

[ *As* INTRODUCED IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY]

A

**BILL**

to provide for prohibition of religious conversion by use of force, allurement or fraudulent means and for matters connected therewith:

It is hereby enacted as follows:-

1. **Short title, extent and commencement.**- (1) This Act may be called the Prohibition of Forced Religious Conversion Act, 2019

(2) It extends to the whole of Pakistan.

(3) It shall come into force at once.

2. **Definitions.**- In this Act, unless the context otherwise require,-

(a) **“allurement”** means offer temptation in the form of-

(i) any gift or gratification, either in cash or kind;

(ii) grant of any material benefit, either monetary or otherwise;

(b) **“conversion”** means renouncing one religion and adopting another religion;

(c) **“force”** includes a show of force or a threat of injury of any kind including a threat of divine displeasure or social excommunication;

(d) **“fraudulent means”** include misrepresentation or any other fraudulent contrivance;

(e) **“minor”** means a person who has not completed eighteen years of age; and

(f) **“prescribed”** means prescribed by rules made under this Act.

3. **Forced Religious Conversion.**- (1) No person shall convert or attempt to convert, or abet the conversion of, either directly or otherwise, any person from one religion to another by use of force, allurement or any fraudulent means.

(2) Whoever contravenes the provision of sub-section (1) shall be punished with imprisonment for a term, which may extend to three years and shall also be liable to a fine, which may extend to rupees fifty thousand.

(3) Notwithstanding anything in sub-section (2), whoever contravenes the provisions of sub-section (1), in respect of a minor, a woman or a person shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to five years and shall also be liable to fine which may extend to rupees one hundred thousand.

4. **Report of Conversion.**-(1) Whoever performs conversion by performing any ceremony as a religious cleric or takes part, directly or indirectly, in such ceremony, shall give information regarding such conversion to the District Magistrate concerned in such form and with such period before performing of the ceremony, as may be prescribed.

(2) Whoever fails to comply with the provisions of sub-section (1) shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year or with fine which may extend to rupees twenty-five thousand or with both.

5. **Prosecution.**- No prosecution for an offence under this Act shall be instituted except by or with the previous permission of the District Magistrate or such other authority as may be authorized by him in that behalf.

6. **Cognizable offence.**-(1) An offence under this Act shall be cognizable.

(2) An offence under this Act shall be investigated by an officer not below the rank of an ASP.

7. **Savings** - The provisions of this Act shall be in addition to and not in derogation of any other law for the time being in force.

8. **Rules.** (1) The Federal Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, make rules for carrying out the purposes of this Act.

(2) The rules made under this Act by the Federal Government shall be laid, before each House of the Majlis-e-Shoora (Parliament), within six months of their notification in the official Gazette.

#### **STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS**

Following the code of belief of a particular religion is a matter of personal faith and belief for an individual. Basically religious conversion itself causes hurt to faith and belief of an individual when it is done through allurements or force or mischief or by taking advantage of poverty of a person. Balance of society is disturbed when religious conversion is done through the means of force, fraud or allurements. Religious conversion performed through such means not only transgresses the freedom of religion available to every citizen, but also creates law and order problem. Therefore, it is necessary to take steps to keep a check on religious conversion by force or fraudulent means.

Sd/-

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