

Persecution of Ahmadis in Pakistan

News Report May 2013

Availability of justice to Ahmadis in Lahore!

Lahore: More than four months ago, a gang of religious extremists in collusion with Lahore Police raided a printing press owned by an Ahmadi. The police arrested four of the press staff and charged them unwarrantedly under a blasphemy law and the Ahmadi-specific laws. Their plea for bail was rejected by the lower courts, and was then placed before the august Lahore High Court. What happened inside the court room was reported by the daily The Express Tribune in its issue of May 20, 2013 (Extracts):

LHC judge forced to withdraw order

Some jurists say it is ‘improper’ for the judge to withdraw his order, whether verbal or written.

By Rana Tanveer

Published May 20, 2013

Moeed Ayaz, Asmatullah, Razaullah and Ghulamullah, employees of Black Arrow Printing Press, were arrested by Islampura police on January 7. On Friday, their bail petition under Sections 295B (defiling the Holy Quran) and 298C (an Ahmadi calling himself Muslim or preaching his faith) of the Pakistan Penal Code and Section 24A of the Press and Publications Ordinance were heard at the Lahore High Court.

The courtroom was full and some lawyers had to stand while the judge heard the arguments, after which he approved the bails for the suspects. This announcement nearly caused a riot in the courtroom and the judge had to withdraw the order barely two minutes after he had pronounced it. He then referred the case to the chief justice for fixing it before another judge. The judge withdrew the order after harsh remarks from a lawyer who was part of a group of 25 lawyers who had appeared before the court to argue the case against the Ahmadis. Some jurists said it was ‘improper’ for the judge to withdraw his order, whether verbal or written. He should have considered the repercussions, they said, before announcing the order rather than withdrawing it later. On April 9, another LHC judge, after hearing the arguments on the bail petition of a Christian woman accused of blasphemy, referred it to the chief justice for fixing it before another judge.

How the judiciary (mal) functions in Pakistan?

Its impact on freedom of (Ahmadiyya) press

Lahore: All of a sudden the weekly ‘Lahore’ has stopped publication. It is the oldest weekly in Lahore, the capital of the Punjab. The reasons are telling and worrisome.

The Lahore started publication in 1952. It had three journalists as editors, two non-Ahmadis and one Ahmadi. Its title page proudly carries the claim: **Mouth-piece of the literary, industrial and political activities of the high-spirited Pakistanis.** With passage of time the two non-Ahmadi editors departed for greener pastures while Mr. Saqib Zeervi, the Ahmadi stuck to the Lahore, continued to produce the weekly as a model of independent, bold, constructive journalism – a rare undertaking in emerging Pakistan.

Mr. Saqib Zeervi died in 2002. His son Yasser Zeervi succeeded him and continued with his father’s mission of upright journalism. As before, this weekly often printed articles, *inter alia*, on Ahmadis’ human rights and their position on religious, social, political, etc

issues in order to counter mostly false and malicious propaganda against them. In Pakistan, the press is relatively free. The Lahore shared this freedom. But for how long?

It is learnt from reliable sources that one, Mohammad Yaqub, linked to the Khatme Nabuwwat faction in Lahore applied to the police that a case under PPCs 295-C, 295-B, 298-C, W-II ATA etc be registered against Mr. Yasser Zeervi, the editor of 'Lahore' and two others for distributing the weekly which carries "blasphemous writings" (sic). These penal codes include the Blasphemy law, the Anti-Terrorism Act and the anti-Ahmadiyya law. Their penalties include death, imprisonment for life, unlimited fine etc.

The police were good enough not to immediately book the editor as demanded but sent the application to their legal department for examination and recommendation.

The applicant hurried to enlist support from the judiciary and put up a writ in a session's court in Lahore. The pious sessions judge ordered the police to register the case. We do not know if he bothered to go through the 'objectionable' contents, as the editor is routinely extra cautious in selecting the texts he prints in the weekly. It can be categorically said that there is nothing in the weekly that is even remotely blasphemous. The judge simply cared for the sensitivities of anti-Ahmadi bigots of a small minority in Lahore, although they are effective in trouble making if not confronted by a resolute and fair administration and judiciary.

It is interesting to see that in today's Pakistan Maulana Abdul Aziz (of Lal Masjid, Islamabad where the extremist elements murdered a Lt. Colonel on duty) is acquitted of terrorism charges, while an editor whose weekly is full of admiration for the Holy Prophet (pbuh) is frivolously ordered to be booked for blasphemy and terror.

Goons of the Tehrik Khatme Nabuwwat are present on vigil in the vicinity of the office of the 'Lahore'. They are a threat to law and order and of course, to the freedom of press, bringing a bad name to the government of the Punjab.

The editor had to stop going to his office and was obliged to close it down – at least temporarily. He has gone into hiding. The Blasphemy clause PPC 295-C, proposed in the application, normally results in arrest – any release on bail is subject to further judicial discretion.

Mischief of a mulla, Hasan Muawiya *alias* Tooti

Lahore; May 7, 2013: Four Ahmadi youths were standing outside the court where the case of four arrested Ahmadis was being heard. Hasan Muawiya came to them and snatched their mobile phones and accused them of photographing him. He also slapped one of the Ahmadi youths and told the police to arrest them as his life was in danger because of them. Muawiya also stated that he was receiving threatening phone calls from Pakistan and UK. The compliant police took the Ahmadi youths to the police station.

Later two Ahmadi lawyers and a few Ahmadis went to the police station to rescue the Ahmadi youths. Mr. Ahmad Mahmood Khan was in the delegation. Mulla Muawiya called Mr. Khan and told him to remove the ring on which a Quranic verse was inscribed. The former handed over the ring to another Ahmadi lawyer. At this the mulla and his accomplices made hue and cry and demanded of the police to register an FIR against Mr. Khan. When the SHO was unable to resist the pressure of the mullas he referred the matter to the ASP. The ASP asked the mullas to submit an application against Mr. Khan. He also ordered that a report be registered against 4 Ahmadi youths, and told Mr. Khan to give an undertaking that if any harm was done to the mullas he would be responsible. The mullas submitted an application against Mr. Khan that a case under 298-C be registered against him.

Relentless hostility in Lahore

During this month too, the capital of the Punjab remained the epicenter of anti-Ahmadi agitation – thanks to the policy of deliberate neglect adopted by the local administration on behalf of the provincial government. Some reports from different neighborhoods:

Guldasht Town; April 2013: An Ahmadi lady who lives near a local Ahmadiyya centre was going home when she heard a youth telling others loudly, “*We will receive arms tonight, then we shall pile up the Ahmadi dead.*” The lady stopped for a moment, while he kept talking in a raised voice. She reported the incident to the Ahmadi elders.

Township; May 3, 2013: A fresh appointee has come to the Noor Mosque as Khatib. He delivered a venomous sermon on Friday against Ahmadis. He spoke filth against the books written by the founder of the Ahmadiyya community and leveled baseless allegations against him. He provoked the audience extensively and invited his flock, “*Come! The soldiers of Khatme Nabuwwat, let’s roast these Mirzais (Ahmadis).*”

May 3, 2013: Mr. Abid Yaseen Bhatti has a business of photography in Lahore for the last 23 years. Two members of the Faizan-e-Madina Khatme Nabuwwat came to his shop and said ‘*Assalamu Alaikum*’ (Islamic greetings). Mr. Bhatti replied the same way. They objected to his response and added: ‘*You propagate your faith here and have made it a centre of religious activities. If you wish to remain unharmed, abandon this shop and quit this area,*’

Ichra; May 6, 2013: Two mullas came to the house of Mr. Mubashir Ahmad Nagi and asked him to recite the *Kalima*. He recited it for them. They also asked him about his faith in the finality of the prophethood, which he confirmed. At this the leading mulla told his colleagues to do him no harm, as he was a Muslim. Thereafter the mulla started speaking filth against the founder of the Ahmadiyya community. At this Mr. Nagi excused himself and retreated inside.

Wapda Town; May 2013: Mr. Nadeem Akram runs a property business here. Someone threw a threatening note at his office which conveyed (translation):

“You are infidels and accomplices of *Dajjal* (anti-Christ) – avail your last few breaths. Live a few more days; death is waiting for you. You are hell-bound. Stop converting Muslims into Mirzais through deceit. Your days are numbered. We have firmly decided, and are ready to die for the sake of the honour of the Prophethood.”

Mr. Akram has been advised to exercise great caution.

Samanabad; May 4, 2013: An Ahmadi youth, Mr. Musawwar Ahmad was returning home after collecting updated particulars of his community fellows when approximately 20 mullas intercepted him. They forcibly took his bag which contained papers bearing Ahmadis’ particulars. They read these forms. They harassed him, and warned him to expect even severer persecution than before. The mullas carried fire-arms. They set on fire one of the data sheets. They seemed to know the names and addresses of other community workers too. They returned his bag to Mr. Ahmad. Having harassed and threatened him profusely, they let Mr. Ahmad go.

Johar Town; May 21, 2013: Mr. Abid Chughtai lives in Johar Town. Someone who introduced himself from a Khatme Nabuwwat organisation knocked at his door at 9 p.m. He objected to the decorative plate on which ‘*Masha Allah*’ (Whatever God wills!) was written and demanded of Mr. Chughtai to hand it over to him to avoid any confrontation. He threatened him with registration of an FIR in case of non-compliance. Mr. Chughtai handed over the plate to him. He took it away.

Johar Town; May 21, 2013: Dr. Lateef Ahmad, an Ahmadi received a phone call from one of his patient’s wife. She asked permission to visit his house at 10:30 p.m., to which he agreed. The bell rang at 10:30 p.m. When Dr. Ahmad came out to see the patient he found a mulla with a big beard who told his name as Waqas. He objected to the two decorative plates bearing Islamic inscriptions, at his house. He threatened him, “*It is against the law. We are*

not getting an FIR registered yet and give you the time until Sunday. Remove these plates, otherwise we'll get an FIR registered and you will face the consequences.” Dr. Ahmad told him that he had bought this house and these plates were already there. The mulla rejected the explanation, repeated his threat and departed.

Ongoing hostility in Karachi

Galzar Hijri; April 2013: Mr. Tanveer Ahmad and his family had recently shifted here. They went to attend a wedding ceremony. Some unknown people broke into his house and stole gold ornaments and prize bonds worth 800,000 rupees. The theft was reported to the police but they have little to show as follow-up. It is worth mentioning that for some days the children of a nearby madrassa had been pelting stones at his house.

Similarly Mr. Muhammad Saleem Ansari a convert to Ahmadiyyat and his wife received threatening e-mails and text messages telling them to leave the area within 60 days, or remain prepared for the consequences.

Baldia Town; May 20, 2013: Mr. Matta Khan runs a shop here. Someone looted his shop during the dark hours and tried to set it on fire. Luckily the fire did not spread as a water pipe passing through his shop burst open and extinguished the fire. In cash and goods he suffered a loss of approximately 35,000 rupees in this robbery. The owner of this property advised him not to report to the police because he was a Qadiani (Ahmadi). His shop was looted twice in the past as well.

Baldia Town; May 2013: It is learnt that someone dropped a note demanding one and a half million rupees at the beauty parlor run by Mrs. Ghafoor Ahmad, while she and her husband were away from Karachi. Three days' ultimatum was given. After three days they contacted her on a mobile phone but she did not attend their call. They sent a text message demanding the money. Mr. Ahmad and his wife decided not to return home in the face of this threat. The police have been informed of the demand.

It is noteworthy that Mr. Saad Farooq who was martyred last year in Karachi was a nephew of Mr. Ahmad.

Agitation in Rawalpindi

Satellite Town, May 28, 2013: An Ahmadi, Mr. Tanveer Ahmad who works in Aiwan-e-Tauheed (Ahmadiyya centre) went to buy some eatables from a nearby shop. The retailer refused to sell him anything on inquiring and discovering his faith.

Raja Bazaar; May 6, 2013: Mr. Muhammad Sultan owns here a shop, 'Bismillah Spices'. Two mullas came to his shop at 2 p.m. and told him to remove all the Islamic inscriptions from his shop. Mr. Sultan refused to do so. Approximately 12 mullas revisited his shop at 5 p.m., removed all the Islamic inscriptions from there and told him to remove the title-board of his shop as well. They left their contact number with the next door shop-keeper and asked him to inform them in case of non-compliance. Mr. Sultan informed the police about the incident, however they took no action.

Sarafa Market; May 7, 2013: Mr. Mahmood Ahmad owns a business of jewelry in this market. Some members of the market committee came to his shop and told him to remove the Islamic inscriptions from his shop. He replied, "I have no problem, but you can do that yourself if you have any problem with them." The bigots unhooked all the pious inscriptions from there and took them away.

Nabi Chowk, May 29, 2013: Mr. Ziaul Qamar Sabzwari, an Ahmadi owns a shop in Nabi Chowk. Some mullas of the Khatme Nabuwat faction came to his shop and demanded removal of Islamic stickers and cards from his shop. Mr. Sabzwari refused to oblige. The mullas then removed all the cards etc that bore Islamic inscriptions. The mullas demanded

removal of the *Bismillah* (Islamic inscription) plate from his house as well. Mr. Sabzwari is living in a rented house; it is owned by a non-Ahmadi.

It is worth noting that forced removal of Islamic inscriptions from Ahmadi-owned houses and shops was practiced in Lahore, now this evil has spilled over to Rawalpindi as well.

No place for Ahmadis in Imran Khan's Naya (new) Pakistan

Karachi: The Express Tribune filed the following report in its issue of May 3, 2013 (Extracts):

“1973 Constitution: Imran opposes repeal of Ahmadi laws

Shireen Mazari clarified that it did not mean Imran “sanctions violence against minorities”.

By Faiza Rahman

Published: May 3, 2013

“KARACHI: In a widely accessed video message, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan said that he would neither revise nor repeal any current laws pertaining to the Ahmadi community, since these were in consonance with his personal beliefs.

“The PTI chief’s message came as a clarification to another popular video in which a woman named Nadia Ramzan Chaudhry, introducing herself as a PTI office bearer, approached the spiritual leader of the Ahmadi community in Britain to encourage his community to vote for the PTI.

“In response, the PTI chief made it clear that he had not asked any one from his party to enlist support from the Ahmadi community, adding that the removal of the stated clauses of the constitution was “not part of PTI’s agenda.

“The PTI chief said that those who do not believe that the Holy Prophet (PBUH) was the last prophet of Islam cannot be Muslims. However, Shireen Mazari, the party’s information secretary, quickly clarified that this does not mean that Imran “sanctions violence against minorities”.

“Political analyst Rasul Baksh Rais of the view that Imran’s personal belief will do little to add to the Ahmadi community’s plight. “The community is indeed suffering, but it is suffering because of clauses in the constitution.”

Earlier, JUI (F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rahman was reported by the daily The Nation, Lahore on April 28, 2013 as follows:

Imran working for Ahmadi, Jewish lobbies, alleges Fazl

A few days later the Daily Times reported on May 5, 2013 in its Site Edition a fatwa issued by this mulla as follows:

“Dera Ismail Khan: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) Chief Fazlur Rehman has issued a decree (fatwa) against Imran Khan, saying that vote to Imran is ‘haram’ (forbidden as per Sharia).”

Imran Khan’s reaction to these fatwas and allegations surprised most of his fans. Some of them felt disappointment to the core by his echoing of the mulla’s sectarian muddle. No one needed or expected from him a restatement or elaboration of the dogma of Khatme Nabuwat (the end of Prophethood). Comments on his misplaced clarification flooded the Internet. Some intellectuals took him to task in op-eds. Copy of one such op-ed by Yasser Latif Hamdani in the Daily Times – Site Edition of May 06, 2013 is placed as Annex I to this report.

Nabeen Jafri wrote the lead article in the Blogs – The Express Tribune; (extracts):

“He (Imran Khan) stated yesterday, “PTI totally subscribes to the article in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on the Ahmadis. It is not part of the PTI agenda to seek amendment of the said article in the Constitution.

...

“Today, a political candidate is denying a group a basic right to identify based on a fundamentally wrong constitutional law. Tomorrow, someone will go a step further and deny some other group another basic right. Such inherent and open discrimination end up in a vicious cycle.

“Just ask the Germans.”

The Blog asked its readers to indicate approval or disapproval of Imran Khan’s statement on the Ahmadi community. Thousands responded. In a clear verdict, 84% disapproved Khan’s statement. In Elections 2013, Imran Khan’s party could bag only 28 seats out of the 253 National Assembly seats (11%) when results were declared.

Members of US Congress support Ahmadis’ political rights in Pakistan

Washington: A fairly large number of Members of the US Congress wrote a letter to Mr. John Kerry, Secretary of State on April 16, 2013 on the issue of obstacles in the way of Pakistani Ahmadis’ participation in Elections 2013.

“... Unfortunately, Pakistan’s electoral system discriminates on the basis of religion, rendering the promise of free and fair elections a sham,” they wrote.

After referring to the rules and procedures that make it impossible for Ahmadis to register as voters, they warned, “Absent the ability for Pakistan’s entire electorate to participate, we will not be able to endorse the May elections.”

“We urge you to press Pakistani President Zardari to immediately repeal Executive Order No. 15 and remove any discriminatory restrictions on Ahmadis being able to vote in the upcoming May elections,” they concluded.

Copy of this letter is placed at Annex II to this report.

U.S. Senator Mitch McConnell, the Republican Leader, and Senator John Cornyn wrote a similar letter to the Secretary of State on April 25, 2013.

An overview of Elections 2013

News headlines from various national newspapers and media outlets are reproduced below on this subject. These will give a fair picture of what happened, and will also help in assessing the fairness, validity and impact of this major national event.

Ahmadis still out of electoral process

The daily The Express Tribune; Lahore April 22, 2013

Ahmadis announce boycott of elections over discrimination

The Daily Times, Staff Report on May 06, 2013

Bloody ballot: 110 killed in April

The daily The Express Tribune; Lahore, May 9, 2013

No let up on poll offices, rallies

The daily Dawn; Lahore, May 2, 2013

Seven political leaders (extremists!) who had been placed on a watch list under the Fourth Schedule of the Anti-Terrorism Act 1997 are contesting elections for the national and provincial assembly seats in Rawalpindi and Abbotabad, it has been learnt.

The daily Dawn; Lahore, May 4, 2013

31 killed, dozens injured in firing and bomb attacks on election offices

The daily Mashriq; Lahore, May 12, 2013

49 polling stations show over 100% turnout

The daily The News; Lahore, May 14, 2013

We do not accept electoral results; our votes were later found in fields, gutters and streams: Fazlur Rahman (JUI-F)

The Ace News; Faisalabad, May 18, 2013

None from Bhutto family could campaign elections openly: BBC

The daily Mashriq; Lahore, May 14, 2013

In Bajaur, only 2800 women out of a registered 130,000 plus – a mere three percent – were able to cast their votes because religious/political parties and tribal elders flouted earlier commitments to the contrary and barred women from voting.

Editorial in the daily Dawn; Lahore, May 19, 2013

Imran to issue white paper on rigging

The daily The Nation; Lahore, May 13, 2013

Five parties boycott elections in Karachi

The daily Dawn; Lahore, May 12, 2013

Zehra Shahid PTI leader in Karachi murdered; Imran holds Altaf Hussain responsible

The daily Dunya; Lahore, May 19, 2013

Islamabad: Voting turnout countrywide 53.4 percent

The daily Ausaf; Lahore, May 16, 2013

Election Commission orders re-polling in 4 NA and 2 PK provincial constituencies

The daily Mashriq; Lahore, May 16, 2013

Op-ed: Wisdom Corridor

The biggest pre-election challenge was to hold free, fair and transparent elections. In this the caretaker governments, the Election Commission and by extension the judiciary have failed utterly. Consensus is emerging that this could be the most flawed election in our history.

Humayun Gohar on the internet; <http://www.opinion-maker.org/2013/05/wisdom-corridor/>

Bigotry of the police

Gotaryala, District Gujrat; May 25, 2013: The Deputy Superintendent of Police from Kharian and SHO of police station Gulyana arrived here at night with a heavy contingent of police. The DSP stated that they had come to protect Ahmadis as he had information of the possibility of bloodshed there. He pointed to the *Kalima* written on the houses of local Ahmadis and ordered the SHO to erase those writings, and threatened local Ahmadis of registration of an FIR against them. The SHO and four policemen effaced the Islamic creed written on the outer walls of the houses of four Ahmadis. While leaving, the SHO told Ahmadis to demolish the niche of the Ahmadiyya mosque.

It is worth a mention that the newly elected local MNA, Mr. Abid Raza (PML-N) is anti-Ahmadiyya and openly opposes Ahmadiyyat. This visit of the police could be on his initiative.

Belligerence in Nawabshah

April 2013: Mr. Abdul Samad Khan, Ahmadi, runs an internet café in the city. A youth named Farooq used to work in his café. One day Farooq went to a roadside shop to buy insulation tape for his motor rickshaw. The owner of the shop who looked like a *Pathan*, asked Farooq about the location of the house of Mr. Samad Khan. Farooq showed ignorance. The *Pathan* informed him that Mr. Khan lived in Jamshed Colony. Farooq asked him the reason of his interest, to which he replied, “The same will happen to him as happened to other

Qadianis.” Many Ahmadis have been murdered in Nawabshah for their faith in recent years. Farooq reported the incident to Mr. Khan.

Another case: Mr. Muhammad Imtiaz owns a bakery in the city. One, Naveed works in his bakery. An opponent of Ahmadiyyat named Bilal asked Naveed if Asif was still alive. Asif, an Ahmadi was seriously injured in an attack on his life last month. Mr. Naveed showed his ignorance. Bilal offered Naveed to stop working for Mr. Imtiaz and join him. He threatened action against Naveed’s boss (Mr. Imtiaz).

All Ahmadis have been advised to remain on guard, and authorities have been informed of the ongoing hostility.

Anti-Ahmadi activism in Sargodha

April 2013: Some mullas came to the shop of an Ahmadi, Zafar Book Depot and threatened the owner to stop selling Islamic books at his shop, otherwise he would be responsible for the consequences.

New Satellite Town; April 2013: Mr. Nizarat Ahmad Shahid runs a tailoring shop here. Mulla Akram Toofani and a former councilor along with a few mullas came to his shop and threatened the owner to have the shop vacated within an hour, or face arson. From there they proceeded to locate the house of Malik Irfan (of Al-Meezan Oil), an Ahmadi. Then they returned to Mr. Shahid’s shop and shouted abuse. He had to vacate the shop. The opponents are now agitating against other Ahmadi residents of the neighbourhood.

Update of the case against the daily Al-Fazl

Lahore; May 7, 2013: It was reported last month that on April 10, 2013, the police registered a case against the editor, Mr. Abdul Sami Khan, the printer Mr. Tahir Mehdi Imtiaz Ahmad of the oldest newspaper the daily Al-Fazl, and four others under the Anti-Terrorism Act and (anti-Ahmadi) Ordinance XX. The latter four accused were arrested by the police.

The accused applied for bail after arrest with the Anti-terrorist court. On May 7, 2013 the judge granted the bail of two Mr. Azhar Zareef and Mr. Faisal Ahmad Tahir while the bail of the other two accused Mr. Khalid Ashfaq and Mr. Tahir Ahmad was refused.

Update of the Gulshan e Ravi case

Lahore; April 28, 2013: A group of miscreants led by the brother of a top mulla and the police raided an Ahmadiyya prayer centre in Gulshan-e-Ravi, detained nine, including a woman and her son, and booked 8 Ahmadis under section 295-B, and 11 WATA in P.S. Gulshan-e-Ravi in FIR 385/13 on April 29, 2013.

The court has finally accepted their bail applications and they got freedom on bail after arrest. The mullas have lodged an application in the higher court to cancel this bail. The court has summoned all the record of the case from the police.

Mr. Noman Virk’s plea for bail before arrest in this case was also confirmed by an ATC court.

A renowned Ahmadi professor, and his persecution in 1970s and 1980s

Professor Dr Syed Sultan Mahmud Shahid died recently in Rabwah. He was a senior professor in the Ahmadiyya Talim ul Islam College when it was nationalized in 1972. The renowned Dr. Parwazi wrote a biography note on him in the daily Al-Fazl of May 6, 2013. A few extracts (translation):

“Text books written by him (on chemistry) were taught in the colleges of the Punjab University. ...

“When I saw this renowned person first time in Rabwah I could not believe that it is the eminent and illustrious professor I had heard so much about. He was a man without any pretense who, holding his little daughter by hand, way buying vegetables in the market. ...

“Shah Ji (Prof. Shahid) treated students kindly and informally. I never saw him disciplining students through fines. He would reform them through affection. ...

“Dr Syed Sultan Mahmud Shahid was one of the early teachers of the (Talim ul Islam) college. He joined the staff in Qadian (in pre-Partition days). He remained on the staff in Rabwah till the college was nationalized. And it was for this ‘crime’ that he was made to suffer, but he never wavered. ...

“After the nationalization of this college, Shah Ji was inflicted many hardships. He was transferred here and there and was often given appointments below his rank and merit; but he bore up with it. Although at the time of nationalization he was among the senior most teachers in the Punjab, he had to sip the bitter drink of injustice.

“Talim ul Islam College (Rabwah) is the only such college that has not been denationalized on account of (religious) prejudice and discrimination; otherwise most institutions have been returned (to original owners). (Professors) Naseer Khan and Sufi (Basharat) have passed away bearing this grief; now Shah Ji has departed with this spot on his heart.”

Pakistan of 2013: the judiciary, lawyers groups and Ahmadiis

Lahore: We reproduce below a Statement AHRC-STM-099-2013 verbatim, without comment:

ASIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

PAKISTAN: Lawyers threatened and forced a High Court judge to change his ruling

May 24, 2013

A judge of the Lahore High Court changed his decision less than two minutes after ruling in favour of the accused in a blasphemy case when lawyers and members of fundamentalist groups threatened him. The judge, in the fear of the dire consequences, quickly withdrew his decision of granting bail to the accused persons.

May 19, the arrested persons of a printing press were presented before the Lahore High Court (LHC) for their bail applications. The persons were arrested on January 7, 2013 on the charges of Sections 295B (defiling the Holy Quran) and 298C (an Ahmadi calling himself a Muslim or preaching his faith) of the Pakistan Penal Code and Section 24A of the Press and Publications Ordinance. The arrested persons were simply the employees of a printing press which was owned by an Ahmadi, the most hated Islamic community in Pakistan.

The Government of Punjab has once again pounced upon the Ahmadiyya newspaper, ‘Al Fazl’ which is the only paper the community has in Pakistan for the education and information of its members. Al Fazl is completely apolitical and extremely particular to publish items within the framework of the restrictions imposed upon it by the infamous Ordinance XX issued during the military government of General Zia ul Haq. A group of fundamentalists, Khatme Nabuwwat, supported by the local police and vandals, attacked the Black Arrow Press in Lahore. Whilst the owner of this press is an Ahmadi the employees are not.

During the hearing the courtroom was full and some lawyers had to stand while the judge heard the arguments, after which he approved bail for the suspects. This announcement nearly caused a riot in the courtroom and the judge had to withdraw the order barely two minutes after he had pronounced it. He then referred the case to the Chief Justice for fixing it before another judge. A group of 35 lawyers came to oppose the bail application of the printing press employees because the lawyers claimed they were from the Ahmadi sect.

The judge had to withdraw the order after harsh remarks from one particular lawyer who was part of the group who had appeared before the court to argue the case against the Ahmadis. When this lawyer used harsh remarks against the judge the other lawyers and some people from a fundamentalist group shouted slogans against the judge and verbally insulted him with malicious remarks.

According to the daily Express Tribune, some jurists said it was 'improper' for the judge to withdraw his order, whether verbal or written. He should have considered the repercussions, they said, before announcing the order rather than withdrawing it later.

They appear to be missing the entire point which is that when a judge makes his decision the lawyers should respect it. Any judge should make a decision based on the merits of the case and (not) for reason of personal security. For the lawyers to verbally abuse and threaten a judge makes a mockery of the law. The defendants who were initially granted bail should be released as the justice system permits.

Just one month before this latest incident a similar situation was faced by another judge of the Lahore High Court. On April 9, the said judge, after hearing the arguments on the bail petition of a Christian woman accused of blasphemy, referred it to the chief justice for fixing it before another judge.

The hooliganism of the lawyers has become common in the country since the successful movement for the independence of the judiciary. Since the year 2010, when Chief Justice Iftikhar Choudry and other judges were restored after the heroic struggle of the lawyers and masses, the lawyers formed groups which take decisions in their favour or force the judge to accept their dictates. In not one single case has the Chief Justice of Pakistan or the Judicial Reform Committee taken any action to stop such hooliganism. In one appalling case which happened in 2010 a lawyer physically beat a judge of a Session Court of Faisalabad, Punjab province. When the judges went on strike due to this incident the Chief Justice, rather than support their stand, ordered them to settle the issue with the attacker. The judges then had to apologise to the offending lawyer as the other lawyers went on strike in his support.

This is nothing more than vigilantism and has become a disease in the lawyers' community. In the case of the assassination of the former governor of Punjab Mr. Salman Taseer, who was shot by his guard, the lawyers defending the killer made him a hero of Islam and attacked the court rooms to stop the hearing against him. Later the judge that sentenced him had to leave the country after receiving threats to his life from the lawyers.

The religious fanaticism in the country has now reached the point where it has destroyed the very fabric of the society. The judiciary for whose independence people have sacrificed their lives has become hostage before the lawyers and the fundamentalists and acts on the dictates of bigots.

The Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) has always stood up for the independence of the judiciary and supported the lawyers' movement as a vanguard of change in the society. We are saddened to see the state to which the law profession appears to have fallen. Rather than relying on the rule of law and the supremacy of the judiciary the lawyers themselves have resorted to the same

terror tactics of the Taliban and the fundamentalists. The AHRC urges the Supreme Court, the Judicial Reform Committee and the Pakistan Bar Council to act quickly to stop the rot which has taken the form of the hooliganism by the lawyers. If the lawyers are allowed to dictate terms to the judges they are sworn to respect then the entire purpose of the courts ceases to exist. At the moment the people still respect the judiciary. However, if the judiciary continues to pay lip service to the rule of law and caters to the whims of the hooligans then the respect of the people will soon fail and the society will resort to anarchy.

Document Type: Statement
Document ID: AHRC-STM-099-2013
Countries: Pakistan
Issues : Rule of law, Extrajudicial killings, Judicial system, Military, Right to education

Ahmadis behind bars

1. The police raided the workshop of a book-binder, Syed Altaf Hussain and arrested him, his son and his workers on February 22, 2013. The charge: he undertakes book-bindings of some Ahmadiyya publications. Syed Altaf Hussain is not an Ahmadi. Two days later, the police released four of the detainees but kept Syed Hussain in detention at P.S. Old Anarkali. Mr. Asmatullah another Ahmadi who was also implicated in Black Arrow case and granted bail by the court in that case but was not released because he was also mentioned in this case of book-binder. Syed Hussain (non-Ahmadi) and Asmatullah (an Ahmadi) are still behind bars.
2. On April 10, 2013, the police registered a case against the editor Mr. Abdul Sami Khan, the printer Mr. Tahir Mehdi Imtiaz Ahmad of the oldest newspaper the daily Al-Fazl and four others, under the Anti-Terrorism Act and (anti-Ahmadi) Ordinance XX. The latter four accused Mr. Khalid Ashfaq, Mr. Tahir Ahmad, Mr. Faisal Ahmad and Mr. Azhar Zareef were arrested by the Lahore Police of Police Station Islampura. On May 7, 2013 the judge granted the bail of two Mr. Azhar Zareef and Mr. Faisal Ahmad Tahir, while the bail of the other two accused Mr. Khalid Ashfaq and Mr. Tahir Ahmad was denied who consequently remain behind bars.

From the Media

Eight detained Ahmadis now under arrest (in Lahore)

The daily The Express Tribune; Lahore, May 1, 2013

Anti-Ahmadi group targets community again

The daily The Express Tribune; Lahore, May 8, 2013

Gulshan e Ravi (Lahore): Objectionable material nabbed from secret worship place of Qadianis. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani is the author of the disputed books. Police investigations under way.

The daily Ausaf; Lahore, May 2, 2013

Imran opposes repeal of Ahmadi laws

The daily The Express Tribune; Lahore, May 3, 2013

Jamaat-i-Ahmadiyya to boycott elections

The daily The Express Tribune; Lahore, May 6, 2013

According to the Constitution, Qadianis may not pose to be Muslim even through a hint or pointer (Isharey Kinaey): Maulana Zahid ur Rashidi's address in Chiniot

The daily Aman; Faisalabad, May 18, 2013

Chenab Nagar: 3 taps functional out of 11 at the (city) water filter plant

The daily Jahane Pakistan; Lahore, May 21, 2013

- Chenab Nagar: Excessive breeding of mosquitoes and flies; Risk of contagious diseases**
The daily Din; Lahore, May 1, 2013
- Chenab Nagar: Inadequate security measures. Demand to improve security.**
The daily Mashriq; Lahore, May 3, 2013
- Qadiani community should be declared illegal, banned, and Sharia penalty of apostasy (death) should be imposed: Maulana Shabbir Ahmad (of International Khatme Nabuwwat Movement)**
The daily Ausaf; Lahore, May 1, 2013
- Qadianis and Jews are joint enemies of the Muslim Ummah: Maulana Abdul Hafeez Makki**
The daily Ausaf; Lahore, May 1, 2013
- Imran Khan is Jewish agent and Qadianis' companion: Ilyas Chinioti**
The daily Jang; Lahore, May 7, 2013
- Qadianis and Jews are joint enemies of the Muslim Ummah; their liquidation is our foremost responsibility: Qari Shabbir Ahmad Usmani**
The daily Ausaf; Lahore, May 18, 2013
- Bomb explosions in two Malakand mosques – 20 dead; 30 seriously wounded**
The Ace News; Faisalabad, May 18, 2013
- At least 14 killed, 52 injured in 3 attacks in KP**
The daily Dawn; Lahore, May 8, 2013
- JUI-F rally attacked in Kurram; 19 dead**
The daily Dawn; Lahore, May 7, 2013
- Two female anti-polio workers killed in Peshawar**
The daily The News; Lahore, May 29, 2013
- Three killed, 14 hurt in sectarian attack (in Peshawar)**
The daily Dawn; Lahore, May 29, 2013
- Maulana Abdul Hafeez Makki (Amir, International Khatme Nabuwwat Movement) and Maulana Muhammad Ahmad Ludhianwi (Quaid banned JUD) announce (electoral) support to Qari Shabbir Ahmad Usmani (of Khatme Nabuwwat organization)**
The daily Nawa-i-Waqt; Lahore, May 2, 2013
- Sufi Muhammad (of TNSM) acquitted in another terrorism case**
The daily Dawn; Lahore, May 5, 2013
- Jhang: Maulana Muaviya Azam Tariq (of banned SSP) released (by LHC)**
The daily Pakistan; Lahore, May 14, 2013
- Over 100 activists of banned outfits released in Punjab**
The daily The News; Lahore, May 23, 2013
- Rs. 250 million exorted from traders through threats by religious parties (in Faisalabad)**
The daily Dunya; Faisalabad, May 23, 2013
- JUI-F opposes use of force against terrorists**
The daily Dawn; Lahore, May 2, 2013
- Imran vows to target drones if elected PM**
The daily The News; Lahore, May 5, 2013
- 1973 constitution: Imran opposes repeal of Ahmadi laws. "PTI totally subscribes to the article in the Constitution of the Republic of Pakistan on Ahmadiis. It is not part of the PTI agenda to seek amendment of the said article in the constitution" Imran quoted from video.
The daily The Express Tribune; Lahore, May 2&3, 2013
- My victory is that of the Khatme Nabuwwat. (Mulla) Ilyas Chinioti (PML-N)**
The daily Khabrain; Lahore, May 24, 2013

It is a major sin (*Gunah Kabirah*) to vote in a corrupt system: Tahir ul Qadri

The daily Ausaf; Lahore, May 1, 2013

I don't like the word 'minority'; we all are equal: Nawaz Sharif

All will be treated equally, if we gain majority.

The daily Nawa-i-Waqt; Lahore, May 10, 2013

In these elections, people of Pakistan not only courageously withstood the threat of terrorism, they also defied unfounded dictates of an insignificant and misguided minority. (General) Kayani

The daily Dawn; Lahore, May 21, 2013

US report warns of 'crisis' for Pakistan's minorities.

Says Islamabad failed to protect Christians, Ahmadis and Hindus.

The daily The Express Tribune; Lahore, May 2, 2013

Pakistan: Violence against the Ahmadi community continues with the collusion of the police and authorities of Punjab province. A statement from the Asian Human Rights Commission

AHRC-STM-086-2013 on May 3, 2013

Islamist leader held on war crimes charges in Bangladesh

The daily Dawn; Lahore, May 13, 2013

Anti-Muslim riots erupt in Myanmar

The daily Dawn; Lahore, May 2, 2013

36 dead as Bangladesh Islamists demand Blasphemy Law

The daily Nation; Lahore, May 7, 2013

BD Islamist sentenced to hang for war killings

The daily Nation; Lahore, May 10, 2013

Burmese Muslims given two-child limit

The Guardian; UK May 25, 2013

Anti-Muslim riots erupt in Myanmar

The daily Dawn; Lahore, May 2, 2013

Police attacked; cars torched in Stockholm riots (in immigrant suburbs)

The daily Dawn; Lahore, May 23, 2013

US denounces hatred against Muslims, Jews

The daily Dawn; Lahore, May 21, 2013

Saudi Arabia allows school girls to play sport

The daily Dawn; Lahore, May 6, 2013

Gay marriage legalized in France

The daily Dawn; Lahore, May 19, 2013

No let up in attacks on poll offices, rallies

The daily Dawn; Lahore, May 2, 2013

ANP candidate, son shot dead in Karachi. Taliban claim responsibility.

The daily Dawn; Lahore, May 4, 2013

Seven political leaders who had been placed on a watch list under the fourth schedule of the Anti-Terrorism Act 1997 are contesting elections for the national and provincial assembly seats in Rawalpindi and Abbotabad, it has been learnt.

The daily Dawn; Lahore, May 4, 2013

Twin blasts rock MQM stronghold (in Karachi)

The daily Dawn; Lahore, May 5, 2013

Prosecutor in Benazir case gunned down

The daily Dawn; Lahore, May 4, 2013

Bugti murder case: Pervez Musharraf arrested. Inquiry team questions him for four hours.

The daily Mashriq; Lahore, May 3, 2013

Quetta: 13 killed including ten of constabulary in bomb attack on vehicle

The daily Mashriq; Lahore, May 24, 2013

Imran injured in fall at Lahore rally

The daily Dawn; Lahore, May 8, 2013

31 killed, dozens injured in firing and bomb attacks on election offices

The daily Mashriq; Lahore, May 12, 2013

The tiger (MPL-N) roars again. PTI fails to stop 'N' juggernaut, Punjab punishes PPP

The daily Dawn; Lahore, May 12, 2013

Imran urges SC, ECP to take rigging complaints seriously. PTI identifies 20 constituencies.

The daily Dawn; Lahore, May 15, 2013

Jamaat Islami boycotts elections in Karachi, Hyderabad

The daily Mashriq; Lahore, May 12, 2013

It (HRCP) criticized the failure of the authorities to enroll members of the Ahmadiyya community on the common voters' list, and called for their inclusion in the list.

The daily Dawn; Lahore, May 13, 2013

Bloody ballot: 10 killed in April

The daily The Express Tribune; Lahore, May 9, 2013

Religious (political parties) sink because of differences. Win 46 seats out of 849 national and provincial seats.

The daily Dunya; Lahore, May 14, 2013

JUI(F) refuses to accept PTI's mandate in KP

The daily The News; Lahore, May 16, 2013

Sajid Mir (MJ Ahle Hadith) faces rebellion for seeking votes for PML-N

The daily The News; Lahore, May 6, 2013

Islamabad: Voting turnout countrywide 53.4 percent

The daily Ausaf; Lahore, May 16, 2013

Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat bags Presidential Gold Award (in Sierra Leone)

...The citation reads "In recognition of its long and outstanding contributions to the nation in the fields of Education, Health, Agriculture and Humanitarian Activities,"

www.sierraexpressmedia.com/archives/56547 report dated May 4, 2013

Turin shroud 'is not a medieval forgery' – Telegraph

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/world.news/italy/99586778Turin>

16 kids, teacher burnt alive

The daily The News; Lahore, May 26, 2013

Ali Haider Gilani, son of former PM, kidnapped

The daily Dawn; Lahore, May 15, 2013

Countrywide protests against 22-hours of electric outages

The daily Mashriq; Lahore, May 25, 2013

Op-ed: Alienated

"I will chase every Ahmadi in any part of the world and will not spare them," said moon-sighting committee chairman Mufti Muneebur Rehman (Ummat, March 18, 2013) "Ahmadis don't have the right to live in Pakistan. They don't have the right to be on any post in Pakistan. All of them who are on important posts in Pakistan, should be sacked immediately."

By Mohammad Shehzad in the weekly The Friday Times, Lahore; May 10-16, 2013

(Note: This mulla is on the public pay-roll. Ed.)

Op-ed: Pakistani minorities leery of democracy

Minority religious groups fear extremists will piggyback on the backs of mainstream political parties to a position of political power. They most often point to Nawaz Sharif, head of the Pakistan Muslim League-N.

Members of the group have been seen on the campaign trail with members of extremist parties like Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat, a new name for the outlawed Sunni militant group Sipah-e-Sahabah Pakistan (SSP). Minority leaders and election monitoring groups say Sharif's party is withdrawing candidates in certain electoral constituencies to give radical religious candidates an unchallenged run for election. Sharif spokesman Siddiq-ul-Farooq denied any accommodation with extremist groups.

[www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2013/05/10/asia-pacific ...](http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2013/05/10/asia-pacific...)

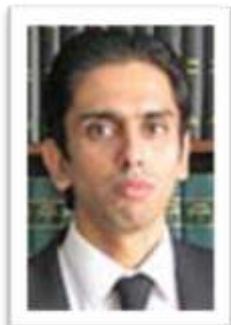
Op-ed: Plumbing new depths

The politicians rage against America and declare preference for 'ideology' against democracy to mollify the Taliban. But are the terrorists listening? The fact that Imran Khan's party has been lightly attacked, Jamaat Islami attacked in Upper Dir and PPP in lower Dir, and Maulana Fazlur Rehman's party has been literally slaughtered in Kurram Agency and Hangu, points to two possible causes; either the Taliban will simply not accept anyone submitting to "pagan" democracy or they are too fragmented internally to stick to their leadership's immunity granted to some political parties. While the Maulana refused to blame the Taliban for the Kurram attack, Imran Khan has firmed up his credentials with them by speaking against the most wronged minority in the country, the Ahmadis.

<http://www.thefridaytimes.com/beta3/tft/article.php?issue=20130510&page=1>

Annexes:

- I. "The anatomy of the press release" by Yasser Latif Hamdani, published in the Daily Times, May 06, 2013
- II. Letter of Members of the U.S. Congress to the Secretary of State, dated April 16, 2013

COMMENT : The anatomy of a press release — Yasser Latif Hamdani

Jinnah was repeatedly pressured on the Ahmadi issue; he repeatedly shot it down publicly and said that those trying to raise the anti-Ahmadi issue were actually trying to divide the Muslims
I am a registered voter from NA-122 Lahore. Till recently I was sure who I was going to vote for: the great Imran Khan who is standing from my constituency. Khan has been a hero to me as long as I can remember. We grew up admiring him as a cricketer, as an Oxford educated playboy (this is when Article 62 and 63 were not taken seriously), and as a philanthropist who gave us Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital. I was 16 years old when Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf (PTI) was launched and I remember trying to convince my parents that they should vote for Khan then. In 1998 when I went to the US for college, I met a famous religious leader from a religious party who called Khan a Jewish agent and I almost came to blows with him.

There is also a personal emotional connection that makes me want to vote for Khan. My late father who had voted for Pakistan People's Party (PPP) all his life decided to cast his vote for PTI in 2002 unexpectedly. By this time I had decided to vote PPP largely because I did not think Khan's candidate had a chance of winning from our constituency. I asked my father why he was wasting his vote, and he said that Khan was the only man with any character or integrity left. He predicted that sooner or later everyone would get around to voting for Khan. He died suddenly before this could happen in 2007, and 2013 seems to make his prediction come true.

So I was all set to vote for Khan from NA-122 till of course I read the press release by the PTI on the Ahmadi issue and it has given me pause. Let me state that I never expected the PTI or Khan to repeal the second amendment or even undo the horribly unjust Ordinance XX of 1984. It is not politically feasible and, therefore, all the defences cited by Khan's tigers of the press release are justified. However, the press release itself was so poorly drafted and so horribly worded that one wonders if Khan is actually arguing for more state-sponsored persecution of Ahmadis. Then there is the larger problem. Khan has, in many private gatherings, said that anyone who professes to be a Muslim is a Muslim. This is a principled position, a position that Jinnah subscribed to as well but unlike Jinnah who openly said Ahmadis were Muslims and no one had the right to say otherwise, Khan only says it privately. Be that as it may, it makes the press release a lie.

The story as I gathered from various sources goes something like this. One lady Nadia Ramzan Chaudhry, an information secretary in London, visited the Ahmadi Jamaat headquarters (quaintly named Islamabad) as part of a peace symposium, and in her personal capacity asked an innocent question about why Ahmadis, if they believe in justice, would not vote for the PTI. A video clip of this was then used by the mullahs to suggest that Khan was trying to mobilise the Ahmadi vote by promising them repeal of the 2nd Amendment. Of course, this is a minefield no politician would dare go near at election time and there was nothing to suggest that it was an official PTI overture.

PTI's reaction was abysmal. First Shireen Mazari came out with a statement denying that Nadia Chaudhry was even an office bearer. Then came the press release. It would have been alright if Khan had merely said that he never canvassed the Ahmadis as a community for their vote. It would be equally alright if Khan had merely affirmed that he believed in the absolute and unqualified finality of the Holy Prophet's (PBUH) prophethood. After all, no one has questioned Khan's personal belief and no one thinks he subscribes to the Ahmadi beliefs. The statement, however, did not stop there. First it declared that not only is this Khan's belief but he also believes that anyone who does not believe like he does is a kafir (infidel) and any claimant of prophethood since is a liar. This part, of course, goes against what Khan has said on several occasions at other places and there is enough evidence to the contrary on YouTube. Secondly, if Khan's belief is that Ahmadis are non-Muslim, then the Ahmadi religion constitutes a separate category. Whither tolerance for other faiths? As if that was not enough, he also affirmed his faith in the constitutional status of 'Qadiyanis'. Now granted that Qadiyani is not necessarily an offensive term like say Mirzai. However, Ahmadis call themselves Ahmadis and they are described as such in Article 260 of the Constitution. Secondly, one wonders if by merely speaking of Qadiyanis, is Khan saying that he does not agree with the constitutional status of the Lahori Ahmadis? Perhaps whoever drafted the statement should have read Article 260 of the Constitution clearly. In any event it goes without saying that Ahmadis object to the word Qadiyani in much the same way as Muslims in general object to the once in vogue word Mohammadan. Khan could at least have followed the Constitution in letter and spirit.

What could Khan have done? He could have taken a principled stand like Jinnah. Jinnah was repeatedly pressured on the Ahmadi issue and he repeatedly shot it down publicly and said that those trying to raise the anti-Ahmadi issue were actually trying to divide the Muslims. Granted that would have been too much for a lesser man of not the same sterling quality. If not that then Khan could have remained silent and ignored the hoopla. He didn't. It takes me back to the 2008 US presidential election campaign when certain Hijab-clad women in Barack Obama's audience were removed because there were accusations by the right wing that he was secretly a Muslim. Obama had the moral courage to call them up and also publicly apologise to those Muslim women, despite everything. Imran Khan has proved that he is no Jinnah. He is not even an Obama. So I ask you who should I vote for from NA-122? Perhaps I should not vote at all.

The writer is a lawyer based in Lahore and the author of the book Jinnah: Myth and Reality. He can be contacted via twitter @therealylh and through his email address yasser.hamdani@gmail.com

http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2013%5C05%5C06%5Cstory_6-5-2013_pg3_3

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 16, 2013

The Honorable John Kerry
Secretary of State
2201 C St NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Kerry:

We write to you today about a country whose importance to U.S. foreign policy cannot be overstated—Pakistan.

As you know, Pakistan plans to hold general elections in May 2013. Ambassador Richard Olson has expressed the United States' hope that the elections will be free, fair and transparent. Unfortunately, Pakistan's electoral system discriminates on the basis of religion, rendering the promise of free and fair elections a sham.

In order to register, each citizen must fill out a form stating his or her religious affiliation. Not only are matters of conscience wholly irrelevant to the exercise of this fundamental right of citizenship, but for Pakistan's four million Ahmadi Muslims, this requirement blocks their right to vote. The only way the Ahmadis—members of a peaceful sect within Islam who have nonetheless been declared non-Muslim under Pakistan's Constitution—can cast a ballot is if they are willing to renounce their Islamic faith. Moreover, pursuant to Pakistani Presidential Order No. 15 of 2002 ("Executive Order No. 15"), Ahmadis are uniquely excluded from the joint electoral rolls, and required to be registered on a separate supplementary voter roll.

This pernicious regime of discrimination—which if unresolved, will certainly mar Pakistan's elections—is relatively easy to change. It is our understanding that a new presidential order can rescind Executive Order No. 15 and thereby foster at least the conditions for free and fair elections. Notably, even the Supreme Court of Pakistan has taken notice of the exclusion of Ahmadis from the joint electoral rolls, and has ordered both the Attorney General of Pakistan and the Election Commission of Pakistan to explain how such a system can be consistent with the equal right of all citizens, irrespective of religion, to vote.

If this—the first time in Pakistan's history that a democratically elected government peacefully passes power to another through elections—is truly to be a watershed moment, we cannot stand idly by and allow four million Ahmadis to remain disenfranchised and outside the electoral process.

Absent the ability for Pakistan's entire electorate to participate, we will not be able to endorse the May elections.

The preservation of Pakistan's very democracy—and, indirectly, our national security—is at stake, as are our own commitments to human rights and international religious freedoms—both central interests of the State Department.

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

You have a unique opportunity to advocate on behalf of an entire segment of Pakistani society which has long been marginalized and oppressed.

We urge you to press Pakistani President Zardari to immediately repeal Executive Order No. 15 and remove any discriminatory restrictions on Ahmadis being able to vote in the upcoming May elections.

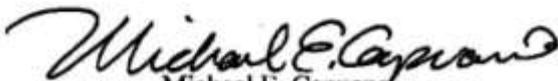
Sincerely,



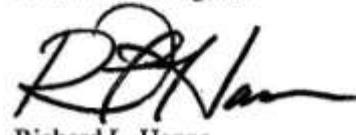
Gary C. Peters
Member of Congress



Frank R. Wolf
Member of Congress



Michael E. Capuano
Member of Congress



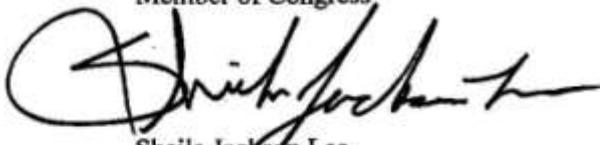
Richard L. Hanna
Member of Congress



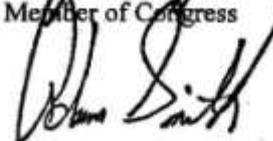
Gwen Moore
Member of Congress



Randy Hultgren
Member of Congress



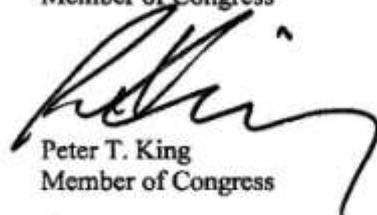
Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress



Adam Smith
Member of Congress



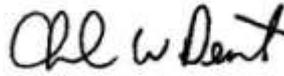
Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress



Peter T. King
Member of Congress



Michael T. McCaul
Member of Congress



Charles W. Dent
Member of Congress

(plus 21 more signatures on two pages)