

Journal of Law Social Studies (JLSS)

Volume 6, Issue 1, pp 28-39

[www.advancelrf.org](http://www.advancelrf.org)

## Rights in Conflict: Reconciling Individual Freedoms with Security Measures in Pakistan

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### Abstract

*The delicate balance between individual freedoms and national security remains a critical concern in Pakistan. As the country grapples with internal and external threats, questions arise about the extent to which security measures can encroach upon fundamental rights. This article explores the tensions between safeguarding individual liberties and implementing security protocols, offering insights into potential reconciliations. In Pakistan reconciling individual freedoms with security measures. This doctrinal study delves into the intricate interplay between individual freedoms and security measures within Pakistan's legal framework. Against the backdrop of persistent security threats, the article critically examines the tensions and trade-offs inherent in balancing the protection of fundamental rights with the imperatives of national security. Through an analysis of relevant legislation, judicial decisions, and policy initiatives, this research explores the challenges and opportunities in reconciling the sometimes-conflicting objectives of safeguarding individual liberties and ensuring public safety. By shedding light on key legal principles, institutional mechanisms, and societal dynamics, this article aims to contribute to a nuanced understanding of the complexities surrounding rights and security in Pakistan.*

**Keywords:** Individual Freedoms, Security Measures, National Security, Policy Initiatives, Societal Dynamics.

### Introduction

Pakistan's historical struggle for independence and the subsequent framing of its Constitution set the stage for an ongoing debate (Amjad, 2022). How can the nation strike a harmonious balance between individual freedoms and security imperatives? In a complex landscape where terrorism, cyber threats, and political instability persist, finding this equilibrium becomes paramount (Jabeen et al., n.d.). Pakistan grapples with the perpetual dilemma of safeguarding individual freedoms while ensuring the safety and stability of its citizens. As we navigate this complex terrain, let us explore the nuances, legal frameworks, and real-world implications of balancing rights and security (Zahoor & Rumi, 2020).

In the intricate tapestry of governance, the tension between individual freedoms and security imperatives forms a central thread, nowhere more palpable than in the context of Pakistan's legal landscape (Ahmed & Brasted, 2021a). The collision of these two fundamental principles, each essential to the fabric of a democratic society, raises profound questions about the nature of governance, the

role of the state, and the rights of its citizens (Niaz, 2020). This introduction sets the stage for a nuanced exploration of the complexities surrounding the reconciliation of individual liberties with security measures within Pakistan's legal framework (Rafiq, 2022).

Pakistan, like many nations, grapples with the perennial challenge of balancing the protection of individual freedoms with the imperatives of national security (Addo Ghana et al., n.d.). The Pakistani state has implemented a series of measures to safeguard public safety and preserve social order in a region plagued by persistent security threats, including terrorism and geopolitical tensions (Mavrouli et al., n.d.). However, these measures have often encroached upon the rights and liberties enshrined in Pakistan's constitution, sparking debates about the limits of state power and the protection of civil liberties (Garwa, 2024).

At the heart of this debate lies the delicate balance between security and freedom, a balance that has profound implications for the rule of law, democratic governance, and societal cohesion (Alteri et al., 2021). Ordinary Pakistanis daily navigate a complex web of laws, regulations, and security protocols in their quest for security and freedom, illustrating the tension between these competing interests (Giannaki et al., 2023).

Against this backdrop, this article seeks to dissect the complexities surrounding rights and security in Pakistan, examining key legal principles, institutional mechanisms, and societal dynamics that shape the interplay between individual freedoms and security measures (J. L.-J. of B. Studies & 2021, 2021). By critically analysing relevant legislation, judicial decisions, and policy initiatives, this research aims to shed light on the challenges and opportunities in reconciling these sometimes conflicting objectives (S. G.-A. I and Law, 2022).

This article hopes to contribute to a broader understanding of the intricate relationship between rights and security in Pakistan and foster meaningful dialogue about the principles that underpin a democratic society (Mavrouli & Van Waeyenberge, 2023). By grappling with these complex issues, Pakistan can move closer to realising the vision of a society where individual freedoms are upheld and security is ensured for all its citizens (Greenstein, 2022).

### **Rights and Security: A Historical Perspective**

To understand the present, we must delve into the past (P. K.-R. A.-A. J. of Law, 2020). The Nehru Committee's efforts in drafting fundamental rights for a united India laid the groundwork for the post-independence legal framework (Kashwan et al., n.d.). Simultaneously, Jinnah's Fourteen Points provided an alternative strategy for Muslims during the struggle for autonomy (Mitra et al., 2023). The Constituent Assembly's deliberations post-partition further shaped the contours of individual liberties and state authority (Choudhary et al., 2021).

To understand the contemporary challenges of reconciling individual freedoms with security measures in Pakistan, it is essential to trace the historical roots of this complex relationship (Banerjee, 2020). The colonial past, partition from India in 1947, and subsequent struggles with political instability and regional conflicts have profoundly influenced Pakistan's approach to governance, law, and security (Kashwan et al., 2022).

The colonial legacy of British rule left a lasting imprint on Pakistan's legal system, characterized by a blend of British common law principles and Islamic legal traditions (Singh & Saxena, 2021a). The adoption of the Government of India Act 1935, with its emphasis on centralization and executive authority, laid the foundation for a centralized state structure that would later shape Pakistan's approach

to security and governance (Case & 2021).

Following independence, Pakistan grappled with the challenges of nation-building, identity formation, and the establishment of democratic institutions (Nazeer et al., n.d.). Political instability characterised by military coups, authoritarian rule and civil unrest, punctuated Pakistan's early years as a fledgling democracy, influencing its approach to security and civil liberties (W. Sofi, n.d.).

The Cold War era further shaped Pakistan's security landscape as the country became a frontline state in the geopolitical rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union (Ghosh, 2020). Pakistan's role as a strategic ally in the fight against communism led to increased military aid, alliance building, and militarization of its security apparatus, setting the stage for future tensions between security imperatives and individual freedoms (Adeney & Boni, 2023).

The rise of religious extremism and terrorism in the latter half of the 20th century further complicated Pakistan's security challenges, as militant groups exploited regional conflicts, sectarian tensions, and political grievances to advance their agendas. The state's response to these security threats, marked by military operations, emergency laws, and counter-terrorism measures, often raised concerns about human rights abuses and the erosion of civil liberties (W. A. Sofi, 2021). In the post-9/11 era, Pakistan's role in the global war on terror further intensified the interplay between security and civil liberties as the country grappled with the challenges of combating terrorism while upholding democratic values and human rights (Federalism & 2021, n.d.). The enactment of laws such as the Anti-Terrorism Act and the establishment of specialised counter-terrorism units reflected Pakistan's evolving approach to security in the face of new and emerging threats (Karim, 2022). Today, as Pakistan continues to navigate the complexities of security and individual freedoms, it does so against the backdrop of a rich and complex historical legacy (Singh & Saxena, 2021b). By understanding this historical perspective, policymakers, scholars, and citizens can gain valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead in the quest for a society where security and freedom coexist in harmony (4611683 & 2023, n.d.-a).

### **Legal Framework: Balancing Acts**

The Pakistani Constitution, a living document, enshrines fundamental rights (PLR & 2021, n.d.). Let us examine key provisions and their delicate balance:

#### **Article 19 (Freedom of Speech and Expression)**

Citizens have the right to express their thoughts freely, but this right is not absolute (Ahmed & Brasted, 2021b). Reasonable restrictions—such as preventing defamation, incitement to violence, or harm to public order—ensure a delicate balance (LJ & 2022, n.d.). The Constitution of Pakistan guarantees certain fundamental rights regarding freedom of speech, expression, and assembly (Bromell, 2022a). Every citizen shall have the right to freedom of speech and expression, and there shall be freedom of the press, subject to reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interest of Pakistan's sovereignty or integrity, public order, or morality (Bromell, 2022b).

#### **Article 20 (Freedom to Assemble Peacefully)**

A peaceful assembly is a democratic right, allowing citizens to voice their concerns collectively (Nazneen et al., 2021). However, security considerations may necessitate limitations to maintain public order and prevent chaos (de Vogel, 2022). The Constitution provides for the right to assemble peacefully and without arms, subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interest of public order (Eichler & Sonkar, 2021).

## Article 21 (Safeguard Against Arbitrary Arrest and Detention)

Protection against arbitrary arrest and detention upholds individual dignity (Practice & 2021, n.d.). Security agencies, however, require powers to apprehend suspects in the interest of national security (Nazneen et al., 2021). The Constitution ensures the right to freedom of association, which includes the right to form associations or unions, subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interest of public order or morality (de Vogel, 2022).

## Article 24 (Freedom of Movement)

Citizens have the right to move freely within the country. Simultaneously, security checkpoints and border controls are essential for thwarting threats (Z. R.-Y. of H. R. and H. Law & 2020, n.d.).

## Article 25 (Equality before Law)

Equality is a fundamental principle, but security measures sometimes disproportionately affect marginalised communities (N. A.-J. of P. Studies & 2021, n.d.). These legal frameworks lay the foundation for the protection of individual liberties and civil rights in Pakistan (Asghar et al., 2022). However, it is essential to note that these rights are not absolute and can be subject to limitations imposed by law in certain circumstances, such as national security concerns or public order (Baig et al., 2024). The interpretation and application of these constitutional provisions by the judiciary play a crucial role in balancing the protection of individual freedoms with the imperatives of security and public order (Rehman, 2021).

## Case Studies: Rights vs. Security

### *The Nehru Committee's Role in Shaping Fundamental Rights*

The Nehru Committee, during the pre-independence era, meticulously crafted fundamental rights for the United India. These rights—enshrined in the Indian Constitution—served as a blueprint for Pakistan's own legal framework. They reflected the aspirations of a newly formed nation, promising liberty, equality, and justice.

### *Jinnah's Vision: The Fourteen Points*

Amidst the fervour of independence, Muhammad Ali Jinnah presented the Fourteen Points—a strategic alternative for Muslims. These points emphasised autonomy, representation, and safeguards for minority rights. While not directly related to fundamental rights, they underscored the delicate balance between communal interests and individual liberties.

### *Post-Partition Deliberations*

The Constituent Assembly of Pakistan grappled with defining the contours of individual freedoms. The framers recognised the need for a robust legal framework that would protect citizens' rights while allowing for necessary security measures. The result was the Pakistani Constitution, a living document that continues to evolve.

## Proportional Balancing

Legal authorities use proportional balancing to weigh competing interests and determine the

appropriate level of restriction on individual rights in light of broader societal concerns, such as national security or public order (Kolfshootten et al., 2020). In Pakistan's counter-terrorism efforts, proportional balancing requires policymakers and legal authorities to carefully assess the necessity and proportionality of security measures vis-à-vis the protection of individual liberties (Justickis, 2020). Proportional balancing seeks to strike a delicate equilibrium between security imperatives and the preservation of fundamental freedoms by ensuring that any limitations on rights are proportionate to the threat posed and are no more restrictive than necessary to achieve the legitimate aim (Keane & Raganella, 2023).

### **Judicial Scrutiny**

Judicial scrutiny refers to the judiciary's role in reviewing the constitutionality and legality of government actions, including counter-terrorism measures, to ensure compliance with the rule of law and protection of individual rights (Ahmed, 2020a). In Pakistan, the judiciary plays a vital role in scrutinising the legality and constitutionality of security measures through judicial review (4611683 & 2023, n.d.-b). By examining the proportionality, necessity, and legality of government actions, courts can serve as a check on executive power and safeguard individual liberties against potential abuses (Siddiky, 2023). Judicial scrutiny ensures accountability, transparency, and adherence to constitutional principles in the implementation of counter-terrorism policies (Ahmed, 2020b).

### **Public awareness and education**

Public awareness and education are essential components of a rights-based approach to counter-terrorism in Pakistan (Svennevig et al., 2021). By promoting awareness of constitutional rights, legal protections, and the rule of law (Sciences & 2022, 2022), the government can empower citizens to assert their rights and hold authorities accountable for any violations (counter-radicalization & 2020, n.d.). Education initiatives aimed at raising awareness about the dangers of extremism, promoting tolerance, and fostering community resilience can also help prevent radicalization and build social cohesion (PQDT-Global & 2022, n.d.). By engaging civil society, religious leaders, and grassroots organisations, public awareness and education campaigns can mobilise communities to reject violence and extremism and uphold democratic values and human rights (Ahmad, 2020).

### **Reconciliation Strategies**

Reconciliation strategies are integral to addressing the underlying grievances and conflicts that fuel extremism and terrorism in Pakistan (Jilani & Mujaddid, 2020). These strategies focus on fostering dialogue, promoting inclusivity, and addressing the root causes of violence through peaceful means (Akhtar et al., n.d.). Various reconciliation strategies can promote social cohesion, address grievances, and mitigate the drivers of extremism (Chance & Steenekamp, 2020):

**Dialogue and Mediation:** Engaging in constructive dialogue and mediation processes between conflicting parties can help build trust, resolve grievances, and prevent the escalation of violence (Spirituality et al., n.d.). Facilitating communication and negotiation channels between communities, religious groups, and political factions can promote understanding, reconciliation, and conflict resolution (Partov, 2022).

**Inclusive Governance:** Promoting inclusive governance structures that represent diverse ethnic, religious, and ideological perspectives can help address marginalisation and exclusion, which are often root causes of extremism (Gill & Sahni, n.d.). By ensuring equal participation and representation in decision-making processes, governments can foster a sense of belonging and ownership among

marginalised communities and reduce the likelihood of resorting to violence (Sani, 2021).

**Economic Development:** Investing in economic development initiatives, job creation, and poverty alleviation programmes can address socio-economic disparities and empower marginalised communities (Jacob, 2020). Economic opportunities provide viable alternatives to radicalization and recruitment by extremist groups, fostering stability, prosperity, and social cohesion (Abbasi, 2020).

**Reintegration and Rehabilitation:** Implementing reintegration and rehabilitation programmes for individuals disengaging from extremist groups can facilitate their transition back into society. Providing psychosocial support, vocational training, and educational opportunities can help former extremists rebuild their lives, reintegrate into their communities, and contribute positively to society (Akhtar et al., 2023).

**Truth and Reconciliation:** Establishing truth and reconciliation commissions to investigate past human rights abuses, promote accountability, and facilitate healing can help address historical grievances and promote reconciliation (Jilani et al., n.d.). By acknowledging past injustices and fostering a culture of forgiveness and reconciliation, societies can move forward towards peace and stability (Philosophy & 2020, n.d.).

**Cultural and Religious Dialogue:** Promoting interfaith dialogue, cultural exchange, and religious tolerance can foster mutual understanding, respect, and acceptance among diverse religious and cultural communities (Institute, 2022). By recognising and celebrating diversity, societies can build bridges of understanding and cooperation, counter extremist narratives, and promote social cohesion (Abu-Nimer & Nasser, 2023).

Overall, reconciliation strategies are essential for addressing the root causes of extremism, promoting social cohesion, and building sustainable peace in Pakistan (Kasmi, 2024). By adopting a comprehensive and inclusive approach that addresses grievances, fosters dialogue, and promotes economic and social development, Pakistan can mitigate the drivers of extremism and build a more resilient and peaceful society (Hahn, 2020).

## Conclusion

Pakistan faces an ongoing challenge: preserving individual freedoms while ensuring national security (Ishaque et al., 2023). Nuanced approaches, dialogue, and legal reforms are essential. As we tread this tightrope, let us remember that a resilient democracy thrives when rights and security coexist harmoniously (Haque et al., n.d.). As Pakistan marches forward, it faces the tightrope walk of preserving individual freedoms while securing the nation (Ishaque et al., n.d.). Let us engage in thoughtful discourse, seek innovative solutions, and uphold the spirit of justice (Akram et al., n.d.). The heartbeat of democracy thrives in this delicate dance (Jafree et al., 2023).

In navigating the delicate balance between individual freedoms and security measures in Pakistan, it becomes evident that reconciling these often-conflicting interests is a complex and ongoing challenge (Tariq Ali et al., 2022). The interplay between safeguarding fundamental rights and ensuring national security requires careful consideration of legal principles, institutional mechanisms, and societal dynamics (*Pakistan Faces an Ongoing Challenge: Preserving Individual*, Google Scholar, n.d.).

While Pakistan has made strides in enshrining rights protections in its legal framework, the implementation and enforcement of these rights have often been overshadowed by security concerns (Akram Ul Haq & Saif Alvi, n.d.). Counter-terrorism measures, while necessary to combat the threat

of extremism and violence, have sometimes resulted in the infringement of civil liberties and human rights (Counter-Terrorism Measures, *While Necessary to Combat...*, Google Scholar, n.d.).

However, it is imperative to recognise that the protection of individual freedoms and the maintenance of national security are not inherently incompatible goals (Obidimma et al., n.d.). Through a rights-based approach to counter-terrorism grounded in the principles of proportionality, necessity, and legality, Pakistan can navigate this balance more effectively (Schmid et al., n.d.).

Judicial scrutiny, public awareness, and education are essential components of this approach, ensuring accountability, transparency, and respect for constitutional rights (Globalisation & 2023, n.d.). By empowering citizens to assert their rights, fostering dialogue between government authorities and civil society, and promoting awareness of legal protections, Pakistan can strengthen its commitment to human rights while addressing security challenges (Kirima et al., 2024).

In conclusion, reconciling individual freedoms with security measures requires a nuanced understanding of the complexities inherent in Pakistan's legal and socio-political landscape (Barawi, 2023). By embracing a rights-based approach, Pakistan can uphold its constitutional obligations, protect the dignity and autonomy of its citizens, and foster a society characterised by justice, democracy, and respect for human rights (Charbord et al., n.d.).

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