

DAILY TRACKER

Taliban's extremist implementation of sharia law

1. According to estimates, approximately 3 million girls in grades 7 to 12 are not attending school in the country. "Unfortunately, in Afghan society, there are still fathers who do not support their daughters' education." Who else but their teachers will speak up for those girls? They will be men's slaves if they do not receive an education. While remaining true to their Islamic beliefs, the Taliban wanted to be less harsh than when they previously ruled Afghanistan, prohibiting women from working and girls from attending school, according to reports.
SOURCE: <https://indianexpress.com/article/world/protests-against-taliban-wont-stop-till-schools-for-girls-reopened-7845179/>
2. Under the guise of imposing Islamic law, the Taliban has been stealing Afghan women's rights. According to the BBC, the World Bank has suspended four projects totaling \$600 million in Afghanistan due to the ban on girls returning to secondary school. To the chagrin of the international community, the new Afghan rulers reversed their decision to open secondary schools for girls.
SOURCE: <https://www.wionews.com/world/world-bank-suspends-600-million-projects-after-taliban-ban-girls-from-schools-467025>
3. According to Human Rights Watch (HRW), the Taliban have increased their attacks on the media, as journalists in the country have stated that it is difficult to report from Afghanistan. Taliban authorities prohibited international news organisations, including Voice of America and the BBC, from broadcasting in Dari, Pashto, and Uzbek languages in Afghanistan. According to HRW, this is the latest Taliban measure to limit access to independent information. According to journalists, Taliban intelligence officials meet with the media on a regular basis to inform them of any new Islamic Law rules.
SOURCE: https://www.business-standard.com/article/international/taliban-intensify-attacks-on-afghanistan-media-says-rights-group-122033100060_1.html
4. Representatives from the Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice are reportedly already roving the entrances of government offices to ensure that employees are in compliance with the beard requirement, as well as a dress code that enforces the local dress rule, which requires employees to wear shalwar kameez or similar local clothes, along with a traditional hat or turban. According to source-based reports, employees are also required to pray. The Afghan people can now only blame the Taliban's inflexibility, because accepting Western financial support entails accepting Western conditions. There are no ifs and buts about the manner in which Sharia is being implemented.
SOURCE: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2350307/taliban-beard-rule>

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5. Afghans held several protests while carrying the tricolour, urging the Taliban not to replace the flag since taking power in Kabul on August 15, 2021. The Taliban avoided the controversy by claiming that it would be resolved later. However, it was a surprise to see a white banner bearing the Shahada, which in Arabic reads: "There is no god but Allah, Muhammad is Allah's messenger," the proclamation of the Islamic faith, flying atop the historic hill. Several social activists and politicians urged the Taliban government to keep the tricolour flying in government offices and public places and to recognise it as the national flag. "The tricolour flag is...an important part of our history." We have sacrificed hundreds of thousands of martyrs" in order to keep it flying, Kabul resident Baryali.
SOURCES: <https://www.laprensalatina.com/talibans-white-flag-replaces-the-afghan-tricolor-atop-kabul-hill/>

Promotion of radicalism in Pakistan: HR violations of minorities in Pakistan : Steps taken in the world against Pakistan's radicalism

1. Pakistan's contentious Electronic Crimes Act has come under fire after the government amended the law to make social media comments defamatory. Despite a U-turn, the law indicates a concerning trend toward limiting freedom of expression. "Under the guise of combating 'fake news,' cybercrime, and misinformation, PECA has been used to silence free expression."
SOURCE: <https://english.alaraby.co.uk/features/living-under-pakistans-electronic-crimes-act>
2. The assassination of a Hindu girl rekindles fears about forced conversion. A teen girl was shot dead after resisting kidnapping for alleged forced marriage and conversion, instilling fear in the minority community. Kumari's uncle Odh, whose first name Al Jazeera has withheld due to security concerns, claimed that she was frequently harassed by Wahid Bux Lashari, a member of the powerful Lashari tribe. Earlier this month, Lashari, 24, threatened Kumari with compulsion marriage. Her family claimed that they approached local police, who "showed no interest" in assisting the family in their fight against the powerful landowning tribe.
SOURCE: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/31/pakistan-hindu-girls-killing-reignites-forced-conversion-fears>
3. In Pakistan, the transgender community feels cut off from the rest of society. Trans people are frequently kicked out of their family homes and become isolated when they express themselves. People who do not have family become vulnerable and face numerous challenges. When a child is forced to leave their home at the age of 15, he or she has no choice but to leave school as well. Many transgender people are unable to obtain a proper education. Leaving their community also makes it difficult to access health care. When trans people try to access health care, they frequently face discrimination from doctors and hospital staff.
SOURCE: <https://www.rescue.org/article/meet-namkeen-trans-rights-activist-changing-attitudes-pakistan>

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4. Women are disproportionately affected by changing weather patterns, but reaching out to women in Pakistan's coastal and rural settlements can be difficult due to socio-cultural norms that confine many women and girls to their homes. The focus group gave us the opportunity to hear directly from women about their experiences with climate-induced migration. Ten women between the ages of 20 and 70 took part in the focus group, sharing stories about their lives before migration, their moving experiences, and their current living conditions. In 2007, these women were forced to flee their native village in Kharo Chan after sea intrusion destroyed the community's agricultural land and, with it, local livelihoods. Villagers were left destitute and vulnerable.
SOURCE: <https://reliefweb.int/report/pakistan/i-lost-all-my-belongings-my-land-my-home-climate-induced-migration-pakistan>
5. An unidentified man displayed a photograph of a 13-year-old girl, claiming that her father had sold her to criminals running a brothel in Rojhan tehsil's Chak Dilbar village. This brings safety issues for woman in Pakistan apart from the increase in trafficking of woman specifically minorities in Pakistan.
SOURCE: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1682624/minor-girl-sold-by-her-father-recovered-from-brothel-in-rojhan>
6. Christians in Need provides shelter for the homeless, scholarships for women to study in countries where they are persecuted, and builds schools and orphanages to ensure the future of hundreds of children. Dialogue is being used by a group to assist persecuted Christians in Pakistan. The Pakistani constitution guarantees religious freedom, but the reality on the ground shows that religious minorities face significant discrimination, as well as violence and persecution under the country's controversial blasphemy law.
SOURCE: <https://cruxnow.com/church-in-asia/2022/03/group-uses-dialogue-to-help-persecuted-christians-in-pakistan-other-countries>
7. According to the government, some Pakistani nationals from minority communities, primarily Hindus and Sikhs, have not returned to their country in recent years due to religious persecution.
SOURCE: <https://newsonair.com/2022/03/31/some-pakistani-nationals-belonging-to-minority-communities-have-not-returned-to-their-country-in-recent-years-because-of-religious-persecution-govt/>
8. A group of men arrived at Iqbal Masih's snooker club in the Lahore Development Authority (LDA) quarters in Model Town, Lahore. What was supposed to be a fun activity turned sour when they began arguing about the game – and some money matters. When Masih asked them to leave his club, they abused him and looted his belongings. The situation deteriorated as more members of the Muslim and Christian communities became involved in the conflict. Persecution of Christians in Pakistan continues unabated.
SOURCE: <https://www.thefridaytimes.com/2022/03/31/persecution-of-pakistans-christians-continues-unabated/>

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9. The need for a strong counter-violent extremism strategy in the name of vigilantism in the name of blasphemy. In the aftermath of the heinous beheading of Safoora Bibi, Humaira Zia Mufti writes an incisive piece about how the lack of constructive debate on blasphemy laws has increased incidents of public vigilantism in Pakistan. Such incidents jeopardise the country's international campaign to combat Islamophobia. The gruesome beheading of Safoora Bibi, a 21-year-old teacher at Madrasa Jamia Islamia Falahul Binaat, by her colleagues, who were only 13 and 24 years old, respectively, highlights a serious problem of radicalization of female madrasa students in Pakistan. Despite recent efforts, these students remain outside of mainstream initiatives to reform madrasa education.

SOURCE: <https://www.globalvillagespace.com/vigilantism-in-the-name-of-blasphemy-need-for-strong-counter-violent-extremism-strategy/>

Positive stories on steps taken against radical Islam

1. The video game market is massive. According to Nielsen, by 2020, 82 percent of global consumers will have either played video games or watched video game-related content, a trend accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. There is a growing body of literature investigating the relationship between gaming and right-wing extremism. This includes work on the cultural overlap between online extremism and gaming communities; potential vulnerabilities that may make gamers more vulnerable to radicalization; the gamification of extremist activity; and discussion of the "gamergate" controversy, in which a number of gamers engaged in coordinated online trolling aided in the spread of online extremism.

SOURCE: <https://www.fairobservers.com/politics/extremism/jacob-davey-right-wing-extremism-radical-right-video-games-radicalization-32902/>

2. The break-in at the Oregon Capitol in December 2020, as well as the hours-long standoff with police, capped a year of increased politically motivated violence, according to state auditors in a new report. According to the Statesman Journal, auditors said Wednesday that the state could do more to prevent these events and improve coordination between levels of government and agencies dealing with the threat of extremist acts. Domestic violent extremism is not defined or criminalised under Oregon law. Auditors recommend that Oregon look to other states that define domestic violent extremism or "terroristic acts" in their laws, which means the state can charge offenders if federal standards are not met.

SOURCE: <https://www.oregonlive.com/politics/2022/03/oregon-audit-more-to-do-to-reduce-risk-of-violent-extremism.html>

3. As he presided over the fifth summit of the seven-member regional grouping on Wednesday, Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa emphasised the importance of protecting the BIMSTEC region from the threats of terrorism, religious extremism, and narcotics. President Rajapaksa stated in his speech that the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) nations have become engines of growth in the global economy. The leaders of India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, and Thailand were virtually represented at the summit. The President emphasised the importance of protecting the BIMSTEC region from terrorism, religious extremism, and narcotics.

SOURCE: <https://www.dailypioneer.com/2022/world/protect-bimstec-region-from-threats-of-terrorism--religious-extremism--says-sri-lankan-president.html>

4. Spies from the Security Intelligence Service are looking into more teenagers who are consuming violent extremist content online, and the agency's chief advises concerned parents to "give us a call." Rebecca Kitteridge, director-general of the Security Intelligence Service (SIS), said her agency has discovered more young people exposed to extremist material online in the last year and has had to work with families and police to disrupt and deradicalize them.

SOURCE: <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/128188642/sis-spies-investigating-more-teenagers-for-online-violent-extremism>

5. Better outreach from federal planners and the veterans community will be required to prevent disenfranchised or unstable veterans from drifting into extremist ideology, advocates said on Thursday. "This is a small but growing challenge," William Braniff, director of the University of Maryland's National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, told members of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee. "We need to put in place a prevention ecosystem now, before those numbers continue to rise."

SOURCE: <https://www.militarytimes.com/veterans/2022/03/31/veterans-groups-community-leaders-need-to-play-a-key-role-in-countering-extremism-experts-warn/>

6. Understanding Extremism and determining a method to de-radicalize. The distinction between extremism and terrorism is that the former, as a possibility of thought and action, can exist at both ends of the spectrum or "extreme end" and does not necessarily lead a person to become "terrorist" as s/he can simply become theoretical extremist or ideologically radical, although one can just be a step away from the door of terrorism; whereas the latter (terrorism) can manifest when one is actually engaged in political violence with the intent to wreak havoc.

SOURCE: <https://www.mindanews.com/mindaviews/2022/03/crucible-ten-points-on-extremism-and-terrorism/>

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7. Germany claims to have returned 10 women and 27 children from a camp in northeastern Syria where suspected ISIS members were being held. Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said the group was repatriated from the Roj camp on Wednesday, describing the operation as "extremely difficult." She claimed that some of the mothers were detained as soon as they arrived in Germany. "At the end of the day, the 27 children are victims of ISIS, and they have a right to a better future away from its lethal ideology, as well as to live in security, as we would wish for our own children," Baerbock said in a statement. "The mothers must face consequences for their actions."

SOURCE: <https://www.gfatf.org/archives/germany-repatriates-women-and-children-from-suspected-islamic-state-camp-in-syria/>

8. An alleged ISIS suicide bomber was apprehended before he could blow himself up in the 5th section of northeast Syria's al-Hol camp on Monday, according to the UK-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR). According to the SOHR report, security forces launched an operation in the fifth section of the sprawling camp. Furthermore, armed men clashed in the 4th and 5th sections of the massive camp. On Monday, clashes erupted in the camp, according to the Syria-based North Press agency. During the clashes, one ISIS member was killed.

SOURCE: <https://www.gfatf.org/archives/security-forces-detained-suspected-islamic-state-suicide-bomber-in-syrias-notorious-al-hol-camp/>

9. 'Break the Wave,' Operation: Security forces are bracing for a surge in terrorism. "Citizens of Israel, we are currently experiencing a wave of murderous terrorism, and we will prevail together, just as we have in all previous waves," Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said. A week into the latest terror wave, Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and Public Security Minister Omer Bar Lev (Labor) announced on Thursday evening that 181 million shekels will be allocated to the Israel Police. The funds will be used to strengthen the police's ability to tighten security across the country, including the formation of a "Shin Bet brigade" made up of reservists, the addition of 200 soldiers to Border Police, and the purchase of more protective equipment.

SOURCE: <https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-702782>

10. Tehran is concerned about the rise in terrorist activity in the region since the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan (which is sanctioned by the UN for terrorist activities), said Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian on Thursday. "The third issue is terrorist and radical group recruitment." "The expansion of Daesh [Islamic State, banned in Russia as a terrorist group] terrorist activities in Afghanistan has left no doubt that we need collective measures by the countries of the region to combat terrorism," Amir-Abdollahian said at the ministerial meeting in China's Tunxi, according to the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

SOURCE: <https://goachronicle.com/iran-raise-concern-over-terrorism-from-afghanistan/>

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11. Gun permits and armed citizens are being highlighted for their role in breaking the terrorism wave. The attacker in a stabbing attack on Thursday was shot and killed by an armed passenger, highlighting a quiet but consistent trend of security provided by the firearm-carrying citizenry. On Wednesday and Thursday, politicians and leaders emphasised the role of gun permits and armed citizens as a force multiplier in combating Israel's rising tide of terrorism.

SOURCE: <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/article-702848>