

Network of Concerned Historians				NCH
Campaigns				
Year original	Year follow-up	Circular	Country	Name
2025		111	Pakistan	Anonymous historian

### *Announcement*

In March 2024, a Pakistani historian (his name is kept anonymous for safety reasons) was kidnapped, interrogated, tortured, and threatened with death for reasons possibly related to his research into Sikh and Partition history and/or to his membership in the Shia community. After his release, his parents also received threats. In August 2024, he went into exile in Europe, securing a position for a few months. He is now looking for a university in a safe country to host him. The International Scholars Rescue Fund is prepared to match the necessary funding for a longer-term at-risk fellowship.

- For more information about his case: please see below.
- For more information about his cv and publications and for historians interested in hosting our Pakistani colleague at their university (worldwide), please contact: Dr Doreen Pastor, University of Bath, United Kingdom via email [dp740@bath.ac.uk](mailto:dp740@bath.ac.uk).

Please consider this an urgent appeal. Many thanks.

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### **PAKISTANI HISTORIAN AT RISK**

#### **International Scholars Rescue Fund (IIE–SRF) case sheet**

*Country of origin* Pakistan

*Academic field* South Asian History: History of Partition; History of the Sikh Empire (1800–1849); Identity and Belonging in the Pakistan/India Borderland; History of Bureaucratic Institutions

*M/F* Male

*Languages:* Urdu (mother tongue); Punjabi (fluent); Saraiki (fluent); English (fluent); Persian (fluent in reading and writing); Arabic (fluent in reading and writing)

*Risk* Kidnapping (enforced disappearance), death threat, threats to family members

*Education* MPhil in History, Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad; PhD in History, University of Punjab, Lahore

*Academic experience*

The scholar has worked as assistant professor at a university in Pakistan since 2010. He has extensive experience in teaching at undergraduate level, ranging from modules in Islamic history to the history of the British Empire. He has also held visiting fellowships at a British university, working on the history of the Sikh Empire, including Ranjit Singh (1780–1839). He has a keen interest in public history and has engaged with a variety of museums and heritage sites alongside his academic post. He published his research in academic journals and is also experienced in translating texts from English to Punjabi, and from Persian to English/Urdu.

The scholar has developed different research proposals that he is able to pursue during an at-risk fellowship:

1. The Last Colonialists: The Politics of British Governors Francis Mudie, George Cunningham and Frederick Chalmers Bourne in post-Partition Pakistan;
2. Constructing the Other: Boundary and Identity Formation from the Local to National during and after Punjab's Partition, 1947–1972;
3. The forgotten humanitarian crisis? – The responses of the British Red Cross, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the UNRRA to the Refugee Crisis after Partition in 1947;
4. Economic Dynamics of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Punjab (1799–1849): A Plundering Economy or a haven for Diversity, Pluralism and Tolerance?

*Statement of risk*

The scholar was kidnapped outside his home in March 2024, blindfolded and taken to an unknown location where he was interrogated and physically assaulted for several hours by State actors. He was eventually “released” by having been left on a roadside, severely bleeding from his injuries and with the parting words “we will see each other again.” Medical examinations revealed severe cuts and trauma in the lower abdomen. During the “interrogation,” he was accused of hiding information, most likely a reference to an European Union (EU)–funded research project he was involved in. The scholar also belongs to the Shia community, which has been subject to severe persecution in Pakistan. In June 2024, the parents of the scholar were “visited” by State actors and threatened to provide information about their son's activities. In August 2024, he obtained a visa to temporarily leave Pakistan but was held at the airport and only released after several hours of interrogation by uniformed airport staff. He is currently on a three-month emergency scholar at risk grant in an EU country but is seeking a longer-term placement (worldwide) as part of his IIE–SRF grant.

*Suitable hosting arrangements for this scholar might include:*

- Teaching and/or research position in Modern South Asian Studies, Migration Studies or Borderland Studies.
- Due his interest in the history of the Sikh Empire, the scholar would also welcome a hosting arrangement with a department that has expertise in working with Sikh Persian ancient manuscripts.

IIE-SRF expects some match funding (further information can be found here: [Frequent Questions - IIE Scholar Rescue Fund](#)).

*Documents available:*

- CV
- List of publications
- Comprehensive risk statement
- Confirmation IIE-SRF grant (\$25,000)