

**Antonia Locatelli**  
***Italian missionary***

**RWANDA**

Antonia Locatelli, a 55-year-old Italian missionary and primary school teacher, was shot dead at Nyamata Roman Catholic Church by a member of the Rwandese security forces on the night of 9 March 1992. She is reported to have been killed while trying to assist thousands of members of the Tutsi ethnic group who were fleeing violent attacks in Kanzenze *commune* (district) in Kigali *préfecture* (administrative region) by members of the majority Hutu ethnic group. The authorities are not known to have taken any action against the soldier responsible for killing her.

It has been suggested that Antonia Locatelli was killed to stop her from informing the international community about the killings. Other reports have suggested that she may have been mistaken for a Tutsi fugitive. In either case she appears to have been a victim of extrajudicial execution. At least 150 Tutsi were killed and many others injured in Kanzenze during the previous week by Hutu gangs whose actions were carried out with the apparent acquiescence of the government. Several thousand Tutsi in the area fled to the nearby Nyamata Roman Catholic Church parish which is reported to have been surrounded by members of the security forces. The gangs burned houses and destroyed other property belonging to the Tutsi. Hutu gangs hostile both to the Tutsi and to Hutu opposed to attacks on Tutsi people, have continued to commit killings and destroy property throughout 1992.

The violence against the Tutsi started after state-controlled Radio Rwanda broadcast on 4 March 1992 what it said was the text of a tract and alleged that the armed rebel group known as the *Front patriotique rwandais* (FPR), Rwandese Patriotic Front, was planning to assassinate prominent Hutu politicians and was supported by the opposition *Parti libéral* (PL), Liberal Party. The radio broadcast reportedly implied that the Hutu should take steps to defend themselves. Many Hutu accuse Tutsi of supporting the FPR and regard them as a "fifth column" or enemy. Since the guerrilla war started in October 1990 several thousand Tutsi and dozens of Hutu opposed to the Hutu-dominated government have been victims of deliberate and arbitrary killings by Hutu vigilantes and members of the security forces.

**Please write to the Rwandan authorities**

- expressing concern that Antonia Locatelli, a missionary and teacher, was shot dead at Nyamata parish on 9 March 1992 by a government soldier and asking what steps have been taken to investigate the incident and bring those responsible to justice;
- requesting the authorities urgently to set up an independent and impartial commission of inquiry to investigate the killing of Antonia Locatelli, and the violence against, and killing of Tutsi in Kanzenze district and other parts of Rwanda since the beginning of March 1992, and to bring those responsible to justice;
- Urging the authorities to issue public instructions to all members of the public and the security forces that human rights violations, in particular the persecution or killing of people on account of their Tutsi origin, are a criminal offence and that those responsible will be brought to justice.

**Write to:**

Son Excellence  
Monsieur le Général-Major  
HABYARIMANA Juvénal  
Président de la République  
Présidence de la République  
BP 15 Kigali  
RWANDA

(Head of State, Chairman of the MRND)

Monsieur GASANA James  
Ministre à la présidence pour la Défense  
et la Sécurité  
BP 15 Kigali  
RWANDA

(Defence and Security Minister)

Monsieur NSENGIYAREMYE Dismas  
Premier Ministre  
Présidence de la République  
BP 15 Kigali  
RWANDA

(Prime Minister and Head of Government)

**Increase the power of your letter by sending a copy to the diplomatic representatives of Rwanda in your country**

## **Teresa de Jesús Ramírez Vargas**

### ***Catholic nun***

### **COLOMBIA**

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Sister Teresa de Jesús Ramírez Vargas was teaching a class of children in the village school in Cristales, municipality of San Roque, Antioquia department, on 28 February 1989 when two gunmen burst into her classroom. The men fired several shots before leaving in the company of three other men who were waiting in a jeep outside the school. Sister Teresa was taken to hospital in San Roque but was dead on arrival.

Sister Teresa was of peasant origin and one of eight brothers and sisters born in Guamita, La Ceja, Antioquia department. She became a nun when she was 16 and studied Education and Religious Science at the Bolívar University in Medellín. For nine years until 1984 she worked with poor people in a shanty town called El Bosque. At the time of her death she had worked in Cristales for 18 months. As well as teaching in the school run by the nuns, called the Colegio Idem de Cristales, she carried out evangelical work in the locality, taught literacy to peasants and participated in many projects set up to help local people. She had also participated in peasant marches organized in 1988 in protest against poverty and violence in the region and, together with other nuns, is said to have denounced cases of torture of peasants carried out by the security forces. As a result of this, there were fears that the nuns would face reprisals.

A year before Sister Teresa's death, in January 1988, the parish priest of Cristales, Father Jaime Restrepo López, was shot dead by an unknown gunman in Providencia, Antioquia department. After his killing, written threats in the form of graffiti appeared on the village walls, such as "This won't be the last time blood flows in Cristales". A month before Sister Teresa's killing, graffiti appeared saying "Cristales will soon be in mourning".

Since 1987 there has been a proliferation of death threats against real or suspected members of the opposition and others, many of which have been carried out. Those involved in church community movements have also been frequent targets of both death threats and killings. Responsibility for many of the killings in Colombia has been attributed by the authorities to so-called "death squads" which they claim are groups of right-wing extremists they can neither control nor disband. However, evidence indicates that many of these groups operate under the command or with the acquiescence of the Colombian armed forces.

In late 1987 an anonymous document was circulated widely throughout Colombia listing numerous individuals and organizations from various sectors of public life it considered to have been infiltrated by or working with "communists", this despite the fact that the Communist Party and several other leftwing groups have legal status in Colombia. Certain sectors of the Catholic Church, particularly those espousing liberation theology, were singled out as openly promoting Marxist ideology or as having links with guerrilla groups.

An investigation into the killing of Sister Teresa was opened by the 5th Public Order Judge (Juez 5 de Orden Público) in Medellín, who delegated the case to the preliminary investigation unit for Santo Domingo. The unit is said to have reported that sufficient evidence was provided by the complainant to presume that a paramilitary group was responsible for the killing. In this case, it appears that the investigation was eventually closed because witnesses were too frightened to come forward and give evidence. However, the Procurator's office also appointed an ad hoc

procurator to pursue investigations into the case, but it is unclear whether any progress has been made with this investigation. In the vast majority of cases of human rights violations in Colombia those responsible are not prosecuted and convicted.

**Please write to the Colombian authorities, in Spanish if possible, otherwise in your own language**

-urging that there be a full and impartial investigation into the killing, that the results be made public, and that all those responsible are brought to justice;

-asking for an update on the progress of the investigations into the killing of Sister Teresa de Jesús Ramírez Vargas;

-expressing concern about the numerous threats and killings of members of the church in Colombia and urging that they be given protection so that they are able to go about their peaceful work without fear of attack.

**Write to**

Señor Presidente César Gaviria Trujillo  
 Presidente de la República  
 Palacio de Nariño  
 Santa Fé de Bogotá D.E.  
 COLOMBIA

Telex: 44281 PALP CO  
 Fax 283 3066 / 286 7434 / 287 7939

Dr. Rafael Pardo Rueda  
 Ministro de Defensa Nacional  
 Ministerio de Defensa Nacional  
 Avenida Eldorado - Carrera 52  
 Santa Fé de Bogotá D.E.  
 COLOMBIA

Telex: 42411  
 Fax: 222 1874

Dr. Carlos Gustavo Arrieta Padilla  
 Procurador General de la Nación  
 Procuraduría General  
 Edificio Banco Ganadero  
 Carrera 5, No. 15-80  
 Santa Fé de Bogotá  
 COLOMBIA

Telex: 41224 PRGEN CO  
 Fax: 284 0472

**Increase the power of your letter by sending a copy to the diplomatic representatives of Colombia in your country**

**Abdul Qadeer,**  
*Ahmadi*

**PAKISTAN**

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Abdul Qadeer, a member of the Ahmadi religious minority, was arrested on 26 October 1984 in Sahiwal, Pakistan. He was accused of involvement in an incident in which two members of a Muslim activist group attacking a local Ahmadi mosque were killed after the mosque's caretaker shot at the crowd to stop them from entering the building.

Abdul Qadeer was convicted of murder and sentenced to seven years' imprisonment in June 1985 after an unfair trial by a military court. Despite the fact that the local martial law authorities had considered this sentence to have been imposed on "doubtful evidence", a second martial law court, apparently under pressure from the then Chief Martial Law Administrator, General Zia-ul-Haq, increased his sentence to 25 years' imprisonment. He continues to be imprisoned in Sahiwal Central Jail. Abdul Qadeer was not armed at the time of the incident, and was not involved in the shooting or any other act of violence. His arrest was due to his presence as an Ahmadi at the mosque at the time of the shooting: Amnesty International believes his continued detention is in violation of his right to religious freedom. The organization is calling for his immediate and unconditional release.

The incident took place in the early morning of Friday 26 October 1984. Several Ahmadis were engaged in performing prayers inside their mosque when about 50 Muslim activists armed with sticks and carrying paint, buckets and brushes gathered in front of the mosque in order to erase verses from the Koran and other writings from the mosque's walls. Ordinance XX, enacted in April 1984, prohibits Ahmadis from calling themselves Muslim or displaying Koranic verses.

Muslim activists reportedly began to paint out the writing on the mosque's walls. The mosque's caretaker told them to go away, but the activists became ever more aggressive. The caretaker then reportedly brandished his shot gun, warning the crowd that he would shoot if they entered the mosque. He then opened fire, as a result of which two of the Muslim activists were killed. At his trial, the caretaker admitted in court that he was solely responsible for the shooting, maintaining that the decision to resort to shooting was his and that this was done in self-defence and to protect the mosque from the invading crowd.

The head of the Ahmadiyya community went to the police station soon after the incident to lodge a formal complaint. The police refused to register his report. Instead, later in the day, the police authorities filed a case against 11 members of the Ahmadiyya community under the provisions of the Pakistan Penal Code relating to murder.

Seven of these Ahmadis, including Abdul Qadeer, were arrested, while the others were said to have evaded arrest. Some of those arrested were taken directly to Sahiwal Central Jail, where they were denied contact with relatives or defence counsel for seven days. They were also put in fetters and bar shackles, although after a week or so these were removed. According to Amnesty International's information, three of those arrested were not present at the time of the incident; Abdul Qadeer and two others, Nisar Ahmad and Muhammad Haziq Rafiq Tahir, were present but not armed. They were not involved in the shooting or any other act of violence.

Abdul Qadeer was aged 20 at the time of the incident. He was kept in chains and confined to a small cell in police custody for 15 days and denied family visits. He was then sent to the Central Jail, Sahiwal, where he remained in solitary confinement for several months. He was employed at the time of his arrest and his parents and sister were financially dependent on him.

The trial of Abdul Qadeer and the other six prisoners started in early 1985. They were tried before a special military court whose proceedings did not conform to international standards for a fair trial. On 16

June 1985, Special Military Court No. 62 sentenced two prisoners to death, and four, including Abdul Qadeer, to seven years' imprisonment. One of the seven prisoners was acquitted. The verdict was submitted to the then Martial Law Administrator (MLA) and Governor of Punjab for examination, as was required by martial law provisions. The MLA issued a revision order on 8 October 1985 instructing the military court to "re-consider the conviction on all the charges which is based on doubtful evidence and as such is not legally sustainable".

The martial law court re-convened on 21 October 1985. It was reported that the court had received instructions from the then Chief Martial Law Administrator, General Zia-ul-Haq, to impose harsher sentences. Meanwhile, martial law was lifted and martial law courts were abolished on 31 December 1985, and a civilian government under General Zia-ul-Haq was installed. No sentence was announced. However, on 16 February 1986, a verdict was announced confirming the original death sentences on two of the prisoners while increasing the prison terms of the other four, including Abdul Qadeer, to 25 years' imprisonment.

Amendment of the constitution during the martial law period (July 1977-1985) barred any judicial review of cases of prisoners sentenced by military courts. However, when Benazir Bhutto became Prime Minister on 2 December 1988, she initiated an eight-point amnesty which included provisions for either the release of political prisoners sentenced by special military courts or a review of their cases. None of the Ahmadi prisoners were included in the list of more than 100 political prisoners who were released as a result of the amnesty; nor, so far, has any effective review of their cases taken place.

### **Background about Ahmadis**

The Ahmadiyya community considers itself one of several dozen sects in Islam. It was founded in the late nineteenth century and has approximately 10 million members worldwide. However, it is regarded as heretical by orthodox Muslims. Although Ahmadis follow most of the tenets of Islam, they differ in their religious belief by calling their founder, Mirza Ghulam Ahmed, Allah's promised Messiah. The generally-accepted Muslim belief is that there is no true prophet after Mohammad, who died in AD 632. In addition, orthodox Muslims assert that essential belief was established for all time during Mohammad's lifespan. The Ahmadiyya faith interprets this principle more liberally and their belief requires them actively to go out into the world spreading their faith and seeking converts. As a result of these divergences, Ahmadis have been subjected to discrimination and persecution in some Islamic countries and in Saudi Arabia have been banned entirely.

The Ahmadiyya community in Pakistan, which has some four million adherents, has faced severe restrictions in recent years. In 1974 a constitutional amendment was introduced to declare Ahmadis a non-Muslim minority. In 1984 President Zia-ul-Haq issued Ordinance XX, adding to Section 298 of the Pakistan Penal Code, prohibiting Ahmadis from calling themselves Muslims and performing Muslim religious rites. Furthermore, under the law Ahmadis may not propagate their faith or invite others to join the Ahmadiyya.

In 1986 the Pakistan Penal Code was further amended by the addition to Criminal Law Amendment Act 1986 of Section 295-C which provides the death penalty or life imprisonment for the criminal offence of defiling the name of the Prophet Mohammad. Under the government of Mian Nawaz Sharif, the Pakistan federal cabinet on 29 July 1991 decided to further amend Section 295-C of the Pakistan Penal Code to remove the alternative punishment of imprisonment for life. The amendment makes the death penalty the mandatory punishment for the criminal offence of defiling the name of the Prophet Muhammad. The Ahmadis' reference to the Prophet Mohammad is taken by orthodox Muslims to constitute defiling the name of the Prophet.

### **AI's concerns**

Amnesty International has been examining Abdul Qadeer's case over several years and has established that Abdul Qadeer had gone to the mosque for prayers and not to assist the caretaker in defending the mosque. He was not armed, and was not involved in the shooting or any other act of violence. He was arrested and charged for murder because he was at the mosque at the time of shooting. His continued detention, and his conviction to seven, and then to 25 years' imprisonment in an unfair trial by a military court on evidence described by the then provincial authorities as "doubtful", is in violation of his right to freedom of religion. Amnesty International considers him to be a prisoner of conscience.

**Please write to the Pakistan authorities**

- expressing concern that Abdul Qadeer has been sentenced to 25 years' imprisonment on a false accusation of murder, solely because of his identity as an Ahmadi and because he was in an Ahmadi mosque at the time of the killings;
- expressing concern that his trials took place before special military courts and did not conform to internationally established standards for a fair trial;
- urging the government to release Abdul Qadeer immediately and unconditionally, and to set aside his conviction which is based on an unfair trial.

**Write to:**

President  
Ghulam Ishaq Khan  
The Presidency  
Murree Brewery Road  
Rawalpindi  
Pakistan

Governor of Punjab  
Mian Mohammad Azhar  
Governor's office  
Punjab Administration  
Lahore  
Pakistan

Mian Nawaz Sharif  
Prime Minister  
Office of the Prime Minister  
Islamabad  
Pakistan

Chief Minister of Punjab  
Ghulam Haider Wyna  
Office of the Chief Minister  
Lahore  
Pakistan

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