

# **SENATE OF PAKISTAN**



**REPORT NO. 01 OF 2020**

## **PRELIMINARY REPORT OF THE SENATE PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE TO PROTECT MINORITIES FROM FORCED CONVERSIONS**

**PRESENTED BY:**

**SENATOR ANWAAR UL HAQ KAKAR**  
**CHAIRMAN (PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE)**

## **SENATE SECRETARIAT**

**Subject: PRELIMINARY REPORT OF THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE TO PROTECT MINORITIES FROM FORCED CONVERSIONS.**

I, Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee to Protect Minorities from Forced Conversions have the honour to present Preliminary report of the committee. The Parliamentary Committee to Protect Minorities from Forced Conversions was constituted on 21<sup>st</sup> November, 2019 vide Senate Secretariat's Notification No.F.1(2)/2018-2021/C-II. The Parliamentary Committee has elected Senator Anwaar ul Haq Kakar as its Chairman in its first meeting which was held on 28<sup>th</sup> November, 2019 and it was notified through Senate Secretariat's Notification No. 1 (2)/2018-2021/C-II.

2. The composition of the Committee was as under on 21<sup>st</sup> November, 2019:-

1. Senator Dr. Sikandar Mandhro
2. Senator Dr. Ashok Kumar
3. Senator Rana Maqbool Ahmed
4. Senator Nauman Wazir Khattak
5. Senator Sajjad Hussain Turi
6. Senator Muhammad Ali Khan Saif
7. Senator Anwaar ul Haq Kakar
8. Mr. Noor ul Haq Qadri, MNA  
*Federal Minister for Religious and Inter- Faith Harmony*
9. Dr. Shireen M. Mazari, MNA  
*Federal Minister for Human Rights*
10. Mr. Ali Muhammad Khan, MNA  
*Minister for Parliamentary Affairs*
11. Malik Muhammad Amir Dogar, MNA
12. Ms. Shunila Ruth, MNA
13. Mr. Jai Parkash, MNA
14. Mr. Lal Chand, MNA



15. Mr. Muhammad Aslam Bhootani, MNA
16. Rana Tanveer Hussain, MNA
17. Dr. Darshan, MNA
18. Mr. Keshoo Mal Kheeral Das, MNA
19. Ms. Shagufta Juman, MNA
20. Mr. Ramesha Lal, MNA
21. Mr. Naveed Aamir Jeeva, MNA
22. Mr. Abdul Wasay, MNA

3. The Committee went further through its re-composition in which Mr. Ramesh Kumar Vankwani, MNA, was included in place of Ms. Shunila Ruth, MNA. It was decided again to replace Malik Muhammad Aamir Dogar, MNA with Ms. Shunila Ruth, MNA in the Committee. Thus the final composition of the Committee become as under:-

- |     |                                                                                                      |                 |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1.  | <b>Senator Anwaar ul Haq Kakar</b>                                                                   | <b>Chairman</b> |
| 2.  | <b>Senator Dr. Sikandar Mandhro</b>                                                                  | <b>Member</b>   |
| 3.  | <b>Senator Dr. Ashok Kumar</b>                                                                       | <b>Member</b>   |
| 4.  | <b>Senator Rana Maqbool Ahmad</b>                                                                    | <b>Member</b>   |
| 5.  | <b>Senator Nauman Wazir Khattak</b>                                                                  | <b>Member</b>   |
| 6.  | <b>Senator Sajjad Hussain Turi</b>                                                                   | <b>Member</b>   |
| 7.  | <b>Senator Muhammad Ali Khan Saif</b>                                                                | <b>Member</b>   |
| 8.  | <b>Mr. Noor-ul-Haq Qadri, MNA</b><br><i>Federal Minister for Religious &amp; Inter-Faith Harmony</i> | <b>Member</b>   |
| 9.  | <b>Dr. Shireen M. Mazari, MNA</b><br><i>Federal Minister for Human Rights</i>                        | <b>Member</b>   |
| 10. | <b>Mr. Ali Muhammad Khan</b><br><i>Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs</i>                   | <b>Member</b>   |
| 11. | <b>Ms. Shunila Ruth, MNA</b>                                                                         | <b>Member</b>   |
| 12. | <b>Mr. Jai Parkash, MNA</b>                                                                          | <b>Member</b>   |
| 13. | <b>Mr. Lal Chand, MNA</b>                                                                            | <b>Member</b>   |
| 14. | <b>Mr. Mohammad Aslam Bhootani, MNA</b>                                                              | <b>Member</b>   |
| 15. | <b>Rana Tanveer Hussain, MNA</b>                                                                     | <b>Member</b>   |

16.	<b>Dr. Darshan, MNA</b>	<b>Member</b>
17.	<b>Mr. Keshoo Mal Kheal Das, MNA</b>	<b>Member</b>
18.	<b>Ms. Shagufta Jumani, MNA</b>	<b>Member</b>
19.	<b>Mr. Ramesh Lal, MNA</b>	<b>Member</b>
20.	<b>Mr. Naveed Aamir Jeeva, MNA</b>	<b>Member</b>
21.	<b>Mr. Abdul Wasay, MNA</b>	<b>Member</b>
22.	<b>Dr. Ramesh Kumar Vankwani, MNA</b>	<b>Member</b>

4. The Committee held 4 very well attended meetings. The first meeting was held on 28<sup>th</sup> November, 2019 to elect its Chairperson under rule. Besides, those very well attended meetings two unofficial meetings were held with representatives from the Church of England and Advisor on Religious Minorities to the State Department of US, the Committee acquired valuable experience and guidelines to draft procedure and Terms of Reference (ToRs). It provided the opportunity to the Committee to assess what the major powers around the world observed and devised policies in terms of minorities and religious freedom. The Committee apprised the representatives that in Pakistan, religion, constitution, laws and society did not provide for any exercise of converting non-Muslims to the state religion. The Committee was ensured by representatives of both bodies for research, cooperation and guidelines. It added to the richness of experience which assisted the Committee later to discuss and frame line of action. The Committee also decided to collect data of forced conversions across Pakistan and later, the decision was communicated to the highest authorities in the provinces. Since the cases were rife and proliferating in province of Sindh, the Committee also developed consensus to visit that at the earliest.

5. The second meeting was held on 17<sup>th</sup> January, 2020. The agenda of the Committee was as under:-

- i. **Consideration and approval of the ToRs.**
- ii. **Any other item with permission of the Chair.**
  - Following members of the Committee attended the meeting.
    - i. Senator Sajjad Hussain Turi
    - ii. Senator Sikandar Mandhro
    - iii. Senator Nauman Wazir Khattak

Member  
Member  
Member

iv.	Mr. Noor ul Haq Qadri, MNA	Member
v.	Mr. Jai Parkash, MNA	Member
vi.	Mr. Lal Chand, MNA	Member
vii.	Dr. Darshan, MNA	Member
viii.	Mr. Keshoo Mal Kheeral Das, MNA	Member
ix.	Ms. Shagufta Jummani, MNA	Member
x.	Mr. Ramesh Lal, MNA	Member
xi.	Mr. Naveed Aamir Jeeva, MNA	Member
xii.	Dr. Ramesh Kumar Vankwani, MNA	Member

6. The Chairman of the Committee Senator Anwaar ul Haq Kakar presented draft Terms of References (ToRs) before the Committee and invited all members to deliberate and suggest amendments / improvements in the draft in any. The Committee after the detailed discussions approved and adopted the ToRs mentioned below:-

- i. To review information, incidents, statistics, and laws to improve and enhance the protection of minorities.
- ii. The Committee will undertake visits to different provinces and hold meetings with provincial, district, civil administrations, and police officials so as to create an integrated system of detection, reporting, vigilance and response concerning forced conversion cases.
- iii. To collaborate and meet with human rights organizations around the world to establish best practices in light of case studies and research in order to provide equal rights to minorities.
- iv. The Committee will hold open public hearings and invite representatives of minorities groups, media and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) so as to firm up concrete recommendations for strengthening legal and policy framework to stop forced conversions.
- v. The Committee will undertake visits to foreign countries and government officials, parliamentary leaders, Chairpersons of relevant Parliamentary Committees; and study local laws, policy, and legislations, so as to incorporate practices and tailor-made interventions in improving Parliamentary oversight and response mechanism, procedures and modus operandi in dealing with such practices.

7. It was also agreed by the Committee that the copy of the Bill in relation to the forced conversions as introduced by Senator Sikandar Ali Mandhro in the Sindh Assembly at the time when he was Provincial Minister for Law may be obtained and put up before the Committee in the next meeting for consideration and taking guidance, which will help this Committee in formulation of meaningful report. The Chairman of the Committee asked the Secretary Committee to officially obtain the copy of the said legislation from Provincial Government of Sindh.

8. On the request of Director General, Ministry of Human Rights, the Committee also unanimously decided to include the international commitments pertaining to religious freedom ratified by the Pakistan in the ToRs of the Committee. Further, the Committee decided to work in collaboration with all concerned stakeholders and propose an effective legislation to address the issue of forced conversions.

9. At this stage due COVID-19 further meetings of the Committee were postponed.

10. On the directions of Chairman Committee the Secretary Committee communicated with Chief Secretaries of all the provinces including Chief Secretary of Gilgit Baltistan and AJ&K along with Chief Commissioner of Islamabad to share data of any forced conversion case in their respective jurisdictions.

10. The third meeting of the Committee was held on 24<sup>th</sup> July, 2020. The agenda of the Committee was as under:-

- i. **Consideration and approval / adoption of Rules of Procedures for the Parliamentary Committee to Protect Minorities from Forced Conversions, 2019.**
- ii. **To discuss the subject matter of the Committee and share views in detail to enable the Committee to move forward.**
- iii. **Non-sharing of reported cases of Forced Conversions by the Provincial Administrations with the Committee.**
- iv. **Any other item with permission of the Chair.**

• Following members attended the meeting:-

- |                               |        |
|-------------------------------|--------|
| 1. Senator Dr. Ashok Kumar    | Member |
| 2. Senator Rana Maqbool Ahmed | Member |



3.	Mr. Noor ul Haq Qadri, MNA	Member
4.	Mr. Ali Muhammad Khan, MNA	Member
5.	Mr. Keshoo Mal Khael Das, MNA	Member
6.	Mr. Abdul Wasay, MNA	Member
7.	Mr. Jai Parkash, MNA	Member
8.	Mr. Lal Chand, MNA	Member

11. It was held with due deliberations among the members. The Committee upheld the opinion that marriage, under-age girls and forced conversions were inter-related. Parliamentarians and Ministers with valuable knowledge and key portfolios attended the meeting. Perspective of Government was presented before the Committee which pointed towards freedom of religion. Among the Parliamentarians were religious scholars like Maulana Abdul Wasay who imparted the teachings of Islam which did not depict anywhere the conversion of religion by any means. The Committee discussed the mandate and ToRs. On the one hand, some of the members favored the institutional and administrative approach to tackle problem of forced conversions. On the other hand, rest of the members particularly from the minority representatives, that legislative approach was the sole solution to that burning issue. However, the meeting was concluded on the unanimous decision that notable Islamic scholars and Government advisory bodies be called to enrich the Committee on meaning, definition and concept of conversion.

12. When the meeting was being held the Secretary Committee informed the members that he had not received any reply from the concerned quarters. Later on the directions of the Chairman the Secretary Committee had sent reminders. Following the reminders replies were received from the AJ&K government vide letter No. **Home/P-II/2 (33)/1124-85/2020** dated 22<sup>nd</sup> August, 2020, which stated that there was no case of Forced Conversion in AJ&K. The Committee also received a reply from the Government of Gilgit-Baltistan vide letter No. **SO (Admin) 10-(1)/2020/1582** dated 24<sup>th</sup> August, 2020, which also stated that there was no case of Forced Conversion in Gilgit-Baltistan.

13. On the issue of alleged kidnapping and then forced conversion of a 14 year old girl namely Maria Shahbaz in Faisalabad the Punjab Government had sent a letter through Central Police Office Punjab vide Letter No. 1635/ AIG/R&D dated 2<sup>nd</sup> September, 2020, which stated that according to the statement of Maria Shahbaz she had got married with Muhammad





Naqqash on 25-10-2019 and she accepted Islam on 29-04-2020 in a Madrasah namely (Jamia Mazahar ul Islam Faisalabad Sahabzada Muhammad Hamid Raza Superintendent of Markazi Darul Alum Jamia Rizvia Faisalabad) without any forced conversion. She was living with her husband without any pressure.

**i. Recommendations of the Committee.**

1. The Committee recommended that frequent meetings must be held and in each month, two meeting be arranged.
2. The Committee recommended that in the next meeting, experts of Council of Islamic Ideology be called to express their expert opinion on legislation with regard to prevention of forced conversion in the light of the Islamic Injections and principles.

14. The fourth meeting of the Committee was held on 24<sup>th</sup> August, 2020. The agenda of the Committee was as under:-

- i. **Briefing by the Chairman, Council of Islamic Ideology on enhancing legislation with regard to prevention of forced conversion in the light of the Islamic injections and principles.**
- ii. **Any other item with permission of the Chair.**

- Following members of the Committee attended the meeting.

1. Senator Dr. Sikandar Mandhro	Member
2. Senator Rana Maqbool Ahmad	Member
3. Senator Nauman Wazir Khattak	Member
4. Senator Sajjad Hussain Turi	Member
5. Dr. Shireen M. Mazari, MNA	Member
6. Mr. Ali Muhammad Khan , MNA	Member
7. Ms. Shunila Ruth, MNA	Member
8. Mr. Jai Parkash, MNA	Member
9. Mr. Lal Chand, MNA	Member
10. Dr. Darshan, MNA	Member
11. Mr. Kesoo Mal Kheal Das, MNA	Member
12. Mr. Ramesh Lal, MNA	Member
13. Mr. Naveed Aamir Jeeva, MNA	Member





14. Dr. Ramesh Kumar Vankwani, MNA

Member

15. The government advisory body, Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) reported to the Committee. The Chairman of Council briefed the Committee on the position of Government again and stated in clear terms that no legal, religious or administrative agency in Pakistan favored the concept of forced conversions. The Minister for Human Rights requested the Committee to take into account its reports which had notable judgment of honorable Islamabad High Court on matter of forced conversions. She also told the Committee to widen its pre-planned areas of visits across the country. The Committee directed the Chairman of CII to acquire the opinions of prominent and moderate Islamic scholars of all the sects on the said subject. Besides, it was decided also that non-Muslim religious representative bodies be called to the Committee also. Since the province of Sindh was main concentration of such incidents, it was demanded again by the members to visit there.

**Recommendations of the Committee**

1. The Committee recommended that in the first week of September, 2020, meeting be held in province of Sindh.
2. The Committee recommended that the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) after consulting renowned Islamic jurists in Pakistan on Forced Conversions, submit their proposals and opinions to the Committee.
3. The Committee recommended that a sub-Committee be constituted so that intensive deliberations on the topic were carried.

16. The fifth meeting of the Committee was held on 14<sup>th</sup> September, 2020. The agenda of the Committee was as under:-

- (i). **Briefing by the Chief Commissioner and Inspector General of Police, Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) on reported cases of Forced Conversions of Minorities in Capital Territory.**
- (ii). **Briefing by Ministry of Human Rights on reported cases of Forced Conversions of Minorities in Capital Territory.**
- (iii). **Any other item with permission of the Chair.**



• Following members of the Committee attended the meeting:

1. Senator Dr. Sikandar Mandhro	Member
2. Senator Rana Maqbool Ahmad	Member
3. Mr. Ali Muhammad Khan , MNA	Member
4. Ms. Shunila Ruth, MNA	Member
5. Mr. Jai Parkash, MNA	Member
6. Mr. Lal Chand, MNA	Member
7. Dr. Darshan, MNA	Member
8. Mr. Kesoo Mal Kheal Das, MNA	Member
9. Mr. Ramesh Lal, MNA	Member
10. Mr. Naveed Aamir Jeeva, MNA	Member
11. Dr. Ramesh Kumar Vankwani, MNA	Member
12. Mr. Muhammad Aslam Bhootani, MNA	Member

17. In its previous meetings, the Committee had decided to adopt administrative/institutional approach to the problem. Collection of data was deemed the cardinal part of proposing legislation as cases with different colorings would provide all the factors and reasons attached to forced conversions. In the first step, the Committee asked the authorities in Islamabad to share information. Officials representing the administration of Islamabad briefed the Committee that since January, 2018 till August, 2020, only a single case was registered on that behalf. The problem was solved amicably because the girl had showed her consent to the marriage and conversion to Islam. Secretary Ministry of Human Rights apprised the Committee that Articles 20 and 36 of the Constitution were clear in matters of freedom of religion and protection of minorities. She said that Parliamentary Committee with the assistance of Ministry of Human Rights, had drafted Bills in 2015 and 2016, but could not get them passed. Minority representatives from province of Sindh showed their frustration. They held the opinion that since the Committee was delaying the visit to Sindh, the cases were increasing and they were left helpless. The Committee decided to call Inspector General of Police Sindh in its next meeting and the Chairman Committee ensured the members that he would try to get the approval to visit Sindh.



**Recommendations of the Committee**

- i. The Committee recommended that Inspector General of Police, Sindh, brief the Committee in the next meeting.
- ii. The Committee recommended that S.P. Ghotki brief the Committee in the next meeting.

 29/09/2020

( Faheem Ahmed )  
Secretary Committee

  
(Senator Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar)  
Chairman Committee