



HRFP Fact Finding Report on Peshawar Church Attack

Background:

The continuous trend of brutality and inhumanity against the religious minorities in Pakistan marked a bad history right after the next day of International Peace Day (September 21st) when a Church located at Northwest of Kohati Gate, Peshawar (Provincial Capital of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) met up with a worst ever twin suicide bomb attacks. It was “All Saints Church (All Saints Church dates back its history in 1883 with its Mughalesque features, gleaming white dome and minaret-like towers. The biblical quotations are inscribed on the walls in English, Hebrew and Persian scripts. The Church quiet resemble with the architecture of the traditional Mosque)” of the “Church of Pakistan” Congregation. All Saints Church unfortunately becomes the symbol of bloodshed, mourning and hostility on the late morning of 22 September, 2013. The twin bomb blasts of highest intensity exploded after the Sunday Church around 11:35 am, when the worshippers were returning back to their homes. The explosive blasts reported to be two in numbers by two persons killed 127 Christian worshippers and badly injured 250 peoples that included Men’s, Women’s and Children (Figures Shared to HRFP by All Saints Church Authorities).



After knowing the incident, HRFP strongly condemned and considered it necessary to probe the facts and figures of this attack from the Church authorities, victims, families and the local residents of Peshawar. For this purpose HRFP fact finding team left for “All Saints Church”, Peshawar on the same evening of incident. HRFP team headed by Mr. Naveed Walter (President HRFP) including Mr. Zohaib Newton (Program Coordinator) , Mr. Shadman John (Admin Officer) and Mr. Rustam Masih (Office Assistant) reached to the place of incident at 8:00 A:M of September 23rd.

Environment of Kohati Gate:

The markets and shops near Kohati Gate were closed down in the vicinity when HRFP team entered that attacked area. There was an environment of tension and panic in the eyes of the local residents who were

standing at roadside. The whole area was covered and sealed by the Police authorities. Number of media persons was present there.

Environment of the Church:

On entering the premises of “All Saints Church”, the team witnessed an atmosphere that couldn’t be expressed in the words. The local residents who lost their family members were crying with grief and uttering their sentiments “Give back my family”, “We Want Justice”, “Stop Violence against religious minorities”.... The damages were viewed at every footstep of the Church. The black colored blood on the floor covering, reeking smell of the blood, the human flesh glued up with the Church walls, different insects intaking those flesh, the broken windows, mirrors on the ground, deep holes on all sided of the Church walls, the burned clothes, books of kids, lying in the courtyard of the Church, the blood soaked jumble of shoes and other belongings of the dead bodies and crying persons were creating an environment of doom and gloom.

The Church boundary was crowded with the local people and victim’s families. They were crying, protesting and condemning the saddest incident. After observing the pathetic situation, HRFP started taking information by individual interviews of the eye-witnesses of the incident, victims, their families and other stakeholders that were present at Church, hospital and colonies. Useful facts were revealed from those discussions. Below are mentioning some of the view:

HRFP conducted Individual Interviews of the Following Persons:

1. Interview with Eye-Witnesses:

a. Mr. Mehmood Jan

During the probe visit to All Saints Church Peshawar, the team met with the Eye-Witness named Mr. Mehmood Jan aged 59, the treasurer of All Saints Church and among the injured persons; who got head injury. Informing to HRFP, he shared that on 22nd September, 2013 the Church prayer finished according to routine around 11:30 am. He informed that it was the regular practice of Church to distribute food (Cooked Rice) to worshippers and the same practice was in the process that day. He said, around 11.35 am I came out from the Church and went towards the middle of the corridor, the two of his close friends named Victor Ghulam and Babu Masih called him to finalize few plans regarding the Church activities. He said that moment; my sixth sense directed me to meet them after few minutes. I was at distance from them and I loudly shouted I am

Sr. No	Names	Status
1.	Mr. Mehmood Jan	Eye-Witness of the Incident
2.	Ms. Rukhsana Saleem:	Eye-Witness of the Incident
3.	Kausar Iqbal	Victim Family Member
4.	Samina Masih	Victim Family Member
5.	Nosheen Masih	Victim Family Member
6.	Elizabeth Masih	Victim Family Member
7.	Samina Shahzad	Victim Family Member
8.	Sr. Rose O.P	Victim Family Member
	Pastor Rev.Ejaz Masih Gill	Incharge Pastor of All Saints Church
10	Bishop Humphrey Sarfraz Peter	Bishop of Peshawar Diocese
11.	Bishop Samuel Azriah	Moderator/President Bishop Church of Pakistan)
12.	Sehrish Masih	Victim
13.	Mariam Masih	Victim
14.	Razia Masih	Victim
15.	Sunaina Masih	Victim
16.	Robinson Irshad	Victim
17.	Tariq Masih	Victim
18.	Ashkar Gohar	Victim
19.	Waqas Ishaq	Victim
20.	Jonathan Sohail	Victim
21.	Fiza Munawer	Victim
22.	Shaukat Ali Yousaf Zai	Minister for Health & Information (KP)
23.	Ms Mehraj Hamayun	MPA (KP)
24.	Dr. Arshad Javed	CEO, Lady Reading Hospital Peshawar(KP)

just coming in 5 minutes. He said, I don't know at that time which force dragged me away from them. After saying this, Mehmood Jan moved towards the opposite side of corridor. He said, when I hardly marched upto 15 to 20 feet away from them, I heard a sound of explosive blast which traumatized me for few moments. He also informed that after the interval of approximately 30 seconds, another bomb exploded. He said it was like the end of time for me as there were only the crying voices, injuries and dead bodies of the affectees. He also witnessed a blazing fire of about 25 to 30 feet height. He said though I was quiet at a distance, I still got severe injury on my head. He said after 20 to 25 minutes the rescue team and police reached the spot and started rescuing services for the affectees. A very interesting fact was shared by Mehmood Jan, according to him after the two blasts the Police authorities recovered the head and few body parts of the attackers, both bombers were male. He shared most of the patients were taken to three main hospitals Lady Reading Hospital, Hayatabad Medical Complex and Sher-Pao Hospital.

b. Ms. Rukhsana Saleem:

HRFP met with another eye witness named Rukhsana Saleem aged 45, working as a head nurse in HMC (Hayatabad Medical Complex). Rukhsana shared with HRFP that after the Church prayer it was the regular practice of the church congregates to spend some time in the corridor for discussions. She shared the Church prayer finished around 11:30 am and all worshippers walked towards the corridor. Talking about her self, she said I feel my self immensely lucky as I stayed inside the Church. She said on the first blast I was inside the Church and the Church Windows and mirrors broke in no time. After listening the blast, I was completely feared and I just rushed towards outside the Church. When I was near to the corridor, I saw a second explosion that left me fainted. She said after few minutes I came back to consciousness and witnessed the deadly moment of my life.

She informed that her Uncle Javed Masih and her aunt Raj Bibi got expired soon after the blast. She said both were present in the corridor when the suicide bombers blast themselves. Rukhsana right hand was also injured.

2. Interview with the Victim's families:



a. Kausar Iqbal:

HRFP interviewed Kausar Iqbal aged 65 and a resident of Shahdi Hall, Gol Gathri, Peshawar. Kausar Iqbal was crying near the Church gate remembering her acquaintances that died in the attack. The team of HRFP consoled her and asked about her acquaintances. Her entire family was victimized. She said, his two sons named Riaz Masih aged 45 & Imtiaz Masih aged 39 is killed. Her three grand children are also injured by legs, arms and heads. She made a complaint regarding the negligence of the Hospital authorities in dealing the patients timely. She said my grand children were fully bleeding, but in the Emergency centre of Government Hospital there

were very few doctors to take the emergency cases. She said it took couple of hours to provide rescue services to my grandsons and bleeding continues in that time.

b. Samina Masih:

Samina Masih aged 35 a local resident of Peshawar is working as a Staff Nurse in Lady Reading Hospital. She said on 22nd September, 2013 I didn't went to the Church, I was at home when I came to know from our neighbors that two suicide bombers have attacked on the Church. She said that her 6 close relatives are assassinated in the attack. Their names are Fareeda Masih, Naveed Masih, Ilyas Masih, Nabeela Masih, Shazia Masih, Manu Masih. She said, firstly I went to "All Saints Church" when the injured person were being shifted to the Hospital. Soon I came to know that the medical staff of the hospital is not providing timely medications to the affectees. She said, I rushed towards the Hospital with casual clothes without changing Hospital Uniforms. She said I was disappointed to see that there were few doctors for number of injured patients. She said, the medical assistance of the victimized was very poor.

c. Nosheen Masih:

Nosheen Masih aged 32 is a local resident of Peshawar, works in Lady Reading Hospital. Nosheen shared with HRFP that it's my routine to attend the Sunday prayer. On this Sunday, I was not feeling well so I decided to stay at home. She was taking rest at home, when she watched on television about the two bomb blasts in "All Saints Church". Nosheen Masih shared that she has lost her 5 family members named Sami Masih, Joseph Masih, Albert Masih, Nabeel Masih and Johnson Masih. She said all went to Church on regular basis. Nosheen plight was pathetic as during her conversation she was continuously weeping.

d. Elizabeth Masih:

Elizabeth Masih aged 62 a local resident shared her plight with HRFP as she is also among the depressing one's who lost her 2 family members. She also expressed her views by saying, "The state has completely failed in providing security & ensuring protection of the lives of Christian community and other religious minorities of Pakistan. She said, if the Government can't ensure security, then they should allow us to migrate to some other Country. She said, all religious places in Pakistan are at risk and there is not a single security plan to cop up with those risks.

e. Samina Shahzad:

HRFP met with Samina Shahzad aged 45 who got legs and ribs injuries on the day of attack. The loss of Samina Shahzad was immense and unrecoverable. Samina informed HRFP about the death of his brother Iqbal Gohar aged 43 and her two nephews Ehsan Gohar aged 11 and Nehaar Imsaal aged 8. Samina Shahzad also expressed her deep reservations about the safe future of religious minorities in Pakistan.

f. Sr. Rose O.P:

At the courtyard of "All Saints Church" Peshawar, among the mourners and condemners a Dominican Sister named Sr. Rose O.P was also sharing the sweet memories of her deceased relatives. HRFP came to know on talking to Sr. Rose that her Sister's husband named Nasir Masih aged 45 died with his younger brother in twin suicide bomb attack. Nasir Masih was working in Mission Hospital, Peshawar and a resident of Mission Colony. Sr. Rose shared, that Nasir Masih was the single working hand of his family and now his entire family happened to be orphan.

3. Interview with Church authorities:

a. Pastor Rev.Ejaz Masih Gill

HRFP team met with the Pastor In charge of “All Saints Church”, Peshawar named Rev. Ejaz Masih Gill. Rev. Gill was leading the Sunday prayer on the day of attack. He shared with HRFP, that the Church authorities were already concerned about the security situation of, as it is located at a main centre. He informed that in the past we have requested the police and administration authorities of Peshawar several times to deploy full security during the Church timings, but the Police were reluctant to deploy sufficient guards; they always assigned 2 or 3 security guards similar to 22nd September, 2013.

In response to a question asked regarding the day of attack, Pastor shared that everything started in the similar routine, the Church started at 9:00 “0” clock in the morning, the strength of worshippers as per routine were approximately 500 in numbers . He said, around 11:30 am I concluded the prayer and blessed the whole congregation. He said, the teams who distribute food items (particularly rice) were already in the Church’s Corridor . According to him, after just 5 to 8 minutes when more than half of the congregation was present in the Church corridor, the two bombs blasted during the interval of 30 seconds. He said, the sound of the blast completely traumatized my mind for a certain period of time. He shared, after the explosion I witnessed the parts of human body blasted in the air. The dead bodies of innocent women’s, children and men’s in front of my eyes left me deeply distressed. He informed that only two police officers were appointed to ensure the safety of 500 worshippers. Regarding his safety, he said I was present inside the Church (away from suicides attack places) that’s why I got prevented from possible serious injuries.



b. Peshawar Diocesan Bishop Humphrey Sarfraz Peter

HRFP team met with the Bishop Humphrey Sarfraz Peter (Bishop of Peshawar Diocese), who shared expression of grief and said, “For so long we have been requesting government functionaries to review the security checks but no-one bothered to meet us.” The Bishop shared further that whole community is in the situation of doom. He said to express deep condemnation and grief, the Church Authorities have decided to observe three days mourning to condemn the Church attack, alleging that the government has failed to protect the Christian community, he said, the loss of Christian community cannot be recovered for number of years.

c. Moderator/President Bishop Samuel Azriah (Church of Pakistan)

HRFP team also recorded the comments of Bishop Samuel Azriah (Moderator/President Bishop Church of Pakistan), he commented in grief that terrorism in Pakistan has gained a dangerous dimension that is affecting every person of this state. He stressed “The government should find out the forces behind the attack which we see as attempts to disturb the religious harmony of the country. The forces behind this heinous act must be

exposed and given exemplary punishment. He said, after this gory incident it is the duty of the government to beef up security at all the religious places of worship.”

4. Meeting with the injured Victims in Lady Reading Hospital:

After visiting “All Saints Church” Kohati Gate, the team of HRFP went to the “Lady Reading Hospital” Peshawar to look upon the condition of severely injured persons and express solidarity with them. Lady Reading Hospital is the biggest Government Hospital of Peshawar comprising of 1,400 patient beds. It is surrounded by Khyber Bazaar, Qissakhwani Bazaar. HRFP visited Female Emergency Ward, Male Emergency Ward & Children Emergency Ward that were fully concentrated with the bomb blast injured persons. The environment of the Hospital was more pathetic as HRFP witnessed the injured patients whose wounded conditions were miserable. There were approximately 100 injured Christian patients included women, men and children. HRFP interviewed the following injured patients:



(1). Sehrish Masih:

HRFP visited the Female Emergency Ward of Lady Reading Hospital. Ms. Sehrish Masih aged 14 was on first bed of the Emergency ward and she was unable to speak; just observing everything around her. HRFP team talks with his brother named Naeem Masih who was an accountant in a private organization. Naeem informed that her sister’s both legs are badly damaged and the part of her abdomen is fully burned. Sehrish’s body was fully covered with bandages. Naeem also shared that his mother named Naseem Bibi and his brother Junaid has been killed in this incident. While talking, Naeem started weeping loudly in grief.

(2). Mariam Masih:

On the second bed, Mariam Masih aged 52 was laying in pain & woe. HRFP team talks with her daughter named Rohi Bano aged 31. Mariam facial skin was badly affected and white & black spots indicating immense burning were seen on her face. Rohi Bano informed that she also got legs and back injuries. She requested HRFP to urge the Hospital authorities to increase the efficiency of medication services to the patients.

(3). Razia Masih

Razia Masih aged 35, was also the victim of bad injuries and was laying third bed. She was unable to speak and respond. Her brother Imran Masih was taking care of Razia. Imran shared to HRFP that the abdomen and legs of her sister is wounded, due to which she is feeling quiet difficult to take any move. The team was shocked to know that Razia’s two kids were killed in the bomb attacks. Their names are Zeeshan Amir aged 9 and Shamoon Amir aged 5. The husband of Razia named Amir Masih was also admitted in Male Emergency Ward

of the same hospital, is also badly injured, Imran shared further. He compliant that the Hospital authorities are not dealing the injured patients efficiently.

(4). Sunaina Masih:

Sunaina Masih aged 18 was laying at fourth bed, whose situation is very critical. HRFP met with the mother of Sunaina named Victoria Masih, she informed that her daughter was moving towards corridor for getting the food when the bomb blasted. On asking about her condition, she said the urination system of Sunaina is not working due to the severe injury on her lower body parts. Along with this, her legs and other body parts are also injured badly.

Victoria Masih further shared with expression of sadness that her four beloved family members have been killed; their names are Victor Masih aged 26, Saima aged 20, Neelam aged 20 and a nephew of just 1 & half years.

(5). Robinson Irshad:

HRFP also visited the bed of Robinson Irshad aged 19, a student of B.Sc 7th year, a resident of Khatak Colony, Peshawar. During visit to the Hospital, HRFP found Robinson Irshad the person who himself shared the incident with us and said, his both legs are fractured. He further shared that he feels himself fortunate as he is still live after such a terrible attack.

(6). Tariq Masih:

Tariq Masih aged 55, a Government officer was found to be as one of the most serious patient, was being medicated by the Doctor for his burned body parts. His chest was particularly inflamed and tubes were fixed on his chest due to the extreme intensified explosions. When HRFP visited his bed, he was unconscious at that time and his nephew shared above mentioned.

(7). Askhar Gohar:

A half beard man aged 54 surrounded by his family members was also present in the Male Emergency Ward, his family informed to HRFP that he has undergone major operations of abdomen and the legs and other body parts of Mr. Gohar were fractured. The family shared further that the blasts have took away the 7 lives of their family. The whole family was in the situation of trauma when HRFP talked to them.

(8). Waqas Ishaq:

Amid the mentally normalized victims, there was present an abnormal boy named Waqas Ishaq aged 17. HRFP met with Waqas father named Ishaq Masih, a sanitary worker and a resident of Shadi Hall, Gol Gathri, Peshawar. Ishaq shared that his son Waqas Ishaq who is mentally retarded regularly attends the Sunday prayer. He said, Waqas was far away from the corridor but still due to two major blasts, the explosive materials of the bomb hits and injured my son from both legs and at present he is unable to stand & walk on his legs.

(9). Jonathon Sohail:

HRFP also met with a patient named Jonathon Sohail admitted in ICU and is serving as a teacher in Government High School Peshawar. He was given oxygen to breathe properly and was being treated for injuries on sensitive parts of the body that required highly sterile environment. Her wife and his brother were very

concerned about Sohail's health and they urged HRFP to instruct the Hospital's authorities to provide timely medication to all injured patients.

(10). Fiza Munawar:

In the Child Emergency Ward, Fiza Munawar a small girl aged 7 was also admitted. She got severely affected by the explosions of blast. Mariam Basharat her aunt shared that lower body parts of Fiza are so badly injured and the bleeding is continuously flowing out from her body. She said that wounds are still open and exposed to infections.

The team of HRFP met with many other male, female and child patients that are undergone to various surgeries and operations. Their names are Romail Arif, Nadir Sabir, Nazir Masih, Amir Masih, Anwar Ghulam, Asher Gohar, Maryum Munawar, Shumaila Munawar, Samina Shahzad, Bushra Masih and Kashmala Munawar. Their conditions are still at a high risk and they need continuous medication for months and then they may heal.

5. HRFP team discussed the Concerns of hospitalized victims with Government Officials of KP and with CEO of Lady Reading Hospital, Peshawar.

HRFP team met with Mr. Shaukat Ali Yousafzai (Minister for Health & Information Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) and with Dr. Arshad Javed (CEO , Lady Reading Hospital Peshawar) and also makes a monitoring visit with him in the emergency wards to look upon the conditions of the patients. Earlier, the injured patients reported number of complaints regarding the provision of timely medications to HRFP.



HRFP team shared all reservations of the injured patients to Mr. Shukat Ali Yousafzai and Dr. Arshad Javed. He urged to both of them to assure all possible and advance health facilities to the injured patients. Mr. Shaukat Ali Yousufzai and Dr. Arshad Javed assures HRFP and to family members of patients of proper and free medication during the period of their recovery.

6. HRFP discusses Concerns of the Patients with Female Member Provincial Assembly –KP:

HRFP also shared the reservations of the injured patients with the Female Member Provincial Assembly(KP) Ms. Mehraj Hamayun from Quami Watan Party. She condemned the brutal bomb attacks of the militants and expressed words of sorrow against the negligence of higher authorities and assured to instruct the authorities to increase the efficiency for providing medical and other



possible assistance to the affectees on urgent basis.

7. Police Proceedings about the Case:

The Police of Peshawar is investigating the hidden factors of this incident. Initially, six suspects were detained on Tuesday 24th October, 2013, however it is still doubtful that whether the six suspects are actually involved in this attack or not. The investigation performance of the Police authorities is also under question as in the past it is witnessed that they are found vulnerable in arresting and penalizing the terror elements of such suicide bomb attacks.

At the same time, the Church authorities have registered FIR (First Information Report) in Kabuli Khan Police Station, Peshawar against unknown persons. Bishop Humphrey Sarfraz Peter (Bishop of Peshawar) shared with HRFPP that he have met with Police authorities and disappointed to know that investigation is not being carried out in an effective manner.

8. HRFPP Findings:

1. On 22nd September, 2013 All Saints Church, Peshawar started at 9 'o'clock. About 500 worshippers gathered to offer weekly Sunday prayer at Church.
2. It was the regular practice of worshippers to bring Food (Cooked Rice) on Sunday and eat together when the Church finished around 11:30 am, the bombs were blast during distribution.
3. There are two gates of Church and both are being used by the congregation. The proper security had not been provided to them and after the blasts there was no proper & emergency medical treatment.
4. Two persons wearing suicide vests entered the premises of the Church around 11:35 am from the main gate of the Church. One suicide bomber attacked the people by hand grenade, fired and when he was resisted by the police he detonated the bomb. The second blast was carried-out inside the Church gate near to corridor.
5. The second bomb blast was more explosive and powerful than the first one.
6. According to "All Saints Church" authorities and HRFPP's investigation, 127 Christian worshippers have been killed and 250 are injured.
7. Among the expired persons, 80 were males, 30 were females, 16 were children and 1 police guard.
8. The attackers opened fire at Police Officers deployed at the Church, killing one guard and injuring the other before entering the Church premises.
9. The walls of the Church were dimpled from the force of the ball bearings that had been packed into the explosives.
10. The head and body parts of the suicide bombers had been recovered and were sent to forensic examination.
11. The Police authorities said that both suicide bombers were males.

12. Police officials said each vest contained an estimated six kilograms of explosives.
13. The two bombers detonated their explosive vests within an interval of 30 seconds after entering the Church.
14. Markets and shops in the locality closed down in the vicinity as tension and panic gripped the area after the incident.
15. After the attack, dozens of ambulances with wailing sirens carried coffins of people to the football ground of St. John High School at Kohati Gate, Peshawar.
16. Initially Christian community decided that they should not bury dead bodies for 2 days as protest and then they will do a funeral jointly in the same Church. By the pressure of Government they were not allowed and they buried the bodies on the same evening and next day night (Sep 22-23). The dead bodies were buried in two major cemeteries of Peshawar, Gora Qabristan in the Cantonment and the other in Wazirbagh area.
17. The injured people shifted to the Hospitals were not treated properly and due to unavailability of doctors they wait for 3 to 4 hours with severe injuries for medication. After being admitted, the injured patients again face delayed medication treatment.
18. A militant group belonging to Taliban, claimed responsibility for the attack. The group had earlier claimed responsibility for killing 10 foreign climbers in Gilgit-Baltistan and for an attack on an Inter-Services Intelligence compound in Sukkur.

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