

REPORT OF NATIONAL MINORITIES DAY

Dated: August 11th, 2021

Seminar on Rights of Minorities Guaranteed by the Constitution of Pakistan 1973, in connection with the National Minority day Pakistan.

**The Honorable Chief Guest Mr. Justice Gulzar Ahmed
Chief Justice of Pakistan**

At

Marriott Hotel Islamabad, Pakistan



**Organized By: -
Implementation of Minority Rights Forum Pakistan
& All Neighbors International.**

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“The minorities have certain privileges which are not even available to the Muslims”

Chief Justice of Pakistan 11th August, 2021



IMRF is Non-Profitable, Non-Political and Non-Religious Forum working for the implementation of the Rights of Minorities in Pakistan. A Project of Bright Future Society

Aims & Objectives

1. It is the responsibility of the IMRF to raise voice for the rights of the minorities at every Forum through Seminars, Conferences, Electronic & Print media, and Social Media as well so that lack of awareness and ignorance about the fundamental rights might be abolished and the status of the religious minorities deserves may be implemented and executed.
2. Coordinator shall be deployed in all provinces to make sure the awareness program to be organized by the IMRF so that the awareness shall be provided to the Government officials and the Masses as well.
3. It is also the responsibility of the IMRF to constitute delegates to conduct the meeting with the Government Officials both on the Federal and Provincial Level.
4. It is further the duty of the IMRF that it shall keep on working for the implementation of the vulnerable Judgment of the Supreme Court of Pakistan and in case of any failure, IMRF shall approach the Full Bench of The Honorable Supreme Court of Pakistan till its implementation into its true letter and spirit, More over this bench is constituted that it shall hear the complaints of the minorities and IMRF shall take all these applications and complaints and shall place before the Honorable Bench of The Supreme Court of Pakistan as directed in the judgment.
5. The IMRF will provide free legal aid to the deprived sections of minorities.
6. The IMRF shall announce and conduct an award ceremony “Justice Alvin Robert Cornelius” annually.

Vision of Minority Rights



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“The minorities have certain privileges which are not even available to the Muslims”

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*“Under the constitution minorities have a special status.
This constitutional status has a specific historical background.”*

Ref: (Supreme court of Pakistan 19th June, 2014)

Pakistan is the sixth populated country in the world. There are five major ethnologic communities in Pakistan: Baloch, Muhajir, Punjabis, Pushtuns and Sindhis as well as several small groups. There are also religious minorities such as Christians, Hindus, Sikh, Parsi, Bahai, Kalasha and others. The constitution provides minority rights to them. Implementation Minority Rights Forum organized the Seminar Guaranteed by the Constitution of Pakistan 1973, in connection of the National Minority day Pakistan at Marriott Hotel Islamabad, Pakistan.

Honorable Mr. Justice Gulzar Ahmed, Chief Justice of Pakistan was the Chief Guest of the ceremony, various Diplomats, Civil Society and Representative of Minorities participated in this seminar.

Mr. Samuel Payra and Members of Implementation Minority Rights Forum received and warmly welcome to the Honorable Chief Justice of Pakistan.

The Ceremony commenced with the National Anthem, Recitation of Holy Quran and Holy Bible.

The different Minorities Representatives spoke on minority’s issues and the main speaker was the Honorable Chief Justice of Pakistan. The speech by The Chief Justice of Pakistan was entirely emphasized on the minority’s rights of constitution of Pakistan. The conference was fully covered by electronic and print media.

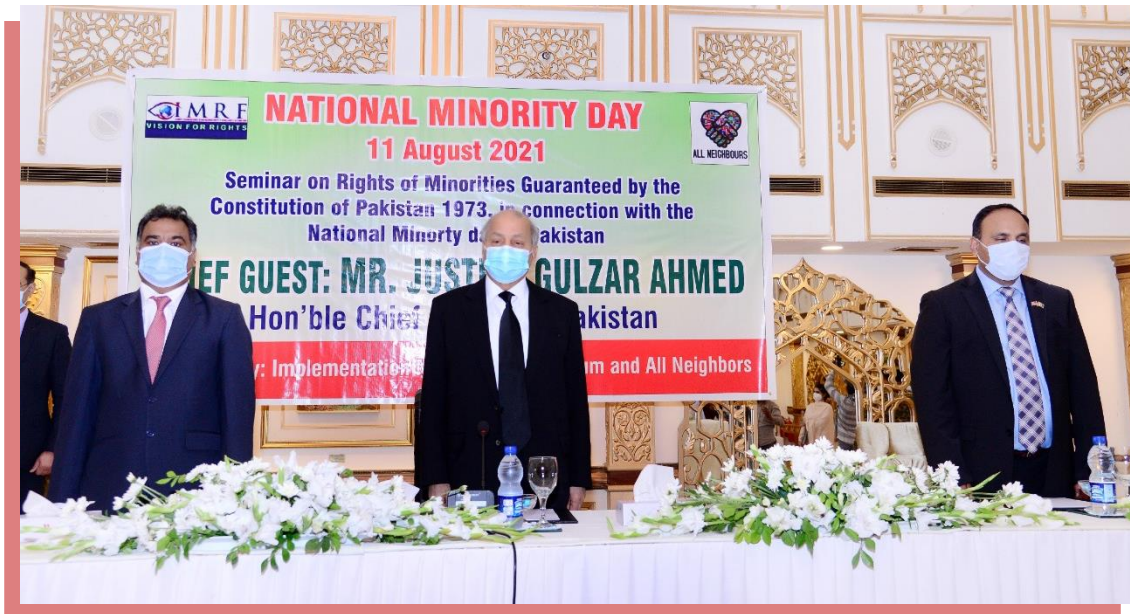


The Honorable Chief Guest Mr. Justice Gulzar Ahmed, Chief Justice of Pakistan was warmly welcomed.

Mr. Samuel Payra Chairman IMRF, Chief Organizer of the Seminar and G.M of Marriot Hotel Islamabad, Sister Parveen (Principal, Convent of Jesus & Mary) presented a bouquet to the Honorable Chief Justice of Pakistan.



All the Participants of the Seminar stood in the honor of National Anthem.





All the Participants of the Seminar stood in the honor of the Recitation of Holy Quran and Holy Bible.



**Welcome Speech by Mr. Samuel Payra
Chairman IMRF & Chief Organizer of the Seminar**



Mr. Samuel Payra warmly welcomed the Honorable Chief Guest, Mr. Justice Gulzar Ahmed Chief Justice of Pakistan and all the international delegates, clergies, valued Sisters of Convent of Jesus and Mary and respected people from civil society. He extended his deepest thanks to Honorable Mr. Justice Gulzar Ahmed for accepting invitation and happily joining the seminar organized by IMRF.

He thanked to all the diplomats and clergies for their generous support and participation. He also thanked to the IMRF team for organizing the Seminar.

He requested to the Chief Justice of Pakistan the underage young girls should restrain from the Nikah Ceremony and such people must respect for the rule of law and Pakistan International Human rights Organizations require that the government should promptly take steps to implement the judgment given by Supreme Court of Pakistan. 19th June, 2014. (PLD 699) specially legislation of National Commission for Minorities.





**Speech by: - H.E. Mr. Paulo Neves Pocinho
Ambassador of Portugal**

H.E. Mr. Paulo Neves Pocinho Ambassador of Portugal greeted Honorable Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Gulzar Ahmed, Mr. Samuel Payra Chairman of IMRF and greeted to all the distinguished participants of seminar.

He said that I would like to thank you for being invited me in this Seminar and first of all I would like to congratulate Pakistan for this National Minority Day.

He Quoted during his speech **Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights** adopted by the United Nations in 1948.

He said all the human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

He said **Article 2 of the same Declaration** states that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other options, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

He also said the Declaration goes on with the list of Human Rights to which individuals are entitled. The Universal Declaration is the founding text that binds us to protect universal human rights that are acknowledged by all peoples and countries of the world.

He said, these are beautiful and very noble principles that guided all governments and institutions, but also should guide each one of us in our daily life as individuals and part of a society.

He stressed upon the rights of minorities are a very important part of this indivisible set of principles and rights.

He said **and why is that so?** Because we all human beings are lucky enough, talented enough, intelligent and very diverse in our ways of living, in our thoughts, traditions, believes, faiths and so on. And our societies reflect this diversity, this richness of our cultures, of our talent, of our beauty as human beings. Indeed it would be very boring, even sad if we all have the same opinions, dress in the same way, even enjoy the same food.

He emphasized, It happens also that even if our societies in the different countries are very diverse, where you can find people from different religions, different ethnic groups, etc, there is usually in each country or society a majority, or a group that one way or the other is able to or wants to impose its way. And it is exactly for that reason that is so important to underline and protect the rights of minorities. So that not only the majority but also the other members of the society can fully enjoy their lives.

He also said that rights of minorities is the right of each individual to enjoy his life, to play its role in the society, to develop his personality, to create a family, to have a job, to have a dignified life, to be able to follow his dreams, to be able to live according to his beliefs, his religion, the values of his community. In this there should be no difference between the rights of the majority and the rights of the minorities.

He said, I think this concerns all of us in every country and continent, be it in Europe or Asia, in Pakistan or in Portugal. We should protect the rights of minorities as a contribution to the dignity and wellbeing of every human being.

He said, we must also acknowledge that no country is perfect; there is a lot to do everywhere to protect the minorities, to protect the diversity that enriches our countries, to protect the human development of our Youth, of our girls and boys and our families.

He said, Finally, since we are in Pakistan it is important to underline and congratulate the authorities and the people of Pakistan for the progresses that are being made in this context and to wish also that shortcomings can be addressed for the good of the wonderful people of this country.

At the end he said Thank you to all.





Speech by: Mr. Tariq Khan, Adjunct Professor, Leadership & Marketing, New York University and CEO, Global Diversity Marketing, New York

I like to thank Mr. Samuel Payra and his team for organizing this amazing event. It seems to be culmination of months of planning, and I would be remiss if I don't acknowledge the hard work of Mr. Payra and your colleagues.

It is an honor and a privilege to address this august audience, especially in the presence of the Honorable Chief Justice of Pakistan, Mr. Gulzar Ahmed.

Today, we are gathered here to not only to celebrate the National Minority Day in Pakistan but to also reaffirm Pakistan's continued commitment to all our minorities.

Why should minorities matter in any country?

Minorities play the most critical role in any society and serve as bedrock of the country's infrastructure. Minorities bring diversity, unique perspective, and much needed innovation.

Today, the concept of diversity, equity and inclusion has become a quintessential for any society.

1. Diversity is the differences among us that make us unique. Diversity is a fact; it is what we are. Imagine if we all of us looked the same, had same education, religious background, and same opinions. That may not lead to any innovation, and we all be looking at things from the same lens.
2. Equity is a fair opportunity for all, according to each person's need. It requires effort for leaders to create equity in a society by neutralizing barriers.
3. Inclusion is an effort to value others through meaningful engagement. It is a choice.

I have lived all my adult life in the United States of America, and I consider it among the most diverse countries in the world.

U.S. is the third largest country in the world in terms of population after China and India.

In China and India, almost every person is either Chinese or Indian. In China, they don't call their food as Chinese food; it is called food as almost everyone eats the same food.

In the U.S. every third person is either, Hispanic, Black, or Asian American. We have representation from all faiths and ethnicities. Today, the white population is a minority in the 10 largest U.S. cities. The experts are projecting that by the year 2044, whites may become minorities in the entire U.S.A.

The United States has become a superpower and became the innovation hub for the world. One of the main reasons for their success is embracing diversity and promoting inclusiveness.

Pakistan is a beautiful country gifted with natural resources and diverse human resources. Our minorities are our strength and while we may be far from perfection, but we are making a good progress.

Last week, a Hindu temple was attacked in Rahim Yar Khan. While the incident was deplorable but our response as a nation was commendable.

The honorable Chief Justice took cognizance of the incident and it resulted in more than 50 arrests and the road to reconstruction of the temple.

No society in this world is fully immune to these incidents but the action taken at the highest level provides a glimmer of hope and confidence.

Sadly, we are seeing continuous increase in incidents of undermining minorities in our neighboring country and instead of taking actions against perpetrators; we see inaction from their leadership.

In Pakistan, we are fortunate that we have diversity in terms of ethnicity, religion, gender, lifestyle and generational. It is incumbent upon us that we not only protect the rights of minorities but also provide a fully conducive environment for them to contribute to growth of Pakistan.

The founder of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah envisioned Pakistan where minorities can prosper. In his own words, "You are free to go to your temples; you are free to go to your mosques or any other place of worship in this state of Pakistan."

In the end, I once again thank all of you for giving me the opportunity to be a part of this wonderful event.

I hope that the promise of Pakistan becomes the practice of Pakistan.

Thank you.



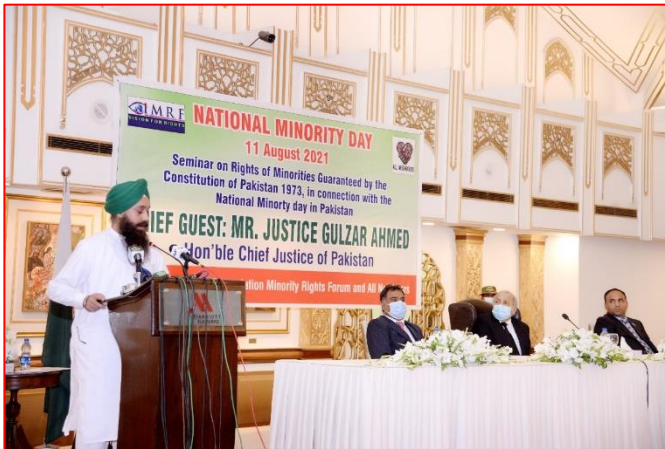
The Speeches by different speakers in seminar



Archbishop Sebastian Francis Shaw



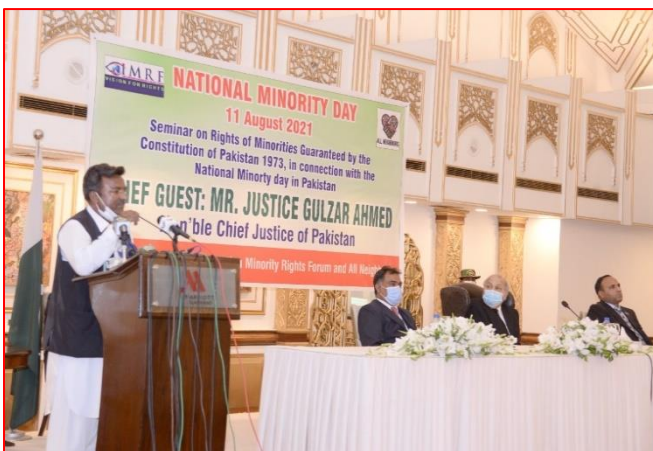
Prof. Mehrdad (Bahai Community)



Dr. Sahib Singh (Sikh Community)



Wazir Zada (Kalasha Community) Special Assistant to CM KP Minorities Affairs/ MPA KP



Mr. Sarwan Kumar Bheel (Hindu Community)

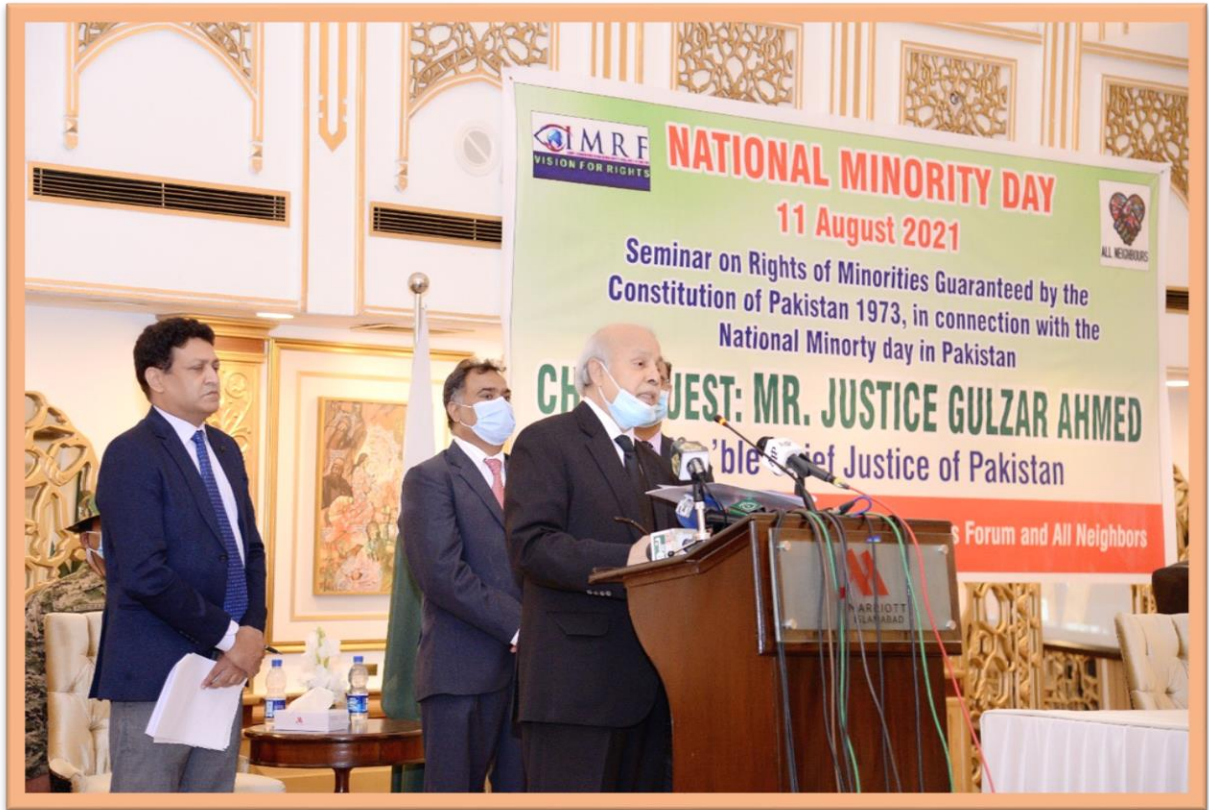


Mr. Ilyas Masih (All Neighbours)

Appeals from the Minorities Representatives for the Honorable Chief Justice of Pakistan

1. Mr. Samuel Payra, Chairman of the IMRF, highlighted that the law regarding marriages of underage girls was not being implemented and appreciated by the lower courts in the country had always taken stern and prompt action against any violation of the rights of minority communities. Supreme Court of Pakistan. 19th June, 2014. (PLD 699) specially legislation of National Commission for Minorities.
2. Prof. Mehrdad (Bahai Community) strongly appealed to allow the minorities to take Oath on their Holy books in parliament of Pakistan.
3. Dr. Sahib Singh (Sikh Community) requested to the Chief Justice of Pakistan to give relaxation and allow to carry Kirpan (small religious sword) in Supreme Court and High Courts as it is the most important part of our faith.
4. Mr. Sarwan Kumar Bheel (Hindu Community) requested to the Chief Justice of Pakistan that Hindu community should get back all the properties in Tharparkar and all over the Pakistan.





**Speech By: - The Honorable Chief Guest Mr. Justice Gulzar Ahmed
(Chief Justice of Pakistan)**



The Honorable Chief Justice of Pakistan shared his perspectives at seminar organized by the Implementation of the Minority Rights Forum (IMRF) and All Neighbours on the rights of the minorities at Marriot Hotel, Islamabad Pakistan.



The Chief Justice of Pakistan recalled how he felt pain when he learnt about the desecration of temples both at Hindu Samadhi in Karak, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and at Ganesh Mandir in Bhong, Rahim Yar Khan.

“That was the reason why prompt suo motu notices were taken on the desecration of the worship places because such tragic and unfortunate incidents of desecration of the holy places of the minority communities were neither tolerable nor acceptable in the country,” The Honorable Chief Justice said.

“Hindu temples, Sikh gurdwaras and churches are as important and sacred to me as my own religious places,” observed the Chief Justice of Pakistan, adding that such incidents should be discouraged with full force by taking prompt and stern action against the culprits.

He said temples, gurdwaras, churches are as sacred to him as his own religious places
“A sense of tolerance and religious harmony should be instilled in our society so that the people are allowed to live and profess their religion freely without any fear,”

He also said “The Supreme Court of Pakistan always takes the fundamental rights of all people of the country very seriously and sincerely and we have always been at the forefront to ensure no unfairness, atrocities or violation of any fundamental right of the minority communities took place,”

The Honorable Chief Justice of Pakistan added that the apex court would continue to take measures relentlessly to ensure necessary action against any disrespect to the harmony, tranquility or coherence in society.

He stressed the need for rooting out the rampant practice of marrying underage girls from the minority communities with Muslims, especially in Sindh and Punjab, and emphasized that the Christian Marriage Act 1872 should be made applicable to all such cases.

The Honorable Chief Justice of Pakistan said in his speech “The law clearly disallows underage marriage of girls and since such wedlock may not be void but definitely wrong and, therefore, this should come to an end. The courts should always pronounce dissolution of such marriages,”

He also asked Attorney General for Pakistan Khalid Jawed Khan, who was present on the occasion, to look into the matter and bring the issue to the notice of the government for finding some amicable solution to the problem. Citing examples from Tharparkar (Sindh) where underage girls usually tell the court that they have married Muslim men of their free will,

The Chief Justice said law does not allow child marriages and said that the Attorney-General could be approached in this regard and he could look into the matter. He also said that a commission constituted for looking into the issues of minorities could be approached to register complaints.

The Chief Justice of Pakistan said the courts should be extra careful in dealing with such cases and, being a serious matter, the issue needed to be addressed promptly.



Honorable Mr. Justice Gulzar Ahmed said also referred to the 2014 landmark judgement of the Supreme Court on the rights of the minority communities and said the court, through the most liberal construction of the minority rights, ordered the government to ensure that the rights of

Minorities were protected, their places of worship secured and an atmosphere of tolerance and religious harmony was ensured.

He said that as a result of the judgment, a National Council for Minority Rights was established and a commission headed by Dr. Shoaib Suddle was constituted, which was doing an exemplary function by acting a bridge between the minorities and the government.

“Any individual with any grievance on the minority rights can approach Dr. Suddle and, in return, the commission will ensure that nothing goes wrong and the rights of minorities are protected,”

August 11 is observed as the National Minority Day to recall the vision of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah and to reaffirm the commitment that despite belonging to different faiths, we are one nation. Events, seminars, and social gatherings are arranged across the country on the day by members of various religious minorities. Honorable Chief Justice, Mr. Justice Gulzar Ahmed said that the Constitution of Pakistan is a comprehensive document; Article 20 of the Constitution envisages religious and basic freedom to every citizen of the country. Article 22 guarantees right to education to all without any discrimination.

He added that every religion in this country is free to establish their places of worship. He said that there are some works to be undertaken by the federal government in order to ensure minorities’ rights, as enshrined in the law. He stated that the attorney general is a legal representative of the federal government and he may look into the demands made by the minority communities, while I can assist on the legal aspect of the matter, The Honorable Chief Justice said.

The Honorable Chief Justice reassured the minorities in Pakistan that if any feudal lord imperils anyone from the minority community, the doors of the court are always open.

Referring Article 25, the Chief Justice said that all citizens in Pakistan are equal before the law and are provided equal protection. There is no discrimination between Muslim, Hindu, Christian, Sikh, or Bahai and other communities.

He said that Articles 51, 59 and 106 of the Constitution provide quota for reserved seats for non-Muslims in Pakistan in National Assembly, Senate and the Provincial Assemblies. The minorities have quota, therefore, they should make efforts to reach the National Assembly, Senate and the Provincial Assemblies. Nobody can prevent them, adding if the landlord or anyone in their areas stops the minorities from reaching the assemblies then they could approach the courts or complain to the government and they are ready to help you.

“Attacks on worship places of minorities are intolerable”, he said, adding that temples, churches and other worship places of minorities were as sacred as mosques

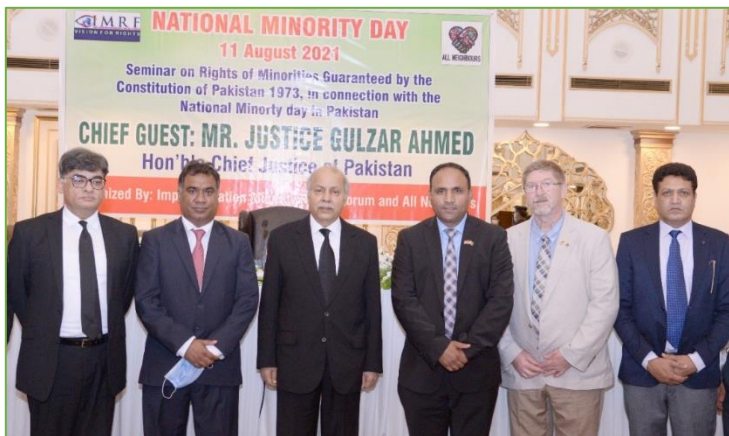
He added that the minorities have certain privileges which are not even available to the Muslims that you can enjoy and avail by all means.



“Attacks on worship places of minorities are intolerable”,
that temples, churches and other worship places of
minorities are as sacred as mosques

**Honorable Mr. Justice Gulzar Ahmed,
Chief Justice of Pakistan
11th August, 2021**

Presented a Souvenir to the Honorable Mr. Justice Gulzar Ahmed, Chief Justice of Pakistan, by Mr. Samuel Payra Chairman IMRF, Mr. Ilyas Maish & Madam Sehar Bhatti.



**“We will not enjoy security without development,
we will not enjoy development without security,
and we will not enjoy either without respect for
minority rights”.**

IMRF LEGAL TEAM



Sumaira Hussain (Advocate High Court (Legal Head IMRF Legal Team))



**Sarfraz Khokhar
Advocate High Court
Lahore**



**Zahid Nazir
Advocate High
Court Lahore**



**Syed Sibtain Akhtar
Bokhari Advocate
Supreme Court Officer
of Pakistan**



**Sehar Bhatti
Advocate Legislation
of IMRF**

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS. IMRF
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Dr. Ernest Faheem



Mr. Nasir Jamil



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Ms. Samra Mushtaq



Ms. Tania Ilyas



Mr. Rashid Shoukat



Mr. Augustine Jacob



Pastor Asif John



Mr. Emanuel Pervaiz Bhatti



Mr. Basharat Khokher



Mr. Azar Nabeel Murad



**Mr. Samuel Payra Chairman IMRF with
Honorable Mr. Justice Gulzar Ahmed,
Chief Justice of Pakistan**

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Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah

On 11 August 1947, in his of quoted speech to the first Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, he said:

'... You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other places of worship in the State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed – that has nothing to do with the business of the State ... We are starting with this fundamental principle: that we are all citizens and equal citizens of one State. Now, I think we should keep that in front of us as our ideal and you will find that in course of time Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims, not so in the religious sense because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as citizens of the state.

Ref:- 11th August, 1947 to 1st Constituent Assembly



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