

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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11 March 1994

PAKISTAN: Attacks against members of the Ahmadiyya community in Lahore

Amnesty International is concerned that the Pakistan authorities are failing to protect the lives and physical safety of members of the Ahmadiyya community in Lahore. After at least 13 attacks against individual Ahmadis by armed men in the past four months, most recently in February, the organization fears that the lack of official condemnation and protection will result in more violence, deaths and injury. The recent attacks have claimed two lives and left more than a dozen Ahmadis seriously injured. Victims include students, doctors, university professors, and other prominent members of the Ahmadiyya community.

The assailants reportedly go to Ahmadi homes, force the occupants to leave their houses, demand to know if they are Ahmadis, then beat them severely (under the Ahmadi religion, adherents are not permitted to deny their faith). The identity of the attackers remains unclear, but they are believed to be members of an armed Islamist group. Eyewitnesses have described them as "*bearded young men in their early to mid-twenties*", and have recognized some of them as "*students of Allama Iqbal Medical College in Lahore*".

It seems the police have so far failed to adequately investigate the attacks, or to provide any protection to members of the Ahmadiyya community against further violence. Even when the victim's families have been able to provide information about the identity of the assailants, or their vehicle's registration number, the police have reportedly refused to register their complaints.

On one occasion, two Ahmadis were severely beaten, before being dragged by their attackers to a nearby police station where the police reportedly registered a case against the victims, while taking no action against the perpetrators. Usually the police have not registered victims' complaints at all. In a few cases, the police amended the complainant's report, warning the complainant to submit the amended report if they wanted it to be registered.

On 2 February 1994, Rana Riaz Ahmad was shot dead by men who were then identified by the victim's family. However, it seems that only two of the named assailants have been questioned by police. On 6 February, Ahmad Nasrullah, son of Hamid Nasrullah, the Ameer (leader) of the Ahmadiyya community in Lahore, was found dead. There has been no police action to bring his killers to justice.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Ahmadiyya community considers itself one of several dozen sects in Islam. It was founded in the late 19th century and has approximately 10 million members worldwide. However, it is regarded as heretical by orthodox Muslims. The Ahmadiyya community in Pakistan, which has some four million adherents, has faced severe restrictions in recent years. In 1974 a constitutional amendment they were declared non-Muslim. Under a 1984 legislation, they were prohibited from calling themselves Muslims and performing Muslim religious rites. Over the past decade, Ahmadi places of worship have been targeted for attack by Islamist assailants.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters either in English or in your own language:

- expressing concern about recent attacks by armed men against members of the Ahmadiyya community in Lahore, which have resulted in at least two deaths and over a dozen people seriously injured, and calling on the authorities to publicly condemn such attacks;
- urging the authorities to take immediate steps to guarantee the lives and physical safety of members of the Ahmadiyya community in Lahore;
- urging the authorities to immediately initiate a thorough investigation into the attacks, with a view to bringing to justice those responsible, including any police personnel found to have been deliberately conniving with the assailants;
- expressing concern at reports that police in Lahore are failing to protect the lives and physical safety of members of the Ahmadiyya community, and are neither adequately registering complaints nor investigating attacks;
- urging the authorities to ensure that all complaints regarding these incidents are registered by the police and thoroughly investigated.

APPEALS TO

1. President Farooq Ahmad Leghari

Office of the President

Islamabad, Pakistan

Faxes: +92 51 811390

Telegrams: President Leghari, Islamabad, Pakistan

Salutation: Dear President

2. Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto

Office of the Prime Minister

Islamabad, Pakistan

Telexes: 5742

Faxes: as for President, but for attention of Prime Minister Bhutto

Telegrams: Prime Minister Bhutto, Islamabad, Pakistan

Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

3. Mr Mian Ahmad Manzoor Wattoo

Punjab Chief Minister

Lahore, Pakistan

Telegrams: Chief Minister Wattoo, Lahore, Pakistan

Salutation: Dear Chief Minister

- and only calling on the following to publicly condemn the attacks:

4. Mr Mian Nawaz Sharif

Leader of the Opposition

National Assembly

Islamabad, Pakistan

Telegrams: Mr Nawaz Sharif, National Assembly, Islamabad, Pakistan

Salutation: Dear Sir

5. Islamic political party leader

Mr Syed Munawar Hasan

Secretary General

Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan

Mansoorah

Multan Road, Lahore 54570, Pakistan

Faxes: +92 42 7574719

Salutation: Dear Sir

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

diplomatic representatives of accredited to your country

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 22 April 1994.