

*In Praise of Pakistan*  
**How the U.N. Human Rights Council  
Reviewed Pakistan in the 2008 UPR**

*30 October 2012*

**Executive Summary**

The UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism is meant to scrutinize the human rights records of all 193 UN member states once every four years. According to the Council's Institution Building Package, UPR's objectives are to achieve "the improvement of the human rights situation on the ground" in the country under review, and "the fulfilment of the State's human rights obligations and commitments." Reviews are to be conducted in an "objective," "non-selective" and "non-politicized" manner.

However, the last time Pakistan was reviewed, it was given a free pass. The countries conducting the 2008 reviews below were fully aware that Pakistan was failing to meet the minimal standards of a free democracy. For example, according to the UN's [NGO compilation report](#) of that year, Pakistan was found to be violating the right to life and liberty, the right to a free and fair trial, freedom of movement, freedom of speech, freedom of peaceful assembly and association, women's rights, children's rights, and the right to equality before the law. Yet out of the 36 countries who took the floor, no less than 20 heaped praise on Pakistan. They misused the process in order to legitimize Pakistan's human rights abuses, instead of holding its government to account.

For example:

- Cuba praised Pakistan for "advancing the legal and social status of women" and for "the steps taken to promote and protect human rights."
- Iran praised Pakistan for its "valuable efforts to promote and protect human rights."
- Jordan praised Pakistan for "working towards democracy and human rights," and for endeavoring to "advance the causes of men and women and their economic, social, and cultural rights as well as their political rights."

UN Watch calls on the countries speaking today to challenge Pakistan on specific areas of concern, and to directly criticize specific government policies and actions that violate human rights. *For the methodology used in this report, see [Mutual Praise Society](#).*

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COUNTRY	FH RATING	AFFILIATIONS	EXCERPT FROM STATEMENT	ASSESSMENT	SCORE
<b>AUSTRALIA</b>	Free	JUSCANZ, WEOG	“[We are] pleased that political freedoms in Pakistan have improved significantly over the past year... [We] encourage Pakistan to follow through by implementing the commitment and obligations within these [human rights] treaties... Can Pakistan advise if it will also move to ratify the two Optional Protocols on the Convention on the Rights of the Child?”	<b>Positive</b>  Praises Pakistan, but also encourages it to implement human rights treaties and sign protocols on children’s rights.	2
<b>AZERBAIJAN</b>	Not Free	EE, OIC	“Pakistan continues its efforts to protect human rights in accordance with international law... The Government of Pakistan is making enormous strides in reducing poverty in the country which is a legacy of the colonial past... We are pleased to see the tangible progress that Pakistan has made in ensuring women’s rights.”	<b>Negative</b>  Strongly praises Pakistan instead of holding it accountable for ongoing violations.	-9
<b>BAHRAIN</b>	Partly Free	Arab League, NAM, OIC	“Pakistan has been working tirelessly to consolidate human rights... The government has adopted the national program for maternal and infant health... My delegation highly appreciates the steps taken by Pakistan in the field of education... Could the delegation of Pakistan shed light on the efforts being made by the new government to confirm and enhance freedom of information and the media?”	<b>Negative</b>  Strongly praises Pakistan on health, education, and human rights in general instead of holding it accountable for ongoing violations.  Poses question that is congratulatory rather than an actual challenge.	-8

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<b>BANGLADESH</b>	Partly Free	Asian Group, NAM, OIC	“Human rights are best protected in an environment of plurality, where good governance and the rule of law are well sorted. Media is free... We are happy to note that Pakistan has made considerable progress in all these areas... One of the important indicators of a country’s social progression is the status of women in society. Pakistan has attained enviable success in improving the status of women... My delegation would like to know what measures have been adopted to modernize the education system in Madrassas.”	<b>Negative</b>  Strongly praises Pakistan, including on women’s rights that are in fact significantly violated.  Question on Madrassas not posed as a clear challenge.	-9
<b>BRAZIL</b>	Free	G77, GRULAC	“The Brazilian Government praises Pakistan for the positive measures and its efforts to face human rights challenges... As recommendation, Brazil wished to propose to the Government of Pakistan to consider acceding to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances,...to consider establishing a national policy of protection of human rights defenders.”	<b>Positive</b>  Praises Pakistan, but follows with specific recommendations on signing and ratifying human rights treaties, as well as a generic challenge on the protection of human rights defenders.	2

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COUNTRY	FH RATING	AFFILIATIONS	EXCERPT FROM STATEMENT	ASSESSMENT	SCORE
CANADA	Free	JUSCANZ, WEOG	“Gender discrimination and violence against women remain a problem. Canada recommends the adoption of measures to ensure that victims have access to protection and redress, that perpetrators are prosecuted and punished and that gender sensitivity training be provided to relevant officials. Canada recommends repealing provisions of the Hudood Ordinances that criminalize non-marital consensual sex and fail to recognize marital rape... The second Amendment to the Pakistani Constitution outlaws the Ahmadi religion and the Penal Code allows for the imprisonment of members of the Quadiani, Lhaori and Ahmadi religions for preaching their faith.”	<b>Positive</b>  Strongly challenges Pakistan on discrimination and violence against women, the criminalization of consensual sexual conduct, and discrimination against religious minorities.  Makes specific recommendations.	8
CHILE	Free	GRULAC	“We appreciate the efforts made by the government of Pakistan in the field of gender... We note the act adopted in 2004 which criminalizes honor killings. We feel that it is fundamental that this law be applied as well as the punishment of the acts which it violates. We therefore wonder what is being done by the government of Pakistan to ensure freedom of worship and the integrity of the religious communities.”	<b>Positive</b>  Distinguishes between Pakistan’s law against honor killings and its actual implementation.  Cautiously challenges Pakistan and makes specific recommendation.	3

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COUNTRY	FH RATING	AFFILIATIONS	EXCERPT FROM STATEMENT	ASSESSMENT	SCORE
CHINA	Not Free	Asian group, G77	“We would like to congratulate wholeheartedly Pakistan for its numerous achievements in promoting economic growth, creating employment, eliminating illiteracy and providing health service... We have taken note of the great attention paid by Pakistan in fulfilling its international obligations and its many legislative and administrative measures in the promotion and protection of human rights of women, children, and handicapped persons... We would like to know how they protect the rights of minorities.”	<p><b>Negative</b></p> <p>Strongly praises Pakistan instead of holding it accountable for ongoing violations. Praise extends to women’s rights for which Pakistan deserves censure.</p> <p>Generic question on rights of minorities not posed as clear challenge.</p>	- 8
CUBA	Not Free	GRULAC, NAM	“The heavy burden of centuries of colonialism, the arbitrary division of territory, terrorism and poverty have been only some of the dramatic problems that this noble people have had to struggle against... Commendable effort has been made, for example, in the field of advancing the legal and social status of women... In general, Cuba commends Pakistan on the steps taken to promote and protect human rights. We’d like to ask a question, lastly, concerning Pakistan’s success in reducing child labor in a number of industries in the country.”	<p><b>Negative</b></p> <p>Strongly praises Pakistan, including its progress on women’s rights and reducing child labor despite the persistence of grave violations in these fields.</p> <p>Blames Western states and other external factors for Pakistan’s human rights challenges.</p>	- 10

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EGYPT	Not Free	African Group, Arab League, AU, G77, NAM, OIC	<p>“We are indeed impressed with the significant progress Pakistan has achieved in the field of democracy and human rights...even when facing the most difficult challenges, such as terrorism... We encourage Pakistan to establish an independent national human rights institution... Pakistan has achieved considerable progress in its efforts to eliminate child labor. We would appreciate if the delegation could shed light on the challenges that may still be persisting in this regard... The promotion of blasphemy and adultery are obviously not parts of human rights protection and are hence not recommended.”</p>	<p><b>Negative</b></p> <p>Strongly praises Pakistan’s “progress” on democracy, human rights, and the rule of law instead of holding it accountable for failures in these areas.</p> <p>Praises Pakistan’s “progress” on reducing child labor instead of noting that this remains a grave problem. Requests only that Pakistan itself identify challenges on this issue.</p> <p>Comment on adultery appears to be a retort to Canada’s question on Pakistan’s criminalization of consensual sexual activities.</p>	- 8
FRANCE	Free	EU, WEOG	<p>“[On] freedom of religion and conviction, like other delegations, we wonder whether Pakistan envisages further amendments to the Blasphemy Act. [On] administration of justice, we would like to know what steps are being taken to ensure the independence of the judiciary and to foster access for all to justice.”</p>	<p><b>Positive</b></p> <p>Cautiously challenges Pakistan on freedoms and justice.</p>	4

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<b>GERMANY</b>	Free	EU, WEOG	“Concerns had been raised by CEDAW and CERD that discrimination against women still persists in a number of Pakistani laws... Religious minorities face discrimination by the State and non-state actors. Which measures does the Pakistani Government take to effectively protect minorities?... What measures is the government of Pakistan taking to protect the rights of prisoners?... Some observers have expressed concern at Jum’a (Friday) Sermons in some Pakistani mosques inciting to hatred and violence against various groups inside and outside of Pakistan.”	<b>Positive</b>  Strongly challenges Pakistan on issues pertaining to rights of women and minorities, prison conditions, and incitement to hatred and violence in religious sermons.	9
<b>INDONESIA</b>	Free	Asian Group, G77 and China, NAM, OIC	“We note that the government of Pakistan has also sought to further ensure the protection of vulnerable groups such as women, children and minorities... We observe from [Pakistan’s] report that the government has not only sought to assure the economic, social rights but also the civil and political rights of its citizens in a comprehensive and cohesive fashion... We wish to seek further explanation on the steps taken by the government of Pakistan, as well as the best practices in dealing with [the terrorist] threat.”	<b>Negative</b>  Praises Pakistan instead of holding it accountable for ongoing violations.  Poses question that is congratulatory rather than an actual challenge.	- 8
<b>IRAN</b>	Not Free	Asian Group, G77 and China, NAM, OIC	“The government of Pakistan has indeed made valuable efforts to promote and protect human rights... We commend Pakistan for adoption of national laws in compliance with Islamic Shari’a and internationally recognized standards... We would like also to recommend the esteemed government of Pakistan to increase its efforts and strengthen its policies in fighting against terrorism and extremism, any manifestation of violence, torture ill-treatment, economic exploitation and sexual abuse of women and children .”	<b>Negative</b>  Praises Pakistan instead of holding it accountable for ongoing violations.  Makes recommendation that is congratulatory rather than an actual challenge.	- 8

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ITALY	Free	EU, WEOG	“We would like to ask if Pakistan...would consider reducing the scope of offenses for which the death penalty may be imposed and establish a moratorium on executions with a view to abolish the death penalty... We would like to recommend Pakistan to urgently adopt appropriate measures to effectively address the violations of children’s rights especially child labor, prostitution, and trafficking, and to consider the increase of legal age of criminal responsibility... We would like to recommend to Pakistan...the swift ratification of all core instruments of international human rights law.”	<b>Positive</b>  Challenges Pakistan and makes recommendations on the death penalty, child abuse, and ratification of human rights treaties.	7
JAPAN	Free	Asian Group, JUSCANZ	“We would like to learn what measures you are planning to take in order to secure freedom of expression, freedom of association and the like... We appreciate the Government of Pakistan for launching various policy measures for the protection of the rights of women. In this regard, what action are you planning to take in order to implement such measures and further monitor them?”	<b>Positive</b>  Weakly and cautiously challenges Pakistan on several issues.	2



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<b>JORDAN</b>	Partly Free	Arab League, Asian Group, G77, NAM, OIC	“Pakistan has worked towards democracy and human rights. This history started off with the goal of building a moderate, modern democratic state, inspired by its Islamic traditions and its universal humanistic vision, and aimed at making a world and society respecting the universal values of human rights, including the freedom of expression, the freedom of one’s faith, and freedom of association. In the context and framework of the primacy of the justice system, Pakistan has endeavored to advance the causes of men and women and their economic, social, and cultural rights as well as their political rights.”	<b>Negative</b>  Strongly praises Pakistan instead of holding it accountable for ongoing violations.	- 10
<b>MALAYSIA</b>	Partly Free	Asian Group, G77, NAM, OIC	“We are impressed with Pakistan’s concrete legal and administrative measures to improve human rights in many fields, as outlined in the presentation and report. We recognize the significant progress and achievements in the areas of poverty eradication, as well as in such areas as education, health, rights of children and women.”	<b>Negative</b>  Praises Pakistan instead of holding it accountable for ongoing violations.	- 8
<b>MAURITIUS</b>	Free	African Group, AU, G77, NAM	“My delegation notes with interest that the report covers extensively the measures taken by Pakistan to uphold family values... The empowerment of women and the promotion of the rights of the child indeed constitute two major pillars of the human rights architecture. My delegation commends Pakistan for paying particular attention to the promotion and protection of the rights of these two groups.”	<b>Negative</b>  Strongly praises Pakistan for promoting the rights of women and children instead of holding it accountable for shortcomings in these fields and other gross human rights violations.	- 8

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MEXICO	Free	GRULAC	“We recommend that Pakistan accept the visits requested by Special Procedures... We also recommend that Pakistan continue with its appropriate measures to eradicate discrimination and violence against women, including domestic violence, and would appeal to it to strengthen existing measures to thoroughly investigate crimes related to violence against women... We would appeal to it to prevent and fight terrorism, and in so doing to strictly adhere to international human rights law, international refugee law and international humanitarian law.”	<b>Positive</b>  Challenges Pakistan and makes specific recommendations on several issues.	5
NETHERLANDS	Free	EU, WEOG	“We recognize that Pakistan has made progress on the situation of women within its society by the introduction of the Women’s Protection Act of 2006. We would like to know how Pakistan has implemented and enforced this act in the light of recent trends within its society... My delegation would also like to recommend that Pakistan restore, as soon as possible, all fundamental freedoms...this implies reconfirming the independence of the judiciary and cancelling all remaining charges to human rights defenders... The situation of religious minorities is not necessarily improving. We are especially concerned by the way the Blasphemy Law is invoked in practice.”	<b>Positive</b>  Challenges Pakistan on women and minority rights, and on its suspension of fundamental freedoms.  Makes specific recommendations.	7

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NICARAGUA	Partly Free	GRULAC, NAM	“Particularly is commendable the efforts to continue a process of political transition towards full democracy and the significant progress in the field of economic, social, and cultural rights... We would encourage, therefore, to continue to endeavor to strengthen its system for the promotion and protection of all human rights, particularly those of women.”	<b>Mixed</b>  Praises Pakistan’s progress instead of holding it accountable for ongoing violations.  Makes generic recommendation on women’s rights.	-1
NIGERIA	Partly Free	African Group, G77, NAM, OIC	“The effort of the Pakistani government through affirmative action, to empower women...is quite encouraging... We recognize the difficulties faced by Pakistan, namely serious economic challenges, catastrophic drought conditions hampering the economy, the armed conflict in some regions, the high number of refugees, as well as the high population growth rate. We therefore encourage Pakistan to continue to take the desired steps to address the attendant challenges.”	<b>Negative</b>  Praises Pakistan instead of holding it accountable for ongoing violations.  Pits blame for challenges on external factors rather than government policies.	- 6
PHILIPPINES	Partly Free	Asian Group, G77, NAM	“We are glad to note that the government of Pakistan has made steady progress in the promotion and protection of civil and political rights as well as economic, social, and cultural rights of its people... We also encourage Pakistan to continue to give utmost attention to combating violence against women and promoting the rights and well-being of children.”	<b>Negative</b>  Praises Pakistan’s progress instead of holding it accountable for ongoing violations.	-7

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<b>QATAR</b>	Not Free	Arab League, Asian Group, G77, NAM, OIC	“Human rights in the Republic of Pakistan are guaranteed politically and judicially. The constitution guarantees equality and fair justice for all.... The Pakistani legislation contains an abundance of laws and ordinances which give force to the various provisions of international conventions which Pakistan has adhered to. Furthermore, Pakistan has granted special importance to the protection of minorities, disabled persons, women and children... The government of Pakistan acknowledges that tribal and traditional mentalities are an obstacle in front of the enhancement of women and full enjoyment of rights. What are the strategies and policies it intends to adopt?”	<b>Negative</b>  Praises Pakistan’s laws instead of noting shortcomings in implementation.  Praises Pakistan on its justice system instead of challenging it on the lack of full judicial independence.  Only raises challenge that was identified by Pakistan itself in its national report.	- 8
<b>RUSSIA</b>	Not Free	EE, OIC (Observer)	“As stated in the national report, in Pakistan, there are still problems with effective promotion of the full range of the rights of children... We would like to know how the provisions of this law [against corporal punishment] will fit with the criminal code which permits the use of corporal punishment as a disciplinary method in schools. Finally, the CERD some time ago suggested to Pakistan to provide to ethnic and linguistic groups the same status as enjoyed by religious minorities. We would be grateful to the delegation for information on the steps taken by the government in this field.”	<b>Positive</b>  Challenges Pakistan on use of corporal punishment in schools.  Generically and weakly challenges Pakistan on its treatment of ethnic and linguistic minorities.	4

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SAUDI ARABIA	Not Free	Arab League, Asian Group, G77, NAM, OIC	“Our congratulations, or rather the congratulations from these two committees [CEDAW and CRC], show our recognition of the efforts made by Pakistan in the field of human rights... Pakistan is one of the first countries to be confronted by terrorism and the efforts in that respect should be recognized... My question is: Pakistan has received a number of refugees over the past decades. But we learn that a decision has been taken to close camps and repatriate the inhabitants. Might not this be opposed to the principle of voluntary return by refugees and prisoners?”	<p><b>Negative</b></p> <p>Praises Pakistan instead of holding it accountable for ongoing violations.</p> <p>Refers to UN committees to praise Pakistan while failing to underline negative aspects raised by these bodies.</p> <p>Addresses one specific issue of concern.</p>	- 6
SENEGAL	Free	African Group, AU, G77, NAM, OIC	“We learned there that economic, social, and cultural rights occupy a significant place in Pakistan’s development strategy. I noted, in particular, the considerable efforts being made by the Pakistani government to improve the status of women, children, and the disabled, as well as progress made in key sectors of education and health... I wonder whether Pakistan envisages ratifying the Convention on the Protection of Migrant Workers.”	<p><b>Negative</b></p> <p>Strongly praises Pakistan’s social and economic policies, only citing Pakistan’s national report.</p> <p>Weakly challenges Pakistan on its failure to ratify a treaty on migrant workers.</p>	- 7
SLOVENIA	Free	EE, EU	“We are however concerned that no sufficient measures were adopted to ensure effective implementation of these new laws [on women’s rights]. Neither the definition of discriminations nor the provisions on equality between men and women in the Constitution and other legislation are in line with the convention.”	<p><b>Positive</b></p> <p>Notes discrepancies between Pakistan’s laws and their actual implementation.</p> <p>Challenges Pakistan on women’s rights.</p>	5

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<b>SOUTH AFRICA</b>	Free	African Group, AU, G77, NAM	“The government of Pakistan has acknowledged the existence of deep-rooted tribal and traditional mindsets as constraints in women’s empowerment. What strategies or programs are or will be put in place to overcome this challenge?... Illiteracy is identified as a major challenge in Pakistan. What specific measures does the government intend to take in this regards particularly to ensure that the girl-child accesses education at all levels?... We wish to recommend that the government of Pakistan enhance its efforts in the provision of adequate housing and address the identified backlog in this regard as identified in the country’s report.”	<b>Positive</b>  Cites shortcomings that Pakistan acknowledged in its national report.	3
<b>SOUTH KOREA</b>	Free	Asian group, JUSCANZ	“Pakistan has carried out a number of legal reforms in order to eliminate discrimination against women... But CEDAW expressed the concern that no sufficient measures were adopted in order to ensure their effective implementation.... Since more than 250,000 people were to be rendered homeless after a process of eviction and destruction of homes, we were wondering if the delegation could kindly update us on the situation of this population... We would like to join with others in recommending that the government would consider signing the convention [on refugees].”	<b>Positive</b>  Cautiously challenges Pakistan on discrimination against women and a specific incident in which Pakistan evicted citizens from their homes.  Makes specific recommendation for Pakistan to sign a treaty on refugees.	5

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<b>SUDAN</b>	Not Free	African Group, AU, G77, NAM, OIC	“The constitution [of Pakistan] entrenches fundamental rights, thereby guaranteeing their development and progress... The contribution of Pakistan in the multilateral effort to promote and protect human rights merits applaud. We recommend that Pakistan shares its experience in poverty reduction.”	<b>Negative</b>  Strongly praises Pakistan instead of holding it accountable for ongoing violations.  Makes congratulatory recommendation.	-10
<b>SWITZERLAND</b>	Free	JUSCANZ, WEOG	“Switzerland recommends to Pakistan to do everything possible to prevent early marriages and to recognize in its legislation rape within marriage. Switzerland recognizes that Pakistan has a draft law on the protection of children and encourages it to implement it rapidly... The death penalty is still broadly applied in Pakistan. Switzerland... would wish Pakistan to move towards abolishing the death penalty. Switzerland recalls that the rules for fair trial are fundamental, and recommends to Pakistan to respect these as diligently as possible.”	<b>Positive</b>  Challenges Pakistan on several specific issues.  Makes specific recommendation.	7
<b>SYRIA</b>	Not Free	Arab League, Asian Group, OIC	“Pakistan has an ideal constitution and legal system scarcely to find its counterpart in the developing world... Pakistan’s achievements in the field of human rights are quite conspicuous in, inter alia, the political empowerment of women, including the criminalizing of what is called “honor killings,” social insurance system, housing and the provision of quality education... I would like to have more details about some media reports that Pakistan is considering the deportation or repatriation of some Afghani refugees.”	<b>Negative</b>  Strongly praises Pakistan.  Fails to distinguish between laws and their actual implementation, e.g., regarding honor killings.  Weakly challenges Pakistan on its treatment of Afghan refugees.	- 8

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UNITED KINGDOM	Free	EU, WEOG	“We would welcome an update on the bill to establish a national commission on human rights...and would like to recommend such a commission be established in accordance with the Paris Principles... What steps will be taken to monitor and investigate human rights violations perpetrated by the security forces, including illegal and arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearance, extrajudicial killings?... We recommend...a repeal of additional aspects of the Hudood and Zina Ordinances to ensure full compatibility with the CEDAW.”	<b>Positive</b>  Challenges Pakistan on several issues and makes specific recommendations.	6
ZIMBABWE	Not Free	African group, AU, G77, NAM	“Pakistan is to be applauded for the tremendous strides that it has made in such a short space of time in its transition towards full democracy, despite the many challenges that it faces, chief of which is the menace of terrorism. Parallel to these civil and political reforms, the Pakistani government has embraced a sound economic policy.”	<b>Negative</b>  Strongly praises Pakistan instead of holding it accountable for ongoing violations.	- 10