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Surge in Targeted Killings Raises Alarm Over Violence Against Transgender Individuals in Pakistan

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A tragic rise in violence against the transgender community in Pakistan has prompted renewed outcry from minority rights groups. The recent killing of a transgender woman in Peshawar has once again put a spotlight on the ongoing failure of the Pakistani state to protect one of its most vulnerable populations. With eight such murders reported in 2025 alone, many are asking: How much longer will authorities turn a blind eye?

On the night of July 8, a transgender woman named Taj Muhammad, known in the community as “Asady,” was found shot to death in her apartment in the Tehkal area of Peshawar, the capital city of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province. According to the Voice of Pakistan Minority (VOPM), a prominent minority rights organization, Asady, aged around 32 or 33, was shot multiple times in the upper body and head. The group described the murder as “brutal” and stated it had “shaken the transgender community to its core.”

This incident is not isolated. Since January of this year, at least eight transgender individuals have been killed in KP. The situation has steadily worsened over the past decade. VOPM reports that since 2009, there have been at least 158 killings and more than 1,800 documented cases of violence against transgender people across the province.

“These are not just statistics,” the organization stressed. “Each number represents a life taken, a life that mattered.”

Arzoo Khan, Executive Director of the Manzil Foundation and Provincial President for Transgenders in KP, condemned the killings and called on authorities to take the situation seriously. “We highly condemn the killings of individuals in KP from the transgender community,” she said, expressing her condolences for Asady’s family.

An *FIR* (First Information Report) was filed by Asady’s brother, Bahadur Khan, the same night. While police have initiated an investigation, they have yet to publicly disclose a motive for the killing, contributing to an atmosphere of fear and frustration.

VOPM has also criticized police response to other recent killings. Just a week before Asady’s death, another transgender woman, known as ‘Titli,’ was murdered in Peshawar’s Gulbahar neighborhood. While law enforcement claimed to have solved the case quickly, Arzoo Khan contested this, accusing police of detaining individuals close to the accused while ignoring the actual perpetrators. “The police’s handling of these cases only deepens the mistrust within the transgender community, who feel that justice for them is constantly delayed, if not denied,” said the VOPM.

The disturbing trend continued in other districts as well. In May, a transgender woman known as Shahab, also referred to as “Wafa,” was gunned down in Malakand while returning from a wedding. The following month, another transgender woman named Zaibi was murdered in Abbottabad. These incidents highlight a pattern of targeted killings, not just random acts of violence.

The VOPM emphasized that these are not isolated acts, but rather part of a wider culture of intolerance and neglect. The group argues that transgender individuals in Pakistan face a “double burden”; they are excluded from education, employment, and healthcare opportunities, and simultaneously face the daily threat of physical violence.

The organization concluded with a pointed message: “Transgender people are treated as outcasts and pushed to the edges of society. While the state continues to fall short in protecting them, their demand for justice and safety grows louder, a demand that should not be ignored any longer.”

In a country where human rights are routinely promised but rarely delivered, the plight of Pakistan’s transgender community stands as a grim reminder of how selective and inconsistent the rule of law can be. Until authorities demonstrate a genuine commitment to equal protection under the law, these tragic deaths will likely continue.