



Pakistan – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 19 May 2015

Is there any information on internal relocation including where the police are not a protective factor or may indeed be a threat.

The 2013 US Department of State country report on Pakistan, in a section titled “Freedom of Movement, Internally Displaced Persons, Protection of Refugees, and Stateless Persons”, states:

“The law provides for freedom of internal movement and for uninhibited foreign travel, emigration, and repatriation, but the government limited these rights.” (US Department of State (27 February 2014) *2013 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – Pakistan*, p.33)

A country information report published by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia, in a section titled “Internal Relocation” (paragraph 5.12), states:

“Freedom of movement throughout Pakistan is guaranteed by section 15 of the Constitution. Because of Pakistan’s size and diversity, internal relocation offers a degree of anonymity and the opportunity for victims to seek refuge from discrimination or violence. In most cases, there are options available for members of most ethnic and religious minorities to be able to relocate to areas of relative safety elsewhere in Pakistan. In particular, many large urban centres are home to mixed ethnic and religious communities and offer greater opportunities for employment, access to services and a greater degree of state protection than other areas. In practice, internal relocation is most successful when these conditions exist, but is limited mostly by a lack of financial resources and in some cases due to debts owed to landowners or money lenders.” (Australian Government: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) (29 November 2013) *DFAT Country Information Report: Pakistan*, p.22)

The 2014 Human Rights Commission of Pakistan report, in a section titled “Freedom of movement”, states:

“The constitution of Pakistan acknowledges every citizen's right, 'subject to any reasonable restriction imposed by law in the public interest', to enter and move freely within the country and to reside and settle in any part of it. In 2014, Article 12 rights were compromised in Pakistan, directly or indirectly, on account of a range of factors including armed conflict and absence of the writ of state in some areas, general lawlessness and targeted attacks, and the inability of the people to travel because of absence or shortage of means of travel, including scarcity of flights for domestic travel for areas that were either too remote or too disturbed for safe road travel. The citizens' freedom of movement was also at times hindered by conditions that made travel difficult, including the cost of travel and poor road infrastructure.” (Human Rights

Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) (16 April 2015) *State of Human Rights in 2014 [Chapter III Fundamental freedoms - Freedom of movement]*

In a section titled “Magnified distances”, this report states:

“Failure to complete or repair important highways made travel longer and arduous than it had to be in many parts of the country. There was no shortage of locations in the country where, on account of inadequate or missing road infrastructure, a journey of a few dozen kilometres took more than a day in this day and age. In June, hundreds of passenger and goods transport vehicles remained stranded for nearly four days in Lowari because of blockage of an unpaved part of Dir-Chitral road passing through a stream. The passengers, including women and children, were stuck in the deserted area without food. The same route also routinely closed for weeks or even months in the winter due to snowfall, virtually cutting off the residents of Chitral from the rest of the country. In January, media reports stated that the army engineering corps had been directed to keep the Lowari Top route open. The residents of Chitral earlier used to reach other parts of Pakistan after passing through Afghanistan during the winter months. However, after the closure of Pak-Afghan border the residents of Chitral district had been dependent on the Lowari Top route. Snowfall in March again caused closure of the route. In some parts of the country, travel on some highways became such a hazardous endeavour at night on account of poor law and order that citizens routinely avoided using those roads after nightfall. The cost of air travel meant that only a fraction of the population could afford that mode of travel. The lowest return airfare within the country cost more than the minimum wage. Even the airfare for one-way domestic travel cost more than the minimum wage for most destinations. Even those who could afford air travel had to suffer frequent and unannounced delays and cancellation of flights. Timely departure of flights, rather than delays, was the exception, especially for the ones operated by the state-owned airline.” (ibid)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research and Information Unit 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.

References:

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