

Persecution of Ahmadis in Pakistan News Report November 2017

Mulla imposes total surrender on spineless government over Ahmadiyya right of vote

Islamabad, November 2017: This issue was triggered early last month when the President signed Elections 2017 Bill into an Act on October 2, 2017. What happened in October was reported last month in our monthly News Report. Here we report briefly the happenings of November, as they reached a climax in the last week of the month, and the prestigious daily Dawn made the following editorial comment in its issue of November 28, 2017 (extract):

Capitulation

IT is surrender so abject that the mind is numb and the heart sinks.

The deal negotiated between the state, both civilian and military facets of it, and the Faizabad protesters is a devastating blow to the legitimacy and moral standing of the government and all state institutions.

In one brief page and six gut-wrenching points, the state of Pakistan has surrendered its authority to a mob that threatened to engulf the country in flames. The federal law minister has been sacked – in return for a promise by the protesters to not issue a fatwa against him.

Whether a decision made out of desperation or fear, the upshot is that the state has accepted that mobs and zealots have a right to issue religious edicts that can endanger lives and upend public order.

It is of historic value to place on record briefly the developments that led to this ignoble end.

Religious parties that decided to promote their political interests vis-a-vis the ruling PML-N by exploiting the issue of the affidavit regarding the ‘end of prophethood’ were the Sunni Tehrik (ST) and Tehrik Labbaik Ya Rasool Allah (TLY). Although the government had undertaken to amend the Act in accordance with their demands and proceeded to seek parliamentary approval for that, the mullas did not relent, as their real political object exceeded mere denial of voting rights to Ahmadis. So they took out a ‘long march’ from Lahore and headed for Islamabad on October 23. Who backed them and encouraged them in this venture, we do not know for sure. These agitators arrived Rawalpindi on 26 October, and after negotiations with senior police officials, they were permitted entry in the twin cities where they camped in a sit-in at a strategic location Faizabad Interchange where the roads leading to Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Murree and Lahore converge and cross.

The Sit-in (*Dharna*) upgraded their demands to the following:

1. Those parliamentarians who conspired against the belief in End of Prophethood should be fired forthwith and punished as per Constitution.
2. Rana Sanaullah should be fired and tried for rebellion against the Constitution.
3. Cursed Aasia (the Christian woman) should be hanged as per court verdict.
4. A Sunni ulama board should be established to control Qadianis’ mischiefs in Pakistan, and the ban on Ahmadis’ practice of Islamic worship etc. should be made effective.
5. The persecuted Rohingya Muslims should be supported and diplomatic relations with Myanmar should be severed.

6. Restrictions imposed on all-round loud-speakers in mosques should be lifted.*(sic)*

The demonstrators settled down at the interchange and their leaders undertook planning and implementing their strategy of a wider and longer unrest and a threat to law and order.

The TLY issued a call for a major strike and protest in Lahore on November 3. It was widely publicized and Friday sermons were delivered on the theme of ‘Honour of the Prophet’. Ahmadis had to take special measures that day to protect their places of worship and the worshipers. The government found it convenient to come to the following agreement with TLY mullas:

1. The issue of changes to the wording of the affidavit in the new Act will be investigated and the findings made public within 20 days. Those found guilty of any conspiracy will be punished under law. The ulama will be taken in confidence by the government over the enquiry and its findings.
2. The criminal Aasia found guilty of blasphemy will be punished as per law. All rumours concerning sending her abroad are baseless. It is not even being considered.
3. The government will form an effective advisory national council comprising distinguished ulama to implement constitutional provisions regarding the deniers of Khatme Nabuwat (KN), their conspiracies and their violations of law specific to them (*read Ahmadis*).
4. The government of Pakistan will continue its diplomatic, political and moral support to Rohingya Muslims. It is pursuing the scheme of their rehabilitation, in league with Turkey. The government will make its plan public and play an effective role.
5. Rana Sanaullah, the provincial law minister will further explain his position regarding some video clips, in the presence of well-known Ahle Sunnat ulama.
6. The federal government will urge the Punjab government to follow the same policy as other provinces and the capital regarding sound-amplifiers in mosques, and will play its role to lift restrictions on the number of loud-speakers in mosques in the province.*(sic)*

The agreement was signed by a federal minister and other high officials as also by four leaders of TLY and the ST.

As a result, the Dharna came to an end – but only temporarily. Another long march, led by Maulvi Khadim Hussain Rizvi was planned to make a sortie from Data Darbar in Lahore on November 6, 2017. All these days, Ahmadis were bad-mouthed in speeches, rallies, meetings, social media, print and electronic media, etc. Their situation was potentially precarious.

The sit-in at Faizabad was strengthened and, with no regard to the agreements already made, the traffic was blocked by the demonstrators. This caused great inconvenience to the public, including school children, patients heading for hospitals, women going to their jobs and daily wage earners. These miscreants manhandled anybody who resisted their directions. Law-enforcing personnel did not interfere; perhaps they were directed to stay clear.

The protest leaders used extremely foul language against the ruling elite and those who did not approve of their conduct. They even issued threats to federal ministers in public addresses and sermons. Pir Afzal Qadri unabashedly said, “(They) should be very careful because our supporters can harm their children.” *The daily Dawn, November 11, 2017*

The situation in the twin-cities was becoming unbearable as hundreds of thousands were greatly affected, and there were protests in the English press and the social media. An op-ed in the daily Dawn on November 15 carried the heading: **The capital under siege**. The writer frankly observed: “It is apparent that the country’s civil and military leadership has never taken counter-extremism policies seriously. That may be either out of political expediency or a fear of backlash or both. It may be true that the situation is not yet completely out of control, but continuing with the current state of inaction could create a very dangerous situation and reverse the gains made in the battle against terrorism...It is a tragic commentary on our state policy which gives such leeway to a group that glorifies a murderer and exhorts its supporters to follow his example. The siege of Islamabad gives some insight into the shape of things to come.”

Availing the indecision of authorities and absence of law-enforcement, the extreme right and the vernacular press used plenty of space to support the bigoted brigade. These included people like Zahid ur Rashidi, Justice @ Nazir A Ghazi, Orya Maqbul Jan who assessed the situation as an ‘international conspiracy’ (*alami sazish*) and Mufti Muneeb who is paid every month from the public purse, he urged inclusion of Musharraf’s notorious 7B and 7C Ahmadi-specific rules, in the new Act. The Khatme Nabuwwat organization openly threatened a campaign on the lines of blood-soaked 1974 riots.

The sit-in continued. The authorities gave deadlines to the protesters to disperse; in turn, the mullas gave deadlines to the government to meet their demands. The mullas said that they will not even start the negotiations before the resignation or removal of the federal law minister.

At this stage the Islamabad High Court intervened as it had been approached by a mulla Allah Wasaya of KN, by the TLY, as also by a few other individual citizens. Judge Shaukat Siddiqui took the liberty of venting his sentiments and opinions. He was angry over the inconvenience caused to the public by the protestors, and ‘advised’ the protesters to end the sit-in. He was sympathetic to the anti-Ahmadi demands, and ordered cancellation of all the amendments in sections relevant to Khatme Nabuwwat in the Elections Act 2017. Mulla Allah Wasaya also demanded that the government setup a database of employees belonging to the Ahmadi faith; in response to this proposal, the judge asked the federal government to submit a reply within 14 days.

The mullas were happy over the judge’s orders that were to the disadvantage of Ahmadis, but decided to disobey his ‘advice’ on lifting the sit-in. Greatly encouraged by the developing situation, the mullas stated and demanded:

- We shall not allow Qadiani-supporters to even breath (*dam na lenay dengai*).
- Rana Sanaullah should be held accountable.
- Those who amended the KN provisions should be tried for rebellion.
- Those who changed the affidavit should be hanged in the open.
- If demands are not met by the deadline, we’ll besiege ministers’ homes.

In the face of the slothful government, mullas imposed a massive gridlock that choked the twin cities (*The Nation; November 10*). In Sialkot, religious zealots attacked a vehicle in which they mistakenly thought federal minister Zahid Hamid was riding.

In response, the ruling PML-N expedited the passage of the demanded amendments to the Election Act, through the parliament. The interior minister Ahsan Iqbal threatened

extreme action against the unruly mob; but they paid little attention to his warning. It appears that the PML-N high command had decided not to use bullets in any circumstance, and the miscreants knew that.

Simultaneously, the law minister and the interior minister repeatedly made public their firm faith in the ‘end of prophethood’ and their belief that those who did not believe in the end of prophethood were Non-Muslims. Zahid Hamid insisted that he and his family would sacrifice even their lives for sanctity of the Khatme Nabuwat. He asserted that he was not a Qadiani. The mullas turned him a deaf ear.

At the international forum, in Geneva, the world community urged Pakistan, in the third UPR to ratify ICCPED, ensure effective protection of the rights of religious minorities and others, and repeal blasphemy laws. In all, 289 recommendations came forth from the UPR Working Group. “All... agree that the Pakistani government must take measures to address the downward spiral of rights in the country”, said the ICJ’s Asia Director Frederik Ramski.

At home, sadly the government had the amendments, demanded by the mulla, passed in the National Assembly and then in the Senate on November 17, 2017. Zahid Hamid tabled the amendment bill in the Senate session which was presided by, otherwise outspoken, Raza Rabbani. Hamid claimed mutual consensus. He said that the status of Qadianis would remain non-Muslim. He added that if a person gets himself or herself enrolled as Muslim in the voters’ list, any other person could challenge this before the revising authority where he or she would be required to sign the declaration of the finality of prophethood. Mr. Ahsan Iqbal, the Interior Minister stated that the law on KN for voters had been further ‘strengthened’ than before, and as an Act it will remain operative till the doomsday (*Qiyamat*). He asserted: “The country, its parliament, government and armed forces were there to safeguard the finality of prophethood”. His pleas and entreaties proved wasteful, as the sit-in was not lifted by the mulla.

Deputy Chairman of the Senate, a mulla from JUI (F) congratulated the nation over the passage of amendments that effectively blocked Ahmadis’ participation in elections – even as voters.

On November 24, the Punjab Assembly passed a resolution to make the ‘End of Prophethood’ a part of school syllabus and a compulsory subject for Muslim students. Belatedly, Lahore Bar Association announced a strike on November 25 and demanded resignation of the Federal law minister. ‘Those guilty of these disgusting crimes (*ghanowney*) should be held accountable’, they said.

At this stage Allama Rizvi, a TLY leader stepped-up his demand further: “Now, not one minister, but the entire cabinet will have to leave.” (*The daily Ausaf; Nov 25*)

As a result of the mounting pressure from the public, the high judiciary, the civil society and the political gains made by the mulla and the opposition, the government decided to order the police on Nov 25 to lift the sit-in. Simultaneously, the Interior Ministry placed huge ads in newspapers stating the government’s position on the issue and restating that the belief in KN was an integral part of 200 million Pakistani Muslims and the parliament was its guardian. It summed up: The KN law is now far more effective and binding than before. Its apology for the police operation was stated as: “In the light of court orders the government is

duty bound to take all necessary measures to safeguard basic rights and the life and property of the public.”

The police action was resisted by the demonstrators. They set fire to 10 police vehicles and occupied many more thorough-fares. The police arrested more than 150 persons. Reportedly 7 persons died, some place the count higher. Emergency was declared in twin-cities’ hospitals. The resistance spread to many other cities and towns in the Punjab and in Karachi and Peshawar. At the end of the day, the Faizabad site was still occupied by the mullas of TLY. Many policemen were injured. Having failed to lift the sit-in the government called out the army.

The army responded by taking steps to guard important government installations in the capital, but the army chief telephoned the prime minister and recommended that ‘the dispute be solved peacefully, as violence was not in national interest’. (*Jang; November 26*)

The army then intervened and acted as the arbitrator between the two parties, the TLY and the government of Pakistan.

As a result, an agreement was agreed upon and signed by the parties. Major General Faiz Hamid signed as ‘Through’ (*Bawasatat*). The demands of protestors were met with the resignation of Law Minister Zahid Hamid. TLY undertook not to issue an edict (*fatwa*) against him. The government agreed to:

- Make public the Enquiry Report of Raja Zafar ul Haq committee within 30 days and take action against those held responsible.
- All the arrested protestors would be released and police cases withdrawn against them.
- An Enquiry Board will be formed in consultation with TLY to look into the police action of November 25, and take action against those held responsible.
- The government will pay up for all damages to public and private property during the Dharna.
- Whatever had been agreed by the Punjab Government (earlier) will be implemented in letter and spirit.
- This agreement has been arrived at through special efforts of COAS General Bajwa and his team. Thanks to them for saving the nation from a catastrophe.

It was reported through <https://www.dawn.com/news/1373197> that according to Rizvi (of TLY), in addition to the demands mentioned on the document, the following conditions of TLY have also been accepted by the government:

1. A board of clerics led by Pir Muhammad Afzal Qadri will be set up to probe remarks made by Punjab Law Minister Rana Sanaullah against the persecution of Ahmadis. Sanaullah will have to accept the decision made by the board.
2. No difficulty will be faced in registering cases under clause 295-C of the Pakistan Penal Code (blasphemy law).
3. No leniency will be given to those convicted by courts for blasphemy.
4. No ban will be imposed on the use of loudspeakers.
5. The foreign and interior ministers will take steps for the release of Dr Aafia Siddiqui after taking her mother and sister in confidence.
6. The holiday of Iqbal Day on November 9 will be revived.

7. Two representatives of Tehreek-i-Labaik will be included in the panel assigned to decide changes in the textbook board. The officials will push for inclusion of translation of the Holy Quran and chapters about Seerat-un-Nabi (PBUH) and Muslim leaders.
8. The chehlum of martyrs will be held on January 4 at Rawalpindi's Liaquat Bagh.
9. Every year, November 25 will be observed as "Martyrs of Prophet's honour day".

There has been no official confirmation or denial of agreeing to these demands from the government's side as yet.

Conditions mentioned at Serial Nos. 2-5, 7 and 9 are particularly noteworthy and are a cause of concern for what the government has ceded to the extremist mulla.

Consequently the 22-day sit-in at Faizabad Interchange was lifted. Demonstrators in most other cities and towns dispersed and life returned to normal within a day or two, except in Lahore where a sit-in continued at the Mall Road, the main thorough-fare.

After the agreement, there was a break in the leadership of the *Dharna*. The break-away mullas accused the others of selling the lives of the *Dharna* martyrs for only 215 million rupees. (*The daily Awaz, Lahore; November 30, 2017*)

The terms of the agreement were most disappointing to many who believe in rule of law and an effective good government. Justice Siddiqui of Islamabad High Court sent for the Interior Minister to explain to the court the failure of the police action. He expressed anger over the army's role as arbitrator. He demanded a reply in writing as to who brought disgrace to the administration, and who stabbed the police in the back. Why an apology of those who abused the higher judiciary was not included in the agreement, he asked. **He claimed that he knew those who had made Qadianis their 'darling'**. The Intelligence Bureau should report (to him) how did the demonstrators come to possess tear-gas gun, shells and masks. Who is this Major General Faiz Hamid who put his signature on the agreement? he asked. Justice Siddiqui said that the court had ordered the lifting of *Dharna* and vacation of the Faizabad Interchange, and not making an Agreement (*Muttahidah*). (*Editorial of the daily Mashriq, November 28, 2017*)

In these two months, if the electronic media spent almost 2000 hours over the mulla's demands, it did not give 10 minutes to Ahmadis to state their views. The vernacular media published more than 1000 news-items and op-eds on the issue, but did not print even once an Ahmadi's comment. Such is the tyranny of the fifth pillar of the state.

None of the players of this fateful game ever admitted in plain language that it was all about denying Ahmadi citizens their right of vote. They covered their wicked demands in technical terms of '7B', '7C', 'solemnly swear', 'declare', 'believe', 'end of prophethood' etc.

At no stage, no body mentioned that in fact Ahmadis also believe in the Khatme Nabuwat, except once when the embattled Interior Minister did drop a hint to that effect. The sly mullas did not take the risk of even blaming him, as that would have exposed their deceit.

Also, in our opinion, the rulers unnecessarily took the devious path by disowning the elimination of the KN rules in the Elections Act. They should have said that in order to have genuine Joint Electorate they did away with a dictator's unsupportable 7B and 7C, and have thus admitted Ahmadis in mainstream politics, as like everyone else they are also citizens of

democratic Pakistan. Such bold and straightforward approach would surely have given the PML-N high moral ground to easily demolish the baseless stand of mullas. Honesty is the best policy, say the sage.

It would be appropriate to place on record here a list of persons and organizations who in our opinion *inter alia* played a very negative role and those who played a somewhat positive role during this potentially catastrophic event. Our criteria for this assessment is: ‘by placing national interest above self-interest’.

Negative role

Political parties: JI, JUI (F), PTI, JUP, PML-Q

Newspapers: 92 News, Khabrain, Nawa-i-Waqt, Daily Express, Ausaf

Individuals: Raja Zafar ul Haq, Maulana Fazl ur Rehman, Ch. Shujaat Hussain, Ilyas Chinioti of PML-N, Mufti Muneeb, Tahir Ashrafi, Maulvi Samiul Haq, Justice ® Nazir Ahmadi Ghazi, Zahid ur Rashidi, Ahmad Jamal Nizami, Orya Maqbul Jan, Bushra Rahman, Umar Abbasi of PAT, Dr Danish and others.

TV Channels: 92 News, 24 News

Groups: Punjab Assembly, Lahore Bar Association, Mashaikh Convention

(Note: Committed anti-Ahmadi parties and individuals are not included in the above list)

Positive role

Individuals: Nusrat Javed, Zubaida Mustafa, Zaman Khan, Kamila Hayat, M Yunus, Wusatulla Khan, Rasul Bakhsh Rais, Kamran Yusuf, Masroor Ahmad, Shamshad Mangat, Zahid Hussain, Afrasyab Khattak, Y.L. Hamdani, Imtiaz Alam

Newspapers: The Express Tribune, Dawn, The Nation, Daily Times, The News

An op-ed written by Imtiaz Alam for the daily The News of November 30 is very readable and is reproduced as annex to this report.

Last but not least, the Interior Minister undertook in clause 6 that the Punjab Government would implement all that was agreed earlier between the two parties. Punjab government is known for its exceptional harshness in maltreating Ahmadis in the province, on behest of its Ulama Board. Tightening the screw further could result, in the opinion of the savant Y.L. Hamdani; **“One fears for the safety and well-being of members of this (Ahmadiyya) community who now live in the shadow and threat of violence and even genocide in the country.”** *Daily Times; November 27, 2017*

Rasul Bakhsh Rais wrote an op-ed in The Express Tribune of November 29, 2017, and summed it up well in the following words: “This is failure of a ruling group in power that is leaderless, incompetent, wounded by corruption charges, divided from within. But at a larger level, it is failure of the state, society and the people of Pakistan in standing up against the intimidation of the religious demagogues. Surrendering to them like this would weaken us further”.

Livelihood of Ahmadis in danger

Kotli, AJK; November 26, 2017: An Ahmadi, Mr. Abdul Rafae Bhatti S/O Mr. Abdul Shakoor Bhatti works in the project of Gulpur Hydal Power. Tahrike Labaik Yarasulullah people came to know of his religious identity and took out a procession against him. They

accused him of blasphemy and abusing their leader Khadim Hussain Razvi on social media. They also demanded the removal of Mr. Riaz, another Ahmadi, who is the manager of the project. The DSP reached at the spot and dispersed the procession assuring them of legal action against Ahmadis. Anti-Ahmadiyya propaganda was then undertaken by the vernacular press. The opponents also met the Additional Deputy Commissioner Kotli and falsely accused Mr. Riaz of proselytizing Ahmadiyyat to the staff. Mr. Riaz is employed in this project through a Korean company. This company has asked him to resign to avoid the protest of the miscreants. He has done that.

The administration 'advised' Ahmadi workers in the project to move to a safe locality to defuse the situation. Accordingly they were all shifted elsewhere temporarily.

Maulvi Fazl ur Rahman (JUI) threatens death

Swat; October 8, 2017: The following was reported by The Express Tribune (extracts):

Khatm-e-Nabuwwat oath: Fazl claims credit for defending religious law

Tribune.com.pk/story/1526090/whoever-tries-change-khatm-e-nabuwwat-law-dead-man-warns-fazl/on/10/8/2017

SWAT: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman warned on Sunday that anyone who tried to change the Khatme Nabuwwat law would be inviting his own death.

Addressing a JUI-F rally in Swat, he congratulated the nation for 'foiling a conspiracy' to mould the law in Parliament, while referring to the recently amended The Elections (Amendment) 2017, which sparked a controversy "No one can touch the Khatm-e-Nabuwwat and Khatm-e-Resalat of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and if anyone tries he would be inviting his own death" Rehman said.

"Islam is being attacked. Our enemy is so weak and coward that he attacks us unawares. You saw our enemy tried to secretly attack Khatm-e-Nabuwwat in Parliament but our party was there. We resisted and within 24 hours what damage had been caused was addressed and compensated for", he said amid slogans by party activists.

Our friends ask how it happened. You should be thankful that the conspiracy was foiled, he said, adding that no one had any information that the bill which had been agreed upon in certain shape had been changed later.

Note: Rehman did not tell his audience that his party members were part of the parliamentary Sub-Committee that prepared the final draft of the Election Bill 2017 before it was sent to the Senate.

Denial of Ahmadi's burial in common graveyard

Nadeemabad, Daska; October 28, 2017: Malik Safdar, a brother of Malik Hameed Ullah a former district president of Ahmadiyya community Sialkot, died. A grave was dug for his burial in the common cemetery of the village. Anti-Ahmadi group took the position: "He was a Qadiani; we would not let his burial be here". They called the police. The police arrived and stopped the burial.

Ahmadis contacted the Sarpanch (*the village chief*); he also refused. When alive, Malik Safdar was a member of the Sarpanch Committee and Ahmadis were buried in this very cemetery.

He was buried in the Ahmadiyya cemetery of a nearby village Bharuka Kalan.

The incident is indicative of the ever widening sectarian divide in Pakistan.

Faith-based police case against Ahmadis

Quetta; October 11, 2017: We reported in October that Mr. Naseer Ahmad Farooqi, the District Amir of Ahmadiyya community in Quetta and the President of Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya Rabwah (the main body of Ahmadiyya community in Pakistan) were booked under PPC 419, 420, 427 and 34 with FIR no. 140 in City police station, Quetta.

A non-Ahmadi Muhammad Alam *aka* Baloch Khan occupied the land adjacent to the Ahmadiyya mosque here which had been sealed by the authorities. Ahmadis tried to get their land back through legal process. Baloch Khan then got a fabricated police case registered against Ahmadis, to maintain his unlawful occupation. The sessions court and high court have given their verdict in favour of the Ahmadiyya community. However the legal process of transferring the procession back to the Ahmadis is pending.

Instead of completing the process of transferring back the property to Ahmadis, the police urged Mr. Farooqi to obtain bail or present himself in the court to face the trial. Mr. Farooqi got his bail from the court.

The victim party feels harassed by the authorities even though the courts support its claim.

Religious extremism on the rise

Model Colony; Karachi, November 2017: Malik Waseem Ahmad is a resident of Shah Faisal Town, Model Colony. He owns a business of currency exchange and a whole-sale dealership of rice. For the last two years mullas have been telling the shop owner to get his shop vacated. The shop owner didn't oblige them. Then, the mosque committee sent for the owner to come to the mosque. There they told him to get his shop vacated. At this, he gave one month's notice to Malik Ahmad to hand the shop back. He is now in search of a different location for his business.

2. Tehreek-i-Labbaik Ya Rasool Allah (TLY) inaugurated their office in Model Colony as they started their movement in the Punjab. They often make hateful speeches against Ahmadis. So, Ahmadis reported in the police. The police banned the use of loud speakers to the TLY. Undeterred, the TLY went a step further and undertook anti-Ahmadiyya wall chalking in the area. They did not spare even the wall of Bait-ul-Sana (Ahmadiyya mosque). This has disturbed the social and sectarian peace of the locality.

Harassment through blasphemy accusation

Hattar, District Hazara; November 2017: An Ahmadi boy, Aarsal Ahmad S/O Mr. Tasawwar Ahmad felt some nail pinching in his shoe. He put a piece of paper in it as remedy and went to a cobbler. When the cobbler took out the paper, he found the name of Allah written on it. Aarsal had not done that intentionally. Another boy, present there, took the paper and gave it to the local mulla. He and a few others created hue and cry over it. Thereafter a few men came to the house of Aarsal Ahmad and inquired from his father. "Aarsal is a child, he did not do it intentionally, however we seek pardon over it," said Mr. Qadeer, an Ahmadi neighbor of Mr. Ahmad, to the visitors. This apparently settled the issue.

After a few days Mr. Tasawwar Ahmad received threatening letter from the Khatme Nabuwwat organization; it conveyed:

“Anti-Ahmadiyya ordinance has to be implemented. You have blasphemed against the Holy Prophet (PBUH). We are talking over this issue. A police case will be registered against you by tomorrow. You have undertaken terrorism. Meetings are held in your house and in the house of Chaudhry Shakeel and Bajwa. Your children will be burnt after one week. Your house will be burnt as well. Leave this area. Action plan is being prepared in Haripur against you. We’ll not leave you alone; action will be taken.”

Livelihood deprived for faith

Rabwah; November 2017: Mr. Muhammad Saeed has been working in a thread mill near Sheikhpura for the last eleven years. He started facing difficulties when his colleagues came to know of his religious identity. They boycotted him socially. When the owner of the mill came to know of it, he called Mr. Saeed and laid him off because of his faith.

Thereafter Mr. Saeed went to another mill for a job. When the mill-owner came to know that he was from Rabwah, he said that he wouldn’t provide job to a *Mirzai*.

Now Mr. Saeed is jobless and is trying to find a way to earn his livelihood.

Hostility at street level

Farooqabad; October 17, 2017: Mr. Manzoor Ahmad lived in Siddique Abad near a mosque. On October 17 his son Bilal climbed the roof of the mosque to repair an electric connection. To this some residents of the street objected and took the plea: “Why an infidel (*Kafir*) climbed over the roof of our mosque?” Bilal jumped from the roof to escape himself from these people.

The locals decided to file a police case against Bilal. Mr. Manzoor is influential in the town, so both the parties made a truce in the police station over this paltry issue.

The incident shows the intolerance spread in the society by the extremist mulla.

Update on major atrocities of 2016

1. **CTD raid on Ahmadiyya offices on December 5, 2016.** The fake police case registered after the raid was not withdrawn; instead the authorities took it to an Anti-terrorism court. Mr. Sabah ul Zafar and Mr. Idrees Ahmad were denied release on bail. The ATC judge announced three years’ imprisonment for each of them. An appeal against the verdict lies with Lahore High Court.
2. **Mob attack on Ahmadiyya mosque in District Chakwal.** The mosque remains locked by the authorities. Ahmadi have no place for worship for almost a year. On demand of the riot leadership, a separate police case was registered against Ahmadi, on orders of a court. One Ahmadi is still in prison. Sixty rioters out of the 67 detained have been released on bail by courts. Plea for bail of Mr. Muhammad Ansar, Ahmadi awaits hearing at the Supreme Court.
3. **Ban on Ahmadiyya publications and periodicals.** The Punjab government issued numerous such notifications early last year. It did that on illegitimate recommendations of the Muttahidah Ulama Board that were in stark violation of the

Constitutional guarantees, and the international instruments signed by Pakistan. None of these notifications has been yet withdrawn.

Ahmadis behind bars

1. A contrived case was registered against four Ahmadis, Mr. Khalil Ahmad, Ghulam Ahmad, Ihsan Ahmad and Mubashir Ahmad of Bhoiwal, District Sheikhpura under PPCs 295-A, 337-2 and 427 on May 13, 2014 in Police Station Sharaqpur. Mr. Khalil Ahmad was then murdered by a madrassah student, while in police custody, on May 16, 2014. The remaining three accused were arrested on July 18, 2014. A year later the deadly clause PPC 295-C was added to their charge-sheet. A sessions judge has sentenced them to death on October 11, 2017. Appeal against this decision has been made to the High Court.
2. Officials of Punjab's Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) accompanied by a contingent of the Elite Force raided Shakoor Bhai's book shop, arrested him and Mr. Mazhar Abbas the shop assistant, a Shia, on December 2, 2015. A speedy trial in an Anti-terrorism Court dispensed 5 years' imprisonment to each of the two accused, while octogenarian Mr. Shakoor was sentenced in addition to three years' imprisonment under the anti-Ahmadiyya law. He appealed against the verdict and has sought release on bail from the Lahore High Court which has not spared time for almost a year to hear his plea.
3. An armed police contingent of the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) carried out a raid on Ahmadiyya central offices and Zia-ul-Islam Press on December 5, 2016 and arrested four Ahmadiyya officials: Mr. Amir Faheem, Mr. Sabah ul Zafar, Mr. Zahid Majeed Mahmud and Mr. Idrees Ahmad. Mr. Sabah ul Zafar and Mr. Idrees Ahmad remained behind bars as bail was not granted to them. The judge announced three years' imprisonment to both of them. An appeal against the judgment awaits hearing in the Lahore High Court.
4. A violent mob deviated from the authorized route, to attack an Ahmadiyya mosque in Dulmial on December 12, 2016. Forewarned Ahmadis assembled inside their mosque to defend it. In the ensuing riot two persons, an Ahmadi and a non-Ahmadi, died. The police made arrests from both sides, attackers as also defenders. Among the latter, they arrested 4 Ahmadis namely Malik Riaz Ahmad, Mr. Muhammad Ansar, Malik Khurram Abrar and Mr. Naveed Ahmad. The FIR applies numerous clauses of PPC including 302 (for murder) and 7-ATA of the Anti-terrorism Act. A separate case has also been registered against Ahmadis, on orders of a judge. Sixty rioters out of the 67 detained have been released on bail by courts. Mr. Khurram Abrar, Malik Riaz and Mr. Naveed Ahmad were released on bail on September 12, 2017 while the other Ahmadi, Mr. Muhammad Ansar is still behind bars. His bail application is awaiting a hearing in the Supreme Court.
5. Two Ahmadis, Mr. Amjad Iqbal Salooni and Mr. Ikram Ilahi were charged under PPC 295-A and the anti-Ahmadiyya 298-C. They were accused of preaching their faith. They were arrested on March 15, 2017. A judge added terrorism clauses to the case and sent it to an Anti-terrorism Court. Their pleas for bail were rejected. Now these

await hearing in a higher court. The ATA judge observed that terrorism clauses were not applicable in this case. Their plea for bail now lies in Lahore High Court. They remain behind bars awaiting trial.

From the media

IHC restores all 8 laws concerning the end of prophethood. If heavens fall, I do not care: Justice Siddiqui

The daily Mashriq; Lahore, November 15, 2017

Resolution adopted by the Punjab Assembly to include End of Prophethood in school syllabus

The daily Dunya; Faisalabad, November 25, 2017

In a petition submitted to Islamabad High Court, Islamic cleric Allah Wasaya of Tehreek-i-Khatm-i-Nabuwat demands that the court:

Direct the respondent No 3 (Federal Government) to maintain, henceforth, a separate database of individuals belonging to the Qadiani group/Lahori group entering in civil service so that in future they may not be posted in offices involving sensitive matter (s) such as raised in the instant petition.

While reporting the above, the following was reported on dawn.com/news/1370459 on 14 November 2017:

“...The judge also asked the federal government to submit a reply regarding the request for a database within 14 days.”(Justice Shaukat Siddiqui)

MC Chenab Nagar increases water tax from Rs 1050 in June 2016 to Rs 1800 w.e.f. June 2017

The daily Islam; Lahore, November 15, 2017

Chenab Nagar is a centre of terrorists. A grand operation should be undertaken after sealing the town: AMTKN (Khatme Nabuwat)

The daily Ausaf; Lahore, November 27, 2017

(Qadiani voter lists) should be made public for scrutiny: Abdul Latif Khalid (Convener Coordination Joint Movement Khatme Nabuwat)

The daily Nawa-i-Waqt; Lahore, November 18, 2017

Qadianis can be stopped by adding religion column to the ID card

The daily Nawa-i-Waqt; Lahore, November 1, 2017

(Fazl of JUI) Defends decision to include in (MMA) alliance people who were once members of banned organizations

The daily Islam; Lahore, November 17, 2017

Posting of Qadianis on important posts should be banned: Ilyas Chinioti (PML-N)

The daily Dawn; Lahore, November 15, 2017

If those responsible for the amendment to the affidavit are not punished, we'll have an open fight with the government: Qasmi in KN conference (in Lahore)

The daily Ausaf; Lahore, November 9, 2017

Meet our demands by 11a.m. otherwise we march on to the Parliament: Tehrik Labbaik's (TLY) deadline

The daily Express; Faisalabad, November 9, 2017

Cleric threatens ministers' families during Friday sermon at sit-in (in Islamabad)

The daily Dawn; Lahore, November 11, 2017

Special Branch suggests talks with (Islamabad) protestors

The daily Dawn; Lahore, November 11, 2017

Protestors' bid to besiege Ahsan's residence foiled

The daily The Nation; Lahore, November 23, 2017

Islamabad statement: Protestors attack law enforcers

The daily The News; Lahore, November 23, 2017

Faisalabad aftershocks hit Lahore. Life comes to a standstill as angry mobs assault police, commuters, journalist

The daily The Express Tribune; Lahore, November 26, 2017

Islamabad sit-in: Operation – intense battle between forces and demonstrators; 5 dead, numerous vehicles set on fire, hundreds injured

- **Roads blocked in many cities. Stoning on police. Rawalpindi and Lahore lawyers come out in support of demonstrators.**
- **Army Chief phones PM and advises peaceful measures to lift sit-in**
- **News TV channels, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube shut down**

The daily Mashriq; Lahore, November 26, 2017

Army called in after botched operation

The daily Dawn; Lahore, November 26, 2017

Suicide attack in Peshawar. Adl. I G Police and guard dead; 6 injured.

The daily Mashriq; Lahore, November 25, 2017

Quetta: Suicide attack on security forces vehicle. 5 dead including child; 20 injured.

The daily Mashriq; Lahore, November 26, 2017

DIG, two other policemen martyred in suicide attack

The daily Dawn; Lahore, November 10, 2017

Charsadah: Two policemen including SHO martyred by firing on mobile police

The daily Jang; Lahore, November 2, 2017

KP info minister (Shah Farman of PTI) bombasts Zahid Hamid for 'declaring Ahmadis Muslims'

<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/11/15ik.inf>

"... This country, its parliament, government and armed forces are here to safeguard the finality of prophethood," he (the Interior Minister) assured.

The Daily Times; Lahore, November 18, 2017

Sharif terms SC order 'another dark chapter'

The daily Dawn; Lahore, November 9, 2017

Sharif disqualified over conduct unbecoming: SC (Judgment) says ex PM tried to fool parliament, court and people by being evasive, non-committal.

The daily Dawn; Lahore, November 8, 2017

Ijtihad (Independent reasoning) has no place in face of the Quran: Jamia Al-Azhar

The daily Ausaf; Lahore, November 22, 2017

6 JI leaders in Bangladesh sentenced to death over 1971 war crimes

The daily Pakistan; Lahore, November 23, 2017

Repeal the Blasphemy law, another Do More from the US

The daily Insaf; Lahore, November 15, 2017

HRCP concerned over curbs on freedom of expression

The daily Dawn; Lahore, November 21, 2017

UNSC drops Myanmar resolution (over Rohingya's persecution) after China's objection

The daily Dawn; Lahore, November 7, 2017

A I accuses Myanmar of imposing 'apartheid' on Rohingya

The daily Dawn; Lahore, November 22, 2017

US condemns 'ethnic cleansing' of Rohingya

The daily Dawn; Lahore, November 23, 2017

Oxford strips Suu Kyi of award
Pope sidesteps Rohingya crisis in Myanmar address
The daily Dawn; Lahore, November 29, 2017

Butcher of Bosnia (R. Mladic) jailed for life
The daily Dawn; Lahore, November 28, 2017

Suicide bomber kills 50 in Nigeria mosque
The daily Dawn; Lahore, November 22, 2017

33,293 migrants died due to European curbs, says newspaper (Der Tagesspiegel)
The daily Dawn; Lahore, November 11, 2017

Corruption or rebellion! 11 Saudi princes including son of Abdullah, dozens of ministers arrested; commander-in-chief navy dismissed.
The daily Mashriq; Lahore, November 6, 2017

Trump supports arrests in Saudi Arabia
The daily 92 News; Lahore, November 11, 2017

27 worshipers shot dead, 20 injured at church in Texas
The daily Dawn; Lahore, November 6, 2017

Army chief in Tehran, to meet Khamenei
The daily Dawn; Lahore, November 6, 2017

The government bows down after our 11 days' exertion: (mulla) Asif Jalali (TLY)
The daily Express; Faisalabad, November 30, 2017

Senate adopts bill to amend Election Act 2017 moved by PTI legislator, bill seeks to keep Ahmadis' status unchanged with insertion of section 48A
The daily The Express Tribune; Lahore, November 7, 2017

Arrest of the Ulama on KN issue will affect our vote bank: (N) League members' message to the ruling elite
The daily The News; Lahore, November 15, 2017

Gulalai sees Imran behind Tehreek-e-Labbaik sit-in (at Faizabad) "Imran Khan has close ties with the Taliban", the MNA from South Waziristan told reporters...
The daily The Express Tribune; Lahore, November 16, 2017

Govt enlists help of religious leaders to end sit-in
The daily Dawn; Lahore, November 21, 2017

Sit-in invites Supreme Court ire
Bench warns protesters against taking law in to their own hands; regrets their use of inappropriate language.
The daily Dawn; Lahore, November 22, 2017

Who is backing Faizabad sit-in, asks SC judge
The daily Dawn; Lahore, November 24, 2017

Circumstances are heading for 'minus all': Sunni Ittehad Council
The daily Dunya; Faisalabad, November 13, 2017

In the context of national security, Qadianis holding Green Cards and dual nationality should be kept under vigilant surveillance: Fazl ur Rahman (JUI)
The daily Ausaf; Lahore, November 1, 2017

15 from Punjab murdered in cold blood in Turbat (Balochistan). Bodies were thrown around in hills.
The daily Mashriq; Lahore, November 10, 2017

Police officer, three members of family shot dead in Quetta
The daily Dawn; Lahore, November 16, 2017

Political parties agree to undo NAB and form an Accountability Commission
Judges, generals will not be affected by new law
The daily Mashriq; Lahore, November 2, 2017

Model Town inquiry report a ‘dead document’, LHC told (by the Punjab government)

The daily Dawn; Lahore, November 7, 2017

PML-Q leaders appear before NAB, Dar’s son skips hearing

The daily Dawn; Lahore, November 7, 2017

Nawaz Sharif deliberately made a false statement in his nomination papers. It is a legal requirement to mention all assets in nomination papers.

The daily Mashriq; Lahore, November 8, 2017

Maryam reacts to Panama Papers judgment with guns blazing

The daily Dawn; Lahore, November 8, 2017

Court indicts ousted PM, dismisses his plea for joint trial in all three references; Dar’s application for exemption rejected.

Sharif terms SC order ‘another dark chapter’

The daily Dawn; Lahore, November 9, 2017

Non-bailable warrants out for ‘embattled’ Dar (Finance Minister)

The daily Dawn; Lahore, November 15, 2017

Finance Minister Dar declared absconder

The daily Dawn; Lahore, November 22, 2017

20 religious parties (Sunni) form political alliance (Nizam Mustafa Muttahida Mahaz) Hamid Saeed Kazmi (Co-ordinator) told the media that NMMM was established to protect Islamic identity of Pakistan and articles of the Constitution about the honour of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), status of Qadianis, and to counter conspiracies against Islamic laws and traditions in the country

The daily The News; Lahore, November 8, 2017

Religious parties (Siraj ul Haq of JI) announce revival of MMA

The daily Dunya; Faisalabad, November 10, 2017

Islamabad High Court judge gives govt 14 days to reply to extremist’s request for database of all government employees belonging to the persecuted Ahmadi faith

Dawn.com/news/1370459/i...Pakistan

Pakistan in debt of \$84bn. Corruption cases will be followed up to their logical end: Chairman NAB

The daily Mashriq; Lahore, November 16, 2017

Qibla Ayaz appointed CII Chairman

The daily Dawn; Lahore, November 4, 2017

Justice Shaukat Siddiqui (IHC) seeks open trial

SJC reference against him on misconduct

The daily Dawn; Lahore, November 7, 2017

Op-ed: Bigotry in Punjab Assembly

...The divisive and hate driven narratives of people like these are undoubtedly false and malicious, and blame must be placed where it is due. However in this instance the provincial PML-N leadership is more deserving of condemnation for its irresponsible and craven behavior than the narrative peddlers themselves.

Federal leader, like Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister Khaqan Abbasi, and the Interior Minister Ahsan Iqbal, all rose to the challenge and condemned hates speech and bigotry publically and forcefully; assuring every citizen that they have equal rights.

The provincial PML-N government is shamefully silent-and hence tacitly agreeing to every comment being made. The Law Minister was never known to be a paragon of principle, so his capitulation comes as no surprise, but PML-N leaders on the provincial level – such as Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif – need to step up and put a halt to this vitriol.

If Shahbaz Sharif, and Hamza Shahbaz for that matter, have aspirations to be leaders at the national level, they need to own up to their responsibilities and show leadership now.

<http://nation.com.pk/01-Nov-2017/bigotry-in-punjab-assembly>

Op-ed: Chader, etc. (a comment on the Islamabad sit-in)

This is not merely a rally, or a show off; neither is it a drama – there is a need to put an end to this mischief (Ahmadiyyat) forever. Claimants to the love of Mustafa (Muhammad PBUH) do not care for their lives. This is a gathering of lovers of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). These lovers do not care for their lives. It is only those who are crazy after the Prophet that sit out in the open in such intense cold.

Bushra Rahman in the daily 92 News; Faisalabad, November 22, 2017

Op-ed: Reign of terror?

Such is the collective state of our bigotry, complicity, timidity and expediency that even the Muslim majority in this Islamic Republic (created to enable them to live their lives in accordance with their belief system) lives in a constant state of terror. Forget minorities, even members of the Muslim majority can no longer ask questions or critique the logic or intent of those raising demands in the name of religion out of fear of being declared apostate or blasphemers and devoured by vigilantism. ...

While leaders of this pitiable nation sharpen their petty political tactics, freedom of religious conscience remains shackled, hate speech proliferates, tolerance recedes and a few hundred mullahs hold the capital and the garrison cities hostage against clear orders of the Islamabad High Court.

Babar Sattar on November 18, 2017 in <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/245516-reign-of-terror>

Op-ed: Republic of Pakistan, Jinnah's Pakistan

Pakistan's actions against religious minorities, including Ahmadis, fall squarely foul of Pakistan's obligations under International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Pakistan ratified ICCPR in 2010 and won alongside it the prestigious GSP plus status from European markets. I put to you that so long as Pakistan remains an Islamic Republic and so long as Pakistan continues to ignore Jinnah's clear promise made on 11 August 1947, Pakistan will never fully integrate itself as a responsible human rights state that fully respects its international obligations. ...

Sooner or later Pakistan will have to give up its obsession with religion and appeasement of religious extremists forces. Only then will Pakistan stand as a respectable nation in the comity of nations.

Yasser Latif Hamdani in the Daily Times; October 30, 2017

Op-ed: The role of Muslim identity

While Muslim identity (inclusive then of groups like Ahmadis, Ismailis, Mahdavi sects) was the cornerstone of the Pakistan Movement, no historian of the Pakistan Movement can deny the support the Muslim League got from Dalits and Scheduled Castes in Bengal or the fact that it was because of the Christian support in the Punjab assembly that the Muslim League was able to secure the present border of West Punjab. Therefore it is about time we revisited the exclusivist narrative of Pakistan that certain Islamists as well as leftist critics of Pakistan

Movement have been able to impose on it. A Pakistani narrative and identity while mindful of the modernist Muslim identity that League forwarded during the Pakistan Movement cannot ignore also the minorities of Pakistan who were promised equal rights, protection and safeguards by Jinnah and the Muslim League repeatedly through their resolutions and manifestoes.

Yasser Latif Hamdani in the Daily Times, November 13, 2017

Statement AHRC: Pakistan: The last nail in the coffin of democracy

...By ceding to the demands of the violent demonstrators, the state has virtually given absolute power and blanket immunity to fundamentalism and militancy in the name of religion in the country. The government has set a shameful legacy for itself, wherein some 1500 people managed to overcome the government and a country of 200 million people, a 600,000 strong army and the world's sixth nuclear state. The whole world saw the drama unfold that leased the people of Pakistan to non-state actors, who will now decide who is 'Muslim enough' to live in the country. ...

humanrights.asia/news/ahrc-news/AHRC-STM-146-2017

Annex: An op-ed by Imtiaz Alam in The News, November 30, 2017

Bigotry prevails, republic fails

The federal government, initially with the facilitation of the Punjab government and finally with the arbitration of the military leadership, has – by agreeing to the November 27 accord exactly as was demanded by the Tehreek-e-Labbaik Ya Rasul Allah (TLYR) – has signed its own indictment as bigotry now clearly defines the ideological contours of the ‘land of the pure’.

Like in the past, except the first martial law of 1953 enforced in Lahore by a valiant General Azam Khan on the behest of warring politicians to quell anti-Ahmadi riots, the state and its legislative and executive arms panicked, capitulated and surrendered before self-appointed inquisitors and apostatizing low clergy. Both the civilian and martial arms of the executive competed in appeasing a crowd of a few hundred rioters, and abrogated their constitutional mandate as the Supreme Court and Islamabad High Court watched haplessly the breakdown of the constitutional order they are supposed to uphold in the garrison city and the capital.

Even if the Islamabad High has now raised quite pertinent questions about the sordid saga and the document of surrender, it was the very honourable court that had bound the hands of civilian law-enforcement agencies by vague and contradictory directions regarding the use of force to get Faizabad interchange vacated from the armed-occupiers of the TLYR.

First it was our so-called sovereign parliament that was held “collectively responsible for having committed the blasphemy” of minor tinkering (from “solemnly swear” to “hereby declare”) of no legal substance in the oath for being ‘Muslim’ in the subordinate Election Act of 2017. The fact is that the constitutional provision of the definitions of “Muslims” and “Non-Muslims” on the touchstone of faith in the “absolute and unqualified finality of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), the last of the prophets” under Article 260(3) continues to prevail. The sovereignty and collective wisdom of parliament came to its knees when the substitution of words with the same intent was adjudged blasphemous by religious zealots.

Within days the whole parliament had to stand on its head to rectify the ‘blasphemy’ it had collectively committed. By doing so it has, at the very least, handed over its pervasive legislative authority over matters of faith – which it had acquired under the 2nd Amendment to the constitution – to non-state sectarian extremists. After the resignation of Minister of Law Zahid Hamid on the demand of the TLYR, parliament should logically be seeking redemption from the Amir-e-TLYR!

Now matters of faith and the emotive issues of blasphemy and punishment of alleged blasphemers will be in the hands of the warring factions of the Sunni clergy, which is also engaged in accusing one another of blasphemy and apostasy. This will open the floodgates of an internecine sectarian conflict in Pakistan with cross-border implications, especially after Prime Minister Khaqan Abbasi and COAS General Qamar Javed Bajwa have assured the Saudi monarch of Pakistan’s support for Saudi Arabia’s endeavours for “peace and tranquillity in the region”. The law of the jungle is to prevail with the abdication of the state authority and submission to violent religious extremists, even as our brave sons – like Major Ishaq – continue to sacrifice their lives while fighting against the scourge of terrorism.

Sectarian differences have been rooted in Muslim history and can co-exist only in a culture of tolerance and pluralism, with Muslim-majority states treating their citizens as equals regardless of their faiths. But when these states became the instruments of sectarian divisions and intervened in the faiths of their citizens they lost their role as neutral and honest arbitrators. And this is what has been happening with the state, and with nation-building, in Pakistan.

The compromises the state has been making with religious extremists to expeditiously avert various threats have in the long run cast irreparable damages to both our state and society. First, the state patronised the Deobandi/Wahabi/Takfiri extremists to fuel various jihads and to counter ethnic nationalists. And now, it is encouraging and appeasing Barelvi extremists who have started following in the footsteps of the violent Takfiris. With this, a vicious cycle of sectarian divisions is reaching its zenith. The paradox of an ideological state now impedes the very existence of the state which has left its citizens and their fundamental rights to the mercy of demons.

The Islamabad High Court had first exceeded its mandate by constraining the hands of the civil administration. But after the operation, the court has taken serious exception to the November 27 accord under which the officials responsible for the aborted operation on November 25 for the eviction of an unlawful occupation are to be investigated and punished for acting on the orders of the IHC to uphold the law and keep order. The greatest tragedy is that, rather than the violators of the law, those very few from among the whole range of sprawling arms of the executive who dared to enforce the writ of the state are to be prosecuted and punished at the behest of the rioters.

And the greatest irony, in the eyes of the IHC, is that “Prima facie, the role assumed by the top leadership of the army is beyond the constitution”. How could – asks Justice Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui – they play the role of an “arbitrator” or “facilitator”? It is all so obvious that Minister for Interior Ahsan Iqbal did not take ownership of the operation against the sit-in as the civilian law-enforcement agencies struggled with the call of their duty after the army decided not to join in the eviction operation.

While ideological, institutional, constitutional, federal and democratic paradoxes of this state are now haunting us right in our face, various arms of the state and other stakeholders are fighting among themselves to expand or preserve their turfs and fiefdoms. It appears as though Pakistan is a conglomerate of contending fiefdoms – not a unified state governed by a constitution and by a respect for the social contract made with its citizens.

Unfortunately, as the garrison asserts its supremacy and the judiciary timidly questions the former’s role as a de-facto ultimate arbiter, the civilian forces are at each other’s throat. With the PML-N governments in Punjab and at the centre at loggerheads in appeasing the religious extremists, the PTI bent upon derailing a quasi-democratic transition and the PPP exhibiting crass opportunism, no one is left to defend even a lame-duck republic. This leaves the citizens of this country at the mercy of authoritarian state actors and violent extremists and bigots – all in the name of faith and ‘national interest’. And this is how bigotry prevails – as the republic fails.

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<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/250604-bigotry-prevails-republic-fails>