



United States Commission *on* International Religious Freedom

USCIRF Troubled by Denial of Food Aid to Pakistani Hindus and Christians



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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USCIRF Troubled by Denial of Food Aid to Pakistani Hindus and Christians

Washington, DC – The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom ([USCIRF](#)) is troubled by the reports of food aid being denied to Hindus and Christians amid the spread of COVID-19 in Pakistan.

“These actions are simply reprehensible,” stated USCIRF Commissioner [Anurima Bhargava](#).

“As COVID-19 continues to spread, vulnerable communities within Pakistan are fighting hunger and to keep their families safe and healthy. Food aid must not be denied because of one’s faith. We urge the Pakistani government to ensure that food aid from distributing organizations is shared equally with Hindus, Christians, and other religious minorities.”

In Karachi, for example, there have been [reports](#) that the Saylani Welfare International Trust, a non-government organization established to assist the homeless and seasonal workers, has been refusing food assistance to Hindus and Christians, arguing that the aid is reserved for Muslims alone.

USCIRF Commissioner [Johnnie Moore](#) added, *“In a recent address by Prime Minister Khan to the international community, he highlighted that the challenge facing governments in the developing world is to save people from dying of hunger while also trying to halt the spread of COVID-19. This is a monumental task laying before many countries. Prime Minister Khan’s government has the opportunity to lead the way but they must not leave religious minorities behind. Otherwise, they may add on top of it all one more crisis, created by religious discrimination and inter-communal strife.”*

In its [2019 Annual Report](#), USCIRF noted that Hindus and Christians in Pakistan “face continued threats to their security and are subject to various forms of harassment and social exclusion.”

For more information on how governments’ response to COVID-19 is impacting religious freedom around the world, see USCIRF’s latest [factsheet](#): *The Global Response to the Coronavirus: Impact on Religious Practice and Religious Freedom*.

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The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) is an independent, bipartisan federal government entity established by the U.S. Congress to monitor, analyze, and report on threats to religious freedom abroad. USCIRF makes foreign policy recommendations to the President, the Secretary of State, and Congress intended to deter religious persecution and promote freedom

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of religion and belief. To interview a Commissioner, please contact USCIRF at Media@USCIRF.gov or Danielle Ashbahian at dashbahian@uscirf.gov.

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