**Pakistan's Ahmadis fearful as leaders bow to extremists**

**By KATHY GANNON**

**Yesterday**

**apnews**

ISLAMABAD (AP) — **Pakistan's embattled Ahmadiyya minority enjoyed a brief moment of hope earlier this month when one of its own, a U.S.-based Princeton economist, was appointed to an economic advisory council.**

**But the backlash from Islamic hard-liners, which led newly elected Prime Minister Imran Khan to quickly rescind the appointment under political pressure, has only underscored the Ahmadis' fraught position in the conservative, Muslim-majority country.**

**Ahmadis believe another Islamic prophet, Ahmad, appeared in the 19th century, a view at odds with the fundamental Islamic principle that Muhammad was the final messenger sent by God. Islamic hard-liners view them as heretics, and have successfully pressured past governments to pass draconian laws against the community. Ahmadis have also long been** **targeted by Islamic extremists, and are shunned by many mainstream Muslims.**

Religious parties have never done well in Pakistan's elections, and last July's balloting was no exception. But the ability of hard-line clerics to organize mass rallies and incite violence against political opponents has often forced even liberal governments to bow to their demands.

**Khan, a cosmopolitan former cricket star who ran on a populist platform of combatting corruption, is the latest leader to give in.**

**In early September, he appointed Atif Mian, a respected Princeton professor of economics, public policy and finance, to an economic advisory council. Just 72 hours later, Khan sought Mian's resignation, which the economist announced on Twitter, saying he was stepping down "for the sake of the stability of the government."**

"The government was facing a lot of adverse pressure regarding my appointment from the Mullahs (Muslim clerics) and their supporters," Mian said.

Several religious parties took part in this year's election, but as in previous voting, they garnered less than 10 percent of the popular vote. However, they have allies among all the major parties who rallied against the appointment, even introducing a resolution in the upper house of parliament to condemn the move.

Leading the charge was cleric Khadim Rizvi's political party, which won three provincial seats in southern Sindh province by campaigning on a single issue — the finality of the Prophet Muhammad. They also support a harsh blasphemy law that prescribes death for anyone found guilty of insulting Islam.

Rizvi's power was on display last November when he mobilized mass rallies over proposed electoral reforms that neglected to mention Islam's prophet. The two-week demonstration paralyzed the capital, Islamabad, leading to the sacking of a government minister and the legislation's revision. It may have also contributed to the ruling party's defeat in July.

The firebrand cleric had threatened to bring his supporters into the streets again over Mian.

"The finality of the prophet and the blasphemy law is the most potent weapon because the mullahs know that no one can dare touch it," said Zahid Hussain, a defense analyst and the author of two books on militancy in Pakistan.

Mian had at least one defender. Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry sought to stem the controversy by pointing out that the position had nothing to do with religion or lawmaking, and that the newly elected government wanted to be inclusive.

"When I stood up and defended the appointment of Mian, I looked behind me and no one was there," Chaudhry said in an interview this week. "The problem is that you know the opposition will partner with the violence. You don't get the kind of support you need."

Despite their poor showing at the polls, the religious parties are "very effective," Chaudhry said. "They have the capacity to kill you. Extremism here is a reality. We cannot say it isn't," he said.

Moeed Yusuf, a scholar at the Washington-based U. S. Institute of Peace, said "Pakistani society has become deeply intolerant and many more than we think sympathize with such views." Mian's resignation "shows the perceived power of the Islamists and the reluctance of both state and society to stand up to them given the costs they fear — including physical harm."

**Mian's abrupt resignation came as a major blow to the 500,000-strong Ahmadi community, which already feels persecuted and afraid. Many Ahmadis worry they could now lose their jobs, and say their children are often denied admission to certain schools.**

**Pakistan changed its constitution in 1974 to declare Ahmadis non-Muslims. Ten years later, the government declared it a criminal offense for Ahmadis to "pose as Muslims." They are forbidden from calling their places of worship mosques and cannot sound the call to prayer. Ahmadis have even been punished for using the common Arabic greeting "assalamu aleikum," which means "peace be upon you."**

**High Court Judge Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui recently issued a more than 170-page judgment that would force Ahmadis to take further steps to identify themselves publicly, which would expose them to even greater discrimination and violence. It calls for Ahmadis to take names that identify their religion, bans them from wearing "Muslim clothing" — without specifying what that means — and bars them from taking the name "Ahmad." The judgment is being appealed.**

**"It is like Nazi Germany. They want to be able to identify us wherever we go," Usman Ahmad, a representative of the community, said. "The level of intolerance in Pakistan has never been as great as it is today. Every Ahmadi hides his identity."**

**"What does Pakistan want?" asked Salim Uddin, a spokesman for the community. "Do they want to eradicate Ahmadis? Do they want Ahmadis to leave Pakistan?"**

**Both men insisted on meeting in a non-descript guesthouse, rather than the official Ahmadi house of worship, a fortress-like building surrounded by high walls and guarded around the clock.**

"This is not a new story in Pakistan. It's been happening for decades, including under more liberal governments," said Michael Kugelman, deputy director of the Asia program at the U.S.-based Wilson Center.

**"What makes it all more alarming now is that with new parties now involved in electoral politics, the hateful ideas and narratives that fuel discrimination and violence against Ahmadis and other religious minorities will gain more prominence," he said.**

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**No one will be subject to discriminatory behavior: DPO Chiniot**

**Whoever breaks the law will be subject to legal action.**

**Muslim community became anxious over the registration of case against Muslims by local administration.**

Chiniot (Pakistan Correspondent) Muslim delegation of Chiniot met DPO. Members of delegation told DPO if Qadianis break the law, FIR is not registered against them. They informed DPO about the incident where local administration registered FIR against local Muslims following minor allegation. As a result, local Muslims became anxious. Gathering was organized at Tabligh Ul Islam Mosque, Chiniot few days back. It was decided in the event that presidents of all Muslim sects of Chiniot will meet DPO at missionary house on 24th September, 2018 to inform him about their demands. As decided, people belonging to various sects that included Ilyas Chinioti, Shabbir Usmani, Muhammad Mughera, Qari Ayub, Ghulam Mustafa, Khalil Ashrafi and Shaukat Golarwi met DPO yesterday. During the meeting, it was emphasized to withdraw FIR registered against Muslims so that people become relax. DPO ensured members that FIR will be withdrawn as early as possible. He also advised members to calm down.

**(Daily Pakistan Lahore, 25th September, 2018)**

**Muslim envoy meets the D.P.O, protest at the wall-chalking case.**

**Ibadat Nisar assured them the case will be dismissed; demands to remove the barricades in Chenab Nagar**

Chiniot, Chenab Nagar (Express representative). A case has been registered against 7 Muslims on the false accusation of wall-chalking by [the followers of] Mirza Qadiani who themselves oppose the constitution of Pakistan. Ulemas, lawyers and businessmen have asked to dismiss the said case. Leader of international Majlis Khatme Nabuwat, central administrator of Khatme Nabuwat Chenab Nagar Maulana Ghulam Mustafa, Qari Muhammad Ayub Chinioti, Maulana BadrAlam, Syed Noor Ul Hassan Shah, Chaudhry Muhammad Islam Khan, Maulana Khaleel Ahmad Ashrafi and numerous others condemned the case registered against the Muslims. They met the D.P.O Ibadat Nisar at his office and asserted that no Qadiani has ever been harmed by the hands of Muslims. Muslims promote peace. The case is a ploy registered with the intent to spread disorder. Maulana also presented the D.P.O with various books which highlighted that Qadianis have openly broken the constitution. At this the D.P.O assured them that no Qadiani will be allowed to spread their teachings in the district or to display their banners. Law will remain same for all. He promised to dismiss the case. District leader Anjuman Tajiran Haji Jameel Fakhri, Professor Sheikh Pervez Ahmad, Hafiz Meher Tanveer Ul Haq, leaders of Majlis Ahrar Maulana Mugheera, Qari Ayub Chinioti, Maualana Khaleel Ahmad Ashrafi, Qari Shabeer Ahmad Usmani and various others were also present at the instance.

**Daily Express, Faisalabad, Tuesday, 25 September, 2018.**

**We will not let anti-Islam conspiracies of Jews and Qadianis be prevailed: Worldwide Khatm e Nabuwat Movement**

**New crisis will arise with the reopening of protection of the honor of Holy Prophet (PBUH) act. We have severe apprehensions over the bill that is presented in senate.**

**Making registration of cases pertaining to blasphemy extremely difficult is equivalent to providing protection to criminals: religious scholars**

Lahore (Political Reporter) Leaders of Worldwide Khatm e Nabuwat Movement, Aziz Ur Rehman Sani, Zia Ul Hassan, Pir Rizwan Nafees, Abdul Naeem, Aleem Uddin Shakir, Khalid Mehmood, Zahoor Ul Haq, Saeed Waqar and Hammad Azhar expressed severe apprehensions during emergency meeting held to review possible amendment in the bill 295C, pertaining to protection of honor of Holy Prophet (PBUH) in senate. They said that the suggestion pertains to handing over death sentence to the person who doesn’t provide complete profiles of blasphemer to authority is against the teachings of Quran, Sunnat and constitution of Pakistan. Every government made reforms to make law of blasphemy ineffective in order to achieve foreign agenda. Current government has also started following the footsteps of its predecessors as a result of anti-Islam conspiracies of Jews and Qadianis. They said that they will not accept the bill.

**(Daily Ausaf Lahore, Monday, 24th September, 2018)**