



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)
LEGAL AID BOARD

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Information on blood feuds in Pakistan.

In a section titled “Denial of Fair Public Trial” the *US Department of State* country report refers to feuds in Pakistan as follows:

“Feudal landlords in Sindh and Punjab and tribal leaders in Pashtun and Baloch areas continued to hold local council meetings (known as panchayats or jirgas), at times in defiance of the established legal system. Such councils, particularly prevalent in rural areas, settled feuds and imposed tribal penalties on perceived wrongdoers, including fines, imprisonment, or even the death penalty. In Pashtun areas, such councils were held under the outlines of the Pashtun Tribal Code. Under the code, a man, his family, and his tribe are obligated to take revenge for wrongs real or perceived to redeem their honor. Frequently these disputes arose over women and land and often resulted in violence.” (US Department of State (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor) (25 February 2009) *2008 Human Rights Report: Pakistan*)

A report from *The Independent* on feud-related revenge killings states:

“A revenge killing in Pakistan's eastern Punjab province has left 11 members of the same family dead, police said. Four women and three children were among those killed in Vehari, 60 miles east of Multan. There were few details about the killing, but police said it appeared to be in retaliation for a killing several days earlier in the same village. In rural Pakistan feuds are often settled by retaliatory killings that include women and children.” (Independent, *The* (10 April 2001) *Eleven family members die in Pakistan revenge Killings*)

An *Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC)* report states:

“Tribesmen in southern Pakistan shot dead at least seven people from a rival clan, including four children, government officials said. They said the men opened fire on a house belonging to the rival tribe in a remote village in southwestern Baluchistan province early on Saturday morning, killing seven members of a family. ‘One woman and four children were amongst the victims,’ a police official said. Tribal warfare has been raging for decades in an area where the borders of the Punjab, Sindh and Baluchistan province meet, around 480 kilometres north of Karachi. The latest attack came two weeks after the killings of at least 13 people when rival tribes clashed in the same region. Tribal rivals in Baluchistan, which borders Afghanistan and Iran, often settle their feuds by violence using machineguns, rocket launchers and landmines.” (Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) (19 April 2003) *Seven killed in tribal feud in Pakistan*)

A document published by the anti-capital punishment association *Hands Off Cain* refers to executions resulting from a blood feud as follows:

“Ahmad and his five kin killed the three men from a rival family after they were believed to have made objectionable remarks to some of Ahmad's women relatives, prosecutors said. The two families had been involved in a feud for years. Blood feuds are common in rural, conservative parts of predominantly Muslim Pakistan, where tribal codes of family honour still hold sway.” (Hands Off Cain (30 November 2005) *Pakistan. Six People From Same Family Hanged For Murder*)

A *Balochistan Times* article states:

“The feud between the two factions in Orakzai Agency continued into the fifth day today. 23 people have been killed during fighting between tribesmen over ownership of a shrine in northwest Pakistan, security officials said Friday. The tribes exchanged gun, rocket and mortar fire after the dispute erupted several days ago over the holy site in the restive Orakzai tribal district, a senior security official said while talking to a news agency.” (Balochistan Times (6 October 2006) *23 Dead in Tribal Feud in Orakzai Agency*)

A *Pakistan Newswire* report states:

“Sixteen people were kidnapped, 14 killed and four girls raped in district Ghotki during the last two months, a survey report said on Friday. According to the survey, 24 tribal clashes took place in different areas of the district during the last two months in which modern weapons including rocket launchers were used.” (Pakistan Newswire (27 July 2007) *16 kidnapped, 14 killed, 4 girls raped during last two months in Ghotki district*)

See also *Pakistan Newswire* report which states:

“Four persons were shot dead on Friday morning in a tribal clash at village Punhon Chandio, near Dadan Mir Jat, witnesses and police said.” (Pakistan Newswire (21 June 2008) *Four killed in tribal feud near Larkana*)

This report also states:

“The motive behind vendetta was said to be dispute over ownership of agricultural land.” (ibid)

A report from the Pakistani broadcaster *PTV News* states:

“In Kurram Agency, another nine people have been killed and 26 injured in the continuing fighting between rival tribes. With the latest casualties, the death toll in the tribal feud has risen to over 100. Clashes are still continuing in Baghzai, Balichkehl, and Ibrahimzai areas.” (PTV News (1 September 2008) *Pakistan TV reports tribal area clashes, 10 killed*)

A *Pakistan Newswire* report states:

"In an armed clash between two rival groups of Marfani tribes, a villager, identified as Peeral Marfani, was killed at Golo Daro forest in the jurisdiction of Hamayoon police station on Tuesday. The motive behind the incident is said to be ongoing dispute between two groups of Marfani tribe men over matter of Karo-Kari (honour killing). No FIR of incident was registered till filing of this story." (Pakistan Newswire (18 February 2009) *Villager killed in bloody tribal feud*)

A report from the *Inter Press Service* news agency on killings allegedly related to the traditional practise called "Swara" states:

"All three young women were given in marriage to hostile families as compensation for a relative's crime in a practise called 'swara' in Pashtun, parts of Afghanistan and the NWFP - and 'vanni' in the Punjab. Although officially outlawed in Pakistan, the custom prevails. "For as long as I can remember, I've witnessed swara, but killing these poor women is a fairly recent phenomenon," said Razaqat Bibi, who has observed the trend since 1998. Kamila Hayat, joint director of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) told IPS via email from LaHore, 'Swara is a virtual death penalty for young women who become victims of the tradition.' 'Even in cases where they are not physically killed, the humiliation and misery they face, sometimes for an entire lifetime, is a terrible punishment. It is made all the worse by the fact that the women concerned are of course not guilty of any crime,' Hayat added. Assistant professor Fouzia Naeem Khan, a clinical psychologist teaching at SZABIST Institute of Science and Technology in Karachi, belongs to a village in the NWFP where swara originally was designed to stop decades old blood feuds between two clans. The root cause for most blood feuds is land, Khan said. To resolve conflicts the jirga, or village council, dictates sending a bride from the assailant's family to the aggrieved to put an end to all further killings." (Inter Press Service (27 September 2006) *Death Penalty: "Swara" Killings in Pakistan Continue* Ebrahim, Zofeen T.)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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