

Persecution of Ahmadis in Pakistan

News Report December 2012

Another Ahmadi target-killed in Quetta for his faith

Quetta; December 7, 2012: Mr. Maqsud Ahmad an Ahmadi businessman was killed in Quetta by unidentified motor-cycle riders. He had gone in the morning to leave his children at school. On the way, he was approached by two men who shot him in the head four times. Mr. Ahmad died before he could receive medical aid. He was 31. No arrests have followed.

Only four weeks ago, his elder brother, Mr. Manzur Ahmad was likewise killed in the same city. The assassins remained untraced. Perhaps it was the same group who committed these two murders of Ahmadis of the same family. It would be fair to assume that the authorities did nothing after the first murder to deter a second one.

Mr. Maqsud Ahmad is survived by his widow, a daughter and a son.

Mr. Ahmad was kidnapped two years ago. He was released after obtaining a heavy amount as ransom. The criminals involved in this series of heinous crimes seem to be from some extremist religious organization, which is particularly hateful against Ahmadis in particular. These people or at least their organizations are well-known to the authorities in Quetta.

The deceased enjoyed good reputation. He had no personal vendetta with anyone. However, he was a practicing Ahmadi. He was targeted only for his faith.

In a circular to relevant authorities, the Ahmadiyya Director of Public Affairs wrote: *"In recent months, a visible escalation is noticeable in anti-Ahmadi activities and violence. Ahmadis received grave threats. Mullas openly motivated their audience in rallies, conferences and sermons to take extreme action against Ahmadis who are termed Wajib ul Qatl (must be killed). Offensive literature is distributed that describes the murder of Ahmadis an act of Great Jihad that will earn high reward in the Hereafter.... This highly sensitive issue has been brought to the notice of the authorities repeatedly before for necessary action, but regrettably to no avail, and the assassins practically are free to indulge in murders."*

Police violate the law

Kot Abdul Malik, District Sheikhupura; December 9, 2012: The police alongwith a group of anti-Ahmadi agitators covered up Quranic verses with black paint at 4:45 p.m. from a shop owned by Mr. Abdul Ghaffar, an Ahmadi.

A procession of approximately 200 vigilantes accompanied by a few policemen proceeded to the shop of Mr. Abdul Ghaffar. There (as per plan) they demanded that Quranic verses written there should be erased. Accordingly the policemen sprayed black paint over the verses (translation): "Allah is the best of providers" and "O, the Living; O, All Sustaining." The police committed the same sacrilege three months ago at the shop of Mr. Qamar-uz-Zia in this very neighborhood.

Prima facie, this incident is a clear violation of PPC 295 and 153-A. Had non-Muslims committed an identical outrage, they would have been booked under not only these clauses but also PPC 295-C the blasphemy law the penalty for whose violation is death.

Criminal case registered against bridegroom and his family

Allama Iqbal Town, Lahore; September 2012: Mr. Hassan Mamoon, an Ahmadi youth married Miss Aleena Butt who was from a non-Ahmadi family but had become an Ahmadi a few months before marriage, with the permission of her father.

The marriage took place in a situation that apparently posed no legal or religious problem. However, a week after the wedding Mr. Raheel Butt, an uncle of the bride wrote to the police that the Mamoon family had preached Ahmadiyyat to his niece; as such they have violated the anti-Ahmadi law PPC 298-C.

In follow-up of the complaint the police booked Mr. Mamoon's family and raided their residence for arrests on 7 September 2012. They managed to arrest Mr. Salman Mamoon, an elder brother of the bride-groom. They kept him in police lock-up for two days, and then approached a magistrate who allowed a judicial remand of ten more days. He was taken to the camp jail. This was the wedding gift to the family from the state!

Mrs. Mamoon, the mother of the bride-groom was also booked by the police. She applied for bail prior to arrest, which was granted temporarily till September 20.

Mr. Salman Mamoon also applied for bail. The bride's father told the judge that the bride's decision to become an Ahmadi and marry Mr. Hassan Mamoon had his approval. Despite this, the judge rejected Mr. Salman Mamoon's plea for bail.

Mr. Hassan Mamoon, the bride-groom fled abroad to avoid arrest. A few weeks later the Foreign Minister of Pakistan managed to convince the participants in a UN meeting that all was well and satisfactory in Pakistan in the field of human rights. The international community voted with a thumping majority in favour of Pakistan to be a member of the UN Human Rights Council.

Criminal case against an Ahmadi periodical

Karachi: It was reported in the month of September 2012 that a mulla went to a court with plea to issue orders to the police to register a criminal case against an Ahmadiyya periodical Al-Musleh, Karachi for publishing Ahmadi beliefs etc.

On November 29, 2012 the judge issued orders as requested by the bigot.

Profane disinterment

Dahranwali, District Hafizabad: Mr. Sanaullah, Ahmadi, died here on 31 December 2012. He was 75. He was buried in the common graveyard at a location to which all parties consented.

The next day, some religious vandals dug up his grave and threw his dead body out in the open. The village folk assembled to discuss the outrage. The non-Ahmadi elders stated on oath that they had no knowledge of those who committed the profane act.

The police arrived at the site of the incident. They divided the graveyard in two parts, allocating one to the Ahmadis.

Mr. Sanaullah was re-buried in the newly allocated Ahmadiyya section of the cemetery.

Ahmadiyya mosque restored – after 15 years

Goleki; On September 25, 1997 a magistrate ordered sealing of the local Ahmadiyya mosque over a frivolous demand of a few non-Ahmadiis who laid a claim to the mosque. This mosque was in the custody and management of Ahmadis since long. Mulla Manzoor Chinioti, known for his anti-Ahmadi activism, made many visits to Goleki and instigated the locals to lay claim to the mosque.

Ahmadiis remained deprived of their place of worship for 15 years. Eventually, a judge has rejected the claim of the petitioners and given the verdict that the mosque belongs to Ahmadis.

This caused consternation in the opposition camp; they decided to agitate over the decision. The police detained not only a few of them, but also the president of the local Ahmadi community. The sense of justice with the Punjab Police is bizarre. The police

released them all later on.

Ahmadis are taking steps to have their mosque de-sealed.

Incidents in Lahore, the provincial capital

Terrorists held

Rachna Town; December 7, 2012: The police attempted to arrest four terrorists from a gas station in Rachna Town. Two of them succeeded in making good their escape, while two were captured. Subsequently it was learnt that fire arms and explosives were recovered from them. They had plans to target Ahmadiyya mosques, a source disclosed. These men are residents of this town. A few other residents have fled the neighborhood, while the police have detained some suspects.

Police indulge in sacrilege

Sabzazar; December 12, 2012: A police van came over to the residence of Mr. Mansur Ahmad, an Ahmadi resident of Sabzazar, at about 11 p.m. The policemen told Mr. Ahmad to take off the tiled plate of *Masha Allah* (as willed by God) from the exterior of the house. Mr. Ahmad refused to do that. At this the police decided to undertake the sacrilege themselves. They broke up the tiled plate and took away the pieces with them. Obviously they did that in compliance with some mulla's demand.

It is relevant that the law does not forbid Ahmadis the display of writings in Arabic script.

A provocative rally

Ferozwala Annex Colony; December 8, 2012: Anti-Ahmadi extremist elements held a rally in the local mosque after the night prayers (*Isha*) They used sound amplifiers and agitated the audience greatly. They indulged in very foul language against Ahmadis. One of these speakers posed to be a former Ahmadi, now turned a Mujahid of Khatme Nabuwat.

Ahmadi threatened with being reported to Jamaat Islami

Sabzazar; December 2012: Mr. Rashid Mahmud Kahlon, an Ahmadi elder of the local community received a threat letter from one A. Amjad advocate (Extract):

"Two maulvis approached me and conveyed about you that you call yourself a Musulman and your wife and daughter-in-law teach the recitation of the Quran to Muslim children. You and your son remain active. This caused great anger among those present in the mosque and they decided that your case would be forwarded to the Mansura Centre (of Jamaat Islami, in Lahore) so as to have a criminal case registered against you under religious laws, by Liaquat Baloch so as to deny you the possibility of release on bail. I obtained your address with great difficulty. I am one of the members of this committee and warn you sympathetically to take care."

A few other Ahmadis of Sabzazar also received threat letters. This man, Amjad the advocate, had met Mr. Kahlon earlier; now he has written to him.

A shameless and grabby religious bigot

Iqbal Town; November/December 2012: It was reported earlier that one Waqas Ahmad had filed an application with the police to register a criminal case against Mr. Wasim Ahmad, Ahmadi for undertaking sacrifice of an animal at the occasion of the festival of Eid ul Azha.

Now, a police official conveyed to Mr. Wasim Ahmad a message from this shady complainant: Waqas is now ready to withdraw his complaint if he is paid his expenses by the accused.

It seems that Waqas Ahmad ran from pillar to post in the judicial and police offices, spent time, money and effort in pursuit of his unworthy cause, but made little headway on account of it being unwarranted. He should have been ashamed of his scheme; instead he expects to be paid for his failure. NO WAY.

A surge of persecution in District Hafizabad, Punjab

District Hafizabad is located only 50 miles NW of Lahore, the provincial capital. It has been in the grip of anti-Ahmadi extremist elements in the recent past. The police found it convenient to yield to the aggressive bigots and removed religious inscriptions from Ahmadis' graves in Mangat Uncha in August this year. This led to encouragement of the mullas who indulged in greater efforts to violate Ahmadis' human right. These were reported in subsequent monthly reports. Further, incidents are reported below.

Chak Chatha: Following incidents of religious hatred happened in the local schools.

- a. A mulla visited the school and scolded an Ahmadi child Ayaz Ahmad son of Mian Muhammad Ishaque and told him that 'Mirzais are apostates' implying that they should be killed. Some other boys were happy to get this lead from the mulla. This terrorized the boy. However a few others who were present at the spot defended him by saying that his Mirzaiat was not his fault; he inherited this belief. "He would understand when he grows up," they pleaded.
- b. An Ahmadi school boy Sabih Ahmad son of Shafiq Ahmad was beaten up by other boys. They tore up his clothes, and put a paper on which foul words were written about his family, in his pocket.
- c. Another Ahmadi student Asad Ali son of Arshad Bhatti was also beaten up by his class-fellows who are encouraged in this by their teacher Mulla Asmatullah. Ali is facing a lot of hostility from other boys and is exposed to violence at the hand of students and teachers.

Chatthadar: Mr. Asmatullah, Ahmadi was on his way to his shop at about 7 p.m. on September 7, 2012 when a few anti-Ahmadi goons held him up and beat him. Mr. Asmatullah reported this to Rana Zubair a non-Ahmadi notable, at a nearby farm (Dera). Rana Zubair, accompanied by a few of his party, proceeded to the site of the incident where the miscreants were still present. Rana Zubair reprimanded them for their violence and told them to desist from a repeat performance and offer an apology, which they did.

The local Deobandi mulla harangued the audience in his sermon with reference to the state action against Ahmadis on 7 September 1974. He agitated them on the anti-Ahmadi theme. The two incidents greatly spoiled the peace in the village. The communal tension continues.

Chak Chatha: There is a sizeable Ahmadi community in this village. This has attracted the attention of sectarian elements around and the support of Khatme Nabuwwat mullas at the district level. One of their targets now is the Ahmadiyya graveyard, which they ardently desire to be desecrated. These elements succeeded earlier in one such effort at Mangat Uncha in the same district, with the help of authorities.

Encouraged, they approached the Sessions Judge who conveniently sent the case to the police for follow-up. The police sent it to their law branch. The official there did not find much substance in the complainant's case. He told the aggressive party that the case will be

sent to the local “Peace Committee”. The Peace Committees mostly comprise 95% non-Ahmadi Muslims. Their decisions are often a foregone conclusion.

A nasty break-in

Sahiwal; December 6, 2012: At about 12:45 noon, an armed youth jumped over the gate into the residence of Mr. Aamir Hafeez the president of the district Ahmadi community of Sahiwal, central Punjab. His two colleagues also came in.

One of them managed to enter Mr. Hafeez’s bed-room. Mr. Hafeez boldly threw his blanket over the intruder and tried to overpower him. At this he took to heels. His two accomplices also ran out, and fled in the vehicle waiting outside.

The police were informed. They are investigating

Ahmadi doctor receives disquieting threat

Kotli, December 2012: Dr. Munawwar Ahmad works as a child-specialist in the District Hospital Kotli, Azad Kashmir.

Dr. Ahmad was officially told by the hospital administration that, being an Ahmadi, his life was in danger and also, he could be kidnapped.

The doctor has been advised to take all necessary and possible precautions.

Earlier similar cases have occurred in Azad Kashmir in which at least one prominent Ahmadi doctor was kidnapped and could be saved only on payment of ransom by his family. The criminals involved were not brought to justice.

Authorities' neglect of Rabwah

Lahore; December 3, 2012: The daily Waqt, Lahore published the following story sent by its reporter:

Chenab Nagar is neglected in development schemes

Chenab Nagar (Waqt correspondent): TMA Chiniot, behaving like a step-mother, neglected Chenab Nagar entirely in the development schemes prepared for 2012/2013. As per details the TMA has planned 152 development schemes for the financial year 2012-13. However, entirely neglecting Chenab Nagar, a city of 80,000 inhabitants, they have issued tender notices for development works in Bhawana, Lalian, Chiniot and numerous villages. This city is spread over four square kilometers and lakhs of rupees are received from here by the TMA as its grant from the Excise and Taxation department etc. In this context, Mian Zahid the president of Traders Association, Mr. Basharat Kahlon the vice-president, Mr. Khalil Ahmad and Naeem Ahmad Abid a social worker stated that this city adds millions in foreign exchange (to the state kitty) but it has been neglected in development schemes while its infrastructure is in a deplorable state. They demanded from the higher authorities that the tender notices should be cancelled and Chenab Nagar should be appropriately included in the development schemes of 2012-2013 with due regard to its population, size, and foreign exchange earnings.

The brazen bigot

Rawalpindi; November 30, 2013: Sharjeel Mir, the leader of the bazaar gang who succeeded in pushing the authorities to restrict Ahmadis’ Eid congregation prayer at the Evan-i-Tauhid in Rawalpindi now treats low ranking officials with some contempt. He is, of course, harsh with Ahmadis too.

On Friday, November 30, 2012: Sharjeel Mir, accompanied by 6 or 7 mullas came over to Evan-i-Tauhid and asked the police personnel on duty as to why they permitted so many people enter the building for prayers. At that time, an Ahmadi emerged from the building after prayers, and Mir spoke harshly with him.

At 3:45 p.m. Mir revisited the site accompanied by three mullas. The SHO, New Town also came there. Mir told him that he had informed the DCO and the DPO repeatedly that the number of worshipers was again on the rise. "Why do you not stop them" he wanted to know.

The SHO reassured him that no Ahmadi will be allowed to enter the building between 10:00 a.m. and 3 p.m. and none will be allowed to exit from there. True to his word he imposed that commitment the next Friday, December 7.

It seems as if this turf has been handed over by the Punjab government to bigots like Mir, whom otherwise the Chief Minister decries in his public utterances.

In Sargodha - a fabricated dispute

Thatha Joya, District Sargodha; December: This village has three graveyards that were established at different times in the past. One is for Ahmadis, another jointly for Ahmadis and non-Ahmadi, and a third one only for non-Ahmadi. There is a road leading to the joint graveyard. There is a dispute among two non-Ahmadi groups about this road. One of these two groups invited a TV channel crew, and posing this to be a dispute with Ahmadis, raised loud slogans against Ahmadis. This incident drew the attention of the police and security agencies who held an investigation.

The Ahmadi president told the investigators that Ahmadis have no dispute with any of the two parties who are disputants in the issue. The village prayer-leader and a few other non-Ahmadi elders also stated that there is no religious dispute; it is all about a road. "Ahmadis are our brothers", they said.

A well-worded op-ed from the New York Times

New York; December 6, 2012: A report, prepared by Huma Yousaf was placed on the Internet in blogs.nytimes.com after the vandalism at the Ahmadiyya graveyard in Lahore. It sums up well its lead 'ahmadis-a-special-target-of-discrimination-in-Pakistan/..'. It is placed as Annex to this report.

A loathsome complaint

Garhi Shahu; December 18, 2012: Mulla Imran wrote a complaint to Police Station Garhi Shahu that there is a marble plate affixed in the house of Mr. Abid Nasim Chughtai, a 'Qadiani', on which attributes of God are inscribed; this amounts to defiling them, the plate should be removed. He supported his application with a video and pictures taken with his cell-phone.

The SHO of P.S. Garhi Shahu visited the Ahmadiyya office the next day, met an official and told him to have the plate at Mr. Chughtai's home covered up. "We Ahmadis have great respect for God's attributes; we cannot even contemplate effacing or covering them up," the official told the SHO.

It is surprising that an SHO in Lahore is so prompt to attend to an absurd demand of a mulla, while generally it is not easy to get an SHO moving even after a murder.

From the media

Ahmadi graves desecrated in Pakistan

BangkokPost.com/point on 3.12.2012

Attackers of graveyard remain untraced

The daily Dawn; Lahore, December 5, 2012

When graves become a target of the wrath of ideologists, one is forced to ask ‘what happened to the state’.

The daily The News; Lahore, December 9, 2012

HRCP slams razing of Ahmadi graves

The daily Times; Lahore Site Edition, December 4, 2012

Silence resonates after Ahmadis graves vandalized. Community members decry authorities' apathy towards attack.

The daily The Express Tribune; Lahore, December 10, 2012

American Ahmadis upset over attack on graves (in Pakistan)

BBC.co.uk/urdu/world/2012/12/121204

Court orders registration of case against Qadiani periodicals for defiling the Quran

The daily Ummat; Karachi, December 18, 2012

Cases against Qadiani woman for preaching in the open

The daily Din; Lahore, December 6, 2012

Chenab Nagar: Streets still unpaved dirt even after 64 years. Basic infrastructure missing.

The daily Jang; Lahore, December 22, 2012

Chenab Nagar neglected in development schemes

The daily Waqt; Lahore, December 3, 2012

Plea rejected to allow Millat and Super Express (trains) stop at Chenab Nagar

The daily Khabrain; Lahore, December 20, 2012

Ovens lie cold in homes due ‘load-shedding’ of Sui gas

The daily Abtak; Lahore, December 10, 2012

Two Qadiani companies rob the state of 129 billion rupees in tax

The daily Insaf; Lahore, December 17, 2012

Qadiani educational institutions are centres of terrorism. They teach anti-Islam (doctrines) and military skills

The record of their Pakistani and foreign students should be recovered, a search should be carried out at the sites and an audit of accounts be undertaken: Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Usmani

The daily Nawa-i-Waqt; Lahore, December 8, 2012

Bashir Bilour (senior minister KP) assassinated. Secretary, 7 others die in blast. TTP claims responsibility.

The daily Dawn; Lahore, December 23, 2012

Car bomb goes off in Jamrud; 19 killed

The daily Dawn; Lahore, December 18, 2012

Audacious attack on Peshawar PAF base

The daily Dawn; Lahore, December 16, 2012

6 anti-polio workers slain in Karachi, Peshawar

The daily Dawn; Lahore, December 22, 2012

Man accused of allegedly burning the Quran is forcibly taken from police lock-up and stoned to death. His corpse was set on fire (by the mob).

The daily Insaf; Lahore, December 23, 2012

21 kidnapped Levies men found dead (in Frontier Region Peshawar)

The daily Dawn; Lahore, December 30, 2012

Mastung car-bomb kills 19 shias

The daily The Nation; Lahore, December 31, 2012

Six killed in attack on police station (in Bannu)

The daily Dawn; Lahore, December 11, 2012

Five more shot dead in ‘sectarian’ attack in Karachi

The daily Dawn; Lahore, December 1, 2012

**Religious scholar (an Afghan) among seven killed in Karachi
Five vehicles torched**

The daily Dawn; Lahore, December 4, 2012

PAF academy in Risalpur attacked; 18 injured

The daily Dawn; Lahore, December 19, 2012

21 IJT activists held (in Okara)

The daily Dawn; Lahore, December 2, 2012

Suicide attack on police station leaves 10 injured

The daily The Express Tribune; Lahore, December 5, 2012

Jihad – an obligation now or never: Jamaat Dawa

The monthly Nia Zamana; Lahore, December 2012, p.4

Banned outfits earned over Rs. 780 million (Despite ban on collection of hides)

The daily Dawn; Lahore, December 10, 2012

Fresh attacks on polio; two killed. Campaign suspended in KP.

The daily Dawn; Lahore, December 20, 2012

**Three killed in sectarian attacks (in Balochistan). Lashkar-e-Jhangvi claims responsibility;
Hindu doctor shot dead in Mastung.**

The daily The Express Tribune; Lahore, December 14, 2012

**In Punjab the banned organizations avail official support. Qamar Zaman Kaira (PPP
federal minister)**

The daily Mashriq; Lahore, December 27, 2012

Attack on minorities is an attack on Quaid-i-Azam's vision of Pakistan: Bilawal Bhutto

The daily Pakistan; Lahore, December 4, 2012

We are drowned in ignorance and bigotry: Chairman Moon Sighting Committee

The daily Aman; Faisalabad, December 5, 2012

**He (Imran Khan) is afraid that if he takes a position against extremism it will damage
his party's interests: M.A. Rana, head of Pak Institute for Peace Studies**

The weekly Time; September 17, 2012

Reform system, or face march on Capital on Jan 14: Qadri tells govt ...

The daily The News; Lahore, December 24, 2012

Violence against minorities

'Religious harmony must be taught in schools': seminar in Lahore

The daily The Express Tribune; Lahore, December 6, 2012

Saudi Arabia announces plan to establish an Islamic center in Afghanistan

The monthly Nia Zamana, December 2012, p.4

Strike in BD seeks ban on Islamic parties

The daily Dawn; Lahore, December 19, 2012

US can be its 'own worst enemy': IMF Chief (Christine Lagone)

The daily Dawn; Lahore, December 11, 2012

Faulty investigation helps terrorists go scot free (in KP)

The daily Dawn; Lahore, December 1, 2012

14-ton bomb-making chemical seized (in Quetta)

The daily The News; Lahore, December 3, 2012

**Khalifa of Islam makes historic address at European Parliament. Hazrat Mirza Mansoor
Ahmad calls for peace through unity.**

Press Release of the Press desk, Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat on 6 December 2012

SC commission to probe Lal Masjid tragedy

The daily Dawn; Lahore, December 5, 2012

The government had granted tax exemptions and waivers worth more than Rs. 650 billion over the past four years. (The finance minister in the National Assembly)

The daily Dawn; Lahore, December 16, 2012

Ministers lawmakers evading tax: study

The daily Dawn; Lahore, December 13, 2012

Tax amnesty bill introduced in NA

The daily Dawn; Lahore, December 18, 2012

When in power, we shall give rights to minorities in accordance with Islamic teachings: Liaquat Baloch (JI)

The daily Mashriq; Lahore, December 21, 2012

Editorial: Unsafe even in death

Disrespect to any religion or belief is unacceptable. We must learn to see one another as humans first, capable of loving and not just tolerating but respecting and appreciating one another for our differences. The government must take action against those who committed this terrible act and desecrated the memories of the community's deceased loved ones.

The Express Tribune; Lahore, December 5, 2012

Op-ed: Tracing hate

It is believed that Pakistan's descent into the quagmire of violence, partaken in the name of religion has its roots in 1974 when the otherwise 'secular' government of Z.A. Bhutto declared (through legislation) the Ahmadi community as a religious minority.

Nadeem F Piracha in DAWN.COM/2012/12/13/tracing.hate

Op-ed: Ahmadi graves desecration - the death of Conscience

...More tragic is the fact that our respected Chief Justice, the custodian of human rights, fails to take any action against the mistreatment of living – and now also dead - minorities. If there ever was a *suo moto* action to take against anything, it would be this.

Faiza Mirza in DAWN.COM/2012/12/14/Ahmadi

Op-ed: 2012 saw rise in attacks on places of worship

... Minto points out that judges also do not take decisions which would rile the status quo, partly due to fear.

Report in The Express Tribune; Lahore, December 18, 2012

Op-ed: No peace - even in the grave

... the Punjab government on the other hand had been denying the presence of any extremist elements in Punjab. This denial syndrome has allowed extremists and militants to expand their activities and the result is what we witnessed in the form of this incident of the desecration of graves.

...On the other, the state authorities are involved in persecuting minorities themselves. In such situation the minorities are left with minimum options - to either immigrate to other countries, if that is not possible, face persecution.

Gulmina Bilal Ahmad in The Daily Times - Site edition of 7 Dec, 2012

Op-ed: After the living, they came for the dead

The Ahmadiyya cemetery in Lahore's Model Town is dead silent. Broken mud-ridden tombstones are scattered all over the graveyard. An old man weeps silently, trying to fix an uprooted tombstone bearing his father's name with trembling hands. His father had once fought for Pakistan's freedom.

Saba Eitizaz in The Friday Times of December 7, 2012

Op-ed: The mighty ruler of Punjab

Maybe the 'Hakim-e-Ala' has heard the saying of the Ummeyad Caliph Umar Bin Abdul Aziz who said that he was responsible even for a dog starving on the banks of Dajla, Religious minorities, forced or otherwise, in the province of Punjab are treated worse than

even animals. At least that is what Chief Minister Sharif's conduct makes us believe. The last years of the Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz's (PML-N) government in Punjab have been the worst for religious minorities in the province since the bloodletting in the immediate aftermath of partition in 1947. Then at least you had men like Iftikhar Mamdot, Mian Iftikharuddin and Sir Francis Mudie in the government of Punjab who made every effort to stem the massacre of Hindus and Sikhs, Mr. Sharif's government is either unable or unwilling to act.

Yasser Latif Hamdani in The Daily Times - Site Edition on December 10, 2012

Op-ed: Creating space for minorities

The graves of Ahmadis are desecrated by excavation. Young girls from scheduled castes are raped. Temples are demolished. Shias are persecuted. Christians are murdered. Sikhs are abducted. It seems that a systematic ideological warfare against minorities in Pakistan has been waged.

We are marching towards a bleak future that is awaiting Pakistan without beauty of religious minorities.

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan reports that at least 25 Hindu girls are abducted in Pakistan every month. **Hindu minorities, during Taliban rule in Swat, were forced to wear red headgear such as turbans as a symbol.** (Emphasis added)

Jamil Junejo in the Dawn, Lahore of December 18, 2012

Annex: IHT Global Opinion

IHT Global Opinion

DECEMBER 6, 2012, 3:49 AM

Minorities Report

By **HUMA YUSUF**

LONDON - On Monday, a dozen masked gunmen said to be affiliated with the Taliban and Lashkar-e-Taiba broke into a graveyard in an elite neighborhood of Lahore, the historic capital of Punjab Province. They tied up the guard, a caretaker and about 20 visitors, and then vandalized 120 gravestones.

It was a graveyard for Ahmadis, a minority sect that identifies itself as Muslim but is rejected by most Pakistanis as heretical for believing there was a prophet after Muhammad. The vandals destroyed gravestones inscribed with Koranic verses; they frown on Ahmadis' using Muslim prayers in epitaphs.

As Pakistan grows increasingly intolerant of minorities, Ahmadis are becoming prime targets of both violence and widespread discrimination.

In 2008, within 48 hours of a television broadcast featuring a popular televangelist and clerics who argued that Ahmadis should be killed, two members of the community were shot dead in separate incidents. In the most egregious attack to date, Pakistani Taliban simultaneously attacked two mosques in Lahore in 2010, killing 93 Ahmadis.

Taking a cue from this violence, many other Pakistanis are sidelining the minority. Earlier this year the Lahore Bar Association banned the sale of fruit juices produced by an Ahmadi-owned company. Ahmadis in Rawalpindi were prevented from congregating during Eid. Meanwhile, Pakistan's otherwise feisty media have seemed insensitive to the community's plight.

Anti-Ahmadi sentiment is so pervasive among Pakistanis that even members of the community who should be hailed as national heroes are vilified. Extremists deleted the word "Muslim" from the gravestone of Abdus Salam, an Ahmadi and theoretical physicist whose work provided evidence of the Higgs boson's existence; his family had had it inscribed with "the first Muslim Nobel laureate." Salam had been systematically shunned and eventually banned from lecturing at public universities because of his religious beliefs.

The discrimination is especially horrifying because it is mandated by the state. In 1974, then Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto oversaw an amendment to the Constitution that declared Ahmadis to be non-Muslims; he was hoping to secure the support of religious political parties in upcoming elections. As the Pakistani state formally became more Islamic in the 1980s, it further curtailed the community's rights.

Ahmadi are now prohibited by law from proselytizing, making the call to prayer, describing their houses of worship as mosques or even identifying as Muslims. In fact, in order to obtain a passport, all Pakistani citizens have to sign an oath declaring that Ahmadis are not Muslim.

After Monday's graveyard attack in Lahore, local police filed a case against the unknown gunmen for trespassing, intimidation and wrongful restraint. But often the authorities are a direct part of the problem.

In August, police officers whitewashed religious inscriptions from an Ahmadi graveyard in Hafizabad, a district of Punjab - all in the name of averting bloodshed: members of an extremist organization had threatened to attack Ahmadis if the gravestones were not razed. In September, police officials destroyed 23 gravestones in an Ahmadi graveyard in Faisalabad, a Punjabi city, at the direct instigation of local clerics.

As they gear up for general elections in 2013, Pakistani politicians refrain from speaking out against mounting discrimination against the Ahmadi community for fear of alienating conservative voters. But how long can political expediency trump basic religious rights and human dignity?

<http://latitude.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/12/06/ahmadis-a-special-target-of-discrimination-in-pakistan/>

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