

## Pakistan: Protect the Minorities

(Bangkok, 30 March 2016) – The Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA) strongly condemns the fatal attack against civilians, mostly women and children, at Gulshan-e-Iqbal Parkin Lahore, Pakistan on 27 March 2016.

Media has reported that at least [72 people were killed](#), including 29 children, and over 340 were injured. Many are in critical condition in hospitals. On 27 March 2016, about 3000 people gathered in the popular park to celebrate Easter. The majority of them belonged to the Christian community. Media quoted eyewitnesses saying that no security arrangements were in place in the park, and that the suicide bomber blew himself in an area where women and children were taking part in recreational activities.

Media reported that Jamat-ul-Ahrar, a militant splinter group of Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), claimed responsibility for the deadly bombing. The group said to have particularly targeted Christians celebrating Easter.

FORUM-ASIA regrets that this is not the first fatal attack on minorities in Pakistan. Around 15 people were killed and more than 80 injured by two suicide attacks carried out by [Jamat-ul-Ahrarat two churches in Youhanabad on 15 March 2015](#). This was preceded by another attack on 22 September 2013, when TTP suicide bombers attacked the [All Saints Church in Peshawar, the capital of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province](#). That attack killed more than 80 people, while about 120 people were injured, mostly women and children.

International human rights and humanitarian law strictly prohibits targeting civilian populations, especially women and children. FORUM-ASIA urges the Government of Pakistan to grant immediate relief and rehabilitation to the victims, and further calls for the adoption of immediate preventive measures to avoid any further attacks. The Government of Pakistan must take all measures to bring the perpetrators to trial, starting with a prompt, efficient and credible investigation.

### About FORUM-ASIA:

*FORUM-ASIA is a regional human rights group with 58 member organisations in 19 countries across Asia. FORUM-ASIA has offices in Bangkok, Jakarta, Geneva and Kathmandu. FORUM-ASIA addresses key areas of human rights violations in the region, including freedoms of expression, assembly and association, human rights defenders, and democratization.*

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