

## **Azad Jammu and Kashmir Parliament also declares Ahmadis as non-Muslims**

*Mirpur (AJK):* The AJK Parliament unanimously passed Azad Jammu and Kashmir Interim Constitution (Twelfth Amendment) Bill 2018, on February 6, 2018, declaring Ahmadis as non-Muslims.

The joint session of both the houses of the AJK Parliament – Legislative Assembly and AJK Council – met with speaker AJK LA Shah Ghulam Qadir in the chair. Minister for Law Raja Nisar Ahmad tabled the bill. Raja Farooq Haider Khan, the prime minister and the leader of the house, steered this consequential bill and got it cleared the same day. The PM is from PML-(Nawaz) party that controls the majority in the legislative assembly.

The ultra-right wing daily *Islam* of February 8, 2018 celebrated the occasion in an op-ed mentioning that ‘this historic milestone was passed at 47 second past 3:52 p.m.’

According to the PM, five members of the Opposition (Peoples Party) abstained from voting.

This legislation has a history. It is claimed by anti-Ahmadi activists that the credit of first proposing imposition of non-Muslim status on Ahmadis goes to Major ® Ayub ‘Shaheed’, who moved a resolution to that end in AJK assembly on 28 April 1973. It was adopted, but the government of Pakistan did not allow the AJK assembly to legislate further thereafter. Instead, Mr. ZA Bhutto the prime minister of Pakistan proceeded to implement the same in Pakistan on September 7, 1974. On February 6, 2018, most speakers paid glowing tributes to Major Ayub, the pioneer of this idea, although all of them were careful to avoid the mention that the major later perished in an earthquake. Mulla Allah Wasaya disclosed in his column that the idea had occurred to Major Ayub when he was on a visit to Harmain Sharifain (Saudi Arabia).

This report is primarily based on vernacular press reports, as no Ahmadi was present in the AJK parliament during its proceedings. The source newspapers are the *Ausaf* (4, 7, 8 and 9 February), the *Islam* (3, 8, 9 and 10 February), the *Nawa-i-Waqt* of 7 February and the *Insaf* of 8 February 2018. As this legislation will be mentioned in dispatches and history in future, it will be useful to mention some essential details here.

The committee assigned the task of preparing the bill comprised MLA members Syed Iftikhar Gilani minister of education, Mr. Ahmad Raza Qadiri, Malik P Akhtar Awan, Raja M Siddique Khan and Syed Ali Raza Bokhari. (*Islam of February 8, 2018*)

In the parliamentary session there was no debate, but there were speeches and statements. Some of these were highly inappropriate, abusive, even false; and these came not only from mere members, but also the prime minister and ministers. For instance:

Mr. Farooq Haider Khan the PM (from PML-N) said the following in his speech.

- Hypocrites are being set apart through this legislation. Qadianis lay their net in a special way.
- Now, mischief will come to end. Qadianis will not be able to play the role of serpent up the sleeve (*Fitney khatm; Qadiani ab aasteen kay sanp wala kirdar ada nahin kar sakain gay*). *The daily Nawa-i-Waqt; February 7, 2018*
- It was essential to move this Bill to differentiate between a Muslim and a Qadiani.
- No permission has been given in this law to kill any person of any faith.
- The suggestion to make changes in (school) syllabus is a good one. We’ll add a few elements to the syllabi regarding religious education, end of prophethood and guidance and character building of the new generation.

- This amendment will not affect the freedom movement nor the UN resolution. It will also have no bearing on the demography of Azad Kashmir and the (Indian) Held Kashmir. We'll see who is what, after Kashmir becomes independent.

**Note:** While Mr. Haider called Ahmadis as hypocrites, he did not miss the opportunity to give an earful to the members on unity and kinship (*Ittehad wa yagangat*).

Also, Mr. Haider could not help referring to the death of Mr. Bhutto, the PM of Pakistan who had passed a similar law. "ZA Bhutto got hanged, not because he declared Qadianis to be non-Muslim, but because of a murder; if he is a martyr (*shaheed*), then Nawaz Sharif is also a martyr", he said. *The daily Ausaf; February 7, 2018*

Raja Nisar A Khan, the law minister was more covetous; he tried to kill two birds with one stone; "It is a great honour that this Bill of effective legislation concerning the repute of the Prophet is being moved", he said. According to the daily *Nawa-i-Waqt* (7 Feb, 2018) he also said, "We'll have to put an end to the role of these snakes up the sleeve." He accused Ahmadis of doing harm to Islam, for lack of definition of a non-Muslim in law.

Noreen Arif, minister of trade was of the opinion that, "The credit (of this law) goes also to the voters of (PML) N-League."

Sardar Atiq A Khan, a former AJK PM was delighted at the move, congratulated everybody at the occasion, and blamed Ahmadis for being busy in conspiracies to remove the craving of Love and Jihad (*Jazba Ishaq* and *Jazba Jihad*) from the hearts of Muslims.

The press quoted some other MLAs as well:

- This law (now) is the most sacred part of the (AJK) Constitution: Faiza Imtiaz
- The deniers of end of prophethood (KN) deserve no sympathy.
- Qadianiat is a great mischief (*fitna*).
- I send a thousand curses on those who do not believe in KN.

The members excelled one another in patting each other's back with profuse congratulations and paid tributes to their leadership. They called the day 'memorable', 'historic', 'of utmost importance', 'history making' and 'immortal (*Amar*)'. One minion expressed the opinion, "The entire Muslim Umma feels overwhelmingly proud (*sar fakhar sey baland ho gia*)." Raja Siddique was overjoyed, "This honour excels the sum total of all my honours earned in the past."

This event received hardly any mention in Pakistan's English press or even the TV. It seems that on account of the absurdity and narrow political motive of this legislation of doubtful value and its relevance to the sensitive international issue of Kashmir, the authorities had advised the media not to play it up. A mulla even protested against the negligent attitude of Pakistani electronic media. However, the ultra-right extremist Urdu papers were happy over this law and expressed their satisfaction and sense of victory:

- We demand from the Azad Kashmir government that as the next step they should have a Blasphemy law approved in the Assembly so that all those wretched people who attack the honour of prophethood should be appropriately punished.

*Editorial in the daily Ausaf, February 8, 2018*

- Surely this legislation has shown a mirror to the few liberal activists who see some national future in the darkness of liberalism.

*Editorial in the daily Islam, February 8, 2018*

- This move has shut the door for ever in Azad Kashmir for the great Qadiani mischief.

*Op-ed in the daily Islam, February 10, 2018*

**Note:** The daily *Islam* of February 10, 2018 also reported, "In a statement issued in Hermain Sharifain (Saudi Arabia), the leaders of End of Prophethood have stated that this unanimous amendment to the Constitution after 45 years, by the AJK assembly, by declaring Qadianis to be non-Muslim, has hammered the last nail in the coffin of Qadianiat." It is interesting that consistently where there is talk of end of prophethood in sectarian or political