



# ICRD Monthly Update

March 29, 2016

## ICRD Statement on the Lahore Bombing

The International Center for Religion and Diplomacy (ICRD) is deeply saddened by the Easter day bombing at the Gulshan-i-Iqbal Park in Lahore, Pakistan that has left an estimated 70 people dead and several hundred wounded. Although most headlines of late have focused on terror in the West, horrific attacks like that experienced in Lahore occur far more frequently and with consequences every bit as tragic as any others that we read about.

The Lahore attack, which specifically targeted Christians celebrating Easter (but killed a lot of Muslims as well), might add credence to the bleak view that religion continues to be a major driver of conflict. That conclusion, however, fails to acknowledge the herculean efforts of numerous faith leaders in South Asia, the Middle East, and elsewhere to bring peace where there is none.

For ICRD, the attacks in Pakistan hit close to home. For over 10 years, we have worked with brave and dedicated Pakistani men and women to help facilitate incremental, yet critical, strides toward peace from within the country's diverse faith traditions, with a particular focus on reforming the country's madrasas (religious schools).

Working with religious leaders, teachers, and community activists of all stripes, we are currently leading an effort to engage conservative Muslim religious leaders in (1) developing effective counters to religious extremism (2) arresting sectarian violence, and (3) empowering women in countering violent extremism.

The Easter incident serves as a stark reminder of just how high the stakes are. Please pray for the victims of this tragedy and the numerous others like it— and for the success of the efforts described above to prevent their further occurrence.



With best wishes,

Douglas Johnston  
President, ICRD

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