

Pakistan's Foreign Policy

POLICE BRUTALITY

Pakistan's Stance:

The Police Order 2002, a much-touted outcome of reform efforts produced under the military regime of Pervez Musharraf (president 2001-2008), framework is implemented through amendments in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa that have diluted the essence of the original order.

In doing so, the legislation's calls to enhance public accountability and reduce political control over the police have gone largely unheeded due to a lack of political will.

But these efforts must also be localized. Pakistan is a multi-ethnic, multilingual society. Each policing jurisdiction, rural or urban, has different dynamics and demographics that influence local politics and social relations. Future reforms must take such diversity and differences into consideration and avoid a one-size-fits-all formula to ensure the implementation and sustainability of reform efforts.

Acts in Pakistan:

Public surveys and reports of government accountability and redress institutions show that the police are one of the most widely feared, complained against, and least trusted government institutions in Pakistan, lacking a clear system of accountability and plagued by corruption at the highest levels. District-level police are often under the control of powerful politicians, wealthy landowners, and other influential members of society. There are numerous reported cases of police extrajudicial killings of criminal suspects, torture of detainees to obtain confessions, and harassment and extortion of individuals who seek to file criminal cases, especially against members of the security forces.

Several police officers who spoke to Human Rights Watch openly admitted to the practice of false or faked "encounter killings," in which police stage an armed exchange to kill an individual already in custody. Such killings may be carried out because of pressure from higher command or local elites, or because the police are not able to gather enough evidence to ensure convictions. Police are rarely held accountable for these killings and families of victims are deterred from filing complaints against police out of fear of harassment or being accused of false charges.

During the long march organised by the Pakistan Tehreek Insaf, the police fired shells of tear gas on civilians protesting peacefully. The tear gas and "Lathi Charge" done by the police was against all international law and norms. The police brutality demonstrated went against the direct orders of the Pakistani Supreme Court.