

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:293

ANSWERED ON:31.08.2012

MIGRATION OF HINDUS AND SIKHS FROM PAKISTAN

Saroj Smt. Sushila;Upadhyay Seema

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is aware of the incidents of alleged looting, kidnapping particularly of girls and conversion of the Hindus and Sikhs in Pakistan and forcing them to flee to India;
- (b) if so, the details thereof along with the number of such Hindu and Sikh families who sought permission/have come to India in the recent past;
- (c) whether the Government has taken up the issue with the Pakistan Government at the highest level and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether Pakistan has accorded minority status to the Hindus & Sikhs residing there and if so, the details thereof along with the provisions made by the Pakistan Government for the safety and security of the minorities in their country and if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (e) the other steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S.M. KRISHNA)

(a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) to (e) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 293 REGARDING "MIGRATION OF HINDUS AND SIKHS FROM PAKISTAN" FOR ANSWER ON 31.08.2012

Government has from time to time come across reports on the problems faced by members of the minority communities in Pakistan. Incidents of persecution and intimidation of the minority communities have also been reported.

Government has seen reports that some Pakistani nationals belonging to minority communities including Hindus, who came to India on valid visas have not gone back to Pakistan on the grounds of religious persecution in Pakistan. Representations have been received requesting for allowing extension of visas of such Pakistani nationals and also for permitting them to apply for Long Term Visa (LTV).

It is the responsibility of the Government of Pakistan to discharge its constitutional obligations towards its citizens, including those from the minority community. While, the Simla Agreement of 1972 between India and Pakistan specifically provides for non-interference in each other's internal affairs, nevertheless, based on reports of persecution of minority groups in Pakistan, Government had taken up the matter with the Government of Pakistan. The Government of Pakistan stated that it was fully cognizant of the situation and looked after the welfare of all its citizens, particularly the minority community.

Recently, India's serious concerns on the matter of abduction, forced conversion and marriage of Hindu girls against their will to Muslim men in Pakistan have been conveyed to Pakistan side. A demarche was made with Pakistan on May 8, 2012 in this regard. It was conveyed that it is our expectation that the Government of Pakistan will look after the well being of its minority communities and discharge its responsibility in this regard. Pakistan side responded that the Government of Pakistan is seized of the matter and the Supreme Court of Pakistan has taken up the issue and that the Government of Pakistan provides full protection to all minorities.

Hindus and Sikhs have the status of minorities in Pakistan; seats are reserved for minorities in the National Assembly (lower house of the Parliament), the Senate, in the Provincial Assemblies and in government jobs. Government of Pakistan in a press release on August 10, 2012 has stated that President Asif Ali Zardari has taken serious notice of the reports of the sense of insecurity among Hindu families in Sindh and directed authorities concerned to allay Hindus' grievances and to submit a report to him. President has also constituted a three member committee of MPs to visit different parts of Sindh to express solidarity with the Hindus on his and Government behalf and to reassure them about their security and well being.