



Pakistan's Monthly Extremism Watch

Compiled by National Initiative against Organised Crime (NIOC)

Centre for Governance Research-Pakistan

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- Eight articles and news items are reported in the current edition, depicting various dimensions of extremism in the country, not only in the religious domain but also highlighting gender disparity. Major focus is on discrimination against and persecution of religious minorities, especially, Ahmadis and Hindus. The alleged “indirectly forced” conversions of Hindus in Sindh and increased killings and economic boycott of Ahmadis in Punjab are alarming. More alarming is the fact that incidents of violence/killings are not random; there is an emerging organized patronage of the crime, threatening not only the individuals but law enforcement system overall. The alleged persecution/discrimination is not confined to physical and economic harm only by the extremist organizations but is described as linked to the very constitution, which is the mother of all laws.
- Another emerging theme is the grip of the extremist elements in the state system as such, which has the capacity to undo any effort by the moderate elements to improve the system or make any amendments. Confiscation of grade -7 book carrying photo of Malala and opposition of Domestic Violence Bill by the right-wing elements within the government are glaring examples of their entrenchment. An appeal is made to the house of representatives not to enable unelected right-wing elements to impose their agenda on society via the CII.
- Further, the killings of alleged blasphemy accused continues with an accused killed while going to appear before a court in Multan. The incapacity of the law, law enforcement agencies and enlightened sections of society to protect the minorities and the other weaker section of society is very clear. It is also mentioned in the articles that we are all very quick to agitate when Muslims abroad are mistreated where they are in minority, without realizing our treatment of minorities in Pakistan.

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Protecting misogyny

THE prospect of enacting legislation against domestic violence inevitably throws certain sections of this society into a moral panic. Specious arguments referring to traditional and religious values are used to give a patina of legitimacy to what is essentially a desire to preserve a misogynistic culture predicated on men controlling women. Unfortunately, it seems that for many in the PTI government, the protection of women is subservient to pandering to these regressive elements.

Adviser to the PM on Parliamentary Affairs Babar Awan has written to the National Assembly speaker seeking a review by the Council of Islamic Ideology of the domestic violence bill passed by the Lower House in April this year. In his communiqué, Mr Awan said that concerns have been raised "regarding various definitions and other contents of the bill".

The proposed legislation was tabled in the National Assembly by Human Rights Minister Shireen Mazari — proving that some within the government are cognisant of their duty towards one-half of the population — and passed the same day.

Now, it seems it will be sent to a body that in 2016 came up with a women's protection bill that allowed a husband to beat his wife "if needed". The CII has in the past also opposed a minimum age for marriage and declared DNA evidence to be of secondary value in rape cases. Its stance has often been contrary to logic, science and fundamental human rights, including Pakistan's obligations under international law.

Notwithstanding resistance to some degree or the other, Sindh, Balochistan and Punjab passed laws against DV several years ago. PTI-ruled KP only passed such legislation in January this year, that too after having its bill vetted by the CII, the sole province to have done so. The result, not surprisingly, is a watered-down piece of legislation. This, even though not a day passes without evidence of the terrible treatment that females are subjected to in this country at the hands of their own families. And only the most egregious cases come to light: much of the suffering

remains unseen, stifled under the weight of 'tradition' and the expectations of being a 'dutiful' wife/sister/daughter.

The house of representatives should not enable unelected right-wing elements to impose their agenda on society via the CII.

If anything, legislation against gender-based violence must be strengthened instead of diluted. The Supreme Court in a judgement on Monday declared that the Protection of Women Against Harassment in the Workplace Act in its present form is limited in scope. Any action or behaviour that is not demonstrably 'sexual' in nature does not fall within its definition of what constitutes harassment, said the court, howsoever grave and devastating it may be for the victim. This is the reality. We have only taken initial steps towards protecting women; there is a long road ahead. Regrettably, the PTI government is marching in the opposite direction.

Source: Dawn, July 8, 2021

59 Hindu peasants convert to Islam in Badin

Sameer Mandhro



At least 59 Hindus converted to Islam in Badin, Sindh after the landlord, whose agricultural land they have been cultivating for years, invited them to do so reportedly in exchange for protection and economic support.

The converts, including 23 women, all belong to the Bheel community and have been working the agricultural lands of the former Matli municipal committee chairperson Abdul Rauf Nizamani for years.

Speaking to The Express Tribune, Nizamani confirmed that the converting ceremony was held in Ismail Wadho village, located on the Matli-Tando Ghulam Ali Road some four kilometres away from Matli city. Around 12 families of the Bheel community converted to Islam at the ceremony held on Tuesday morning.

"They all happily and willingly converted to Islam," claimed Nizamani. "No one forced them to leave their former religion."

Contradicting himself, however, Nizamani added that he had asked the former Hindus to embrace Islam. "They had [almost] no religion. These families were between Hinduism and Islam," he claimed, adding that here Islam offers protection. Most of their relatives had already converted, he added.

According to Nizamani, everyone in the village was now a Muslim and he had done this - ask the villagers to embrace Islam - to make his god happy.

'Implicit force'

"No one forcibly asks these poor souls to convert but the people behind such acts slowly brainwash them into hating the Hindu religion," said Mukesh Meghwar, a Hindu activist from Badin.

Matli in Badin is one of the numerous cities in the province where Hindus, especially those belonging to the lower castes, have been converting to Islam.

Commenting on the pervasive issue of conversions and forced conversions in various districts of the province, particularly in lower Sindh, Meghwar said that the case of these 12 families was one of indirect forced conversion.

He was of the view that economic inequalities factored into such conversions as well. "Muslim landlords offer them [timely] economic opportunities," he elaborated. "Our culture is under threat. We are already a minority."

Meghwar added that such acts and inequalities compelled members of lower income minority groups to convert in hopes of better opportunities as members of the majority religion. "We will not be heard anywhere," he said, citing fears of erasure of his community in this manner.

Meanwhile, Nizamani told The Express Tribune that his family would support the new converts financially.

They would also be enrolled in an Islamic seminary located in the city. In a video shared by Nizamani, the converts were seen reciting Quranic verses guided by a cleric. Some appeared to be in new dresses while others had seemingly been brought to the ceremony straight from the agricultural fields.

Source: The Express Tribune, July 12, 2021.

Grade 7 book seized in Punjab for printing Malala's picture

Imran Gabol



The Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board (PCTB) on Monday confiscated the social studies book for grade 7 published by the Oxford University Press (OUP) for printing the picture of Malala Yousufzai alongside that of 1965 war hero Maj Aziz Bhatti Shaheed in the list of important personalities.

Pictures of some important personalities had been published on page 33 of the book that included Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, national poet Allama Iqbal, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan,

Liaquat Ali Khan, legendary philanthropist Abdul Sattar Edhi, Begum Raana Liaquat Ali Khan, Nishan-i-Haider recipient Maj Aziz Bhatti Shaheed and activist Malala Yousufzai.

Already circulated in various educational institutes, sources said the PCTB, police and other agencies were conducting raids on shops across the city even at the time the report was filed to confiscate copies of the book for publishing Malala's picture besides that of Aziz Bhatti.

On Monday, a team of officials first conducted a raid on the OUP office in Mini Market, Gulberg and confiscated the entire stock of the book. They also handed over a letter to the press, stating that the book had not been issued a No-Objection Certificate (NOC).

One of the publishers on condition of anonymity told Dawn that the book had been submitted to the PCTB for a review and to seek an NOC in 2019. The board, after reviewing its contents, did not approve it for publishing. "The Oxford University Press has published the book despite not being issued the NOC," he said.

He said the PCTB officials, police and other agencies had visited his shop, inquired about the book and read out the orders about confiscation of the book.

PCTB Managing Director Farooq Mazhar was not available for comments till the filing of this report, while its spokesman claimed the book was confiscated for being published without an NOC.

Last year, the PCTB had banned 100 textbooks it deemed "against" the two-nation theory, or "unethical and illegal".

It had stated that some of the books had not printed even the correct date of birth of Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and poet Allama Iqbal, while some others contained "blasphemous material" and incorrect maps of the country. Similarly, there were 36 districts of Punjab, but some of these books mentioned 35.

It had also banned a booklet series, Infant Mathematics, allegedly published without its approval. The booklet was found to be in violation of Section 10 of the Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board Act 2015.

Source: Dawn, July 13, 2021.

Blasphemy suspect injured in firing en route to court in Multan



A man accused of blasphemy was injured after the brother of the complainant allegedly opened fire on him while he was going to attend the hearing of the case lodged against him.

As per police, the man, a resident of Chah Loharanwala in Mauza Jhok Lashkarpur, was going to attend the hearing of a blasphemy case lodged against him with the Makhdoom Rasheed police.

The first information report (FIR) had been lodged under Section 295-B on Oct 24, 2019, in which the complainant alleged that he was informed by one Allah Bakhsh that the man had desecrated the holy Quran. The suspect, who was arrested by the Makhdoom Rasheed police, was later released on bail.

On Tuesday, when he left home to attend the hearing in the court of Additional District and Sessions Judge Hassan Ahmad, the complainant's brother allegedly opened fire on him, inflicting five bullet injuries on his leg. His sister told police that Qaisar Hayat, the brother of complainant Khizar Hayat, along with other unidentified persons had opened fire on her brother.

The injured was shifted to Nishtar Hospital where doctors said his condition was out of danger, while the FIR of the incident was yet to be lodged.

The additional district and sessions judge adjourned hearing of the case till Aug 12 after he was informed that by the defendant's counsel that his client had been injured and admitted to hospital.

Source: Dawn, July 14, 2021.

Religious affairs ministry opposes restricting religious conversion before 18 years of age

Nadir Guramani



The Ministry of Religious Affairs on Wednesday opposed a restriction on converting religion before the age of 18 years, saying that if someone aged 14 years wished to convert to some other religion, they could "not be stopped".

The comments were made by Minister for Religious Affairs Noorul Haq Qadri during a meeting of the Senate parliamentary committee on minorities' rights. "We do not support a restriction on religious conversion before 18 years of age," Qadri, who is also a member of the committee, told the meeting.

"There are several incidents where someone expresses the wish to convert their religion out of their own choice before the age of 18. There are several examples in Islam of religious conversion before 18," he said.

If someone wished to change their religion before reaching the age of 18, it was their choice, Qadri insisted, adding that a nikkah or marriage before 18 was "another discussion".

The minister said that the matter related to setting the minimum age limit for marriage had been sent to the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII).

Qadri said that if someone was "forcefully converting [others] in Sindh", then it would be investigated.

He said that Mian Mithu, the pir of Bharchundi Sharif who is blamed for alleged forced conversions of Hindu girls in rural Sindh, should be called by the committee and informed that what he was doing was "damaging Islam and Pakistan".

'New way of conversion'

Meanwhile, Senator Danesh Kumar told the committee that a new "tradition" of converting people had started in Balochistan.

"There is a religious leader in Dalbandin. Sweepers are being told that they [will not have to do] cleaning work if they convert to Islam," he claimed.

Earlier this year, the committee had recommended that only a mature person may be allowed to change their religion and that too after appearing before an additional sessions judge of the area.

Source: Dawn, July 14, 2021

Walk in their skin

Asfand Yar Warraich

COMMON SENSE dictates that if you truly wish to empathise with another human being, all you really must do is put yourself in their position — slip into their minds and bodies, try and imagine things from their perspectives, their lived realities, their versions of the truth. And so, for this piece, I invite the reader to come and don the skin of any person that qualifies as a 'minority' in our country — take a little stroll through their neighbourhoods, study the legal (and social) architecture in which they are made to exist, its long and claustrophobic streets, its gloomed and doomed alleys.

The first thing you may wish to look at is the country's Constitution, this being the ultimate law of the land. Upon reading the preamble, you will be happy to note that it aspires to observe "equality" as a foundational principle, along with promising "freedom of thought, expression, belief, faith, worship and association". You will be even happier to read Article 20, which gives every citizen "the right to profess, practise and propagate their religion", and will positively squeal in delight at Article 25, which graciously states that "all citizens are equal before law" and therefore, entitled to its equal protection.

Read a bit further though, and you will soon realise that the equality you have been promised does not exactly conform to the traditional, dictionary definition of the word, for despite being 'equal', you cannot become the president of the country, or even its prime minister for that matter. Both these offices are reserved solely for Muslim citizens, and you, by virtue of your religious affiliation, are legally barred from occupying them. Other than that, you are technically eligible for almost any constitutional post — chief justice, member of the cabinet, governor of a province, army chief, whatever floats your boat to be honest (aside from certain understandable exceptions, like say a judge of the Federal Shariat Court).

Most crucially however, secured by Article 20, you shall be free to worship under the open sun — you may mark your festivals, observe your sacred rituals, build and maintain your places of worship as you see fit (potential controversies by right-wingers notwithstanding). You may also, should you choose to do so, preach your faith and invite other citizens to join it, although for obvious reasons this is not particularly advisable.

All of this will stand true, unless you happen to be an Ahmadi citizen, in which case Article 20 shall offer little utility. While the 2nd Amendment only went so far as to officially declare you "non-Muslim", Zia's subsequent tinkering with the Penal Code effectively criminalised all outward expressions of your religious beliefs. It is an offence for you to simply profess your faith in public, and in this sense, it is perhaps incorrect (and even a bit insensitive) to classify you as a minority, because the bone-chilling truth is that you are not — you are something less than that.

Now, as is always the case, the law is but a reflection of a purported ideal, never of reality. Peer away from its shimmer and glimmer, and you will quickly realise that these structural modes of discrimination are only part of the problem. Your everyday persecution takes many forms, and here, the skin you wear really does define the contours of the treatment you are meted out.

Walk as a Hindu and you will find that your religion and your people have been systematically villainised in popular imagination, courtesy of a national mythmaking project that has always cast you as the evil 'other'. In Sindh, where most of your community is based, your physical safety is a question mark — men like Mian Mithu roam the deserts, abducting young girls and forcibly converting them. As a Christian you will fare little better — ghettoised, deeply impoverished and trapped in janitorial jobs, generation after generation.

Add Dalit ancestry to either of these identities and the spectre of caste (which remains criminally unaddressed to this day) will act as an additional prison by itself. To round this all off, there shall always be the glistening dagger of blasphemy laws, which, as statistics make clear, disproportionately target non-Muslims. These are all uncomfortable truths, making it that much more necessary that they be confronted without exception.

At the end of the day, minorities are nothing but creatures of numerical disadvantage. Simply put, one is relegated to this status as a mere consequence of being outnumbered. But in democracies, which are premised, not on unanimity or consensus but on majority rule, minorities are the first victims. This is a very well recognised flaw of the basic principles of democratic

governance, and so, in a desperate bid to tame the dominating (and often predatory) instincts of any majority, we put in place little safeguards like civil and political rights — freedom of religion being only one of them. This is precisely what empowers Muslims living in any other country to be treated in the same manner as their non-Muslim counterparts.

Oddly enough, much of this country is extremely quick to call out foreign nations whenever they enact any laws that act to the detriment of Muslims. This is certainly an excellent moral position to take, but without applying the same standards to non-Muslim citizens here at home, it is nothing but sheer hypocrisy — a double standard so plain that it renders even the most eloquent of outrage as nothing more than shameless grandstanding. We must come to realise that like most other liberties, the right to religious freedom is a two-way street.

Finally, as we bid farewell, it is crucial to bear in mind that the ability to slip in and out of the skin of any minority is an exercise steeped in privilege, capable only of delivering a crude and simplistic understanding of their lives. Unlike those who partake in such sympathetic endeavours, minorities do not have the option of discarding their skin once it is over.

Source: [Dawn, July 19, 2021.](#)

‘When the blood starts’: Spike in Ahmadi persecution in Pakistan



When the first bullet whizzed past Sheikh Nasir Ahmad's ear, he brushed at it, thinking it was a mosquito, out on an unseasonably cool August night in the central Pakistani town of Lalamusa.

Before he was able to react, however, two gunmen on a motorcycle pulled up alongside him and shot him four times, hitting his right leg, lower back and the right arm he used to try and shield himself from the hail of bullets.

"You don't feel anything at that time [when you are shot]," Ahmad told Al Jazeera. "[The bullet] is hot as it leaves the barrel, so it's when the blood starts that you realise that something has hit you."

Security camera footage of the attack shows Ahmad falling to the ground as the gunmen speed away. He cried out for help, he says, but no one came.

"My clothes were completely covered in blood. The blood was soaked through my trousers."



Ahmad is a member of Pakistan's 500,000-strong Ahmaddiya community, a religious minority that considers itself Muslim but is barred from referring to themselves as such, and from practising aspects of their faith under Pakistan's strict blasphemy laws.

Police say Ahmad was targeted due to his faith, one of a spates of violent attacks targeting the Ahmadis, their places of worship and even their graves in Pakistan in 2020.

The last year has seen a spike in violent attacks against Ahmadis, and a tenfold increase in blasphemy cases lodged against them.

Community members and rights groups say the spike has been fuelled by the rise of the far-right Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) religious group, and the efforts of a single religious scholar in the eastern city of Lahore, Hassan Muawiya.

“There has been an increase in these [attacks], in [legal] cases,” says Amir Mahmood, spokesman for the Ahmadi community. “This [persecution] has increased in the last two or three years, and it is continuing to do so.”

‘He did this just to save us’

In 2020, at least five Ahmadis were killed in targeted attacks by gunmen across Pakistan, while at least seven others were wounded in unsuccessful attacks, according to community data.

Since 2017, at least 13 Ahmadis have been killed, and more than 40 wounded, according to the data.



The Ahmadi community’s ‘Wall of martyrs’, showing images of all Ahmadis that have been killed for their faith in Pakistan since 1947.

Five months before the attack on Sheikh Nasir Ahmad in Lalamusa, the TLP held a religious gathering attended by hundreds in a park about 100 metres from his home.

The night of that gathering, Ahmad says, his family hid in their home and alerted community leaders that “anything could happen”, as TLP supporters raised slogans calling for “blasphemers” to be put to death.

After the gathering, TLP activity in his small town of roughly 100,000 people increased, he said, with a constant threat to other Ahmadi inhabitants, and many of the regular customers at his plastic furniture store refusing to do business with him.

Ahmad survived the attempt on his life, but others have not been as fortunate.

In November 2020, a young man attempted to barge his way into an Ahmadi place of worship in the town of Marh Balochan, about 90km (56 miles) west of Lahore.

He blindly fired a pistol through the door, before a 31-year-old Ahmadi man, Tahir Mahmood, confronted him and pushed him outside. Tahir was hit by a bullet in his abdomen, and he attempted to run down the street, scaring the attacker away.

“As Tahir got about 30 or 40 feet away, the attacker was behind him. So I shouted saying ‘Tahir, save yourself, he is behind you!’,” says Tariq Mahmood, 55, Tahir’s father, who was also wounded in the attack.

Hearing the father shout, the attacker turned and fired a single shot at Tariq’s forehead, knocking him down. He then caught up to Tahir and shot him dead.

“He did this just to save us,” says Tariq, his body heaving as he weeps, of his son’s attempt to distract the attacker.

A month before the attack on the Mahmoods, there had been a large TLP gathering in their neighbourhood, they say.

“There is a [yearly] conference in October, it is after that that people are more energised [against us],” says Shamim Akhtar, 54, Tahir Mahmood’s mother.

“They go from house to house telling people not to go to our store or take anything from us. They extract promises from people, they make people raise their hands in the mosque to promise not to go to our store.”

‘An atmosphere of dread’

Originally founded in the mid-2010s as the Tehreek-e-Labbaik Ya Rasool Allah (TLYRA), the TLP rose to national prominence in 2017 when it held a three-week protest sit-in blocking a main highway in the Pakistani capital, Islamabad, over a minor change in an electoral oath that the group considered to loosen restrictions against Ahmadis.

The group, founded by hardline religious scholar Khadim Hussain Rizvi, succeeded in getting the government to backtrack on the electoral oath change, forcing the resignation of the federal law minister.

Since then, the TLP has held a series of successful countrywide anti-government protests, some of them violent, on the issue of blasphemy, and won more than 2.2 million votes in a 2018 general election.

The rise in prominence of the TLP, rights groups and researchers say, has a direct correlation with an increase in violent attacks, legal cases and hate speech against Ahmadis, who are explicitly considered “apostates” by the group.

“Religious freedom has been imperilled in Pakistan for years, but the rise of the TLP sends a clear signal to minority communities that they remain vulnerable to discrimination, harassment or even violence,” says Dinushika Dissanayake, deputy South Asia director at Amnesty International.

“It creates an atmosphere of dread, encouraging self-censorship, making it impossible to follow religious rituals without incurring a significant risk.”

Rabia Mahmood, an independent human rights researcher who works on the persecution of Pakistani minorities, says the TLP uses Pakistan’s strict blasphemy laws – which prescribe a mandatory death sentence for the offence of insulting Prophet Muhammad, and jail terms for Ahmadis who “pose as a Muslim” – to justify their acts of persecution.

“TLP has used the blasphemy law as a key tool of justifying its existence, and accused minorities of insult to Islam, raised hell in neighbourhoods for arrest of blasphemy accused and ensured cases were registered against suspects as a result of their witch-hunts,” she says.

Moreover, Mahmood says, attacks against Ahmadis are often preceded by increased TLP activity in the area, or with explicit hate speech campaigns.

“The violent attacks on Ahmadis, their properties and [places of worship], show a pattern of pre-attack smear campaigns against members of the community in a specific locality,” she says.

“At times, the campaign is against the community generally, and sometimes specific to an individual or a group of residents of a locality.”

In at least four cases of attacks on Ahmadis in the last year reviewed by Al Jazeera, there were increased gatherings by the TLP and its affiliates in the area in the months leading to the attack, and in one case the victim, Naeemullah Khattak, was explicitly the target of a hate speech campaign.

In April this year, following a series of violent countrywide protests by the TLP on the issue of “blasphemy” that saw the group abduct several police officers in the eastern city of Lahore, Pakistan’s government banned it as a “terrorist” organisation.

While the ban remains in place, media reports indicate the group is continuing to operate freely in many areas.

Pir Ijaz Ashrafi, a prominent Muslim scholar who refers to himself as the “former” central information secretary of the TLP since the ban was imposed, blames the violence on “individuals”, not an organised TLP policy.

“Pakistan has a constitution and laws, and the constitution and laws do not give permission for [Ahmadis] to present themselves as Muslims,” he told Al Jazeera at a small mosque in Lahore.

“[T]here is no other position on this: the denier of the finality of Prophethood is an apostate, and regarding an apostate Islamic law is clear that there is a duty to kill [them].”

The ‘blasphemy’ campaigner

Even more precipitous than the rise in violence has been an increase in blasphemy cases against members of the Ahmadi community in Pakistan in 2020.

Last year, at least 30 blasphemy cases and 71 other legal cases related to religion were lodged against members of the Ahmadi community, according to community data, representing a tenfold and sixfold increase respectively from the year before.

The increase in legal cases is fuelled, rights activists and community members say, by one man: Hassan Muawiya.



Muawiya, 34, is a religious leader in the eastern city of Lahore, the country’s second-largest city, and works closely with the Khatm-e-Nabuwat Lawyers Forum to pursue cases of alleged blasphemy, particularly against members of the Ahmadi community.

Muawiya’s elder brother, Tahir Ashrafi, is a prominent religious scholar who was appointed by Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan as his special representative on religious harmony in October 2020. Muawiya says his work is “not related” to that of his brother, who is also known for his strong anti-Ahmadi stance.

“Hassan Muawiya, undoubtedly, is Pakistan’s ‘leading’ anti-Ahmadi campaigner,” says Mahmood, the researcher. “He began the most coordinated well-thought-out offline campaign against this community, under the larger ambit of Khatm-e-Nabuwwat Council.

“His tactics use the existing institutional and legal discrimination against Ahmadis to target the community through cases on fabricated charges.”

Sitting on a wicker-backed chair in the dappled sunlight of the grounds of the district courts in Lahore, Muawiya insists he is only following the letter of the law, and accuses members of the Ahmadi community of flouting those laws.

“If any [Ahmadi] or member of any religion stays within their limits, we have no issue with them,” says Sajid Ishari, Muawiya’s lawyer. “But when you cut my nose, then you can expect me to cut your nose as well.”



Muawiya told Al Jazeera that he had been advised by the courts to speak through his lawyer, as he was the complainant or a witness in a number of ongoing blasphemy cases.

Since 2012, Muawiya has been the complainant in at least eight blasphemy cases and associated as a witness or adviser with at least eight others, according to records reviewed by Al Jazeera. Rights activists say the actual number of cases in which Muawiya is associated with the complainant but does not appear on paperwork is far higher.

Defence lawyers allege that Muawiya and his group of lawyers use intimidation tactics, and the sensitivity of the issue of blasphemy in Pakistan, to “pressure” judges.

“In the court, often [the complainants and their lawyers] have tried to misbehave with me,” said Ali Khan*, a lawyer representing several Ahmadis accused of blasphemy by Muawiya’s group of lawyers in Lahore.

“They speak loudly, to scare [people] or intimidate, there have been several incidents of this. The silence of judges is basically in support of [the complainants’ behaviour].”

Al Jazeera attended hearings for four blasphemy cases at Lahore’s sessions court and high court in July. Hearings in three cases were not held despite being on the schedule.

The fourth hearing saw a tense exchange between the complainant’s lawyer and the judge, which saw the defence lawyer accuse the judge of “taking dictation” from the complainants, and the complainant’s lawyer proclaim: “If I had the power ... none of these people [gesturing to the defence] would survive!”

The judge remained silent, and then granted the complainant’s request for an early next hearing, despite the defence’s objections that it had not yet been provided copies of the evidence against the accused.

Khan said such a practice was “common”, and that judges were often under pressure to deliver guilty verdicts or face violence themselves.



Since 1990, at least 79 people have been murdered in the name of the blasphemy laws, according to an Al Jazeera tally. Those killed include people accused of blasphemy, their family members, their lawyers and judges who have delivered “not guilty” verdicts.

“Overall, the atmosphere has become much worse. You have given them free rein and sent a message that on the name of [blasphemy], you can do anything. No one will say anything to you,” says Khan.

Ahmadis have seen “blasphemy” cases registered against them for possessing copies of Islam’s holy book, the Quran, for writing Prophet Muhammad’s name on a wedding invitation, and for uttering the Muslim words of faith while in their place of worship.

Muawiya says the increased violence is a result of judges coming under “foreign pressure” to deliver acquittals in high-profile blasphemy cases.

“[The acquittals] are a question mark on the judiciary, and there is no forum after that,” his lawyer said. “Young people will stop believing in the justice system and then what will they do?”

Muawiya denied allegations that his group of lawyers or he personally intimidated judges or sought to prosecute Ahmadis without “fully researching” to establish the veracity of the case.

Calls for justice

For those who have been attacked in the name of their faith, the cry appears to be similar: for prosecution and conviction of those responsible.

Tariq Mahmood, whose son was killed in Marh Balochan, says his family may never be able to return home again.

“Until we do not get justice and equality, and if a convict gets full punishment, that’s when someone who wants to commit a murder [of an Ahmadi] will know that they will be hanged,” he says.

“But there is no such thing here. So many Ahmadis have been killed, and no one has been punished.”

Sheikh Nasir Ahmad, a shopkeeper from Lalamusa who survived the attack on him, says the government needs to take stronger action against groups like the TLP that engage in hate speech and attacks, or face an expansion of violent attacks.

“There is saying in Punjabi that when you’re grinding the wheat, the [other products] also end up in the flour sometimes.

“So, one day, everyone will be in the middle of this.”

*Some names have been changed to protect the identities of those quoted, at their request, due to security concerns.

Source: AL JAZEERA, July 26, 2021.

Mithi police arrest suspect for forcing Hindu man to hurl obscenities at deities

Mohammad Hussain Khan



Mithi police in Sindh's Tharparkar district have arrested a man who forced a Hindu worker of the Thar coal project to mock and hurl abuse at his religious deities after a video of the incident went viral.

In the video, seen by Dawn, the suspect can be seen hurling obscenities at a young man, who looks visibly shaken at the ordeal. The suspect repeatedly tells the young man to hurl abuses at the Hindu religion and deities, while also forcing him to say "Allahu Akbar".

It was not immediately clear when the exchange was recorded, but on Tuesday, the video went viral on social media, prompting the Sindh government to take notice and order the police to arrest the suspect.

Subsequently, police arrested the suspect, identified as Abdul Salam Abu Dawood, and registered a case against him on behalf of the state at Mithi Police Station. The case has been lodged under Sections 295-A (deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs) and 298 (Use of derogatory remarks in respect of holy personages) of the Pakistan Penal Code on the complaint of Mithi Police SHO Inspector Mohammad Soomar.

The complainant, while referring to the video clip, stated that the suspect had forced the Hindu man, identified as Mukesh Bheel, to hurl abuses at his religion and deities.

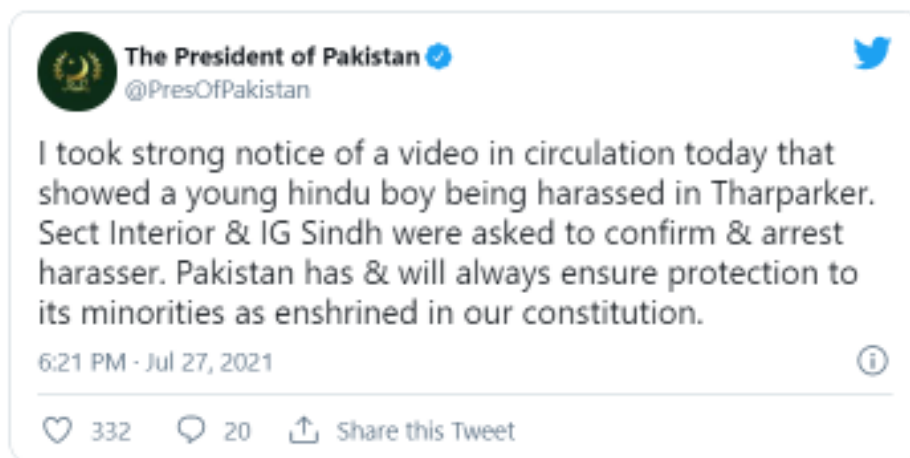
The Hindu man was also forced to hurl abuses at his mother and sister. The police official said that the suspect had committed sacrilege of the Hindu religion, which had hurt feelings of the minority Hindu population and caused anguish among the community.

According to the SHO, the suspect had stopped Mukesh on a main road around five to six kilometres from Mithi near the shrine of Chutthan Shah and slapped him. He also grabbed him by the neck while forcing him to hurl abuses at his deities.

In a tweet, Sindh chief minister's adviser Murtaza Wahab said the suspect had been arrested from Khoski in Badin district.

According to local journalists, Salam too used to work in the Thar coal project but had been sacked some time ago. His Facebook profile still lists the Thar coal project as his employer.

Meanwhile, President Arif Alvi took "strong notice" of the video showing the young Hindu man being harassed, his office said in a tweet, adding that the interior secretary and Sindh police chief were asked to confirm and arrest the harasser.



"Pakistan has and will always ensure protection to its minorities as enshrined in our constitution. [...] How dare anyone in this country violate our laws in such a manner?" the president was quoted as saying. He noted that "the state through Sindh Police" had promptly arrested the suspect, Salam.



The President of Pakistan 
@PresOfPakistan



Islam protects minorities. Our constitution ensures equal rights, freedom & security. How dare anyone in this country violate our laws in such a manner. The State through Sindh Police promptly arrested the accused Abdus Salam Abu Dawood.

6:27 PM · Jul 27, 2021



 285  51  Share this Tweet

Calling upon people to "remain alert", the president said: "Such isolated ugly incidents are used to give a bad name to the country. I condemn it and I assure all citizens that we in Riasat-e-Madina cannot and will not allow this to happen."

Rights activist and PTI minority wing leader from Mithi Krishan Sharma also appreciated the authorities' swift response in registering the FIR against the suspect. Sharma said that Salam had tried to disturb peace through his actions, but the police had responded quickly.

He also lauded the response of the Muslim community, saying it would discourage those who wanted to create an environment like what is being witnessed in India. "We don't want to see such an environment in our country [Pakistan]," he said.

Source: Dawn, July 27, 2021

پولیس ڈائری نمبر 2021/71 ڈاکو نمبر 11100

بک نمبر 11100

کرنٹل پروسیجر کنوینشن 1949 سرجب پولیس ٹاکنی ٹی بنگلن ہاؤس چوکی ڈورہ بائٹ ڈال پھریں خیر

تاریخ و وقت ڈورہ 27-07-2021 وقت 1100 بجہ

تاریخ وقت رپورٹ 27.07.2021 @ 11:00 6 رپورٹ

خبر ڈیٹو فریڈی جو ڈالو رھن جی چاہ

سروکار پاران فریڈی NSP محمد سومار SIO

مذمتی PS

CNIC44032-9281368-5

PIH03360123277

LIS 295A,298 PPC

ڈورہ جو مختصر بیان قلم سبب و جھگڑا کور مال

کمی دور تر ان جو پڑ مختصر بیان

آوردات جی چاہ و پولیس ٹاکنی کان کیتری مفاسلی تی

گڈ کھڑی رکھ آھی ویدیر وائل ہمہ علاقہ مان معلومات وشی وشی خیر پھری ڈا پڑاؤل ٹکی خیر سٹار اور دائرو

نالی خندو چوہری مکیش پت راجہ پیل ویدل میوا رار مکاشی ملی جو آھی جھنڈا ڈ مکھورو ویدیر سوشل میڈیا تی

وازل لیر کھری شہر خندو مکیش جی عقیقت مند آھن و پاکستان خیر کھار سٹل ٹراکان بر خندو جی پھنچی مقدی

جی توہین لیر کھری غر و غشی جو اظہار کھرو ورو آھی جو ایدار خیر لالہ لار اور دائرو چوہری مکیش پیل کی گھی

مان جھلی خندو مکیش جی پگراں جی تالی تی گار گڈ کھری ملیمی توہین کھری قلم 295A,298 PPC جو ڈورہ کھرو آھی

تھنکری سروکار پاران فریڈی تی فریڈی لکھتی پڑ

محمد سومار منگریو صحیح 14 جھنڈو

DSHSIO PS MITH

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About NIOC:

National Initiative against Organized Crime (NIOC) is the first-ever initiative against Organized Crime in Pakistan, which was launched in November 2019. It is led by a group of committed professionals and experts with law enforcement, media and other public service backgrounds. Through developing an empirical evidence-base and conducting hands-on consultations, NIOC aims to build community resilience and influence public policy to combat organized crime including terror financing, drug trafficking, human trafficking and cybercrime. With a complex governance structure having multiple layers of stakeholders, the criminal justice system and law enforcement apparatus require better coordination and capacity building. NIOC tries to identify the gaps and suggest improvements in the Criminal Justice System (CJS).



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