



ANNUAL REPORT

2023 PERSECUTION OF AHMADIS
IN PAKISTAN



For decades, the Ahmadiyya Community has diligently published annual reports, meticulously documenting instances of discrimination, violence, and human rights violations targeting Ahmadis in Pakistan. This year marks a significant milestone in our advocacy efforts as, in November 2023, the Head of the Ahmadiyya Community, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, established a new International Human Rights Desk (IHRD) dedicated to addressing the escalating persecution faced by Ahmadis globally. For the first time, the annual report is being published by the IHRD as part of our mission to raise awareness and advocate for the rights of Ahmadis. Our goal is to shed light on the severe human rights violations faced by Ahmadis in Pakistan and elsewhere, and to advocate for the protection and promotion of the rights and dignity of members of the community.

International Human Rights Desk

✉ contact@ihrdesk.org

☎ +44 7377 252513

📍 2 Sheephatch Lane, Tilford, UK, GU10 2AQ

CONTENTS

01

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 1

02

ABBREVIATIONS & GLOSSARY 8

03

STATISTICS 9

04

LONGSTANDING HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS 13

SPECIAL REPORTS 16

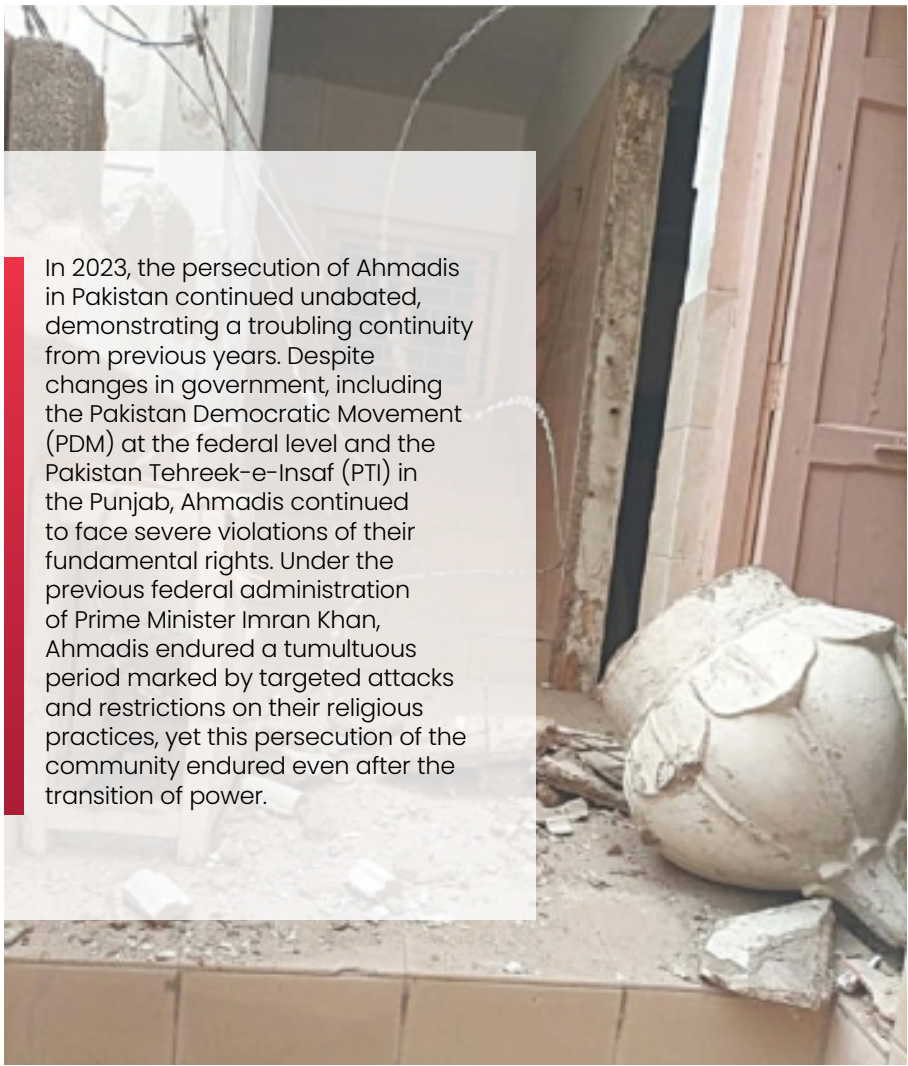
MURDERS & ASSAULTS 28

PROSECUTIONS & INCARCERATIONS 33

LEGAL DISCRIMINATION & QUEST FOR JUSTICE 38

05	EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, & BUSINESS	48
06	MOSQUE ATTACKS	53
07	CEMETERY ATTACKS	60
08	ANTI-AHMADI HATE ADVOCACY	64
09	DIVERSE HUMAN RIGHTS BREACHES	69
	INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON AHMADI PERSECUTION IN 2023	74
	FROM THE MEDIA	78
	CONCLUSION	81

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



In 2023, the persecution of Ahmadis in Pakistan continued unabated, demonstrating a troubling continuity from previous years. Despite changes in government, including the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) at the federal level and the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in the Punjab, Ahmadis continued to face severe violations of their fundamental rights. Under the previous federal administration of Prime Minister Imran Khan, Ahmadis endured a tumultuous period marked by targeted attacks and restrictions on their religious practices, yet this persecution of the community endured even after the transition of power.

Throughout the year, Ahmadi communities nationwide endured targeted violence and the desecration of their places of worship.

Despite constitutional assurances and international commitments concerning freedom of religion and belief, successive Pakistani governments have neglected to safeguard the rights of Ahmadis.

It is imperative for domestic stakeholders and the international community to maintain vigilance and apply pressure on the Pakistani government to redress these violations, ensuring that Ahmadis receive the dignity and respect to which they are entitled as equal citizens under the law.

In January, Mohsin Raza Naqvi assumed the role of caretaker Chief Minister of Punjab, followed by Anwarul Haq Kakar as caretaker Prime Minister in August. Nevertheless, even with an interim government for a substantial part of the year, 2023 marked a concerning rise in the challenges experienced by Ahmadis. The perpetrators behind this escalation primarily comprised extremist factions, notably the Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP). Regrettably, in many instances state institutions were quick to align with them.

The rise in recent years of the TLP movement has intensified persecution against Ahmadis in Pakistan. Advocating for strict blasphemy laws and defending the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH),

TLP's rhetoric has fuelled attacks and human rights abuses against Ahmadis, exacerbating their already precarious situation.

Despite constitutional assurances and international commitments concerning freedom of religion and belief, successive Pakistani governments have neglected to safeguard the rights of Ahmadis.

In 2023, demands put forward by the group and other extremist factions primarily targeted the religious practices and symbols of the Ahmadiyya Community. These included the partial demolition of Ahmadi mosques, the desecration of Ahmadi graves through the destruction of tombstones inscribed with Islamic phrases, and the denial of the right to perform animal sacrifices during the Eid-ul-Adha festival. State-sanctioned joint operations with extremist groups inflicted profound harm upon Ahmadis, causing not only physical but also psychological suffering, thereby undermining the very essence of their human dignity.

The desecration of Ahmadiyya places of worship reached alarming levels in 2023. A focal point of

contention became the traditional architectural features of Ahmadi mosques, particularly minarets and niches. The TLP launched a campaign against Ahmadi places of worship, leveraging their influence and popular power to compel authorities to either remove or destroy architectural features like minarets. In a frequently observed and troubling trend, law enforcement and administrative officials, in the apparent interest of upholding the law, progressively yielded to the demands of the TLP and other extremist organisations. This led to a spate of attacks against community places of worship across the country. For example, the main worship centre in Karachi, the Ahmadiyya Hall, fell victim to vandals on two occasions during the year. Perpetrators were allowed to desecrate the minarets under the watch of law enforcement, signalling a troubling collusion between state authorities and extremist elements.

Despite a judgement of the Lahore High Court, delivered by Justice Tariq Saleem Sheikh, which explained that Sections 298-B and 298-C of the Pakistan Penal Code did not mandate the demolition or alteration of Ahmadiyya places of worship built before the introduction of Ordinance XX in 1984, authorities proceeded to demolish minarets at numerous locations in the Punjab. In 2023 alone, state authorities desecrated 44 Ahmadiyya mosques and places of worship.

Throughout the year, the desecration of Ahmadi graves

emerged as another distressing focal point of Ahmadi persecution. A total of 109 graves and tombstones were damaged and desecrated, primarily at the hands of state officials and vigilante groups. One particularly alarming incident occurred on the night of 22 September 2023, when the Punjab Police colluded with clerics to destroy 74 gravestones in Daska Kalan, Sialkot. Prior to this, the district administration of Sheikhpura had vandalised 10 Ahmadi gravestones following complaints from extremists alleging that these bore sacred Islamic verses. These targeted attacks against Ahmadi burial places represented a flagrant violation of the basic human rights and dignity of members of the community.



Ahmadi graves desecrated in Kasur

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights issued a letter to the Government of Pakistan expressing profound concern over the escalating series of violent attacks targeting the Ahmadi community. Despite repeated communications urging remedial action, the safety and security of the Ahmadi community continued to deteriorate.

The desecration of Ahmadiyya places of worship reached alarming levels in 2023. A focal point of contention became the traditional architectural features of Ahmadi mosques, particularly minarets and niches.

The freedom of Ahmadis to practice their faith was severely curtailed during the Eid-ul-Adha festival. Once again, the TLP spearheaded a campaign to restrict the religious practices of Ahmadis. Such targeted onslaughts not only undermined the principles of religious freedom but also perpetuated a climate of fear and discrimination against Ahmadis. Throughout Punjab, numerous instances of harassment against Ahmadis were documented during the Eid period, with the active involvement of the Punjab Police reported in 89 different locations. In many instances, Ahmadis were coerced into signing security bonds, or forced into a pledge not to undertake the ritual Eid sacrifice. Additionally, ten animals were unlawfully confiscated by the police, while 13 Ahmadis were falsely charged in six separate police cases, and seven individuals were arbitrarily arrested across various districts.

These actions were not isolated incidents but orchestrated and directed from the provincial capital. The issuance of an immediate order by the Home Department of the Punjab government on 23 June 2023 to all Deputy Commissioners instructing that only Muslims ought to be allowed to offer the Eid sacrifice, further underscored this complicity.

The registration of criminal cases against Ahmadis on the basis of religion continued to be a potent tool of persecution. In 2023, 24 cases were registered against 133 Ahmadis. As one example of this, in Ghogiat, District Sargodha, a violent mob desecrated the minarets and dome of an Ahmadiyya mosque in April, with the police present at the scene. Rather than protecting the victims, the police registered a case against three Ahmadis, falsely accusing them of intimidation and threatening behaviour. Elsewhere, in Kotli, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, the police arrested an Ahmadi for listening to the recitation of the Holy Quran on television. These incidents highlight the systematic manner in which Ahmadis are targeted and persecuted through the law, underscoring the urgent need for comprehensive legal reforms in Pakistan to better protect the rights of members of the community in the country.

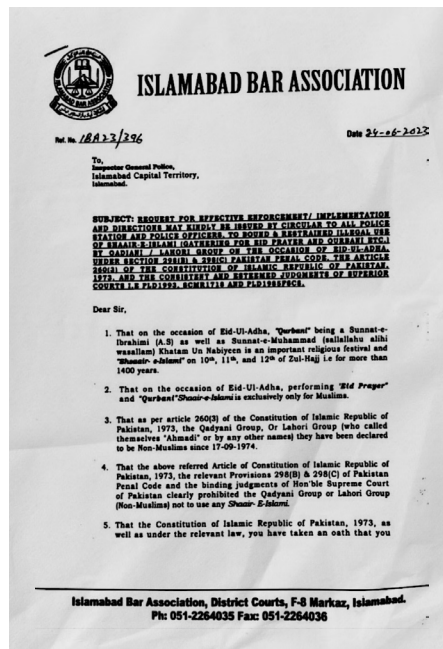
Additionally, Ahmadis continued to encounter significant hurdles in securing bail. Throughout the years there have been many cases where Ahmadis have remained incarcerated for years without bail,

only to be eventually acquitted. This year, for example, bail was denied to Mubarak Sani, the principal of an Ahmadiyya madrassah, who was charged under the blasphemy laws for allegedly desecrating the Quran.

The freedom of Ahmadis to practice their faith was severely curtailed during the Eid-ul-Adha festival. Once again, the TLP spearheaded a campaign to restrict the religious practices of Ahmadis. Such targeted onslaughts not only undermined the principles of religious freedom but also perpetuated a climate of fear and discrimination against Ahmadis.

Elsewhere, despite the federal government addressing 54 items for review in the Elections Act, it failed to address discriminatory clauses against Ahmadis. Ahmadis continued to be deprived of their right to vote in local and national elections as noted by Human Rights

Watch and USCIRF among others. In the field of law, several bar associations and legal practitioners implemented mandatory Finality of Prophethood affidavits for membership and called on Ahmadis to be prohibited from conducting the ritual Eid sacrifice. The Lahore Bar Association highlighted blasphemy as Pakistan's most pressing concern and called for immediate government intervention. Additionally, in Karachi, a faction of lawyers physically assaulted an elderly Ahmadi advocate within a courthouse.



Statement of the Islamabad Bar Council

The International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute and the UK Bar Council voiced concern over

these incidents. The incident in Karachi prompted firm remarks from Justice Omar Sial of the Sindh High Court, who condemned any attempts to intimidate the court and the physical abuse of lawyers. He stressed the importance of condemnation by Bar Associations and Councils for such unacceptable behaviour.

The situation for Ahmadis in education remained dire, with authorities permitting the publication of religious textbooks for all minority groups except Ahmadis. Meanwhile, Ahmadi students continued to be harassed, expelled, ostracised, and physically assaulted because of their faith.

Ahmadis continued to face discrimination and targeted harassment in employment. In September, for example, a local TLP leader launched a campaign against an Ahmadi Superintendent of Police who had been posted to Mandi Bahauddin. He was ultimately reassigned to another location.

In Okara, an Ahmadi lawyer and the president of the local Ahmadi community, was targeted by TLP activists, who staged rallies against him, demanding that he no longer appear in court. Additionally, unidentified individuals defaced the nameplate of his chambers, effacing the names Muhammad and Ahmad.

Groups such as the TLP and Khatme Nabuwat persisted in propagating hate speech against Ahmadis. For example, Anas Rizvi, the leader of the TLP, distorted history by claiming



Anas Rizvi, TLP Leader

that 36,000 Ahmadis were slain by the companions of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) during the Battle of Yamamah, even though the community did not exist at the time and was founded 1400 years later.

Similarly, Sibtain Naqvi of Jamiat Ahle Hadith advocated violence against Ahmadis by saying that if a person was to encounter an Ahmadi house ablaze, they should pour more petrol over the fire, rather than attempt to put it out with water.

This widespread hostility against Ahmadis continued to have fatal consequences in 2023. Muhammad Rasheed, a well-respected homeopath, was murdered for his at his clinic in Goteri, Gujrat. In another incident, extremists opened fire on an Ahmadi Mosque in Sindh, while in Karachi, senior advocate Syed Tariq was viciously attacked on the premises of a court.

The persistent attacks, discrimination, and institutionalised intolerance against Ahmadis in Pakistan highlight the urgent need for concerted action to address

the systemic injustices faced by members of the community in the country. As we reflect on the challenges of the past year, it is imperative for domestic stakeholders and the international community to redouble their efforts in advocating for the rights and dignity of Ahmadis, ensuring that they are accorded the full

protections guaranteed under both Pakistani law and international human rights standards. Only through collective action and unwavering commitment can we strive towards a future where all individuals, regardless of their religious beliefs, are treated with respect, dignity, and equality under the law.



Ahmadiyya Hall, Karachi

ABBREVIATIONS & GLOSSARY

AC	Assistant Commissioner	Anjuman	association; union
AJK	Azad Jammu and Kashmir	Chak	village
AMTKN	Aalmi Majlis Tahaffuze Khatme Nabuwwat	Hafiz	who has memorised the Holy Quran
DC	Deputy Commissioner	Hajj	pilgrimage to Makkah
DIG	Deputy Inspector General (Police)	Hazrat	title for respect
DPO	District Police Officer	Imam	religious leader
DSP	Deputy Superintendent of Police	Jamiat	community; group
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil & Political Rights (1966)	Kalima	Islamic creed
IHC	Islamabad High Court	Khatam un	
LHC	Lahore High Court	Nabiyyeen	Seal of Prophets
PBUH	Peace be upon him	Khatme	
PDM	Pakistan Democratic Movement	Nabuwwat	Finality of Prophethood
PPC	Pakistan Penal Code	Madrassah	Islamic school
PPP	Pakistan Peoples Party	Maulvi	Muslim cleric; scholar
PTI	Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf	Mehrab	a niche in the wall of a mosque
RPO	Regional Police Officer	Mirzai	pejorative term for Ahmadi
SC	Supreme Court of Pakistan	Mufti	one who issues edicts
SHC	Sindh High Court	Qadiani	pejorative term for Ahmadi
SHO	Station House Officer (Police)	Qurbani	Islamic ritual of sacrificing cattle
SP	Superintendent of Police	Salam	peace
TLP	Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan	Tahaffuz	safeguard
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights	Tehreek	movement
USCIRF	United States Commission for International Religious Freedom		

STATISTICS

2023 IN NUMBERS

MOSQUE ATTACKS

44

In 2023, Pakistan witnessed 44 attacks on Ahmadi mosques, many of which were carried out by the authorities themselves.

DESECRATION OF GRAVES

109

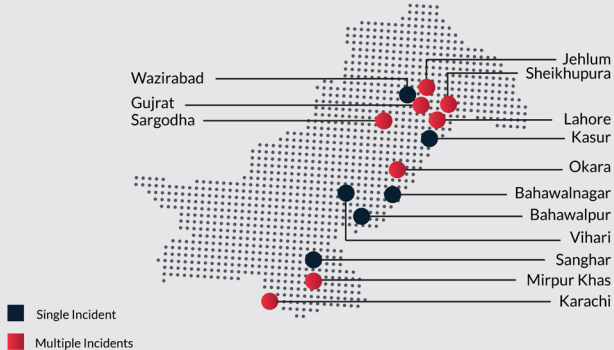
A disturbing total of 109 Ahmadi graves were destroyed or desecrated.

POLICE CASES

13

In a troubling trend, 13 faith-based criminal cases were initiated against Ahmadis in Pakistan during the year.

INCIDENT MAP



HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES AGAINST AHMADIS DURING EID-UL-ADHA: A STATISTICAL OVERVIEW



23

Complaints against Ahmadis for carrying out the Eid sacrifice.

89

Ahmadis harassed by the police.

13

Ahmadis formally accused in six cases.

10

Sacrificial animals illegally seized.

5

Ahmadi houses were illegally searched by the police.



4 reports of Ahmadis assaulted for their faith.

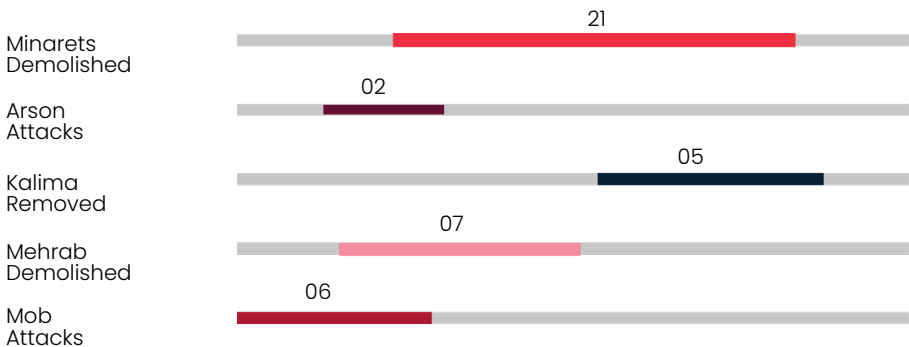


10 reports of Ahmadis formally accused in for faith-based crimes.



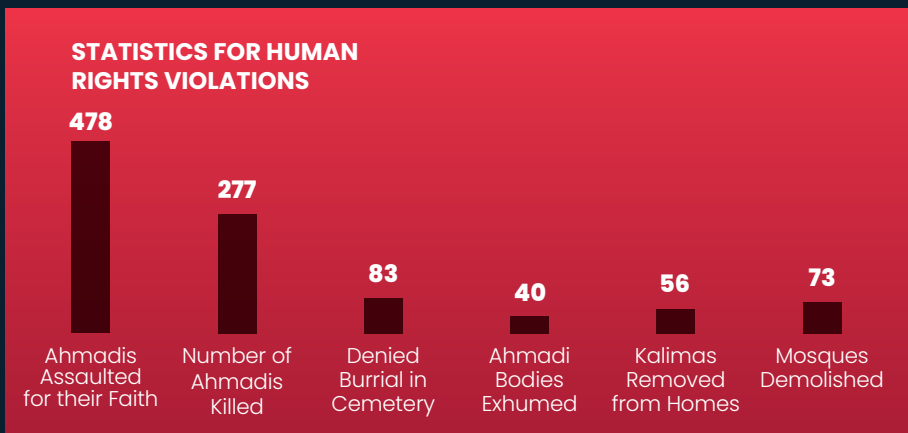
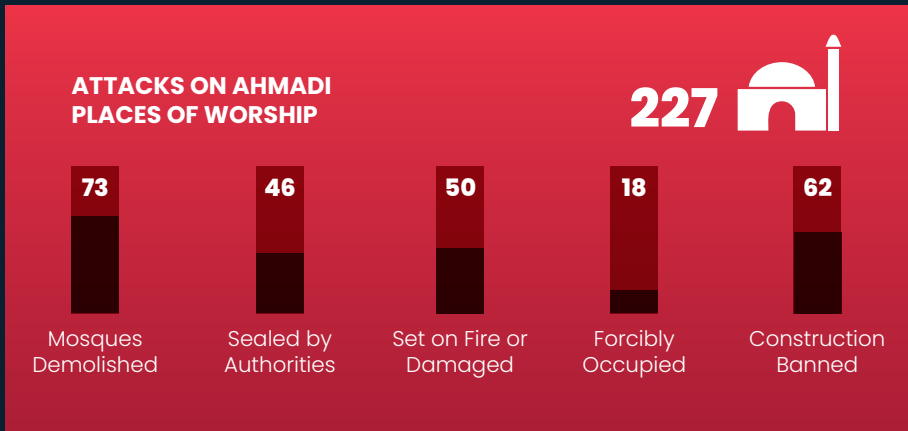
11 reported cases of Ahmadi students bullied, attacked, or harassed.

ATTACKS ON AHMADI PLACES OF WORSHIP IN 2023



AHMADI PERSECUTION IN PAKISTAN 1984 – 2023

Since the passing of the Second Constitutional Amendment which declared Ahmadis non-Muslims and the Zia-era laws of 1984, state-sponsored persecution and societal discrimination has been a constant in the life of Ahmadis in Pakistan. The statistics make for grim reading. In that time, 277 Ahmadis have been killed for their faith, 478 have faced violence and assault, and 227 Ahmadi mosques have been attacked, among other human rights abuses. As of right now, with increasing legislation being passed against the community particularly at a provincial level, it does not appear that things are about to get better any time soon.



BANNING ORDERS AGAINST AHMADIS SINCE 1984



All outdoor rallies and conferences of Ahmadis in Rabwah have been banned by the government.



Sports events organised at a community level have been prohibited by the authorities.



The government of the Punjab has banned the entire written works of the founder of Ahmadiyyat.

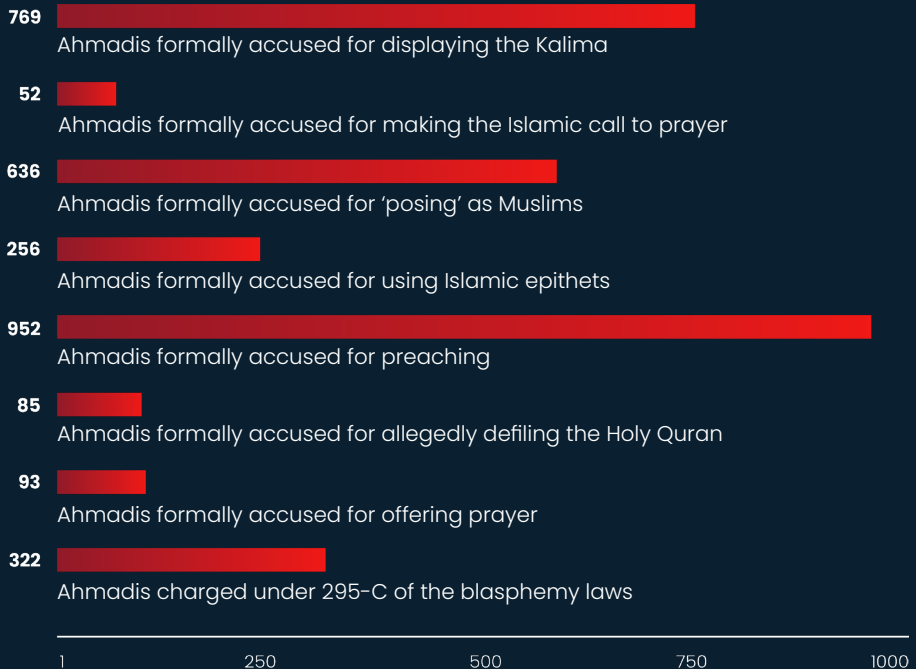


The government of the Punjab has banned the publishing of the Quran and its translation.



The publishing of Ahmadi newspapers and magazines have been banned by the government of the Punjab.

STATISTICS OF POLICE CASES REGISTERED AGAINST AHMADIS ON RELIGIOUS GROUNDS



LONGSTANDING HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

In addition to the persecution of the Ahmadiyya Community in Pakistan in the year 2023, longstanding violations against the fundamental rights of Ahmadis continue to persist and are enforced against the community.

Ahmadis continue to be prohibited from publishing the Holy Quran and its translation.

The entire written works of the founder of the Ahmadiyya Community remain banned in the Punjab.

Ahmadis continue to be prohibited from holding their annual conference in their headquarters of Rabwah, as well as other public gatherings and events. The last annual conference held in Pakistan was in December 1983, with 250,000 participants in attendance.

Ahmadis remain unable to participate in national and local elections due to discriminatory laws and regulations that specifically target and exclude them from the electoral process.

Multiple community magazines, periodicals, and newsletters continue to be banned in the Punjab including a magazine for children.

Ahmadis TV channels remain banned in Pakistan.

Several denationalised Ahmadi educational institutes have not been returned to the community due to ongoing discriminatory policies and reluctance from authorities to restore their ownership rights.

Ahmadis are compelled to declare themselves a non-Muslim minority in order to obtain a national identity card or a Pakistani Passport which contradicts their religious beliefs, and impinges on their right to self identify.

The Ahmadiyya mosque in Dulmial has been sealed since 2016, leaving the local community without a place for congregational worship.

Six Ahmadis, imprisoned on false and fabricated faith-based charges, continue to languish in prison.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1

Discriminatory laws, particularly the Second Amendment to the Constitution of Pakistan and the Anti-Ahmadi laws ushered in through Ordinance XX which curtail the right of Ahmadis to freedom of thought, conscience, religion, and belief need to be repealed. Legislation needs to guarantee equal rights and protection to all citizens, regardless of religious affiliation.

2

Legislative and institutional responses need to be strengthened to address violence effectively, incitement of religious hatred, and hate speech against Ahmadis, in accordance with the established international human rights standards.

3

In light of pervasive discrimination and violence against Ahmadis in Pakistan, urgent steps must be taken to safeguard their fundamental human rights and ensure their full participation in public life free from fear, hatred, and reprisals.

4

In order to uphold principles of democratic governance and ensure the protection of fundamental human rights, it is imperative that Ahmadis in Pakistan are guaranteed

the right to vote without discrimination or prejudice. This recommendation underscores the need for legislative reforms to amend electoral laws that currently disenfranchise Ahmadis based on their religious beliefs. Such reforms should unequivocally affirm the right of all citizens, regardless of religious affiliation, to participate in the democratic process and exercise their fundamental right to vote.

5

Political leaders and lawmakers must unequivocally refrain from perpetuating hatred against Ahmadis or exploiting religious sentiments for political gain. Such actions not only undermine social cohesion but also contribute to the perpetuation of violence and discrimination against Ahmadis in Pakistan, but also other minorities. It is imperative that politicians and lawmakers adhere to principles of inclusivity, tolerance, and respect for religious diversity in their public discourse and policy-making processes.

6

State authorities in Pakistan need to cease any involvement in attacks against places of worship and cemeteries and instead fulfil their duty to protect all religious and

cultural sites, including those of the Ahmadi community. This necessitates strict adherence to the rule of law, impartial enforcement of legal protections for religious minorities, and accountability for any complicity or negligence in facilitating attacks on Ahmadi mosques and cemeteries.

7

It is imperative that Ahmadis are granted the freedom to practice their religious festivals without fear of reprisal or arrest, as guaranteed by international human rights standards and Pakistan's constitution. The targeting of Ahmadis by both law enforcement authorities and extremists during religious festivals, such as Eid-ul-Adha, is a flagrant violation of their rights and undermines principles of religious freedom and tolerance.

8

Any bans on Ahmadiyya books, magazines, newsletters, websites, and other forms of media and publications must be rescinded and all steps

9

must be taken to ensure that Ahmadis fully enjoy their right to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas.

The discriminatory measures and regulations targeting Ahmadi lawyers enacted by bar councils and associations in Pakistan in recent years must be promptly revoked to uphold the principles of equality, fairness, and justice within the legal profession. These discriminatory practices undermine the fundamental rights of Ahmadi lawyers and perpetuate a culture of intolerance and exclusion.

10

The government of Pakistan must work to eliminate all forms of anti-Ahmadi discrimination in schools, workplaces, commerce, and housing. In the case of education, steps must be taken to revise and amend national curricula and textbooks to eliminate prejudicial references to and caricatures of Ahmadis in particular.

These recommendations aim to address the systemic issues contributing to Ahmadi persecution in Pakistan and work towards building a more inclusive and rights-respecting society.

01

SPECIAL REPORTS



The anti-Ahmadi laws in Pakistan are very cruel laws and they are opposed to the vision of the founder of Pakistan. The Pakistan that Jinnah sought was an open Pakistan in which all people had religious freedom. The first Government he formed proved his desire to uphold the principles of religious freedom. If I say I am a Muslim and recite the Kalima then what right does anyone have to say that I am not?

*Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad,
Khalifatul Masih V*

SUMMARY

This chapter focuses on specific incidents from 2023 that demand special attention. These selected cases, are emblematic of the pervasive persecution experienced by the Ahmadiyya Community in Pakistan, and underscore the urgent need to address systemic human rights violations against the community. A thorough examination of these incidents, sheds light on the gravity of the challenges faced by Ahmadis in the country and highlights the need for meaningful change to safeguard their rights and dignity.

SPOTLIGHTS

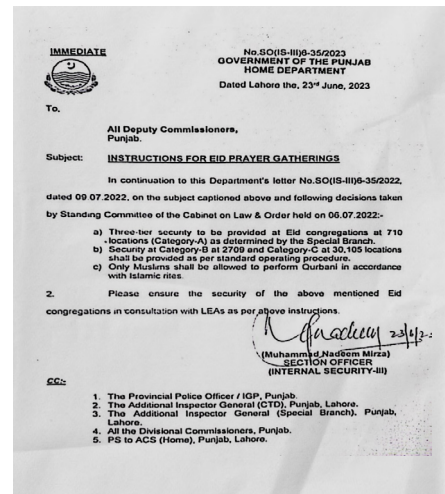
PUNJAB

June 2023

In 2023, severe violations against the rights of Ahmadis to freely practice their faith were witnessed during the Eid-ul-Adha festival. Traditionally, Ahmadis engage in the ritual of animal sacrifice (Qurbani) for Eid. However, clerical figures endeavoured to prohibit them from partaking in this religious custom, asserting that Ahmadis should not be permitted to share religious rites with Muslims. Notably, clerics affiliated with the Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) spearheaded this campaign. Regrettably, authorities in the Punjab disregarded the constitutional protections afforded to Ahmadis and issued directives to law enforcement agencies to curtail the religious freedoms of members of the community.

None of these events occurred in isolation; they were carried out under the directives of the provincial government. The Home Department of the Punjab government issued immediate orders on 23 June 2023, to all Deputy Commissioners in a letter titled INSTRUCTIONS FOR EID PRAYER GATHERINGS. Paragraph 1(c) of this directive stated: "Only Muslims shall be allowed to perform

Qurbani in accordance with Islamic rites." This directive violated Article 20(a) of the Constitution, which states: "Subject to law, public order, and morality, every citizen shall have the right to profess, practice, and propagate his religion."



Letter from Home Department, Punjab to DPOs to prevent Ahmadis from undertaking the Eid sacrifice

The collaborative efforts of the TLP and the Punjab government to target Ahmadis during the Eid celebrations had significant consequences for members of the community. While the scope of this report does not allow for a

comprehensive documentation of events, presented below is a concise overview of cases where law enforcement authorities pursued criminal charges or conducted arrests of innocent individuals. It is worth noting that an unprecedented number of police cases were filed against Ahmadis on religious grounds within a single month in the Punjab.

- On 29 June 2023, three Ahmadis from Dharowali, District Nankana Sahib, approached butchers to slaughter their animals. Clerics reported this to the police, prompting an investigation. Subsequently, authorities contacted the District Police Officer (DPO), who arrived at the scene and ordered the registration of a case and subsequent arrests. A case was registered against three Ahmadis, Rafique Ahmad, Azam Ali Kalu, and Nabeel Ahmad, under section Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) 298-C in First Information Report (FIR) No. 462/23 at Shah Kot police station.
- On 30 June 2023, the police arrested and filed FIR No. 508/23 against two Ahmadis, Aftab Ahmad and Javaid Ahmad of Dheroki, under PPC 298-C at Sadar police station, Gojra, District Toba Tek Singh. They were charged with performing the Eid sacrifice, and thereby causing offense to the sentiments of Muslims. On the same day, the police registered another FIR against two

Ahmadis, Asad Ijaz and Ahmer Sheraz of Dheroki, at Sadar police station, Gojra, District Toba Tek Singh, under section PPC 298-C for performing the Eid sacrifice and hurting the religious sentiments of Muslims. They were subsequently arrested. Despite attempts by local Ahmadis to approach the DPO for assistance, he did not intervene and instead ordered the registration of the case.

- On 1 July 2023, complainant Ghulam Mustafa, a local cleric of the TLP, reported to the police that Tanvir Ahmad, an Ahmadi from Roshanwala, Faisalabad, was sacrificing a calf in the yard of his farmhouse. Subsequently, the police registered FIR No. 571/23 against him under PPC 298-C at Roshanwala police station, Faisalabad.



3 Jul 2023

#freedomofreligionorbelief

HRCP strongly condemns the judicial harassment of the Ahmadiyya community, most recently in the shape of cases filed against them by individuals with far-right political links for engaging in ritual sacrifice during Eid-ul-Azha. No progressive society can afford to be held hostage to the whims of religious extremists in this manner. Moreover, such harassment flouts the 2022 Supreme Court judgement which upholds all religious minorities' fundamental rights as citizens of Pakistan, including their right to dignity and to practice their faith within their places of worship. All such cases must be quashed immediately.

Statement of HRCP

In addition to reporting on the many ways Ahmadis were prevented from exercising their right to perform the ritual animal sacrifice during the Eid-ul-Adha celebrations, it is also essential to report the following pertinent details:

- Anti-Ahmadi activists prepared a template complaint application to help people lodge police complaints or FIRs against Ahmadis seen performing any sort of religious ritual on Eid. This template was spread on various social media platforms.
- A general message was circulated on social media urging individuals to promptly notify the police at hotline number 15 upon witnessing an Ahmadi engaging in the Eid sacrifice or distributing meat, among other rituals.
- Khatme Nabuwwat activists approached the police at various locations to prevent Ahmadis from performing the Eid sacrifice. One such application was submitted to the Station House Officer (SHO) of Sabz Pir Police Station, District Sialkot, purportedly on behalf of eight villages falling under the jurisdiction of the police station.
- Activists submitted similar applications to the police in several areas, despite the majority of locals expressing no objection to Ahmadis performing the Eid sacrifice.

- Ashraf Khan, President of the Bar Association in Gojra, District Toba Tek Singh, offered pro bono legal services to prosecute Ahmadis participating in the religious rituals of Eid.
- According to a report by dissenttoday.net police raids were conducted on at least three houses belonging to members of the Ahmadi community in Faisalabad on Eid-ul-Adha, following complaints from workers of the extremist TLP. Police confiscated sacrificial animals found inside these houses.

(<https://dissenttoday.net/news/police-raid-ahmadi-houses-in-faisalabad-confiscate-sacrificial-goats/>)

- While clerics, primarily affiliated with the TLP and Khatme Nabuwwat organisations, spearheaded the campaign to deprive Ahmadis of their fundamental right to undertake the ritual Eid sacrifice, various bar associations across Pakistan including the Lahore, Islamabad, and Sargodha bar associations issued letters to the authorities demanding that Ahmadis be denied their right to the ritual animal sacrifice on Eid.
- The spokesperson of the Ahmadiyya Community in Pakistan denounced the directive from the Home Department, labelling police actions as unlawful and unconstitutional.

THE IMPACT OF THE TLP ON THE RELIGIOUS FREEDOMS OF AHMADIS IN PAKISTAN

Pakistan's history with religious minorities, particularly Ahmadis, has been marred by discrimination, violence, and persecution. This troubling narrative has only been exacerbated by the rise of the Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) movement in recent years. The TLP's emergence as a formidable force in Pakistani politics, with its fervent advocacy for strict blasphemy laws and defense of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), has unleashed a wave of intolerance and extremism, disproportionately affecting the Ahmadi community.

Ahmadis, who have long faced institutionalised discrimination since being declared non-Muslims by the Second Amendment to the Pakistani Constitution in 1974, find themselves increasingly vulnerable in the face of TLP's inflammatory rhetoric and mobilization efforts. The TLP's leaders and followers have openly demonised Ahmadis, portraying them as heretics and enemies of Islam. Such rhetoric has not only fuelled societal animosity towards Ahmadis but has also emboldened extremists to commit acts of violence against them.

One of the most alarming consequences of TLP's rise has been the escalation of attacks on Ahmadi mosques and cemeteries. These sacred spaces, meant to provide solace and spiritual sanctuary, have instead become targets of hate-fuelled violence. Ahmadis, while attempting to practice their faith peacefully, have been subjected to brutal assaults and desecration of their places of worship, instilling fear and insecurity within their community.

The rise of the TLP has also brought forth significant repercussions on other religious practices and freedoms of Ahmadis, particularly evident during Eid-ul-Adha celebrations. This festival, which commemorates the willingness of Ibrahim (Abraham) to sacrifice his son as an act of obedience to God, involves the ritual sacrifice of animals by Muslims worldwide. However, for Ahmadis in Pakistan, celebrating Eid-ul-Adha has

become fraught with challenges due to the actions of TLP activists.

TLP activists, have actively prevented Ahmadis from undertaking the ritual Eid sacrifice and participating in other religious rituals. These activists often intimidate, threaten Ahmadis who attempt to perform the religious rites associated with Eid-ul-Adha. Such acts not only violate the fundamental rights of Ahmadis to practice their religion freely but also perpetuate a climate of fear and persecution within the community.

Moreover, TLP's influence has permeated into the fabric of Pakistani society, contributing to a culture of discrimination and exclusion against Ahmadis. Discriminatory practices in education, employment, and public services further marginalise Ahmadis, denying them fundamental rights and opportunities enjoyed by their fellow citizens. The constant threat of violence and persecution has forced many Ahmadis to live in fear, concealing their religious identity to avoid persecution and safeguard their lives.

The failure of the Pakistani state to protect Ahmadis from such egregious violations of their human rights is deeply concerning. Despite international condemnation and calls for action, the authorities have often turned a blind eye to attacks on Ahmadis, failing to hold perpetrators accountable and provide adequate security measures. This culture of impunity only perpetuates the cycle of violence and emboldens extremists to continue their campaign of hatred and intolerance.

Furthermore, the political opportunism exhibited by certain elements within the Pakistani establishment exacerbates the plight of Ahmadis. Mainstream political parties, in their pursuit of electoral gains, have often appeased or allied with TLP, legitimising its extremist ideology and further marginalising Ahmadis. This tacit endorsement of discrimination and violence against Ahmadis undermines the very principles of democracy and rule of law that Pakistan purports to uphold.



A Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan Rally

KARACHI, SINDH

27 April 2023

On 27 April 2023, Syed Ali Ahmad Tariq, a 77-year-old senior advocate of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, was subjected to a brutal attack alongside his office assistant by a group of extremists while conducting legal proceedings in court.

Rather than providing assistance and protection, the police arrested Tariq under section 298-B of the anti-Ahmadi laws, yielding to unfounded accusations made against him by the extremist mob present at the scene. This mob, comprised of lawyers and members of the Pakistan Bar Association, accused Tariq of violating Section 298-B, which pertains to the misuse of Islamic epithets, descriptions, and titles reserved for certain holy personages or places. The accusation stemmed from Tariq signing an affidavit in court using his full name, which includes 'Syed', a name considered to belong to Muslims.

Tariq was charged and arrested on the spot, detained, and faced a potential custodial sentence of three years on 27 April.

On 23 May 2023, after over a month of detention, Tariq was granted bail by the Sindh High Court (SHC). However, upon his release, he was immediately arrested again under a different law for the crime of using the Islamic greeting of salam almost 30 years prior.

Caving to the pressure from the mob, Tariq was charged under sections 295-A and 298-C of the PPC for a case registered on 20 October 1992. The complaint had been filed at the Shahdadpur police station in district Sanghar,

approximately 250 kilometres from Karachi.

Tariq was incarcerated once more and faced further imprisonment. Because of significant pressure from within the legal fraternity, Tariq encountered difficulties in finding legal representation. Eventually, his case was taken up, and his post-arrest bail application was submitted in the SHC, with a hearing scheduled for 15 May 2023 in the court of Justice Omar Sial.

However, before the scheduled hearing, a hostile campaign orchestrated by opposing lawyers inundated social media platforms and local bar associations with anti-Ahmadi rhetoric. This deliberate effort to instil fear and incite violence led to the presence of around 70 hostile lawyers within the courtroom. Justice Omar Sial was compelled to adjourn all bail cases, citing the imminent threat to law and order.

On 22 May, despite being denied entry into the courtroom, opposition lawyers resorted to chanting anti-Ahmadi slogans outside, further highlighting their efforts to pressure the judiciary. Undeterred by these coercive tactics, Justice Sial proceeded to grant post-arrest bail to Tariq the following day. Regrettably, Tariq's suffering extended beyond the confines of the courtroom, as his health deteriorated due to the mental and physical stress of incarceration at his age.

The plight of Tariq serves as a stark reminder of the systemic injustices faced by Ahmadis in Pakistan's legal landscape. Incarcerations and prosecutions are often employed as tools to further persecute the community, denying Ahmadis their fundamental human rights.

THE CRIMINALISATION OF AHMADI NAMES

The recent targeting of an Ahmadi lawyer in Pakistan for bearing the title 'Syed' in his name stems from deep-seated religious and legal discrimination against the Ahmadiyya Community within the country. The root of this persecution lies in the Pakistani government's designation of Ahmadis as non-Muslims under the Second Amendment to the Constitution of Pakistan in 1974. Furthermore, Section 298-C of the Pakistani Penal Code criminalises Ahmadis for "posing as Muslims" or engaging in Islamic practices, which includes the use of Islamic terminology or titles.

The honorific title Syed holds significant religious and cultural importance among Muslims. Traditionally, the title Syed is associated with those who are recognised as descendants of Hasanids and Husaynids, who trace their lineage back to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) through his daughter Fatima and her husband Ali.

Within this context, there is a growing belief among certain segments of Pakistani society that Ahmadis, being declared non-Muslims, cannot rightfully claim the title Syed or use it as part of their names. This belief is grounded in the denial of Ahmadiyya identity as legitimate Islam by mainstream Muslims in Pakistan, who view Ahmadis as heretics or apostates due to theological differences, particularly regarding the status of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the founder of the Ahmadiyya movement, as a prophet. As a result, the usage of the title Syed by Ahmadis is seen as an affront to orthodox Islamic beliefs and traditions by those who oppose the Ahmadiyya Community. This perception fuels discrimination and violence against Ahmadis, exacerbating their already precarious situation in Pakistan's socio-political landscape.

It is not just the use of Syed that has seen Ahmadis attacked for their names. In February 2023, video footage that went viral over social media showed two Ahmadi men being harassed by a mob and told to change their names. One of the men, a well known local community leader, was told to change his name from Muhammad, while the other was told to change his name from Ahmad.

RABWAH

26–27 October 2023

The Aalmi Majlis Tahaffuze Khatme Nabuwwat convened a two-day conference in the Muslim Colony neighbourhood, situated on the periphery of the Ahmadi headquarters of Rabwah, focused on the theme of the Finality of Prophethood. Over the years this event has evolved into a significant annual gathering, notwithstanding the fact that its venue is located within a town where 95 per cent of the population identifies as Ahmadi.

The majority of the clerics who addressed the crowd during various sessions engaged in widespread hate speech against Ahmadis, including incitement to violence. Recorded below are selected statements from the event:

- Maulvi Ehsanullah of Sargodha claimed that Ahmadis have renounced Islam and are considered to be outside of the faith. He labelled them as traitors to both Islam and Pakistan, accusing them of hypocrisy and theft.
- Maulvi Muhammad Ahmad of Quetta said that while Muslims may associate with dangerous creatures like scorpions and snakes, they should not associate with those who disrespect the Prophet (PBUH). He extended an invitation to Ahmadis to embrace Islam.

- Qari Anwar Ansar of Sialkot remarked that Ahmadis were now restricted from performing religious practices such as ritual animal sacrifice.
- M. Atif of Sargodha asserted that Ahmadis should not be allowed to construct places of worship that look like mosques.
- Maulvi Muhammad Ayub characterised Qadianism (a derogative term for Ahmadis) as a malignancy afflicting Muslims. He demanded the removal of Ahmadi worship sites, likening such an action to the eradication of a cancerous growth.
- Siraj ul Haq, the head of of the Jamaat-e-Islami, claimed that two significant perils, namely Judaism and Qadianism, exist in the world. He asserted that both are bolstered by the United States and the United Kingdom. Allowing the proliferation of Qadianism, amounted to treachery against both Pakistan and Islam.
- Syed Abdul Khabeer Azad of Lahore expressed his belief that Ahmadis were adversaries of Islam; they were aiding Israel in the ongoing conflict in Gaza and were perceived as subservient to the British.
- Maulvi Hamza Luqman of Bhera said that Ahmadis were liars who were bound for hell.

Among the resolutions passed at the conference were the following:

- Non-governmental organisations and law enforcement agencies were urged to take cognisance of the oppression inflicted by the Ahmadi Community upon its own members.
- A law be enacted to allocate state jobs based on quotas corresponding to the population of Muslim and non-Muslim citizens. It was proposed that individuals applying for positions as Muslims should be required to sign an affidavit affirming their belief in the Finality of Prophethood.
- Ahmadi places of worship and centres ought to be altered in accordance with the anti-Ahmadi ordinances, removing any depictions of the Islamic Kalima, Quranic verses, and other Islamic terminology.
- It was proposed that similar to other armed groups, the supposed armed faction of the Ahmadi community, Khuddamul Ahmadiyya, also be listed as a banned organisation.

Both the addresses delivered at the conferences and the resolutions passed therein constituted a blatant violation of Pakistani law under PPC 153A, which delineates the legal accountability for those who openly incite hatred and advocate violent extremism. These actions should have been subject to investigation by the authorities.

The decision to hold the conference in Rabwah, a town where 95 percent of the population is Ahmadi, amounted to a deliberate provocation against the Ahmadi community residing there. Weeks prior to the event, the Ahmadiyya office had written to all relevant authorities to oppose the granting of permission for the conference, providing ample justification for their stance.

Moreover, with fifteen thousand participants, the majority of whom were transported from outside the local vicinity and provided with accommodation and meals for two days, along with dozens of leading clerics invited from across the country, the auxiliary expenses likely amounted to tens of millions of rupees. The source of these funds raises questions, as it is unlikely that the participants themselves provided them. This influx of financial resources indirectly supports and perpetuates the indoctrination of violent extremism, which poses a significant risk of escalating into terrorism. It is imperative for the state to critically evaluate whether such activities align with its objectives and values.



Aalmi Majlis Tahaffuze Khatme
Nabuwwat Conference

02

MURDERS & ASSAULTS



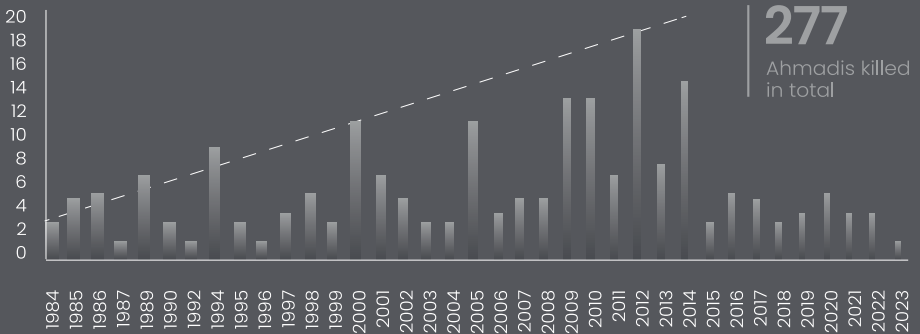
Over a period of many decades, Ahmadi Muslims have been mercilessly targeted only because of their religious beliefs, and many have lost their lives as a result of utterly inhumane and barbaric attacks by religious extremists.

*Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad,
Khalifatul Masih V*

SUMMARY

In 2023, Pakistan bore witness to a distressing continuation of faith-based violence against the Ahmadiyya Community, underscoring the deadly challenges faced by Ahmadis in the country. Within the span of the year, one murder and four instances of assault were recorded.

AHMADIS MURDERED FOR THEIR FAITH



These statistics do not include the 86 Ahmadis who were killed during the 2010 terror attacks on two Ahmadi mosques in Lahore.

SPOTLIGHTS

GOTERIALA, GUJRAT

19 February 2023

In the district of Gujrat, Punjab, Dr Muhammad Rasheed, an Ahmadi homeopath and dual Pakistani and Norwegian national in his seventies, met a brutal end when assailants ambushed him in his clinic, located adjacent to his residence in his ancestral village of Goteriala.

According to reports, Dr Rasheed was attending to patients in his clinic when two assailants, posing as patients themselves, entered the premises and opened fire, fatally wounding him. Despite efforts to save him, he succumbed to his injuries at the scene of the attack.

Despite also holding Norwegian citizenship, Dr Rasheed chose to reside in his ancestral village, prioritising his commitment to serving the impoverished over personal safety. His senseless murder underscores the deadly impact religious fanaticism has had on Pakistani society.

Following his tragic death, an outpouring of condolences from both his local community and neighbouring villages served as a



Dr Muhammad Rasheed

testament to Dr Rasheed's influence and legacy. He is survived by his widow, two sons, and five daughters, who mourn his loss deeply.

The perpetrators behind the attack were identified as young men with no personal animosity towards Dr Rasheed. It is suspected that they were influenced or misled by religious extremists to carry out the killing. One of the attackers, Hafiz Inam, known for his anti-Ahmadi prejudices, was later found dead at a nearby location, while another individual named Babar was apprehended by the police for further investigation.

LALIAN, DISTRICT CHINIOT

13 April 2023

In a troubling incident, Zubair Anwar attacked an Ahmadi lawyer, Amir Munir, with a cleaver in his chamber in Lalian, District Chiniot. Munir sustained head injuries and was rushed to hospital for treatment.

The attacker, known for his violence against Ahmadis, was swiftly

arrested by the police. Lalian is located just 12 kilometres west of Rabwah, the headquarters of the Ahmadiyya Community.

Amir Munir, the victim, is a respected community worker and advocate who defends Ahmadis facing religious persecution in local courts. This incident underscores the ongoing challenges confronting the Ahmadiyya Community in Pakistan.



Map of Lalian, District Chiniot, Punjab

BHULAIR, DISTRICT KASUR

June 2023

On 3 June 2023, Waqas Ahmad, was ambushed by armed assailants while on route to visit his relatives. He was detained and tortured. Upon learning of his abduction, Ahmad's family and acquaintances swiftly intervened, enabling him to escape from his captors.

In the aftermath of this harrowing ordeal, members of the community sought recourse through the local authorities at the Police Station Phool Nagar, District Kasur. However, rather than offering support, the police detained the Ahmadis and initiated legal proceedings against them. Under First Information Report (FIR) No. 588, charges were levelled, citing alleged violations of Pakistan Penal Codes 324, 149, and 148.

Initially, 12 individuals were implicated in the case, with eight held in custody. Subsequently, following a thorough investigation, all those detained, except for one individual, were released.

03

PROSECUTIONS & INCARCERATIONS



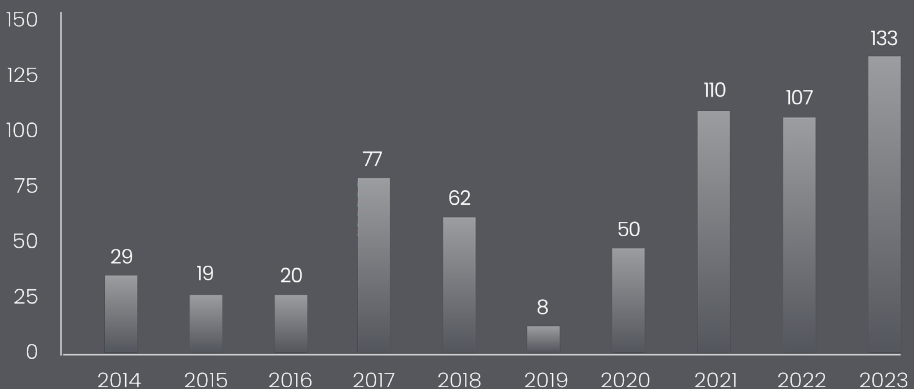
Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 10)

SUMMARY

In defiance of their fundamental human rights, Ahmadis persistently face unwarranted arrests, prosecutions, and imprisonment because of their faith. The anti-Ahmadi laws are systematically employed to target members of the community, compounded by the application of stringent penal provisions without sufficient legal justification. Denial of bail, even by the highest judicial authorities such as the Supreme Court, further exacerbates the plight of Ahmadis, perpetuating their unjust detainment. The judiciary's imposition of incarceration sentences only serves to entrench this cycle of persecution. In 2023, 133 Ahmadis were unjustly subjected to legal proceedings including incarcerations. This chapter highlights specific incidents, which shows how prosecutions and incarcerations are used against Ahmadis, to persecute them using the legal framework.

FAITH BASED CASES – 2014–2023



SPOTLIGHTS

RABWAH, DISTRICT CHINIOT

January 2023

In January 2023, a disturbing incident unfolded in Chenab Nagar, Pakistan, where Mubarak Ahmad Sani, a prominent figure in the Ahmadiyya Community, along with several others, faced egregious charges under the blasphemy laws of Pakistan (PPC 295-B), the anti-Ahmadiyya laws (PPC 298-C), and The Punjab Holy Quran Act of 2011. The catalyst for this legal onslaught was Hassan Muawiya, the brother of Hafiz Tahir Ashrafi, a former Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Religious Affairs under Imran Khan.

The accusations levied against Sani and his associates were not only malicious but also entirely fabricated, and centred on the alleged distribution of a corrupted translation of the Holy Quran. Despite the absence of credible evidence, Sani was arrested on 7 January 2023. Following judicial remand, he was transferred from Jhang Jail to District Jail Faisalabad on 20 February 2023, where he has been incarcerated for nearly a year.

During the legal proceedings, despite ongoing efforts to secure bail, Sani's plea was repeatedly rejected. On 10 June, the plea for

bail was denied by the Additional Sessions Judge Lalian, District Chiniot. This decision came despite the glaring irregularities surrounding the case, including the fabricated charges, the inappropriate application of penal codes carrying severe penalties such as life imprisonment, and Sani's prolonged incarceration.

Those pushing the case against Sani made a dubious request to transfer the case to an anti-terrorism court. In a shocking decision, the court approved their request, effectively derailing any chance of a fair trial and trampling on Sani's fundamental right to due process.

It is imperative to note the stark contrast between Sani's plight and the leniency afforded to individuals facing similarly serious charges by the higher courts. Despite numerous instances where bail has been granted to individuals accused of sedition and violent conduct, Sani's plea for bail was callously dismissed.

An appeal was subsequently lodged before the Lahore High Court (LHC) seeking redress. However, on 2 October 2023, Justice Ali Zia Bajwa recused himself from presiding over the case, referring it back to the Chief Justice for reassignment.

On 27 November 2023, Justice Farooq Haider of the LHC dealt a further setback by rejecting the bail plea, which left no option to the accused except to approach the Supreme Court of Pakistan with a plea for bail.

On 6 February 2023, the Supreme Court set aside the impugned orders against Sani by deleting Section 7, and Section 9 of the Punjab Holy Quran Act of 2011 and Section 298-C and 295-B of the PPC from the charge framed against him. The Court further held that the petitioner was no longer being treated in accordance with the law because while waiting for the conclusion of his trial he had remained imprisoned for a period much longer than what he would have been punished for if he was found guilty of the remaining charges.

The court ordered that the petitioner be immediately released upon provision of a personal bond in the sum of five thousand rupees in respect of the case arising out of the First Information Report (FIR) No. 661/22. C.

The FIR lodged against Sani, the court case against him, as well as his incarceration not only underscores the systematic persecution faced by members of the Ahmadiyya Community in Pakistan, but highlights the way the legal system is abused to persecute the community, with false criminal allegations, legal claims and incarcerations.

CHAK, SINDH

October 2023

In Chak 20, District of Mandi Bahauddin, in October 2023, legal proceedings were initiated against 23 members of the Ahmadiyya Community, including Ghulam Ahmad, Raja Nadeem Sarwar, Raja Khurram, Shamshad Ahmad, Mubashir Ahmad, Khushnood Ahmad, Ahmad Khan, Tanveer Ahmad, and 15 others. This action stemmed from an FIR dated 28 September 2023, invoking section 298-B of the law against the accused. The accusations revolved around the alleged construction of minarets in their place of worship. However, the mosque in question predates the anti-Ahmadi laws that prohibit Ahmadis from calling themselves Muslims or using Islamic symbols.

Despite efforts to seek legal protection through a bail application filed in court, the Additional Sessions Judge Mandi Bahauddin rejected their bail on 27 October 2023.

This incident represents yet another instance of baseless, malicious persecution targeting members of the Ahmadiyya Community. The potential consequences for the accused, if found guilty, include imprisonment of up to three years.



Shahtaj Sugar Mills, Mandi Bahauddin

BHULAIR, DISTRICT KASUR

4-7 August 2023

On 4 August 2023, Shafiq Ahmad, an Ahmadi, was accosted by assailants while returning home, who forcibly tried to prevent him from entering his house. They falsely accused Shafiq and his brother, Parvez Ahmad, of attacking their residence and firing shots at them.

Despite the absence of any weapons or ammunition, the police detained the brothers and registered an FIR against them under PPC 107/151. They were granted bail the following day.

On 5 August, another Ahmadi, Irfan Ahmad, was verbally abused by a group of individuals. Instead of taking action against the perpetrators, the police arrested both Irfan Ahmad and the person who reported the incident, subsequently filing an FIR against

them under PPC 107/151 and incarcerating them. Irfan Ahmad was released on bail on 7 August 2023.

MANDI BHAUDDIN, PUNJAB

27 September 2023

On 27 September 2023, in Mandi Bahauddin, the authorities perpetrated further human rights violations against Ahmadis by registering a criminal case against members of the community under sections 298-B and 298-C of the PPC, with an FIR No. 1436 at Police Station of Civil Lines. This action targeted eight specific individuals and 30 unidentified Ahmadis for allegedly constructing their place of worship, complete with minarets, within the premises of the Shahtaj Sugar Mills.

It is crucial to note that this place of worship, built in 1970, predates the enactment of the Zia-era laws. Despite this, the Ahmadis named in the FIR—Mian Muhammad, Karimuddin, Najeeb Ahmad, Rashid Mahmud, Inamul Haq, Qureshi Abdul Waheed, Tauqir Nawaz, and Waqar Ahmad—are now subject to imprisonment for up to three years if convicted.

The inclusion of an additional 30 unnamed Ahmadis in the case serves as a stark indicator of the malicious intent behind the complaint. This collective targeting of members of the community underscores the systemic persecution faced by Ahmadis in Pakistan.

04

LEGAL DISCRIMINATION & THE QUEST FOR JUSTICE



All persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection of the law. In this respect, the law shall prohibit any discrimination and guarantee to all persons equal and effective protection against discrimination on any ground such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Article 26)

SUMMARY

Ahmadis in Pakistan face significant legal obstacles arising from discriminatory laws, regulations, and biases within the legal fraternity. This continued in 2023, marked by the implementation of anti-Ahmadiyya declarations for membership by various bar associations across the country. These measures, observed from Gujranwala to Peshawar, highlight the systemic discrimination Ahmadis encounter within the legal profession.

Both the Bar Council of England and Wales and the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute expressed profound concern over these discriminatory practices. They called upon Pakistani authorities to uphold international human rights standards.

On a more positive note, the Lahore High Court assumed a crucial role in addressing the challenges faced by Ahmadis. Through landmark judgments, the court emerged as a beacon of hope for Ahmadis seeking justice and protection.

However, despite these encouraging developments, various legal challenges faced by Ahmadis in Pakistan such as the decision of the Supreme Court to deny bail to five Ahmadis accused of blasphemy, continue to underscore their struggle for recognition and equality.

SPOTLIGHTS

GUJRANWALA

7 March 2023

Hafiz Wazir Ali Malik, Secretary of the District Bar Association Gujranwala, issued an official notification regarding the declaration of the Finality of Prophethood, as printed on the association's letterhead. Presented below is the English rendition of the original text:

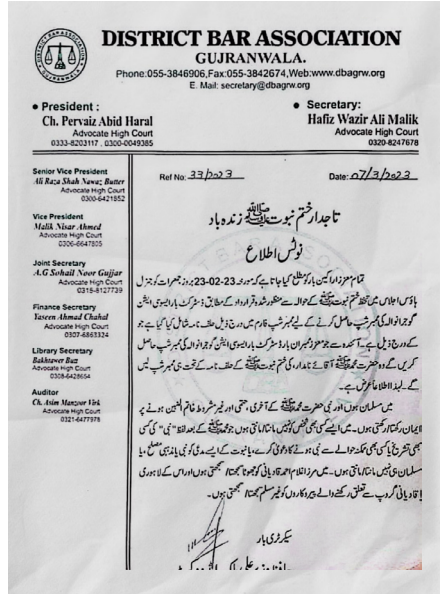
“May the Crown of the Finality of Prophethood endure!

Notice for Information

All esteemed members are hereby informed that, pursuant to the resolution adopted during the general assembly convened on Thursday, 23 February 2023, a new declaration has been integrated into the membership application of the District Bar Association Gujranwala. Henceforth, prospective members of the District Bar Association Gujranwala are required to solemnly affirm the following declaration concerning the Finality of the Prophethood of Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH):

‘I, as a Muslim, acknowledge and firmly uphold the absolute and unequivocal Finality of Khatam an-Nabiyyin, Muhammad (PBUH), as the

last of the prophets. I categorically reject any individual who purports to be a prophet following Muhammad (PBUH) in any capacity or guise whatsoever, and do not recognise such a claimant as a prophet, a religious reformer, or a Muslim. I deem Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani to be an impostor and consider his adherents, whether affiliated with the Lahori or Qadiani faction, to be non-Muslim.”



Screenshot of the notice issued by Hafiz Wazir Ali Malik

PESHAWAR

3 May 2023

During a meeting of its Executive Committee the KP Bar Council decided that all new entrants must submit an anti-Ahmadiyya affidavit regarding the Finality of Prophethood, along with their intimation form. Unfortunately, this decision follows a pattern seen in various other bar associations across the country, including those in Multan, Islamabad, Gujranwala, who have taken similar regressive steps in the past.

The English translation of the affidavit is as follows:

"I swear that I am Muslim and believe in the absolute and unqualified Finality of Khatam an-Nabiyyeen Muhammad (PBUH) as the last of the prophets. I do not recognise any person who claims to be a prophet in any sense of the word or any description whatsoever after Muhammad (PBUH) or recognise such a claimant as prophet or a religious reformer or a Muslim. I consider Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani to be an imposter and consider his followers whether belonging to the Lahori or Qadiani group to be non-Muslim."

An inflammatory tweet by former justice of the Islamabad High Court Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui:

"Qadianis staying in the US, Canada, Britain, European countries and Pakistan are plotting against the army chief, General Syed Asim Munir, and spreading poisonous propaganda against him. Also, the informer Zalmay Khalilzad is a paid agent of the Zionist-Qadiani lobby."



STATEMENT BY THE BAR COUNCIL OF ENGLAND AND WALES

8 June 2023

The Bar Council is profoundly concerned by recent announcements in parts of Pakistan that Ahmadi Muslims lawyers must renounce their religion in order to practise at the Bar. Both the District Bar Association of Gujranwala and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council issued notices that anyone applying for admittance to the Bar must positively assert they are Muslim and denounce the teachings of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community and its founder Mirza Ghulam Ahmad.

The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan enshrines the principles of religious freedom and equality before the law and it is difficult to see how the notices can be consistent with that principle.

Nick Vineall KC, Chair of the Bar of England and Wales, has written to the chair of the Pakistan Bar Council requesting that action be taken to remedy this discrimination against Ahmadi Muslims and non-Muslims.

According to news reports from The Friday Times, Ahmadi Muslims have also faced physical attacks in court. In a judgment from the High Court of Sindh Karachi, Omar Sial J. said: "Not only an attempt was made to intimidate the court and interfere in the smooth administration of justice, but a lawyer... was physically abusive towards... one of the learned counsel for the applicant. [...] This was simply unacceptable behaviour and conduct and must necessarily be condemned by the Bar Associations and Councils."

Commenting, Chair of the Bar Council of England and Wales Nick Vineall KC, said:

"There is understandably a huge amount of international political focus on Pakistan at the moment. Amid these wider concerns over democratic processes, we have been alerted to the specific concerns of Ahmadi Muslim lawyers who are facing discrimination in being denied the right to practise at the Bar because of their religion.

"The decisions taken in Gujranwala and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to exclude Ahmadi Muslims and non-Muslims from the Bar – and by extension, potentially excluding citizens from access to legal representation – are intentionally discriminatory and seem impossible to reconcile with Pakistan's constitutional principles of religious freedom and equality before the law.

"We are urging the Bar Council of Pakistan, as the overarching body, to take action."

Full statement: <https://www.barcouncil.org.uk/resource/bar-council-raises-concern-over-treatment-of-ahmadi-muslim-lawyers-in-pakistan.html>

STATEMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL BAR ASSOCIATION'S HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTE

10 August 2023

The International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute in a statement raised their concern about Ahmadi Lawyers.

IBAHRI Co-Chair and Immediate Past Secretary General of the Swedish Bar Association, Anne Ramberg Dr Jur hc, commented: 'Pakistan must ensure that its laws and policies are in accordance with international standards without exceptions. Religious minority communities such as the Ahmadiyya must be granted all rights as per the Universal Declaration of Human Rights [UDHR] and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights [ICCPR], including the right to freedom of religion or belief as per Article 18 and Article 27 respectively. In particular, the latter that grants extra protections for minority communities.'

IBAHRI Co-Chair Mark Stephens CBE stated: 'I am appalled by yet another attack on this marginalised community as well as lawyers in Pakistan. It is clear from the blatantly unfair treatment of the Ahmadiyya Community that Pakistan is far from affirming and implementing international protections. As long as hate speech is directed at, and violence perpetrated against, Ahmadis because of their religious identity, the international community has a duty to speak out and speak up. The Ahmadis are being squeezed out of civic and public spaces by constant restrictions, and such treatment must be brought to a halt. Pakistan needs to affirm, without delay and without excuse, the rights of this marginalised people in accordance with international standards.'

IBA Executive Director Dr Mark Ellis commented: 'While the situation of the Ahmadiyya Community in Pakistan has been of significant concern for many years, the targeting of the Ahmadiyya lawyers is yet another attack on this discriminated and marginalised group. Pakistan must implement its international law obligations and ensure human rights for all.'

Full statement: <https://www.ibanet.org/IBAHRI-concerned-about-the-discrimination-of-Ahmadiyya-lawyers-in-Pakistan>

RAWALPINDI

31 January 2023

A writ petition concerning 'blasphemy material on social media' against Ahmadis prompted action by the Rawalpindi Bench of the Lahore High Court (LHC). Justice Abdul Aziz was informed that the accused had yet to be apprehended, leading to the issuance of arrest orders. Following this, an FIA team conducted a raid in Rabwah. The court had previously demanded the presence of the District Police Officer (DPO) Chiniot, who submitted his report. Meanwhile, the accused, Saleem ud Din, had received protective bail from a Karachi court. When this development was presented to the LHC on 25 November 2022, Justice Aziz noted that the matter was in the jurisdiction of that court, and it was the responsibility of the FIA Cyber Crimes Wing Lahore to continue to pursue the case. Saleem ud Din believed the issue was nearing resolution. However, the matter resurfaced at the Rawalpindi Bench under Justice Abdul Aziz on 25 January, regarding the failure to arrest the accused. Justice Aziz summoned the Additional Director of the FIA Cyber Crimes Wing Lahore on 27 January to discuss the arrest. The Additional Director appeared again in court on 31 January to report on the matter, where Justice Abdul Aziz allowed an additional 15 days for the arrest, expressing his expectation for 'the good news of the arrest' by then.

ISLAMABAD

22 February 2023

The Supreme Court of Pakistan (SC) deliberated on a petition seeking bail for five Ahmadis, with the particulars of their case summarised as follows:

On 26 May 2020, Rohan Ahmad, Malik Usman Ahmad, and Hafiz Tariq Shehzad faced charges under various sections of Pakistan's Penal Code (PPC) and the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016 (PECA) at the FIA Cyber Crimes Wing, Lahore, resulting in their arrest. The addition of the blasphemy clause PPC 295-C by Additional Session Judge Lahore, Syed Ali Abbas, on 29 June 2021, exposed them to the death penalty. Subsequently, their post-arrest bail application was rejected by the Supreme Court (Justices Mazahar Naqvi and Jamal Khan) on 27 April 2022.

Shiraz Ahmad was taken into custody on 25 February 2021, following allegations of sharing Ahmadi content in a chat group, with the blasphemy section PPC 295-C later appended to his charge sheet.

Malik Zaheer Ahmad, arrested on 30 September 2020, in a case entailing several charges, secured bail on 23 February 2021, only to be re-arrested shortly thereafter by the Cyber Crime Wing of Lahore under related charges linked to the Shiraz Ahmad case. Furthermore, Justice Syed Ali Abbas added the blasphemy section PPC 295-C to his charge sheet following an application by adversaries.

The bail pleas of Shiraz Ahmad and Malik Zaheer Ahmad were dismissed by Justice Tariq Saleem of LHC on 12 January 2022, and subsequently by the SC on 27 April 2022. A Review Petition led to a hearing by a three-member SC bench on 22 February 2023, which ultimately denied the bail plea and review. The court directed the LHC to ascertain within two months the jurisdiction of the FIA in applying the contested sections of the Penal Code to the case.

Additionally, Rohan Ahmad's bail request on statutory grounds was rejected by the Lahore High Court on 8 June citing the failure of the trial to conclude within two years of arrest.

LAHORE HIGH COURT SCRUTINISES PROGRESS IN ANTI-AHMADI CASES

In a sequence of events spanning from September to October 2023, Lahore was home to a mounting series of legal and investigative measures against the Ahmadi community, driven by allegations made by Hassan Muavia. Muavia, who is the brother of Hafiz Tahir Ashrafi, the Prime Minister's Special Representative on Inter-Faith Harmony under Imran Khan, had accused the community in 2019 of violating the Punjab Holy Quran Act by publishing the Holy Quran, its translation, and commentary—a claim which the community vehemently deny. Despite the absence of substantial evidence, an FIR was lodged in December 2022 against prominent Ahmadis, including educators and publishers, under stringent blasphemy and anti-Ahmadiyya laws. Furthermore, additional cases were filed by Muavia to the DPO Chiniot. The Punjab Quran Board also registered a case against Ahmadi office-bearers.

On 6 December 2022, the Station House Officer filed an FIR against six senior members of the Ahmadi community, comprising the principals of Aisha Academy and Madrassa-tul-Hifz, as well as individuals involved in publishing and printing, charging them with various religious offences under the Pakistan Penal Code and the Punjab Holy Quran Act. The charges included

the alleged desecration of the Holy Quran—an offence punishable by life imprisonment.

Subsequently, Mubarak Ahmad Sani, the principal of a Quran school (Madrassa-tul-Hifz), was arrested on 7 January 2023, on charges of defiling the holy book. Despite his plea for bail being denied by the sessions judge, his trial persists in the sessions court.

On 27 September, Justice Shujaat Ali Khan interrogated the DPO Chiniot and Additional I.G. Punjab regarding the progress of the investigation, expressing dissatisfaction and summoning the Prime Minister of Pakistan and the Chief Minister of the Punjab to appear in court on the next hearing scheduled for 16 October to submit a report.

Subsequent to this, on 7 October, the police acquired a search warrant and inspected various offices of the community and Ahmadi-owned printing presses the following week.

On 15 October, the Federal Interior Minister announced during a press conference that the Punjab Police would ensure that no non-Muslim or non-registered body publishes 'corrupted' versions of the Quran. Similarly, the Federal Minister of Religious Affairs, Aniq Ahmad, asserted that Ahmadis were deemed non-Muslims by the Pakistani constitution and therefore could not construct worship places resembling mosques. He advocated for joint action by the provinces to uphold the authority of the state and activate Quran Boards.

Subsequently, on 16 October, representatives from the federal

and Punjab governments, including the Deputy Attorney General and officials from the PTA and the FIA, reassured the court of their full compliance with its orders. The Advocate General of Punjab submitted in writing that a committee had been established to review the implementation of the court's orders every 15 days. However, owing to prior engagements, both the Prime Minister and Chief Minister were absent. Justice Shujaat Ali Khan criticised the senior officials for disregarding the sanctity



Justice Shujaat Ali Khan, Lahore High Court

of the Quran and warned of taking decisive action if the Chief Minister failed to present his policy in court. Regarding the reports submitted on 16 October by the Federal and Punjab governments, Justice Shujaat Ali Khan deemed them vague, asserting in his verdict that both the Federation and Punjab had failed to provide the court with detailed rules and regulations concerning the established Committee. Consequently, in the absence of the Prime Minister and Chief Minister from the court, the reports submitted by the federal

and provincial governments could not be acknowledged as reflective of government policy. The case was adjourned to the next hearing on 18 December, with a demand for the personal presence of the Prime Minister and Chief Minister. Justice Shujaat Ali Khan instructed both governments to implement the court's verdict without succumbing to detailed reports at the next hearing.

LAHORE

October 2023

The LHC has emerged as a vital institution in addressing the Ahmadi community's quest for justice and protection, exemplified by Nasrullah Mahmud's filing of a writ petition on their behalf. This legal action was instigated by a significant surge in targeted assaults on Ahmadiyya places of worship and burial grounds, with over 44 places of worship and more than a hundred graves desecrated within the span of a year. The writ petition unequivocally sought state protection for Ahmadi properties and sacred sites, underscoring their entitlement to security as Pakistani citizens.

During the inaugural hearing on 15 October 2023, under the auspices of Justice Muhammad Sajid Mahmud Sethi, the court scrutinised the absence of adequate security measures for the Ahmadi community's places of worship, cemeteries, and other revered locations. Justice Sethi directed the Punjab government to promptly implement comprehensive security measures and to furnish a response to the community's writ petition, marking a pivotal stride toward ensuring the rights and safety of Ahmadis in Pakistan.

A LANDMARK JUDGEMENT LAHORE

31 August 2023

The LHC delivered a significant verdict in favour of five Ahmadi individuals from Wazirabad, associated with a historic Ahmadiyya mosque established in 1915, which featured a minaret among other architectural elements. Presided over by Justice Tariq Saleem Sheikh, the court not only granted them pre-arrest bail but also addressed broader issues concerning religious freedom, architectural heritage, and legal interpretation.

The core issue revolved around the minarets of the mosque which were targeted for resembling Islamic architecture, leading to charges against the community under the anti-Ahmadi laws. Justice Sheikh highlighted the historical and architectural significance of minarets, emphasising their diverse origins and evolution over time. He argued against targeting the mosque retrospectively for its architecture, and questioned the motive behind the belated filing of the complaint, some 38 years after the ordinance, implying it was

politically motivated.

Applying the principle that an act must be criminal at the time of its commission, Justice Sheikh rejected the application of the doctrine of continuing offence, as the mosque did not contravene any laws when it was built.

Furthermore, he invoked the ruling of the Supreme Court in the case of Tahir Naqash and Others Vs The State, which reiterates the constitutional rights of Ahmadis as citizens of Pakistan. Despite their non-Muslim status under Article 260(3) of the Constitution, Ahmadis are entitled to all fundamental rights, including protection and equality before the law as guaranteed by Article 4.

By granting pre-arrest bail and providing these justifications, Justice Sheikh's verdict not only protected the individuals involved but also set a precedent for the treatment of Ahmadi architectural heritage and the rights of religious minorities in Pakistan, ensuring laws are interpreted and implemented with respect for the country's diverse cultural and religious legacy.



05

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, & BUSINESS



We earnestly desire for Pakistan to prosper and to succeed. Indeed, we want all countries to flourish and to achieve this, the human rights of all people must be upheld and protected.

*Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad,
Khalifatul Masih V*

SUMMARY

Ahmadis continue to face pervasive discrimination within the education and employment sectors in Pakistan. Historically known for their high levels of literacy and education, Ahmadis have faced targeted discrimination from clerics and extremist groups, resulting in exclusion from government jobs, harassment in the business sector, and denial of educational rights.

Multiple incidents of discrimination against Ahmadi students were reported in 2023, including expulsions, assaults, and cases of harassment. Additionally, discriminatory question papers and exclusion from religious education classes further highlighted the challenges faced by Ahmadi students in the country. Ahmadi teachers were also targeted and in certain instances forced to resign. 2023 saw seven students forcibly expelled from schools or colleges on grounds of their faith.

Over the course of the year Ahmadi professionals in government service, such as Superintendent Police, Fateh Ahmad, and teacher, Qazi Muhammad Yusuf, were subjected to threats, intimidation, and forced transfers due to their religious identity. Discriminatory practices, fueled by extremist ideologies, resulted in unfair treatment, forced retirements, and cancellation of appointments of Ahmadis in various government positions.

Ahmadi-owned businesses faced boycotts, attacks, and social ostracisation orchestrated by extremist elements. Incidents such as the targeting of Ahmadi businesses, harassment of Ahmadi business people, and pressure to close down shops demonstrated the economic hardships endured by Ahmadis due to religious discrimination.

These incidents collectively illustrate the pervasive discrimination, hostility, and persecution faced by Ahmadis in various aspects of their lives, including education, employment, and business ownership. They highlight the urgent need for protection of minority rights and the promotion of tolerance and inclusivity in Pakistani society.

SPOTLIGHTS

EDUCATION

PST COLLEGE KAMALIA DISTRICT TOBA TEK SINGH

October 2023

Adnan Ahmad, a B.S. Honors student at PST College in Kamalia, District Toba Tek Singh, was forcibly expelled from PST College due to discrimination based on his religious identity as an Ahmadi. Despite being a dedicated student, Ahmad faced vehement opposition from his fellow students upon the revelation of his Ahmadi background.



PST College Kamalia

RAMBRA, DISTRICT NAROWAL

21 September 2023

Two siblings attending Aspire College were targeted and assaulted by fellow students due to their Ahmadi faith. One of them, Hassan Nawaz Khan, was subjected to a violent attack by fellow students at the college. Rather than addressing the root cause of the violence and protecting the rights of

the Ahmadi students, the principal chose to send the siblings home and warned them against returning.

GULSHAN PARK, LAHORE

15 November 2023

Siblings, Farhan Ahmad and Zeeshan Ahmad were enrolled at an Academy in Gulshan Park, Lahore when the school administration called their parents to attend the office. The sibling's mother visited the school and spoke with the principal who informed her that the children had been expelled as he was previously unaware that they were Ahmadi. He further returned their tuition fees and asked for all school notebooks to be given back to the school.

CHAK CHATHA, DISTRICT HAFIZABAD

December 2023

Saadat Ahmad was falsely accused of spraying an individual with a substance that nearly resulted in his death. The alleged victim's daughter, employed as a teacher in a local school, commenced a campaign of harassment against Ahmadi teachers and students at Ahmad's school. During a staff meeting, she verbally abused Ahmadi students and advocated for the termination of an Ahmadi teacher's employment contract. Moreover, discussions were held about expelling older Ahmadi students from the school.

EMPLOYMENT

MANDI BHAUDDIN, PUNJAB

September 2023

In September 2023, Fateh Ahmad, an Ahmadi Police Officer, encountered significant opposition following his appointment as Superintendent of Police in Mandi Bahauddin, Punjab. This opposition arose primarily from heated statements issued by Naeem Chatha Qadri, the local leader of the Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP), who expressed strong reservations about Ahmad's presence in the district. These statements, characterised by intolerance and references to past violent incidents targeting Ahmadis, fostered an atmosphere of fear and hostility towards him. Despite his commitment and dedication to his duties, Fateh Ahmad was subsequently transferred from his position in response to pressure exerted by extremist factions, highlighting the formidable



Naeem Chatha Qadri

challenges confronting religious minorities within Pakistan's law enforcement sector.

SARGODHA

3 January 2023

The appointment of Dr Shafqat Ullah Nasir, an Ahmadi doctor, as the Additional Principal and Medical Superintendent of District Headquarters Hospital, Sargodha, was abruptly cancelled under pressure from religious extremists. Anjuman Tahaffuze Huqooq Shehryan Sargodha circulated posters demanding Dr Nasir be removed from his post and accusing him of preaching his faith and offending the religious sentiments of Muslims.



A copy of the poster, advocating for the removal of Dr Shafqat Ullah Nasir from his appointment

The poster threatened authorities with protests if their demands were not met within three days. Dr Nasir, a highly qualified physician with years of experience, had previously faced discrimination in his career. Despite his competence and merit, his appointment was revoked.

**PALINGARI KAHOTA,
DISTRICT RAWALPINDI**
November 2023

Maulvi Anjum, a teacher at a local madrassah, incited his students and local residents against Ahmadis, fostering an atmosphere of hostility and intolerance. One student, influenced by the cleric visited a shop owned by an Ahmadi man, Adeel Ahmad, and shouted derogatory slogans targeting the community.

Concerned about the escalating tensions, the local Ahmadiyya leadership contacted the Station House Officer (SHO) and informed him of the worrying developments.

Despite the police intervening to resolve the matter, things did not improve. Boycott posters targeting Ahmadi businesses were displayed in the area, and efforts were made to forcibly shut down Ahmadi-owned businesses, creating an environment of intimidation.

These incidents collectively illustrate the pervasive discrimination, hostility, and persecution faced by Ahmadis in various aspects of their lives, including education, employment, and business ownership. They highlight the urgent need for protection of minority rights and the promotion of tolerance and inclusivity in Pakistani society.

06

MOSQUE ATTACKS



Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship observance.

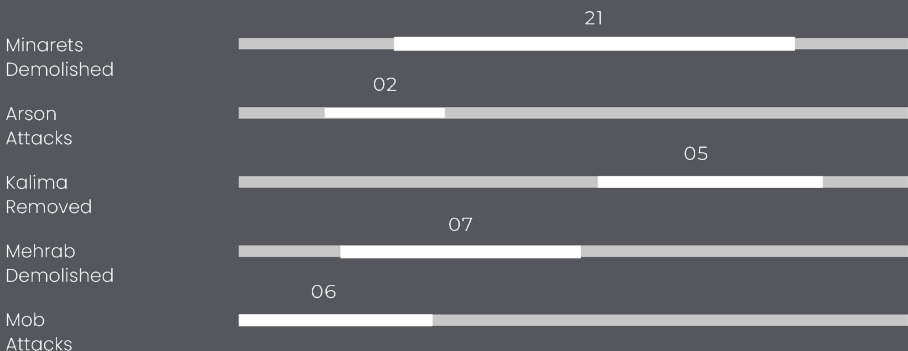
Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 18)

SUMMARY

In 2023, Ahmadi mosques in Pakistan were subjected to a persistent onslaught of vandalism and attacks, with a total of 44 reported incidents documented throughout the year. These assaults were orchestrated by a variety of actors, including government authorities and religious extremist groups, often in collusion with one another. Primarily, these attacks aimed at defacing the perceived Islamic architectural features of Ahmadi mosques. The minarets of 21 mosques were demolished, seven niches were destroyed, and the Islamic Kalima was effaced from five places of worship. Additionally, there were two instances of arson against Ahmadi mosques and one incident where a mosque was subjected to gunfire.

Geographically, the majority of these attacks, numbering 33, occurred in the Punjab, with 10 incidents reported in Sindh, half of which took place in the city of Karachi, and one incident in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. It is important to note that the attacks extended beyond physical destruction; authorities sealed Ahmadi places of worship in three separate instances throughout the year, further restricting the community's ability to practice their faith freely.

MOSQUE ATTACKS IN 2023



SPOTLIGHTS

SAMUNDRI, DISTRICT FAISALABAD

21-22 December 2023

In the late hours of the night, the district administration and police cooperated to dismantle the minarets of the local Ahmadiyya mosque in Samundri Faisalabad. Earlier, the Assistant Commissioner (AC), accompanied by the Station House Officer (SHO) and several policemen, arrived at the mosque demanding entry. The complainant objected specifically to the minarets. Subsequently, the AC instructed community leaders to see him in his office.

Later that evening, the AC informed the Ahmadi president that the task must be completed that day to report to the Regional Police Officer (RPO). He warned that any damage incurred during the operation would not be the responsibility of the administration. Just after midnight on December 21-22, the AC instructed the Ahmadi president to open the mosque gate or face forced entry.

KIRTO, DISTRICT SHEIKHUPURA

September 2023

Members of the Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) pressed local law enforcement authorities to demolish

the minarets and niche of the Ahmadiyya mosque situated in Kirto, Sheikhpura. Around 50 local villagers, representing diverse religious denominations, provided sworn testimony on stamped paper affirming the peaceful coexistence of individuals from various faith backgrounds, including Ahmadis, within the village. They confirmed that the construction of the Ahmadiyya mosque in 1963 predated the anti-Ahmadiyya ordinance of 1984 and expressed no objections to its architectural features.

On 20 September, nine senior local representatives convened with the RPO and formally presented the aforementioned testimony. Subsequently, the RPO communicated with the District Police Officer (DPO) of Sheikhpura, urging diligent attention to the concerns raised. Following a discussion with the DPO, it was conveyed that further action was unnecessary if no objections were raised by the locals.

However, on 21 September, a group of 50-60 extremists associated with the TLP accosted a local elder, alleging his support for Ahmadis and insinuating affiliation with the community. Despite the elder's

refutation of the accusations and affirmation of a peaceful coexistence agreement, the harassment persisted.

On 23 September, the DPO summoned a delegation from the Ahmadiyya Community, cautioning them about escalating tensions and suggesting that non-compliance could lead to widespread unrest. He presented the local Ahmadis with a stark ultimatum: either permit the demolition of the entire mosque or just the minarets. Consequently, following the evening prayer, a police contingent arrived and proceeded to demolish the upper portions of the minarets with sledgehammers, despite initial claims of providing security.



Broken minarets of the Ahmadiyya mosque in Kirto

This incident exemplifies the relentless hostility directed towards Ahmadis by the TLP. Despite pleas from locals and the Ahmadiyya delegation, law enforcement authorities acquiesced to the demands of religious extremists, thereby violating the fundamental rights of Ahmadis to safeguard their religious property. Such occurrences underscore the recurring pattern of authorities yielding to the unlawful demands of extremists, often at

the expense of citizen rights and security.

CHAK NO. 24, DISTRICT SANGHAR October 2023

Dr Azhar Iqbal, the local president of the Ahmadiyya Community in Chak No.24, Sanghar, undertook renovations at his residence, which included a mosque within the premises. As part of the renovation process, repairs were conducted on the niche of the mosque. Exploiting this situation, a group of agitators raised objections specifically to the minarets and niche, falsely asserting that Ahmadis were prohibited from including these architectural features in their places of worship. They escalated their objections on social media platforms and mobilised a mob from neighbouring villages to gather at the site. The cleric leading the agitators delivered inflammatory speeches which incited hatred and demanded the demolition of the structure.

On 4 July 2023, the Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) and SHO visited the site. Despite being informed that the mosque was an old structure, predating the anti-Ahmadi laws, the police chose to seal the place of worship. Additionally, they registered a criminal case against Dr Azhar Iqbal and his brother Mazhar Iqbal, under sections 295-A, 298-C, and 298-B(1)(D) of the Pakistan Penal Code, even though Mazhar Iqbal resided in Rabwah. It is also pertinent to note that instead of protecting the Ahmadis, the police chose to register a case against them, a significant departure from their duty to ensure their safety.

KARACHI

February & September 2023

In 2023 the Ahmadiyya Hall in Karachi was attacked twice over the course of the year. The first of these attacks occurred in February when unidentified assailants vandalised the minarets of the building. While some individuals chanted anti-Ahmadi slogans, others scaled the wall and swiftly demolished the minarets with sledgehammers. The perpetrators then fled the scene. Despite the presence of a small contingent of police officers, they failed to apprehend the assailants. It is worth noting that this building has been situated in the heart of the city since 1950, predating the 1984 anti-Ahmadi laws.

On the second occasion in September, a mob again vandalised the minarets of the building. The attackers also raised inflammatory slogans against Ahmadis, inciting hatred and violence. Additionally, several Ahmadis were subjected to physical assault within the premises of the building.



The attack on the Ahmadiyya Hall

SAMBRIAL, DISTRICT SIALKOT

18 August 2023

On the night of 18 August, at the behest of the TLP, the police and civil administration proceeded with the demolition of the niche of an Ahmadi place of worship.

Prior to this, the TLP had lodged a complaint with the authorities regarding the niche of the Ahmadiyya mosque. On 14 August, Pakistan's Independence Day, several clerics issued threats to the AC, saying that if the authorities did not accede to their demands, they would take matters into their own hands and demolish the niche. Subsequently, the AC, accompanied by the DSP and SHO, instructed the local Ahmadis to destroy the niche themselves. However, they refused to comply.

On the night of 18 August, a dozen officials cordoned off the street from both ends and commenced the demolition of the niche. Municipal workers were then tasked with removing the debris from the site.

The desecration of the mosque took place just three days after a highly publicised mob attack in Jaranwala when Christian churches and homes were ransacked and set on fire. The attackers vandalised and set alight several churches and homes, causing extensive damage. Additionally, there were reports of physical assaults on individuals and families within the Christian community. The incident sparked outrage both domestically and internationally, drawing attention to the plight of religious minorities in Pakistan and raising concerns about the prevalence of religious intolerance and violence in the country.

KASUR

18 February 2023

Just after noon on 18 February 2023, members of the Ahmadiyya Community congregated at their mosque in Kasur to observe the Friday prayers. However, their worship was disrupted by a hostile mob affiliated with the TLP. The crowd objected to the Ahmadis being allowed to perform the Friday prayer. One of the instigators asserted that Ahmadis had already conducted too many Friday prayers at the location and threatened them against returning for future services. The presence of a police officer on duty did little to deter the agitated mob, although some local residents attempted to intervene and defuse the situation.



A TLP leader leading a mob against Ahmadis in Kasur

Upon the intervention of additional police personnel summoned via a distress call to an emergency helpline, the authorities opted to instruct the Ahmadis to vacate the premises rather than disperse the hostile crowd. Consequently, the Ahmadis were compelled to relocate to an alternate location to perform their Friday prayers.

Meanwhile, both the police and a cleric from a nearby mosque called on the mob via loudspeakers to refrain from engaging in any unlawful behaviour. Subsequently, the mob dispersed from the site while chanting anti-Ahmadi slogans.

CHOOKNAWALI, DISTRICT GUJRAT

29 August 2023

The local Ahmadiyya mosque in Chooknawali, Gujrat, built in the 1960s, serves as the centre of worship for eleven Ahmadi families residing in the area. Historically, the mosque has been a symbol of unity within the village, attracting members of the community during times of celebration and mourning. However, tensions arose when the members of the TLP lodged a complaint at the Kunjah police station regarding the construction of the mosque.

In response to the complaint, an Ahmadiyya delegation met with the SHO to address the issue. The SHO, demanded that the Ahmadis remove the Islamic Kalima from the mosque.

On the afternoon of 29 August, the AC reached out to Waleed Ahmed,

the son of the local Ahmadiyya president, urging him to remove the Kalima. The AC warned of potential violence, stating that failure to comply could result in a hostile procession targeting the mosque and causing further damage. Despite these threats, Ahmed refused to acquiesce to these demands.

Later that evening, the police arrived at the mosque and approached the residence of an Ahmadi youth living adjacent to the place of worship. They demanded that he remove the Kalima, and upon his refusal, an official proceeded to paint over it with black paint while documenting the act with photographs.

DHOLAN ABAD, MIRPUR KHAS

4 May 2023

A group of assailants launched an attack on the Ahmadiyya mosque in District Mirpur Khas, inflicting significant damage to its structure.

According to reports, a group of assailants attacked the Ahmadiyya mosque in District Mirpur Khas, causing extensive damage to its structure.

Reportedly, almost 150 individuals descended upon the mosque in the morning, gaining entry by placing a ladder against the building. Once inside, they proceeded to dismantle the minarets of the building and attempted to damage the niche. Situated in the heart of Mirpur Khas City, the mosque also houses shops in its basement. Despite

their efforts, the assailants failed to breach the main gate of the mosque but resorted to setting fire to the belongings of the Ahmadi, including their clothing and personal possessions. Constructed in the 1980s, the mosque stands adjacent to Fazl-e-Umar Hospital, founded by Dr Abdul Mannan Siddiqui, a much-respected Ahmadi doctor who tragically lost his life in 2008 in a religiously motivated targeted killing.

In response to the incident, a spokesperson for the Ahmadiyya Community in Pakistan condemned the continuous attacks on Ahmadiyya worship places as a flagrant violation of their human rights. Additionally, the spokesperson expressed dismay over the lack of police action, criticising the delay in registering a case for the incident.



Ahmadiyya mosque in Dholan Abad, district Mirpur Khas

07

CEMETERY ATTACKS



There are many difficulties when it comes to graves and cemeteries in Pakistan; with every passing day, some evil individual or group breaks the headstones of our [members'] graves.

*Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad,
Khalifatul Masih V*

SUMMARY

The persecution of Ahmadis in Pakistan persists even beyond death, as evidenced by continued brutalities against Ahmadi cemeteries and the denial of burial rights in 2023. This year, reports indicate that 109 Ahmadi graves were targeted and desecrated. While this number marks a decrease from the 197 incidents recorded in the previous year, it remains alarmingly high. These attacks were largely undertaken by law enforcement authorities in collusion with religious clerics.

In 2023, troubling rhetoric spread across social media platforms, with videos surfacing of clerics demanding the removal of deceased Ahmadis from communal cemeteries. Moreover, in at least three instances this year, religious clerics successfully impeded three burials with the backing of local authorities.

This alarming trend follows a pattern that emerged in 2019, characterised by sustained and escalating attacks against Ahmadi graves and cemeteries.

SPOTLIGHTS

DASKA KALAN, SIALKOT

September 2023

In the largest cemetery attack of the year, 74 gravestones were destroyed in Daska Kalan, Sialkot, including those belonging to the family of Sir Zafarullah Khan, by the Punjab police and the local Assistant Commissioner (AC) in collusion with extremist clerics. Sir Zafarullah Khan was Pakistan's first foreign minister and the only Pakistani to preside over the International Court of Justice. He also served as the President of the UN General Assembly.

Following the attack on the cemetery, the Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) organised a large rally in the same area, drawing scores of people protesting against places of worship belonging to the Ahmadiyya Community. The focal point of contention was a mosque established by Sir Zafarullah Khan.

The rally was staged following a public announcement by the TLP, with banners plastered across the city, amplifying the party's stance against the Ahmadiyya Community's places of worship. Videos circulating on social media captured the fervour of the rally, as

participants marched through the city streets, chanting slogans and playing religious chants through loudspeakers.

BHULAIR, DISTRICT KASUR

30 September 2023

A complaint was lodged by religious extremists with the police concerning the presence of Islamic inscriptions on two Ahmadi tombstones in Bhulair. In response, the Deputy Commissioner of Kasur formed a committee chaired by the AC of Pattoki to investigate the matter. Despite Ahmadi representatives citing the verdict of the Supreme Court which affirms their right to freely practice and express their faith within the confines of their privately owned spaces, the committee dismissed their argument.

Subsequently, acting upon the orders of the AC of Pattoki, the police proceeded to destroy the gravestones. This action further exacerbated local tensions and increased hostility towards the Ahmadis in the area. Despite requests from the local Ahmadi community for additional time to find a mutually acceptable solution, their pleas were disregarded.

SIALKOT

21 January 2023

Following arrangements for the burial of an Ahmadi woman named Bushra Bibi, an anti-Ahmadi activist associated with the Tahaffuze Khatme Nabuwwat filed a complaint under the anti-Ahmadi laws. Consequently, the local administration prohibited Ahmadi from burying their deceased in a joint cemetery, which had been shared with Ahmadi for over 71 years, and warned them of potential legal action.

Despite a recommendation from the District Core Management Peace Committee to come up with a solution regarding Ahmadi burials, the administration chose to seal off the section of the cemetery designated for the community.

Furthermore, the police threatened local Ahmadi with criminal charges

if they did not bury the remains of the deceased outside the village.

SARGODHA

11 July 2023

Following the passing away of an Ahmadi woman, efforts were undertaken to arrange her burial in a nearby cemetery. However, after local opposition against this arose, a formal complaint was lodged with the police. Subsequently, a group of clerics congregated at the graveyard, with both police personnel and a local land revenue official.

The land revenue official decided that the burial of Ahmadi would be restricted to a one-acre part of the cemetery. However, disagreement persisted among the clerics, leading to further disruptions to the burial proceedings. Consequently, the family of the deceased was compelled to carry out the burial at a private farmhouse.



An Ahmadi grave destroyed in Daska.

08

ANTI-AHMADI HATE ADVOCACY



If Pakistanis, the ulema – or the so-called maulvis, clerics – do not change their attitude, there will never be peace in Pakistan. Until and unless they behave well, they practice good morals, and they change their attitude and try to be humane [...] if they are doing inhumane activities, Pakistan can never be at peace.

*Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad,
Khalifatul Masih V*

SUMMARY

In 2023, Ahmadis in Pakistan endured a persistent wave of hate campaigns and hate rhetoric against them. Instead of curbing this hate speech, authorities continued to turn a blind eye to it or in some instances even facilitate it, allowing hostile rallies and conferences to take place, including in the Ahmadi headquarters of Rabwah. Throughout the year, hate speech against Ahmadis permeated various media platforms, including mainstream news channels, YouTube, TikTok, Twitter, and Instagram.

The hate speech directed towards Ahmadis over the course of the year posed a grave threat to the safety and well-being of members of the community. Despite calls for accountability and condemnation from various quarters, including international human rights organisations, this cycle of hatred persisted, perpetuating an environment of intolerance and hostility.

SPOTLIGHTS

HEAD OF TLP ANAS RIZVI INCITED HOSTILITY AGAINST AHMADIS

Anas Rizvi, the son of Tehreek-e-Labbaik (TLP) founder, Khadim Hussain Rizvi, and a prominent figure in the party, was captured on video absurdly telling a large audience that the Companions of the Holy Prophet killed 36,000 'Mirzais' (a derogatory term for Ahmadis) under the leadership of the first Caliph of Islam Hazrat Abu Bakr in the battle of Yamama.

By spreading false claims about the community, Rizvi not only exacerbated existing tensions but also increased the climate of fear and insecurity Ahmadis continue to live under in Pakistan.

SARGODHA

January 2023

Syed Muhammad Sibtain Shah Naqvi, a prominent figure associated with Markazi Jamiat Ahl-e-Hadees in Punjab, delivered a speech in which he propagated hatred and violence against Ahmadis. Naqvi's remarks, which were made during a public address, included directives to boycott and ostracise Ahmadis from society.

In his speech, Naqvi went to the

extent of saying that if the home of an Ahmadi ever caught fire, people should douse it with petrol instead of trying to put out the flames with water. This chilling call for violence not only promoted discrimination but also posed a serious threat to the safety and well-being of Ahmadis residing in Bhulair and beyond.



Syed Muhammad Sibtain Shah

FEBRUARY & MAY 2023

Mufti Abdul Wahid Qureshi, a cleric notorious for his hate-filled speeches, recorded a video during a PIA flight, calling for the boycott of Ahmadi-owned businesses. In the video, Qureshi specifically singled out Shezan Ketchup, a product of Shezan International Limited, alleging that

its presence on PIA flights violated the constitution of Pakistan. He demanded that the Minister of Aviation, Khawaja Saad Rafique, take immediate action to cease all business dealings with Ahmadis. Qureshi's video circulated widely on social media, sparking outrage and concern over the propagation of hate speech and discrimination against Ahmadis.



Mufti Abdul Wahid Qureshi

Several months later, on 27 May, a video recording surfaced of Senator Muhammad Talha Mahmood who at the time was the Federal Minister of Religious Affairs expressing his intense pain over the publicity of commercial products associated with Ahmadis in a brochure provided to Hajj pilgrims. Mahmood demanded urgent action be taken, including asking for a report on the matter to be submitted within two days.

Both these incidents raise serious human rights concerns, particularly regarding the economic rights of Ahmadis in Pakistan.

CHAK NO. 88 JB, HASYANA, DISTRICT FAISALABAD

29 January 2023

On 29 January, the TLP organised a conference on the theme of the life

of the first Caliph of Islam, Hazrat Abu Bakr, in Hasyana, Faisalabad. Rather than stick to the topic of the conference, Irfan Mehmood Burq, a prominent cleric associated with the TLP and other speakers targeted Ahmadis with inflammatory rhetoric during their addresses.

The various speakers propagated hate speech against Ahmadis, including a declaration that it was impermissible to greet Ahmadis with the traditional Islamic greeting of salam. Ahmadis were also accused of denying the Finality of Prophethood, while calls were made to forbid them from referring to their places of worship as mosques. Attendees were also urged to defend the doctrine of the Finality of Prophethood with their lives.

OKARA

14 July 2023

Activists affiliated with the TLP organised a motorcycle rally in Okara, Pakistan, with over 100 participants. Following the rally, the participants congregated at the Okara Press Club, where inflammatory speeches were made against the Ahmadiyya Community.

During the gathering, the district leader of TLP criticised the government for not properly preventing Ahmadis from taking part in the Eid-ul-Adha celebrations. He asserted that local Ahmadis would not be permitted to offer their Friday prayers and demanded that the local Ahmadi president remove 'Muhammad' from his name. Furthermore, he insisted that the Ahmadi president refrain from visiting court premises in his work as a lawyer.

Justifying his demands, the TLP leader argued that the name Muhammad should be exclusively reserved for Muslims, and that Ahmadis were impure and unworthy of using it. He further said that Ahmadis had defied previous directives issued by the TLP, particularly regarding the ritual sacrifice of animals during Eid-ul-Adha. He went on to warn Ahmadis that if they continued to perform Islamic rites and practices, the TLP would not hesitate to take forceful measures against them.

RABWAH

7 September 2023

On 7 September, clerics gathered in Rabwah at the 36th Annual Khatme Nabuwwat Conference to commemorate the enactment of the Second Amendment of the Constitution of Pakistan in 1974, which declared Ahmadis to be non-Muslim.

Throughout the conference, speakers accused Ahmadis of being infidels and expressed gratitude to the government for officially declaring Ahmadis a non-Muslim minority while criticising international agencies for using Ahmadis to spread unrest within Pakistan. There were also calls for social boycotts of members of the community.

The annual rallies and conferences held on 7 September to commemorate the passing of the Second Amendment represent a grave violation of human rights principles, particularly the rights to freedom of religion, expression, and association. By perpetuating hate speech and promoting discriminatory

practices against Ahmadis, these events contribute to the ongoing persecution and marginalisation of the community in Pakistan.



36th Khatme Nabuwwat Conference

JAUHARABAD, DISTRICT KHUSHAB

December 2023

An individual by the name of Malik Adnan Qadri, with the backing of the Deputy Commissioner of Khushab, initiated legal proceedings against an Ahmadi man, Tariq Virk, for allegedly hosting Friday prayers in his residence, an act deemed unlawful under 298-C of the anti-Ahmadi laws. Qadri urged the authorities to take legal action against Virk and other local Ahmadis.

During the inauguration of a mosque, Qadri also demanded that Ahmadis be prevented from offering the Friday prayers throughout Pakistan. Qadri went on to demand that either Virk be expelled from the local vicinity or that the Friday prayer service at his residence be put to a stop. He threatened that failure to comply would result in him and others taking matters into their own hands and that they would not be held responsible for any ensuing disturbances or harm.

09

DIVERSE HUMAN RIGHTS BREACHES



Ahmadiyya Jamaat has never deprived anyone of their rights, rather we serve people, and while the opponents oppress us, the members of our Jamaat express mercy and sympathy in return.

*Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud
Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih II*

SUMMARY

This chapter encapsulates a myriad of incidents that highlight the relentless persecution faced by Ahmadis in Pakistan, underscoring the pervasive nature of discrimination and hostility that permeates various facets of their lives. Despite not fitting neatly into specific thematic chapters, these incidents shed light on the breadth and depth of persecution experienced by members of the Ahmadiyya Community in the country.

Incidents such as preventing Ahmadis from distributing charity, and targeting members of the community for their names underscore the extent to which Ahmadis are marginalised and deprived of their fundamental rights.

Moreover, the chapter emphasises the complicity of both state and non-state actors in perpetuating this persecution. Despite the diverse range of incidents presented, a common thread of intolerance and discrimination runs through each narrative, highlighting the urgent need for comprehensive legal and societal reforms to protect the rights and dignity of Ahmadis in Pakistan.

SPOTLIGHTS

DHANI DEV, T.T. SINGH

30 September 2023

On 30 September, two individuals identified as Manzur Ahmad and Zaheer Ahmad harassed and intimidated four Ahmadis gathered at a local mosque. The two men shouted derogatory remarks and hateful rhetoric from the gate of the building.

During the verbal assault, Manzur Ahmad specifically targeted an Ahmadi named Rashid Ahmad, openly expressing his desire to attain paradise by committing violence against him. This threatening behaviour created an atmosphere of fear and insecurity among the Ahmadis present.

Following the incident at the mosque, Manzur Ahmad escalated his aggression towards Rashid Ahmad in the local bazaar.

Prior to this, Manzur Ahmad had exhibited hostile and aggressive behaviour towards the president of the local Ahmadi community.

79 NAWAN KOT, DISTRICT SHEIKHUPURA

April 2023

During the holy month of Ramadan,

Ahmadis across Pakistan engaged in charitable activities to support the vulnerable and underprivileged. In Nawan Kot local Ahmadis organised the distribution of 250 packets of provisions to needy families and individuals in the village irrespective of their faith.



79 Nawan Kot, District Sheikhupura

However, this drew the attention of religious extremists who viewed their charitable efforts with disdain. Upon learning of the distribution initiative, these extremist elements approached the local authorities, prompting the police to retrieve the distributed packages.

Despite their efforts, only a fraction of the packets were recovered, as most of the recipients refused to give over their provisions. Even the Imam of the local mosque refused to comply.

NAIMAT COLONY, DISTRICT FAISALABAD

25 July 2023

During a routine security visit to the area, police officials, led by the Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), visited the clinic of Syed Kaleem Ahmad. Upon seeing the clinic's signboard, which prominently displayed the name Syed, the DSP ordered its immediate removal.

However, upon being informed that Dr Kaleem was not present at the clinic, the DSP instructed the dispenser to remove the signboard, which he did.

Subsequently, the DSP tried to search the clinic without a warrant. When told that the doctor held the key and was away, the DSP ordered the clinic to be locked and summoned Dr Kaleem to the police station for questioning. Following the intervention of an Ahmadi delegation, it was revealed that the police action stemmed from demands made by the Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP).

After negotiations, the authorities permitted the clinic to reopen.

GUJRANWALA

12 February 2023

A group of police officers visited the residence of Munir Ahmad Khokar, an Ahmadi resident of Ameer Park, Gujranwala. Upon arriving, they identified themselves and proceeded to address Khokar regarding a complaint received

concerning the presence of the phrase 'MashAllah' (an Arabic term expressing praise for God's will) engraved on the tiles of his home.

Despite objections against their behaviour from the residents and non-Ahmadi neighbours, the police insisted on removing the tiles.



Mohalla Amir Park Gujranwala

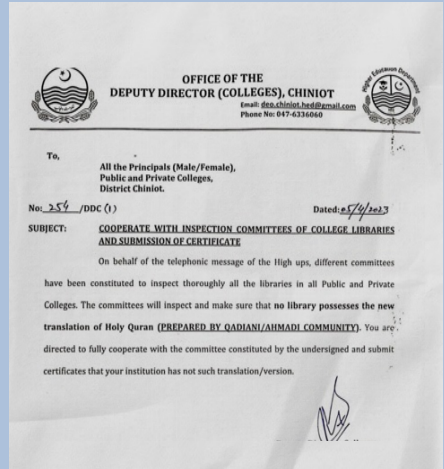
Subsequently, the same group of officers proceeded to the home of another Ahmadi, Naseem Ahmad, where various religious clerics were allowed to remove similarly inscribed tiles from his home.

An Ahmadi community official later learned that the involvement of religious clerics prompted the police action.

CHINIOT
5 April 2023

In response to certain directives, the Deputy Director (Colleges) of District Chiniot issued a circular instructing the formation of committees comprising of various professors and lecturers. These committees were tasked with investigating whether translated copies of the Holy Quran allegedly prepared by the Ahmadi Community were being kept in both public and private college libraries.

The circular mandated the collection of certificates from all principals confirming that no such translations were being kept within three days. However, it lacked specific details regarding any publication making mention only of a "new translation" undertaken by the community.



The Deputy Director (Colleges) of District Chiniot issued a circular instructing an investigation to ensure that no library, whether public or private, possesses a copy of the Holy Quran with the 'new translation' prepared by the Qadiani/Ahmadi Community.



INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON AHMADI PERSECUTION IN 2023

US STATE DEPARTMENT'S 2022 REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

In October, the government announced the creation of a dedicated unit to investigate and handle blasphemy allegations online and on social media like other cybercrimes. In November, local police in Chiniot, Punjab, in coordination with the Federal Investigative Agency (FIA) Cyber Crime Wing, charged the national spokesperson for the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community of Pakistan under blasphemy laws and attempted to arrest him in Rabwah, Punjab. The UN special rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief said the country's blasphemy laws were a violation of human rights and religious freedom. NGOs active on religious freedom issues reported harassment by government authorities."

The Ambassador, Consuls General, other embassy officers, and visiting senior U.S. officials, including the Counselor of the Department of State, engaged government officials and senior advisors to the Prime Minister, including officials from the Ministry of Law and Justice, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and senior members of the Senate and National Assembly, to urge them to make progress on blasphemy laws and laws concerning Ahmadi Muslims, better protect members of religious minority communities, improve sectarian relations, and encourage interfaith respect.

Source: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-report-on-international-religious-freedom/pakistan/>

OHCHR RAISES CONCERN OVER THE TREATMENT OF AHMADIS IN PAKISTAN

The Daily Dawn; 3 June 2023: Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) wrote a letter to the government of Pakistan, to take effective action, and send back a report. It was reported in the daily as reproduced below:

The UN human rights body has expressed concern over the treatment of Ahmadis in Pakistan and sought a reply from the government by the end of this month to allegations that the community does not enjoy the freedoms and rights granted by international law to all individuals regardless of their religion, caste, creed or colour.

The concern was expressed by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) through a letter submitted to Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland. The Permanent Representative's office forwarded the letter to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs this week.

The OHCHR wrote the letter after receiving a report prepared by a team of its Special Rapporteurs — Fernand de Varennes, Irene Khan, Margaret Satterthwaite and Nazila Ghanea.

The letter went on to say: "We would like to bring to the attention of your excellency's government information we have received concerning growing discrimination and rising incidents of hate speech and incitement to violence against the Ahmadi religious minority in Pakistan, including attacks against places of worship and other acts of intimidation."

The UN agency called upon the government to take measures for putting an end to the alleged violations, ensure that they did not recur and take action against individuals found responsible.

"While awaiting a reply, we urge that all necessary interim measures be taken to halt the alleged violations and prevent their re-occurrence and in the event that the investigations support or suggest the allegations to be correct, to ensure the accountability of any person(s) responsible for the alleged violations."

The High Commissioner's office said "religiously motivated instances" of hate speech and "acts of intolerance" against Ahmadis were on the rise in Pakistan.

"We are deeply concerned about violent attacks against the Ahmadi minority, which we have previously addressed in several communications that despite our requests for remedial actions from authorities, the safety of the Ahmadi minority continues to deteriorate." the OHCHR said.

Source: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1757632>

USCIRF EXPRESSED OVER PAKISTAN'S EXPULSION OF REFUGEES AND ATTACKS AGAINST AHMADIS

The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) is troubled by reports of increased detainment, violence, and intimidation against the Ahmadiyya and Afghan refugee communities in Pakistan. Over the last several weeks, Pakistani officials have called for the repatriation of "illegal migrants," including 1.7 million Afghan refugees who lack documentation. Authorities have reportedly conducted raids and established deportation centres to hold individuals who do not voluntarily return to their country of origin.

We are particularly concerned that the Pakistani government may forcibly return to Afghanistan religious minorities who fled persecution," said USCIRF Commissioner David Curry. "Under Taliban rule, Christians, Shi'a Muslims, Ahmadiyya Muslims, and Sikhs cannot freely practice their religious beliefs in Afghanistan. The U.S. government must continue to engage with Pakistani officials to press them to reconsider this policy decision.

Throughout 2023, incidents targeting the Ahmadiyya Community have increased. Despite an August ruling by the Lahore High Court mandating that Ahmadiyya mosques built before 1984 cannot be destroyed or altered, government and nonstate actors continue to vandalise structures, prevent the construction of minarets, and erase the public display of Qur'anic verses. Members of the community continue to be detained on blasphemy charges and are denied equal voting rights in local, provincial, and national elections unless they renounce their faith.

We are alarmed by the number of attacks on places of worship and arrests of Ahmadiyya Muslims and their leaders simply for practicing their faith. We call on the Pakistani government to ensure that the Lahore High Court's ruling is observed," said USCIRF Commissioner Susie Gelman. "All citizens should have equal access to vote regardless of whatever religion they profess to follow, particularly as the country prepares for the upcoming general elections."

In its 2023 Annual Report, USCIRF recommended that the U.S. Department of State redesignate Pakistan as a Country of Particular Concern for its systematic, ongoing, and egregious religious freedom violations.

Source: <https://www.uscifr.gov/news-room/releases-statements/uscifr-concerned-pakistans-expulsion-refugees-and-attacks-against>

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE U.S. COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM 2023

Recommendations to the U.S. Government

Repeal blasphemy and anti-Ahmadiyya laws; until such repeal, enact reforms to make blasphemy a bailable offence, require evidence by accusers, ensure proper investigation by senior police officials, allow authorities to dismiss unfounded accusations, and enforce existing Penal Code articles criminalising perjury and false accusations.

Source: <https://www.uscifr.gov/sites/default/files/2024-01/AR%202023.pdf>

PRESS RELEASE BY GERMANY'S COMMISSIONER FOR GLOBAL FREEDOM OF RELIGION

Translated Excerpt

Religious affiliation has different regional emphases, and many believers belong to either a majority religion or a minority religion, depending on where they live. But there are also religious communities that always remain a minority. Such as the Baha'i, the Ahmadiyya or the Jehovah's Witnesses", explains Frank Schwabe.

Ahmadis are discriminated against and persecuted as a religious minority. In Pakistan in particular, where around four million members of the religious community live, they are particularly affected by arrests and 'blasphemy' charges. Their places of worship are regularly torn down and cemeteries are desecrated. Ahmadiyya cannot live in safety in other countries either. Just a few days ago, nine Ahmadi Muslims were killed in a mosque in Burkina Faso.

As the representative, I will continue to work to ensure that discrimination and persecution of religious minorities are made public, protection against threats and persecution is increased and the situation of religious actors in minorities is improved.

Source: <https://religionsfreiheit.bmz.de/religionsfreiheit-de/aktuelles/schwabe-nimmt-religioese-minderheiten-in-den-blick-136416>

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON THE UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW PAKISTAN 2023

The following recommendations were included in the outcome report adopted by the Human Rights Council at its fifty-third session:

Repeal or amend blasphemy laws, and end other discriminatory laws used against members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community and members of other religious minority communities (United States of America).

Amend section 260 (3) and the second amendment of the Constitution, which discriminates against Ahmadiyya Muslims, and repeal sections 295-A, 295-B, 295-C, 298-B and 298-C of Pakistan's Penal Code to allow freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Switzerland);

Ensure that the draft national policies guarantee the practice of minority faiths, including of Ahmadiyya Muslims (Sierra Leone).

Sources: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/pk-index>

FROM THE MEDIA

CHENAB NAGAR: DESECRATION OF THE HOLY QURAN, QADIANI INDIVIDUAL ACCUSED AND ARRESTED.

The Daily Dunya
1 January 2023

FIVE AHMADIS BOOKED FOR DISTRIBUTING 'ALTERED' VERSION OF QURAN IN CHINIOT

The Friday Times
News Desk
9 January 2023

PAKISTAN: IMAM THREATENS TO BREAK AHMADI HEADMASTER'S LEGS

Bitter Winter
Marco Respinti
03 May 2023

AHMADI PLACE OF WORSHIP VANDALISED, SET ON FIRE IN MIRPURKHAS

Friday Times
News Desk
4 May 2023

UK BAR COUNCIL RAISES CONCERN OVER TREATMENT OF AHMADI MUSLIM LAWYERS IN PAKISTAN

The European Times
News Desk
17 June 2023

MULTIPLE COMPLAINTS FILED WITH PUNJAB'S POLICE TO PREVENT AHMADI COMMUNITY FROM SACRIFICING ANIMALS ON EID

Dawn
Imam Gabrol
28 June 2023

**“THE POLICE TOOK SACRIFICIAL MEAT FROM OUR FRIDGE,”
AHMADIS IN PAKISTAN SPENT EID IN FEAR.**

BBC News Urdu
Sana Asif & Umair Salimi
1 July 2023

**5 FIRS AGAINST AHMADIYYA COMMUNITY FOR SACRIFICING
ANIMALS ON EID**

Voicepk
Staff Report
03 July 2023

**AFTER TLP ‘THREATS’, POLICE DEMOLISH MINARETS OF
AHMADI WORSHIP PLACE IN JEHLUM**

The Express Tribune
Asif Mehmood
16 July 2023

**NEITHER LIVING NOR DEAD AHMADIS PROTECTED IN
JEHLUM AS GRAVES VANDALISED**

The Friday Times
News Desk
20 July 2023

IN THE SHADOW OF THE BLASPHEMY LAW

Voicepk
Maryam Missal
11 August 2023

**LAHORE: THE LAHORE INVESTIGATION POLICE ARRESTED
EIGHT MEMBERS OF THE AHMADI COMMUNITY FOR ALLEGED
PREACHING OF THEIR BELIEFS IN THE BADAMI BAGH AREA
THE OTHER DAY.**

Dawn
Asif Chaudhry
21 August 2023

**AHMADI WORSHIP PLACE VANDALISED (IN KARACHI)
SECOND TIME IN SEVEN MONTHS**

Dawn
Imtiaz Ali
5 September 2023

**IN PAKISTAN, THE AHMADI COMMUNITY: “EVERY DAY
AS I LEAVE HOME, I CONTEMPLATE WHETHER TODAY MIGHT
BE THE FINAL DAY OF MY LIFE.”**

BBC News Urdu
7 September 2023

THE POLICE VANDALISE THE AHMADIYYA PLACE OF WORSHIP IN SHAHDRAH TOWN

The Daily Dunya
9 September 2023

LAHORE: TWO WORSHIP PLACES OF THE AHMADIYYA COMMUNITY WERE ALLEGEDLY DESECRATED BY POLICE IN THE LAST TWO DAYS IN GUJRAT AND SHEIKHUPURA DISTRICTS.

Dawn
News Desk
21 September 2023

TLP ACTIVISTS DEMAND DEMOLITION OF PLACE OF WORSHIP BUILT BY PAKISTAN'S FIRST FOREIGN MINISTER

Friday Times
News Desk
22 September 2023

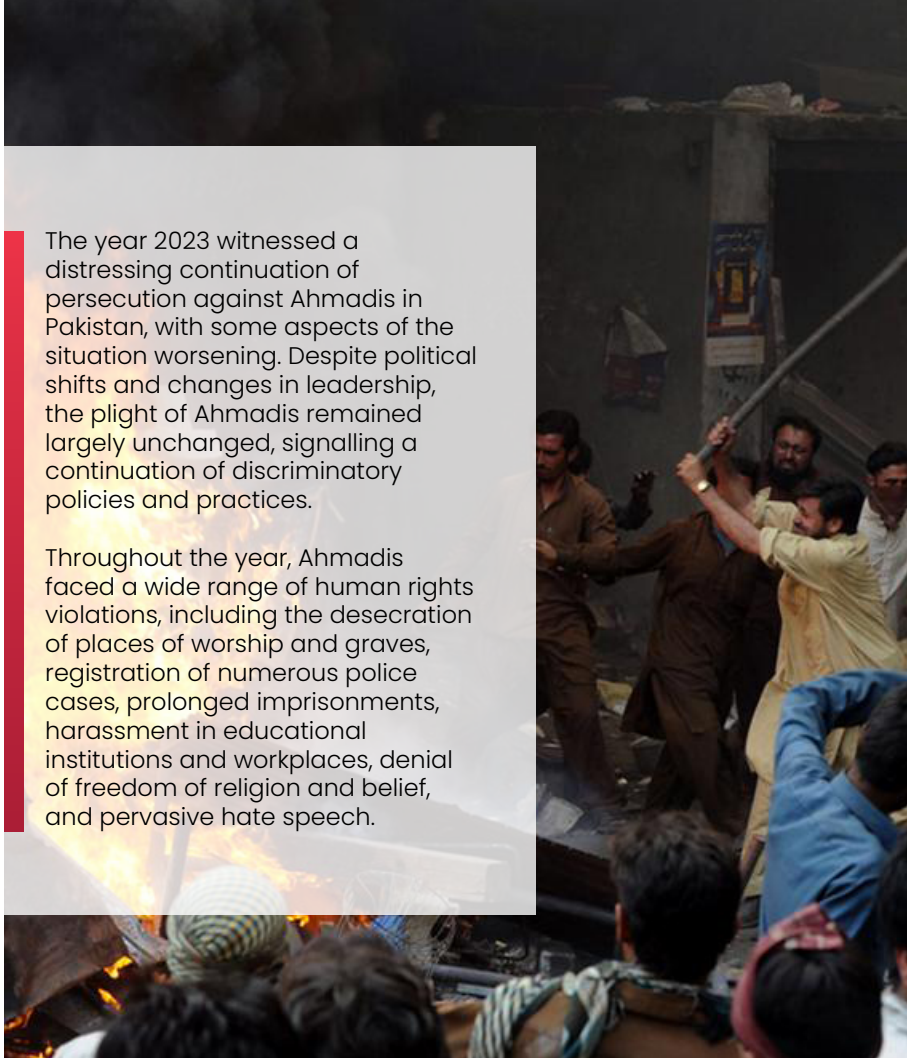
40 PLACES OF WORSHIP OF AHMADIS ATTACKED AND DESTROYED IN 2023 IN PAKISTAN, SAY COMMUNITY MEMBERS

The Times of India
M Zulqernain
18 October 2023

CONCLUSION

The year 2023 witnessed a distressing continuation of persecution against Ahmadis in Pakistan, with some aspects of the situation worsening. Despite political shifts and changes in leadership, the plight of Ahmadis remained largely unchanged, signalling a continuation of discriminatory policies and practices.

Throughout the year, Ahmadis faced a wide range of human rights violations, including the desecration of places of worship and graves, registration of numerous police cases, prolonged imprisonments, harassment in educational institutions and workplaces, denial of freedom of religion and belief, and pervasive hate speech.



Despite shifts in political power, anti-Ahmadi sentiments persisted, with religious extremist groups like the Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan spearheading campaigns against Ahmadis. The complicity of authorities in perpetuating discrimination against Ahmadis remained evident, with little effort made to address the systemic issues underlying their marginalisation.

The year saw a surge in attacks on Ahmadi mosques and places of worship, indicating a troubling escalation in hostility towards the community. Moreover, discriminatory laws and practices, coupled with societal prejudices, continued to impede the rights and freedoms of Ahmadis across various domains of life.

Despite international scrutiny and condemnation from human rights organisations and leading figures, including the UN special rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, USCIRF, and others, the Pakistani government remained largely unresponsive to calls for action to address the persecution of Ahmadis.

While some voices within Pakistan's judiciary and civil society acknowledged the severity of the situation, the absence of meaningful dialogue and action at the political level hindered progress towards addressing the root causes of discrimination against Ahmadis. The urgent need for political leadership capable of initiating meaningful change to uphold the rights of Ahmadis remains apparent.

In conclusion, the year 2023 highlighted the urgent need for concerted efforts to address the entrenched discrimination and persecution faced by Ahmadis in Pakistan. Only through genuine commitment to human rights principles, inclusive dialogue, and decisive action can the systemic injustices against Ahmadis be effectively addressed and remedied.



IHRP INT'L
HUMAN
RIGHTS
DESK