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Flash – Human rights

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A hideous and unwarranted raid on Ahmadiyya central office in Rabwah First ever such action; indicative of still more persecution of Ahmadis in Pakistan

Rabwah (Chenab Nagar), Punjab; December 5, 2016: An armed police contingent of the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) carried out a raid on a central office (Publications Department of the Tehrik Jadid) and Zia-ul-Islam Press here at mid-day on 5 December. They acted brutally, severely beat up some staffers unnecessarily, made unjustified arrests and took away office equipment and personal belongings. This sort of raid and attack had never been mounted in the past 42 years since the state adopted the agenda of acting hostile towards its Ahmadi citizens.

They came in three vehicles, more than 25 of them, some in uniform, others in civvies. The armed personnel were wearing masks. They made forced entry in the office compound. Some of them proceeded directly to the first floor where Publications Directorate is located, while five or six others took up positions near the boundary wall. The latter ordered people to lie down in the lawn. Those who entered the office ordered the staff to make no move. They told the nearly 80-year old Director to stand up and accompany them. He asked them to show him the Warrant, to which the intruders did not reply, but took possession of his lap-top and two mobile phones.

The raiders beat up some of the office staff, checked their CNIC cards and arrested three officials, apparently only for their Rabwah addresses, as they took no action against one who's ID card was issued in District Gujranwala.

Apparently they were in search of the editorial staff of monthly 'Tehrik Jadid', who were not present there. The three arrested personnel are harmless *Waqif Zindigi*, a cadre dedicated to service of humanity and religion. Why they arrested them and hand-cuffed them is not known. The raiders took away five office computers, a lap-top, a printer and a bag full of various books – this was more like a loot, otherwise taking away a printer makes no sense.

At the time, they came across a visiting peon carrying some mail. They snatched the mail bag from him.

Thereafter they forced their way to the roof where the security office is located. They severely beat up the security guard on duty, Rana Irfan Ahmad, took the key of the locked almirah from him, and took possession of arms found in the almirah: three

guns and a box of shots, all licensed and authorized. Acting as marauders rather than officials, they did not issue any receipt for the spoils.

The injured security guard Irfan Ahmad was driven immediately to the hospital by the Ahmadi administration. He was provided emergency aid followed by treatment; he is out of danger.

The visitors went to the Audit Office as well. They took the staff's mobile phones and checked their CNICs. Later, they left behind the phones at the gate.

This phase of the raid lasted 25 minutes. After that they proceeded directly to the Zia ul Islam Press. It was about 1 p.m. They did not ring the bell but preferred to jump over the wall to enter the premises. They told the press operators to stop the press; they also beat them up for no reason. They asked them to hand them over the monthly Tehrik Jadid and its plates. The pressmen told them that they had none at the moment, as they were busy printing the Ahmadiyya daily. The intruders asked them as to who was in-charge there after Mr. Tahir Mahdi Imtiaz (the squeaky clean printer who is in prison for almost two years in a case fabricated jointly by the police and mullas). Mr. Idrees Ahmad told them that he was the foreman. They handcuffed him and beat him up. They also took in possession 8 coloured plates, 4 black plates and printed sheets of the daily which is published by permission, and for years now, the authorities have found nothing objectionable in its texts.

This part of the brutish raid lasted half an hour.

It is learnt that a police case has been registered against 9 Ahmadis; 4 of those arrested, and some others whose names are found in the monthly. It is learnt that anti-Ahmadi sections PPC 298-B and 298-C have been applied, as also some sections of the Anti-terrorism Act. We have not yet been provided a copy of the FIR; the details will be available on its receipt.

It is learnt that the CTD is the same department that raided the only bookshop in Rabwah last year and succeeded in securing (5+3) eight years' imprisonment for its octogenarian proprietor, Mr. Abdul Shakoor, after a speedy trial. It seems that this department is very fastidious and successful – in operations against very soft targets, decent individuals and peaceful communities.

The way they conducted the raid, it seemed well-planned over plenty of time, and the prime movers behind this are arguably the self-serving leaders of politico-religious lobby in the Punjab. Whither National Action Plan!

Note: It is offered that any research scholar may obtain one-year's issues of the 'Tehrik Jadid', the monthly in question and pinpoint even a hint that calls for the notice of the CTD and the application of the anti-terrorism laws. END