

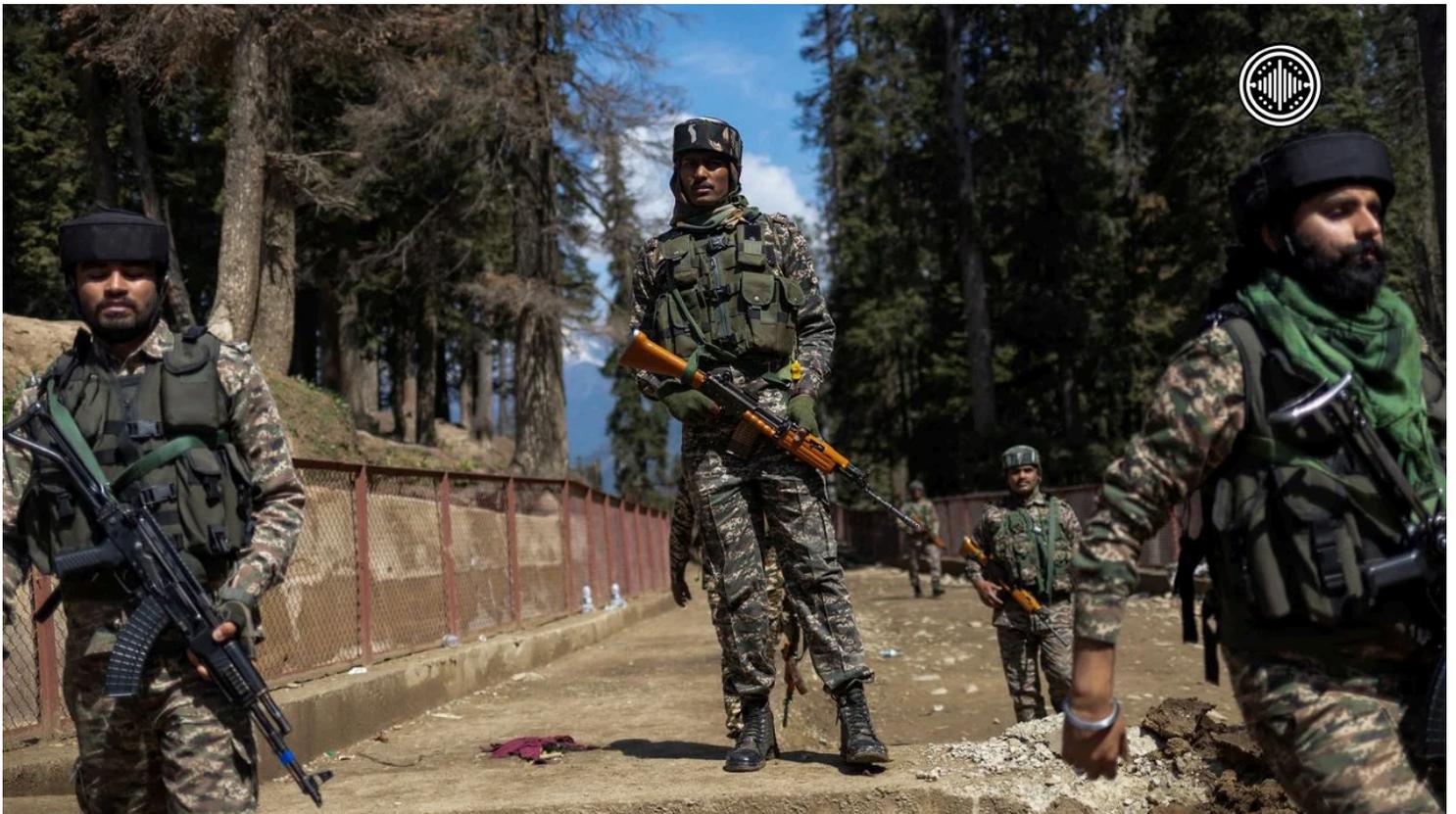
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Pakistan Faces Surge in Honour Killings

July 30, 2025

– Categories: Human Rights



The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) has confirmed that at least 405 honour killings took place across the country in 2024, a grim reflection of persistent violence against women and a lack of enforcement in rural regions. Most of the victims were women, murdered by relatives under the pretext of preserving family honour. Despite legal reforms aimed at curbing such acts, cultural norms and weak law enforcement continue to fuel this disturbing trend.

In one of the most recent and shocking incidents, a couple in Balochistan was killed on the orders of a tribal council after marrying without family consent. The involvement of these so-

called parallel justice systems has long undermined the authority of state law, particularly in remote areas where such councils continue to exercise influence. Another high-profile case that sparked widespread outrage was the murder of social media influencer Sana Yousuf in Islamabad, reportedly shot by a close relative. The killing triggered protests and reignited calls for justice and accountability.

Although Pakistan passed legislation in 2016 aimed at closing loopholes that previously allowed killers to walk free after receiving forgiveness from victims' families, enforcement has remained uneven. In many rural areas, traditional customs still carry more weight than formal legal systems, leaving vulnerable individuals without recourse to protection or justice. The rise in honour killings this year, despite national and international condemnation, suggests that more needs to be done at the grassroots level to implement reforms effectively.

The HRCP and civil society organisations have urged the government to act decisively and dismantle these informal justice structures that enable such crimes. It is essential for law enforcement and the judiciary to assert the rule of law in all regions of the country and ensure that perpetrators face prosecution without exception. Honour should never serve as justification for murder. Real progress will only come when the justice system is equally accessible and effective for every Pakistani citizen, regardless of gender or location. With strong leadership and community engagement, the country can move beyond outdated customs and toward a future grounded in human dignity and the equal protection of all under the law.