



PAKISTAN INTERFAITH LEAGUE

A Socio-Political Movement

Let's say **NO** to Discrimination, Injustice and Religious Extremism for a **Peaceful Pakistan!**

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN



It is with great pleasure that I observe the many milestones that PIL has been able to achieve in line with the vision, mission and objectives by raising awareness for the significance of interfaith harmony, promotion of peaceful co-existence, access to justice for all, due diligence for rights of the Minorities, provision of equality on the basis of humanity by engaging stakeholders belonging to different walks of life and endeavoring to bring a positive change in their outlook towards these imperative issues.

For the past many decades the need for Interfaith Harmony has been recognised as the way forward for Peace in the world for sustainable development in every domain. However this need strongly emerged on the globe majorly after the incident of 9/11 where the world was divided into different blocks on the basis of religion and religious beliefs. The gap between the people grew rapidly and gave way to religious extremism and sectarian violence which resulted in brutal and unjustified killing of hundreds and thousands of innocent people all over the world.

Unfortunately Pakistan has not been an exception to religious extremism and has witnessed atrocious incidents which not only affected the religious minorities in Pakistan but also the majority population which are Muslim. The heinous crimes committed in the name of religion massacred innumerable households and left behind as aftermath, countless orphans, widows, physically impaired people and homeless families.

Disdainfully not only have we forgotten Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah's vision of a secular state where the citizens were to be free to worship their respective religions, we are now partaking in intra-faith and sectarian violence which is resulting in further divides even between people of same religious beliefs. Today rights of the minorities have been disregarded and equality of citizens is of no significance.

PIL has come forward as a movement which believes that true representation of the national flag will only be possible if all citizens of Pakistan are perceived as equal and stand shoulder to shoulder without any discrimination.

PIL's stakeholders comprise religious scholars, clerics, political workers, journalists, lawyers, academia, students, civil society representatives, and members of corporate sector specifically focusing to promote interfaith harmony, peace and collective wisdom in their respective domains. PIL proudly boasts a nationwide membership of over half a million people from all religions based in Pakistan, which is steadily growing. The outreach of PIL encompasses representation from the Federal Capital as well as provincial, divisional, district, tehsil and union council levels. The members belong to all religious faiths and segments of the society and have a staunch conviction that people from different religious beliefs should not be considered as minorities but should be given equal status as all other Pakistanis; they have the right to compete at all levels without bias, prejudice and condemnation as the minorities are an integral part of Pakistan.

I would like to put forward a humble appeal to all citizens of Pakistan to join hands with Pakistan Interfaith League and stand together for making Pakistan as perceived by the Father of the Nation in its true letter and spirit where the Constitution of the country does not discriminate the citizens on the basis of their religion, sex and provincial divides; where the citizens are not victimised on the basis of religion; where the rule of law prevails for all irrespective of their social strata, ethnicities and religious beliefs; where the society does not discriminate people's talents, abilities and potential on the basis of religion; where the political parties do not undermine the patriotism, wisdom, commitment, dedication, integrity and social standing of the members of the minorities and give them due representation in the mainstream decision making; where members from the Minorities can also be appointed at higher positions at the government level, the Armed Forces, Judiciary, Public as well as other sectors; where there is provision in the Constitution for non-Muslims to hold the office of the President of the State, Prime Minister of the State, Chairman Senate, Speakers National and Provincial Assemblies, Governor and Chief Minister.

As citizens of Pakistan it is our highest obligation to devote our time and energy for building a true democratic Pakistan.



Sajid Ishaq

IDEOLOGY OF PIL

Pakistan Interfaith League (PIL) is a socio-political movement comprising a network of religious scholars, clerics, political workers, journalists, lawyers, academia, students, civil society representatives and members of corporate sector specifically focusing to promote interfaith harmony, peace and collective wisdom in their respective domains.

Pakistan Interfaith League came into being with the conviction that the people of Pakistan should be represented by a Socio Political movement that perceives the nation as one entity as depicted in the national flag; a movement that neither represents the majority nor the minority but humanity on the basis of equality. PIL has come forward to ensure collective wisdom, coexistence, justice, peace, tolerance and interfaith harmony in the country.

PIL is of the belief that instead of treating people with different religious beliefs as minorities they should be given equal status as all other Pakistanis. They should be permitted to compete at all levels without bias, prejudice and condemnation. They should be considered an integral part of Pakistan as they are proud to be Pakistanis.

PIL envisages bringing a positive change in mindsets and promoting equality for most vulnerable segments of the society such as religious minorities, downtrodden, oppressed, victimized, women, senior citizens, and People with Special Needs.

VISION

The whole nation united under one flag irrespective of religious beliefs, ethnicity, traditions and culture to contribute in prosperity, peace and stability of Pakistan.

MISSION

Uniting people for peaceful, social, political and religious coexistence.

VALUES OF PIL

- Patriotism
- Justice
- Accountability
- Transparency
- Equality
- Sincerity
- Humanity
- Respect
- Tolerance
- Humility
- Integrity
- Compassion
- Stewardship

OBJECTIVES

- Promotion of Interfaith Harmony, Human Rights and struggle to improve access to Justice, particularly for the vulnerable segments of the society (religious minorities, women, children, senior citizens, bonded labour, and People with Special Needs)
- Advocacy and Lobbying for the restoration of the rights of religious minorities and religious freedom
- To advocate social and interfaith issues through print and electronic media
- Restoration of Rule of Law through strengthening of Democratic Process and Good Governance
- Improve access to Quality Education for all citizens of Pakistan
- Improve living conditions and environment of vulnerable segments of the society

Achievements of PIL

PIL has established 744 Interfaith Units at Provincial, Divisional, District, Tehsil, Union Council and Town levels. These Units are responsible for keeping people belonging to various religious faiths united on one platform for addressing and resolving the issues arising at local level on the basis of religious discrimination by involving local clerics and religious scholars. At present PIL has over 575,000 registered members belonging to different religious faiths.



- **Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC)**

PUC is a recognised body of over 22,000 religious scholars and 5,630 Madaris (religious Islamic seminaries) around the country which come under its auspice. The Chairman PUC, Maulana Tahir Ashrafi, a religious scholar of international acclaim, is also the member of Islamic Ideology Counsel of Pakistan.

The alliance between PUC and PIL has been established in order to deal with the growing insurgencies related to religious extremism, misuse of the Blasphemy Law and victimization on the basis of religion. PUC and PIL are working together for the promotion of Interfaith Harmony in the country.



- **United Council of Churches Islamabad (UCCI)**

United Council of Churches Islamabad is a network of Churches of different denominations based in Islamabad. The purpose of this network is to provide support to the Christian families living in the slum areas of Islamabad. PIL assists them in resolving their community issues by establishing linkages with different line departments, as and when required.

PIL, through UCCI, endeavors to sensitize different stakeholders of the society on the importance of Interfaith Harmony, Rights of the Minorities, access to justice, equality on the basis of humanity and provision of equal opportunities on the basis of merit. PIL undertakes extensive lobbying in order to highlight the afore mentioned issues at the level of policy makers, heads of Political parties and parliamentarians so that the voice of the aggrieved minorities is heard by the decision makers.



UCCI pays tribute to Chairman PIL and Chairman PUC on the successful efforts made for the release of Rimsha Masih

- **National Supreme Council of Bishops & Heads of Churches (NSCBC)**

NSCBC is a body of Bishops and Heads of Evangelical Churches, recognized by the Government and other political parties at National level. The Alliance between NSCBC and PIL strengthens the endeavors and compliments the struggle being made for raising voice for the rights of the minorities, social injustices and discrimination on the basis of religion.

This platform provides opportunities to PIL leadership in reaching out to the minorities, especially Christians, in order to sensitize them on issues pertaining to their due rights and also enables PIL to voice their grievances at various forums.



Former Federal Minister for Interior, Rehman Malik meeting with the Chairman NSCBC Bishop Ishaq Mazhar.



Chairman PIL with the representatives of National Supreme Council

- **Odh Rajput Community**

Odh Rajputs, a Muslim ethnic group, have a total population of over 12 million people residing mainly in the Sindh and Punjab provinces of Pakistan. Nomads by nature, they remain associated with the building trade in Pakistan. They are also one of the deprived and marginalized communities in respect to their rights.

The Odh Community's alliance with PIL gives strength to its struggle for the restoration of rights for its marginalized community in Pakistan and for its recognition as a mainstream ethnic group and for their due share in the decision making.



Chairman PIL with the Chairman Odh Rajput Community and other office bearers of Odh Rajput Community

PIL Interventions

- **Kot Radha Kishan, District Kasur, November 4, 2014**

A young Christian couple, Shahzad and Shama, were kidnapped, brutally beaten and then burnt alive in a brick kiln, allegedly for burning pages of the Quran at Chak No: 59, Tehsil Kot Radha Kishan, District Kasur, near Lahore, on Tuesday November 4, 2014 in a conspiracy involving the brick kiln owner, the accountant and the local Muslim clerics of the area. The local clerics announced from the mosques of 5 adjoining villages right after the Morning Prayer that the couple had burnt pages from the Quran, thereby committing Blasphemy. On hearing the announcements a mob of nearly 3000 to 4000 Muslim villagers, started arriving at the kiln. They beat the couple and paraded them naked before throwing them into the kiln, burning them alive.

PIL held a protest in-front of the Press Club in Islamabad on November 5, 2014 in order to denounce the heinous murder of three people, under the garb of religious extremism. A Press Conference was also held in this regard on November 17, 2014 in Islamabad. The Chairman PIL demanded from the Chief Justice of Pakistan to take a Suo Motto action in this case so that a speedy trial of the incident may be carried out and an exemplary punishment may be awarded to the culprits of the murder incident.



Protest against inhumane killing of Christian Couple in Kot Radha Kishan



Chairman PIL addressing a Press Conference on Kot Radha Kishan incident along with family members of the murdered couple.

- **All Saints Church, Peshawar, September 21, 2013**

A twin suicide bombing at the end of the service at All Saints Church in Peshawar, killed nearly 200 Christians, leaving hundreds critically injured. It is believed to be the country's deadliest attack on Christians.

Chairman PIL, Sajid Ishaq, visited the site of the incident the same day with Chairman PTI, Imran Khan, Chief Minister of KPK and other Provincial Ministers and met with the families of the blast victims, the injured of the blast, church leaders and local administration.

Chairman PIL held a Press Conference on September 24, 2013 to protest against the brutal attack and demanded from the Chief Justice of Pakistan to formulate a commission to investigate the suicide attack in Peshawar and bring forth the truth. He also requested him to look into providing security to the worship places of all religious minorities.



Chairman PIL with the victim of the Church blast



Chairman PIL with the Chairman PTI and CM Khyber Pakhtoon Khwa on their initial visit to All Saints Church after the blast

• Hazara Genocide, Quetta, January 10, 2013

The Hazara Community, easily identifiable due to their Mongoloid features, have for generations been the target of sectarian violence in Pakistan and Afghanistan. The Pakistani Sunni Muslim extremist militant group is assumed to be behind the attacks against Hazaras. For hundreds of years, Afghan Hazaras have fled Afghanistan for the relative safety of Quetta, on Pakistan's restive western border. But unfortunately Quetta is no more a sanctuary for them. The deadliest bomb attack was in a snooker hall on January 10, 2013 which killed 94 people. At least 2000 Hazara men, women and children have lost their lives and more than 1000 have been injured in Quetta in recent years.

A peaceful protest was launched under the banner of PIL in front of National Press Club (NPC) against the killings of the Hazaras in Quetta whereby hundreds of people belonging to different faiths and different walks of life joined in the protest. Candles were lit in memory of those innocent Hazaras who had lost their lives due to religious extremism.

Speaking to the National and International Media, Sajid Ishaq, Chairman PIL said that no religion preached violence. He said that killing of Shiite Muslims in Quetta was an insane act of extreme religious intolerance. He said that there was dire need for religious scholars of all schools of thought to sit down and chalk out a strategy to deal with religious extremism and promote interfaith harmony and tolerance.



Protest launched against the killing of innocent Hazara Community in Quetta

• Kasur Incident June, 23, 2013

The incident of parading naked three women of the same family took place on June 23, 2013. On two occasions some goats belonging to a Christian family entered the fields of Munir, a landlord, who claimed that his crops had been damaged by the goats, hence he confiscated them. When Shaukat Masih and his father Sadiq Masih, owners of the goats approached Munir in the company of their two female family members and requested him to release their goats Munir refused to do so and instead started beating and cursing Shaukat and his father and severely injured them. In retaliation Shoukat slapped him back.

This infuriated Munir who threatened Shaukat of dire consequences. The same evening Munir sent his armed men to Shaukat's house who broke into the premises around 11pm. On finding Shoukat and his two brothers away they started harassing their wives. They dragged them outside into the street, stood them under the street lights and tore their clothes. No one dared to stop them as they were influential people having close links to the PML-N Parliamentarians.

Unfortunately the Chief Justice of Pakistan and Chief Minister of Punjab turned a blind eye towards this heinous incident in Kasur, Punjab and no action was taken against Munir or his men.

Chairman PIL, Sajid Ishaq raised the issue of inhuman attitude meted out to the Christian family in Kasur with the Chairman PTI and emphasized on the need for a "Calling Attention" to the incident in the Parliament.



Chairman PIL meets Chairman PTI to deliberate on the Kasur incident

- **Joseph Colony, Badami Bagh, District Lahore, March 9, 2013**

On March 9, 2013, a total of 235 families were directly affected by the heinous incident whereby a Christian boy living in Joseph Colony was accused of committing blasphemy, while sitting with his Muslims friends. The Blasphemy Law in Pakistan strictly prohibits the uttering of disrespectful, objectionable and derogatory remarks against Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H). The incident happened on Thursday evening. On Friday, a religious prayer day of Muslims, the religious cleric of the local mosque instigated the Muslims, who gathered for Friday prayers, to severely punish the Christians living in Joseph Colony for the act.

Muslim extremists in the shape of a mob, first looted the property of the residents and then set their houses on fire. An estimated 180 to 200 houses, small shops and business concerns in the area got burnt down.

Chairman PIL, Sajid Ishaq visited the affected area, the same day, to assess the damages and console the traumatised families. He held two press conferences in collaboration with Pakistan Ulema Counsel (PUC), in Lahore and Islamabad, to launch a strong protest against the sad incident, demanding that the findings of the judicial probe be made public and the culprits be brought to task for setting ablaze two Churches and Bibles as that also comes under Blasphemy. A protest was also held in Islamabad against the heinous crime.



Chairman PIL's initial visit to Joseph Colony, District Lahore March 2013



Nationwide Protests against the act of Religious Extremism; PIL and PUC protest against the heinous incident at Joseph Colony Lahore



Chairman PIL and Chairman PUC hold Press Conference to condemn the barbaric act of violence; PIL also provided assistance to 235 affected families by distributing Bibles, food items and non-food items.

• Sarhadi Lutheran's Church, District Mardan, September 21, 2012

On September 21, 2012, Sarhadi Lutheran's Church in Mardan, KP Province, was set on fire by an angry Muslim mob, comprising of nearly 800 persons protesting against the sacrilegious film. The mob set the Church on fire along with Houses of two Pastors and the adjacent Head-Teacher's house of the local Christian school, after looting and plundering valuables from the premises.

Chairman PIL visited the Church on the day of the incident and launched a serious complaint to the concerned authorities. He said that the amount of Rs. 30 million announced by the Chief Minister of KP was too less as the real loss of movable and immovable property was at least somewhere around Rs. 120 Million. After vigorous efforts of Chairman PIL, the Federal Government also contributed Rs. 70 Million for the reconstruction of the Church.

PIL held a Press Conference to condemn the anti-Islam film which was attended by people from the Muslim, Hindu, Christian and Sikh Communities. Chairman PIL Sajid Ishaq expressed his sorrow on the burning of the Sarhadi Lutheran's Church in Mardan and strongly condemned the latest act of 'hate preaching' by the US national film maker who tried and succeeded in triggering a grand wave of religious violence at international level.



Visit of the Chairman PIL to Lutheran's Church.



Chairman PIL leading a protest rally in Mardan.

- **Rimsha Case, Islamabad, August 17, 2012**

On August 17, 2012 a minor Christian girl Rimsha, aged 11, reported to have Down's Syndrome, was arrested and sent to jail allegedly for desecrating pages from the Holy Quran. A major breakthrough and a feather in PIL's cap was the success of the Rimsha Masih Case. It was the first time in the history of the country that a case registered under the Blasphemy Law was thoroughly investigated by the concerned authorities and the culprits were brought to task while charges against a Non-Muslim girl accused of a blasphemous act were dropped.

This indeed is a milestone in the history of Pakistan which was achieved with the cooperation of representatives of all religions whereby the Media played a very strong role by highlighting the true picture and communicating the real image behind the curtain.

Chairman PIL, Sajid Ishaq, advocated the case by organizing several Consultative Meetings with religious scholars of different faiths, especially the Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC) and holding Press Conferences to sensitize the print and electronic media regarding the nefarious designs of the religious cleric who wrongly accused a minor girl of blasphemy.



Series of Press Conferences, involving Muslim religious Scholars (first time in the history of Pakistan) to raise voice for justice for Rimsha; National and International Media coverage

• Gojra Incident, District Faisalabad, July 29, 2009

Seven people were inhumanly burnt alive and 18 others injured in Gojra on July 29, 2009 over an alleged case of desecration of the Holy Quran. More than 50 houses were set on fire and a Church was damaged by an angry mob. According to sources, most of the houses were burnt by a mob of around 1000 people, mostly youth, who had their faces covered with veils. They threw petrol bombs and fired indiscriminately. This continued for 5 hours and then busloads of people joined the mob, with the police backing away, ransacked the entire village, looted and plundered and burnt seven Christians alive and while injuring several others. Witnesses said the attackers appeared trained for rioting and arson.

PIL organised Press Conferences to highlight the issue and to provide justice to the persecuted Christians of Gojra. PIL provided relief assistance to the affected families in the form of Folding Beds, Bedding, Jerry Cans, Water Tanks, Kitchen Sets and Stoves.



Chairman PIL consoling the bereaved families;



Visiting the graves of the martyrs

- **Kasur Incident, June 30, 2009**

The incident took place at Bahmniwala, a village in Kasur where around 110 Christian families, almost 700 people, were forced on Tuesday, June 30, 2009 to flee from their houses and spend the night in the fields surrounding their village, after an angry mob attacked and threatened to burn their houses for an alleged case of blasphemy. The problem started when a Christian boy, Arif Mashi, was traveling on a tractor and asked a Muslim boy, Muhammad Riaz, to allow him to pass or overtake on the road. When Riaz refused, the two quarreled. Following this incident, on Tuesday night, a mob attacked houses of the Christian community with petrol-bombs, destroying their electricity meters and thrashing any Christians they found.

Chairman PIL called a series of Press Conferences to highlight the issue to provide justice to the innocent Christian families of Kasur . PIL also provided relief in the form of Food Ration, Folding Beds, Bedding, Jerry Cans, Water Tanks, Kitchen Sets and Stoves.



Visit to the affected area; Chairman PIL addressing the media

- **Interfaith Harmony Campaigns by PIL**

PIL ventures to promote positive change at all levels in the society through advocacy and lobbying. PIL feels that peace at national level is possible only when there is peace within communities and among people of different faiths and beliefs. This level of comfort within communities can only be attained through better understanding of each other's religions, faiths and beliefs so that misconceptions are done away with and minds are more accommodative in accepting activities pertaining to religious events other than their own.

PIL endeavors to sensitize different stakeholders of the society on the importance of Interfaith Harmony, Rights of the Minorities, Access to Justice, Equality on the basis of Humanity and provision of equal opportunities on the basis of merit. PIL undertakes extensive lobbying in order to highlight the aforementioned issues at the level of policy makers, heads of Political parties and parliamentarians so that the voice of the aggrieved minorities is heard by the decision makers.



PIL organised an Interfaith Walk, led by Chairman PIL, Sajid Ishaq, to mark the International Interfaith Day.

PIL Rallies



PIL Chairman addressing the participants of the Rally Against Joseph Colony Incident, Lahore



PIL Chairman who is also the National President of Minority Wing PTI, speaking during PTI Rally on March 23, 2013, at Minar-e-Pakistan, Lahore



PTI Rally being lead by Chairman PIL in Rahim Yar Khan in 2013.





Rally against Joseph Colony Lahore incident



Rally on 3rd Anniversary of Gojra Incident



Protest against the burning of All Saint's Church, Mardan.



National President Minority Wing PTI / Chairman PIL during the Azadi March from Lahore to Islamabad.



Chief Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, SSP Islamabad, Bishop, religious leaders and other notables joined the Peace Walk led by Chairman PIL for solidarity with victims of All Saints Church Peshawar.



Chairman PIL leading a rally on International Interfaith Day.



Chairman PIL Sajid Ishaq in a rally for solidarity with the Armed Forces of Pakistan



Leading a rally in Islamabad



Chairman PIL heading towards rally in Rahim Yar Khan along with Shah Mehmood Qureshi



Leading a rally in Islamabad Azaadi March



Leading a rally in Lahore

PIL Protests



Protest against blast in All Saints Church Peshawar



Protest against the Hazara Genocide



Protest against Election Commission



Chairman PIL who is also the National President Minority Wing PTI with Chairman PTI at Azadi Dharna.



Peace Painting Competition on the occasion of International Interfaith Day. H. E. Mr. Peter Hayward, High Commissioner of Australia was the Chief Guest



Certificate Distribution Summer Internship Programme. Mr. Lajos Arendas, Deputy High Commissioner of Canada was the Chief Guest.

Picture Gallery / Events



Imran Khan, Chairman PTI and Sajid Ishaq Chairman PIL lighting candles on Christmas Dinner



Chairman PIL presenting the Minority Policy to Chairman PTI



Chairman PTI and Chairman PIL Meeting Ambassador of Argentina, H. E. Mr. Rodolfo Martin Saravia, Dean of Diplomatic Corps



From Rt. to Lt: French Ambassador. Secretary General PUC and Canadian Deputy High Commissioner with Chairman PIL

Press Conferences



Press Conference on All Saints Church incident



Press Conference Rimsha Masih Blasphemy Case



Press Conference for Joseph Colony Incident, Lahore.



Press Conference Gojra incident.

With the Victims of Religious Extremism



Chairman PIL visiting a victim of St. Lutheran's Church Blast, Peshawar



Chairman PIL with victims of Bahmniwala incident, District Kasur



Chairman PIL Distributing Relief Packages to victims of Rimsha case.



Chairman PIL talking to Joseph colony victims, Lahore



Chairman PIL's visit to Joseph colony Incident Site, Lahore



Bible Distribution to Joseph colony victims in Lahore



Chairman PIL visiting the All Saints Church Mardan after the attack



Chairman PIL distributing relief to affectees.

Christmas Celebrations



Cake cutting ceremony at Interfaith Christmas Dinner 2013.



Christmas at St. Joseph's Hospice, Rawalpindi, 2013.



Cake cutting ceremony at Interfaith Christmas Dinner 2012.



Chairman PIL and Executive Director I-LAP during the Christmas cake cutting ceremony with Diplomats and other Guests 2012.



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