

A Brief on recent Hostile and Vicious Moves against Ahmadis in Pakistan

(Note: This brief follows Ahmadiyya office Flash message dated December 5, 2016 and the Urgent message of December 9.)

An armed raid was carried out on Ahmadiyya central offices in Rabwah on December 5, 2016 by the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) of the Punjab, and a few days later anti-Ahmadiyya riot occurred in Dulmial, District Chakwal in the Punjab resulting in loss of lives and major disruption for the Ahmadi residents of the village. The two incidents and the prevailing state-supported anti-Ahmadiyya environment in the country deserve notice of all sections concerned with human rights and freedom of religion in this country. A brief note follows.

Unlawful, entirely unwarranted, surprise raid on Ahmadiyya central offices and the printing press. Following facts are relevant, *inter alia*:

- a. The raid was mounted by the CTD. The FIR charged the accused under the Anti-terrorism Act. The authorities should point out even a single violent incident in the past 30 years, in fact ever, perpetrated by Ahmadis. The raid was *malafide*.
- b. This is the first time ever that such intervention was officially undertaken against Ahmadiyya central offices. It is most unbecoming to a democratic government. The raid was authorized by the provincial capital.
- c. Three of the four arrests made were at random. These were Ahmadi men who serve humanity through religion. They were beaten up while in custody. No civilized police beats up 'priests' who have neither committed nor preached violence. This unscrupulous conduct of CTD has spread fear among Ahmadis who are the most peaceful and law-abiding group in Pakistan.
- d. The FIR of the incident makes no mention of the raid on the central offices and arrests made therefrom – that betrays its fabrication.
- e. The initial official order issued by the provincial Home Department (on recommendation of the Ulama Board) mentioned that the material therein is 'treasonable and seditious'. The Home Secretary should point just one line from the 12 previous issues of the monthly, or the 365 issues of the daily *Alfazi*, that is even remotely 'seditious' or 'treasonable'.

Attack on Ahmadiyya mosque in Dulmial, District Chakwal, Punjab. Briefly, a large procession led by mullas, came forth in this village on December 12, 2016 on the occasion of birthday of the Holy Prophet of Islam (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The leaders deviated from the authorized route and led the crowd to the Ahmadiyya mosque. Much earlier the mullas had conveyed to the authorities that the Ahmadiyya mosque should be handed over to them, otherwise they 'would undertake extreme action'. Ahmadis informed the district and provincial authorities that mullas had decided to

indulge in violence on this issue on 12 December so please “take adequate measures to protect the life and properties and worship places of Ahmadiyya community.” The authorities apparently took no firm action on the Ahmadiyya complaint and took inadequate steps to stop the assault.

The processionists were armed; on arrival at the mosque gate they indulged in extensive firing, stone throwing and slogan-raising. A group of Ahmadis had closed up inside the mosque to defend it, if the mob came as foretold. They resisted the entry of the mob. A small contingent of police was present and in contact with the two parties. The siege went on for hours. One Ahmadi defender died of cardiac arrest on account of the stress of the happening. Eventually, the police persuaded Ahmadis to depart from a back door, and guaranteed safety of the mosque and made the promise that the rioters would not be allowed to take its possession. However, soon after the Ahmadis left, the mob stormed inside and the police did little to stop them. Once inside, they damaged the mosque, piled up its furniture, carpets etc and set them on fire. The mosque was badly defiled.

Then came the Rangers, even the Army. The miscreants fled. The mosque was sealed by the authorities.

During the siege, one of the processionists was hit by a shot; he died afterwards. Ahmadis insist that they did not kill him; however they do not know who, of the two other parties present at the scene, had shot him.

The police registered one (not two) FIR against the rioters as also against Ahmadis. They arrested two Ahmadis on charge of murder and numerous rioters under the Anti-terrorism Act.

The situation is very tense in the village, although apparently calm on account of troops' presence.

A number of Ahmadis, some accompanied by their families, have left the village and gone elsewhere for safety. Such flight is a severe hardship in village life.

Two days later, a senior mulla issued a call for countrywide anti-Ahmadi sermons and processions on next Friday, December 16.

This incident shows that the authorities are reluctant to take firm preventive action to protect places of worship of smaller communities, and they leave it to them to save their lives and properties. This happened to Ahmadis in the past at many locations, for example in Takht Hazara in 2000 and in Gujranwala in 2014, that resulted in death of numerous Ahmadis. It also reminds one of the burning of 7 Christians to death in Gojra, and of loot and arson in Joseph Colony, Lahore, in 2013.

The status of the Dulmial (District Chakwal) mosque was never in dispute except with extremist miscreants who look for an excuse to make a riot. The mosque was initially constructed in 1860; at that time there were neither Ahmadis nor non-Ahmadi. At the end of the nineteenth century, a large number of the locals who were land-owners, influential and literate, joined Ahmadiyyat when its founder made a claim to his Divine mission. So the mosque remained under the management and control of Ahmadis. Now, non-Ahmadi have approximately 10 mosques in the village, the land for some of these was donated by Ahmadi land-owners. The Ahmadiyya mosque however has never been in the control of

non-Ahmadis for a single day. It has been vastly upgraded by Ahmadis. It was not an issue till after the mischief of General Zia's anti-Ahmadi Ordinance of 1984. Some mullas approached the court, but as they had no case, they stopped pursuing it in the court. At numerous places, even in Islamabad, some mullas laid claim to Ahmadi places of worship on ludicrous grounds that as prior to Ordinance XX of 1984 these places were *masjid* (mosque) so after 1984 these do not belong to Ahmadis who are not-Muslim in law. The argument is grotesque.

On the issue of Ahmadiyya mosques, the record of Pakistani mulla and state is dismal, even condemnable. Since Zia's anti-Ahmadi Ordinance XX to-date 27 Ahmadiyya mosques have been demolished, 33 sealed by authorities, 21 set on fire or damaged and 16 forcibly occupied. Unbelievable – but true.

Broadly, at present mullas, politicians in power and the administration (CTD etc.) have formed a trio to strangle the Ahmadiyya community in Pakistan, particularly in the Punjab. They have banned Ahmadiyya translations of the Quran, all the written works of the Founder of Ahmadiyyat, all the periodicals of the community, targeted their mosques, raided their central offices with CTD force, not handed back the community's colleges and schools despite their own policy on denationalization, and last but not least, blocked their participation in national politics through elections, etc.

In the initial few days of this December following happened. A prominent mulla raised the issue of a general's religious belief in the End of Prophethood; the Prime Minister named the Physics Centre in the QA University after Dr Abdus Salam, an Ahmadi; the same day the CTD mounted first-ever raid on Ahmadiyya headquarters; and a week later a mob attacked on the largest Ahmadiyya mosque in District Chakwal, Punjab. Is there a 'plan' behind all this – people wonder.

Plan or no plan, these incidents arguably convey the message that the mulla is a power and has a big role in the affairs of the state, and powers-that-be accept and endorse his role, even if it goes against the grain of the National Action Plan, and even if it affects the national campaign against the elements of terror.

The rulers in Pakistan need to be advised in their personal and national interest to reconsider their policy concerning the Ahmadiyya Jamaat. Present attitude at the top, graver than *laissez faire*, and resultant actions in this context have no merit. The mulla has already done great harm to Pakistani state and society; he should be effectively restrained, otherwise putting an end to terrorism in the country will remain a pipe dream. Zia's Pakistan should be about-turned to its founding father, the Quaid-i-Azam.

For action: The police case registered after the CTD raid should be dropped and the Chakwal mosque should be handed back to Ahmadis, and peace and harmony should be restored to the village. The police know how to do that, if only directed by their political bosses.

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