave for India.

Although there has been a steady flow of Hindus crossing the border into India in the post-partition period, there have been three primary phases of migration, in addition to the latest which began in 2009: (1) 1965, (2) 1971, and (3) the post-1992 era. In 1965, for example, 8,000 Pakistani Hindus migrated to the state of Rajasthan alone, while approximately 90,000 arrived in 1971, and nearly 20,000 in the post-1992 period.<sup>7</sup>

The large scale migrations in 1965 and 1971 were largely due to wartime tensions between India and Pakistan. During both wars, Hindus in Pakistan were characterized as supporters of India and effectively designated as “enemies of the state.” Accordingly, they were implicitly targeted under a series of administrative regulations imposed by Pakistan’s military government.<sup>8</sup> This conflation of Hindus with India was not limited to the government establishment, and extended to religious leaders, extremist groups, and popular opinion as well. As a result, Hindus became convenient targets for discrimination and violence, and fled Pakistan en mass.

Similarly, a dispute between Hindus and Muslims in 1992 over an abandoned mosque in India, known as Babri Masjid, led to widespread violence against Hindus throughout the subcontinent. This was particularly true in Pakistan, where Hindus were subjected to violent attacks by Muslim mobs and several temples were destroyed. Accordingly, there was a substantial exodus of Hindus from the country in the aftermath of the events of 1992.<sup>9</sup>



Furthermore, a fourth period of migration appears to have emerged around 2009, when more than 6,000 Pakistani Hindus sought sanctuary in India.<sup>10</sup> Since then, approximately 1,000 Pakistani Hindus have settled in Rajasthan annually, notwithstanding migration to other Indian states. And this number is likely to continue unabated, if not significantly increase, according to Hindu Singh Sodha and other SLS volunteers.<sup>11</sup>

The upsurge in kidnappings and forced conversions of Hindu girls, in particular, has created an atmosphere of terror and insecurity amongst Pakistan’s Hindu community, compelling many to leave for India. Countless more attempt to make the journey, but are unable to for a variety of reasons.

In India, Rajasthan has seen the largest influx of Hindu refugees and there are now at least 400 refugee settlements scattered throughout the western parts of the state. Amongst cities in Rajasthan, Jodhpur has the highest concentration of Pakistani Hindus, followed by Jaisalmer, Bikaner, Ganganagar, and Jaipur.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, SLS volunteers contend that Pakistani Hindus can be found in almost every district of Rajasthan. Other areas of India, such as Punjab, Haryana, Gujarat, and the capital

of New Delhi also host sizeable Pakistani Hindu populations.

Of the three settlements HAF visited in Jodhpur, the majority of refugees originated from Pakistan’s Sindh province, or the districts of Rahim Yar Khan and Bahawalpur in southern Punjab province.<sup>14</sup> At the Chopasni refugee camp, for example, there were 204 refugees who migrated from Sindh in September 2012.<sup>15</sup>

The refugees at the Kali Beri and Banar Road settlements, on the other hand, were predominantly from Rahim Yar Khan and Bahawalpur districts. Kali Beri housed approximately 100 to 115 families (each with an average of seven to eight members), that arrived in India at various times since 1971. And at Banar Road, there were 331 refugees who migrated to India between fifteen and twenty-two years ago.<sup>16</sup> The residents at the Banar Road settlement initially settled in Sirsa, Haryana before relocating to Jodhpur in December 2012.

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Moreover, the residents at all three camps were primarily from the Bhil and Meghwar tribal communities, two tribes that have historically lived on both sides of the Indo-Pakistan border. Prior to Partition, these tribes frequently travelled between western Rajasthan and southern Punjab and Sindh, in search of cultivated agricultural land.<sup>17</sup>

Regardless of tribal affinity or provincial origin, the Pakistani Hindus we encountered in Jodhpur presented similar

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narratives of persecution and religious intolerance in Pakistan. The following therefore attempts to provide an accurate assessment of the situation for Hindus in Pakistan by highlighting select interviews from a cross-section of refugees.

## REFUGEE ACCOUNTS OF PERSECUTION IN PAKISTAN

In speaking with refugees from all three camps, several common themes emerged regarding the status and treatment of Hindus in Pakistan. Specifically, there were consistent accounts of temple destruction, restrictions on religious freedom, social prejudice, and economic exploitation and abuse by feudal landlords. Furthermore, many refugees discussed the prevalence of discrimination against their children in schools, and the frequent abduction and forced conversion of both Hindu girls (under the age of 16, which is the legal age of marriage) and adult women.

According to Kishanbhai, a former refugee and SLS volunteer, the refugees

he worked with had personally endured a great deal of suffering in Pakistan. He contended that there was “no peace for Hindus in Pakistan” and if someone saw the amount of injustice they faced, “it would bring tears to their eyes.”<sup>18</sup>

As one refugee at the Chopasni camp succinctly summarized, “Muslims and their rule held sway in Pakistan.”<sup>19</sup>

This sentiment was echoed by the vast majority of refugees we spoke with. For instance, Jogdha, an elderly man at the

regardless of their ‘zaat’ (caste). In the end I decided that I am going to India and leaving this country. Nothing else is going to happen here...I felt as if when I left Pakistan I got a new life.”<sup>22</sup>

And Kundan Devi, who fled Pakistan more than fifteen years ago, explained that Hindus faced significant difficulties and were routinely harassed by Muslims in her native village in Punjab province. The day after her niece was abducted, Kundan Devi and her family decided to migrate to India. Kundan Devi’s niece was never heard from again and here whereabouts at the time of this interview were still unknown.<sup>23</sup>

While reports of persecution were generally higher amongst more recent refugees, the stories of oppression and religious subjugation we documented at the three settlements transcended age, gender, region, and date of migration. As a result, the subsequent subsections present an overview of the specific nature of discrimination faced by the Pakistani Hindu migrants we encountered.

### ABDUCTIONS/FORCED CONVERSIONS

The abduction, forced conversion and marriage of young Hindu girls was a particularly common topic of discussion and several refugees shared personal stories of such incidents.

One unidentified resident at the Kali Beri settlement, for example, stated that Maulvis, or Islamic religious leaders, in Rahim Yar Khan aggressively tried to convert Hindus to Islam. The Maulvis reportedly told Hindus that “if they didn’t become Muslims, they should leave for their own country, India” and that there was no place for them in Pakistan, implying that Hindus were not accepted as Pakistani citizens.<sup>24</sup>

Kali Beri settlement who migrated from Rahim Yar Khan in 2001, noted that Hindu farmers faced extensive struggles, while young girls were routinely kidnapped and forcibly converted to Islam. He added that Hindu children were discriminated against by their Muslim teachers and forced to read the Koran in schools.<sup>20</sup>

Similarly, Chammi, a female refugee from Sindh, stated that she would never return to Pakistan: “We wish that our children can go to school and we receive ‘sukh’ and ‘shanti’ [bliss and peace]. We will not go back.”<sup>21</sup>

Chetan Ram, another refugee who left Sindh in September 2012, declared: “We feel so bad and demoralized. We never got justice. How much unhappiness can I share with you? Hindus from all sections including Meghwar, Bhil, Bhaagri have complaints and challenges to discuss

**His wife had been forcibly kidnapped, converted to Islam and married to another Muslim man... His two children, including a six month old daughter, were also taken, although they were eventually returned to him.**

He then revealed that his wife had been forcibly kidnapped, converted to Islam and married to another Muslim man.<sup>25</sup> The lack of a legal mechanism to officially register Hindu marriages in Pakistan has left married Hindu women, such as his wife, vulnerable to abductions and forced marriages.<sup>26</sup> He also reported that he had been threatened by his wife's abductors, while the police refused to help claiming that she had willingly converted and agreed to the marriage. His two children, including a six month old daughter, were also taken, although they were eventually returned to him. Consequently, he migrated to India only with his two children, while his wife remained in the captivity of her abductors. This particular refugee further explained that there were many other Hindu girls and women who had been abducted, forcibly converted, and married against their will in his neighborhood.<sup>27</sup>

Other refugees recounted similar stories, including the following:

- Amar Lal migrated to India in April 2009 from Bahawalpur after his unmarried sister-in-law was kidnapped and the family never saw or heard from her again. He also noted that he knew of four to five additional Hindu girls that had been kidnapped in Bahawalpur.<sup>28</sup>
- Chetan Ram recounted two specific examples from Sindh province: (1) A Hindu girl was kidnapped by the son of a influential political leader on a major highway in the town of Tando Adam. When the girl's family and community members approached the political leader for help, he told them "to get lost" and threatened to have them arrested, and (2) After a Hindu house

maid was forcibly abducted in Badin district, it was publicly announced that she would be converted to Islam and forced to work as an agricultural bonded laborer and "would not be paid even one rupee."<sup>29</sup>

- A female refugee at Kali Beri, Jamna, explained that there were many incidents of Hindu girls being kidnapped in Rahim Yar Khan, but Hindu parents were poor and helpless, and unable to do anything. Beautiful Hindu girls in particular were targeted, harassed, and then abducted, according to Jamna. The abductors would then threaten the girls and their families.<sup>30</sup>
- Govardhan, a refugee who migrated

from Sindh in 2001, mentioned that Hindu girls were unable to leave their homes safely without the fear of being kidnapped, and he detailed many cases that he was personally familiar with. As Govardhan described, after a girl was abducted, she was not allowed to speak to or see her family members and was threatened if she attempted to contact her family. Moreover, government and law enforcement officials consistently failed to render assistance to Hindus in these cases, and in most instances, Hindus were fearful to even register complaints with the police. During a few incidents, Hindus from Govardhan's

community approached local "jagirdars" or feudal Muslim landowners for assistance, but were instead threatened for raising the issue. Jagirdars wield considerable power and influence in rural Pakistan, and are viewed as power brokers, whose authority often supersedes that of local government officials and police.<sup>31</sup>

These refugee accounts were consistent with the findings of several human rights groups, such as the Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), who contend that 20-25 Hindu girls are kidnapped and forcibly converted to Islam every month in Pakistan.<sup>32</sup>

This dangerous trend received considerable media attention last year with the high profile and politically charged case of Rinkel Kumari. Rinkel Kumari, along with two other Hindu girls, Asha Devi and Lata Kumari, were abducted, forcibly converted to Islam, and married against their will with the reported assistance of Mian Mitthoo, Member of Pakistan's National Assembly from Sindh province.

Mitthoo was accused by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) of being in the "business of not only converting and encouraging forceful marriages, but also selling Hindu girls."<sup>33</sup>

Ultimately, neither the girls nor their families received justice in a case that reached the Supreme Court. In most instances, such incidents are rarely adjudicated by the courts or investigated by law enforcement officials.

Furthermore, a recent L.A. Times article depicted the process as follows: "The victim, abducted by a young man related to or working for a feudal boss, is taken

**"The victim, abducted by a young man related to or working for a feudal boss, is taken to a mosque where clerics, along with the prospective groom's family, threaten to harm her and her relatives if she resists. Almost always, the girl complies, and not long afterward, she is brought to a local court, where a judge, usually a Muslim, rubber-stamps the conversion and marriage...Often the young Muslim man is accompanied by backers armed with rifles. Few members of the girl's family are allowed to appear, and the victim, seeing no way out, signs papers affirming her conversion and marriage."**

## Hindu agricultural laborers encountered significant prejudice and inequality, with jagirdars (feudal landlords) in Bahawalpur often withholding their wages or refusing to pay them at all.

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### ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION/ BONDED LABOR

Since many of the migrants we interviewed were landless farmers in Pakistan, they frequently described oppressive working conditions and exploitative Muslim landlords.

As an unidentified refugee at the Kali Beri settlement noted, most Hindus in Pakistan were landless laborers and were at the mercy of powerful Muslim landowners. Consequently, they were voiceless and subject to constant mistreatment and abuse.<sup>35</sup> Amar Lal added that Hindu agricultural laborers encountered significant prejudice and inequality, with jagirdars (feudal landlords) in Bahawalpur often withholding their wages or refusing to pay them at all. According to Lal, this led large numbers of poor Hindu laborers to migrate to India over the years.<sup>36</sup>

This was reiterated by Govardhan, whose father and older brother worked in the fields in Sindh and were exploited by local jagirdars. He stated that Hindu farmers were not fully compensated for their work and that many children were prevented from attending school by their landlords, because they used the children as labor in the fields. In addition, female Hindu laborers were forced to dress like Muslim women and prohibited from wearing their traditional dress,

known as the ghaghra choli.<sup>37</sup>

And according to Parcha Ram, another farmer from Sindh: "There is a lot of deceitfulness there. I am a farmer. When I harvest my crops and sell them to the local distributors, I am given the runaround for payment. I am told that I will receive payment after a few days. And that, too, after delivering a large amount of vegetables. When that time comes the matter is forgotten. We ask for our money to be given to us stating that we have young children. We are told by these people [the distributors] that we will be given the money."<sup>38</sup> He then indicated that they were never paid by the distributors.<sup>38</sup>

Some of their narratives were consistent with features of the bonded labor system, which systematically enslaves an estimated 1.7 million people in Pakistan, the majority of whom are Hindus.<sup>40</sup> The U.S. Department of Labor maintains that the debt bondage system in Pakistan operates by "giving advances of peshgi" (bonded money) to a person. As long as all or part of the peshgi debt remains outstanding, the debtor/worker is bound to the creditor/employer. In case of sickness or death, the family of the individual is responsible for the debt, which often passes down from generation to generation. In the case of children, the peshgi is paid to a parent or guardian, who then provides the child to work off the debt.<sup>41</sup>

According to media reports, many vulnerable Hindu bonded laborers have also been induced into converting to Islam by mosques and Islamic organizations in return for paying off their debts.<sup>42</sup>

### SOCIAL PREJUDICE/ INSTITUTIONAL DISCRIMINATION

Social prejudice, harassment, and discrimination were prominent aspects of life for Hindus in Sindh and the southern

districts of Punjab province, according to the refugees we interviewed. Parcha Ram, for instance, noted that there was an inequitable distribution of government aid in Pakistan, and poor Hindus failed to receive assistance. He specified that: "You have no right to claim any amount of aid. Muslims will receive whatever aid is available. What can we do? We cannot force them to help us."<sup>43</sup>

Furthermore, a number of migrants at the Kali Beri settlement explained that Hindus also experienced extensive discrimination in obtaining employment and were routinely denied job opportunities, regardless of their level of education or qualifications. In particular, Hindus were systematically excluded from government positions and were reportedly told by Muslim civil servants that "if they gave Hindus government jobs, Hindus would make another Hindustan there."<sup>44</sup>

As documented by the Asian Centre for Human Rights (ACHR), non-Muslims are in fact severely underrepresented in civil service jobs in Pakistan, where Hindus make up only .21% of all federal civil service positions.<sup>45</sup>

Moreover, higher socioeconomic status did not prevent Hindus from being subjected to prejudice and unequal treatment. According to one unnamed refugee at Chopasni, Hindu owned lands and properties were frequently illegally occupied by powerful Muslims using force or coercion. Hindu businessmen faced significant challenges as well, and were often forced to obtain support or protection from influential Muslims to conduct their business.<sup>46</sup>

Additionally, those Hindus that were financially successful were frequently attacked and robbed. As Kashi Ram recalled, security was a serious concern for the Hindu community in Rahim Yar Khan, and law enforcement was virtually non-existent or ineffective. Consequently, Hindus were unable to move around freely or safely without fear of being targeted.<sup>47</sup>

Kashi Ram's depiction was reiterated by Jogdha, who also noted that Hindu families with money were especially vulnerable and never received protection



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or assistance from the police. In one example he narrated, a Hindu woman's entire hand was chopped off by her assailants in order to remove a gold bracelet she was wearing. Similarly, in another incident he relayed, a Hindu woman wearing “jhumkas” (decorative dangling earrings) had half her ear ripped off by her Muslim attackers.<sup>48</sup>

Education was another major issue discussed by the refugees at the Chopasni camp, who indicated that

## **Hindus were not only restricted from openly practicing their religion in his neighborhood, but were also attacked for publicly celebrating their festivals.**

the curriculum used in schools in Sindh province was religiously oriented, especially after the fifth grade.<sup>49</sup> In addition, Chetan Ram stated that Hindu children faced significant discrimination and harassment in schools from their teachers and Muslim students, and were bullied and subjected to physical violence.<sup>50</sup>

The refugees at the Kali Beri and Banar Road settlements also reported pervasive prejudice in schools in the southern districts of Punjab province. For instance, Jamna explained that since studying Islam and the Koran were compulsory, many Hindu children in Rahim Yar Khan did not attend school or dropped out altogether.<sup>51</sup> Moreover, Neema Devi and another female refugee at Banar Road noted that they migrated to India in part due to the Islamic education and discrimination their children faced in Pakistani schools.<sup>52</sup>

A recently released report by the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) substantiated much of what these refugees articulated regarding the systematic intolerance and hatred for non-Muslims entrenched in Pakistan's education system.<sup>53</sup>

### **RESTRICTIONS ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM**

Refugees from both southern Punjab and Sindh province described facing widespread restrictions on their religious freedom while living in Pakistan. At the Chopasni camp, for instance, refugees expressed happiness to be free from religious persecution and openly practicing their faith in India. Moreover, several camp leaders indicated that they enjoyed their best Diwali (major Hindu religious festival) to date last November, despite residing in squalid conditions in the camps.<sup>54</sup>

Similarly, a number of refugees at the Kali Beri settlement maintained that Hindus were in fact trying to leave Pakistan in order to preserve their religion. As one migrant noted, “Hindus haven't accepted Islam there, they have been forced to become Muslim by kidnapping young girls or children. Those that have been forcibly converted become Muslim with great sadness.”<sup>55</sup>

Amar Lal told a similar story and specifically mentioned that local Muslim religious leaders caused significant problems for Hindus, while government officials failed to intervene or protect their rights.<sup>56</sup> Kashi Ram added that Hindus were not only restricted from openly practicing their religion in his neighborhood, but were also attacked for publicly celebrating their festivals, especially during the Muslim prayer time.<sup>57</sup>

Refugees at the Banar Road settlement reiterated the accounts at Chopasni and Kali Beri regarding the inability to freely practice their religion in Pakistan. For example, one refugee stated that he left Rahim Yar Khan twenty two years ago because the “Hindu religion was being destroyed there,” and that there were many challenges for the survival of Hinduism in Pakistan.<sup>58</sup>

## FUNERAL RITES AND TEMPLE DESTRUCTION

There were two additional issues that were repeatedly raised by residents of all three camps: (1) the pervasive destruction of Hindu temples, and (2) interference with Hindu funeral rites.

Attacks on temples, in particular, were reported by refugees who left Pakistan at various times, demonstrating the long-standing nature of the problem.

Chetan Ram, who worked as a social worker for sixteen years in Hyderabad district, detailed the recent destruction of at least four temples he was familiar with in Sindh province. These included Ramdev Mandir (temple) in Ali Yaari, Rama Pir Mandir in Tando Allah Yar, Bhole Nath Mandir in Umerkot, and Mataji Mandir in Shadadpur. He also noted that Hindus were often prevented from building temples and shared a personal example of an incident involving his community. Specifically, after purchasing a plot of land in order to build a temple in Khandu, Sindh, the local jagirdar prohibited them from building a temple on the land and refused to return their money.<sup>69</sup>

At the same time, refugees at Banar Road and Kali Beri detailed the demolition of Hindu religious sites in southern Punjab as far back as 1992. Refugees at Banar Road explicitly mentioned that after the

Babri Masjid incident, large numbers of temples were destroyed in Pakistan leading many Hindus to leave for India.<sup>60</sup>

In addition, at Kali Beri, Kashi Ram explained that a temple administered by his uncle was demolished, while many others in the area were either attacked, vandalized, or burned down.<sup>61</sup> Moreover, Jogdha recounted that local Muslims broke into a number of Hindu homes and destroyed shrines and personal altars. He also noted that Hindus in his neighborhood were publicly attacked in the street by Muslim mobs, forcing many to seek safety in rural villages.<sup>62</sup>

Kishanbhai added that many temples were destroyed in his native town in Punjab in 1992 and that Hindus were attacked and “told to become Muslims or be ready to die.” This led many of his extended family members that still lived in Pakistan to apply for a visa and migrate to India.<sup>63</sup>

Kishan Bhai claimed that 1,000 temples were attacked and damaged across Pakistan in the aftermath of the Babri Masjid incident.<sup>64</sup> While it is unclear whether this number is accurate and it is difficult to ascertain the exact number of temples attacked, there have been numerous reports from Hindu community groups, human rights organizations, and the media indicating

**Many of the refugees were living in extremely poor conditions without even enough food to eat, “similar to beggars on the street.”**

that a large number of temples were in fact destroyed during that period.

Beyond the targeting of temples, cremation was a major issue consistently mentioned. Cremation is an essential funeral rite for Hindus and integral to the practice of their religious tradition. Many of the refugees at Chopasni, for instance, noted the difficulties Hindus faced in cremating their dead in Sindh province. Specifically, Chetan Ram stated that Hindus were often unable to cremate their dead due to the unavailability of cremation grounds.<sup>65</sup>

Many crematoriums, along with temples, came under the control of the Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB), a governmental body, at the time of the partition of the subcontinent in 1947. Since then, Hindu community leaders and human rights groups in Pakistan allege that cremations grounds have been routinely sold by the ETPB without consulting Hindus.<sup>66</sup>

Consequently, Chetan Ram explained that Hindus were often forced to bury deceased family members in Muslim cemeteries. Since Hindus were considered “kafirs” (infidels) by their Muslim neighbors, they even faced obstacles and harassment in burying their dead. For example, in one town in Sindh, he explained that Hindus were required to pay a bribe of 2,000 rupees to bury their dead or were prohibited from using the cemetery. And in another incident he relayed, a nine year old Hindu girl’s dead body was exhumed by local Muslims stating that a “kafir” girl was polluting their cemetery. Expressing dismay, Chetan Ram remarked that, “there are so many difficulties that occur ahead of death that it makes life itself so difficult.”<sup>67</sup>

Similar to Chetan Ram’s accounts in Sindh, there have also been several





recent media reports of Hindus in the northwestern Pakistani city of Dera Ismail Khan being forced to bury deceased relatives due to the inability to cremate them.<sup>68</sup>

## CURRENT SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS

The Sphere Project, a collaborative international initiative aimed at improving the quality of humanitarian assistance, listed the following minimum priority interventions required during an emergency refugee relief effort:<sup>69</sup>

- Adequate food rations (both quality and quantity) (>2100 kcal/adult/day)
- Clean and sufficient water (>20 Liters/adult/day)
- Good sanitation (at least 1 latrine/20 persons)
- Appropriate shelter, blankets, clothing
- Immediate immunization of vulnerable groups against measles

These were largely absent at all three settlements we visited, in addition to a lack of other basic infrastructure.<sup>70</sup>

Furthermore, as Mr. Sodha explained, the refugees' needs were significant and also included, food, health care, employment opportunities, education, and legal status.<sup>71</sup>

According to Kishan Bhai, a volunteer in the camps, many of the refugees were living in extremely poor conditions without even enough food to eat, "similar to beggars on the street." He added that the government has not provided the refugees with any assistance and that the settlements lacked electricity, clean water, proper roads, and proper accommodations. In particular, Kishan Bhai noted that the dearth of housing left many refugees exposed to the cold weather, resulting in frequent illnesses.<sup>72</sup>

Similarly, access to education and basic supplies was a major issue for the wider refugee population in western Rajasthan.

Kishan Bhai explained that without citizenship or Below Poverty Line (BPL) cards, the refugees were ineligible for government benefits and state housing programs. At the same time, he noted that even those refugees that had received citizenship were still unable access many of the benefits that other Indian citizens enjoy.<sup>73</sup>

And finally, the lack of consistent employment was a common theme amongst the refugees at all three camps.

Despite the similarities between the settlements, there were also a number of perceptible differences, especially between the relatively permanent Kali Beri settlement and the makeshift Chopasni camp. The following therefore provides an overview of each camp, as well as the general socioeconomic challenges faced by the residents.

### CHOPASNI REFUGEE CAMP

The migrants at the Chopasni camp initially took refuge in a local temple when they first arrived in Jodhpur last September. After two days, they were forced out by local residents and relocated to a private plot of land, where they set up their camp with the assistance of SLS.<sup>74</sup> The land's owner has permitted the refugees to live on a small portion of the land, but it is unclear what will happen to them when the land is developed.<sup>75</sup>

Physically located off the roadside and adjacent to a gutter filled with garbage and debris, the Chopasni camp consisted of little more than a makeshift tent like structure and comprised less than 2,000 square feet in total living space for 204 men, women, and children. The tent roof had large openings, while the ground was only covered by a thin tarp material, providing the residents with insufficient protection from the elements, particularly cold weather and rain. It further lacked any basic infrastructure, including a sanitation or sewage system, toilets, access to clean drinking water, or electricity.<sup>76</sup>

Camp leaders and parents also indicated that education was a significant problem for the children in the camp, who were unable to attend local schools. They did receive

**"Please help us. These are small children and we are poor people...I am not even able to cook for my children. What am I going to give my children if I can't feed them? They will die of hunger...It is a matter of great unhappiness that I cannot care for my children."**

limited instruction in English and Hindi from two Pakistani Hindu refugee teachers in the camp, but did not have adequate space for classes, or sufficient supplies and books.<sup>77</sup>

Beyond support from SLS, the refugees have not received assistance from any other source, including the state government. The only exception was when Rajasthan's Chief Minister visited the camp in September and distributed blankets and sweets.<sup>78</sup>

While the HAF team was there on January 16 and 17, heavy rains in Jodhpur caused considerable damage at the camp and soaked through the residents' belongings, clothes, and the tarps they slept on. Similarly, with their supply of firewood saturated with water, they were unable to build a fire to cook with or keep warm. As their food supply finished, they had nothing to eat and went hungry through the night of January 16 and most of the day on the 17th. Towards the end of January 17, Mr. Sodha provided them with money in order to purchase food.<sup>79</sup>

Young children in particular suffered from the harsh weather conditions, including a newborn baby in the camp, and came down with infections. Some of the mothers explained that they had stayed awake all night holding their children in their arms to keep them dry and warm.<sup>80</sup>

Specifically, one mother noted that they were unable to cook and feed their children, who were "dying of hunger."<sup>81</sup>

## “I feel very sad that to protect our religion we came here...but now we don't belong there and don't belong here either.”

She went on to state: “What can we do? There are so many young children here. We are saddened by coming from Pakistan. They are such young children...I have become ‘dar-badar’ [dismayed, disillusioned, disappointed]...Please help us. These are small children and we are poor people...I am not even able to cook for my children. What am I going to give my children if I can't feed them? They will die of hunger...It is a matter of great unhappiness that I cannot care for my children. We feel so, so much unhappiness about this...Our children are poor. When it rains our children become sick.”<sup>82</sup>

As a consequence of the weather, the camp's residents were forced to temporarily relocate to an alternative location for shelter until the rain subsided.<sup>83</sup>

Overall, the refugees at Chopasni expressed the desire to be self-sufficient and merely live in peace. As Chetan Ram stated, “If we were given the opportunity to work we would want to make our own money so we can feed ourselves... These tents are not a place that is worthy of living...I am fortunate enough to be living in Bharat. There is peace here. I am happy. I can sleep at night.”<sup>84</sup>

### **KALI BERI SETTLEMENT**

Unlike the makeshift Chopasni camp, Kali Beri was a larger and relatively more established settlement. Situated in the hills far from the main city center, Kali Beri was on unused government land and difficult to access by car. Despite its size and permanent nature, however, it still lacked basic infrastructure, such as toilets, electricity, proper roads, sanitation, and a sewage system. Moreover, many of the homes were nothing more than huts or brick dwellings with tent roofs. A few homes did have brick roofs, providing marginally better protection.<sup>85</sup>

The only two exceptions in terms of infrastructure, were a nearby water supply and a small school. Water was

generally accessible, but only due to the proximity of a city water tank and pipeline passing through the settlement. From the pipeline, the refugees were able to create a makeshift faucet in order to obtain water. Without direct access to water in their individual huts, however, many of the refugees had to travel a considerable distance, in some cases up to several kilometers, to acquire water since the settlement was spread out over a number of acres.<sup>86</sup>

In regards to education, the government built a small school in the settlement in 2002 after considerable advocacy by SLS. Although the school was rudimentary and only consisted of a few classrooms for students from the first through the fifth grade, it was considerably better than the level of education available in the Chopasni camp.<sup>87</sup>

Children in the sixth grade and above attended the local government school and were observed wearing school uniforms. At the same time, according to a number of parents we interviewed, the school was difficult to access from the camp and many children returned home without receiving proper instruction.<sup>88</sup> Other than the school, the refugees in the settlement maintained that they did not receive any assistance from the government with their basic needs. Amar Lal, who came with his family in 2009 from Bahawalpur, explained that he did not have enough food to feed his family or a proper home to live in, and had to walk two to three kilometers just to obtain water. He added that after coming to India, he was arrested for travelling outside of Jodhpur for a relative's wedding and imprisoned in the Bikaner Central Jail along with his elderly father for two years.<sup>89</sup>

Additionally, since the refugees were technically squatting on government land, they were subject to being evicted by the government at any time.<sup>90</sup> Kashi Ram believed that if it was not for Hindu Singh

Sodha's advocacy efforts, they would have most likely been forcibly removed from the land where they were living and possibly even deported.<sup>91</sup>

Beyond infrastructure issues, employment was a major concern for the refugees at the Kali Beri settlement. Prior to migrating to India, most of the camp's residents, both male and female, worked as “kethi baris” or agricultural laborers in Pakistan. In Jodhpur, however, there was little cultivated farmland, and the refugees were therefore unable to find consistent work.

Moreover, due to limitations on their visas, they were prohibited from traveling outside the city to pursue employment. Consequently, the male refugees were forced to perform manual labor lifting heavy rocks, which was inconsistent at best. The female refugees, on the other hand, were unable to engage in such physically demanding work, thereby substantially reducing their family's ability to earn money.<sup>92</sup>

According to SLS volunteers, approximately half of the residents in Kali Beri were Indian citizens, although the majority of refugees we spoke with only had provisional visas for Jodhpur. Amongst the refugees we interviewed without citizenship, acquiring some form of permanent legal status that would afford them access to government benefits and the freedom of movement to travel outside of Jodhpur, was the greatest issue of concern. In fact, they believed that obtaining citizenship would help alleviate many of their socioeconomic concerns.<sup>93</sup>

On the other hand, even those refugees possessing citizenship, such as Jamna, reported significant problems despite their legal status, including difficulty finding employment and the absence of basic infrastructure in the settlement.<sup>94</sup>

Overall, there was a general feeling amongst the refugees of not being accepted by the local population and disparagingly being labeled as Pakistanis. Kashi Ram described their predicament as follows: “I feel very sad that to protect our religion we came here...but now we don't belong there and don't belong here either.”<sup>95</sup> At the same time, Kashi Ram



Young Hindu children standing outside their hut in the Kali Beri settlement



Jodhpur city water tank and pipeline running through the Kali Beri settlement

also stated that he was still happier in India and thankful that his parents brought him here when he was a child.<sup>96</sup>

## BANAR ROAD SETTLEMENT

As noted above, the 331 refugees at the Banar Road settlement initially migrated to the state of Haryana in the 1990s prior to moving to Jodhpur in December 2012, in the hopes of obtaining citizenship.<sup>97</sup> The conditions at this settlement were marginally better than those at the Chopasni camp in terms of size and shelter, but otherwise lacked many of the same necessities.<sup>98</sup>

For instance, although the residents here were not all confined to one same small space, they lived in individual huts or dwellings that provided little protection from the cold weather. In addition, there was no electricity, clean water, sanitation

Many refugees we interviewed also described education as a substantial concern and indicated that their children were unable to attend local schools since they had only been in the city for one month.<sup>102</sup>

The lack of citizenship or formal legal status was perceived to be at the root of a number of these aforementioned problems and was the primary motivation for relocating from Haryana.<sup>103</sup> Neema Devi and Kundan Devi, for example, associated their poverty and arduous conditions to their inability to acquire citizenship or at least obtain ration cards.<sup>104</sup>

In explaining their difficulties, one unidentified refugee rhetorically asked, “how do we raise and educate our children in these conditions...how do we work or eat without citizenship?”<sup>105</sup>

instance, since the Chopasni settlement lacked the space to adequately treat the refugees, a provisional clinic was established at a nearby community hall. Moreover, a school was utilized for the Banar Road medical camp due to inclement weather conditions.

The medical team followed a similar process at each camp, enabling them to efficiently attend to a large number of refugees in a short period of time. Specifically, patients were initially screened by an SLS volunteer to determine their precise complaint or problem, then subsequently directed to one of the doctors. Once the physicians completed their examination and diagnosis (with the assistance of the local doctors), they dispensed medical advice, prescribed medications, and in some cases recommended follow-up steps, such as x-rays or surgical procedures at the local government hospital. In most cases, medications were also available on-site after receiving a prescription from one of the doctors.<sup>108</sup>

According to Dr. Gidwani, the most common problems observed across all three camps were psychosomatic in nature, or physical symptoms originating from mental or psychological sources. These musculoskeletal ailments primarily included nonspecific complaints of dizziness, weakness, aches, and generalized pain. And this pattern of psychosomatic and musculoskeletal disorders was present amongst both the male and female residents in the camps.<sup>109</sup>

Psychosomatic conditions are known to be fairly normal amongst refugee populations, who have experienced severe trauma as a consequence of being displaced from their homes due to violence or persecution. In addition, the ongoing mental and emotional stress of living in substandard and uncertain circumstances exacerbates their prior trauma.<sup>110</sup>

The medical team also noted a high incidence of respiratory disease, particularly amongst the adult male inhabitants at the Kali Beri settlement. In Kali Beri, Dr. Gidwani specifically observed a variety of respiratory problems stemming from frequent exposure to

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or sewage systems, access to medical care and medicines, or enough food.<sup>99</sup>

Several of the refugees we interviewed at Banar Road explained that the government had not assisted them with any essential provisions. Moreover, they stated that it was particularly challenging during the winter season without adequate shelter or warm clothes. Similarly, they lacked a sufficient food supply and were unable to purchase additional food.<sup>100</sup>

One of the refugees, Nanak Ram, specifically noted that they were going hungry and had no way to acquire food without assistance from the government or travelling outside the city for employment, which they were prohibited from doing. He added that medicines were expensive and that there was no nearby access to water.<sup>101</sup>

## MEDICAL FINDINGS

Over a period of three days, HAF's team of doctors, with the assistance of SLS volunteers and locally based Pakistani Hindu physicians, provided primary medical care and triaging for more than 400 refugees.<sup>106</sup>

This group of fifteen doctors had migrated to India between four months and fifteen years ago. While they were fully licensed to practice medicine in Pakistan, they were unable to earn medical licenses in India without citizenship or formal refugee status.<sup>107</sup> Consequently, they played a supporting, yet crucial, role to the Foundation's medical team.

In order to effectively serve the refugees, all medical services were delivered directly on-site at the camps or at nearby locations easily accessible for them. For

## Without citizenship, Pakistani Hindus have been precluded from acquiring Below Poverty Line (BPL) cards, or ration cards available to Indian citizens for basic government benefits, including food, free health care, and school admission priority and scholarships.

stone dust and the habitual use of “beedis” (Indian unfiltered cigarettes). The stone dust resulted from quarry mines near the settlement, where many of the refugees performed manual labor lifting or mining large rocks. Without adequate protective equipment, a number of refugees exhibited signs of occupational parenchymal lung disease.<sup>111</sup> Other common issues included hypertension or high blood pressure (HTN), diabetes (DM), and metabolic syndrome,<sup>112</sup> which is defined as a “cluster of conditions — increased blood pressure, a high blood sugar level, excess body fat around the waist or abnormal cholesterol levels — that occur together, increasing your risk of heart disease, stroke and diabetes.”<sup>113</sup>

Similarly, malnutrition and other lifestyle disorders, including obesity, elevated blood pressure, and cardiovascular disease associated with a lack of health awareness were also frequently encountered. And finally, infectious disease and common infections, such as coughs and colds were noted with regular frequency amongst both adults and children. In fact, routine infections were the most prevalent complaints observed with the children in the camps.<sup>114</sup>

Beyond those recurrent conditions noted above, Dr. Shukla documented a wide array other problems as well, ranging from blindness to oral tumors.<sup>115</sup>

Overall, after examining 150 patients at Chopasni, and nearly 300 migrants collectively at the Banar Road and Kali Beri settlements, it appeared that consistent access to medical care and medicines, psychological treatment/therapy, and general health education were the most pressing needs for the refugees going forward.<sup>116</sup>

## LEGAL STATUS

Legal status was by far the most significant, yet complex, issue facing the refugees in Jodhpur. At the camps we visited, we came across a multiplicity of legal situations. For instance, while some of the refugees at the Kali Beri settlement possessed Indian citizenship, most others only had provisional visas to stay within the city limits.<sup>117</sup>

Moreover, all the refugees at Banar Road lacked Indian citizenship, despite living in India for nearly twenty-two years. Instead they had visas to stay in Sirsa, where they originally migrated to, but did not yet have permits to live in Jodhpur.<sup>118</sup> Finally, the residents of the Chopasni camp had visas for Jodhpur, but were prohibited from traveling to other cities, except Haridwar.<sup>119</sup> In contrast to visitor and long-term visas in the U.S., which allow a person to travel freely throughout the country, the refugees were granted visas for a specific city, thereby restricting their freedom of movement in India.

These inconsistent patterns are present amongst the wider Pakistani Hindu population in Rajasthan as well. Although the vast majority of recent migrants lack Indian citizenship, an estimated 13,000 Pakistani Hindus were granted citizenship

by the Rajasthan state government in 2005.<sup>120</sup> According to Hindu Singh Sodha, however, there are still at least 7,000 Pakistani Hindus from the post-1992 period awaiting citizenship. And with more than 1,000 new refugees arriving in the state annually, this number is constantly expanding.<sup>121</sup>

Furthermore, even when refugees have legally resided in India (with a visa for a particular city) for the obligatory seven year period, the government is not compelled to grant them citizenship. In some cases, eligible refugees have been waiting for citizenship for more than ten years. Additionally, some refugees that may otherwise be qualified for citizenship are unable to apply due to prohibitively high fees.<sup>122</sup>

Without citizenship, Pakistani Hindus have been precluded from acquiring Below Poverty Line (BPL) cards, or ration cards available to Indian citizens for basic government benefits, including food, free health care, and school admission priority and scholarships. Similarly, they have been ineligible for state housing programs and government assistance in finding employment.<sup>123</sup>

Hindu Singh Sodha did note that a committee examining the refugee issue in Rajasthan has made a recommendation to the state government to issue BPL cards to the refugees, which has been accepted in principle, but has not yet been implemented. Expediting this process would likely alleviate many of the socio-economic problems facing the refugees we spoke with.<sup>124</sup>

Additionally, those refugees with visas are severely restricted in their freedom of

**“India has not forced any Pakistani Hindus to return to Pakistan under the principle of non-refoulement, which states that no country, “shall expel or return (‘refouler’) a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.”**



## The persecution and discrimination Hindus face in Pakistan is a direct consequence of being a religious minority in an ideologically driven state.

movement and only authorized to stay in Jodhpur. In fact, some of the refugees interviewed recounted stories of being arrested for travelling outside of Jodhpur when visiting a relative in another city.<sup>125</sup>

The process for Pakistani Hindus to migrate to India has also become unduly complicated due to increased requirements and procedures. Since most of those applying for visas to come to India are poor and uneducated, it has proven difficult to comply with all the necessary requirements. This “policy of discouragement” as Mr. Sodha calls it, has also resulted in several divided families, with some members unable to obtain visas to leave Pakistan.<sup>126</sup>

This was substantiated by the residents at the Kali Beri settlement, who indicated that it took them several attempts before finally being granted a visa. Moreover, they claimed that they were mistreated at the

Indian Embassy in Pakistan and frequently “kicked out of the office.”<sup>127</sup>

In addition, none of the Pakistani Hindus with whom we met had been officially recognized as “refugees” by the Indian government or UNHCR. Despite meeting the necessary criteria under the 1951 Geneva Convention and 1976 Protocol, which are the primary international legal instruments on refugees and stateless persons, they have not been accorded refugee status.<sup>128</sup>

And since India is not a signatory to the 1951 Geneva Convention nor the 1976 Protocol, and lacks an internal refugee policy, it can arbitrarily decide when to grant asylum or refugee status.<sup>129</sup> Furthermore, despite UNHCR’s ability to make refugee status determinations and assist refugees within India, it has not done so in the case of Pakistani Hindus.<sup>130</sup>

The sole exception was during the 1971 Indo-Pakistan War, when the Government of India in conjunction with the Rajasthan state government and international organizations, established 24 refugee camps for 55,000 Pakistani Hindus, officially categorized them as refugees, and provided them with a rehabilitation package. The majority of these refugees eventually became Indian citizens, in addition to those Pakistani Hindus that

migrated in 1965. Subsequently, the Indian government has not recognized any Pakistani Hindu migrants as “refugees” consistent with international law.<sup>131</sup>

On the other hand, India has not forced any Pakistani Hindus to return to Pakistan under the principle of non-refoulement, which states that no country, “shall expel or return (‘refouler’) a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.”<sup>132</sup>

While India should be commended for this positive step, the government should expand its level of support and provide direct assistance to these refugees, who after enduring great suffering and persecution are now living on the margins of Indian society.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The displacement and exodus of Hindus from Pakistan is not a recent phenomenon, but rather a long-standing trend that dates back to the partition of the subcontinent in 1947. The multiple waves of migrations to India in the post-partition period, in particular, have been the result of Pakistan’s failure to protect the rights of its minorities.

## India does have a long history and tradition of providing refuge to persecuted peoples from around the world, such as Tibetan Buddhists from China.

According to Hindu Singh Sodha, the persecution and discrimination Hindus face in Pakistan is a direct consequence of being a religious minority in an ideologically driven state. Moreover, since

its inception, the Pakistani state has neglected to create a system with effective mechanisms and autonomous bodies to ensure equal rights for all citizens and provide its minorities with a sense of security.<sup>133</sup> Pakistan has thus failed to live up to its obligations under international conventions and human rights treaties.

With more than 100,000 Pakistani Hindus now living in India and a contingent of new refugees arriving every month, however, it can no longer be considered a purely internal Pakistani matter.<sup>134</sup> Consequently, the Indian government must address the situation in a comprehensive manner.

While acknowledging India's difficult position vis-a-vis accepting large numbers of refugees and any resulting burden on society, India does have a long history and tradition of providing refuge to persecuted peoples from around the world, such as Tibetan Buddhists from China. According to UNHCR statistics, for instance, India has granted asylum and provided direct assistance to nearly 200,000 refugees from a variety of countries in the past.<sup>135</sup> It should therefore implement a coherent and consistent policy and render assistance to Pakistani Hindus on an equitable basis.

Considering the magnitude and complexity of the current situation, there are unfortunately no simple solutions to this multifaceted problem. That being said, the Foundation strongly supports the following recommendations as necessary steps to begin confronting the issue:

1. The United States and the international community should utilize diplomatic pressure and economic leverage to persuade Pakistan to implement additional legal safeguards to protect the rights of its minority citizens, and create an independent body to investigate and address all forms of discrimination and violence against non-Muslims.
2. Furthermore, we support Mr. Sodha's recommendation that the Indian government should diplomatically raise the issue of the treatment of the Hindu minority in Pakistan with their



counterparts in Pakistan, in regional South Asian forums, and with the United Nations.<sup>136</sup>

3. The Government of India should work in conjunction with UNHCR and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to address the basic shelter and survival needs of newly arriving refugees, such as creating transitional housing and providing emergency aid.
4. India should create a process to formally register displaced Pakistani Hindus as refugees consistent with the 1951 Geneva Convention and the 1976 Protocol. However, if the government does not do so, UNHCR should conduct its own independent refugee status determinations (India has allowed UNHCR to do this with Afghan and other refugees in India in the past) and administer direct assistance to them.
5. The approximately 7,000 refugees in Rajasthan (in addition to those in other states) that are legally eligible and have been waiting for at least seven years should be granted Indian citizenship at reduced fees.
6. Alternatively, short of citizenship, the

refugees should be provided with BPL cards, temporary housing, and access to free education and health care. The government can collaborate with NGOs and community-based organizations to create model schools, for instance, to serve refugees from multiple settlements.

7. And finally, restrictions on their freedom of movement should be lifted, enabling them to pursue employment opportunities outside their city of residence in order to become self-sufficient.

First and foremost, it is incumbent upon Pakistan to take immediate measures to curtail the ongoing large-scale exodus of Hindus from their homeland. Its failure to do so will have far reaching consequences for stability in the subcontinent. Given Pakistan's demonstrated unwillingness to sincerely address the plight of its minorities, however, the migration of Hindus will likely continue unabated. As a result, India and the international community must urgently act to assist these vulnerable refugees in order to prevent a humanitarian disaster.



## FOOTNOTES

1. The Foundation conducted a similar fact-finding and medical assessment trip to Bhutanese Hindu refugee camps administered by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Damak, Nepal in early 2012. HAF has since partnered with UNHCR to provide psychological and dental care to the refugees.
  2. Refugee interviews were conducted with the assistance of translators proficient in Sindhi, Marwari, Punjabi, Hindi, and Urdu. The excerpts included below are translated as closely as possible into English.
  3. Based on conversations with Hindu Singh Sodha in Jodhpur, India.
  4. Definition of Refugee, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c125.html>.
  5. "Gross Violation of Human Rights of Minorities in Pakistan: A Study of Migrants Seeking Shelter in India," (November 2012), Centre for Human Rights' Studies and Awareness.
  6. Census of Pakistan," Government of Pakistan, [http://www.statpak.gov.pk/depts/pco/statistics/other\\_tables/pop\\_by\\_religion.pdf](http://www.statpak.gov.pk/depts/pco/statistics/other_tables/pop_by_religion.pdf)
  7. Sodha, Hindu Singh, "The Nowhere People: The Story of the Struggle of Post-1965 Pakistani Refugees in Rajasthan," (2010), Seemant Lok Sangathan; "Gross Violation of Human Rights of Minorities in Pakistan: A Study of Migrants Seeking Shelter in India," (November 2012), Centre for Human Rights' Studies and Awareness; Conversations with Hindu Singh Sodha in Jodhpur, India.
  8. Khan, Tariq Mahbub, "Revitalization of Panam Nagar: Social Displacement and the Minority Issue," The 4th International Conference of the International Forum on Urbanism (IFoU), Amsterdam, 2009, [http://newurbanquestion.ifou.org/proceedings/3%20The%20Urbanized%20Society/poster%20papers/B010\\_Khan\\_Tariq%20Mahbub\\_Revitalization%20of%20Panam%20Nagar.pdf](http://newurbanquestion.ifou.org/proceedings/3%20The%20Urbanized%20Society/poster%20papers/B010_Khan_Tariq%20Mahbub_Revitalization%20of%20Panam%20Nagar.pdf).
  9. Sodha, Hindu Singh, "The Nowhere People: The Story of the Struggle of Post-1965 Pakistani Refugees in Rajasthan," (2010), Seemant Lok Sangathan; "Gross Violation of Human Rights of Minorities in Pakistan: A Study of Migrants Seeking Shelter in India," (November 2012), Centre for Human Rights' Studies and Awareness; Conversations with Hindu Singh Sodha in Jodhpur, India.
  10. Divya, A., "Insecure in Pakistan," March 16, 2009, The Times of India. [http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2009-03-15/special-report/28057682\\_1\\_hindu-families-haryana-and-rajasthan-valid-documents](http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2009-03-15/special-report/28057682_1_hindu-families-haryana-and-rajasthan-valid-documents).
  11. Based on conversations with Hindu Singh Sodha and other SLS volunteers, who work closely with the refugee population. Mr. Sodha indicated that the 1,000 per year statistic is an average and fluctuates.
  12. Based on conversations with Hindu Singh Sodha and Kishan Bhai, an SLS volunteer, in Jodhpur, India.
  13. Punjab was one of those areas divided during Partition in 1947. The western part became Punjab province in Pakistan, while the eastern portion remained in India as Punjab state. Any further mention of Punjab through the remainder of this report refers to Punjab province in Pakistan, unless otherwise indicated.
  14. Smaller numbers of Pakistani Hindus have also migrated from Khyber Pakhtunkwa, Balochistan, and other parts of Punjab province.
  15. Based on information received from Hindu Singh Sodha and SLS volunteers in Jodhpur, India.
  16. Id.
  17. Id.
  18. Interview with Kishan Bhai at Kali Beri Settlement on January 16, 2013.
  19. Interview with unidentified refugee at Chopasni Refugee Camp on January 15, 2013.
  20. Interview with Jogdha at the Kali Beri Settlement on January 16, 2013.
  21. Interview with Chammi during a group interview of three women at Chopasni Refugee Camp on January 17, 2013.
  22. Interview with Chetan Ram at Chopasni Refugee Camp on January 15, 2013.
  23. Interview with Kundan Devi during a group interview of four women at the Banar Road Settlement on January 17, 2013.
  24. Interview with unidentified refugee at Kali Beri settlement on January 16, 2013.
  25. Id.
  26. Khan, Raniya, "Marriage Registration for Minorities," Secular Space, Jinnah Institute, <http://jinnah-institute.org/issues/secular-space>.
  27. Interview with unidentified refugee at Kali Beri settlement on January 16, 2013.
  28. Interview with Amar Lal at Kali Beri settlement on January 16, 2013.
  29. Interview with Chetan Ram at Chopasni on January 15, 2013.
  30. Interview with Jamna at Kali Beri on January 16, 2013.
  31. Interview with Govardhan, a refugee and SLS volunteer, at Chopasni on January 15, 2013.
  32. "Pakistan the Failure of the Judicial System--Another Hindu Girl was Forcibly Converted to Islam and her Whereabouts are Unknown," (March 6, 2012), Asian Human Rights Commission, <http://www.humanrights.asia/news/urgent-appeals/AHRC-UAC-042-2012>
  33. Sirmed, Marvi, "Rinkle Kumari: The Timeline of Injustice," (May 25, 2012), <http://marvisirmed.com/2012/05/25/rinkle-kumari-the-timeline-of-injustice/>; Rajghatta, Chidnanad, "Forced Conversion of Hindus in Pakistan Jolts US out of Slumber," (March 14, 2012), The Times of India, [http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-03-14/us/31164574\\_1\\_hindus-religious-conversion-islamization](http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-03-14/us/31164574_1_hindus-religious-conversion-islamization); "Pakistan the Failure of the Judicial System--Another Hindu Girl was Forcibly Converted to Islam and her Whereabouts are Unknown," (March 6, 2012), Asian Human Rights Commission, <http://www.humanrights.asia/news/urgent-appeals/AHRC-UAC-042-2012>;
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35. Interview with unidentified refugee at Kali Beri settlement on January 16, 2013.
36. Interview with Amar Lal at Kali Beri settlement on January 16, 2013.
37. Interview with Govardhan at Chopasni on January 15, 2013.
38. Interview with Parcha Ram at Chopasni on January 15, 2013.
39. Id.
40. Bakshi, Roopa "Bonded Labour," The--South---Asian.com, November 2002; "Bonded Labour in Pakistan," Report Prepared for UN Economic and Social Council, June 23---July 9, 1999, Anti---Slavery International, <http://www.antislavery.org/archive/submission/submission1999--08Pakistan.htm>; Naveed, Shayan, "Minorities: 'Us and them' - what divides Pakistani identity, June 9, 2011, The Express Tribune, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/184740/minorities-identify-with-pakistan-despite-persecution-report/>
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43. Interview with Parcha Ram at Chopasni on January 15, 2013.
44. Group Interview with adult male refugees at Kali Beri on January 16, 2013.
45. "Pakistan: The Land of Religious Apartheid and Jackboot Justice," A Report to the UN Committee Against Racial Discrimination, August 2007, Asian Centre for Human Rights, <http://www.achrweb.org/reports/cerd/Pakistan--CERD2007.pdf>.
46. Interview with unnamed adult male refugee at Chopasni on January 15, 2013.
47. Interview with Kashi Ram at Kali Beri on January 16, 2013.
48. Interview with Jogdha at Kali Beri on January 16, 2013.
49. Based on informal discussions with several camp leaders at Chopasni on January 15, 2013.
50. Interview with Chetan Ram at Chopasni on January 15, 2013.
51. Interview with Jamna at Kali Beri on January 16, 2013.
52. Group interview with adult female refugees at Banar Road on January 17, 2013.
53. "Connecting the Dots: Education and Religious Discrimination in Pakistan, A Study of Public Schools and Madrassas," (November 2011), USCIRF, [http://www.uscirf.gov/images/Pakistan-ConnectingTheDots-Email\(3\).pdf](http://www.uscirf.gov/images/Pakistan-ConnectingTheDots-Email(3).pdf).
54. Based on informal discussions with refugees and camp leaders at Chopasni on January 15, 2013.
55. Group interview with adult male refugees at Kali Beri on January 16, 2013.
56. Interview with Amar Lal at Kali Beri on January 16, 2013.
57. Interview with Kashi Ram at Kali Beri on January 16, 2013.
58. Group interview of adult male refugees at Banar Road on January 17, 2013
59. Interview with Chetan Ram at Chopasni on January 15, 2013.
60. Based on informal discussions with refugees at Banar Road on January 17, 2013.
61. Interview with Kashi Ram on January 16, 2013.
62. Interview with Jogdha on January 16, 2013.
63. Interview with Kishan Bhai at Kali Beri on January 16, 2013.
64. Id.
65. Interview with Chetan Ram at Chopasni on January 15, 2013.
66. Life at Risk: Report of HRCF Working Group on Communities Vulnerable Because of Their Beliefs, Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, <http://www.hrcf-web.org/pdf/Life%20at%20risk.pdf>; Ali, Tahir, "Pak's Hindu Temples Turned into Picnic Spots, Hotels," February 24, 2011, Rediff India Abroad, <http://www.rediff.com/news/slide---show/slide---show---1---paks---hindu---temples---turned---into---picnic---spots---hotels/20110224.htm>
67. Interview with Chetan Ram at Chopasni on January 15, 2013.
68. "Cremation Banned? Hindus in Pakistan's Dik Forced to Bury Their Dead Ever Since Country's Birth," (November 29, 2012), The Indian Express, <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/cremation-banned--hindus-in-pakistans-dik-forced-to-bury-their-dead-ever-since-countrys-birth/1038031>.
69. The Sphere Project, <http://www.sphereproject.org/about/>; Burkle, Frederick M., MD, MPH, FAAP, FACEP and Lis, Julian G., MD, MPH "Refugee Health Care," [http://mediccom.org/public/tadmat/training/NDMS/Refugee\\_Article.pdf](http://mediccom.org/public/tadmat/training/NDMS/Refugee_Article.pdf).
70. Based on first-hand observations at the camps and conversations with Hindu Singh Sodha and SLS volunteers.
71. Based on conversations with Hindu Singh Sodha.
72. Interview with Kishan Bhai at Kali Beri on January 16, 2013.
73. Id.
74. Based on conversations with SLS volunteers.
75. A building was being constructed on the land when we visited the camp according to SLS volunteers.
76. Based on first-hand observations at Chopasni camp on January 15 and 17, 2013, and conversations with SLS volunteers.
77. Interview with Chetan Ram at Chopasni and conversations with camp leaders on January 15, 2013.
78. Interview with Chetan Ram at Chopasni on January 15, 2013 and conversations with SLS volunteers.
79. Based on first-hand observations at Chopasni camp on January 17, 2013 and conversations with refugees and SLS volunteers.
80. Group Interview with adult female refugees at Chopasni Camp on January 17, 2013.
81. Id.
82. Id.
83. Hindu Singh Sodha found temporary shelter for the refugees.
84. Interview with Chetan Ram at Chopasni on January 17, 2013.

85. Based on first-hand observations at Kali Beri on January 16, 2013, and conversations with Hindu Singh Sodha and Kishan Bhai.
86. Based on first-hand observations at Kali Beri on January 16, 2013.
87. Based on first-hand observations at Kali Beri on January 16, 2013, and conversations with Hindu Singh Sodha and Kishan Bhai.
88. Interviews with several refugees at Kali Beri on January 16, 2013.
89. Interview with Amar Lal at Kali Beri on January 16, 2013.
90. Interview with Kishan Bhai at Kali Beri on January 16, 2013.
91. Interview with Kasi Ram at Kali Beri on January 16, 2013.
92. Based on interviews of several refugees and conversations with SLS volunteers at Kali Beri on January 16, 2013.
93. Id.
94. Interview with Jamna at Kali Beri on January 16, 2013.
95. Interview with Kashi Ram at Kali Beri on January 16, 2013.
96. Id.
97. Based on conversations with SLS volunteers.
98. Based on first-hand observations at Banar Road on January 17, 2013.
99. Id; Conversations with SLS volunteers at Banar Road on January 17, 2013.
100. Based on several interviews with both male and female refugees at Banar Road on January 17, 2013.
101. Interview with Nanak Ram at Banar Road on January 17, 2013.
102. Based on interviews with several refugees at Banar Road on January 17, 2013.
103. According to SLS volunteers, the Rajasthan state administration was relatively more lenient in granting citizenship to Pakistani Hindus in comparison to other state in the country.
104. Group interview with adult female refugees at Banar Road on January 17, 2013.
105. Interview with unidentified refugee at Banar Road on January 17, 2013.
106. Estimated number of patients seen by HAF's medical team.
107. Based on conversations between HAF's medical team and the locally-based Pakistani Hindu doctors on January 15, 2013.
108. Based on first-hand observations at all three camps and conversations with HAF's medical team and SLS volunteers.
109. According to summary notes provided by Dr. Gidwani following the medical clinics.
110. Burkle, Frederick M., MD, MPH, FAAP, FACEP and Lis, Julian G., MD, MPH "Refugee Health Care," [http://mediccom.org/public/tadmat/training/NDMS/Refugee\\_Article.pdf](http://mediccom.org/public/tadmat/training/NDMS/Refugee_Article.pdf).
111. Based on post-clinic summary notes provided by Dr. Gidwani.
112. Based on post-clinic summary notes provided by Dr. Gidwani and Dr. Chandrakantan.
113. Metabolic Syndrome Definition, Mayo Clinic, <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/metabolic%20syndrome/DS00522>.
114. Based on post-clinic summary notes provided by Dr. Gidwani, Dr. Chandrakantan, and Dr. Shukla.
115. According to notes provided by Dr. Shukla.
116. Id.
117. Based on conversations with Hindu Singh Sodha and Kishan Bhai, and interviews with several refugees at Kali Beri on January 16, 2013.
118. According to Hindu Singh Sodha, the required documents had been filed on the refugees behalf and they were only waiting on formal permission from the government to legally reside in Jodhpur.
119. The refugees at Chopasni migrated to India on religious pilgrimage visas allowing them to also stay in the city of Haridwar, a Hindu pilgrimage site.
120. During this period, the central government delegated the power to grant citizenship to the states after considerably advocacy by SLS on the refugees behalf, according to Sodha.
121. Based on conversations with Sodha and SLS volunteers.
122. Id.
123. Id.
124. Id.
125. Based on interviews with several refugees at all three camps.
126. Based on conversations with Sodha.
127. Based on interviews with several refugees at Kali Beri on January 16, 2013.
128. Based on conversations with Sodha.
129. Id; 2013 UNHCR Regional Operations Profile, UNHCR, <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e4876d6.html#>.
130. Id.
131. Sodha, Hindu Singh, "The Nowhere People: The Story of the Struggle of Post-1965 Pakistani Refugees in Rajasthan," (2010), Seemant Lok Sangathan; Conversations with Sodha.
132. 2013 UNHCR Regional Operations Profile, UNHCR, <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e4876d6.html#>; UNHCR Note on the Principle of Refoulment, (November 1997), UNHCR, <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/refworld/rwmain?docid=438c6d972>
133. Based on conversations with Sodha.
134. Id.
135. 2013 UNHCR Regional Operations Profile, UNHCR, <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e4876d6.html#>.
136. Based on conversations with Sodha.



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