

## Restrictions on press & publications etc.

2017

### **An FIR: against seven Ahmadis**

*Lahore; October 25, 2017:* Hassan Muaviya, a brother of widely known Maulvi Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, is an anti-Ahmadiyya religious thug in Lahore. He is the main instigator in different police cases against Ahmadis. He managed to get another police case registered in Lahore against Ahmadi elders who reside in far-away Rabwah. On October 25, 2017 at 00:30 an FIR was registered in police station Gujjar Pura, Lahore against seven Ahmadis. The time of the FIR is worth noting. One purpose was to get two Ahmadis arrested from the court premises where they were to appear before a court the next day. The FIR was registered under PPC 295-A, 298-C and ATA 11-W.

The Ahmadis implicated in the case are:

1. Mr. Tahir Mahdi Imtiaz (Printer Monthly Tahrike Jadid)
2. Mr. Abdul Sami Khan (Editor Daily Alfazl)
3. Mr. Ihsanullah Dansih (Ahmadiyya missionary, Editor Monthly Tahrike Jadid – Urdu)
4. Mr. Shahid Mahmood (Ahmadiyya missionary, Editor Monthly Tahrike Jadid – English)
5. Mr. Rashid Minhas (Ahmadiyya missionary, Manager monthly Tahrike Jadid)
6. Mr. Nafees Ahmad Ateeq (Ahmadiyya missionary, Publisher monthly Tahrike Jadid)
7. Mr. Amir Faheem (Ahmadiyya missionary, composer monthly Tahrike Jadid)

It should be noted that the police in Lahore obliged Muaviya so readily as to register a very serious case at very short notice against Ahmadi personages living in a remote district, accusing them of crime under the Anti-terrorism Act and a blasphemy clause. This servitude of the police in the provincial capital to a petty religious thug deserves no adjective other than 'disgraceful'.

**Follow-up.** Mr. Tahir Mahdi Imtiaz, a printer and Mr. Abdul Sami Khan, Editor daily Alfazl went to Lahore to attend a police case in court on October 26. When they came out of the court after the hearing, Hassan Muaviya and his gang of approximately 15 mullas intercepted them. They manhandled Mr. Tahir Mahdi and attempted to detain and take him to the police station under the FIR which was lodged the previous day in Gujjar Pura police station. They took law enforcement in their hands. In the attempt they tore his shirt. Luckily Mr. Imtiaz managed to escape the scene.

The police took no action against Muaviya for his thuggery – of course.

## **Ahmadis forbidden in the Punjab to publish their prime and foremost scripture**

**Lahore:** The government of Punjab took steps in 2011 to make sure that Ahmadis were not allowed to publish the Holy Quran and its translations; however it is now that the provincial authorities are actively investigating if any violations of 2011 law have taken place. This investigation is being conducted on instigation of Mulla Hassan Muaviya, younger brother of the well-known Maulvi Tahir Ashrafi, a full time anti-Ahmadiyya activist and a religious thug. The Punjab law on this subject deserves a comment.

Prior to year 2011, the publication of the Holy Quran was done under the provincial Act of 1973. This facilitated Ahmadis to publish their translations and *Tafseer* (commentaries) of the Holy Quran. In 2011, the Punjab government was moved by the mulla to enact a revised law on this issue, whose main object was to deny Ahmadis their lawful right to publish their holy book and its translation etc. Accordingly, The Punjab Holy Quran (Printing and Recording) Act 2011 was promulgated. Mian Shahbaz Sharif was the chief minister.

The new law contained little new to add to the 1973 law to ensure error-free printing of the Holy Quran; however it included *Section 7* which was Ahmadi-specific, without naming Ahmadis. It provided:

**“Translation or interpretation of the Holy Quran contrary to belief of Muslims – where, in a copy or record of the Holy Quran, or in any extract thereof published in a text book, a prayer book, a religious treatise or any other book, an Ayah is translated, interpreted or commented upon by a non-Muslim contrary to the belief of Muslims, the author, the printer or publisher, or the person who prepared the record, whether or not registered under this Act, shall, unless he proves that such translation, interpretation or commentary occurred only owing to a printing or mechanical error, be liable to punishment provided for in section 9.”**

This provision is highly vague and open to question as there is no authority to precisely state the ‘belief of Muslims’ and what is ‘contrary’ to it. The primary two sects of Islam differ with each other even on the text of the basic creed, the *Kalima*. Anyway, the object of the law was to stop Ahmadis, and that was achieved.

This law also provides for the government to constitute a Quran Board. It would be very surprising if any such board would act differently than the infamous provincial Muttahida Ulama Board that recommended and got all the (86) books written by the founder of the Ahmadiyya community banned last year.

Sub section 5 (7) of this Act provides: “No record of the Holy Quran which injures its sanctity, in any form, shall be prepared”. The phrase ‘in any form’ gives unlimited power to any narrow-minded member of the Board to insist that the mere fact of an Ahmadi translating the Holy Quran ‘injures its sanctity’. This is not mere conjecture; most mullas insist that an Ahmadi using Islamic greetings of *Salaam* (peace) injures its sanctity. Magistrates are known to have awarded imprisonment sentences to Ahmadis for wishing *Salaam* to ‘Muslims’.

Section 3 now requires a publisher to have him registered on prescribed terms and conditions promulgated by the government. As such, it is no longer possible for Ahmadis to become registered as publishers of the Holy Quran.

The 2011 Act provides that its violation entails ‘imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years, or with fine of not less than twenty thousand rupees, or with both.’

Understandably, Ahmadis can no longer publish the Holy Quran, its translations and its commentary. They and their future generations have no option but to read in Urdu the non-Ahmadiyya versions of controversial issues like Jihad, etc. The list can be long depending on the specific ‘belief of Muslims’.

As a result of this law, no print copy of the Holy Quran and its translation by an Ahmadi is available in any office of the Ahmadiyya headquarters in Rabwah, nor in the town’s main library. Incredible!

This law is an obvious violation of both the national and the international laws on religious freedom. Article 20 of the Pakistan Constitution and Articles 18 and 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are relevant.

### **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. Ahmadis have no place for worship for over a year. On demand of the riot leadership, a separate police case was registered against Ahmadis, on orders of a judge. One Ahmadi is still in prison at the end of the year. 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 Muttahida 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.