



# **SHIA GENOCIDE IN PAKISTAN**

## **THE PLIGHT OF 40 MILLION SHIA OF PAKISTAN**

The 40 million Shia of Pakistan are the second largest religious group after the Sunni Muslims but have been persecuted as target of endless violence resulting in several thousand deaths. The genocide of Shia continues unabated while the state institutions have completely failed to protect them or provide justice while the killers roam free. This report briefly discusses the state of Shia community of Pakistan and genocide that they are facing for their faith.

# SHIA GENOCIDE IN PAKISTAN

## THE PLIGHT OF 40 MILLION SHIA OF PAKISTAN

Shia Muslims make up nearly 20% of Pakistan's 200 million population i.e. 40 million and are spread across the country with the northern Gilgit Baltistan region and Kurram Agency on Afghanistan border being the only Shia majority regions.

The ideology of Takfir using which Shia are declared infidels and worthy of being killed, several thousand Shia have been killed, injured or disabled for life by anti-Shia militants. The worrying fact is that these militants run organized intimidation campaigns against the Shia and create resentment for them in the society to gather support and sympathy for their cause of exterminating the Shia. The state has turned a blind eye to the organizations and militants killing the Shia and they operate freely, their leaders enjoying public space. One notorious anti-Shia organization Ahl-e-Sunnat-Wal-Jamaat (ASWJ) has changed its name at least five times but has continued its task of killing the Shia. Its sister organization Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) regularly claims responsibility of attacks on the Shia. Both of these are known to have links with the Taliban and Al-Qaeda.

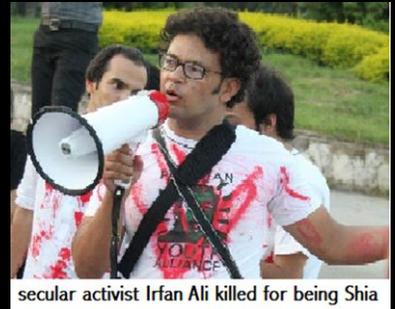
According to independent estimates, nearly 12,000 Shia have been killed in Pakistan as a result of direct attacks on them for their faith. Another 9000 – 10,000 Shia have been killed as part of the terrorism which have engulfed the country. An Amnesty International report from 2002 states that only in the city of Karachi between the 1992 – 2002, seventy Shia doctors were killed. In total, nearly 200 Shia doctors have been killed while other professionals killed include lawyers, academics, educationists, sportsmen, entrepreneurs and poets to mention. Shia processions or Imambargahs (worship places) are attacked regularly every year across the country in the Muslim month of Muharram; and more than a hundred such incidents have been recorded. Other than killings en masse, they are also victim of targeted killings across the country where individuals are shot dead just because of their Shia faith.

On paper, the anti-Shia militant organizations are banned but they operate freely and publicly take responsibility of killing the Shia after every attack. Their leaders are on record having said that they will “*make it so tough for Shia in Pakistan that they (Shia) will say where do I go now...*” and that is precisely what has happened. It appears as if all state institutions in Pakistan including the security agencies and Judiciary are working in partnership to exterminate Shia from Pakistan.

The Shia community has remained peaceful and there is no history of even a single incident of indiscriminate violence by Shia on anyone. Even retaliation or reprisal attacks have been nonexistent for several years but violence has not stopped. It is high time that the community be protected before it is too late.



a young Shia boy at his dead father's grave



secular activist Irfan Ali killed for being Shia



she protests saying "Kill me, I'm Shia"



Shia prepare for mass burial, again...



Shia schoolgirl Mehzar shot with father

## **HOW MANY SHIA IN PAKISTAN?**

According to reliable estimates from CIA World Fact Book and Middle East Institute, Shia makes up 20% of Pakistan's population which is close to 200 million. The 40 million Shia, thus make up the second largest religious group in the country. This is world's second largest Shia population, second only to Iran. Shia in Pakistan are geographically spread across the country. The highest concentration is found in the Gilgit Baltistan province in northern Pakistan where they form the majority of population. Kurram Agency (with Parachinar as capital) is particularly a Shia stronghold in the tribal belt. Similarly, all urban capitals Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar and Quetta have a sizable Shia population. Saraiki belt (stretching from Southern Punjab to North Western Punjab) in particular hosts strong Shia population – cities of Dera Ismail Khan (Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa), Bhakkar, Layyah, Jhang and Multan deserve a specific mention. Hyderabad and Larkana region in Sindh also have large Shia population.

## **WHY ARE SHIA KILLED IN PAKISTAN?**

The ideology of Takfir i.e. declaring Shia as apostates or infidels and worthy of being killed is the 'religious' reason behind their faith-based killing. However, it is the state patronage to anti-Shia militants and complete failure of state institutions to protect the Shia which is primary reason of violence against the Shia. The state of Pakistan has adopted a particular rigid brand of Islam which is High-Church in tradition and so helps the 'ideological' state in law making and legislation. The doctrine of strategic depth which the country's military holds dear for increased and permanent role in affairs Afghanistan also is key to understand persecution of Shia. The Jihadis (militants) produced by the madressahs which the military funded are inherently anti-Shia and in their free time, when they are not busy in Afghanistan or elsewhere, routinely kill the Shia across Pakistan. For the country's security establishment, the violence against the Shia is a collateral damage in-house, a price they have to pay for the strategic depth they want. Some organizations, however, were formed with the sole reason to intimidate, threaten and kill the Shia – Sipah Sahaba Pakistan (now Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat or ASWJ) is one of them while its breakaway faction Lashkar-e-Jhangvi or LeJ the other. They operate in coordination with Taliban, Jandullah and Al-Qaeda and are responsible for killing several thousand Shia across Pakistan.

## **WHO KILLS THE SHIA?**

Sipah Sahaba was formed in 1985 and a study of its official website, pamphlets and flyers it has released, its manifesto can be summed up as: declare Pakistan a Sunni state, legislation for death penalty for blasphemy, restrict Shia processions indoors, implement Islamic (Sunni) caliphate system in Pakistan, declare Shia non-Muslims in Pakistan and more. After their creation and throughout the 90s, they notoriously target killed several thousand Shia across the country. Lashkar-e-Jhangvi was formed in 1995 as a breakaway faction of Sipah Sahaba but both of them have been working in coordination with the sole mission to exterminate the Shia from Pakistan.

Sipah Sahaba also has known working links with militant organization Jaish-e-Muhammad which was involved in attack on the Indian Parliament, suspected in Daniel Pearl murder case and routinely launched terrorist attacks in Kashmir. Masood Azhar, the head of Jaish-e-Muhammad is on record having said that Sipah Sahaba stands shoulder to shoulder with Jaish-e-Muhammad. A US wikileaks described Jaish-e-Muhammad as a breakaway faction of Sipah Sahaba. Similarly, other US wikileaks

confirm that several foot soldiers of the Tehrik Taliban Pakistan TTP are members of Sipah Sahaba. Sipah Sahaba has been involved in both sectarian violence and war, initially against the former Soviet Union, and later the US. In fact, Ramzi Yusuf, who was involved in trying to blow up the World Trade Centre in 1993, was linked to this militant outfit. This group is also reputed to have been the first to dispatch its jihadis to join Al-Qaeda. In any case, it had gone to fight in Afghanistan in 1985. Sipah Sahaba, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, Taliban, TTP, Jandullah, Jaish-e-Muhammad, all of these work as a network in coordination with Al-Qaeda and they are all inherently anti-Shia.

## **HOW MANY SHIA HAVE BEEN KILLED?**

Human Right organizations like Human Rights Commission of Pakistan and Asian Human Rights Commission usually release the data on number of Shia killed in a year but this data is not accurate for the simple reason that they do not use independent sources to get this information but rely purely on mainstream media. The problem with this approach is that there is a tendency in Pakistani media not to use the word 'Shia' while reporting any incident of violence against the Shia whether it be targeted killing or bombing for mass killing. Therefore, only a small proportion of total Shia killings are counted in the statistics of Human Rights groups. Let us consider the gruesome incident of Chillas massacre which happened on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2012 when six passenger buses enroute the Shia majority region of Gilgit Baltistan were stopped, passengers were offloaded and their Identity cards were scanned for Shia names and backs were checked for marks of self-flagellation (a Shia practice). All of those identified as Shia were shot dead on spot. This was not the only incident of its kind. Similar incidents when Shia were killed are proper identification include the Kohistan massacre of February 2012 and Mastung Baluchistan incident of September 2011. The media did report these incidents but failed to mention the word Shia. Evidence of this sham journalism is archived in a video available at this link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=58Hwe097Kyk> Because of this reason and the fact that media's reporting on Shia killings is limited to major cities and incidents from remote towns and villages go unreported, the statistics of Shia killings released by Human Rights organizations are extremely lowered down.

As social media became popular in Pakistan and violence against the Shia increased, many Shia organizations have propped up online who reported the violence against the Shia very effectively with evidence which includes name of the person(s) killed or injured their age, profession and area they loved. This almost always is accompanied with pictures and videos. 'Shia Killing', 'Karbala-e-Quetta' and 'Sada-e-Mazlomeen' are a few of such organisations. A few activists have collated all the data on violence against the Shia which these organizations release on a day to day basis and combine it with reports from mainstream media and the data on Shia violence from past made available by South Asia Terrorism Portal and archives of media outlets. A list has been compiled, the details of which and a download link are available on this web page: <http://criticalppp.com/archives/132675>

According to the data collected on violence against Shia in Pakistan:

- **More than 12,000 Shia have been killed in direct attacks on them for their faith**
- **Another 9000 have been killed as part of terrorism which has gripped the country (total 45,000 citizens killed as part of this, 20% Shia population makes it 9000)**

## **IS THIS SECTARIAN VIOLENCE OR TWO-WAY TIT FOR TAT VIOLENCE?**

The discourse that this is sectarian violence or two-way Sunni Shia war or tit-for-tat violence is gross misrepresentation of the plight of Shia community of Pakistan. Throughout the 90s, the Shia were target killed for their faith, their mosques and Imambargahs were bombed and processions either fired upon or bombed. In the 2000s, they have been attacked with suicide bombers and modern explosives. They have been properly identified and then killed. They have killed the Shia praying at mosques, shopping in markets, selling fruit as vendors, going for pilgrimage to Iran, going to see their families in Gilgit or for going to school or work for that matter. They have not even spared Shia funerals to ensure maximum damage and at times have bombed hospitals after Shia injured been taken there. Shia have buried their dead en masse several times as well.

If it was indeed a two-way violence, there would have been as many Sunnis killed by Shia as Shia have been killed but there are no mass graves or Sunnis, there are no mass burials. There is not a single example of an indiscriminate attack by the Shia targeting Sunni mosques or gatherings. The only violent response which came from the Shia was allegedly in the 1990s when a militant organization named Sipah Muhammad retaliated in response to mass killing of Shia and they target killed leaders of the anti-Shia militant organization. There were no indiscriminate attacks. However, in the last 15 or so years, even such retaliation attacks have disappeared after the leader of Sipah Muhammad was jailed in 1996 and the organization banned in 2000s. Although those retaliation attacks stopped, the violence against the Shia has escalated further. Now when the state has completely failed to protect the Shia and state institutions refused to prosecute those responsible for it, instead they roam freely, make public speeches and make alliances with political parties – what does the world expect the Shia community to do for their survival? How long will they continue to die before lifting arms to defend themselves?

The 2012 Annual report published by Global Human Rights Defense on Pakistan states that:

***So far in Pakistan more than 10,000 Shias have been killed (in direct attacks only). In Parachinar valley more than 4000 Shias were killed. People are pulled down from the buses, their identity cards are checked, their names are different than the Sunni names [so they are easily identified] and they get killed and raped; women have been threaten and molested. The reason why these things are happening I believe is not a sectarian (two-way) issue.***

***If you look at the last 60 years, the Christians, Hindus, Ahmadis and Shias, they have never attacked the Sunnis. It is just one way traffic, these groups always get attacked and they are always on the run to save their lives when they get attacked by the militants. So it is not a sectarian issue, it is targeted killing; it is a type of killing that is supported by the Pakistani military and intelligence agencies. Whenever somebody attacks Shias and kills them, the attackers take protection in the military cantonments and they never get prosecuted in the courts, Secondly I believe that, it is not the general Sunni population that is attacking the minorities. It is a very clear situation that the militants are involved in the target killings.***

**Report Available at this link:** [http://www.ghrd.org/filespage/4158/pakistan\\_report\\_2012.pdf](http://www.ghrd.org/filespage/4158/pakistan_report_2012.pdf)

### Attacking university buses carrying Shia students



At least five students were killed and 53 injured in a suicide blast that targeted a university bus near Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) office on Samungli Road in Quetta in June 2012.

### Attacking hospitals treating Shia victims of blast



DERA ISMAIL KHAN, Aug 19 Thirty-two people, seven policemen and two health officials among them, were killed and 55 others injured when a suicide bomber blew himself up near the emergency ward of the District Headquarters Hospital here on Tuesday.

### Attacking Shia students with acid



Unidentified militants in Kurram Agency intercepted and attacked a vehicle carrying Shia students from Kohat, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa en route to Parachinar, the headquarters of the agency, before throwing acid on them, injuring three, including a female in October 2012.

### Killing Shia pilgrims enroute Iran



A suicide bomber driving a vehicle packed with explosives rammed into a bus carrying Shia Muslim pilgrims in south-west Pakistan on 30 Dec 2012, killing 19 people, a government official and witnesses said.

### Killing Shia pilgrims



At least 26 Shia Muslim pilgrims killed as gunmen opened fire on a bus in western Pakistan, officials said on 20 Dec 2011.

### Identify and Kill Shia



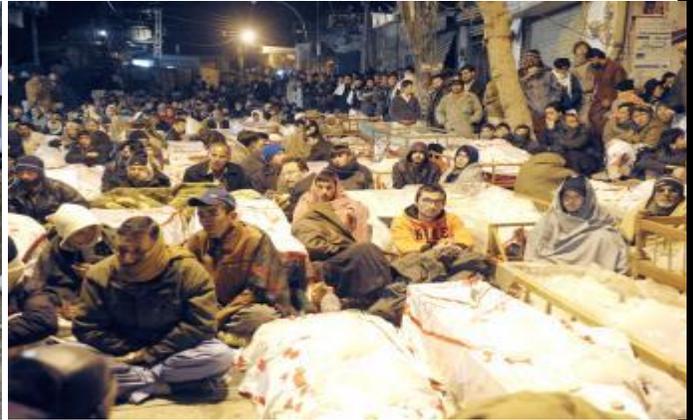
On 3 April 2012, Shia were identified from passenger buses and shot dead on spot after being identified as Shia.

### Shia prepare yet another mass grave



Shia prepare a mass grave in Quetta to bury 110 Shia dead in the aftermath of a suicide bombing attack in Quetta. This is the second mass burial in 40 days, the first one was for nearly a 100 dead in January 2013.

### Shia refuse to bury their dead in protest



In January 2013 after a deadly attack which killed nearly 100 Shia Hazara in Quetta, they refused to bury their dead and staged a sit-in with 100 dead bodies for four days. A similar attack a month later killed another 110.

### Mehzar Zehra – Shia schoolgirl attacked

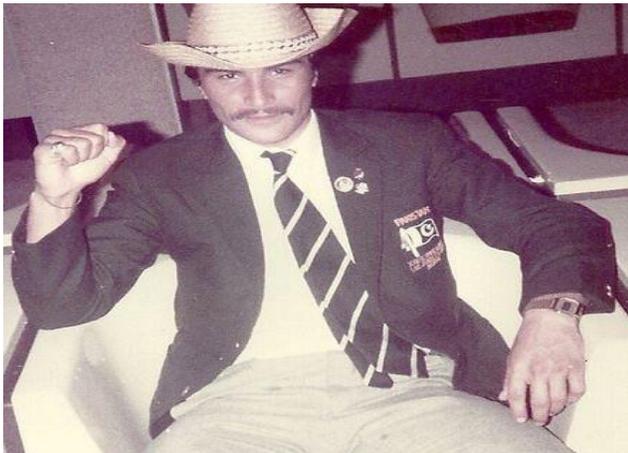


Schoolgirl Mehzar Zehra was enroute her school with her father when they were attacked – her father shot dead in front of her but she survived after two bullets shot at her and is still recovering in hospital, disabled for life.



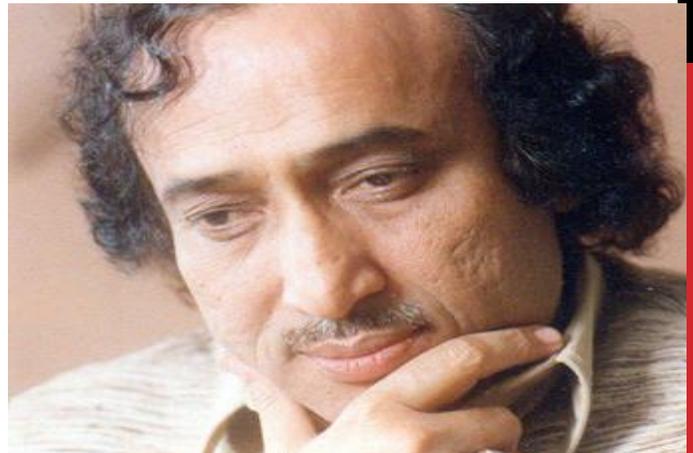
Pakistan's finest Eye Consultant and Professor of ophthalmology killed with his son in broad daylight in February 2013, just for being Shia.

### 3-time Olympic boxer killed for being Shia



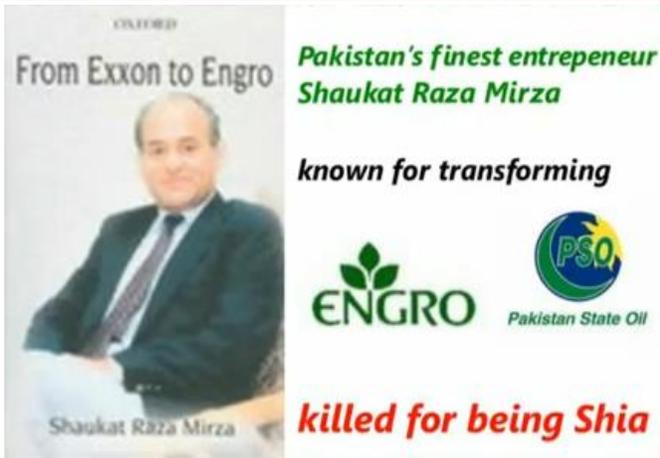
3-time Boxing Olympian and deputy director of Pakistan Sports Board Quetta centre Syed Abrar Hussain was shot dead for being Shia in Quetta Pakistan.

### Finest poet and writer Mohsin Naqvi killed for being Shia



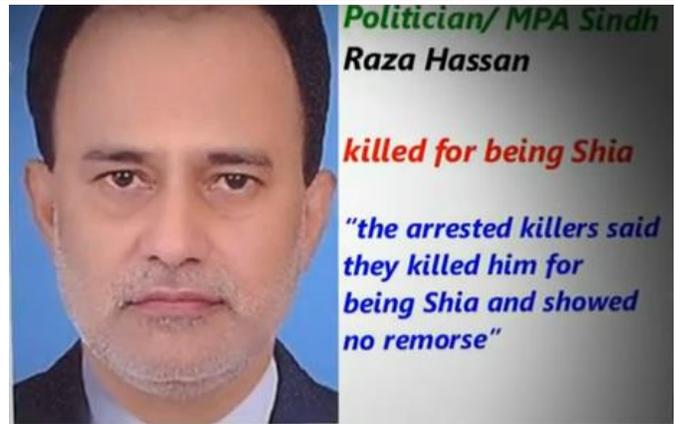
Pakistan's finest poet and writer Mohsin Naqvi belonged to Shia community and spoke about their oppression, and so was killed at his residence.

**Pakistan's finest entrepreneur killed for being Shia**



Shaukat Raza Mirza was known for transforming two of Pakistan's biggest enterprises namely Pakistan State Oil and ENGRO Group.

**Shia Politician killed for his faith**



Member Sindh Assembly Raza Hassan was killed for being Shia; his killers were arrested who proudly proclaimed that they killed him because he was a Shia infidel.

**Shia women victimized for their faith**

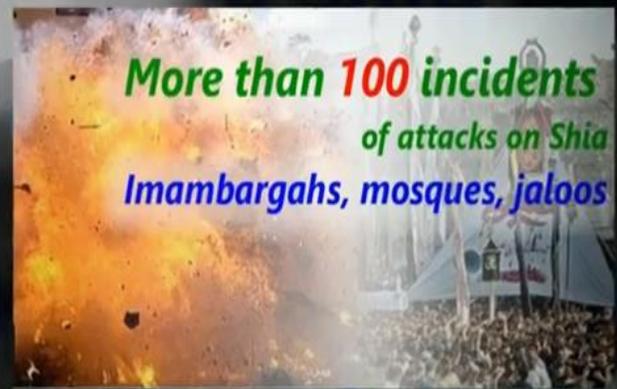
**Shia women victimised for being Shia**

Professor Nazima Talib Mehdi      Doctor Kaneez Fatima      Schoolgirl shot Mehzar Zehra



Shia women have been target killed injured, victims of bomb attacks and acid attacks.

**Shia mosques and processions under attack**



Shia mosques, processions and Imambargahs have been under attack throughout Pakistan's history.

**Video grab: Taliban lineup Shia and kill them all**



In a video released by Taliban, they line up Shia and fire on them killing all of them.

**Shia protest with dead bodies**



Shia refuse to bury their dead second time in Feb 2013 when 110 Shia killed. First attack in Jan killed nearly 100.

## SHIA GENOCIDE IN 2012

Total number of Shia killed in Pakistan in the year 2012: 1450

- 630 Shia killed as a result of direct Shia faith based killings
- 820 Shia killed as part of the country wide terrorism

This anti-Shia violence witnesses incidents across the country and percentage of killings in each province is as follows:

- Balochistan: 30% (this includes both Hazara & non-Hazara Shia)
- Sindh: 26%
- FATA 14%
- Punjab: 12%
- Gilgit Baltistan 11%
- Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 7%

For details and references on this data, please see this: <http://criticalppp.com/archives/236793>

## SHIA GENOCIDE IN 2013

Total Shia killed and injured from 1st Jan 2013 to 17th Feb 2013: 269 while 459 were injured.

A list of all incidents and those killed is available here: <http://criticalppp.com/archives/243691>

## THE SITUATION IN QUETTA – ALL SHIA UNDER ATTACK

The city of Quetta has been receiving some media attention lately because of gruesome en masse killing of the Shia community, most of which were Hazara Shia. According to Hazara community's website <http://www.hazara.net/>, Quetta is home to nearly 600,000 Shia Hazara while other reports suggest nearly 20,000 non-Hazara Shia lives in Quetta as well. The data compiled at the said website states nearly 1300 Hazara Shia have been killed which is part of the 21,000+ total Shia deaths earlier explained which includes Shia of all ethnicities.

A report published in Daily Express Tribune on January 3, 2013 which documents data released by Government of Pakistan on Shia killings in Baluchistan states: *"From 2008 to 2012, 758 members of the Shia community were killed in 478 incidents. Of these, 338 victims belonged to the Hazara community"*. The rest 420 Shia killed in Baluchistan belonged to other ethnicities.

Express Tribune Report: <http://tribune.com.pk/story/488311/violence-is-on-the-rise-in-balochistan-report/>

Similarly, a list of more than 130 non-Hazara Shia killed in Quetta is available at this web page: <http://criticalppp.com/archives/64797>.

The killing of Hazaras is not an ethnic issue and cannot be segregated from Shia Genocide. Hazaras are killed precisely for their Shia faith and that is why non-Hazara Shia have been targeted not just in Quetta but other parts of Baluchistan as well. Shia community irrespective of their ethnicity faces a genocide throughout Pakistan with Quetta, Karachi, Parachinar (Gilgit Baltistan), Dera Ismail Khan being some of the worst hit areas.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS, EXPECTATIONS & COMMENTS**

### **- RECOGNISE SHIA GENOCIDE**

The Shia community requests the British Government to recognize the en masse killing of the Shia community (including but not limited to Hazara Shias) in Pakistan as a Genocide as per Article II of The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

### **- HOLD PAKISTANI STATE RESPONSIBLE FOR SHIA GENOCIDE**

The Shia community of Pakistan holds the state, specially its security establishment responsible for its genocide because of their support to the Jihadi madressahs and the anti-Shia militants. We expect The British government to do the same on humanitarian grounds and wherever possible, pressurize the Pakistani government to ensure the protection of Shia community.

### **- PRESSURISE TO PROSECUTE SHIA KILLERS**

The killers of Shia roam free in Pakistan while the community expects the perpetrators to be brought to justice. We expect the British Government and Human Rights organizations to pressurize Pakistan to bring the culprits to justice.

### **- WHAT HAPPENS IF SHIA GENOCIDE IS NOT STOPPED?**

The Shia Muslims believe in metaphorical and allegoric interpretation of religious sources like the Sufi Muslims, and unlike the orthodox Wahhabi Salafi Muslims who follow a literal interpretation. Decimation of Shia, who make up a strong 20% of population of Pakistan and serve in all important intuitions of the country will lead to further radicalization of Pakistan as a society and will create a nuclear armed Wahhabi state with ultra-orthodox politicians at helm that can unleash devastation in the region and worldwide. The anti-Shia militants work in alliance with global militant Islamists like Taliban and Al-Qaeda, they want to establish an orthodox Sunni caliphate and know very well that Shia are standing between them and their goal. This enables the genocide of the Shia but they will eventually go after the shrine going traditional Sufi/ Barelvi Muslims too in an attempt to turn Pakistan's society and state into a purely Wahhabi Salafi state. Therefore, considering the gravity of the situation and the threat to Shia community in Pakistan and the world at large, we request the British Government and Human Rights Organisations to consider this issue at all possible platforms and exert pressure on Pakistan as a Common Wealth member state and also attempt to cut the financing of terrorism in Pakistan by Gulf states specially Saudi Arabia, UAE and Qatar.