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# About this Report

Strengthening the rule of law is an important objective for governments, donors, and civil society organizations around the world. To be effective, however, strengthening the rule of law requires clarity about the fundamental features of the rule of law as well as an adequate basis for its evaluation and measurement. This report presents select findings from two World Justice Project surveys: the General Population Poll, conducted in Pakistan in August and September 2017, and the Pakistan Justice Sector Survey, conducted in Pakistan in November and December 2017.

The General Population Poll was conducted through face-to-face interviews in 2,010 households distributed proportionately across the five urban areas of Faisalabad, Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, and Quetta. This poll was designed to capture data on the experiences and perceptions of ordinary people on a variety of themes related to the rule of law, including government accountability, bribery and corruption, crime, and access to justice. The Justice Sector Survey polled 2,010 people using the same methodology as the General Population Poll and was designed to capture data on Pakistanis' views and experiences related to dispute resolution, legal awareness, legal identity, household dynamics, and gender issues.

Overall, this report represents the voices of over 4,000 people in Pakistan and their experiences with the rule of law in their country.

The data derived from both surveys is presented in this report as 12 thematic briefs, each one highlighting a different facet of the rule of law as it is experienced by the population in Pakistan. These briefs touch upon issues of accountability, corruption, fundamental rights, access to information, crime, justice – criminal, civil, and informal – as well as views on women, internally displaced people, and refugees. The thematic briefs are designed to call attention to Pakistan's situation from a national perspective, while simultaneously illuminating key changes over time, comparisons to South Asian peer countries, as well as the unique perspectives of various sub-populations of interest, such as women and respondents across the five selected cities in Pakistan.

# Executive Findings

## 01. **Perceptions of Government Accountability:**

There is a high perception of impunity in Pakistan. Approximately one in five Pakistanis (21%) think that a high-ranking government officer caught embezzling government funds would be prosecuted and punished. On average, since 2013 there has been a steady increase in the number of respondents who believe the accusation would be ignored by the authorities (33%). Overall perceptions of government accountability vary across cities in Pakistan, however. Respondents in Lahore reported the most positive perception of accountability, where 24% believe a high-ranking government officer would be punished for embezzlement, while only 10% of respondents in Quetta believe the same. When compared to other South Asian countries, perceptions of accountability in Pakistan are better than India (19%), on par with Afghanistan (21%) and lower than Nepal (26%), Sri Lanka (31%), and Bangladesh (45%).

**02. Corruption Across Institutions:** Pakistanis believe that a significant number of authorities are involved in corrupt practices. Police are viewed as the most corrupt authorities by respondents, with 73% of respondents saying that most or all police are involved in corrupt practices. With 32% of respondents saying that most or all judges and magistrates engage in corruption, judges and magistrates are perceived to be the least corrupt by respondents. Despite being viewed as the most corrupt authority in Pakistan, perceptions of police corruption have steadily decreased in the last four years. In 2013, 88% of respondents believed that most or all police were involved in corrupt practices, but this figure decreased to 73% of respondents in 2017.

**03. Bribery Victimization:** Petty bribery is pervasive in Pakistan. More than half of Pakistanis have paid a bribe to receive assistance from the police (60%), and a quarter have paid a bribe to process a government permit (25%). Overall, there has been a decrease in bribes paid to a police officer, to process a government permit, and to receive medical attention at a public hospital since 2013. When compared to bribery victimization rates of regional peers, rates of police bribery are higher than average in Pakistan,

while rates of bribery to process a permit and to receive treatment at a public hospital are lower than the average for other South Asian countries.

**04. Fundamental Freedoms:** Pakistanis have moderate views of political and media freedoms in the country, and quite positive views of religious freedoms. Respondents have the most positive views on whether religious minorities can observe their holy days – with 87% agreeing or strongly agreeing – followed by views on whether the media can expose cases of corruption (69%) and whether people can organize around an issue or petition (69%). Since 2016, perceptions of political, media, and religious freedoms in the country have improved.

**05. Crime Victimization:** Crime rates in Pakistan vary by type of crime and city. On average, 7% of respondents reported that their household experienced a burglary in the last three years, 2% of households experienced a murder, and 15% experienced an armed robbery. Rates of armed robbery are the highest in Karachi (25%), burglary rates are the highest in Peshawar (12%), and murder rates vary between 1% and 3% across all five cities. On average, there has been a decrease in the rates of all three crimes since 2016.

**06. Criminal Justice:** Incompetence of criminal investigators was cited as the most serious problem facing criminal investigative services in Pakistan. Regarding police conduct, 32% of respondents believe that police always or often act according to the law, and 30% believe that police are always or often punished for violating the law. While these views have fluctuated since 2013, perceptions of police corruption and respect for suspects' rights have improved in recent years. When it comes to criminal courts, inadequate resources were cited as their most serious problem. Views on how often courts guarantee everyone a fair trial and perceptions of corruption have both fluctuated since 2013.

**07. Access to Civil Justice:** A large majority of those surveyed (82%) experienced a legal problem in the last two years, with problems relating to community and natural resources (51%), consumer disputes

(39%), and public services (28%) being among the most commonly reported issues. Of those who experienced a legal problem, 5% reported that a party involved in the dispute resorted to violence and only 14% turned to an authority or third party to adjudicate, mediate, or help resolve the problem. In terms of problem status, 32% reported that their legal problem was done while 68% reported that their legal problem was still ongoing. Respondents whose legal problem was not yet resolved reported lower levels of satisfaction with the resolution process as well as lower levels of legal capability, confidence, and access to expert help. Nearly half (48%) experienced a hardship as a result of their legal problem, with stress related illnesses being the most common hardship reported.

**08. Legal Awareness:** Pakistanis have a moderate amount of legal knowledge. Out of 10 true or false statements about legal rights, the average respondent answered 6.1 correctly. The greatest percentage of respondents was able to correctly answer questions related to children's legal rights, with between 78% and 94% responding correctly depending on the question. The smallest percentage of respondents identified the correct answer for questions related to due process and rights of the accused, with between 13% and 87% responding correctly depending on the question. Neither gender nor higher levels of educational attainment correlated with better legal knowledge.

**09. Women in Pakistani Society:** There are minor differences in men and women's views regarding the rights of women when it comes to divorce and dispute resolution, but the perception gap grows for questions related to inheritance and household dynamics. For example, 64% of female respondents agreed that all children are entitled to a portion of their parent's estate, whereas only 46% of men shared this view. Similarly, 31% of men believe that a man has a right to hit his wife if she misbehaves, while only 20% of women agreed with this statement. When asked about legal identification and literacy, 78% of male respondents reported possessing a birth certificate and 87% were able to read and write. For female respondents, 55% possess a birth certificate and 80% can read and write.<sup>1</sup>

**10. Internally Displaced People:** Views on internally displaced people (IDPs) in Pakistan vary by topic and by city. Only half (50%) of Pakistanis say that IDPs are welcome in their community but more than two thirds (70%) believe that the government is doing enough to help IDPs. These perceptions are the most positive in Faisalabad and the most negative in Quetta. When asked about the seriousness of various issues relating to IDPs, the largest percentage of respondents (62%) said that IDPs spreading violence and extremism was a serious or very serious problem in Pakistan. In terms of IDPs' treatment by certain institutions, 61% of respondents believe that the media portrays IDPs fairly and less than half (46%) think that local residents and IDPs are treated equally by the police.

**11. Refugees in Pakistan:** Views on refugees in Pakistan vary by topic and by city. Just under half of Pakistanis (49%) say that refugees are welcome in their community, with responses to this question being the most positive in Faisalabad (70%) and the most negative in Quetta (27%). Similarly, on average, 50% of respondents believe that refugees should be guaranteed the same constitutional rights as citizens of Pakistan, with the greatest percentage of respondents agreeing in Peshawar (73%) and the smallest percentage agreeing in Karachi (35%). When asked about the seriousness of various problems relating to refugees, the largest percentage of respondents (73%) said that refugees bringing violence and extremism to Pakistan was a serious or very serious problem. In terms of refugees' treatment by certain institutions, 64% of respondents believe that the government is doing enough to help them, 58% believe that they are treated fairly by the media, and only 43% agree that refugees and citizens are treated equally by the police.

**12. Trust in Pakistan:** Pakistanis have a high degree of trust in fellow citizens, with 82% reporting that they have a lot or some trust in other people living in Pakistan. Across institutions, Pakistanis have the most trust in the courts (61%) and the least trust in the police (23%). Since 2013, the percentage of respondents who report having some or a lot of trust in the police has steadily risen from 12% to 23%.

<sup>1</sup> The The Pakistani Government reports slightly lower literacy rates of 82% for urban men and 69% for urban women. For additional details, see: [http://www.finance.gov.pk/survey/chapters\\_16/10\\_Education.pdf](http://www.finance.gov.pk/survey/chapters_16/10_Education.pdf).