



Pakistan - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Thursday 2 May 2019

Information on Ahmadis including: societal/state treatment; treatment by khatm e nabuwat/police involvement in khatm e nabuwat; & available state protection

A report issued in May 2018 by the *United States Department of State* reviewing human rights of the preceding year notes that:

“Throughout the year, unidentified attackers targeted and killed Shia, Hazaras, and Ahmadis in attacks believed to be religiously motivated...” (United States Department of State (29 May 2018) *2017 Report on International Religious Freedom: Pakistan*, p.2).

This document also states that:

“According to the constitution and the penal code, Ahmadis are not Muslims and may not call themselves Muslims or assert they are adherents of Islam. The penal code bans them from preaching or propagating their religious beliefs, proselytizing, or “insulting the religious feelings of Muslims.” The punishment for violation of these provisions is imprisonment for up to three years and a fine” (ibid, p.3).

It is also pointed out in this document that:

“Lower courts reportedly continued to conduct proceedings in an intimidating atmosphere, with members of groups labelled extremist by the government, such as the Khatm-e-Nabuwat (“Finality of the Prophethood”) group, often threatening the defendant’s attorneys, family members, and supporters” (ibid,p.12).

An undated report issued by *Minority Rights Group International* states that:

“...aspects of the Constitution specifically discriminate against Ahmadis. In 1974, the Second Amendment to the Constitution was passed, declaring Ahmadis a non-Muslim minority, in contradiction to their self-identity. Contributing to further legal discrimination against Ahmadis was the introduction of Ordinance XX in 1984 as part of the programme of ‘Islamization’ under Zia-ul-Haq. This amended Pakistan’s Penal Code (PPC) through the introduction of sections 298-B and 298-C, detailed in Table 2. The impact of this legislation has been to effectively criminalize the practice of the Ahmadi faith, in turn affecting many other areas of their lives, such as political participation. In order to complete voter registration, for example, Ahmadis are required to declare themselves non-Muslims, which in practice curtails their voting rights” (Minority Rights Group International (Undated) *Freedom of religion or belief in Pakistan*, p.5).

A report issued in 2019 by *Freedom House* commenting on events of 2018 states that:

“Ahmadis, members of a heterodox Muslim sect, face political discrimination...” (Freedom House (2019) *Freedom in the World 2019, Pakistan*, p.5).

It is also pointed out in this report that:

“The most specific discriminatory legislation has been directed at members of the Ahmadi community, who are prohibited from calling themselves Muslims. The practical effects of this were exacerbated in March 2018, when the Islamabad High Court ruled that a declaration of religious faith was mandatory for those applying for government jobs, including positions in the armed forces, the judiciary, and the civil service, and in order to access key documents including passports. The same court in July ruled that citizens have a right to know the religion of key officials” (ibid, p.7).

A report published in 2019 by *Human Rights Watch* reviewing events of 2018 points out that:

“Members of the Ahmadiyya religious community continue to be a major target for prosecutions under blasphemy laws, as well as specific anti-Ahmadi laws across Pakistan. They face increasing social discrimination as militant groups and the Islamist political party Tehreek-e-Labbaik (TLP) accuse them of “posing as Muslims.” The Pakistan penal code continues to treat “posing as Muslims” by Ahmadi as a criminal offense. They were effectively excluded from participating in the 2018 parliamentary elections: to vote, Ahmadi are required to declare they are not Muslims, which many see as a renunciation of their faith” (Human Rights Watch (17 January 2019) *World Report 2019, Pakistan*, p.2).

In April 2019 the *Human Rights Commission of Pakistan* released a report commenting on events of 2018 which included stating that:

“The widespread hatred and antagonism against the Ahmadiyya community in Pakistan is nothing new. Incitement against them continued unabated in 2018 in an environment conducive to bigotry and hate speech. The barefaced persecution of the community has gone on for decades, with instances of mob attacks, desecration of worship places, targeted killings, and hate speech. Banned religious organisations openly targeted Ahmadi on Facebook, Twitter, and other forums on social media, spewing out venom against them” (Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (15 April 2019) *State of Human Rights in 2018*, p.113).

A report issued in April 2019 commenting on events of the preceding year by the *United States Commission on International Religious Freedom* notes how:

“...Pakistan’s constitution prohibits Ahmadiyya Muslims from self-identifying as Muslims or calling their places of worship mosques, underpinning a discriminatory legal structure that has systematically diminished their right to practice their faith” (United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (29 April 2019) *2019 Annual Report, Pakistan*, p.2).

This report also states that:

“Ahmadi are subject to severe legal restrictions and suffer from officially sanctioned discrimination. In addition to the constitution’s second amendment that declares Ahmadi to be “non-Muslims,” Penal Code section 298 criminalizes Ahmadi referring to themselves as Muslims; preaching, propagating, or disseminating materials on their faith; or referring to their houses of worship as mosques. They also are prohibited from voting as Muslims and were denied registration under joint

electoral lists in 2018, relegating them to separate electoral lists that command less political power. Ahmadis frequently face societal discrimination, arrest, harassment, and physical attacks, sometimes resulting in murder” (ibid, p.5).

It is also pointed out in this document that:

“Along with physical attacks by individual civilians and mobs, state institutions often have targeted the Ahmadiyya community for prosecution” (ibid, p.5).

A report issued in February 2019 by the *Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia* states that:

“Ahmadis are not readily identifiable by their appearance, language or names. Many Ahmadis do not publicly identify for fear of persecution, maintain a low profile in the community to avoid societal discrimination and violence, and refuse to take part in the census” (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia (20 February 2019) *DFAT Country Information Report: Pakistan*, p.39).

This document also states that:

“Ahmadis face high levels of official discrimination in Pakistan and are not able to practise their religion freely. In 1974, the Pakistan government amended the Constitution to state explicitly that Ahmadis were considered non-Muslims. In 1984, the government of General Muhammad Zia ul-Haq promulgated Ordinance XX, which banned Ahmadis from: publicly practising their faith; using non-Ahmadi mosques or public prayer rooms for worship; using Islamic texts for their prayers; performing the Muslim call to prayer; producing, publishing or disseminating religious materials; using the traditional Islamic greeting in public; seeking converts; and publicly quoting from the Quran. Ordinance XX also banned Ahmadis from identifying or 'posing' as Muslims” (ibid, p.40).

This report also points out that:

“Violence against Ahmadis by militant groups has been relatively rare in recent years. This partly reflects a general improvement in the security situation, the relatively high socioeconomic status of many Ahmadis, and the difficulty of identifying Ahmadi solely from their appearance. Nonetheless, violent attacks on Ahmadis can and do occur. Unknown gunmen killed three Ahmadis in separate sectarian attacks in Punjab between March and May 2017, and half (three out of a total six) of total faith-based violent incidents across Pakistan in 2018 targeted the Ahmadi community...Media reports anti-Ahmadi group, Aalami Majlis Tahaffuze Khatme Nabuwwat (AMTKN), is one of the main banned organisations involved in attacks and threats against, and the killing of Ahmadis, both in Pakistan and overseas (United Kingdom). Media reports allege MTKN is also active in its efforts to advocate for more restrictions on the Ahmadi community in Pakistan” (ibid, p.42).

This report also notes:

“Ahmadis face the highest risk of discrimination and violence in rural villages where no extended Ahmadi community exists, although the security of individuals largely depends on the attitude of the local cleric. Ahmadis report the highest levels of discrimination in rural areas in Punjab. After Punjab, Ahmadis consider Karachi to be the most dangerous location” (ibid, p.43).

It is also stated in this document that:

“Human rights groups consider Ahmadis to be the most vulnerable group in Pakistan, due to legal discrimination and growing religious intolerance. DFAT assesses that Ahmadis in Pakistan face a high risk of official discrimination, which affects their ability to practise their religion freely and limits the extent of their political and social engagement. DFAT assesses that Ahmadis face a high risk of societal discrimination and violence, which intensified in late 2017 and increased in 2018 as a result of the major Khatm-e-Nabuwat protests at the end of 2017 and the 2018 election” (ibid, p.43).

Pakistan Today in March 2019 states that:

“Bullet-riddled bodies of two doctors abducted a couple of days ago were recovered on Monday. Police said that bodies of Dr Iftikhar and Dr Aziz, who reportedly belong to the Ahmadiyya community, were recovered from a small dam in Dhoke Soba area of Attock district” (*Pakistan Today* (18 March 2019) *Bodies of two Ahmadi doctors recovered in Attock*).

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