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LEGAL AID BOARD

Pakistan - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 30 and 31 December 2009

Treatment of those who operate cd shops

An *Amnesty International* report in April 2009 on Buner in the North West Frontier Province states: "The Taleban have banned music, ordered all girls over the age of seven to wear a burqa, and all men to grow beards." (Amnesty International (23 April 2009) *Pakistan: People of Buner at mercy of Taleban*)

In February 2009 a report by *Amnesty International* on Swat which is in the North West Frontier Province states: "The Taleban have publicly whipped men for shaving their beards, destroyed shops for selling music and forcibly prohibited women from leaving their houses unless escorted by a male relative." (Amnesty International (12 February 2009) *Pakistan: Government must protect Swat valley residents from abuses*)

A *Human Rights Watch* article also commenting on Swat in May 2009 notes:

"Since 2007, the Taliban have imposed their authority in Swat and adjoining areas through summary executions – including beheadings – of state officials and political opponents, public whippings, and large-scale intimidation of the population. Girls' schools have been shut down, women have not been allowed to leave their homes unless escorted by male family members, polio immunization programs were halted, and nongovernmental organizations were expelled. Music and film were banned and stores trading in them destroyed. All men were required to grow beards." (Human Rights Watch (11 May 2009) *Pakistan: Avoid Civilian Casualties*)

The *United States Department of State* in February 2009 reviewing events of 2008 includes the following mention of Swat noting: "Militants destroyed more than 150 girls' schools, particularly in Swat, and forced the closure of more than 200 barber shops and stores selling western CDs and videos in FATA and NWFP." (United States Department of State (25 February 2009) *2008 Human Rights Report: Pakistan*, Section 1 Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom From: g. Use of Excessive Force and Other Abuses in Internal Conflicts, Other Conflict-related Abuses)

The *Human Rights Commission of Pakistan* in April 2009 reviewing events of 2008 states: "Taliban militants and their sympathizers attacked and blew up hundreds of music, CD and barber shops, mainly in the NWFP and Tribal Areas." (Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (1 April 2009) *State of Human Rights in 2008*, p.49)

A report from the *International Crisis Group* in March 2009 on militancy in Pakistan notes:

“The Taliban groups expound Islam as a vehicle of social and political empowerment. Their Sharia courts claim to resolve cases that were pending in officially constituted tribunals for years. In fact, they seek to reform society along radical Deobandi lines, as expressed in attacks on girls’ schools, barber shops, DVD and CD stores, and residents perceived to be engaged in immoral activities.” (International Crisis Group (13 March 2009) *Pakistan: The Militant Jihadi Challenge*)

A news story in *The Nation* published in November 2009 about Upper Dir which is in North West Frontier Province states: “A powerful blast at Salim Market destroyed at least 15 CD shops here on Wednesday. According to details, the explosive device was planted by unidentified miscreants in the market. Five shops were destroyed completely, while 10 others damaged partially in the blast.” (The Nation (12 November 2009) *Blast destroys 15 CD shops*)

A November 2009 article in the *Daily Times* on Dir Khas which is in North West Frontier Province notes: “Unidentified terrorists, on Wednesday, blew up a CD shop at Dir Khas.” (Daily Times (12 November 2009) *Terrorists blow up CD shop*)

A *Dawn* article in August 2009 on Mansehra which is in North West Frontier Province states:

“Following closure of music and CD shops in Balakot and Oghi, owners of such shops in the Mansehra town are also under pressure to wind up their business. The owner of a CD shop who had displayed a notice that he would wind up the business soon told Dawn he had taken the decision under compulsion. He said he did not want to close the business because it was his only source of livelihood, but he had no option. “Even my business community wants me to do so (quit the business) because of potential threats by outlaws,” he said.” (Dawn (18 August 2009) *CD shops face closure in Mansehra town*)

In July 2009 an article in *Dawn* on Bakhshali which is in North West Frontier Province states:

“Seventeen CD shops and two general stores were destroyed when explosive devices went off in three adjacent markets of the Bakhshali village, 10 kilometres from here, late Thursday night. An explosion in the Mir Afzal Market destroyed 11 CD shops and two general stores. Four CD shops were destroyed in a blast in another adjacent market and three shops were destroyed in the nearby Waleed Market.” (Dawn (25 July 2009) *Blasts destroy 17 CD shops in Mardan*)

A *Dawn* article from May 2009 on Kohat which is in North West Frontier Province notes: “A minor girl was injured and four shops were gutted in a bomb blast here on Friday. Militants had planted a time bomb at a CD shop near the New Bus

Stand which went off in the small hours.” (Dawn (30 May 2009) *CD shop blown up, girl hurt in Kohat*)

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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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