Anti-Ahmadiyya propaganda in vernacular press

*Rabwah; February 2, 2017:* In general, vernacular press looks for the slightest excuse to indulge in hostile propaganda against the Ahmadiyya community. Its aim is to act as mouth-piece of religious lobby and to wage nasty and vicious propaganda war against the beleaguered and marginalized community. Here, for instance, we refer to a 3-column news item in the daily Ausaf that accuses Ahmadis of ‘spreading fear and chaos in the society and running a state within a state’ – a serious charge. We elaborate below.

Rabwah, now renamed Chenab Nagar by official decree against the wishes of its residents, is the national headquarters town of the Ahmadi community in Pakistan. Its population is 95% Ahmadi. As such, it is targeted and remains in the cross-wires of terrorists and religious extremists. The government knows this, and based on its intelligence reports has taken some measures to apparently improve the security of this town. These steps are inadequate, as successful terrorist attacks have occurred here on individuals and congregations. Anyway the authorities have told Ahmadis to take security precautions, and in this the administration and police have urged and sought compliance from the locals to put obstacles in some important streets and block a few entry points from the main inter-city road.

The daily Ausaf finds these minimal security measures highly objectionable, and by giving self-serving twists to facts and on the ground situation it incites its readers against the Ahmadi residents as well as the authorities. Extracts:

*Chenab Nagar:* Qadianis permanently close down important highways by use of obstacles and barbed wires.

*Fear and harassment is spread by closing down free passage in the name of security; it is unlawful to establish a state within a state.*

Leave alone (vehicular) traffic, even pedestrian passage has been denied. Most streets within the town have been blocked by installing barriers.

*Chenab Nagar:* (Special correspondent) Most of the roads in Chenab Nagar have been closed by Qadianis by installation of concrete barriers and barbed wires. Countless streets have been blocked with barriers in the name of security. It is unlawful to block passages by placing obstacles. Visitors from outskirts and both locals and non-locals, once inside, find it extremely difficult to move out. Barriers are boldly marked ‘Chenab Nagar Police’… (on and on).

*Note:* If the above is a correct report, residents of Rabwah should be the first to complain. Agreed that a little inconvenience is faced by those few who drive cars and heavy vehicles on two or three streets and three or four entry points, the detour involved is nowhere longer than 500 meters. Surely, the authorities have the powers to implement such measures to improve security. If the Ausaf finds these causing inconveniences to malicious and evil terrorists in their missions, the rag has the freedom to incriminate itself.