


Persecution of Ahmadis in Pakistan

Newsreport October, 2000

Five Ahmadis Murdered in a Mosque in District Sialkot

 **Sialkot: October 2000:** A group of anti-Ahmadi extremists sprayed bullets with automatic weapons on Ahmadi worshippers at their local mosque in Ghatialian (Khurd), District Sialkot. As a result, five Ahmadis died and six injured.

It is learnt that a car was noticed to arrive Ghatialian in the early hours of the morning on October 30, while it was still dark. Ahmadi worshippers came to the mosque for their morning prayers. After then service, at about 6 A.M. when the first worshipper came out of the building, he was hit by a masked man at the door who pushed him back into the prayer hall. Then two attackers rushed inside and opened up bursts from a rapid-fire weapon on Ahmadis present there. In all, eleven victims were hit. Two of them, Mr. Iftikhar and Mr. Shehzad, died on the spot.

The visitors had parked their car approximately one hundred yards away from the mosque, and two of their colleagues had remained in the car, ready for escape. The attackers returned to the car, and they sped away from the scene of their crime. No arrest has yet been made till the time of rendering of this report, ten days later.

The mosque presented a bloody sight after the attack. There was blood all over. Prayer mats got soaked with blood. There was blood in the courtyard as well, as the injured were moved out. The locals hurriedly arranged some transport to take the injured to Narowal. While on the way Mr. Ataulla expired. As medical facilities were inadequate at Narowal, the injured were advised to be shifted to Lahore. While in transit, Mr. Abbas and Mr. Ghulam Muhammad also succumbed to their injuries thus bringing the total of dead to five. That left behind six injured. If they live, it is not due to any lack of efforts by the fundamentalists. They intended to kill them all. Authorities handed over dead bodies to the relatives by the end of the day after necessary formalities.

It is learn that the village recently was calm, despite the communal unrest of last year. However, District Sialkot had generally become a hot bed of anti-Ahmadiyya activities for months. Religious extremists raised claim to a number of Ahmadiyya mosques. They damaged one at Koorakot. Another mosque at Merajke was handed over to them by authorities. Reconstruction of Ahmadiyya mosque at Sialkot Cantt was ordered to be stayed. Fundamentalists also implicated many Ahmadis in criminal cases under religious laws. In this they received ready help from authorities. Some details are given at Annex.

During last six years, criminal cases against 21 Ahmadis were registered in the district under religious laws. This year, criminal cases, based on religion, were registered against 23 Ahmadis. Although Ahmadis are accused of preaching, PPC 295A is applied so as to haul them to Anti-Terrorism Special Courts. Dr. Abdul Ghani and Mr. Munir

Ahmad have not been granted bail, and are in prison for over one year under such fabrication. Messers Abdul Jabbar, Mian Fazil and Asad Zahur are also behind bars on religious charges.

Social environment is continuously polluted and poisoned by Mullas who enjoy unrestrained freedom in fanning the fires of communal hatred. On the day of the incident, Maulvi Azam Tariq, Patron of the Sipah Sahaba, while addressing a conference in Chak 20 Ghugh stated: *No Qadiani will be spared, if the violence erupts again* (The Daily Jang, Lahore; 1 November 2000). Also on 30th October, mullas of Khatame Nabuwwat organization had planned an open-air conference near Ghatialian. The vernacular press provides the mulla ample undeserved coverage in its newspapers. Politicians like Kalsum Nawaz also want to cash the religious cheque and agitate the public mind Ahmadiyya issue. Members of the judiciary, like Justices Akhtar and Mughal, unashamedly issue statements that are license to murder. The government has adopted the policy of appeasement of the Mulla, and the bureaucracy is aware of it. As a result, no preventive effort is made. At Ghatialian, the victims' families believe that the bloodbath was the work of religious extremists. In all probability, they are right. Authorities, however, cannot escape their responsibility; they have failed to take obvious remedial measures.

The statement of the police spokesman that this incident could be the result of an earlier incident in which a non-Ahmadi was killed by an Ahmadi was highly misleading. In fact, no Ahmadi was ever charged by the police of his murder.

Anti-Ahmadiyya Law takes its Toll

Qasur; October 12, 2000: A local magistrate awarded imprisonment terms of one year each to three Ahmadis in two religious cases and also fined them Rs. 5000 each on 11 October 2000.

The first case was going on since 1987 against Sh. Muhammad Yusuf. He was accused of displaying Quranic verses at his shop and the *Kalima* (Muslim Creed) at his door.

Messers Mohammad Hussain and Muhammad Sadiq, father and son, were co-accused in the second case. They were accused of displaying the *Kalima* (Islamic Creed) on their house.

Another Fabricated Case of Blasphemy

Ilahabad, Distt: Rajanpur; October 13, 2000: The police registered a case under PPC 295B, 341 & 506 at police station Muhammad Pur against Mr. Nasir Ahmad, Ahmadi, on a false accusation of defiling the Holy Quran.

The facts of the case show the nature of such cases. The accuser visited the accused and indulged in a hot argument. When the accused re-entered the house, the accuser bolted the house from outside. A passer-by opened the door. When Mr. Nasir came out, the accuser hit him on the head with a brick. Nasir was injured. In self-defense, he pushed the attacker who fell in the nearby drain. Subsequently, Mullas raised hue and cry that the accuser carried a Quran in his pocket and the accused had thus defiled the holy book.

Although the village folk refused to support the accuser, mullas persisted in their efforts to implicate the Ahmadi. Reportedly, the Army authorities got involved as well. They decided to support the Mulla.

The accused was arrested.

No Bails

The judiciary plays to the gallery. Lower courts deny bails to Ahmadis. For instance:

1. Civil Judge, Kamran Basharat refused to grant bail on 18 October to Mr. Asad Zahur, Ahmadi, who had been charged under PPC 298B and 298C for addressing the Head of the Ahmadiyya Community as *Ameerul Momineen* i.e. the Leader of the faithful. The accused remained behind bars to face the trial that may go on for years.
2. Additional Session Judge, Bhalwal refused, on October 31, to confirm Bail of Messers Manzur Qadir Khan and Muhammad Idrees, Ahmadis who had been accused of preaching. The former is the president of the local Ahmadiyya community while the latter is the religious teacher. The police arrested the two Ahmadis.

Minister shows his True Colours

In the recent past, some column writers attributed to Mr. Muhammad Ghazi, the Federal Minister of Religious Affairs statement to the effect that the decision to declare Ahmadis a 'Minority' was an emotional one, and that the charge of infidelity against Ahmadis was not well-founded. Mr. Ghazi refused to own up the alleged statements and wrote an article in the Daily Pakistan of ... October wherein *inter alia*, he stated the following:

1. I myself have written three books in rebuttal of Qadianism.
2. I had addressed the Conference of "Jamaat Mujahideen" at Lahore and stressed that public awareness of Sharia's rational was essential to its smooth implementation.

If promotion of religious 'tolerance' is a need of the Pakistan society, the nomination of Mr. Ghazi to the post of 'Minister of Religious Affairs' is indeed questionable.

Flagrant Discrimination in the Open

Rabwah; August 31, 2000: Housing and Physical Planning Department Jhang decided to sell by auction a large number of residential plots in Muslim Colony area of Rabwah. It advertised the Auction in the daily Jang of August 31, 2000. In the ad, the Department unashamedly published the following Note:

As per Order No. 3-(1)76-HM-II dated 7.6.1976 of the Government of Punjab, Qadianis/Ahmadis/Mirzais are not eligible to participate in the auction of the plots at the Area Development Scheme (Muslim Colony) Chenab Nagar.

Participants in the auction will declare on oath that they believe that Hadrat Muhammad is the Prophet of Latter Days, and that they are not linked with Ahmadi/Qadiani/Mirzai denomination.

Awardees of plots in this scheme will never be permitted to transfer their plot to an Ahmadi/Qadiani/Mirzai. If so, their allotment will be cancelled, and their plot along with the building and paid up sum will be confiscated by the government.

Outrageous!

The case of Desperate Wife

Begum Kalsum Nawaz is leaving no stone unturned to secure the release of her husband. While none would mind any fair efforts on her part, but when she banks upon falsehood, slander, religious fanaticism and Ahmadi-bashing, she only betrays her desperation and character. According to the daily Pakistan of 16 October, 2000, the Begum Sahiba congratulated her party workers on the success of the Black Day observed on October 12, 2000, and stated the following, *inter alia*:

1. Kargil Operation was a conspiracy of Hindus and Jews against Pakistan.
2. The coup of October 12 was a Qadiani revolution.
3. The people and the army will not allow Qadianis to occupy the country.
4. The Ulema should jointly resist the Jewish NGOs.
5. People will come out in the streets in a suicidal mission against the Qadiani take-over.
6. In 1953, we drenched the earth with our blood for the honour of the Holy Prophet (she was referring to the Ahrar-led Anti-Ahmadiyya riots in Punjab).
7. If the Ulema do not unite now on the one point agenda of 'Protection of the Finality of Prophethood' they will never deserve the atonement of the Holy Prophet, till the Doomsday, etc. etc.

Anti-Ahmadiyya conference at Rabwah

Rabwah: 13 October 2000: A two day Khatame Nabuwwat Conference was held at Rabwah with the permission of the government. The speakers made provocative speeches as usual. The college and school boys took out a procession on the College Road and indulged in stone throwing. An Ahmadi Muhammad Ahmad's house was subjected to stone throwing. The police accompanied the procession.

It is noteworthy that the government permitted the Jamaat Islami to hold a large conference at Qurtaba City. It permitted the Tablighi Jamaat to hold its annual conference at Raiwind. Reportedly, hundreds of thousands participated. Anti-Ahmadiyya conferences are routinely permitted at Rabwah. However, the traditional and purely religious Ahmadiyya Annual Conference remains forbidden. Where is the much-trumpeted equal citizenship for all sections of society? An obvious hoax and empty claim.

A Fatwa

A Fatwa, apart from being a religious edict, also betrays the attitude and the state of mind of the Mufti and his types. Recently a mulla, Muhammad Ibrahim Sarhindi of Umarmkot issued a Fatwa against Ahmadi, dated 19 Jamadi-us-Sani 1421 (Islamic Calendar). Some excerpts:

"Qadianis are apostate infidels, as they were initially Muslims but later turned infidels. As such, it is completely forbidden to be friendly with them, to buy anything from their shop, to lend or borrow from them, to employ them or to be in their employee, as also to participate in occasions of their sorrow or joy; in short to have minimal relationship with these cursed infidels is totally illicit."

"Do not greet them, nor reply to their greetings. God's wrath is ever upon them and anyone who maintains any relationship will also be under God's curse upon him. He will be the fuel for hellfire".

"Mirza Qadiani is a cursed infidel. While in grave, he is burning in the black fire. He is suffering great torture. O Muslim, protect thy soul and distance thyself a hundred miles from this cursed lot."

Mosques under Attack

Mosques remain under constant attack of mullas and their followers. In this, they often get support from authorities. For instance:

Dastgir, Karachi: A Sub-Divisional Magistrate and a Deputy Superintendent Police accompanied by a police party arrived at the Ahmadiyya Mosque. They took possession of the Kalima (Islamic creed) board and carried it away. Obviously they acted in response to some mulla' demand. Such behaviour of authorities, in the cosmopolitan city like Karachi reflects very poorly on the attitude of the city administration and the provincial government.

District Noshero Feroz (Sind): The village, Goth Imam Bux Alavi has its Ahmadiyya mosque. The mullas are agitating against the niche in the mosque, even though it is not visible from outside. Mullas have also demanded removal of the Holy Quran from the mosque. This has generated a great deal of tension in the village life.

Tension at many places

The mulla is working full time to maintain a climate of agitation all over Pakistan. It keeps him in business of power politics. Some locations are cited below.

Islamabad: The Khatame Nabuwwat Education Society has distributed pamphlets in large numbers to generate an Anti-Ahmadiyya hatred among masses. They have compiled a list of out-of-context short excerpts from the writings of the Founder of Ahmadiyyat. They have also published corrupted photographs of Ahmadiyya mosques to misguide the general public about Ahmadiyya articles of faith.

Haripur (NWFP): An anti-Ahmadi campaign has been going on in the local press. Some headlines:

- ❑ Open Proselytizing by Qadianis in Haripur.
- ❑ Simple folks are being misled by clever talk

The Daily Mahasib. September 25 2000

- ❑ Freedom of propaganda to Mirzais is dangerous to the Federation - Qazi Rehman Gul.
- ❑ Non-Muslims be removed from key posts. Otherwise activists of Khatame Nabuwwat will themselves take action.

The Daily Mahasib. September 25, 2000

Hafizabad (Punjab): An outsider Mulla was invited here on 29 September for the Friday congregation. In his sermon, he delivered a great deal of slander and calumny against the holy Founder of Ahmadiyya Community. He told them that a Muslim who does not consider Ahmadis as infidels, is himself an infidel. He urged them to implement a complete social boycott against Ahmadis. Leaflets were also distributed.

Mangat Unche, District Hafizabad: The Imam of the local mosque delivered a hateful sermon against Ahmadis. Some religious activists approached the authorities to take action against Ahmadis on the issue of graveyard, the call to prayers and the posting of Ahmadi teacher etc. Accordingly the police and the administration intervened. This disturbed the community life of the village and caused unnecessary tension.

Mirpur Khas (Sind): Mullas have stepped up their anti-Ahmadiyya campaign. People are instigated to implement social boycott against Ahmadis. A building contractor who undertook to build an Ahmadi's house was told by extremists to stop construction.

School teacher harassed

District Muzzafargarh: Mr. Mushtaq Ahmad, Ahmadi, is a primary school teacher at Jatoi. Activists of Sipah Sahaba and Khatame Nabuwwat Organization have turned against him. He is facing a general boycott. His children are not allowed to drink water from outside. The education department held an inquiry against him. He was transferred to another village. When he arrived there, the opponents had organized a demonstration to confront him. He was not allowed to join the school. He is being posted to still another village.

In the meantime, a confidant has intimated to Ahmadis that the mullas are planning to murder him. Mr. Mushtaq Ahmad is worried about his safety.

Annex

Some observations on the bloodshed at Ghatialian

The blood-letting incidents like the one at Ghatialian do not happen out of the blue. A chain of incidents, attitudes, developments, action and omissions cause them to materialize. The country's environment of intolerance, neglect of human rights of the weak, growth of the so-called Jihadi cult and the government's refusal to take on the challenge of fundamentalists provide fertile breeding ground for religious terrorism. Ahmadis have lived with this situation for quarter of a century and their policy of self constraint and refusal to respond violence with violence has, to some extent, limited the quantum of bloodshed. However, the mulla refuses to let peace prevail and makes all efforts, not discreetly either, to keep the pot of religious strife boiling. He adopts a well-considered aggressive policy, makes detailed plans accordingly and follows them up methodically to get the desired results. For example, prior to the Ghatialian assault, mullas mounted a relentless overt campaigns spread over months in District Sialkot to agitate the masses against Ahmadis. In their campaign, they demanded and often got support from authorities who unwittingly thought that this was the best way to circumvent the potential mischief of the mulla. They are wrong and short sighted. It would be useful and of some interest to briefly mention here anti-Ahmadiyya

developments in District Sialkot. The authorities were fully aware of all the following events all along.

Registration of Fabricated Criminal Cases against Ahmadis

- Mullas got registered a fabricated criminal case of 'hostage taking' against three Ahmadi men and three Ahmadi women at police station Sambarial on March 22, 2000. The person who was alleged to have been taken hostage stated in the court that no one had taken him hostage, nor anyone had preached to him. At this, the accused were let off after a great deal of harassment of the accused.
- Four Ahmadis of Bhakku Bhatti District Sialkot were accused of preaching, and a case was registered against them on April 27, 2000 at police station Sabz Peer under the anti-terrorism section PPC-295A.
- Mullas held anti-Ahmadiyya open meeting on 21 and 28 April in Daryapur in District Sialkot and demanded that minaret and niche of the local Ahmadiyya mosque be demolished. They threatened that if authorities did not undertake the action, they would do it themselves and would occupy the Ahmadiyya mosque. As a result, the frightened administration framed bogus criminal charges against six Ahmadis to calm the clerics.
- At the accusation of a mulla-inspired tout, the Daska police registered a criminal case under PPC 298C and the anti-terrorist clause PPC 295A against six Ahmadis of Bharokey, on July 29, 2000. In fact, Ahmadis of Bharokey were watching Ahmadiyya Television. When Mulla Feroz of Sipah Sahaba Organization came to know of this, he conspired with others to have a criminal case registered. Two of the accused were not even at the site. A number of witnesses said so on oath, so these two were dropped from the list of accused.
- Asad Zahur, an Ahmadi of Ludddhar District Sialkot wrote a letter to the Head of the Ahmadiyya Community and addressed him as the Amir-ul Mominin i.e. 'Leader of the faithful'. An accuser got hold of the letter and reported to the police station at Nikapura where they promptly charged the Ahmadi under PPC 298B and 298C on September 19, 2000. Some miscreants at this occasion even beat up Zahur, who is mentally not quite normal.

Registration of criminal cases on religious grounds generates a great deal of tension, as these result in years of prosecution in courts and the accused may end up in prison for long periods. Mullas press upon the authorities to proceed against Ahmadis, and they often get ready cooperation from officials. It wrecks the peace of communities and generates mutual strife and ill-will. All this is attributed to vicious laws that violate human rights of Ahmadis.

Mosques

The Mulla is fully conscious that a sure and effective way to persecute Ahmadis is through some sort of attacks on their mosques. Anyone would get seriously disturbed if one's place of worship is threatened. Ahmadis are no exception. In District Sialkot, mullas mounted persistent and multifarious attacks on Ahmadiyya mosques.

- Ahmadis were constructing their mosque at Koorakot when eighteen armed intruders arrived. They demolished the walls, fired some shots and went back. No arrests by the police - no criminal charges either against the attackers.
- Authorities handed over the Ahmadiyya Mosque at Merajkey to the opponents on August 24, 2000.
- Extremist elements put pressure on authorities who obligingly ordered Ahmadis to build a wall around the niche and minaret of the Ahmadiyya mosque at Qila Kallarwala in District Sialkot.
- The Administrator of the Sialkot Cantt City Council permitted Ahmadis to renovate their mosque, but a Civil Judge, in response to the plea of opponents, ordered that this be stopped.
- Opponents of Ahmadiyyat have approached the authorities against Ahmadiyya mosques at Marl and Bhakku Bhatti. Their applications are under process.

These incidents have caused great concern to Ahmadis and disturbed their peace. Such actions only strengthen their feeling that they are maltreated by the state and that their basic human rights are grossly violated.

Arrests and Detentions

Registration of criminal cases on religious grounds often result in arrest. When authorities wrongfully charge Ahmadis under PPC 295A, the anti-terrorist courts refuse to grant the bail. Bails are also often denied to Ahmadis charged under anti-Ahmadiyya laws. In district Sialkot, following Ahmadis remain under detention although courts have not yet declared them 'guilty':

- Dr. Abdul Ghani of Daska - since September 16, 1999
- Mr. Munir Ahmad of Sayyan - since September 5, 1999
- Mian Mohammad Fazil of Bharokey - since July 29, 2000
- Mr. Abdul Jabbar of Bharokey - since July 29, 2000
- Mr. Asad Zahur of Luddhar - since September 19, 2000

None of these gentlemen has any criminal record. Their only fault is their faith.

Anti-Ahmadiyya Propaganda

Mullas remain busy in fanning the fire of hatred all the time. They do so through their sermons at mosques, fiery speeches in open-air conferences and distribution of various leaflets and folders. Their printing presses churn out profusely anti-Ahmadiyya hate literature, and they have adequate staff to distribute the same. Some of the titles translated into English from Urdu are mentioned below: -

- The only cure for Qadianis - **Jihad, Jihad**
- Implement the Sharia penalty (Death) against Apostates
- Not Rabwah, but Chak Dhagian (a derogatory name)
- Mirza Tahir's flight from Prayer Duel
- Open Challenge.
- Black day be observed against Qadianis.
- Government Support to Qadianis.
- Indicted by Islam (Qadianis)
- Where are Those who Love the Prophet?
- The Cursed one
- If Mirza Qadiani was Alive in our Times...
- Qadianis - a Plant planted by the British.
- Snakes all around
- The English Prophet.

More than thirty such highly provocative and inciting pamphlets came to our notice during August and September alone. They openly incite the common Muslim to violence against Ahmadis. Authorities know about them but they do not confiscate or proscribe them. Authorities have never admonished the authors of this literature that promotes nothing but hatred and violence.

The incident at Ghatialian was not a big surprise to any keen observer of the past events in district Sialkot. If the government does not respond actively to the challenge of religious terrorism now, there would be more of the same. And the violence may not remain restricted to Ahmadis only -- there are other vulnerable sections in Pakistani society as well.
