

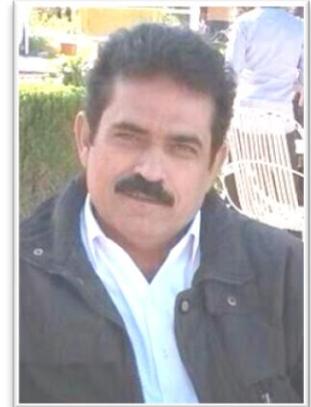
Persecution of Ahmadis in Pakistan News Report September 2014

An Ahmadi medical practitioner Mubashar Ahmad Khosa killed in his clinic in Mirpur Khas, Sindh

Hate material declaring Ahmadis ‘worthy of death’ is distributed during conferences held in the name of Khatme Nabuwwat

Rabwah; September 23, 2014: Ahmadiyya central office issued the following press release:

Chenab Nagar (PR): Yesterday, 22 September 2014, Mubashar Ahmad Khosa, a well-known Ahmadi medical practitioner was killed by two unknown assailants in Mirpur Khas, Sindh. He was attending to patients at his clinic when two unknown assailants came in and fired at him repeatedly before fleeing on a motorbike. Mubashar Ahmad was rushed to hospital but succumbed to his injuries on the way. He was 50 years old. He is survived by a wife, two sons and two daughters. His remains will be brought to Rabwah for burial.



Expressing his grief at this tragic murder, the spokesperson of Jamaat Ahmadiyya, Mr. Saleemuddin said that every year in the month of September conferences in the name of Khatme Nabuwwat are convened throughout the country, during which hate material declaring Ahmadis to be worthy of death is regularly distributed. Despite this the authorities continue to turn a blind eye to such inciteful activities against Pakistan’s Ahmadi population. In 2008, another Ahmadi doctor, Abdul Manan Siddiqi was also assassinated in September in a targeted attack. His murderers have still not been brought to justice. The Jamaat, he said, finds sanctuary in God alone in the face of these injustices. Addressing Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, the chairman of the Pakistan People’s Party which rules in the province, he asked how much longer Ahmadis have to endure such persecution in the name of religion. He demanded that the assailants be pursued with full force of the law and tried for their crimes.

Mr. Usman Ahmad, an Ahmadi wrote a blog in <http://www.down.com/news/1133841>. It is readable and is reproduced as Annex to this report

Photo of an Ahmadi martyred in Nawabshah, Sindh

In our July report this year we reported the killing of Mr. Imtiaz Ahmad in Benazirabad (Nawabshah). He was killed because of religious hatred on 13 July 2014 at about 4.30 p.m. in busy Trunk Bazaar. He owned a furniture shop and was standing in front of it when unknown assailants opened fire at him and the bullets pierced through his head and exited through the other side.

Mr. Imtiaz Ahmad’s photo has now become available and is printed here for record.



Update of Gujranwala incident

Gujranwala; September, 2014: It would be recalled that on July 28, 2014 mullas-led mob torched Ahmadis’ homes and businesses in Gujranwala, which resulted in death of a

grandmother, her two grand-daughters and loss to a 7-month pregnant woman. The entire Ahmadi population had to flee.

The police booked an Ahmadi youth who had been falsely accused of blasphemy for defiling the picture of the great mosque at Makka. He was arrested.

The affected Ahmadis have not been able to return to their homes as mullas are maintaining pressure on the administration. A group of mullas, including a few from Lahore, met the City Police Officer. The local mullas later held a conference in which they again incited the public against the Ahmadiyya community and garlanded Sadam Hussain, the central figure of this riot. They declared that they would not allow Ahmadis to return to their homes.

Mullas held yet another conference on September 1, 2014 near the houses of Ahmadis in Street no. 3, Rasheed Colony. They called this conference 'Aman (peace) Seminar', but all of them spoke venomously against the Ahmadiyya community and spread hatred. They said that they were satisfied with the progress of the case against the Ahmadis, as the police were cooperating with them.

Ahmadis denied burial in common cemetery

Kartarpur, District Faisalabad; August 28, 2014: Mr. Irshad Ahmad S/O Mr. Ghulam Ahmad, the president of the local Ahmadiyya community in Gangapur died on August 28, 2014.

Mr. Irshad's non-Ahmadi relatives from Kartarpur village offered his relatives burial of the deceased in the common cemetery in Kartarpur, to which they agreed. Some Ahmadi youths went there to dig the grave. Some miscreants of the locality however created hue and cry and threatened that they would not allow any 'Qadiani' to be buried there. They made announcements in two mosques on amplifiers and urged the people to assemble in protest. The police also arrived at the scene.

Due to this hostile environment, Ahmadis decided not to bring the remains of Mr. Irshad there, and buried him in Gangapur. Action is in hand to acquire land in Kartarpur for Ahmadi dead.

Bail denied

Ferozwala, District Sheikhpura: In May this year, subsequent to a trivial conflict, mulla-led village folk had a fabricated case registered against four Ahmadis under PPC 295-A etc. Mr. Khalil Ahmad, one of the accused, was arrested by the police. While in police custody, Mr. Ahmad was shot dead by a madrassah student.

The remaining three Ahmadi accused initially were granted release on bail. However their bail was cancelled and they were arrested on July 18, 2014. Their plea for bail was heard by a judge recently. He refused them the relief.

Mr. Mubashir Ahmad, Mr. Ghulam Ahmad and Mr. Ehsan Ahmad remain in prison on a fabricated complaint whose initiators had the fourth accused shot dead in police custody.

Grave consequences of legal action

Sabzazar, Lahore: Mr. Adnan Munir S/O Mr. Munir Ahmad escaped an attempt at kidnapping last year in June. He lodged an FIR with the police station against ten suspects. Four of them were arrested while six are still on the run. Mr. Munir has been receiving threatening calls since then. His son and daughter escaped an attempt on their lives on August 18, 2014. The attackers snatched a gold chain from his daughter but could do no further harm because a number of people assembled at the spot, and fled away.

The entire family is greatly disturbed and feels at risk. They have to take great care when appearing in court. Their business has suffered heavily. The state has done little to deter the hostile goons.

Ahmadi teacher continues to face severe hardship

Chak Chatha, District Hafizabad; September, 2014: Mr. Habibur Rahman has been mentioned in our dispatches for facing severe hostility at his work place. In July, our news report carried a story titled: **Severe maltreatment of an Ahmadi teacher**. It mentioned how Mr. Habib-ur-Rahman was facing hostility from a Qari in his school; and Sabih Ahmad, his nephew, had been beaten up by other boys on instigation of the Qari. A follow-up was given in last month's news report, titled: **More info about the plight of an Ahmadi school teacher**.

Mr. Rehman was teaching in Government Primary School Hameedpura. His colleagues wrote an application to the education department:

"Habib-ur-Rehman belongs to Qadiani faith; hence we have only hatred for him, socially and religiously. We do not want a Qadiani teacher to teach our children. Similarly, the students also hate and despise this teacher and do not want him to teach them. If some wrong happens to him, we shall not be responsible. Hence teacher Habib should be transferred and an alternate teacher be provided instead."

Mr. Rahman was accordingly transferred to Government Primary School Khurlanwala. His faith-based persecution followed him there too. On first day at the school, a man told him to get himself transferred elsewhere and send the previous teacher back. An opponent of the Ahmadiyya community, named Faizan came to the school to see Mr. Rahman. Mr. Rahman greeted him with *Salaam* but the visitor did not return the greetings, instead said, *"You are a blasphemer. If there were a Christian in your place I would have hugged him; they are Ahle-Kitab (People of Book) at least. The entire village knows that you are a Mirzai. It is better for you to get transferred from here soon."* He further threatened him that he could have lodged an FIR against him under the blasphemy law 295-C for saying *Salaam*. He also used obnoxious language and warned Rahman of grave tidings. The villagers told another teacher to get rid of the Qadiani teacher.

Mr. Rahman has been advised to take precautions and try to get a transfer from there too.

Reports from Lahore, the capital of Punjab

Baghbanpura; August 2014: Mr. Mazhar Umar Butt, an Ahmadi was returning home from the bazaar when Hassan Muawiya the younger brother of the well-known Maulvi Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi noticed him. Muawiya started shouting abuse against the founder of the Ahmadiyya community on seeing him. Mr. Butt refused to pay heed and paddled fast to return home.

Green Town; August 31, 2014: A mulla held a Khatme Nabuwat conference in Masjid Abdullah. Other mullas from the city were also invited at the occasion. As usual, anti-Ahmadiyya speeches were made and the audience were incited. Mullas held a meeting after the conference in which they planned to take out a procession on September 1 and set fire to Ahmadi's houses.

Ahmadis informed the police of their plans. The inspector questioned the mulla over the report. He accepted that they had plans for a procession but not about torching Ahmadi's houses. The police inspector warned him against any such attempt.

Anti-Ahmadiyya activism in Rawalpindi

Rawalpindi; September, 2014: Following incidents happened in Rawalpindi.

1. Ahmadi residents of F-Block of Satellite Town are facing social boycott. The shopkeepers refuse to sell them anything. They have pasted stickers in their shops: **“No dealing of any kind here with Qadianis”**. This area is close to Aiwan-e-Tauheed (the Ahmadiyya prayer centre) where the administration stopped Ahmadis from offering Friday prayers after the agitation led by Sharjeel Mir and rabid mullas a year ago. Similar stickers have been pasted in shops in the Main Market of Rawalpindi.
2. The Khatib delivered a Friday sermon in Masjid Bilal in Akal Garh. He used extremely filthy language against the Ahmadiyya community and left no stone unturned to incite the public against Ahmadis. The only Ahmadi family living in the vicinity had to move elsewhere.

Anti-Ahmadiyya conference in Rabwah

Rabwah; September 7, 2014: Mullas routinely gather every year in the Ahmadiyya headquarters, Rabwah to hold highly provocative and spiteful conference. Ahmadis request the authorities every time to forbid this conference as it disturbs the civic life of the town whose 95% population is Ahmadi. Almost the entire audience are transported from other cities to Rabwah.

The conference was held in Jamia Usmania Khatme Nabuwwat, Muslim Colony under the supervision of Qari Shabbir Ahmad Usmani of the National Khatme Nabuwwat Movement. It started at about 10 a.m. and lasted until late night. Three sessions were held. The third and the last session started at 8:45 p.m. and lasted until 3 a.m. Maulvi Ahmad Ali Siraj of Kuwait presided over it. Other mullas who spoke in this session were Abdul Rauf Qasmi of Kabirwala, Hafiz Gulzar Ahmad of Gujranwala, Abdul Jawwad Qasmi of Sheikhpura, Abdul Waris of Chiniot, Muhammad Ilyas Chinioti (MPA of PML-N), Tahir Abdul Razzaq of Lahore and Sheikh Muhammad Amjad. They hurled abuse against the holy founder of the Ahmadiyya community and criticized other elders. They called September 7, an historic day when ‘Qadianis’ were declared non-Muslim.

Mulla Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi (head of Pakistan Ulema Council) also addressed the conference. His faction enjoys official support. He criticized Dr. Tahir ul Qadri for his protest sit-in at Islamabad, and demanded imposition of Sharia law in the country. He invited ‘Qadianis’ to accept Islam.

Mulla Shabbir Usmani criticized the District Coordinations Officer Chiniot for his orders forbidding some mullas to enter the district to incite sectarianism.

Ahmadis felt concerned and threatened and had to remain alert all day. Educational institutes remained closed in Rabwah. Women had to stay at home. Markets remained shut and civic life of the entire city was affected due to the presence of unwelcome guests.

A hostile rally in Faisalabad

Faisalabad; August 23, 2014: Mullas held a Khatme Nabuwwat conference here in MC Model School No. 1. It was attended by Ahle Sunnat, Jamaat Islami and Ahle Hadith mullas. Farid Paracha, a leader of Jamaat Islami spoke maliciously against the Ahmadiyya community and its respectable leaders. Maulvi Yaqoob Sheikh, Muhtasim Ilahi Zaheer, Mutee Ullah, Usman Shakir, Mateen Khalid, Abdul Azeem Asad etc also uttered a great deal of abuse and slander. The audience were told to survey Ahmadis’ houses and shops for bearing any Islamic inscription; these should be removed and an FIR lodged with the police. In case of any resistance by officials contact any Maulana, they were advised.

Anti-Ahmadiyya literature was distributed during the conference. Approximately 400 men attended the conference. Tahrike Khuddam Khatme Nabuwwat announced a similar conference in Jaranwala on September 6.

Threats in Hafizabad

August 23, 2014: Non-Ahmadi youths of Mangat Uncha threatened some Ahmadi youths that they would treat Ahmadis there the same way as in Gujranwala (referring to the murder, arson and loot in July 2014).

The president of the local Ahmadiyya community contacted the parents of those youths and complained to them about these threats. He received favourable response from the elders.

Threat to Ahmadis for ransom in Wah Cantt

Wah Cantt, District Rawalpindi: Five Ahmadis here received threat letters by post, telling them to pay ransom, become a Muslim or face death. Their text is translated below: "You are Qadianis and blasphemous to the Holy Prophet. Flee from this country of ours. You have no right to stay in Pakistan. However, if you become Muslims, we will treat you as our brothers in faith. For this, you will have to visit Almustafiz Dar-e-Ahsan, Samundri Road, Faisalabad. If not, be prepared to die. You people should be treated under section 58-C (sic), which provides death as penalty laid down in the Constitution of Pakistan. Anyone who sympathizes (with you) will also be considered blasphemous against the Holy Prophet, and will be killed as well. However, if you want to stay alive, you should contribute two million rupees for the Trust we have established for the poor in Burewala. Otherwise go away from here. After 15th October, we will kill you. You may inform of this anyone you may choose. We are the lovers of the Holy Prophet, we are not afraid of anyone. It is up to you to decide whether you want to live or die. Dr Nisar Jutt MNA, Chaudhry Ilyas Jutt former MNA, General Safdar Malik (Ex – Governor), Saeed Iqbal Wahla, Khalid Latif Mughal, Sajjad Rasul (Deputy DG ISI), Aslam Tarin (Ex-IG Punjab) and Colonel Tanvir Jalal, all of them are our brothers in cult, and we all are followers of Hazrat Abu Anis Muhammad Barkat Ali Ludhianvi. Also other members of our cult occupy high positions in the government. You may contact us at the following phone numbers. From: Chaudhry Nadim of Burewala"

A similar threat (identical text) was sent to Dr Tariq Mahmud, an Ahmadi of Adda Sheikh Fazal, District Vehari. Obviously the source is the same. The source urged the addressee to contact Bashir Jat at Cell Phone #0332-8498786. The source is thus traceable. The police have been informed.

Grave threat to an Ahmadi in Kotli

Kotli; September 2014: Mr. Aftab Ahmad, the head of Ahmadiyya youth organisation of District Kotli, received the following threat by post: "Aftab, Mirzai, the filthy Qadiani and professor, we have come to know of what you did in Goi. You and the professor will be slaughtered, God willing. You and your family will be slaughtered inside your house, inshAllah. You have misbehaved with our Imam of the mosque. We will kidnap you. You cannot escape from us. You and your brother professor should start counting down the days. We will slaughter you, the blasphemers. Blasphemers, Blaphemers, Blasphemers, just wait; and you will be murdered surely like Shah Muhammad Javed. **Lovers of the Prophet**"

All Ahmadis living in Kotli, especially the District Amir and Mr. Ahmad have been advised to exercise great caution and try to shift elsewhere for some time because of this grave threat to their persons.

Released on bail – Mr. Tahir Ahmad Khalid

Tando Allah Yar, Sindh; September 13, 2014: Mr. Tahir Ahmad Khalid, an Ahmadi missionary was finally released on bail after five and half months of detention on a false accusation of blasphemy. A brief resume' would be in order at this stage.

On March 31, 2014 extremist elements arranged stoning at Ahmadi missionary's residence by madrassah students in Tando Allah Yar. Thereafter this incident was escalated into anti-Ahmadi riots in the town by mullas. They leveled blasphemy charges against the missionary, Mr. Tahir Ahmad Khalid, tasked a complainant to make a formal report to the police, put pressure on the administration and had the missionary arrested.

Mr. Khalid's plea for bail was rejected by the magistrate. Thereafter when it was contested at the Sessions' level, the clerics maintained their vigil at the court and the Sessions Judge found it convenient to reject Mr. Khalid's plea. He had to take his plea to the Sindh High Court.

At the High Court the prosecutors successfully indulged into delaying tactics and had the hearing repeatedly postponed on various dates on following grounds:

- The prosecution attorney was new to the case; he needed more time to prepare his case.
 - At the given date, the prosecutor failed to turn up.
 - By the close of the court's working hours, this case being at the tail-end, could not be heard.
 - The judge was not available.
- etc, etc.

Months passed and the innocent accused remained in prison for lack of grant of bail. Eventually, Syed Saeed-ud-din Nasir J, a good judge decided to catch the bull by the horns and granted release on bail. In his Order, the judge observed that:

- The complainant did not witness the act of defiling the Quran. He only heard of it from someone else who heard it from others.
- The alleged mutilated pages of the Quran had still not been recovered by the police and the investigation to that end was still in progress (five months after the incident).
- The complainant had consulted with the 'Ulam-e-kram' who advised him to lodge the complaint. etc; etc.

It is a fair question to ask as to why these obvious aspects of the case, pointed out earlier as well in lower courts, went unheeded by the magistrate and the sessions judge. Why did they withhold justice to the victimized accused?

Mr. Khalid, who initially was given the impression by the police that he was being detained to protect him from the mob, remained behind bars for 22 weeks before he was set free to face the baseless trial. It is noteworthy that the counsel for the complainant vehemently opposed the grant of the bail, while the Learned A.P.G Sindh half-heartedly opposed the grant of bail application, according to the judge's Order Sheet. This shows the unholy team-work between the state, the mullas, the police and the extremist/sectarian elements against marginalized sections of society, called religious minorities.

Release on bail is only the first step in the right direction. A court trial is still to follow. The prosecution of Mr. Khalid may go on for years. If declared guilty, he could end up in prison for life for a crime he would not even dream of. Holy Quran to him is as dear, holy and revered as Bible to a practicing Christian.

Avoiding the 'impending human disaster'

Lahore; September 7, 2014: Mr. Ali Usman Qasmi has recently written a book titled: **The Ahmadis and the Politics of Religious Exclusion in Pakistan**. The News on Sunday

(TNS) interviewed this author and published the interview in <http://tns.thenews.com.pk/now/scope>... on September 7, 2014. It is readable.

The interview is titled: "There is no scope for a counter response from Ahmadis." The introduction to the interview mentions that the Second Amendment "was a kind of culmination of their (Ahmadis) social ostracisation..."; also "This (Ordinance XX) effectively curtailed social and political exclusion in every possible manner."

Mr. Qasmi also expresses the opinion that, "They (the common people) oppose or hate them (Ahmadis) because they have been fed a certain opinion about the Ahmadis **and there is no scope or possibility for a counter response coming from the Ahmadis.**" (Emphasis added)

The interview comes to end with the following loaded paragraph: "At this point it can only be hoped that this work (book) will lead to academic discussion that will in turn influence the larger public discourse as well. The problem is that there is a human crisis, our concern is how to resolve this human crisis. This crisis cannot necessarily be addressed through legal or constitutional means. It requires changing the minds of the people and influencing their opinion. This can only happen through research and open discussion. Only then we might be able to avoid the impending human disaster which is in the making."

That is the ground reality in Pakistan today after 40 years of co-operation between the state and the mulla in Pakistan on the Ahmadiyya issue, "impending human disaster" forecast by a social scientist. Ahmadis can only pray and have faith in God to protect them from this man-made tsunami initiated in 1974, sustained and intensified constantly in the past four decades.

Ahmadis behind bars

1. Mr. Mubashir Ahmad, Mr. Khalid Mehmud and Mr. Javed Ahmad were booked on June 2, 2014 under anti-Ahmadiyya law in a case where the complainant had a property dispute with an Ahmadi who owns a local prayer centre in Gujranwala. A judge refused the Ahmadis' plea for bail. They remain behind bars.
2. The police registered a fabricated case under Anti-terrorism clause ATA 8/11 and PPC 295-A a blasphemy clause, against Mr. Aqib Saleem with FIR no. 553/14 in Police Station Peoples Colony, Gujranwala on July 28, 2014. He is still in prison.
3. A baseless case was registered against four Ahmadis, Mr. Khalil Ahmad, Ghulam Ahmad, Ihsan Ahmad, 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 murdered by a madrassa student while in police custody, on May 16, 2014. The remaining three accused were arrested on July 18, 2014. They are in prison.

From the media

Ahmadi doctor killed in Mirpur Khas

The daily Dawn; Lahore, September 24, 2014

US efforts to hand back Ahmadi education institutions founder once again

The daily Insaf; Lahore, September 13, 2014

Sri Lanka Court gives green light to deport Pakistani asylum-seekers

The daily Nation; Lahore, September 3, 2014

Qadianis are traitors of the constitution. They should be decimated in every field: I.K.M. Conference

The daily Insaf; Lahore, September 9, 2014

Chenab Nagar: Piles of filth all over. Risk of disease. Gutters overflow in streets and on roads and flies breed in plenty. Plea to take notice.

The daily Din; Lahore, September 24, 2014

Qadianis are opposed to Jihad; they are enemies of Islam and Pakistan.

The daily Insaaf; Lahore, September 13, 2014

Qadianis are blasphemers against the Prophet and are enemies of Pakistan and its constitution: Ulema Karam

The daily Jurat; Lahore, September 6, 2014

Qadianis should be fired from all key posts in the interest of peace: Khatme Nabuwwat Conferences

The daily Jang; Lahore, September 8, 2014

7 September is a day of humiliation and ignominy for the deniers of Khatme Nabuwwat: (Mulla) Zahid Qasimi

The daily Jang; Lahore, September 4, 2014

Qadianis are the enemies of the Muslim world and in particular Pakistan: Ulama Karam

The daily Mashriq; Lahore, September 15, 2014

Binoria scholar among nine shot dead (in Karachi)

The daily The Express Tribune; Lahore, September 11, 2014

8 killed in Hangu IDPs camp blast

The daily The News; Lahore, September 29, 2014

Five killed in Peshawar suicide attack on FC convoy

The daily Dawn; Lahore, September 24, 2014

Nine injured – PU staff, IJT activists clash

The daily Dawn; Lahore, September 11, 2014

Key seminary cleric shot dead in Rawalpindi

The daily Dawn; Lahore, September 22, 2014

KU dean Shakeel Auj shot dead

The daily The Express Tribune; Lahore, September 19, 2014

A true revolution will sweep away all including the patricians: Shahbaz Sharif

The daily Mashriq; Lahore, September 29, 2014

Britain: Annual Khatme Nabuwwat Conference. Dr Abdul Razaq Sikandar, Khwaja Aziz Ahmad, Maulana Fazlur Rehman Ashrafi, Maulana Alla Wasaya and others address (the audience)

The daily Islam; Lahore, September 11, 2014

IS extends its self-styled Khilafa to Pakistan as well

The daily Nawa-e-Waqt; Lahore, September 3, 2014

Over 120 Muslim scholars reject 'ISism'

The daily The News; Lahore, September 27, 2014

PTI is backed by Jewish and Qadiani lobby: Mohamamd Zakaria (of JUI)

The daily Jehane Pakistan; Lahore, September 21, 2014

Not even US, Saudis can save Nawaz: Imran

The daily The Express Tribune; Lahore, September 22, 2014

Protesters storm PTV HQs, attack PM House

The daily The News; Lahore, September 2, 2014

Clash in Islamabad between police and protestors. 6 dead, 700 injured.

The daily Ausaf; Lahore, September 1, 2014

PAT, PTI Chiefs booked on terror charges

The daily The Express Tribune; Lahore, September 2, 2014

Rescue and relief operation by Ahmadi youth in floods

The daily Mashriq; Lahore, September 12, 2014

Prison guard shoots blasphemy accused inside Adiala Jail

The daily Insaaf; Lahore, September 13, 2014

Super flood in Chenab affects 600 villages. Warning of high to very high flood hitting Guddu and Sukkar in a week.

The daily Dawn; Lahore, September 8, 2014

Pakistan Navy foils (terror) attack on Karachi dockyard

The daily The Express Tribune; Lahore, September 9, 2014

Militants who attacked Malala arrested

The daily Dawn; Lahore, September 13, 2014

47-storey building plan (in Karachi) gets official nod

The daily Dawn; Lahore, September 24, 2014

Op-ed: Asylum seekers' plight

Given the asylum-seekers' religious affiliations, the veracity of their claims can scarcely be overstated. Sri Lanka would have done well to take a humane view of their quest for refuge; its indifference to their plight goes against the spirit of legal and moral obligations towards vulnerable groups. In any case, now that avenues of escape for them appear to be closed, it is incumbent upon Pakistan to ensure their misery is not further compounded when they return by them being dragged into legal tangles based upon the deportation reports issued by Sri Lanka. Already the Pakistan Foreign Office has done them a disservice by saying they have badmouthed Pakistan in Sri Lanka, a statement that dispenses with logic (for why would they seek asylum had they not been driven away by intolerable injustice here?) and compassion, for it has tarred them as 'unpatriotic' a dangerous label in a milieu where minorities are anyway seen as second class citizens.

Editorial in the daily Dawn, September 4, 2014

Op-ed: War on minorities

...Although attacks on such scale (as All Saints Church in Peshawar) along religious lines have not occurred since then, the war on minorities in this country grinds on relentlessly.

...Although persecution of Zikris – a little known Islamic sect – had surfaced during Gen Zia's time, when religious extremism was actively harnessed and patronized to further strategic objectives, this was the first direct attack in more than two decades on their lives. Meanwhile, a reprehensible conspiracy of silence by the state surrounds the murder of Ahmadis – whose persecution is institutionalized in Pakistan – even when a woman and two girls from that community were killed in a ghastly mob attack in July. The crux of the problem is the state's refusal to take proactive steps to control the menace of religious extremism; banned/extremist organizations extend their influence to areas so far untouched by communal strife; hate speech is freely disseminated, the blasphemy law is used as a tool of persecution; school curricula contain derogatory references to minority communities. While the government continues in a state of torpor, this fire has begun to consume the very foundations of the country.

Editorial in the daily Dawn of September 24, 2014

Op-ed: Land of the walking dead

David Brooks is a noted columnist of The New York Times. In August last year, he wrote a column with the title 'One great big war'. This is how he began. 'What is the biggest threat to world peace right now? Despite the horror, it's not chemical weapons in Syria. It's not even, for the moment, an Iranian nuclear weapon. Instead it's the possibility of a wave of sectarian strife building across the Middle East.'

We may well ask what are the biggest threats to Pakistan's survival? There may be others but violent sectarianism or, in other words, religious intolerance is certainly one of them. But does anyone care?

Ghazi Salahuddin in The News; September 14, 2014

Op-ed: ISIS emerges in Pakistan?

The presence of dozens of militant outfits actively working in Pakistan could prove to be like a hatchery for the ISIS. But what is more disturbing is the distribution of the pamphlet which asks for support for the transnational militant outfit in Afghan refugee camps. There are at least three renowned militant commanders in Afghanistan that have offered their allegiances to Abu-Bakar al-Baghdadi, the self-declared Caliph of the Islamic State. What sectarian tensions ripe within the country, it's impossible to think about the implication if such a movement gains momentum? The government should not take the distribution of such material lightly, with Nato wrapping up its decade long project across the border and the rise of the Taliban in across the border, Pakistan is marred with serious security concerns that need to be dealt with immediately. We have a pre-requisite in the form of the TTP which spread from the tribal areas to the entire country – can we combat a new enemy?

Editorial in The Express Tribune; September 4, 2014

Annex: Blog ‘A single drop of water, in a fire of hate’ by Mr. Usman Ahmad at Dawn.com

A single drop of water, in a fire of hate

Ye dard rahe ga ban ke davaa, tum sabr karo waqt ane do

According to a parable, when Prophet Abraham was cast into a fire by the tyrant king Nimrod, the spectacle was met with horror by a small bird. It spread its wings and soared to a nearby river, where it filled its beak with water. The bird carried these meager drops to where the fire was lit before going back for more. The water it fetched was of course, not enough to quell the raging flames.

An arrogant crow mocked the bird's scurrying efforts and haughtily told him: 'How can you hope to douse the fire with such little water. Surely you realize that there is nothing you can do?'

The bird remained unperturbed and calmly replied: 'When I meet with God, He will not ask me whether I was able to put out the fire, He will only inquire whether I did my part to see that it was extinguished.'

Reports of another Ahmadi killing have emerged today. The name of the latest victim is Mubashir Ahmad Khosa, a basic medical practitioner who was shot at by two unknown assailants in Mirpur Khas as he tended to patients in his clinic. He died on his way to the hospital. Ahmad was 50 years old and is survived by his wife and four young children.

I cannot sketch out the broader details of what has happened as I am not aware of them. But what I do know is that the reaction at this deplorable crime will be as muted as the desolate silence that envelopes me while I pen these words.

Reticence, quiet and indifference rest upon this land. It is strange to think how so much destruction can breed such awful calm. And yet, this is the absurd reality we are faced with in these troubled times.

This latest killing is just another brutal reminder of the misery inflicted on so many in our country.

Each turn of the season brings fresh grief to Pakistan's Ahmadis, Shias, Hazaras, Christians and numerous others who have been deemed unworthy of life.

Too few, if any, will speak for them, rouse themselves to action or even feel an inkling of disquiet for their plight.

Is there anything left of Pakistan except the quarrels of politicians?

Justice has been strained to the brink of non-existence, moral authority abdicated long ago and coexistence is more a punch line than truth.

The blood-drenched streets aren't fit for walking; suffocation plagues ashen neighbourhoods. This is not the stuff of which real nations are made of, especially those which aspire to the grand ideals of pluralism and democracy as the chief actors in the current political crises keep telling us is the case.

More troubling still is that the ideological justification of religious extremists fuels this machine of hate, leaving in its wake deep societal rifts and little love for the sanctity and preservation of life.

And if there still is a Pakistan, it teeters atop the wreckage of its own crippling hypocrisy and duplicity. But it cannot hold its balance forever.

As the poem once said, '*ya zulm mite ga dharti se, ya dharti khud mit jai gee.*'

In this desperate state, I have heard many a note of despair. Friends, work colleagues and acquaintances alike have expressed a profound degree of pessimism as to whether any change for the better can be brought about in Pakistan.

Much as I, too, am often plagued by the same despondency, like the little bird in the parable, I have chosen to let the sadness deep within ripple once more against the undulating dark of night through the flow of my pen.

I realize that my words are likely to have little or no effect on anything, but that would be missing the point. To struggle for something is not always about succeeding. Sometimes, it is more important, more meaningful and more worthwhile to address your own conscience.

Amidst the helplessness of it all, one must not allow his/herself to lose the courage of their convictions. Instead, it is incumbent upon all of us to break the prevailing silence, even if our cries drown in this sea of noise.

The truth is – it is less about what we do and more why we choose to do it. The final judgment will be cast not upon our deeds but our intentions, and to that end the struggle must go on, even if it has the bearing of just a single drop of water.

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