

A long list of proscribed Islamist organizations – and a comment

Islamabad; September 1, 2017: Ministry of Interior this month issued a list to the press of 71 organizations Proscribed/Under Observation, almost all religious and Islamist. One such ad appeared in the daily *Dawn* of September 1, 2017, one day before the festival of Eid ul Azha. The ad is titled: Don't let your **Donations Fall into Wrong Hands** and the list is introduced with the following warning:

“As per national laws, it is a crime to donate hides of animals to organizations involved in activities related to terrorism. On the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha, donate hides of your sacrificial animals to those welfare organizations that are not proscribed under any national and international laws and must be working purely for the national welfare.”

The list comprises organizations, most of which are known for their Salafi, Wahabi, Deobandi etc. origins or membership. Some new names are given along with their former application, for example; ex SSP, ex JeM, ex TJP etc. This initiative on the part of the Ministry of Interior is commendable; however it calls for a comment in the context of internal national security.

It is well-recognized that half measures and half-hearted steps rarely deliver success and goals. The call to believers to not donate hides of sacrificial cattle to these organizations will affect to some extent their budgets, but they surely do not depend upon hides alone to remain functional and effective.

If these organizations are involved in activities related to terrorism, why are they tolerated to operate with new names? Also if their charity wings are not working purely for the national and general welfare, why allow them to function?

The authorities know that these organizations have sympathizers and facilitators who provide them all kinds of support, including ideological, financial and personnel; these remain in the rear but are known for their not so discreet backing to them. Why these facilitators continue to enjoy free hand in their support activities? These include a number of political as well as religious parties and organizations. They openly support sectarianism, extremism and, indirectly, terrorism. To them, violence against adherents of other beliefs, even though marginally different, is permissible, even mandatory. The mullas of various Khatme Nabuwwat organizations openly and repeatedly call Ahmadis *Wajib-ul-Qatl*.

Well-known politicians are on record to openly consort and support leaders of these proscribed organizations. These people have often been called by them ‘our people’ in political parlance and Taliban Khans have insisted on negotiating with them rather than confronting them. The false scions of the Quaid-e-Azam sent their ministers to participate in the rallies of these mouth-frothing fanatics to register their presence to gain votes of the ignorant masses.

Provinces appear to exercise great autonomy in dealing with them, in disregard of the federal assessment of these people as mentioned in this ad. The Punjab has formed an Ulama Board whose recommendations are treated by the Department of Interior as

orders. These Ulama went to the same type of madrassas as the leaders of the 71 advertised organizations. This Board may have contributed little to the fight against terrorism, but it has had great success in banning the entire literature produced by the founder of the Ahmadiyya community, who took a firm stand against terrorism and *Jihad bis Saif* (violence in support of religion) in the 19th century, and the community has followed that teaching ever since.

In the Punjab, counter-terrorism department has mounted successful raids against the peaceful Ahmadis. The CTD arrested an octogenarian Ahmadi book-seller of Rabwah and got him incarcerated for (5+3) eight years through an ATC court. During the trial the prosecution failed to point out any content in the confiscated literature that promoted terrorism in any way.

In Dulmial, District Chakwal, a procession led by extremist mullas, unlawfully altered its authorized route and attacked the Ahmadiyya mosque. It is now almost a year that the mosque has been locked to the worshippers, while the mob leaders and riot planners roam around free. The ring leader managed to flee to Canada, although he was mentioned in earlier dispatches.

More recently, at the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha the anti-Ahmadiyya organizations openly agitated against Ahmadis' right to sacrifice cattle, and directed their followers to report to the police if any Ahmadi undertook this rite. It is noteworthy that these bullies expected the police to support them. Ahmadis consequently faced difficulties in performing this rite and disposal of hides.

The authorities, both in provinces and Islamabad will do well to implement the National Action Plan in letter and spirit to rid the Pakistani society of extremism and terrorism. And surely, further persecution of the peace-loving Ahmadi community is not an honest and fruitful interpretation of the NAP; it is hypocrisy a *l'extreme* and is nothing but playing in the hands of the evil that the state aims to eliminate.

This 71 org list should be sufficient proof to all in the government, the intelligentsia, the establishment and the civil society in Pakistan that the mulla's 21st century understanding of Islam is faulty and harmful. They must dare to examine and adopt some alternate version even if it is uncommon and unpopular. After all, the wise few of Medina, when faced with unmanageable chaos, picked someone from far away Makka to be their lord, seer and guide, PBUH. This made them historically a model and successful community.