



# INTERNATIONAL **HUMAN RIGHTS** COMMITTEE

*Ensuring Justice for All*

secretariat@humanrightscommittee.co.uk

Volume I: Issue 12



## Protestors attack Ahmadi mosque in Pakistan

Thousand Strong Muslim  
Mob Opens Fire on Minority  
Ahmadiyya Community



Canadian government  
asked to probe whether  
Toronto-area man  
involved in Pakistan  
mosque siege



To Win Its War on  
Terror, Pakistan Must  
Accept Ahmadis as  
Muslims

Ethnic cleansing of  
Ahmadis

# Report

October to December 2016

# Protestors attack Ahmadi mosque in Pakistan

Thousands of protestors stormed a mosque belonging to the minority Ahmadi sect in Pakistan's Punjab province on Monday, firing at worshipers and wounding several before police dispersed the attackers, police and an Ahmadi spokesman said.

A procession of around two thousand Sunni Muslims marking the birthday of Islam's Prophet Mohammad entered the Ahmadi mosque despite resistance by police, hurling stones and bricks and firing weapons.

**“Today a mob attacked the worship place, threw stones and shot gunfire. Police could not stop them because of weak deployment”**

The Ahmadi minority holds that a prophet followed the Prophet Mohammed, who founded Islam. But that view runs counter to the Muslim religion's central belief that Mohammad was the last of God's messengers.

In 1974, a Pakistani law declared Ahmadis non-Muslims and in 1984, a new law made it possible to jail Ahmadis for "posing as a Muslim" or "offending a Muslim's feelings".

"Police tried their best to stop the attackers but failed because of slim deployment", Malik Nawaz, the police officer in charge of the

Choa Saiden Shah area where the attack took place told Reuters.

"Later, high officials reached the scene with more troops and chased out the occupants."

He said police would register a case against the attackers after receiving a formal complaint from the Ahmadi community.

A spokesman for the Ahmadi sect said the mosque was built by the community in 1860 and has been in use since then.

The attackers likely attacked the mosque because they suspected the worshippers were breaking the law by commemorating the birthday of the prophet Mohammad.

"Today a mob attacked the worship place, threw stones and shot gunfire. Police could not stop them because of weak deployment", Saleemuddin, the Ahmadi community's Pakistan spokesman, told Reuters.

The attack comes just a week after Pakistan renamed a university centre for physicist Abdus Salam, its first Nobel laureate, after more than 30 years of all but disowning his achievements, as a member of the Ahmadi minority sect.

Salam, the first Muslim to win the prize for science, is buried in the Pakistani town of Rabwah, a major centre for Ahmadis, where his gravestone was defaced by local authorities who removed the word "Muslim" from an inscription that called him "the first Muslim Nobel laureate".

Ahmadis have repeatedly been targeted with violence by militant protesters and been taken to court on blasphemy charges.

# Thousand Strong Muslim Mob Opens Fire on Minority Ahmadiyya Community

A mob of more than 1,000 people armed with batons, guns, and stones has reportedly attacked a mosque of the minority Muslim Ahmadiyya sect in Pakistan, prompting the provincial government to deploy the army to bring the situation under control.

On Monday, the mob, while chanting anti-Ahmadi slogans, attempted "to seize Ahmadiyya property," declared Saleem-ud-Din, a spokesperson for Jamaat Ahmadiyya Pakistan, reports Dawn.

The Pakistani news outlet quotes Deputy Commissioner Chakwal Mahmood Javed Bhatti as saying that "the mob hurled stones and bricks at the place of worship before storming the building, adding that gunmen opened fire on Ahmadis in the area."

Part of the Ahmadi mosque had been set ablaze, revealed Rashid Ahmad, a local police officer.

The Ahmadi spokesperson claimed that one individual was killed in the incident but was unable to identify the victim, reports Dawn, adding that no casualties have been officially reported.

Other Muslims consider followers of the Ahmadiyya sect to be heretics and blasphemers for designating their founder the messiah after the the Prophet Mohammed.

Citing the Ahmadiyya community spokesperson, Dawn reports that the "the [Ahmadi] place of worship located in the limits of the Chowas Saidan Shah police station area in Chakwal's Dhalmial district was attacked' by nearly 1,000 people."

The incident took place in Muslim-majority Pakistan's Punjab province. Eventually, the Punjab government deployed the army in response to the incident, reports the Rabwah Times. Law enforcement ultimately dispersed the crowd and secured the Ahmadi mosque.

The local police station told Dawn that the situation is currently under control, adding that police had not yet decided what action to take.

"As per details, a misunderstanding developed between the two groups. Home Department is vigilantly following up the issue," the Punjab government reportedly noted on Twitter.

Some Ahmadis in Pakistan have requested additional security from their government. "You are kindly requested to take adequate security measures to protect the life and properties and worship places of the Ahmadiyya community," noted some Pakistani Ahmadis in a letter to their government on 5th December, Reports Dawn.

Members of the Christian minority in Pakistan have also been victims of violent harassment in recent months. The United States, Afghanistan, and India are constantly accusing Pakistan of serving as a sanctuary for Islamic extremist groups.



## Canadian government asked to probe whether Toronto-area man involved in Pakistan mosque siege

An attack on a mosque in Chakwal, Pakistan, has led to calls for an investigation in Canada over allegations a Toronto-area man was part of a group that vowed “extreme measures” against the place of worship.

A mob of about 1,000 surrounded the mosque belonging to minority Ahmadiyya Muslims, according to Pakistani newspapers *The Nation* and *Dawn*, as well as social media posts, some showing video of the damage.

The incident Monday reportedly came after locals filed a petition with police claiming “infidels” were illegally occupying the building and unless action was taken “we will be forced to take extreme measures to liberate this mosque.”

One of the names near the top of the petition was Haji Malik Rashid Ahmed, whom Ahmadiyyas say is a Canadian. A news website that reports on the Ahmadiyya community, *Rabwah Times*, said he had spoken about the issue at mosques in the Chakwal area. A video posted by the site appears to show him talking to police in the aftermath of the attack.

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama‘at Canada, which represents Canadian Ahmadiyya

Muslims, raised the issue at a meeting with Global Affairs Canada, said Asif Khan, the organization’s director of public relations.

Khan said he informed federal officials that a Canadian was possibly involved and sent them the relevant documentation. He also asked whether Global Affairs would inform the RCMP, or if his organization should do it.

“We don’t want stuff like that here”, Khan said Tuesday. While violence against religious minorities is commonplace in Pakistan, he called the conduct “un-Canadian” and said he hoped whatever laws applied would be enforced.

I know him because he comes to our mosque in Mississauga. ... He’s not a violent guy. He’s not a bad person

In Pakistan, Ahmadiyyas are prohibited from “indirectly or directly posing as a Muslim”, publicly declaring or propagating their faith, building mosques or referring to them as such, and making public calls to prayer, according to Human Rights Watch.

Such intolerance, together with regular attacks, have prompted many Ahmadiyyas to

resettle in such countries as Canada, but they still face a degree of stigmatization from those who do not recognize them as genuine Muslims.

The Canadian who allegedly signed the petition concerning the Ahmadiyya mosque in Chakwal has lived in Canada for at least 40 years, said Imam Syed Soharwardy, who chairs the organization that runs the Mississauga mosque the man attends.

“I know this guy very well”, he said. “I know him because he comes to our mosque in Mississauga. ... He’s not a violent guy. He’s not a bad person.” Soharwardy said he did not know what had happened in Chakwal “but in Pakistan people do these things. They should not be doing it.”

# To Win Its War on Terror, Pakistan Must Accept Ahmadis as Muslims

Discrimination against Ahmadis and other religious minorities adds fuel to the fire of jihadism.

On Monday, a mob of more than 1,000 Muslims attacked a mosque belonging to the Ahmadiyya Muslim community in Chakwal, a district around 150 km from the capital Islamabad. The mob opened fire, hurled stones, and set parts of the building ablaze in an attempt to take over the mosque. The attack came on Eid Milad-un-Nabi, the Islamic festival to commemorate the birth of Prophet Muhammad, with the religiously motivated mob desecrating the mosque as a "tribute" to the Prophet.

The Ahmadiyya community is accused of heresy by orthodox Muslim clergy owing to allegations of divergence from conventional Islamic beliefs. This led to the excommunication of the community in 1974 through the Second Amendment to Pakistan's Constitution. In 1984, the government of Pakistan's Ordinance XX barred the community from preaching their beliefs or using Islamic titles in their literature, epithets, or "places of worship." According to the ordinance, an Ahmadi could be imprisoned for up to three years for "posing as a Muslim."

The Chakwal "place of worship", not acknowledged as a mosque by orthodox

Muslims or the Pakistani state, was targeted over claims that the Ahmadiyya community had "taken over a mosque" and transformed it into their own worship place.

Even so, property disputes are used as a pretext to target the Ahmadis, with allegations of blasphemy and apostasy escalating amidst celebrations of Eid Milad-un-Nabi. This is why the Ahmadiyya community had requested the local law enforcement agencies to provide security for the Chakwal mosque, anticipating aggression.

The Chakwal attack came a week after Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif decided to rename a physics centre in the capital after Dr. Abdus Salam, the first Muslim Nobel laureate, whose achievements have been discarded by the state owing to his Ahmadi identity. A day after the "Professor Abdus Salam Centre for Physics" was announced, Punjab's Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) raided the Ahmadiyya headquarters, and detained four Ahmadis affiliated with publishing the community's magazines.

Targeting Ahmadiyya literature, as a "counter terror" manoeuvre or clampdown against "hate speech," is a regular occurrence. But after the recognition for Dr. Salam, the authorities possibly felt the need to appease Islamist hardliners, who eventually took matters into their hands in Chakwal.

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As Pakistan battles jihadism on multiple fronts, the Ahmadiyya question remains central to the state's counter terrorism efforts. This is because all efforts to recognise the community's contributions for Pakistan, or to safeguard their rights as citizens, remain subordinated by the Constitution's codification of the Ahmadiyya community's excommunication. Not only does this give Islamists the license to target the Ahmadis at will, it reaffirms the Sunni Muslim supremacy in Pakistan, which in turn sidelines other religious communities, including various Islamic sects.

Two weeks ago Masroor Jhangvi, a leader of the banned anti-Shia jihadist group Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP), was elected to the Punjab parliament. Jhangvi and SSP vociferously call for the genocide of the Shia Muslims in Pakistan.

According to Article 18 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights, to which Pakistan is a signatory, "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 and observance."

Pakistan denying the Ahmadis their right to self-identify as Muslims is a blatant breach of the UN stipulations, which has been condemned by global rights groups and other states.

## United Nations in Pakistan strongly condemns the attack on Ahmadi mosque in Chakwal

United Nations Issued the Statement:

The United Nations Country Team in Pakistan is shocked at the brutality of a mob attack on an Ahmadi place of worship in Chakwal, and condemns the violence used and any expression of intolerance.

**"...shocked at the brutality of a mob attack on an Ahmadi place of worship"**

"The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is emphatic: Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This attack, and any on a place of worship is against this principle and universal principles of common humanity," said Mr. Neil Buhne, Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator, United Nations Pakistan.

# Ethnic Cleansing of Ahmadis

What happened in Chakwal on 12 December, is yet another reminder that Pakistan's systematic exclusion of Ahmadis, which started in 1974, is taking a disturbing and frightening turn.

After having attacked the Ahmadi place of worship (they are not allowed to refer to it as a mosque under law), the perpetrators then gave a nationwide call to protest against the "oppression by the administration and Qadianis against Muslims." It is unclear as to what the end game is, but I have been warning through my articles in this newspaper that the world ought to monitor this situation carefully.

The objective of the anti-Ahmadi organisations is clear and has often been stated times from their platforms. They want to drive every Ahmadi either to the grave or out of Pakistan. It has also caused a crisis of the internally displaced persons as more and more Ahmadis are taking refuge in the city of Rabwah where a sizeable population of Ahmadis lives. Even this is not acceptable.

The city lives in a virtual siege with a large number of sectarian organisations setting up camp in and around the city. At the very entrance of the city is a mosque called Majlis-e-Ahrar Masjid, named interestingly after the Indian National Congress backed religious organisation that had historically persecuted the Ahmadis and led the movements against them.

The same Majlis-e-Ahrar had also attacked the founder of Pakistan as Kafir-e-Azam and called Pakistan Kafiristan. In Pakistan, you are free to abuse and attack the state so long as you also beat down on the Ahmadis. There is no law against doing that at all. Every Friday the sectarian Imams of the officially Muslim mosques freely abuse and curse the Ahmadis in their sermons on loudspeakers. Obviously, the Ahmadis are not allowed to respond. They are not even allowed to use loudspeakers.

An educated and enterprising community, the Ahmadis had been at the forefront of national progress before being ostracised, marginalised, excommunicated and finally de-humanised. Pakistan has to find a way to accommodate them in the country and protect them from the outrages of the kind we saw in Chakwal and elsewhere.


It is amazing that this country of 190 million, an overwhelming majority of whom are officially sanctioned Muslims, cannot protect or even tolerate a community that numbers less than a million. Indeed these few hundred thousand terrify the state to the extent that every Pakistani Muslim has to sign off on a statement declaring them Non-Muslims in order to get a passport. Historically the kind of persecution Ahmadis face in Pakistan is very similar to Jews in Nazi Germany of the 1930s. We all know how that ended and the trauma it inflicted not just on Jews but Germans themselves. 70 years later, Germans have not really recovered from the overwhelming sense of guilt. I shudder to think what this would do to Pakistan's future generations. Do we want them to carry this awful burden?

## About Us

The International Human Rights Committee (IHRC) focuses on human rights abuses/violations throughout the world with a specific focus on Ahmadi Muslims. The IHRC has specific expertise in relation to the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community having worked with and understanding their issues throughout the world.

By focusing international attention on the violation of human rights of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, we give voice to the oppression faced by Ahmadi Muslims endeavouring to bring the perpetrators of such crimes to account. The head office of the IHRC is based in London, England. The IHRC works with governments, NGOs, communities and human rights organisations particularly on Ahmadi Muslim issues.



The United Nations logo, featuring a globe surrounded by a laurel wreath, is centered in the background. The text is overlaid on the globe.

“All people should be granted equal rights  
without discrimination or prejudice.  
This is the key to peace.”

[hrcommittee.org](http://hrcommittee.org)

[secretariat@humanrightscommittee.co.uk](mailto:secretariat@humanrightscommittee.co.uk)