

Press release of HRCP

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Press release

Faith no criterion for public service

Lahore, 8 September 2018. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) has expressed serious concern over the government's decision to withdraw its nomination of Dr Atif Mian for the Economic Advisory Council (EAC). In a statement issued today, HRCP has said:

'There is overwhelming evidence to show that Dr Mian was eminently qualified to serve on the EAC and that his contribution to economic policy making in Pakistan would have been immensely valuable. The government's decision to withdraw this nomination on the grounds that it might prove divisive – merely because he happens to belong to the Ahmadiyya community – contravenes Article 27(1) of the Constitution of Pakistan, which clearly states that 'no citizen otherwise qualified for appointment in the service of Pakistan shall be discriminated against in respect of any such appointment on the ground only of race, religion, caste, sex, residence or place of birth.'

'HRCP welcomes the government's desire, as expressed earlier, to promote inclusivity by carrying with it all social groups. This sentiment, however, cannot be applied arbitrarily or selectively and certainly not at the expense of beleaguered religious communities that are entitled to the state's protection and to civil society's support. The withdrawal of Dr Mian's nomination does not augur well. The spate of faith-based attacks this year, not only on the Ahmadiyya community, but also on the Christian, Shia, Hazara and Hindu communities, should make it clear that any steps by the state that are seen to legitimize religious discrimination are unacceptable. Defending human rights is necessarily a question of moral courage and HRCP strongly urges the government to avoid any sort of precedent that allows a person's faith to trump all other criteria for public service.'

Dr. Mehdi Hasan

Chairperson