

Freedom of worship denied, obstructed or threatened

Ahmadiyya Mosques and places of worship under Attack

(A special report in Annual Report on Persecution of Ahmadis in Pakistan – 2019)

Ahmadiyya mosques were specifically targeted in General Zia's anti-Ahmadiyya ordinance. These laws remain in force and the mullas use them to their full advantage in their moves against Ahmadiyya places of worship. Often they demand state action that goes far beyond the prohibitions specified in the law, for example, calls for removal of minarets and the niches from the Ahmadiyya mosques. Unscrupulous officials find it convenient to do the mullas' bid, which often results in gross violation of Ahmadis' basic human right of freedom of worship. This year Ahmadiyya mosques and places of worship were specifically targeted. In this mullas were supported by the administration. Approximately at a dozen locations Ahmadiyya worship places were damaged, sealed, closed down, worship forbidden or construction stopped. This was most hurtful.

The peak of this year in the context of persecution of Ahmadis in Pakistan is undoubtedly the quantum and intensity of attacks, of various types, on Ahmadiyya places of worship. These attacks were made by the mulla, but generally supported by authorities, and often given a helping hand by the common man. These attacks resulted in partial destruction, damage, arson, sealing, closure, denial of construction even repairs to the places of worship, while at some locations Ahmadis were ordered to stop assembly for worship, remove minarets from their mosques, etc. At some locations anti-Ahmadi elements simply claimed the Ahmadiyya mosques and sought help from the police in their occupation. A female journalist took it upon herself the task of visiting Ahmadiyya places of worship, taking pictures, making videos and demanding that the police register FIRs against Ahmadis. In short, in recent memory, such intense activity against Ahmadiyya worship has not taken place—and this happened in the era of PTI whom people voted into power for apparently upholding liberalism and shunning bigotry.

These attacks on Ahmadiyya worship occurred at so many places and were of such variety that it is not easy to describe them in a convenient order. We choose to mention these under sub-headings of the nature of the outrages.

Demolition of Ahmadiyya mosques by authorities

The worst case happened in District Bahawalpur in the Punjab, where the authorities conducted partial demolition of an Ahmadiyya mosque.

Here Ahmadiyya mosques faced risk of defiling in September as a local anti-Ahmadi activist Muhammad Ishaq returned after staying away for a while in Multan.

Muhammad Ishaq is now residing near the Ahmadiyya mosque located in Ghalla Mandi, Bahawalpur. As a first step in his hate campaign he approached the Deputy Commissioner with complaint that Ahmadis have provided a niche in their place of worship in Chak 161 Murad, which is forbidden by law (sic). He was wrong, as the law makes no mention of forbidding niches or minarets in Ahmadiyya mosques.



The niche—destroyed by authorities in District Bahawalpur, Punjab

After this, the DC sent for the president of the Ahmadiyya Community. A delegation of local representatives met him, where they were told to cover the niche. Similarly, presidents of other Ahmadiyya local communities were told to remove similarities between Ahmadiyya places of worship and mosques, or hide them—an unlawful compulsion imposed by the unprincipled careerist.

The DC's orders were entirely contradictory to the Prime Minister's vision of *Riasat Madinah* stated by him in UN General Assembly before the world leaders: ***"In Islam, it was a sacred duty to protect places of worship of all religions"***.

The PTI government of Punjab should have been in step with the Prime Minister, but local convenience made the authorities disregard the pious assertions in New York.

Things moved fast. At about 3:30 pm an Ahmadi mosque was partially destroyed in Chak 161 Murad, District Bahawalpur on October 25, 2019 under the supervision of police and officials.

According to details the Assistant Commissioner accompanied by policemen, workers of the city administration Hasilpur and machinery, arrived at the scene and took the keys of the mosque from a local Ahmadi. On entry they disconnected the electric supply and confiscated the recording system of the CCTV at the mosque. Then using the

machinery, they destroyed the niche of the mosque into rubble. They did this while they had no official warrant or an Order of the Court to take such action.

The incident was captured by Mr. Vishal Ahmad (an Ahmadi) on his mobile phone. The police arrested Mr. Ahmad and seized his phone. Another Ahmadi, Mr. Muhammad Mustafa, an official of the Ahmadiyya Community was also arrested. These two were charged under PPC 186/506. Surely, photography in the open is not an offence. Next day they were released on bail.

The mosque was built by Ahmadis on Ahmadiyya land in 1949. Seventeen Ahmadi families, totaling about 150 persons live in the vicinity of the mosque.

It is noteworthy that the defiling of the mosque was not undertaken by mullas, but by officials. State is supposed to protect, not attack places of worship.

According to the daily *Dawn* report, “Assistant Commissioner Tayyab termed the action anti-encroachment operation, launched on order of the district peace committee, led by Deputy Commissioner Shazeb Saeed. ... He added that Ahmadis were asked to demolish ‘Mehrab’ of their worship place or construct a wall around it so that it might not look a ‘Mehrab’.” One may ask these gentlemen to show any ‘Mehrab’ in the whole Islamic world where a wall has been constructed around it. Even the idea of such construction is comical and absurd.

The same paper carried AC’s statement: “The committee directed him (the DC) to take action against the encroachers in larger interest of peace in the village so that Ahmadis could continue having religious freedom within the walled premises of their worship place; Ahmadis are being given ‘freedom of religion.’”

It seems the district authorities do not even read their daily newspapers. Only a few days earlier on October 4, 2019 the Supreme Court decided to constitute a special bench for protection of minority rights and places of worship as ordered by the SC in its verdict of June 2014. It is hoped that the SC will take notice of this incident and hold the concerned officials accountable.

As for the authorities' inclination to demolish Ahmadiyya worship places on flimsy excuses, an incident in Karachi is worth reporting in that the district administration issued orders to undertake demolition, but was restrained from implementing the outrage. It happened in May this year.

A self-styled journalist and (anti)social-activist Ms. Basma Norine prepared video of a Ahmadiyya prayer centre in Karachi on May 2, 2019 and objected to its minarets. Later she went to the local police station and tried to get an FIR registered on this account against Ahmadis. She made another video of her visit to the police station and therein incited local Muslims against Ahmadis and threatened: “If anyone would attack this prayer centre or explode a bomb therein destroying it and killing Ahmadis therein, the police should not act against us, as Muslims’ sentiments have been injured because of it.” Surprisingly, the police did not react to her flagrant hate-speech.

Ahmadis felt concerned and lodged a complaint on May 3 against her hate-provoking remarks which she had uploaded on the social media. The SSP East told Ahmadis that they were doing the inquiry and would register an FIR if appropriate.

Ahmadis were later called by the Assistant Commissioner on May 10. He praised Ahmadis for being law-abiding citizens, however, added that these minarets were unlawful. Ahmadis told him that this building was built 50 years ago much before the anti-Ahmadi law. The AC referred the case to the DC. The DC told Ahmadis to appear before him on May 13 with all the documents. Ahmadis went to him, but right at the start he plainly told Ahmadis to demolish the minarets otherwise the authorities would do that, and said that he had strict instructions from the Commissioner. Ahmadis felt very disturbed over it and asked for 2 days' grace for legal action.

Ahmadis contacted the political leadership and the Rangers leadership and briefed them on the absurdity of the intended action against the place of worship. DG Rangers informed that they had received a demand from the TLP (of Mullas Rizvi and Qadri) about the demolition of the minarets of the Ahmadiyya place of worship, under threat of a sit-in. Rangers then referred the matter to the civil administration. Ahmadis explained that this place was 50 years old, and minarets were built on temples and churches too. Would those be demolished as well in future? Also, the law does not forbid Ahmadis minarets on their places of worship.

Ahmadis had to move fast and contact very senior administrative authorities and political leaders of PPP as this party governs in Sindh. Our justified stand was accepted in these higher circles and orders were issued to the administration and the police to stay put and take no action on the demands of Ms. Norine and the TLP.

This crisis was a major attempt against Ahmadis' basic rights and freedom of religion.

Ahmadiyya prayer centre sealed by police

This happened in the capital of the Punjab.

Ahmadis have a prayer centre in Model Town, adjacent to two Ahmadi-owned factories there. The factories have been given on rent; the entry to the prayer centre is from outside. The locals objected to Ahmadis praying in the centre.

Ahmadis held a meeting with the objectors in June this year. In opening remarks, Ahmadis attempted cordiality and mutual respect and told them that they were talking to them as brothers and friends. At this, one of them retorted: "We are neither your brother, nor friends. We will not let you pray here. Your entry to this centre is through the factories; we shall not let you take this outer route for entry. You are a small minority here; we shall not let you use this location for worship."

The local Ahmadiyya community had already applied for its registration. Officials of Special Police visited the site and inspected it. A section of locals continued to insist on not allowing Ahmadis to worship there.

DSP called Ahmadis on August 1, 2019 and told Ahmadis to stop worship there until an NOC is obtained from the DC office. He also urged Ahmadis to remove the *Kalima* and the niche from the prayer centre as he thought these are not allowed to Ahmadis. Ahmadis told him that they would not remove the *Kalima* but would not resist the authorities if they did that. He told Ahmadis to write an affidavit of compliance, but Ahmadis asked for some time to consider.

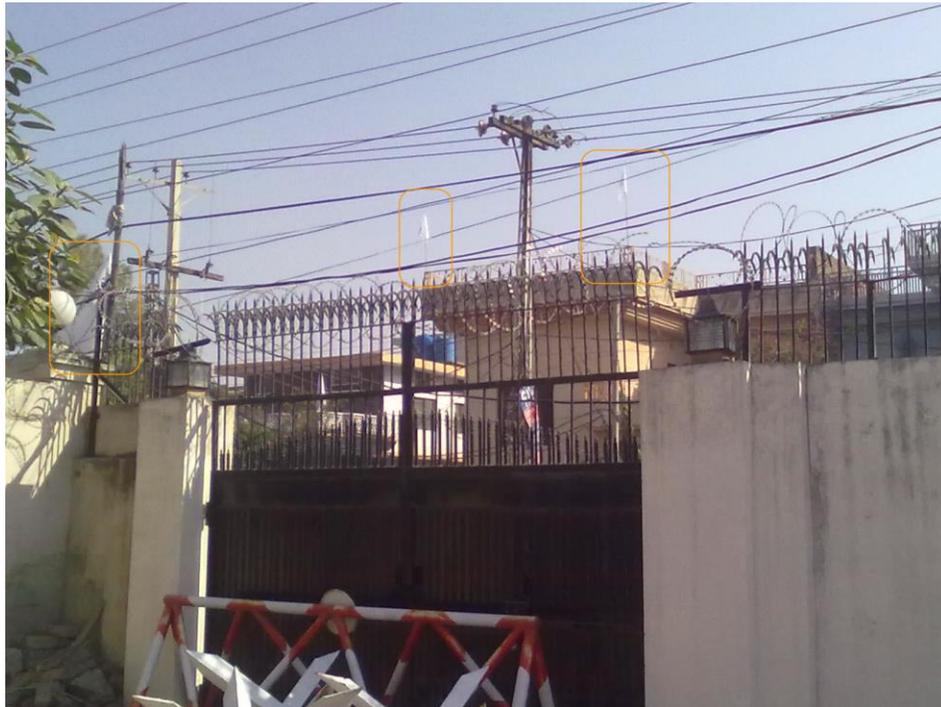
The next day Ahmadis were called again to the police station and told to sign an agreement. Ahmadis had to comply.

Ahmadis approached higher authorities for help, but on August 6, 2019 the police sealed the prayer centre under the pressure of mullas. The police rather than acting fair and helpful to the weaker community preferred to cater for the bullies of the majority. They say that it has been sealed to defuse the dispute to reach an amicable solution. This is a bogus excuse as on numerous such occasions, the sealing of Ahmadiyya worship places has resulted in permanent closure.

Worship forbidden at worship places

A number of such cases happened this year. The Constitution, in fact requires the state to facilitate worship and ensure this freedom but the authorities were active to do the exact opposite.

For instance two such violations occurred in Rawalpindi. Rawalpindi is a twin city to Islamabad, the Capital. What happens here is expressive of authorities' concern for international norms and opinions.



On December 18, 2018 a policeman came over to Bait ul Ata (Ahmadiyya mosque) with the message that the SHO had sent for the administrator of the place, Col. ® Ijaz Minhas. On December 21, 2018 the SHO himself visited the mosque and repeated his demand. At this, Col. Minhas went to the Westridge Police Station and met the SHO. The SHO informed Col. Minhas of a security report that some days earlier terrorists had attacked an army check post, killed two army personnel and fled away. Therefore it became essential to remain on high alert in the Cantonment area and also to upgrade security of all places that could be targeted by terrorists. Ahmadiyya guest house (Bait ul Ata) located on Peshawar Road is on the same hit list, he said. It is located in a narrow street and is surrounded by Muslims' houses. Any attack there could cause big damage, according to the SHO.

The SHO told Col. Minhas that the status of this building was only a community guest house, so it cannot be used for worship. "If you want to use it for worship obtain permission from relevant offices; till then, the location cannot be used for Friday prayers," he said.

Thereafter the SHO obtained Col. Minhas' signatures on a statement that until the permission was obtained from the relevant office there would be no Friday prayer in Bait ul Ata. On December 28 the SHO himself visited Bait ul Ata to check the implementation of his orders.

This is yet another case whereby Rawalpindi administration has closed down an Ahmadiyya place of worship, without caring to provide a suitable alternative. 'Security' is a lame excuse, as shutting down normal activities is not the solution; the solution is to beef up security and let life go on.

The other outrage was committed against the Ahmadiyya worship place in Tench Bhata, Rawalpindi. Here Ahmadis assemble for congregational prayers and Friday prayers. The location is used for community meetings and get-together.

A policeman came over to the location in January and said that the Assistant Commissioner (AC) had sent for the administrator of the centre. Accordingly, Mr. Abdul Ghani the local president called on him.

The AC told Mr. Ghani that Ahmadis were using this building in a residential area for worship. This was objectionable. Mr. Ghani told him that the building is registered as a property of Sadr Anjuman Ahmadiyya and the documents convey that it was meant to be used for religious purposes; hence there should be no objection.

The AC told Mr. Ghani to obtain a No Objection Certificate from the Deputy Commissioner, and till that is provided, the location cannot be used for worship.

Thereafter the police obtained an affidavit from Mr. Ghani to that effect. So, now there is no place for Ahmadis of this area for congregational worship.

This is still another case where district authorities have deprived Ahmadis of their place of worship without providing an alternative.

It is relevant to mention that rules and laws do not require minorities to apply for NOC for a place of worship, however where the aim is to deny Ahmadis their right to worship, their place of worship is treated as a mosque. As for mosques in general, without exaggeration, it can be claimed that there are over half a million mosques in the country that were built without NOC. Telling Ahmadis to obtain an NOC is *malafide* and unlawful.

A similar case from District Sheikhpura, also in the Punjab. The mosque in village Amba Nurya was built by Mr. Ahmad Din Virk and Mr. Muhammad Ismael Virk more than a century ago. Then Mr. Ahmad Din Virk went to Qadian, and took pledge (*Ba'ait*) at the hand of the holy founder of the Ahmadiyya community. The mosque remained in common use of both Ahmadis and non-Ahmadis for worship. Both communities maintained it; they also had a common graveyard. Their religious tolerance and co-operation was exemplary — till recently.

In the recent past, a number of locals decided to join the Ahmadiyya community. This exercise of freedom of belief was not liked by the mullas. They invited clerics from elsewhere, sought help from the infamous TLP and disturbed communal peace of the village. The TLP leadership approached the police and sought state support which was provided without reluctance.

On June 23, 2019 a policeman came to Dr. Tahir Ahmad the president of the local Ahmadiyya community and told him to report to the police station. Mr. Ahmad went there with some Ahmadi elders. A large number of non-Ahmadis were already there. The police put forth a written undertaking for the Ahmadi president to sign. Mr. Ahmad attempted a phone call for advice on the issue, but the police forbade him the call and told him that due to 'the law and order situation' he could neither go outside nor could he make a phone call. They had to submit compliance report to their superiors without delay, they said. The police had themselves prepared an affidavit and told Mr. Ahmad to sign it. The undertaking required that, *inter alia*:

- Qadianis would no more offer their prayers in the mosque.
- Qadianis would hold no public gatherings except Friday prayers and Eid prayers.
- Within a month, after mutual consultation, the burial ground would be separated.
- At Eid ul Adha, Qadianis will be restricted to slaughter their animals only inside their houses or premises.
- Qadianis are not at all allowed to preach their belief; if they do that, the opposite party may report them to the police.
- We resolve on oath to implement this peace plan; legal action may be taken against us for any violation.

Non-Ahmadis of the mosque's neighborhood did not lodge the FIR nor did they go to the police station. They sympathized with Ahmadis for their maltreatment. The opponents enjoyed support of the police and the local MPA, as also the support of TLP's

urban activists who gathered in large numbers outside the police station to make their demands.

This is the third incident in District Sheikhpura where this kind of agreement has been imposed on Ahmadis. Every time the TLP is the prime mover of the sectarian discord.

Another case from Lahore. Baitul Rahman is an Ahmadiyya prayer centre in Jauhar Town. From early November, activities against Baitul Rahman picked up pace. Opponents are striving hard to have this centre closed down. To this end, a neighbor of the centre, mulla Ihsan ul Haq Laiq, a Deobandi mulla, Sheikh Nasir a self-styled local leader and the notorious Hassan Muawiyah are active. They got permission from a shopkeeper at backside of the centre to climb up his roof for their mischief against Ahmadi worshippers. In the beginning, five to seven opponents would stand in front of the centre and try to enter in some argument with worshipers and bad-mouth them. Baitul Rahman issue was being heard by the Deputy Commissioner (DC) who sent the case to a magistrate. The opponents heightened their anti-Ahmadi activities; their aim is to deny Ahmadis their right of worship.

On November 9, the opponents informed the police that a motorcyclist had exited from the centre and hit a local woman. The police arrived at the spot, examined the situation, visited the centre and found that the info was bogus. In response to persistent harassment, Ahmadi elders met the Superintendent of Police (SP) Sadar and informed him of the situation. He tasked the DSP to inquire.

The next day the DSP sent for both the parties. The DSP found it convenient to favor the opposition and told Ahmadis that they didn't have an NOC, although he knew that the DC's office had already said that there was no policy to issue NOC for Ahmadiyya prayer centres. Last year, the same DSP was shown several times the property documents of the centre. He also said that last year it was decided that only the residing family of the centre could offer prayers there. The reality is that the DSP himself said at that time that regular worshipers could come but their number should not increase. True, but how absurd!



In the meeting the DSP told both the parties to submit surety bond that till the decision of Lahore High Court, neither of the parties would do anything illegal, otherwise pay Rs. 1 million in addition to the legal costs. Further, he asked the parties to sign a deed of compromise stating that only inhabitants of the centre would pray there. Ahmadis refused to give the bond and sign the unfair deed. This made the DSP angry and he told that if they didn't sign, he would issue detention order against them. Further, he threatened to include the Ahmadiyya missionary in future hearings. The same night the police raided the centre and the missionary house but the security guard wisely turned them away. At this, the SHO phoned the missionary and told him to report to the police station within an hour along with the centre's care-taker, otherwise the police would raid again. Later the SHO told them that the SP has called for a meeting of both parties on November 13.

In the meeting, both parties presented their stance. The SP told Ahmadis that till the decision of the High Court only locals could pray there. It appears that the opponents had lodged an application at the High Court regarding the decision of DC about the centre, and made the DC a party. Anyways, it is ridiculous to order Ahmadis that only the locals could worship at their place of worship.

Construction of worship place stopped on official orders

This happened in Jalalpur Jattan, District Gujrat in November.

An Ahmadi, Mr. Ashfaq Ahmad dedicated a plot of land for building a place of worship. It was registered in the name of the central body of the Ahmadiyya community in Pakistan. Construction was started after the plan's approval by the administration. When the roof was about to be built the police arrived. They told Ahmadis to first obtain an NOC from the district administration before proceeding further with the construction work.

This opened a new Pandora box. Ahmadis submitted an application for NOC to the Deputy Commissioner. Ashfaq, an anti-Ahmadiyya activist in the village, is a police employee. He launched a campaign in the village to oppose the construction of the prayer centre. He led a procession comprising approximately 50 men on November 12, 2019. They blocked the traffic on the main road and made provocative speeches. Local madrassah students and mullas joined them in the protest.

Under the circumstances, the authorities ordered a halt to construction work. Six weeks have passed, and it has not been allowed to recommence.

Reconstruction of Ahmadiyya worship place denied

This story is from Mardan KPK. Independenturdu.com/node/21206... issued the following story on November 11, 2019.

Home Page: Reconstruction of Ahmadiyya worship place — “Issue is Sensitive; We Dismiss the Complaint.”

A complaint was made on Pakistan Citizen Portal to rebuild an Ahmadiyya worship place in District Mardan of KPK. A screen shot of the complaint was uploaded on social media; it became viral. As a result, unrest spread in the area and demonstrators took to the road.

This complaint was made by a resident of Mardan on October 3. It demanded that the worship place in Bikat Ganj, destroyed in 1988, should be rebuilt.

The complainant was of the opinion that “The Prime Minister Imran Khan talks of minorities’ rights in Pakistan. If minorities have all the rights in Pakistan, how come their worship place has not been rebuilt yet?”

The Director Human Rights took note of the complaint on October 4 and wrote to the Secretary Auqaf and Religious Affairs to look into the case so as to grant the complaint.

As per Citizen Portal, the Secretary Auqaf wrote to Deputy Commissioner (DC) Mardan on October 18 that a fact-finding report be compiled and submitted to the Department of Religious Affairs.

At this, the DC wrote to the Assistant Commissioner (AC) Mardan on October 21 to compile a report on this issue within three days and forward the same so that the concerned department is intimated to redress the complaint.

On November 1, the complainant was informed that his complaint had been forwarded to the Tehsildar for inquiry and follow up.

When this issue got viral on social media, a protest demonstration was held in Mardan. Thereafter on December 10, the complainant was informed on Citizen Portal: “This is a sensitive religious issue, as such it does not fall within the jurisdiction of the Portal; hence your complaint is dismissed.”

On this issue religious organizations and citizens of Mardan held a demonstration that was led by a local leader of PTI who is a former Neighborhood Council Nazim, Mr. Sajid Iqbal Mehmmand.

Sajid told the Independenturdu, “We were told that the government intends to rebuild the Ahmadiyya worship place to redress the complaint; this we shall never let happen.”

He claimed that now only a few Ahmadis are left in Mardan who provoke us through such cunning (*hathkanday*). “If there are hardly any Ahmadis in Mardan, why build them a worship place? Ahmadis are non-Muslims as per the Constitution of Pakistan; they cannot call their worship place a Masjid, nor can they build a worship place in the style of a Masjid”, he added. He further intimated that a delegation including some Ulama called on the Deputy Commissioner on this issue. The DC assured them that the government has no plan to build a worship place in the neighborhood; also they believe in the honor of the Prophet and would not undertake such an act.

On this issue, Mr. Abid Wazir the DC Mardan spoke to the media the other day and said, “This complaint was made on the Citizen Portal; no action was taken on it, nor shall be taken.”

He told the visiting delegation, “You will lead the drive for honor of the Prophet, and we shall follow you. This was merely a complaint on Citizen Portal. The rest is all rumors; pay no attention to them.”

Mr. Abdul Sattar, a local journalist told the Independenturdu that a mob had demolished this worship place in 1988; thereafter the land plot was declared disputed and was taken over by the state.

He stated that decades ago a few prominent Ahmadi business families resided in Mardan; now they have shifted from here.

According to Abdul Sattar, the person who made the complaint on Citizen Portal is a claimant to the disputed plot, but the administration has dismissed his complaint.

He added that the locals had suggested to the DC that if agreed the district administration could buy this plot and build a Masjid on it to which the DC replied that this was not possible as the plot was in dispute.

Comment on the above report:

1. Note the attitude of the state and the society to a worship place of a 'minority'.
2. The agitation against the complaint was led by a PTI activist and local leader. What is the difference between the leadership of the PTI and the JUI (F)?
3. DC volunteers to follow the lead of bigots on the issue of honor of prophethood in the context of rebuilding a worship place destroyed by a mob!
4. How quickly the Religious Affairs Division raised their hands from attending to a fair complaint by an Ahmadi?

With this attitude at home how is the Muslim majority in Pakistan justified to complain against the demolition of the Babri Masjid in India and the Supreme Court of India's verdict to not hand over the site to the Muslim minority?

Attacks and defiling

Three incidents happened, two in Wah Cantt. and one in Pir Mahal, in the Punjab.

An unidentified miscreant came to the main gate of Ahmadiyya prayer centre in the morning on September 19, 2019. He kicked the main gate, piled up some dry grass & bushes there and set these on fire. Ahmadi youths on duty intervened, and he fled.

The same miscreant came again the next morning at 05:30. He was holding a rod in his hand. He struck the security cameras and took these away with him. Ahmadiyya youth on duty tried to detain him but he managed to flee. He could be identified through CCTV footage. A complaint was lodged against him in the police station.

Two months earlier some miscreants had set the security cabin of the Ahmadiyya prayer centre here on fire. Ahmadi on duty extinguished it. The police managed to arrest the miscreants with the help of CCTV footage but later released them when their family seniors apologized.

Anti-Ahmadi activities picked up pace in Pir Mahal in District Toba Tek Singh for some time and opponents frequently harass Ahmadi. Earlier a convert to Ahmadiyyat was subjected to violence.

On October 27, 2019 at about 10 p.m. two unknown motorcyclists hit the Ahmadiyya worship place's main gate and fled away. The resident religious teacher heard the thud and came out to check but found nobody there. Next morning he checked again

and saw a mark of brick-hit on the gate. The security cameras recorded two persons throwing the brick.

A neighbor of the worship place throws garbage near its gate. Opponents are trying to get an FIR registered against Ahmadis of preaching, but are not able to do so for lack of evidence. All this is a cause of stress and strain for the beleaguered community.

Congregational get-togethers forbidden

A house of an Ahmadi, Chaudhary Liaqat Ali was used by Ahmadis for Friday prayers in Askari II, Gujranwala. In September the Station Commander sent for Mr. Ali and told him that Ahmadis were offering Friday prayers illegally there, so there should be no more Friday prayers at his house. After that, Ahmadis offered no Friday prayers there. Now, Ahmadis have no place to pray together.

This order would suit a bigoted, low-level police official, but is quite unbecoming a one star general. Only a few individuals assembled at Mr. Ali's house, once a week for less than an hour, causing no inconvenience to anybody.

Even repairs of place of worship made problematic

In January Ahmadis decided to repair the roof of their place of worship in Chak no. 109 R.B, Narain Garh, District Faisalabad and ordered some earth in trolleys. When it was dumped inside the mosque, some miscreants called the police on emergency nr. 15. The police arrived there and held a meeting. They demanded that some earth be dumped outside the mosque in the street. This was done. The police went away and told Ahmadis to come to the police station the next morning. Ahmadis called on the Superintendent Police of Jaranwala the next day. He informed Ahmadis that he had told the parties involved to fill a surety bond worth Rs. 100,000 on a stamp paper to abstain from mischief.

Ahmadis deposited their bond with the police station.

Threatening activism against Ahmadiyya worship places

Ahmadiyya mosque in Shadiwal District Gujrat is at risk at the hand of a non-Ahmadi, Irshad Daraji. He lives near the mosque. He claims, “This mosque has minarets, and mosques belong to Muslims, not to infidels. This mosque belonged to our ancestors.”

He has recently returned from Makkah after performing *Umra*. He claims to have made a pledge at the grave of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) that he would get the mosque ceded to Muslims. He became a follower of Haq Bahu clan in recent years. He is addicted to drugs but is financially strong, politically influential.

Approximately 40 Ahmadis live in Sathiali Kalan, District Nankana. They built a house for their religious teacher with a worship centre. Some outsider mullas took notice of it in September. They came to the village and incited the locals to vandalize this

Ahmadiyya structure. Nobody complied. They left threatening official action to support their campaign.

The Assistant Commissioner, DSP and SHO came to the village on September 7 and stated that somebody had lodged an application against the Ahmadiyya prayer centre. As per complaint, Qadianis had built a place of worship through which they would lure away their youth to Qadianism, as such they should be protected against the potential risk. The visiting officials heard both the parties. They noted the names of outsiders who were taking interest in this issue. They stopped the locals from calling outsider mullas to the village and stopped the Ahmadis from taking up residence in the building till further orders.

On October 17, the date of inquiry the AC told the agitators that Ahmadis had the right to have their religious teacher. As for place of worship, Pakistan law allowed Ahmadis to build their worship places after permission. The AC told Ahmadis to get permission from the Deputy Commissioner, and told the opponents to shirk provocation and communal hatred.

Accordingly Ahmadis submitted an application to the DC for permission to pray in congregation at the centre. A security officer later visited the religious teacher's house.

The mullas are putting pressure on the AC, and propagating that authorities are supporting Ahmadis. Permission to worship at the new location is still awaited from the DC.

In Khairpur, District Kasur a few non-Ahmadi activists thought of a devious plan to deprive Ahmadis of their mosque. They started visiting Ahmadiyya mosque to offer prayers. After some days they discontinued visiting. This mosque is under Ahmadiyya management for the past hundred years.

Then some outsider mullas visited the mosque and went away. Thereafter non-Ahmadi again started offering their prayers in the Ahmadiyya mosque and declared that this was their mosque. In this situation Ahmadis contacted some local influential persons and asked for assistance. Their intervention improved the situation. However, Ahmadis remain alert and on guard to retain their mosque.

We mentioned above that in May a self-styled journalist and (anti)social-activist Ms. Basma Norine prepared a video of an Ahmadiyya prayer centre in Karachi and uploaded it on social media. Later she went to the local police station and tried to get an FIR registered on this account against Ahmadis. She is seeking professional recognition through religious prejudice and bigotry. In this she is helped by anti-Ahmadi mullas.

On July 6, 2019 she went to the Ahmadiyya Bait ul Hamd Martin Road, Karachi with a mulla. She prepared a video of the Ahmadiyya prayer centre, pointed out its minarets. Thereafter she also captured Fazle Umer Dispensary adjacent to the centre. While there she tried to enter the centre but the centre's caretaker recognized her and did not let her in. Then she went to the police station Jamshed Quarters to get an FIR registered against

Ahmadis but the police didn't oblige. At this she went to the DSP office. She deposited her fake complaint with the DSP and departed.

On July 8, 2019 Norine uploaded a video on Facebook. In the video she mentioned Ahmadiyya prayer center of Drigh Road and the (prayer) Hall, in Sadr.

She also pointed out a building in Gulzar Hijri, and commented on 'incorrect' translation of the Quranic verse written on it and accused Ahmadis of that. In fact, Ahmadis have no prayer centre there. She fabricated this lie. Then she talked about Ahmadiyya Bait ul Hamd Martin Road, as well.

The same day she went to the Ahmadiyya prayer centre in Mehmoodabad with a mulla, prepared its video and uploaded it on social media. She mentioned in the video: "In a posh area like Karachi an abundance of Qadiani bases (*addon ki bharmar*). Discovered third Qadiani centre in ten days and fifth in five months. Discovered a Qadiani base in the midst of Muslims' mosques and shops in Mehmoodabad, Kashmir Colony. An application has been submitted in Mehmoodabad police station for its demolition."

On July 17, 2019 Ms. Norine went to Bait ul Sana Model Town, took photos of the mosque and prepared videos. Thereafter she went to the local police station and tried to have an FIR registered against Ahmadis on grounds that Qadianis are not allowed to build mosques and they are up against Shariah and Khatme Nabuwwat; Qadianis have their base in Model Colony; five CCTV cameras are installed there, and they are busy committing blasphemy and are propagating Qadianiat from there; they call themselves Ahmadi which is the blessed name of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and are misleading common people, so this place should be got vacated from Qadianis; demolish it and take legal action against its inhabitants, etc. Her bogus complaint was given the due follow-up.

On October 6, 2019 she came along with a mulla to the Ahmadiyya prayer centre in Model Colony and started preparing a video. Ahmadis stayed inside the centre and informed the police and authorities by phone. Norine and the mulla wore shirts with anti-Ahmadiyya lines. They pasted anti-Ahmadiyya hateful posters on the prayer centre's exterior and went away. Later the police arrived, removed the posters and took them away. Thereafter Rangers arrived and took a copy of CCTV footage with them.

On return, Basma went to the Model Colony Police Station to get an FIR registered against Ahmadis but the police didn't oblige.

It is obvious that this woman is on the pay roll of a Khatme Nabuwwat (KN) organization. There are newspapers that go out of the way to spare space for the KN, like the daily *Ausaf*. MTKN gets funds from somewhere to employ these journalists 'on hire'.

A mulla, Muhammad Hanif of D Block Okara sent an application against Ahmadis to the Chief Justice Supreme Court, Chief Justice Lahore High Court, the District and Session Judge Okara and the Deputy Commissioner Okara.

He took the plea that Ahmadis have a mosque in the Main Chowk of D Block in Okara, built long ago, with 6 or 7 minarets; while "as per the 1973 Constitution these people

are not allowed to construct mosques, nor the minarets, nor can they call themselves Muslim, cannot make call for prayers, nor call their religion Islam, but they continue to do that—as such the authorities should act against them and demolish forthwith the minarets of their mosque.”

With such activism and great successes against Ahmadiyya places of worship, the mulla could approach The Guinness Book of Records to claim an entry therein for Pakistan for being on top of countries list where places of worship are at the greatest risk of defiling, closure, etc.

In conclusion it would be appropriate to provide a running total of violations of the sanctity of Ahmadiyya mosques and worship places; the figures are unbelievable:

- Number of Ahmadiyya mosques demolished 29
- Number of Ahmadiyya mosques sealed by the authorities 40
- Number of Ahmadiyya mosques set on fire or damaged 25
- Number of Ahmadiyya mosques forcibly occupied 17
- Number of Ahmadiyya mosques' construction barred by the authorities 59

We take this opportunity to respectfully and very thoughtfully remind the plenipotentiaries of our Islamic Republic of the Divine command on the issue of places of worship:

And who is more unjust than he who forbids that in places for the worship of Allah, Allah's name should be celebrated?-whose zeal is (in fact) to ruin them? It was not fitting that such should themselves enter them except in fear. For them there is nothing but disgrace in this world, and in the world to come, an exceeding torment. *Al-Quran 2:114*

(Translation by Yusuf Ali)

Repeated violations of this command could be fraught with dire and unaffordable consequences—best avoided.

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