

Persecution of Ahmadis in Pakistan

News Report March 2013

Extremist elements attack the residence of president of Ahmadi community Shamsabad

Violence perpetrated over belief; household belongings set on fire: Spokesperson Ahmadi Jamaat

Shamsabad, District Kasur, Punjab: (PR) Approximately twenty extremist bigots attacked Malik Maqsd Ahmad for his belief on March 26, 2013 night in Shamsabad, District Kasur. As per details, an organized hate campaign has been going on there for the last few months against members of the Ahmadi community. Extremist elements, in the same context, mounted an assault on his residence and injured him grievously. He was rendered unconscious as a result of the attack. The attackers beat up members of his family too. They damaged his household belongings. Mr. Ahmad had to be admitted in the local hospital.

Mr. Saleemuddin, the Ahmadi spokesperson and Director Public Affairs condemned the attack and called it a failure of the administration. He stated that for some time religious extremist were carrying on a hate and boycott campaign against the Ahmadis. A social boycott is in place. As a result no shopkeeper sells anything to Ahmadis. No doctor or dispenser provides medicines to Ahmadi sick. Ahmadi children have been expelled from schools. Ahmadis' movements have been restricted. They are barred even to fetch water. The local administration knows all this, but the officials find it more convenient to yield to extremists than provide protection to Ahmadis under law. This is a clear failure of the law-enforcement authorities. "This organized attack on the residence of Malik Maqsd Ahmad is a clear proof of mounting intolerance and violence in Pakistani society", said Mr. Saleemuddin. He demanded that authorities be directed to ensure safety of person and property of Ahmadi citizens and provide them freedom of faith. "The attackers on his residence should be arrested and punished as per law", he said.

Attack on an Ahmadi

Mori Darwaza, Sialkot; March 1, 2013: Rana Muhammad Akmal S/O Rana Muhammad Fazil was sitting in his shop when two bearded men came to him on a motorcycle. One of them called Mr. Akmal, and asked him the time. Meanwhile, his colleague fired a shot at him that hit him in his leg. They fired some more shots, but they missed him. The shooting invited the attention of other people, so the attackers fled on their motorcycle. The Rescue Service attended to Mr. Akmal and shifted him to a hospital where he got stable.

The police have registered a report.

Desecration of Islamic creed by the police

Jalya Wala, 367 JB, District Toba Tek Singh; March 9, 2013: Some men came to the local Ahmadiyya mosque and demanded removal of the *Kalima* written on the mosque. Ahmadis refused to comply. Later they arrived in company of a constable who directed Ahmadis to remove the *Kalima*. Afterwards the same constable telephoned and told Ahmadis to report to the police station on 25 February. There the Ahmadi delegation explained their position to the SHO and persuaded him not to remove the *Kalima*. A few days later the mullas used their old but effective tactic and took out a procession and put pressure on the police to remove the *Kalima* from the Ahmadiyya mosque. The police yielded to their pressure and covered the *Kalima* written in the courtyard and on the outer wall of the

Ahmadiyya mosque with black paint.

Supreme Court and the electoral situation of Ahmadis

Islamabad: According to press reports, the Supreme Court in response to a petition by Mr. Kunwar Idris, an Ahmadi, decided to take notice of the various rules affecting Ahmadis' electoral position. *Inter alia*, the petitioner submitted that a separate electoral list for Ahmadis is an insult aimed at excluding the community from the mainstream. The Court directed the authorities to put up the current rules. "The Court will look into the case in the light of the constitutional principles laid down in the Zaheeruddin case verdict in 1993," observed one of the judges.

It would be recalled that in the Zaheeruddin vs State case, the Supreme Court, in a majority verdict, upheld the controversial anti-Ahmadiyya Ordinance XX of 1984.

In this 1993 verdict the Supreme Court of Pakistan made the following observation which will be quoted for decades to come. "... (W)hen an Ahmadi or Ahmadis display in public on a placard, a badge or a poster or write on walls or ceremonial gates or buntings, the '*Kalima*' or chant other 'Shaeere Islam' it would amount to publicly defiling the name of Holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.)..." (Zaheeruddin Vs. State, 1993 S.C.M.R. 1718 (para 85)

As for the 'constitutional principles' laid down in that case by the then Supreme Court, one expert opinion is quoted here as sample. Barrister A.G. Chaudhry LLB. Hons (Leeds) in his 'An analytical Comment on Judgement of the Supreme Court (1993 S.C.M.R. 1718)' remarked as (extract):

"How did Abdul Qadeer Chaudhry, J. think apt the analogy between the limitation imposed by law on the freedom to profess religion and to maintain religious institutions and the restrictions imposed by the company law and the law of trade and merchandise marks is beyond our comprehension. The instance furnished by the learned author of the majority opinion, that the Coca Cola Company "will not permit anyone to sell, even a few ounces of his own product in his own bottles or other receptacles, marked coca cola, even though its price may be few cents" in support of an argument that the fundamental right of freedom of religion of Ahmadis can be taken away or curtailed to say the least, is most unfortunate." p.28

The Daily Times of Lahore made the following editorial comment on this subject on March 13, 2013:

"...When Pakistan was born, its founding father, the Quad-i-Azam, had a vision – he told the people that faith was a personal matter and that the state had no business interfering with anyone's beliefs. Fast forward to the Pakistan of today and we see that, far from being free believers of whichever faith they choose, minorities – particularly the Ahmadis – are not even treated as citizens of the state. They have no right, no safeguards and can be jailed for some of the pettiest 'offences' inventive and mischievous minds can think of."

Their lordships of the Supreme Court had a great opportunity to undo the historical wrong perpetuated by the state, and sweep its own backyard too on this issue. It would have been a major step towards much-cherished recovery of this stricken nation. But their Lordships were thinking of using the 'light' of a disputed discredited verdict delivered 20 years ago.

It is learnt that Mr. Idris has withdrawn his petition. He had filed it more than five years ago. The attorney general, representative of the state never turned up; so for his convenience the case was moved to the principal seat of the court, Islamabad. The attorney general failed to show up there as well on three dates. After the most recent hearing, when he decided again not to make an appearance, the dejected petitioner, not seeing a light at the end of the tunnel, sought permission to withdraw his petition. His op-ed in the daily Dawn on this event is produced at Annex I.

A drive against Ahmadi-owned printing presses

Lahore; March 2013: Last month it was reported that the police raided Black Arrow printing press, arrested four Ahmadis, booked them and sealed the press.

Subsequent to the raids on Black Arrow and Silver Link printers, a police inspector visited the Sunrise Printers near the Shimla Hill. He met the proprietor Mr. Naveed Malik, an Ahmadi, and told him that some mullas had moved an application against him and showed him a book '313 Ashab' in evidence. Mr. Malik told him that he had nothing to do with the printing of this book; also, he had for the last two years given the press to another party on rent. The inspector intimated that the complainants were putting a great deal of pressure on him. Anyway, he found nothing objectionable at the site and went back.

As for the detainees of the Black Arrow Press case, the police dispatched Mr. Asmatullah and Mr. Altaf Shah the book-binder to prison on judicial remand. The court refused to accept their plea for bail. A panel of lawyers has been formed to present their case for bail to the Lahore High Court.

Ongoing hostility in Lahore

Rachna Town, Lahore; March 6, 2013: Mr. Abdur Rashid Nagi's daughters, aged 11 and 9 were walking back from school when an attempt was made to kidnap the younger sister. Her foot was hurting so she lagged behind, while the elder reached home early. On inquiry of the parents, she went back to escort her home. When she arrived at the Ferozwala Main Bazar, the younger sister was noticed in a side street. She narrated that a man gagged her and attempted to take her forcibly away. "You are a Mirzai girl, hence you have to be taken away", he said. She bit him on his hand and screamed for help. At this the man released her and fled.

The elder sister stated that for two previous days the man was seen in the same street on their way back home. The parents reported the incident to the police. The community elders have warned all the Ahmadi families in Lahore to take appropriate precautions against such attempts.

Faisal Town, Lahore; March 5, 2013: Mr. Amir Mashood, Ahmadi S/O Mr. Muhammad Arif Naseem has been running a printing business "Galaxy Four" in Royal Park for the last fourteen years. The Lahore Police is visibly active since the beginning of the year 2013 against printing presses owned by Ahmadis. They arrested the owner of Black Arrow printing press in January. They also raided another printing press owned by another Ahmadi Sheikh Waseem Anwar and detained him. Mr. Mashood's office is located opposite the office of Mr. Anwar. The police raided his office on March 5 and then again on March 7 but discovered nothing objectionable.

Later anti-Ahmadiyya banners were put up in the market. The market union decided to have all Ahmadi businesses vacated from the market. This is a very grave and unlawful decision. The owner of Mr. Mashood's office also served him a notice of vacation.

Civil Lines, Lahore; March 17, 2013: Sheikh Tahir Ahmad was going on a motorbike along with his father when three mullas on a motorcycle stopped them near Sandha. They abused Mr. Ahmad and his father and even thumped them. They told them "to accept Islam or face death." The father told the son not to retaliate and keep his calm. Some people intervened and facilitated their release. The mullas let them go but under threat to their lives.

Ghazi Abad; March 2013: Mr. Iqbal Ahmad has been selling chicken meat for the last seven years in Lahore. Some mullas of Sipah Sahaba (a religious outfit banned for its terrorist activities) came to his shop and told him to stop selling meat as he was Qadiani, a non-Muslim, and that chicken were thereby not *Halal* as per Sharia. The mullas took the police on board who ordered Mr. Ahmad to close down his business. In fact Mr. Ahmad had recanted from Ahmadiyyat two years ago.

Lahore; February 2013: With reference to the police case of attacks on two Ahmadiyya mosques in Lahore in 2010, a court hearing was scheduled for February 19, 2013. Ahmadis were supposed to present the eye witnesses in the court, but they are unable to do so in view of the threats posed by the militants.

Meeting of a banned organization against Ahmadis

Rahim Yar Khan; February 28, 2013: Reliable sources reported that Lashkare Jhangvi (a religious outfit banned for its terrorist activities) held a meeting here on one point agenda – the Ahmadiyya community. They discussed ways to stop ‘Qadiani’ Jamaat from functioning. They decided to target first the Amir of local Ahmadis who lives in Khanpur. They discussed various plans to harm the Ahmadiyya community.

A meeting with Home Secretary to the Government of the Punjab

Lahore: A high level office-bearer of the Ahmadiyya community in Pakistan requested a meeting with the Home Secretary who was considerate enough to spare time. The meeting took place in Lahore and the former presented to the Secretary a brief on anti-Ahmadi events that occurred in Lahore during the last six months. Most of what was said was put down briefly in writing. Its English translation is produced below:

**Directorate of General Affairs
Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya, Pakistan, Rabwah**

To:

The Home Secretary Punjab, Lahore

Salutation

Subject: Anti-Ahmadi activities in Lahore

Sir, during the last few months there has been a dangerous escalation in the activities of anti-Ahmadi elements in Lahore, the capital of the Punjab. Initially they effaced the *Kalima* from Ahmadi places of worship, they demolished the minarets, and now they are targeting Ahmadis’ homes and places of business from where they are effacing religious inscriptions. They even obstruct Ahmadis undertaking animal sacrifices. Likewise, they now interfere in last rites of Ahmadi dead. Ahmadis are implicated in fabricated police cases. All this is undertaken by a particular group who operate hand in glove with police who indulge in actions beyond the law.

Apart from the above, people are inflamed against Ahmadis in anti-Ahmadi rallies where provocative literature is also distributed that calls for extreme action against Ahmadis calling them *Wajib-ul-Qatl* (must be killed). All this is happening in the capital of the largest province of Pakistan. A report on some such incidents of the past six months is attached for perusal.

As Pakistani citizen, an Ahmadi’s life and property should be protected by the authorities like that of all other citizens. We have requested repeatedly in the past the competent authorities to take note of anti-Ahmadi activities, but unfortunately without any visible result. This has encouraged the above mentioned elements to further action. The administration and the police support them to the hilt.

The above is submitted for appropriate action.
With best wishes,

Saleemuddin

Director General Affairs
Rabwah (Chenab Nagar), District Chiniot

Ordeal of an abductee

Karachi; March 2013: Mr. Shaukat Javed, an Ahmadi of Karachi went missing. All efforts to trace him had failed.

On March 13, 2013, the Rangers undertook an operation in Gadap Town near the Super Highway. They arrested four Pathans and recovered two men from their captivity. They showed them on TV during a news broadcast.

Mr. Javed's family noticed that one of the two rescued men was Shaukat Javed. Delighted, they contacted the Rangers and brought him home. Mr. Javed described that he was abducted from the Vegetable Market, about 5 miles from Gadap Town.

While in captivity they tortured him and asked him questions concerning the security details of the senior office-holders of the Ahmadi community.

Mr. Javed is lucky to regain freedom without having to pay ransom.

A very close escape

Rehman Abad, District Nawab Shah; March 2013: An Ahmadi family here was spared an attack by a mob and a criminal charge by the police over a false accusation of blasphemy.

Mr. Abdul Rehman of Dhari tribe was an influential Ahmadi in this area. A plot of his land was on rent with a tenant of Arain family. Now, Mr. Rehman's family wanted their plot back, but the tenant did not wish to part with it, so he thought of an easy way to worsen the landlord's sons. He accused them of defiling the Quran. "They trampled the Holy Book under their feet and even kicked it," he alleged. He sent some messengers to the nearby town of Bandhi to spread the disinformation.

At Bandhi, on hearing the news, people got very angry and agitated. They closed down their businesses, took up their clubs and headed for Rehman Abad. They formed a procession, blocked the road and posed a major threat to law and order. Accompanied by a number of mullas they reached Mr. Dhari's house and threatened violence.

The Dhari tribe are a well-knit group. They place their tribal identity before any sectarian prejudice. They assembled and challenged the unruly crowd to provide evidence in support of their accusation. As they could produce no evidence they had to step back and disperse.

The targeted Ahmadi family escaped a catastrophe by a thin margin.

Anti-Ahmadiyya conferences

Golra; March 11, 2013: Opponents of the Ahmadiyya community held a Khatme Nabuwwat conference in this town that is adjacent to the federal capital. It was addressed by Pir Jalalud Din Gilani, Nizamud Din Jami, Syed Riaz Hussain Shah, Babar Awan etc. Speakers spoke venomously against the Ahmadiyya community. Following was said, *inter alia*:

1. If a Qadiani (Ahmadi) is not loyal to our Holy Prophet (PBUH), how can he be loyal to our country? A notice is taken of any contempt of court, but no action is taken here against contempt of the Holy Prophet (PBUH)!
2. An international TV channel of Khatme Nabuwwat is urgently needed. Its head office should be in London. The well-off are requested to donate generously.
3. No prophet is ever a slave; so the Mirza cannot be a true prophet as his name was Ghulam Ahmad (slave of Ahmad).

4. A reporter admired Mulla Shabir Usmani (of Khatme Nabuwwat mosque in Muslim Colony Chenab Nagar, Rabwah) in that he had established a centre of Khatme Nabuwwat in Chenab Nagar. Mulla Shahid felt jealous and retorted that he had been deceived: Shabir Usmani suffered from a heart attack and he went to a Qadiani doctor; he should have preferred death to a treatment by a Qadiani doctor. His children were being taught by Mirzai (Ahmadi) teachers, and he indulged in buying and selling to Mirzais.

This conference was attended by approximately five thousand participants, five hundred of them were women. A number had come from Jhang, Multan and Muslim Colony.

G-9, Islamabad; March 15, 2012: Mullas held another Khatme Nabuwwat conference in the Jamia Masjid and madrassa Zulqarnain in Sector G-9. The police intended to disallow the conference but allowed it after receiving assurance through phone-calls from an anti-Ahmadiyya centre in Golra that the proceedings will be peaceful. The police readily agreed.

Qari Saleem Naeemi spoke insults against the founder of the Ahmadiyya community. Another mulla Syed Hashmi who had come from India also spoke against the Ahmadiyya community. Approximately 250 participated in the conference. Most of them were madrassa students who kept on raising anti-Ahmadiyya slogans during the conference.

The sectarian extremism displayed in the conference was unworthy of the capital, and the police should not have permitted the event in the first place.

Mianwali Sindhwan, Sialkot; March 1, 2013: Anti-Ahmadi mullas held a Khatme Nabuwwat conference here in Jamia Masjid Gumbad Wali. Mulla Allah Wassaya came from Multan to address it. There were other mullas too. They indulged in slander against the Ahmadiyya community. A few samples from their rhetoric:

- A Muslim even if sinful, of loose character, adulterer or drunked, he is still much better than a Qadiani.
- Thanks to the butchers who refused to slaughter animals offered as sacrifice by Qadianis on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha
- Remove the Quranic verses and Islamic inscriptions from the gravestones of Ahmadi's graves, as Ahmadi's have no right to Quranic verses.

This conference lasted till midnight.

Anti-Ahmadiyya propaganda in Faisalabad

Chak 96 GB, District Faisalabad; March 2013: Anti-Ahmadiyya opponents have become very active in this village and in the nearby town of Jaranwala. They formed a group comprising some youth who distributed pamphlets and stickers that incite the people to boycott Ahmadi's. They also distributed in the village distorted portraits of the founder of the Ahmadiyya community. Some elders of the village protested against it. The activists undertook wall-chalking in the village: "**Khuddam (servants) of Khatme Nabuwwat – Labbaik (ready to act) Ya Rasulallah – from Pakistan Sunni Tahrik**". The college students distributed anti-Ahmadiyya stickers in the Jaranwala College and pasted them in public transport. These opponents have left no stone unturned in their anti-Ahmadi campaign.

Lahore episode further blemishes Punjab govt's record

An op-ed fit for archives

Lahore; March 11, 2013: The News International, Lahore published an op-ed with the above title. It brings to focus precisely the 5-years' performance of the PML(N) government in the Punjab on the issues of protection of minorities mainly, Christians, Ahmadi's and Shias, the roles of SSP, ASWJ, JD and PML(N) parties in this sphere and the authorities' handling of the criminals involved in their crimes against humanity. This op-ed by Amir Mir is placed as Annex II to this report.

A Statement by the Asian Human Rights Commission

March 11, 2013: Hong Kong-based AHRC issued Statement Nr: AHRC-STM-057-2013 for 'Immediate Release', titled: **PAKISTAN: Christian houses were burned with connivance between the government of Punjab and land grabbers.** As this Statement refers to a very grave incident of arson in Lahore against a minority community and accuses the provincial government of policy of prejudice against religious and sectarian minorities, a few extracts from it are reproduced below:

...

The attackers were from the Madrassas (Muslim seminaries) and most of the persons were from nearby provinces and were not familiar with the area and the PML-N workers were guiding them.

...

This is not the first incident of attacks on religious minority groups in the province by the ruling party of the government. During the last five years of the government of PML-N more than 200 persons from minority groups were killed in attacks on Christians, Ahmadis and Shias.

...

The attacks and incidents of killings of Christians are due to the sheer negligence and biased attitude of the Punjab provincial government and police. The Punjab government is notorious for appeasing banned Muslim militant organizations.

...

The recent incident at Joseph Colony (Badami Bagh, Lahore) has set a precedent that any religious group can hire people and start attacking on the excuse of blasphemy and as has happened constantly in the past the police and the government have failed to provide protection to the minorities. Not only are they failing to provide protection but in view of the fact that members of the assembly are involved in the incident, it is blatantly clear that the government approves the attacks.

...

Section 295 and 298 of the Pakistan Penal Code which are related to the blasphemy laws and Ahmadis for presenting themselves as Muslims, should be repealed immediately. Indeed the government should immediately abolish the blasphemy law completely which was introduced by a fundamentalist military dictator in 1980s for the purpose of prosecuting religious minorities...

AHRC-STM-057-2013 on March 11, 2013 on website. www.humanrights.asia

World war inevitable unless justice prevails: Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad

London (PR): The World Head of the Ahmadiyya Jamaat and Fifth Khalifa, has spoken at length about the perilous state of the world and the impending threat of a nuclear war. While delivering the keynote address, on the occasion of the 10th Annual Peace Symposium at the Baitul Futuh Mosque in London His Holiness warned of the catastrophic consequences if true justice at all levels was not observed. He said the risk of nuclear war was real and was the biggest threat to today's civilization.

Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad appealed for change to save society: "If we want true peace and if want to save the world from destruction then we must act with justice, integrity and be ever faithful to the truth."

The event attracted an audience of more than a 1,000 people, including Government Ministers, Ambassadors of State, Members of both Houses of Parliament and various other dignitaries and guests from all walks of life. The theme of this year's Symposium was 'The Pathway to Peace'.

The 4th Annual 'Ahmadiyya Muslim Prize for the Advancement of Peace' was presented to Dr. Oheneba Boachie-Adjei for his life-changing medical work that provides great hopes for the future of thousands in the developing world.

Dr. Boachie-Adjei is from Ghana, who shifted to the US for higher studies, research and work.

Ahmadis behind bars

Mr. Moeed Ayaz, Mr. Asmatullah, Mr. Razaullah and Mr. Ghulamullah are in detention in Lahore in the Black Arrow press case. They were arrested on January 7, 2013.

From the media

Assault on the residence of regional president of the Ahmadiyya Community. He was receiving threats for last six months: Leave the area.

The daily Mashriq; Lahore, March 28, 2013

Tension after attack on Ahmadi house (in Kasur)

The daily Dawn; Lahore, March 27, 2013

No arrests so far in Ahmadi attack case. Ahmadiyya Community claims FIR lodged: Police stays mum.

The daily The Express Tribune; Lahore, March 28, 2013

Chenab Nagar: No water supply for six years (in Darul Ulum) due official neglect

The daily Din; Lahore, March 21, 2013

Separate electoral rolls (for Ahmadis): AG, ECP told to respond to five-year-old petition

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/514140/separate..>

There has never been a greater mischief (fitna) in Islam for the past 14 centuries than the Qadiani fitna.

Title of op-ed in The daily Nawa-e-Waqt; Lahore, March 1, 2013

49,000 martyred in war against terror (since 9/11) SC told

The daily The News; Lahore, March 28, 2013

Blast ravages Shia neighborhood (in Karachi). At least 45 killed, 135 injured, many died in their apartments.

The daily Dawn; Lahore, March 4, 2013

Checkpost suicide attack death toll rises to 17

The daily Dawn; Lahore, March 28, 2013

12 die in Peshawar suicide blast. FC commandant survives attack.

The daily Dawn; Lahore, March 30, 2013

ASI, two bombers killed in Mardan gun battle

The daily The Nation; Lahore, March 31, 2013

Five fall prey to 'sectarian' killings in Karachi

The daily Dawn; Lahore, March 3, 2013

Hizb-ut-Tahrir targets Pakistan on global leader's orders

The daily The News; Lahore, March 1, 2013

One crore (10 million) rupees – price of the head of Muti ur Rehman of Lashkar Jhangvi

The daily Din; Lahore, March 1, 2013

The Punjab government (PML-N) is notorious for appeasing banned Muslim militant organizations. AHRC-STM-057-2013 dated March 11, 2013

The daily Dawn; Lahore, March 11, 2013

Minimum wages Rs. 15,000. PML(N) unveils election manifesto – 2013

The daily The News; Lahore, March 8, 2013

Non-Muslims enjoy equal rights in country, says PM

The daily The Nation; Lahore, March 7, 2013

Ulema raise voice against misuse of blasphemy law, want it amended

- The daily The Nation; Lahore, March 13, 2013*
Myanmar riots: 43 Muslims killed; 13000 homes, shops and mosques set on fire
The daily Nawa-i-Waqt; Lahore, March 31, 2013
The US will disintegrate soon like the Soviet Union: Difa Pakistan Council
The Ulama should strive for unity in Ummah. Hafiz Saeed and Maulana Ilyas Chinioti and others address rally in Chiniot.
The daily Pakistan; Lahore, March 29, 2013
Myanmar accused of blocking aid to Rohingyas (Muslims)
The daily The Nation; Lahore, March 29, 2013
Malik (Fed Int Minister) accuses Punjab Govt of striking deal with (the banned) LJ
The daily The News; Lahore, March 6, 2013
Man having links with banned outfit may get PML N ticket (in District Gujrat)
The daily Dawn; Lahore, March 18, 2013
Jamaat (Islami), PTI enter seat adjustment in KP
The daily Dawn; Lahore, March 18, 2013
3 MQM activists shot dead in Hyderabad
The daily Dawn; Lahore, March 18, 2013
Lawyers boycott courts for (the kidnapping) of the Prosecutor General. Litigants face difficulties.
The daily Mashriq; Lahore, March 2, 2013
Musharaf lands in Karachi (after 4 years of self-exile)
The daily Dawn; Lahore, March 28, 2013
If the Constitution has to be suspended to save Pakistan it is OK: Musharraf
The daily Dawn; Lahore, March 20, 2013
Ch. Nisar (PML-N) proposes Justices Nasir Aslam or Shakir ullah Jan as Caretaker PM. Nisar requests Munawwar Hassan (of JJ) to forward these names to Imran Khan (of TIP)
The daily Mashriq; Lahore, March 2, 2013
Mir Hazar Khan Khoso takes oath today (as prime minister)
The daily Dawn; Lahore, March 28, 2013
Najam Sethi: Caretaker CM Punjab
The daily Waqt; Lahore, March 27, 2013
HRW points fingers at police complicity (Christians under attack)
The daily The Express Tribune; Lahore, March 11, 2013
Blasphemy accused gets life term (in Hyderabad)
The daily The Nation; Lahore, March 31, 2013
Argentina's cardinal (Jorge Mario Bergoglio) elected new Pope (named Francis I)
The daily Dawn; Lahore, March 14, 2013

Op-ed: Ahmadis and the elections

...When Pakistan was born, its founding father, the Quad-i-Azam, had a vision – he told the people that faith was a personal matter and that the state had no business interfering with anyone's beliefs. Fast forward to the Pakistan of today and we see that, far from being free believers of whichever faith they choose, nominates particularly the Ahmadis – are not even treated as citizens of the state. They have no rights, no safeguards, and can be jailed for some of the pettiest 'offences' inventive and mischievous minds can think of.

Editorial, The Daily Times, Lahore; March 13, 2013

Op-ed: Who will take a bullet for Sherry Rehman?

Pakistan Ambassador to the United States of America, Sherry Rehman's twitter bio declares: "Will take a bullet for the motherland but hope our children don't have to." But what is an ambassador to do when that bullet comes from Pakistan and strikes her in the back? Last week, Pakistan took the unprecedented step and charged their own ambassador with blasphemy – a crime that carries the consequence of fine, prison time, and even execution. As Rehman vibrantly fights to improve our nation's image, implores the US that her country is moderate and tolerant, and courageously defends Pakistan's domestic and foreign policy, the motherland – of all places proves her wrong.

Qasim Rashid in The Daily Times, Site Edition, February 26, 2013

Op-ed: 'I' and JI – Imran's rally, dis allies

Those looking for a party to end the individuals' hold on Pakistan politics must have been disappointed by Imran Khan's address to a big rally in Lahore on March 23. And those who had seen in him the promise of independent, refreshing (even progressive) thrust for change are not too pleased with his closeness with the Jamaat-i-Islami.

Editorial, The daily Dawn; March 27, 2013

Op-ed: Why we cannot combat terrorism

It is said that the supporters of PML(N) and Lashkar Jhangvi share common political understanding to the extent that the latter will extend electoral support to PML-N in at least 40 constituencies and will not target their political leaders. (Translation)

Najam Sethi in beta-jang.com.pk/printAkb.asp?ID-68609

Op-ed: Why Sir Syed loses and Allama Iqbal wins in Pakistan

Sir Syed's rational approach ultimately lost out and the Allama's call on emotive reasoning won.

Iqbal said what people wanted to hear – and his genius lay in crafting it with beautifully chosen words. Unfortunately his prescriptions for restructuring society cannot help us in digging ourselves out of a hole.

Pervez Hoodbhoy in The Express Tribune; February 9, 2013

Op-ed: Destined to fail

... It is a national emergency, and what is missing is an acknowledgement that the problem is far broader than just the L.J. or other blatantly violent organizations. Focusing on them is pointless without a crackdown on all the various faces of sectarianism that are tolerated and in some cases actively fostered by the state, from politicians and sections of the media to law enforcement and the military.

Editorial, the daily DAWN; March 5, 2013

Annexes:

- I. Op-ed from the News International of March 11, 2013: Lahore episode further blemishes Punjab govt's record
- II. Op-ed from the Dawn of March of 23, 2013: Long search for justice

Long search for justice

By Kunwar Idris | 3/25/2013 12:00:00 AM

IN the 1960s at the age of 29, I was political agent of Chitral, then a princely state. The mehtar (princely ruler of the state), a minor, was a boarder at Lahore's Aitchison.

All power executive and judicial vested in the political agent. A more senior political officer based at Malakand was the regent. A rusted 19th century cannon fired an 11 gun salute whenever he came to Chitral.

Among those serving in the region were the redoubtable G.A. Madani, a shrewd Wajihuddin Ahmad and an expert on tribal acumen, Ijlal Haider Zaidi. I valued their appreciation and even admonition for it was always for my good.

As the local potentate called the wazir-i-azam, which the political agent was known as, I presided over the judicial council and the meezan-i-Shariat or Shariat court. On both bodies also sat some elders. The representatives of the contesting parties were heard to their heart's content.

An unwritten but firmly embedded convention required the council and the meezan to hear and decide every case in a day's sitting. If the hearing was carried over to the second day, the procrastinating party had to bear the cost of the overnight stay of the other side, which in those days cost Rs2 per head. (Mind you, the wage of a state peon then was Rs30 a month and mine Rs750).

If the political agent was feeling lazy or was preoccupied he had to bear the cost of both parties, obviously from the state treasury. The purpose in recalling this outdated and rather long introduction is to relate through personal experience the dispensation of quick justice in an impoverished, autocratic state that went by tradition and truth, as well as the state of litigation in modern Pakistan with its laws rooted in Roman, British and Islamic jurisprudence and that goes on for years, even generations.

Half a century later, I accidentally discovered that my right of vote was put in jeopardy because of an amendment made behind closed doors by the then 'chief executive' Gen Musharraf. This focused on listing Ahmadis separately despite the joint electorate system. Tormented by a feeling of wrong inflicted by a dictator who had pretensions to enlightenment, I decided to challenge his law by ignoring saner counsels to the contrary.

Here follows the saga of my search for justice at the highest level.

My petition to the chief justice of Pakistan in September 2007 came up for hearing 40 months later in May 2010 before Justice Jawwad S.

Khawaja who admitted it noting that the discrimination alleged was 'invidious and impermissible' After this unexpectedly bright start a nightmare of adjournments followed. The petition was not heard on 20 or more dates for a variety of reasons, the main reason being the absence of the attorney general and three amici curiae whom the court thought fit to appoint despite my protestations that I could argue my case without their help.

Further, the court on visits to Karachi remained largely preoccupied with law and order problems, shifting of the trailer-truck stand from Keamari, arbitrary appointments made by the government and similar matters. As the district magistrate of Karachi in troubled times, I could see that the court was wasting its time. And so it was proved.

In this scenario of frustrating adjournments, Justice Khawaja again came to preside over a Karachi bench.

Perturbed by the delay he suggested, and I agreed, that if my case were to be transferred to the court's principal seat in Islamabad it may proceed faster as the attorney general was always around and a number of benches work there side by side. Three hearings were held in Islamabad but the attorney general still did not make an appearance. Seemingly, he appears only in cases that attract attention to his defiance of authority, the human rights of an ordinary man being of little significance.

In the most recent hearing in Islamabad, Justice Tassadug Hussain Jillani and Justice Sarmad Jalal Osmany comprised the bench. They were quick to make out that I was not a professional petitioner but an aggrieved senior citizen seeking vindication of his fundamental right.

But who knows whether they will be on the bench when I go there for the fourth time. Even if they are, the attorney general wouldn't turn up for sure to state the official viewpoint as the government itself is now in flux.

I sought permission to withdraw my petition to save further expense and fatigue.

Justice Jillani very graciously asked me why I wasn't writing any more. 'To what effect, my lord?' I replied. He seemed to understand. Time had overtaken my grievance. It would be too much reliance on divine favour to expect to be living and fit to vote five or six years hence. In any case only 40 per cent of registered voters vote.

Considering the omissions in the rolls, including mine, and the bogus votes cast the percentage could be no more than 25.

But one thing is certain: I wouldn't be a part of Imran Khan's tsunami nor, perhaps, will there be any tsunami at all.

The people will keep on towards their doom through a jungle of corruption and terror while Imran (with Tahirul Qadri gone) fends for himself in his Margalla estate, the Sharifs fortify Raiwind and Asif Zardari looks to Bahria.

And all that without the attorney general's help. • The writer is a former civil servant.

Lahore episode further blemishes Punjab govt's record

Amir Mir

Monday, March 11, 2013

LAHORE: The anti-Christian violence in Lahore where 100-plus houses and shops were ransacked, looted and finally set ablaze by a group of fanatics has further blemished the already depressing record of the PML-N government which has mostly failed to protect members of the minority communities from the wrath of the extremists and terrorists.

According to careful estimates, during the five-year tenure of Shahbaz Sharif as chief minister of Punjab, over 200 Ahmadis, Christians and Shias were killed in the province in hate-drive attacks, with some of the horrific attacks targeting the minority communities taking place in Lahore. In an almost similar incident, hundreds of hooligans belonging to the Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) attacked a Christians' locality in Gojra city on July 31, 2009 and burnt alive eight members of a family besides setting ablaze over 100 houses. The failure of the Punjab government to prosecute any of the 70 accused held responsible for the gory incident had compelled the family head to leave Pakistan after the Punjab police failed to arrest the culprits who were hurling death threats to him for pursuing the case.

The anti-Christian attacks were triggered by reports of desecration of the Holy Quran by some Christians, which eventually proved false. Five of those burnt alive were women and children who could not run to save their lives.

A total of 72 people were nominated in the Gojra attacks' FIR who were set free one by one because the complainant in the murder case, Almas Hameed Masih, a resident of the Christian Colony, decided against pursuing the case and left Pakistan to save his life. Almas had actually nominated the president of the Toba Tek Singh chapter of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) in the FIR as one of the accused who was held responsible for the July 31, 2010 incident along with the local leadership of the SSP which had been renamed as the Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat (ASWJ). Those nominated in the case registered under section 7 of the Anti Terrorism Act included Abdul Qadir Awan of the PML-N and Maulana Abdul Khaliq, Qari Abidur Rehman Shah and Hafiz Muhammad Imran of the ASWJ.

Ten months after the Gojra tragedy, two fidayeen squads of the Punjabi Taliban targeted two Ahmadi mosques in the Model Town and Garhi Shahu areas of Lahore and killed over 100 people who were offering Friday prayers. Claiming responsibility for the May 28, 2010 twin terrorist attacks, Mansoor Maawia, a spokesperson for the Punjabi Taliban, had said, "No Ahmadi would live in peace in Pakistan. Our war against them will continue till their complete elimination because they are as bad infidels as Jews are." It later transpired during investigations that the master planner of the twin attacks was in fact a doctor of the Jinnah Hospital, Dr Ali Abdullah, who was also the president of the Jamaatud Daawa Medical Wing. He told his interrogators that while pursuing his medical degree at Allama Iqbal Medical College, he had received armed training in Azad Kashmir at a Lashkar-e-Taiba (LT) training camp being run by Hafiz Saeed's Jamaatud Daawa (JD). His arrest showed for the first time that the LT was a part of the Punjabi Taliban who have let loose a reign of terror across Pakistan, especially targeting the minority communities. However, none of the accused in the twin attacks has so far been taken to task.

Seven months later (on January 4, 2011), Punjab Governor Salman Taseer was shot dead in the federal capital by Malik Mumtaz Qadri, a bodyguard from the Elite Force of the Punjab Police. The killer later explained that he had assassinated Taseer because of his criticism of the blasphemy law and his efforts to secure a presidential pardon for Aasia Bibi, a poor Christian woman already condemned to death by a Pakistani Anti-Terrorism Court for having committed blasphemy. Qadri had admitted in his confessional statement that he was actually provoked for the murder by the fiery speeches of two Rawalpindi-based clerics Mufti Hanif Qureshi and Qari Imtiaz Hussain Shah. Mufti Hanif is the ameer of a Rawalpindi-based religious outfit, Shabab-e-Islami Pakistan while Imtiaz Shah is the imam of a Rawalpindi-based mosque called Amna Masjid.

Two months later (on March 2, 2011), Federal Minister for Minorities Affairs Shahbaz Bhatti, a Roman Catholic and an outspoken critic of the blasphemy law, was shot dead in Islamabad. The responsibility for the assassination was placed on the Punjabi Taliban because of a pamphlet found at the place where he was killed. Written in Urdu, the leaflet claimed that Bhatti had been killed because of his opposition to the blasphemy law. His killers have yet to be arrested.

The next in line to be killed by the Punjabi Taliban was Bargeeta Almby, a 72-year old female Christian charity worker from Sweden, who was shot in the Model Town area of Lahore on December 3, 2012 for allegedly backing two Christian priests who had been accused of committing blasphemy, the preliminary police investigations have indicated. Bargeeta Almby, the managing director of the Full Gospel Assemblies (FGA), a church fellowship founded in the United States with congregations worldwide, was returning home from her Kot Lakhpat office when two unidentified motorcyclists shot her in the Model Town area of Lahore where she had been living since long. The day Bargeeta was targeted in Model Town, another significant incident took place in the Q Block area of Model Town where over a dozen masked men carrying arms and digging tools, vandalised the tombstones of 100-plus graves at an Ahmadi cemetery. Three months before this incident, Warren Weinstein, a 71-year old Jewish American US Aid official, was abducted from his Model Town home in Lahore (on August 13, 2011) by armed men belonging to the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LJ) who eventually sold him to the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

The ugly episode in the Badami Bagh area of Lahore took place at a time when the PML-N government in Punjab was already under fire from its political opponents for trying to strike a seat adjustment deal with the ASWJ in south Punjab for the upcoming general elections. However, a Punjab government spokesman refuted the impression that it has failed to protect members of the minority communities because of a soft corner for the banned militant or sectarian outfits.

Copyright © The News International. All rights reserved