



STRATEGY OF RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE
(Approved by the Federal Cabinet vide case No. 76/07/2025 dated 12.02.2025)

GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN
MINISTRY OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS AND INTERFAITH HARMONY
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Section-I

1. Introduction:

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan is a pluralistic society characterized by a rich tapestry of cultures, religions, sects, and ethno-linguistic groups that have coexisted since before its independence in 1947. While this diversity is a source of strength, it can also lead to misunderstandings and conflicts among religious groups, resulting in intolerance, hate speech, religious extremism, and, at times, violence, particularly impacting non-Muslim communities. Regrettably, Pakistan has experienced these social challenges, which threaten national cohesion and stability.

In response to these issues, the Supreme Court of Pakistan, through its judgment in SMC No. 1, dated June 19, 2014 [Para-37(i)], directed the Federal Government to establish a task force dedicated to developing a “Strategy for Religious Tolerance.” The initial task force was constituted under the Ministry of Interior; however, based on the recommendations of the One-Man Commission on September 22, 2022, it was reconstituted by the Ministry of Religious Affairs & Interfaith Harmony on November 16, 2022. This task force was mandated to create a comprehensive strategy aimed at fostering religious tolerance in Pakistan.

The *Strategy of Religious Tolerance* outlined in this document provides a structured framework to promote religious tolerance and address the significant threats posed by religious intolerance and hate speech. By mobilizing relevant ministries, organizations, and community leaders and establishing robust early warning indicators and implementation mechanisms, this strategy offers an inclusive and practical approach to mitigating these pressing challenges in Pakistani society.

2. Objectives of the Strategy of Religious Tolerance:

- i. **Promote Religious Tolerance and Understanding:** Foster a culture of respect, tolerance, and understanding among individuals and communities of diverse religious backgrounds, encouraging empathy and mutual acceptance.
- ii. **Prevent and Control Hate Speech:** Develop and implement comprehensive measures to prevent the spread of hate speech targeting individuals or groups based on their religion, ethnicity, or beliefs, and ensure swift and effective responses when such incidents occur.
- iii. **Ensure Adequate and Effective Legal Frameworks:** Strengthen existing legal frameworks and introduce new legislation as needed to address religious intolerance and hate speech, ensuring laws are effectively enforced and that perpetrators are held accountable.
- iv. **Monitor and Report Incidents:** Establish robust mechanisms for monitoring and reporting incidents of hate speech, religious intolerance, and related violence, collecting data to inform policymaking, allocate resources effectively, and ensure that victims receive appropriate support and justice.
- v. **Engage Communities in Dialogue and Collaboration:** Facilitate dialogue and collaboration among religious communities, civil society organizations and government institutions to promote interfaith dialogue, foster reconciliation, and resolve conflicts at the grassroots level.

- vi. **Reform the Education System:** Implement reforms in the education system to promote values of tolerance, diversity, and respect for human rights by integrating teachings on religious pluralism and interfaith harmony into the national curriculum at all levels.
- vii. **Empower Law Enforcement Agencies:** Strengthen the enforcement of laws to prevent the misuse of blasphemy laws and ensure the effective application of Sections 194 and 211 of the Pakistan Penal Code, which pertain to false statements and filing false charges.

3. Challenges of the Strategy of Religious Tolerance:

- i. **Maintaining a Database of Incendiary Hate Speeches:** Incendiary Hate speech is a primary catalyst for promoting hate sentiments and religious intolerance, creating social tensions that can escalate into violent clashes. Establishing and maintaining a comprehensive database on incidents of religious intolerance and hate speech is essential for proactive management and mitigation.
- ii. **Educational and Madrasah Reforms:** Reports of objectionable religious material in textbooks and incidents of discrimination in educational institutions highlight the need for educational reform. Additionally, the proliferation of unregistered Madrasahs that may disseminate extremist teachings underscores the importance of regulatory oversight and curriculum harmonization.
- iii. **Interfaith Dialogue and Involvement of Ulema/Scholars:** Religious conflicts and hate speech within local communities often escalate into social tensions and law-and-order crises. These issues require the active involvement of local religious and community leaders to mediate conflicts and promote interfaith dialogue as a preventive measure.
- iv. **Public Awareness Campaigns through Media:** The rise in hate speech and misinformation on electronic and social media, incitement to violence against religious communities, and negative international media coverage regarding religious freedom in Pakistan necessitate well-coordinated public awareness campaigns. Such initiatives must counter false narratives and educate the public on the dangers of religious intolerance.
- v. **Rehabilitation and Reconciliation Programs:** Despite precautionary measures, violence against minorities sometimes occurs, leading to community displacement and ongoing tensions. These situations can cause trauma and psychological distress among affected individuals. Comprehensive rehabilitation and reconciliation programs are needed to support victims and foster long-term community stability.
- vi. **Political and Legal Interventions:** Ineffective enforcement of laws related to religious tolerance and frequent violations of constitutional protections for minorities contribute to persistent discrimination and violence. Activating strong political and legal interventions is crucial for addressing these shortcomings and ensuring compliance with constitutional assurances.

Section-II

Plan of action of the Strategy of Religious Tolerance

Ministry of Religious Affairs & Interfaith Harmony will establish a separate desk for implementation of “**Strategy of Religious Tolerance**”. **National Commission for Minorities (NCM)** will ensure the rapid coordination amongst the concerned stakeholders for an effective response. The implementation mechanism for the Strategy will be as follows:

Sl	Action	Early Warning Indicators (EWIs)	Implementation Mechanism	Entities responsible
1	Maintaining database of Incendiary speeches	Reports of Incendiary speeches in public gatherings and hate speeches in Sermons promoting intolerance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting up of database and analysis of issues raised in Incendiary speeches in public gatherings and hate speeches in Sermons promoting intolerance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M/o Interior / NACTA [Lead Role] • M/o RA&IH • National Commission for Minorities (NCM) • Provincial Home and Minority Rights department. • PTA • MoHR
2	Educational and Madrasah Reforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports of objectionable religious material in text books. • Increased incidents of religious discrimination in educational institutions. • Increase in unregistered growth of Madaris • Reports on imparting and preaching of religious bigotry in Madaris. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate interfaith and religious-tolerance education into school curricula. • Harmonization of curricula taught in madaris with the modern education standards highlighting the equal rights, dignity, respect and tolerance for mankind. • NACTA and CII will maintain close contacts with the diverse religious schools and will look after the following strategic plans; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Establishment of an apex body to register and regulate the functions of all Madrassahs. ✓ Establishment of a regulatory body (with representation from all religions) to regulate all religious institutions including state's mosques, temples, gurdwaras and churches. ✓ Mosques to be incentivised and make them institutional entity like community centres. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M/o FE&PT [Lead Role] • HEC • Wafaq-ul-Madaris • Provincial Educational Departments • NACTA • MoRA&IH • CII
3	Interfaith and Intra-faith Dialogue by	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports of religious conflicts in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage religious / community leaders to mediate and defuse the situation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoRA&IH / R&R Wing [Lead]

	Ulema / Scholar Involvement	<p>local communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased social tensions related to religious diversity. • Reports of hate speech in religious sermons or congregations. • Increased incidents of religious clashes involving local religious leaders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activate peace and interfaith harmony dialogues by engaging religious leaders, scholars and civil society. • Establish a Community Resilience Network (e.g UMCs/ DHICs/CSOs) that can be mobilized to engage communities in dialogue when tensions rise. • Coordinate with law enforcement agencies to monitor potential areas of concern • Enhance law enforcement presence in conflict-prone areas. 	<p>Role]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCM • MoI/NACT A • Mo Human Rights • Provincial Human Rights/Minority Departments • Civil Society Organizations (CSOs); • UMCs • DHICs
4	Public Awareness Campaigns through media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharp rise in hate speeches on electronic / social media. • Incitement to commit acts of hate or violence against religious communities • Spread of False information to defame or incite hatred against religious groups • Negative international media coverage about religious freedom and religious intolerance in Pakistan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activate public awareness campaigns through print, electronic and social media to educate Public about the dangers of religious intolerance. • Conduct public awareness about the importance of relevant laws. • Collaborate with media partners and influential voices to amplify campaign messages, counter misinformation, and foster constructive dialogue on issues related to religious tolerance and diversity. • Provide guidelines to media outlets for ensuring responsible reporting and to avoid sensationalism, hate speech. • Establish/activate Media Monitoring Cell to detect, block and remove objectionable contents from the cyberspace. • Register, investigate and prosecute the defaulters of the relevant policy guidelines, laws and rules. • MoFA to initiate international outreach efforts. • Engage with foreign diplomatic missions to clarify Pakistan's position. • Utilize social media platforms for immediate response and public diplomacy. • Initiate dialogue with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M/o Information & Broadcasting [Lead Role] • PTA • MoI-NACTA • FIA • MoRA&IH • NCM • MoFA • MoHR • Provincial Information / Human Rights /Minority Dept./ Home Dept.

			<p>international partners and organizations and highlight Pakistan's commitment to religious freedom and tolerance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare a comprehensive response to address concerns. 	
5	<p><u>Rehabilitation and Reconciliation Programs</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incident of violence occurred against minorities. • Displacement of communities from their homes. • Rising tensions and conflicts between different communities. • Reports of trauma and psychological distress, or mental health due to hate speech 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish community welfare programs to engage with affected communities. • Provide psychosocial support, counseling, and mental health services for individuals and families experiencing trauma. • Encourage community leaders to play a role in providing emotional and psychological support. • Initiate dialogue sessions and mediation efforts to address inter-community tensions and conflicts through religious / community leaders. • Promote open and respectful discussions to foster mutual understanding. • Ensure that the legal system holds individuals accountable for their actions. • Provide legal assistance and protection to victims and witnesses. • Provide support and rehabilitation services to victims of discrimination and violence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCM [Lead Role] • MoI-NACTA • MOI&B • MoRA&IH • Provincial HR/Minority Dept./ Home Dept.
6	<p>Political and Legal Interventions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports of ineffective implementation of laws relating to religious tolerance. • Frequent violations of constitutional assurances for minorities • Growing incidents of discrimination and violence against minority communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pursue legal action against perpetrators of hate crimes and violence. • Capacity building of law enforcement personnel in enforcement of laws regulating religious tolerance and hate speech. • Establish mechanisms for minority communities to report violations and seek redress. • Establish/improve mechanisms of reporting/investigation and prosecution of the defaulters of religious intolerance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M/o Interior / NACTA [Lead Role] • MoRA&IH • Provincial Human Rights / Minority Deptt / Home Dept. • Civil Society Organizations (CSOs); UMCs; DHICs • NCM