

Religious laws

As the only country in the world that was established explicitly to host a Muslim population, and to the diverse ethnic backdrop already found there, Pakistan has produced some unique laws regarding religious practice and individual rights. Speaking against Islam, the Prophet or Allah is punished especially severely, even with death. Some legislation is used to further marginalise minorities such as Ahmadi Muslims, which are under no circumstance allowed to call themselves Muslim. During the 1980s and 1990s the divide between religious groups was deepened by a voting system that mandated members of a religious group to only vote for candidates of their own group in provincial and national elections. Although this guaranteed seats for minority delegates, it removed the incentive for majority politicians to cater to minority concerns. All things concerning religion and minority rights are governed by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Although it is claimed by official sides that the ministry offers considerable support for minority communities and their places and gatherings of worship, analyses of the allocated budgets show per-capita expenditures more than five times higher for Muslim citizens than for non-Muslims.



Internet freedoms

The internet and digital connectivity are recognized in Pakistan as keys to economic development and the goal of becoming a service-oriented middle-income country medium-term. So far, 54% of the population have access to digital services. Despite this emphasis on internet accessibility, censorship of various topics has always been quite heavy-handed, oftentimes coming as bans of entire websites or key words in URLs. Sites affected by temporary bans in the past include YouTube, Twitter, Wikipedia, Reddit, TikTok, Flickr and others. Most bans were issued for the alleged spread of pornography or blasphemy. Government-critical material and voices on some religious topics and secessionist opinions have also been removed from the Pakistani web.