# Upper House unanimously passes bill to boost Khatm-e-Nabuwwat clauses

[By Ijaz Kakakhel](https://dailytimes.com.pk/writer/by-ijaz-kakakhel/)

NOVEMBER 18, 2017

**ISLAMABAD:** Legislators in the Upper House of parliament on Friday passed the Elections (Amendment) Bill 2017 with a majority after the National Assembly unanimously approved revival of 7B and 7C clauses of the bill, relating to Khatm-e-Nabuwwat.

The bill was tabled by Law Minister Zahid Hamid during the session headed by Chairman Raza Rabbani. The bill will take the form of law after being signed by President Mamnoon Hussain.

Speaking on the occasion, Zahid Hamid said that after mutual consensus, sections 7B and 7C of the Conduct of General Elections Order, 2002, had been restored to their original form via the bill. The bill seeks to incorporate and reaffirm the provisions of articles 7B and 7C of the Conduct of General Elections Order, 2002, through addition of a new Section 48A in the Elections Act, 2017.

Section 7B states that the status of Ahmadis remains as stated in the constitution, whereas Section 7C says that if enrolled voters’ belief in the finality of prophethood of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is contended, they shall have to sign a declaration reaffirming their belief, failing which their “name shall be deleted from the joint electoral rolls and added to a supplementary list of voters in the same electoral area as non-Muslim.”

The minister said, “We are Muslims and believe in the finality of the Prophet (PBUH).” Zahid Hamid said the status of Qadiyanis would continue as non-Muslims. He said if a person gets himself or herself enrolled as Muslim in the voters’ list, any other person could challenge this before the revising authority where he or she would be required to sign the declaration of the finality of prophethood.

He said if the person refuses to sign that declaration then he shall be deemed as non-Muslim, and his vote will be expunged from the list of Muslim voters and be included in the non-Muslims’ list.

Speaking on the occasion, Senate Deputy Chairman Abdul Ghafoor Haidri said that this bill had ensured that the matter of the finality of prophethood of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) remains as it is in the 1973 Constitution. Congratulating the nation on the restoration of the Khatm-e-Nabuwwat clause, Haidri said, “Our belief has been secured once again.”

Meanwhile, Senator Aitzaz Ahsan maintained that the government’s role in the situation prevailing in the capital was nowhere to be seen. “The PM and ministers are present in Jati Umra. More protests will be held in Islamabad and the city will become a hostage,” he said.

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***https://dailytimes.com.pk/142304/upper-house-unanimously-passes-bill-boost-khatm-e-nabuwwat-clauses/***

[**PAKISTAN**](https://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/)

# ‘Showdown’ in Islamabad

*\* Action likely against religious protesters camped at Faizabad Interchange following IHC orders to district administration to get the area cleared*

NOVEMBER 18, 2017

**ISLAMABAD:** The government on Friday geared up for a possible showdown with religious hardliners camped out on the federal capital’s busy Faizabad Interchange after the Islamabad High Court (IHC) ordered the district administration to take all necessary steps to clear the area latest by Saturday morning.

There were fears that a crackdown would have serious repercussions, with the government hinting that some of the protesters were armed and would not shy from resorting to violence.

Interior Minister Ahsan Iqbal once again requested the protesters to call off their protest peacefully as parliament had already restored clauses related to Khatm-e-Nabuwwat to their original form.

“We know that there are armed men and we know that there are people with them [the protesters] who are waiting to provoke chaos,” the minister said in a press conference on the matter late Friday evening. “It is incumbent on the leaders of this protest to make sure nothing untoward happens.”

He said that whoever “challenges the writ of the government will be dealt with”. “We have the capability, but we would rather avoid violence.”

A couple of hours before the 10pm deadline for the protesters expired, Ahsan Iqbal made a ‘last-ditch effort’ talk the protesters out of that madness.

Presenting himself as the son of ‘exceptionally devout’ Muslims, he pleaded that the sit-in, which had disrupted life in Islamabad and Rawalpindi, be called off as it went against the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Saying that “international lobbies” would “use pictures of the protests to further their agenda”, he asked the protesters if they wanted their actions to hurt the state of Pakistan.

“The CPEC Joint Coordination Committee’s session is scheduled for November 20-21. What image of the capital city do we wish to portray? Do we want that the investor who is coming in should run away?” he asked.

“I assure that there is no shortcoming in the Khatm-e-Nabuwwat laws and a gap that had been created after 2002 has also been filled forever,” he said. “Therefore, there is no reason this sit-in should continue and be allowed to disrupt people’s lives.”

“I appreciate your sentiments: you are here to safeguard your love for Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). However, this country, its parliament, government and armed forces are here to safeguard the finality of prophethood,” he assured.

“Our faith is just as strong as yours. In light of the Quran and Prophet Muhammad’s (PBUH) teachings, I ask you to end this sit-in immediately.”

He asked them not to test the patience of the people of the twin cities. “Obey the court’s orders. We are still open to negotiations with you. We are all Muslims, and our faith in Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and Islam is just as strong as yours. Do not question it,” he said, as he appealed to the protesters. “Leave the judging to God,” he repeated at various points during his conference. “Else we will be forced to take the step the court has ordered us to take,” he said.

“I hope that we will be able to end this situation with talks and those who claim to love the Prophet (PBUH) will not instigate their followers towards violence,” he said, adding, “It is only the enemies of Pakistan who want to create disruptions in the country.”

The protesters have been calling for the sacking of Law Minister Zahid Hamid and strict action against those behind the amendment to the Khatm-e-Nabuwwat oath in the Elections Act 2017, which had earlier been deemed a ‘clerical error’ and restored to its original form on November 16.

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**https://dailytimes.com.pk/142320/showdown-in-islamabad/**

[**PAKISTAN**](https://dailytimes.com.pk/pakistan/)

# Abolish death penalty, end abuse of blasphemy law, Pakistan urged

*\* Pakistani government needs to take urgent measures to address the downward spiral of rights, ICJ Asia director*

NOVEMBER 18, 2017

**Lahore:** The international community has yet again asked Pakistan to abolish death penalty and repeal or amend blasphemy laws to uphold its commitments under United Nations treaties and covenants ratified by the country.

In its third Universal Periodic Review, the country has also been asked to ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, and to ensure effective protection of the rights of religious minorities, human rights defenders, journalists and other vulnerable groups.

The UPR also features suggestions for strengthening of the National Commission for Human Rights and measures to ensure prompt, impartial and effective investigations of rights violations.

The country has been urged to set 18 as the minimum legal age for marriage, besides the need to make effective implementation of laws on violence against women.

The UPR Working Group of the UN’s Human Rights Council adopted a draft UPR outcome report for Pakistan on November 16. The country received 289 recommendations – up from 167 in its 2nd UPR in 2012 and 51 in the first UPR in 2008.

In its statement on the occasion, the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) said that Pakistan’s third UPR had drawn global attention to a number of serious human rights failures in the country. “That well over a hundred delegations participated in the review indicates the global community’s interest in Pakistan’s human rights situation,” ICJ’s Asia Director Frederick Rawski was quoted as saying.

“The states’ recommendations echo the concerns of dozens of civil society organisations and even Pakistan’s National Commission of Human Rights. All of these organisations agree that the Pakistani government must take urgent measures to address the downward spiral of rights in the country,” he said.

Pakistan will now examine the recommendations and respond to the Human Rights Council by its next session in March 2018.

The ICJ said that Pakistan’s review had come at a time of serious concern about the rights situation in the country. “The government lifted the informal moratorium on the death penalty and carried out nearly 500 executions in less than three years – among the highest execution rates in the world; Parliament enacted laws allowing military courts to try civilians for certain terrorism-related offences in secret trials; and the authorities started a new wave of crackdowns on NGOs, journalists and human rights defenders, including subjecting them to enforced disappearance,” it said.

“Persecution of religious minority communities also continues despite the government’s claims that religious minorities enjoy equal rights as equal citizens of Pakistan. Last month, three Ahmadi men were sentenced to death for blasphemy for allegedly scratching anti-Ahmadi pamphlets. And earlier this week, the Islamabad High Court directed the Government to respond to a petition demanding a separate database for Ahmadis in the civil service to ensure they are not posted in offices involving sensitive matters.

“As a member of the Human Rights Council, Pakistan is expected to uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights, something it has clearly failed to do,” it said, “Pakistan should make use of this process by accepting the recommendations made during the review and adopting a concrete, action-based national human rights plan to ensure their effective implementation.”

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**Reign of terror?**

[Babar Sattar](https://www.thenews.com.pk/writer/babar-sattar) November 18, 2017

Legal Eye  
Such is the collective state of our bigotry, complicity, timidity and expediency that even the Muslim majority in this Islamic Republic (created to enable them to live their lives in accordance with their belief system) lives in a constant state of terror. Forget minorities, even members of the Muslim majority can no longer ask questions or critique the logic or intent of those raising demands in the name of religion out of fear of being declared apostate or blasphemers and devoured by vigilantism.   
During a discussion about the miseries of the residents of the twin cities held hostage by the Faizabad dharna, a colleague stated that he too was willing to lay his life for the sanctity of our Prophet (peace be upon him) and join the dharna. When asked what the controversy was about, he thought the constitutional clause declaring Ahmadis non-Muslims was being undone through Election Act, 2017. Without getting into whether we should be in the business of sitting in parliament and introducing provisions in our law and constitution to define the faith of fellow citizens, let us consider our law, as it exists.   
In 1974, through the 2nd Amendment, the definitions of ‘Muslim’ and ‘Non-Muslim’ were introduced as Article 260(3), which states:  
“In the Constitution and all enactments and other legal instruments, unless there is anything repugnant in the subject or context  
(a) “Muslim” means a person who believes in the unity and oneness of Almighty Allah, in the absolute and unqualified finality of the Prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him), the last of the prophets, and does not believe in, or recognize as a prophet or religious reformer, any person who claimed or claims to be a prophet, in any sense of the word or of any description whatsoever, after Muhammad (peace be upon him); and  
b) “non-Muslim” means a person who is not a Muslim and includes a person belonging to the Christian, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist or Parsi community, a person of the Quadiani Group or the Lahori Group who call themselves ‘Ahmadis’ or by any other name or a Bahai, and a person belonging to any of the Scheduled Castes.”  
The constitution is our supreme law. No provision of a subordinate legislation (such as Election Act, 2017) can override or undermine a constitutional provision. Thus, the question of the Election Act changing the categorisation of Ahmadis as non-Muslims doesn’t arise. Further, reiterating what is categorically stated in Article 260(3) of the constitution in each and every law affecting all citizens, including Ahmadis, serves no purpose.   
To appease those using religion for politics, Zia promulgated Ordinance XX of 1984, through which he added Sections 298-A, B and C to Pakistan penal Code. Pursuant to this, if an Ahmadi calls himself a Muslim, or “poses as a Muslim” or “preaches or propagates his faith” or “outrages religious feelings of Muslims”, he is punishable with imprisonment of up to three years.  
Election Act, 2017 changed none of this. It consolidated provisions related to elections previously spread out over eight laws. One of these was Conduct of General Elections Order, 2002, introduced by Musharraf. The first part of the present controversy is about Sections 7B and 7C of this law. The Election Order declared in Section 7 that elections will be held on joint electorate basis (undoing the prior dis-enfranchisement of minorities), and seats for non-Muslims were to be filled on the basis of proportional representation through party lists.  
When elections were held on a separate electorate basis, there was a separate electoral list for non-Muslims that entitled them to vote for seats reserved for non-Muslims. When the mode of electing reserved seat candidates changed from direct election by non-Muslims to proportional representation, the need for maintaining a separate list for non-Muslims was extinguished. In the joint electorate system only one list was needed, as all citizens (Muslim and non-Muslim) would vote for the general seat in their respective constituencies.  
But the bigoted brigade smelled conspiracy and alleged that Musharraf was trying to undo Ahmadis’ non-Muslim status. To appease the bigots, Musharraf added Sections 7B and C to the Elections Order. Section 7B essentially said that the definition of non-Muslim in Article 260 of the constitution would reign supreme notwithstanding anything in subsidiary legislation (a principle so obvious and established that it needs no restatement).  
Section 7C said that if anyone objected to a person included in a voter list as Muslim, such person would be asked to sign the declaration regarding finality of our Prophet (peace be upon him). And if he didn’t, he would be deemed non-Muslim, his name deleted from the joint electoral rolls and added to a separate list of non-Muslim voters for the same electoral area. This created a special list for Ahmadis, but served no purpose in the joint electorate election system where all citizens were entitled to vote irrespective of their religious identity.  
The declaration to be made by candidates under the new law is the second cause for controversy. Form A under the new law requires a Muslim candidate to state that, “I believe in the absolute and unqualified finality of the Prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him), the last of the prophets and that I am not the follower of any one who claims to be a Prophet in any sense of the word or of any description whatsoever after Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and that I do not recognize such a claimant to be Prophet or a religious reformer, nor do I belong to the Qadiani group or the Lahori group or call myself an Ahmedi.”   
This language is exactly the same as that under the Representation of Peoples Act that it replaces. The change was that in the new form multiple declarations were clubbed together and the language preceding the declarations stated, “I… hereby declare”, whereas words preceding the declaration in the old form were “I… solemnly swear”. The legal consequence remained unchanged: a false declaration attracts disqualification whether you swore upon it or just stated it. To say that such change is one of substance has no basis in law.   
If repeal of Sections 7B and C of the Elections Order 2002 and replacement of the words “solemnly swear” to “declare” were such matters of consequence, why did 34 members of the parliamentary committee, who oversaw the evolution of the new election law in its 26 meetings (or those of the subcommittee that held 93 meetings) fail to identify them. If the matters are such that they undermine a fundamental tenant of our faith, why not demand scalps of all members of the parliamentary committee if not all members of parliament?  
Parliament passed Election Act, 2017 on October 2, an Amendment Act on October 16 (to amend Form A and undo repeal of Sections 7B and C) and then another bill on November 16 to reintroduce the text of Section 7B and C as a new Section 48A in Election Act, 2017. The entire parliament that itself passed the original law joined the chorus condemning the ‘mistake’, looking for a scapegoat, and using religion for politics. As there can be no rational discussion on the matter, the average Joe might think some deep conspiracy against our religion has been unearthed and undone.  
Taking note of the state of persecution of religious minorities in Pakistan, CJ Tassaduq Jillani had noted (in an extraordinary SC judgment emphasizing the right to religious conscience under Article 20) that, “it requires strong moral courage for an individual or nation to apologize for having wronged a community. It is time for us as a nation and as individuals to have a moment of reflection, a moment of soul searching and perhaps a moment of reckoning to ask ourselves, have we lived by the pledges made in the constitution and by the vision of Quaid-e-Azam…”  
While leaders of this pitiable nation sharpen their petty political tactics, freedom of religious conscience remains shackled, hate speech proliferates, tolerance recedes and a few hundred mullahs hold the capital and the garrison cities hostage against clear orders of the Islamabad High Court.

**https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/245516-reign-of-terror**

## [Religious parties protesting in Islamabad advised to end sit-in by court](https://www.dawn.com/news/1370886/religious-parties-protesting-in-islamabad-advised-to-end-sit-in-by-court)

 November 16, 2017

Supporters of religious parties listen to their leaders during a sit-in protest in Islamabad. ─ AP

The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Thursday advised religious parties protesting in the capital against a reversed change in the Khatm-i-Nabuwwat oath in the Elections Act 2017 to end their sit-in.

IHC Justice Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui today heard a petition submitted by the Tehreek-i-Labaik Ya Rasool Allah (TLY) ─ one of the protesting parties ─ which asked for a report compiled by a [PML-N committee probing the controversial amendment to the oath](https://www.dawn.com/news/1363493) to be made public so that "the culprits so determined therein, may very kindly be proceed against under the relevant laws."

The court, however, said a similar petition had already been filed in the IHC and advised the TLY to end its protest as the public was being inconvenienced by the sit-in.

Daily life in the capital over the past week or so has been disrupted by protesters belonging to religious parties, including the Tehreek-i-Khatm-i-Nabuwwat, TLY and the Sunni Tehreek Pakistan (ST), calling for the sacking of Law Minister Zahid Hamid and strict action against those behind the amendment to the Khatm-i-Nabuwwat oath ─ which had earlier been deemed a 'clerical error' and subsequently rectified.

The TLY had occupied the Faizabad Bridge which connects Rawalpindi and Islamabad through the Islamabad Expressway and Murree Road, both of which are the busiest roads in the twin cities.

Fed up with the public response in the twin cities, the cold response by federal government, and the rain which started Tuesday, the protesting clerics have taken to petitioning the IHC for "execution" of their demands.

Their earlier demands, most of which have been taken back now, included the removal of Federal Law Minister Zahid Hamid and Punjab Law Minister Rana Sanaullah, Asiya Bibi’s execution, dismissal of cases against religious leaders, and the removal of clerics from the Fourth Schedule.

Earlier this week, Justice Shaukat Siddiqui, while hearing a petition submitted by Tehreek-i-Khatm-i-Nabuwwat supporter Allah Wasaya against the same issue, ordered to reverse in the Elections Act 2017 all amendments in sections pertaining to the Khatm-i-Nabuwwat oath.

## Khatm-i-Nabuwwat controversy

Earlier in October, copies of the Elections Act 2017 showing changes to certain parts of the law began circulating on social media, prompting lawmakers to take notice of a change in wordings on Form-A, which is submitted at the time of election by candidates, which turned it into a declaration form instead of an affidavit, which puts a candidate under oath.

Through the Elections Act 2017, the words in Form-A “I solemnly swear” had been replaced with “I believe” in a clause relating to a candidate's belief in the finality of the prophethood of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and it had been made not applicable to non-Muslim candidates.

Sections 7B and 7C of The Conduct of General Elections Order, 2002, which relate to the status of Ahmedis, had also been omitted from Elections Act 2017.

Section 7B says that the status of Ahmedis remains as stated in the Constitution of Pakistan, while section 7C states that if an enrolled voter's belief in the finality of Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) prophethood is contended, they shall have to sign a declaration stating so, failing which their "name shall be deleted from the joint electoral rolls and added to a supplementary list of voters in the same electoral area as non-Muslim."

Certain political parties have also taken issue with the amended Election Act 2017, which was bulldozed through the Lower House of Parliament despite strong protests from opposition lawmakers as it paved the way for ousted prime minister Nawaz Sharif to be re-elected as PML-N head due to an amendment that allowed politicians disqualified from holding public office to head a political party.

**https://www.dawn.com/news/1370886/religious-parties-protesting-in-islamabad-advised-to-end-sit-in-by-court**

[#WORLD NEWS](http://www.reuters.com/news/archive/worldNews)

NOVEMBER 16, 2017

**Pakistan's long-persecuted Ahmadi minority fear becoming election scapegoat**

[Saad Sayeed](http://www.reuters.com/journalists/saad-sayeed)

RABWAH, Pakistan (Reuters) - Crammed into buses and mini-vans, more than 10,000 Pakistanis traveled to a mosque on the outskirts of the small Punjabi town of Rabwah, for the sole purpose of denouncing followers of the minority sect based here as “infidels and enemies of the state”. Men, who belong to Ahmadi community, sit in a library with a wall of photo frames of their religious elders, in Rabwah, Pakistan October 20, 2017. Picture taken October 20, 2017. REUTERS/Saad Sayeed

For members of the long persecuted Ahmadi community, who are forbidden to call themselves Muslims and face discrimination and violence over accusations their faith insults Islam, the open vitriol on display at the Oct. 20 rally was not new.

But this year, they say, anti-Ahmadi rhetoric has also re-entered mainstream Pakistani politics, as politicians seek to shore up support among religiously conservative voters after surprise gains by two new Islamist parties.

“We are an easy community to scapegoat for political opponents to target each other,” said Usman Ahmad, who moved to Pakistan from Britain to work as a community activist.

With a general election due in 2018, politicians from both the religious fringe and established parties have had the Ahmadis in their sights.

In the past six weeks, a row over proposed changes to the election law that would have eased some of the barriers on Ahmadis participating in elections has seen the group denounced on the floor of Pakistan’s parliament, while one of the new Islamist parties has held street protests.

The government has since taken out ads in major newspapers reaffirming a religious oath requiring elected officials to vow that they do not follow anyone claiming to be a prophet after Mohammad and “nor do I belong to the Qadiani group”, using a common derogatory term for Ahmadis.

The Ahmadis consider themselves to be Muslims, but their recognition of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, who founded the sect in British-ruled India in 1889, as a “subordinate prophet” is viewed by many of the Sunni majority as a breach of the Islamic tenet that the Prophet Mohammad was God’s last direct messenger.

**A WIDENING SECTARIAN DIVIDE**

The Ahmadi sect has 10-20 million followers worldwide who face discrimination in a number of Muslim-majority nations such as Indonesia and Algeria, as well as being ostracized by large parts of the Muslim community in Britain.

There are about half a million Ahmadis in Pakistan, local leaders say, though other estimates have put the number at 2-4 million.

Ahmadis are some of the most common defendants in criminal charges of blasphemy, which in Pakistan can carry the death penalty.

By law they cannot call their place of worship mosques or distribute religious literature, recite the Koran or use traditional Islamic greetings, measures that they say criminalize their daily lives.

The legal restrictions began in 1974, when the then-Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto passed a constitutional amendment declaring Ahmadis non-Muslim. A decade later military dictator General Zia ul Haq barred Ahmadis from identifying themselves as Muslim.

Community leaders say these moves laid the groundwork for a sectarian divide that has since seen many violent attacks on Ahmadis and birthed multiple militant organizations, including many that are now linked to Islamic State.

In the past four years, the Punjab government has also targeted Ahmadis under the country’s anti-terrorism laws, filing at least eight cases against Ahmadis on charges of producing hate literature, including the sect’s own holy texts.

The offices of an Ahmadi magazine in Rabwah were raided in December 2016 by police, who arrested seven people and confiscated papers and hard drives.

“They stormed the office, it felt like a group of terrorists had come in,” said Amir Fahim, who worked at the magazine and was held for 65 days.

“They said the religious language you use belongs to us and the things you write offend the sensibilities of Muslims.”

A man looks at a wall with posters advertising the Khatm-e-Nubuwwat conference at a mosque and madrassa complex on the outskirts of Rabwah, Pakistan October 20, 2017. Picture taken October 20, 2017. REUTERS/Saad Sayeed

Community leaders say the use of anti-terrorism laws marks a new phase in the targeting of Ahmadis.

“Here, to be an Ahmadi, through state laws, is a crime,” Pakistan’s Ahmadi community spokesman Salimuddin said. “There are restrictions on our annual gatherings, our annual games ... If the state did not persecute us, we would not be persecuted.”

Punjab government spokesman Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan said the authorities were not using the anti-terrorism laws to target any particular minority group.

“The Punjab Government arrested thousands on charges of hate speech during the last three years,” he told Reuters. “Anti-Ahmadi groups were also included in them.”

**POLITICAL STORM**

Many Ahmadis in Pakistan say they only truly feel safe in Rabwah, a town of more than 60,000 in eastern Punjab that is 95 percent Ahmadi. Most of the town’s infrastructure is maintained on contributions made by the community, including free hostels and food for visitors and a community organized garbage clean-up.

But on the edge of Rabwah lies a small settlement and a mosque run by a right-wing Islamist organization that openly professes hatred for Ahmadis. The organization, Khatm-e-Nubuwwat (Finality of the Prophet), built the mosque on land the Punjab government ordered confiscated from Ahmadis in 1975 for low-income housing.

Khatm-e-Nubuwwat has been at the forefront of initiating blasphemy allegations against Ahmadis. Every year for 36 years, the group has held an anti-Ahmadi rally at the mosque.

“Qadianis are the enemies of the prophet,” said Aziz ur Rehman, an organizer of the Rabwah conference, adding: “A country that was made in the name of the prophet cannot accept Qadianis.”

Always volatile, political atmosphere in Pakistan has been especially tense since the Supreme Court removed former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif from office in July over corruption allegations, which he denies.

The calculations of the mainstream parties have been complicated by the formation of two new Islamist political groups that garnered more than 10 percent in two recent by-elections and could become spoilers in a close election.

One of the new parties, Tehreek-e-Labaik, launched a political furor last month after lawmakers from Sharif’s party, which still holds a parliamentary majority, approved apparently small changes to the country‘s election law.

The changes eliminated a requirement for Ahmadi voters to declare they are not Muslim and turned a religious oath for elected officials declaring belief in the Finality of the Prophet and affirming they are not Ahmadi into a simple declaration of belief.

Tehreek-e-Labaik quickly termed any concessions to Ahmadis to be blasphemy and threatened mass protests.

The government, still controlled by Sharif’s party, quickly retreated and reversed the changes.

A week later, speaking before Pakistan’s National Assembly, Sharif’s son-in-law, lawmaker Muhammad Safdar Awan called for Ahmadis to be barred from employment in the government, judiciary, and military. Sharif himself later distanced himself from Safdar’s statement.

The climbdown did not appease Tehreek-e-Labaik, which last week launched street protests blockading roads into Islamabad and demanding the law minister be sacked. The protests are ongoing and have paralyzed traffic in the capital.

Saadia Toor, author of State of Islam said it’s likely that anti-Ahmadi rhetoric will continue up to next year’s elections, due by the end of August.

“Anti-Ahmedi sentiment is widely held across the Pakistani Muslim mainstream, even among moderate Sunnis,” she said. “So using them as scapegoats for political purposes is easy.”

**http://www.reuters.com/article/us-pakistan-election-ahmadis/pakistans-long-persecuted-ahmadi-minority-fear-becoming-election-scapegoat-idUSKBN1DG04H**

# Pakistani police clash with protesters at anti-blasphemy sit-in

Capital on near lockdown after rally in support of cleric Khadim Hussain Rizvi in row over electoral oath wording

**Nosheen Abbas in Islamabad and**[**Sune Engel Rasmussen**](https://www.theguardian.com/profile/sune-engel-rasmussen)

Wednesday 15 November 2017

Pakistani police have clashed with protesters and arrested dozens in an attempt to disperse an anti-blasphemy sit-in staged by a hardline cleric, which has blocked a main entrance to Islamabad for a week, choking traffic and putting the capital on near lockdown.

Thousands of supporters of Khadim Hussain Rizvi, the leader of the Tehreek-e Labbaik [Pakistan](https://www.theguardian.com/world/pakistan) party, are demanding that the law and justice minister, who they accuse of undercutting blasphemy laws, resign.

Fearing violence at a combustible time in Pakistani politics, police have blocked several roads with shipping containers to prevent protesters from reaching government buildings.

“The police have beaten up our peaceful protesters,” said one protester, Faisal, 37. “We are ready to get our heads cut off for this cause. We are protecting the prophet, because if we won’t, who will?”

On Wednesday, the clashes seemed to escalate. A police spokesman, Naeem Iqbal, said police were waiting for orders from the government before moving against the rally.

“We want to end this protest in a way where the least number of people are harmed. We don’t want this to end violently,” Iqbal said.

The showdown on the edge of the capital adds to turbulence that has gripped Pakistan since the prime minister, [Nawaz Sharif](https://www.theguardian.com/world/nawaz-sharif), was forced from power in July. It is the latest in a series of controversies exposing the government’s discomfort in dealing with extremist groups.

The latest spat erupted when the government changed the wording in an electoral oath declaring the prophet Muhammad as God’s final prophet.

Protesters claim the words “I solemnly swear” were replaced with “I believe”, in the context of declaring the minority Ahmadi sect non-Muslim, to appease the minority community, whom official policy regards as heretics. The government put the matter down to a clerical error.

Buses block a highway to Islamabad as members of the Tehreek-e Labaik Pakistan party hold a sit-in in Rawalpindi. Photograph: Caren Firouz/Reuters

Ahmadis, who according to different estimates constitute between 500,000 and 4 million people in Pakistan, have long been persecuted. They came under renewed pressure in October when the deposed prime minister’s son-in-law in parliament [called them “a threat to this country”](https://www.dawn.com/news/1362922) who should be banned from the armed forces.

Protesters say anyone who attempts to accommodate the beleaguered community is attacking the sanctity of the Islamic faith and should be hanged under the blasphemy laws.

“We have come from far and wide to protest these changes that have been made. They are changing the very definition of Muslim, and that is wrong,” said Hassan Abdullah, 32, a businessman from Lahore. He said the government was not taking the issue of blasphemy seriously.

“The government is in collusion [with the Ahmadi]. The change of words was not a mistake, and if it is a mistake, then the person responsible for this, Zahid Hamid, should resign,” Abdullah said. “Our [country’s] ideology is weak and it needs to be strengthened.”

The rally has disrupted life in the capital. Schools were shut and workers commuting between the capital and its sister city, Rawalpindi, spoke of spending hours on the road.

A provincial spokesman told Reuters police had arrested dozens of protesters since last week.

According to local media, police also filed investigation reports against eight protesters for abducting and torturing four police officers on Saturday.

Dozens of people have been sentenced to death under Pakistan’s blasphemy laws.

Tehreek-e Labbaik has been especially active in fuelling sectarian and religious fervour in the run-up to elections slated for 2018. In recent byelections they were able to chip away at the vote bank of the ruling, centre-right party, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz.

[**https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/nov/15/pakistani-police-clash-with-protesters-at-anti-blasphemy-sit-in**](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/nov/15/pakistani-police-clash-with-protesters-at-anti-blasphemy-sit-in)

KP info minister lambastes Zahid Hamid for ‘declaring Ahmadis Muslims’

He was addressing a press conference with Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Nazriyati (JUI-N) leaders

Peshawar – Khyber Pakhtunkhwa’s (KP) minister of information and Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) leader Shah Farman criticized the federal minister of law and justice Zahid Hamid for declaring Ahmadi community as Muslims.

Farman said this while talking at a press conference along with Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Nazriyati (JUI-N) leaders on Wednesday. Farman criticized former prime minister Nawaz Sharif for calling Ahmadi community his brothers. “While our constitution declares them non-Muslim, our minister of law and justice is calling them Muslims,” he remarked.

While answering a question he said that PTI has always been labelled as a Yahoodi lobby here in Pakistan. “When the same people go abroad, they say that PTI is fundamentalist and supports Taliban,” he said.

He asserted that the state should be responsible for those Ahmadis who publicly reveal their sect. “There are certain people who announce that they are Muslims, but actually are not,” he said.

This is not the first time that a PTI leader has given a public statement against the minority sect. Earlier, Abrar-ul-Haq had rallied behind the demands of the protesters protesting against the controversial amendment in the electoral reforms bill in Narowal and Islamabad.  He also accused Ahsan Iqbal for putting forward the controversial bill.

“I strongly condemn the way protesters were treated while protesting in front of Ahsan Iqbal’s office in Narowal,” he said in a video released on social media. Awami Muslim League chief and PTI ally Sheikh Rasheed had also supported the protesters in Islamabad.

Meanwhile, protesters from the Tehrik-e-Labbaik-Ya-Rasulullah (TLYR) party are still protesting at the Faizabad interchange, choking traffic and causing severe problems for the commuters travelling between Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

One of the major demand of these protesters is a resignation from Zahid Hamid, who had already declared on oath, via a video released on social media, that he is a Muslim and had no part in the amendment put forward in the electoral reform bill.

Earlier on Monday, interior minister Ahsan Iqbal had condemned the protesters for creating problems for the people of the twin cities.

https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/11/15/kp-info-minister-lambastes-zahid-hamid-for-declaring-ahmadis-as-muslims/

**The protection of the belief of khatm e Nabuat is the responsibility of the Muslims, Qadianis cannot use Islamic terminologies: Followers of Ahl E Sunnat.**

**Mirza Ghulam Ahmed Qadiani was the founder of false Prophet Hood in the Sub-Continent, against which all sects showed their struggle: Peer Masoom Naqvi.**

**The one who claims to be a Prophet after the Holy Prophet (P B U H) is an infidel according to the Shariah, they are religious hypocrite and liable to death: Muhiuddin, Habib Irfani.**

Lahore (Correspondent) while addressing the Khatm e Nabuat Conference held under the supervision of the followers of Ahl e Sunnat made it clear that without having undoubted faith on the belief of khatm e Nabuat, faith cannot be completed. Ahl e Ba’ait and the Companions of the Holy Prophet were against the belief of the Holy Prophet being the final Prophet. Out of which Hadhart Abu Bakar Siddique was at the forefront, who fought five deniers of khatm e Nabuat including Musailma Kazzab and proved that there cannot be any compromise on the basic beliefs of Islam. The belief of khatm e Nabuat is such in nature that it can’t be changed. Qadianis are being declared non-Muslim minority, they cannot use Islamic terminologies. While speaking to the conference held in the Central Mosque of Main Market Taj Bagh the leader of Ahl e Sunnat Peer Tareeqat, Peer Syed Masoom Hussain Naqvi, Sahibzada Peer Syed MohiUddin Mehboob Kazmi, Peer Habib Irfani, Dr. Amjad Hussain Chisti, Allama Mufti Mustafa Ashraf Rizvi, Allama Ghulam Rasool Owaisi, Peer Akhtar Rasool Qadri, Peer Ghulam Kibria Chishti, Mufti Allama Zahir Tabbasum and others spread some light upon different historical and Islamic aspects of the belief of khatm e Nabuat. During his presidential address Peer Masoom Naqvi said that the safeguard of khatm e Nabuat is the responsibility of every Muslim. Different five personalities claimed to be a false Prophet after the death of the Holy Prophet (P B U H**).** Mirza Ghulam Ahmed Qadiani was the founder of false Prophet Hood in the Sub-Continent, against which all sects showed their struggle. Regarding this issue the struggle of the leaders of Ahl e Sunnat Allama Shah Ahmed Norani and Maulana Abdul Sattar Khan Niazi is part of history, which cannot be forgotten. The Muslims have socially boycotted the Qadianis worldwide, and this is the reason now that this group has become a curse. During his presidential address Peer Syed Mohiuddin Mehboob Ta’anfi Qadri Kazmi said that the real meaning of khatm e Nabuat is that the Holy Prophet the real purpose of this world is the last and final Prophet of Allah the Almighty. No Prophet will come after the Holy Prophet (P B U H). Hadhrat Abu Bakar Siddique (R.A) was the first person to do Jihad against false claimers of the Prophet Hood, and in the battle of Yamama seven hundred persons who were the learners of the Holy Quran by Heart sacrificed their precious lives for the safeguard of the believe of khatm e Nabuat. The Companions, the followers, the followers of the followers, the leaders of the Mujtahideen Mutakalimeen, Interpreters, Muhadiseen, the debators and the arguers and the Ulemas and the Sufia’s have mutual consent regarding the belief of khatm e Nabuat. After the Holy Prophet (P B U H) there can come no Prophet after him be it Law-Bearing Prophet, or a non law-bearing Prophet. A shadow Prophet, or a sub Prophet or all together a new Prophet. The person who claims to be a Prophet after you is infidel, apostate, religious hypocrite and liable to death according to the Shariah. Peer Mustafa Ashrafi was of the view that the belief of khatm e Nabuat is such a belief that cannot be changed.

**Daily Ausaf, Lahore, Wednesday, 15th November, 2017**

**Islamabad High Court: the answer demanded from the Federal Government regarding the Khatm e Nabaut clause in the Election Act 2017.**

**Elections are right upon us, the suspension of Election Act 2017 will create disturbance, the arguments of Deputy Attorney General, will not pass any false order, this is a sensitive matter which cannot be left out, Justice Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui.**

**The removal of all laws under section 241 of the Election Act 2017 will be contrary to the constitution, all the old clauses regarding khatm e Nabuat should be restored, but this does not apply to the rest of the clauses, Written Order.**

Islamabad (Monitoring Order) The Islamabad High Court while dismissing the Khatm e Nabuat Clause in the Election Act 2017 has issued a notice to the Federal Government to submit their answer. Justice Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui the judge of High Court held the hearing on the application of Maulana Allah Wasaya on the amendment in the Election Act. Advocate Hafiz Arafat and Tariq Asad were there from the side of the applicant who requested the suspension of the clause 241 in the Election Act 2017 in court. While giving arguments on the suspension of this act the Attorney General said on this occasion said that the Elections are right upon us, and with the suspension of Election Act 2017 there will be disturbance. Justice Shaukat Aziz Siddqui said in his remarks that I will not pass any wrong decision; this is a sensitive matter which we cannot disturb. The court while giving the decision on the suspension of the Khatm e Nabuat Clause in the Election Act 2017 issued a notice to the Attorney General and demanded an answer from him. The Court in their four page decision declared that suspension of all the laws under section 241 of the Election Act 2017 will be contrary to the constitution, but the clauses related to khatm e Nabuat are being restored in their old state. This does not apply to other clauses. It is written in the court decision that according to the request of the applicant the words are amended in the new Oath-declaration and confirmation statement, and it can cause disturbance to the peace. The order issued by Islamabad High Court has raised an important issue, and it should be taken notice off.

**Daily Pakistan, Lahore, 15th November, 2017.**

**The Issue of khatm e Nabuat, with the arrest of the Clerics the vote bank will reduce. The message of the Workers of N-League to the responsibles.**

**There is severe response from the public on the issue of khatm e Nabuat, there can be a protest outside our homes in few days: Members.**

**More religious groups will become anti-government; there can be damage to 52 towns to N-League in Punjab: Government Secret Agencies.**

Lahore (Rana Muhammed Azeem) The silence of government on the issue of khatm e Nabuat, not revealing the inquiry report against the responsible for amendment, the harsh attitude towards the sit-in of Tehreek e Labbaik Ya Rasool Ullah and upon the arrest of the clerics of Punjab the workers of N-League has made it clear to the important government personalities that through this attitude of the government, not only there will be damage to the vote bank of N-League in the election, but they are also facing severe reaction from the public on the issue of khatm e Nabuat in their towns. Important sources have made it clear that the members of the National Assembly have made it clear that we are getting this message from our towns that if we did not do anything regarding the issue of khatm e Nabuat, that there can be protest outside our homes in next few days. They also said that the Barelvi vote bank and the vote bank of other religious groups that we always had would not be there in next elections, and it can give birth to such an environment which can cause us to lose elections. Some Assembly Members even said that if the operation on LaL Masjid can give defeat to Musharraf in the Elections in spite of all the efforts, then this matter is a lot bigger than that. Many members of the National Assembly, out of which are two are state Ministers said after the operation was started against Tehreek e Labbaik Ya Rasool Ullah that N-League will be the one facing major political damage after this operation. Two government intelligence agencies have also made it clear that there is visible downfall in the vote bank of the government and in next few days some more religious groups can become active, and this will all go against the government. If the government did not satisfy the religious block, then there are 52 towns in Punjab where the religious vote plays a crucial role in victory or defeat, it can harm N-league. The religious vote in KPK, Sindh, and Balochistan will also go against them. Due to operation the other religious groups that are silent as of now, will also come out in their support. Two important government responsible are thinking about it after the report, and in next 24 hours there is a meeting expected for its solution.

**Daily 92 News, Faisalabad, Wednesday, 15th November, 2017**

**Daily Nawai Waqt, Lahore, 13th November, 2017.**

**The Members of Parliament are responsible for the amendment in the Safeguard Khatm e Nabuat Clause: Mufti Munib Ur Rehman.**

**The ones taking vote in the name of religion should focus on the safeguard of the belief of khatm e Nabuat rather than giving statements, Press Conference.**

Toba Tek Singh (Correspondent+ Special Reporter) Chairman of Central Moon Sighting Committee Mufti Munib Ur Rehman said that the members of Parliament and the Senators are responsible for amendment in the safeguard khatm e Nabuat Clause from the Election Act 2017, because amendment in the law is not done by a single person. The ones sitting in the assembly after taking vote in the name of religion should have focused on the safeguard of the belief of khatm e Nabuat inside the Parliament rather than giving statements outside it. The law of Safeguard Khatm e Nabuat has not been restored in its original state till now, Politics is a sacred thing, which cannot be separated from religion. The current politicians are not politicians, but are actors doing politics. Unfortunately politics is made a game of deceiving. The media should highlight the bright face of the country. He further said that Rana SanaUllah should apologize to Allah, the Holy Prophet (P B U H) and the whole public for hurting the religious sentiments of the Muslims. The government should get involved in direct talks with the attendees of the Khatm e Nabuat Sit-In in Islamabad and should resolve these issues in a peaceful manner. The workers arrested with relation to the sit-in in areas including Faisalabad should be released at once. These thoughts were expressed by him while addressing a Press Conference held under the supervision of Tajdar e khatm e Nabuat foundation.

**Daily Nawai Waqt, Lahore, 13th November, 2017.**

**Senators and MNA’S are ready for the safeguard of the Oath-Declaration of Khatm e Nabuat, Ilyas Chinioti.**

Chiniot (Representer Mashriq) Senators and MNA’S are ready for the safeguard of the Oath-Declaration of Khatm e Nabuat. These thoughts were expressed by the Ameer of the International Khatm e Nabuat movement Pakistan and member of Punjab Assembly Mualana Muhammed Ilyas Chinioti while addressing the Nikah Ceremony of Muhammed Ashfaq Yousuf. He further said that the clause of 145 has been deliberately removed from the constitution, under which 7-B and 7-C are also removed. For their restoration a bill will soon be presented in the National Assembly, which has been given approved by the Cabinet Committee. This bill should be approved at all costs. He furthermore made a demand from the Senators and the MNA’S that in next few days the correct version of the Oath-Declaration of khatm e Nabuat will be presented in both National Assembly and Senate. Make sure that this bill is approved in both the houses with full support, and make this Oath-Declaration part of the law while fulfilling all the demands of law.

**Daily Mashriq, 13November, 2017.**

**Daily Nawa i Waqt, Lahore, 13th November, 2017.**

**All those who are trying to amend the oath regarding the faith of Khatm e Nabuwat will face humiliation; Ilyas Chinioti.**

**Government is supervising Qadianis as a news of fiving 700 schools to them is revealed; Ilyas Chinioti.**

Chiniot (reporter) Muslims must have to play their role against the negative activities of Qadianis. The rulers keep on trying to make amendments in the oath regarding Khatm e Nabuwat. Government is supervising Qadianis that is why they act against the constitution of the country. Government must make it clear that they can make friendly terms with Qadianis by amending the law of Khatm e Nabuwat. They must have to unveil the members of National Assembly keeping soft corner for Qadianis and their agenda. Otherwise all religious parties will announce their movement forming as a rally from Badshahi Mosque Chiniot. We will sacrifice our lives for the protection of the honor of the holy prophet (PBUH).neither of the political parties protested on this issue. Are the Muslims will take revenge of this? These ideas were expressed by the Ameer of International Khatm e Nabuwat Maulana Mohammad Ilyas Chinioti, a leader of Majlis Ahrar Maulana Mugheera, Qari Shabbir ahmad Usmani, Maulana Masood Sarwari, Khawaja Moeenuddin, Noorul Hasan Shah, Jamil Fahri, Qari Yamin Gohar, Maulana Mohammad Husain, Maulana Ghulam Mustafa, Qari Abdul Hamid, Qari saifullah Khalid, Shoukat Ali Azad, President of Bar Mohammad Yousaf Khyali, President of district movement Shehzada Mohammad Akbar, Dr Ali Ameen, President of the movement regarding the Honor of The Prophet Hafiz Bin Yamin ABid, Ch Mohammad Aslam and others said in their addresses that Pervaiz Rasheed, Zahid Hamid and a lady member seems to be included in changing this oath. Government must take serious action on this.

**Daily Nawa i Waqt, Lahore, 13th November, 2017.**