

POLICING AS TORTURE

DATA ANALYSIS OF PUNJAB POLICE'S USE OF UNLAWFUL TORTURE

SEVERE BEATING

is the most common form of police torture, including *danda*, *chittar*, slapping, kicking and punching

Police torture people from every age group

Youngest person to be tortured in Faisalabad

12 YEARS OLD

Oldest person to be tortured in Faisalabad

90 YEARS OLD



The poor are most likely to fall prey to police torture, including daily wage workers, domestic workers and farmers

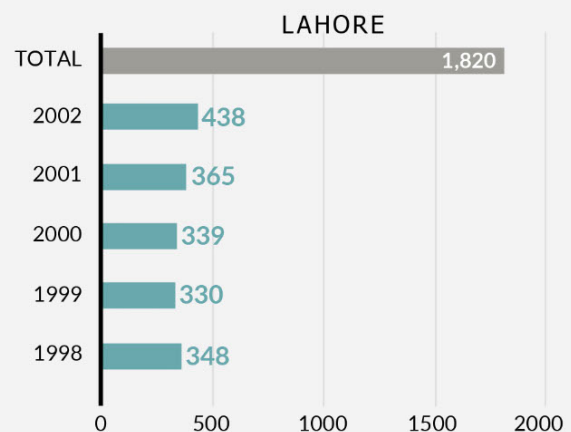
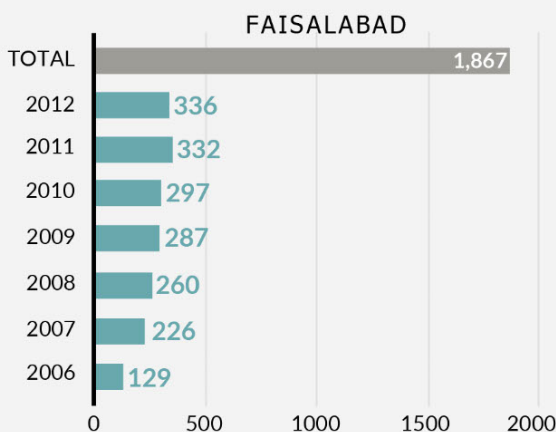
Police torture is widespread and systematic in Pakistan; however, the full scope phenomenon remains understudied due to a lack of data despite its prevalence.

This dataset attempts to fill that gap by examining Medico-Legal Certificates (MLCs) prepared by the Standing Medical Boards (a government body that conducts medical examinations in response to allegations of police torture) in two districts of Punjab in two different time periods: **Faisalabad (from 2006 to 2012)** and **Lahore (from 1998 to 2002)**. The data on Faisalabad were collected by Justice Project Pakistan while the Lahore data are from a paper by Chaudhry *et al.* (2008).¹

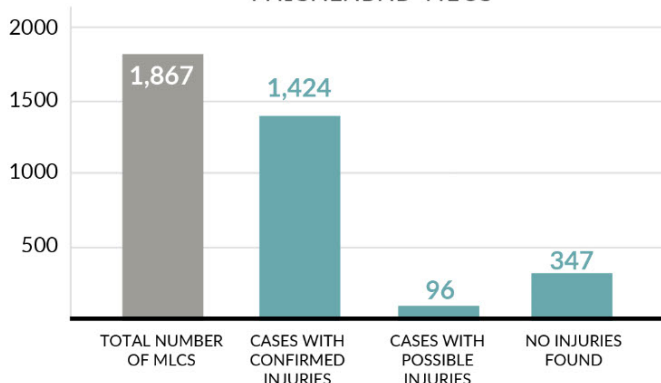
TORTURE BY THE NUMBERS

For a Medico-Legal Certificate to be prepared, a torture allegation has to be made at a judicial forum, which results in a majority of cases remaining unreported. Despite that hindrance, hundreds of complaints were made against the Punjab police in two major cities – Lahore and Faisalabad.

NUMBER OF MEDICO-LEGAL CERTIFICATES EXAMINED



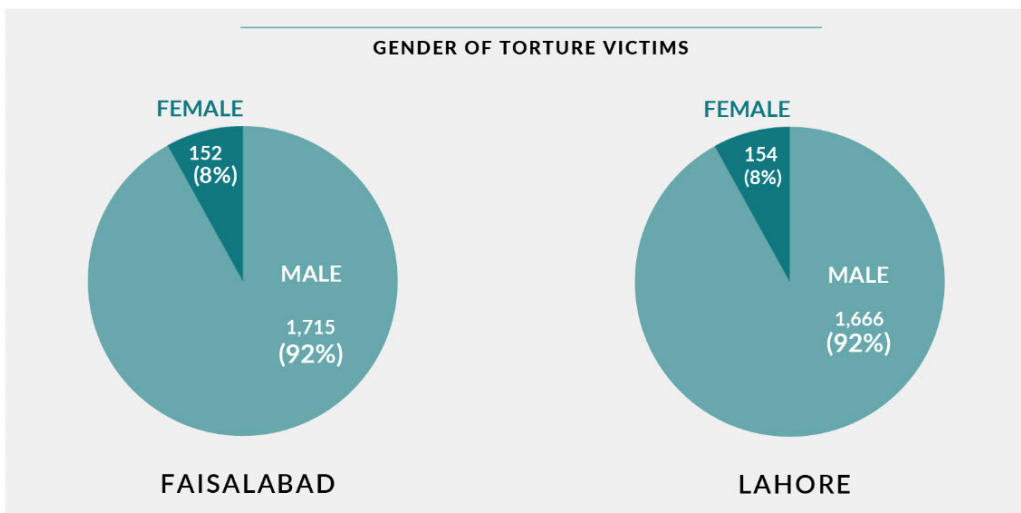
ASSESSMENT OF INJURIES - FAISALABAD MLCS



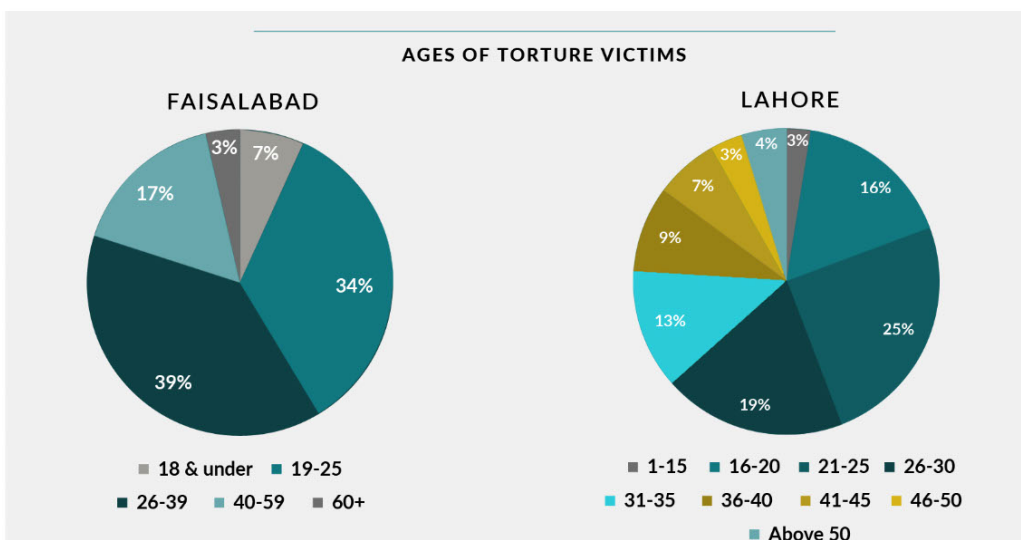
Of the 1,867 MLCs in Faisalabad, physicians confirmed injuries indicating torture in **OVER 76% OF THE CASES**, with a further 96 cases where evidence of an injury was found but could not be confirmed.

VICTIMS OF TORTURE

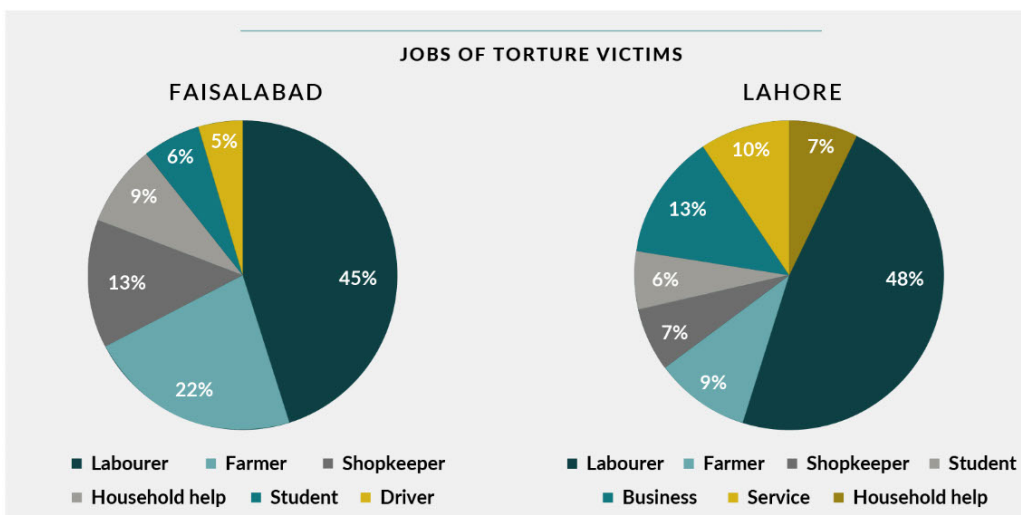
GENDER: In both cities, the vast majority of torture victims are men – making about 92 per cent of the sample size.



AGE: The police also do not discriminate among their victims based on age, with both case studies showing police torturing both the very young and very old. The youngest person in Faisalabad was 12 years old while the oldest was 90. Nonetheless, most of the torture victims are between 20 to 40.



CLASS BIAS: The police almost exclusively target the poor as the torture MLCs reveal a distinct class bias in both the samples. Daily wage workers, household help and farmers dominate the number of MLCs.



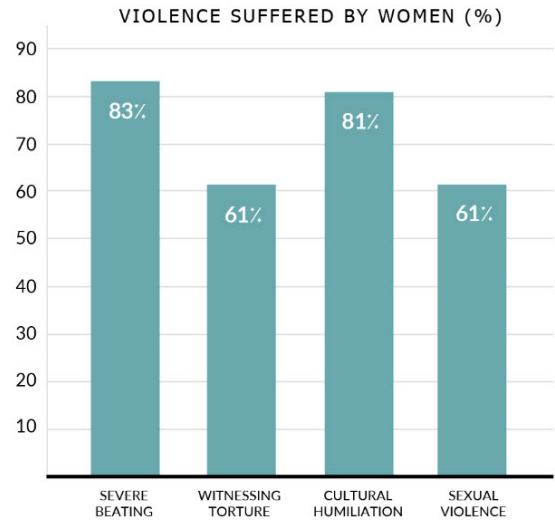
METHODS OF TORTURE

The Medico-Legal Certificates reveal that the police in Punjab have innovated a number of cruel techniques that are consistent across time and space as evidenced in the two separate cases.³

Severe physical beating is the norm in most cases, and it takes the form of being beaten by *danda* (71% of cases), slapping (29%), kicking (29%), punching (25%), hitting with *chittar* (20%) and other methods.

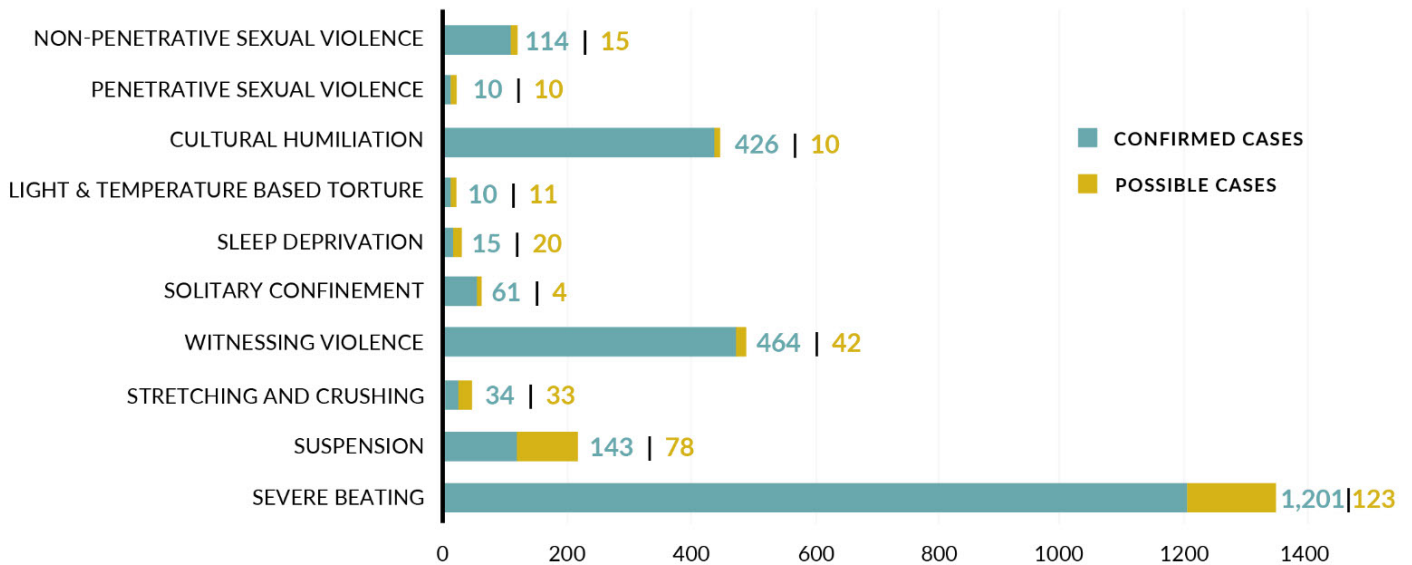
Other physical methods include suspension, stretching and crushing of bodies, sleep deprivation, burning and sexual violence. The police have innovated psychological torture too, which is much harder to record on an MLC that includes solitary confinement, cultural humiliation (where taboos are violated), witnessing other people's physical torture and sexually harming family members.

Women's torture follows a different trend as they are targeted by psychological and sexual trauma and their bodies are used as another site of torture for their male relatives. At least three women in the Faisalabad sample allege penetrative rape, while over 82 were otherwise sexually assaulted and 71 forced to strip.

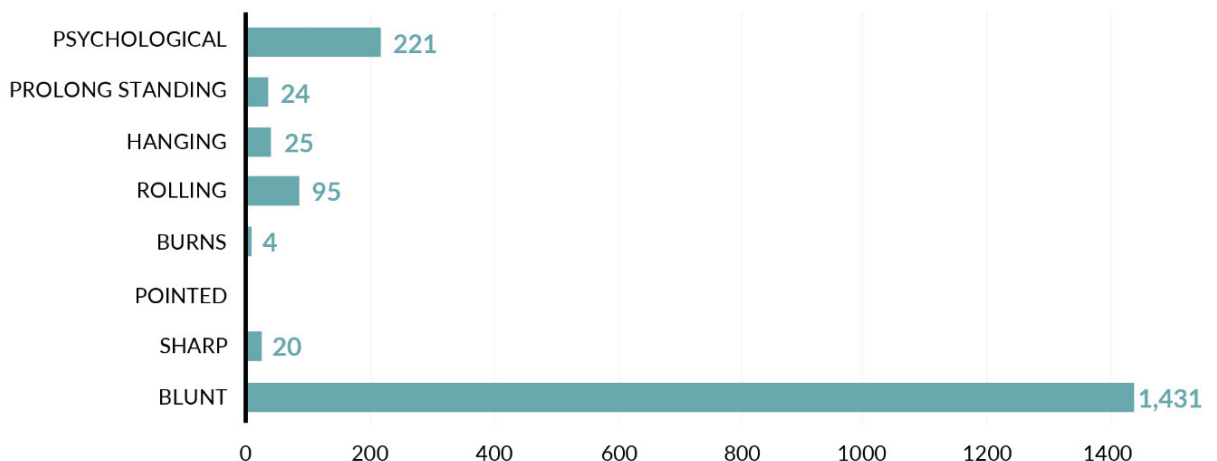


METHODS OF TORTURE

FAISALABAD



LAHORE

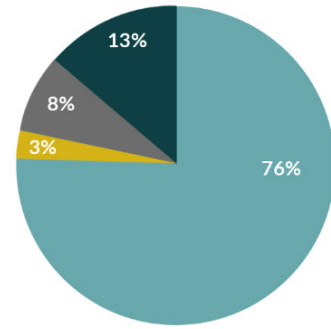


SITES OF TORTURE

Most cases of torture examined occurred at police stations, however, a significant number of torture cases, including that of most women, took place inside the victims' homes. The police are also brazen enough to carry out torture in public places, such as roads or marketplaces.

The MLCs also make record of the police's practice of having private, unofficial torture places.

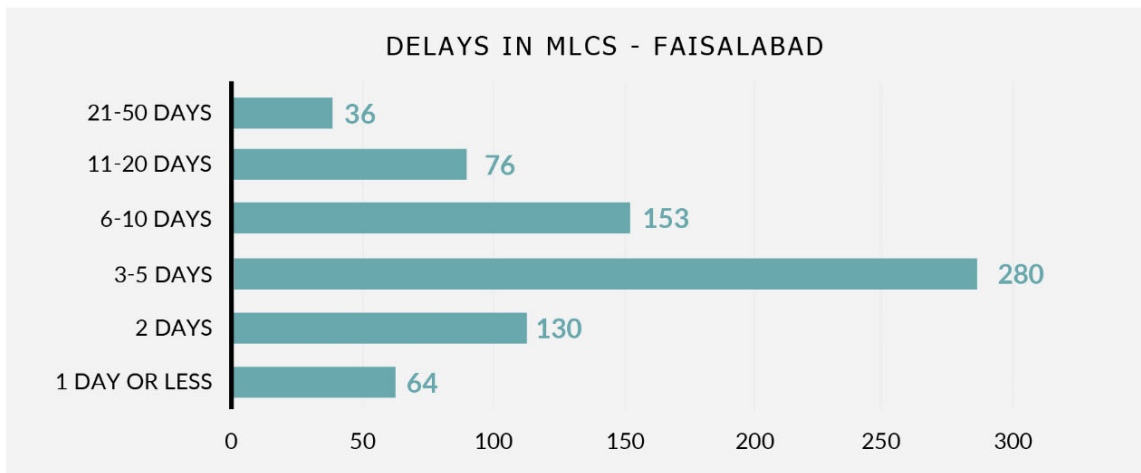
PLACES OF TORTURE



■ Involving Police Station ■ Victim's place
■ Private ■ Public

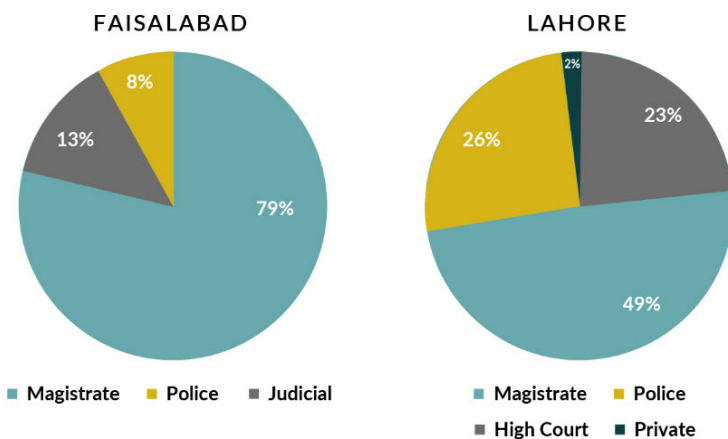
HIDING EVIDENCE OF TORTURE

The MLCs hint at an effort by the police to hide their torture practices. Only in 422 cases of Faisalabad has a name been entered of the suspected officer(s) behind the torture, and there are sufficient delays in producing the victim for examination to the medical board, which is a strategy employed to let bruises heal. In most cases, the victim has been held by the police for over three days before being produced, while some MLCs were delayed by as much as 50 days. ⁴



In both cases, a majority of the complainants had to go through judicial proceedings to have their MLCs recorded while only some were initiated by complaining to the police directly.

ORDERING AUTHORITY



REFERENCES

- ¹ From 2000 to 2010, 10, 421 cases of torture were reported according to Oxfam <<https://www.dawn.com/news/1138252>>
- ² Chaudhry, Muhammad Aslam, et al. "Pattern of police torture in Punjab, Pakistan." The American journal of forensic medicine and pathology 29.4 (2008): 309-311.
- ³ While a statistical breakdown is not given by the authors, they observe similar techniques as JPP: "Rolling the heavy objects over the body, putting the victim naked over ice blocks, and hanging by upper limb or hanging upside down was observed in few cases. Complaints of psychologic and sexual trauma and some inhuman behavior was also alleged in quite a number of the cases...The most common agent alleged to be used to inflict the physical torture was cane stick, broad, flat leather slipper dipped in mustard oil to increase its impact of pain" (Chaudhry et al 2008)
- ⁴ Chaudhry et al. also agree: "Most of these victims had been detained by the police in illegal custody, for a period ranging between 1 to 2 weeks"



JPP is a non-profit organization based in Lahore that represents the most vulnerable Pakistani prisoners facing the harshest punishments, at home and abroad. JPP investigates, litigates, educates, and advocates on their behalf.

In recognition of our work, in December 2016, JPP was awarded with the National Human Rights Award, presented by the President of Pakistan.