

Bright Future Society & Implementation Minority Rights Forum

Honorable Chair, Distinguished Delegates, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, I am reading this on the behalf of Mr. Samuel Payara, Chairman of Implementation of Minority Rights and the President of BrightFuture Society Pakistan. I had a profound honor to enter this esteem forum and share the perspective of Pakistan civil society on minority rights and on interfaith harmony. Pakistan was founded on the inclusive vision of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who declared that all citizens, regardless of religion, caste or creed, would enjoy equal rights and opportunities. This guiding principle is enriched in the Constitution, which guarantees freedom of religion under Article 20, equality before the law under Article 25, and specific protection for minorities under Article 36. These provisions reflect Pakistani commitment to pluralism, justice, and social cohesion. The nation is a home to a diverse mosaic of faith, including Christians, Hindu, Sikhs, Baha'is, Baha'is, Jains, and Kailash, all contributing to the country's cultural richness and development. The judiciary has delivered landmark judgments regarding minority rights, yet challenges remain in effective implementation. In some instances, limited awareness among officials about constitutional provisions hinders full realization of these rights, strengthening institutional capacity, and public awareness is therefore essential. While Pakistan has made commendable progress in promoting interfaith harmony and minority inclusions, challenges persist, particularly concerning underage marriages of minority girls. The government has shown its commitment to addressing these issues through legislation, institutional reform, and awareness campaigns. Ensuring effective enforcement and accountability remains critical to protect vulnerable communities. The restoration of religious heritage sites, including the historic Jain Mandir and Balmiki Mandir in Lahore, the Gurdwaras, the temples, and the churches across the countries, symbolizes Pakistan's respect for pluralism....