Religious populism and the enforcement of anti-blasphemy laws have a long and complex history in many countries around the world. In Pakistan, for example, blasphemy laws were introduced during the colonial era and were subsequently expanded by various military and civilian governments as a means of consolidating power and controlling dissent (Ahmed, 2018). These laws have been used to target religious minorities and political opponents, and have been criticized by human rights groups and international organizations for their repressive and discriminatory nature (Human Rights Watch, 2022).

Similarly, in some other Muslim-majority countries, such as Iran and Saudi Arabia, blasphemy laws have been used as a tool of repression and authoritarianism. In Iran, for example, blasphemy laws have been used to silence dissent and stifle political opposition, particularly among religious minorities such as the Baháʼí (Hoseini, 2019). In Saudi Arabia, blasphemy laws have been used to justify the persecution of dissidents and critics of the ruling regime, including religious scholars and human rights activists (Human Rights Watch, 2022).

The relationship between religious populism and the enforcement of anti-blasphemy laws is complex, and can vary depending on the specific context and political dynamics of a given country or region. However, as noted earlier, there is often a clear link between the two, as religious populism can be used to legitimize and justify the use of blasphemy laws to suppress dissent and maintain political power. This can lead to the repression of free speech, the curtailment of religious freedoms, and the persecution of marginalized groups.

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