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End cyclical harassment and persecution of Ahmadis in Pakistan

The Pakistani authorities must immediately end the systemic repression of the Ahmadiyya community and uphold the right to freedom of belief and religion, said Amnesty International today.

The religious minority has been subjected to escalating intimidation, harassment, and attacks in the lead up to Eid-ul-Adha, which will take place on 7 June. Local and regional authorities across the country have taken measures to prevent Ahmadis from celebrating the festival, including forcing individuals to sign affidavits to refrain from Eid prayers and rituals, and issuing orders to the police. Since mid-April, there have been multiple cases of violence by majoritarian religious groups against the Ahmadiyya community in which at least [three](#) people have been killed. This follows similar episodes of violence and harassment in the lead up to, during and after Eid last year as [documented](#) by Amnesty International.

“The violence and harassment targeted against Ahmadis ahead of the Islamic holiday of Eid-ul-Adha is taking place against the backdrop of ongoing repression by the Pakistani authorities,” said Isabelle Lassée, Deputy Regional Director for South Asia at Amnesty International.

“Not only are local authorities and local enforcement agencies across Pakistan failing to protect Ahmadis, they are themselves actively restricting their rights to freedom of belief and religion.”

Affidavits, notices and preventive detention orders against Ahmadis celebrating Eid

Amnesty International has examined more than 15 affidavits, or surety bonds, signed by Ahmadis undertaking to refrain from either purchasing animals or performing the customary animal sacrifice to mark Eid-ul-Adha. Some affidavits even contained commitments that the individuals would refrain from offering Eid prayers.

The signed documents state that violation of the terms would lead to fines of up to PKR 500,000 (USD 1,765) or open the signatories to legal sanction under the Pakistan Penal Code. Amnesty International has analyzed such documents in five districts: Chakwal, Narowal, Toba Tek Singh, Khanewal and Faisalabad.

Amnesty International has also reviewed multiple notices issued by various District Commissioners in Lahore, Karachi, Mirpur, Sargodha and Rawalpindi directing the police to take action against Ahmadis found to be celebrating Eid. These orders were issued in response to applications by individuals belonging to religious groups such as Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) and [legal associations](#), including bar associations.

Preventive detention orders have also been issued in Sialkot, under the Maintenance of Public Order Ordinance, against individuals from the Ahmadiyya community to prevent them from celebrating Eid. The order states that it is to prevent individuals from acting in a “manner prejudicial to public safety and the maintenance of public order.” Recently, a member of the Ahmadiyya community was reportedly arbitrarily detained for attempting to purchase a sacrificial animal in Chiniot.

“Ahmadis are not protected under the law”

For Ahmadis, Eid has become a time of anxiety rather than joy. “Every year, Ahmadis brace themselves for the possibility of police action, threats, or even violence,” said Mahmood Iftikhar, spokesman for the community. “The state’s arbitrary demands serve only to reinforce the message that Ahmadis are not protected under the law,” he added.

Ordinance XX of 1984, inserted sections 298-B and 298-C in the Pakistan Penal Code, which bar any Ahmadi from calling themselves Muslim or preaching and propagating their faith. This includes use of any “epithets, descriptions and titles” related to Muslims. The law, and its subsequent interpretation by the Supreme Court in 1993, asserts that Ahmadis cannot declare themselves to be Muslims nor perform any practices that could be interpreted as them posing as Muslims. A 2022 Supreme Court judgment, however, upheld the rights of Ahmadis to practice their faith within their homes.

In 2024, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination expressed concerns about “harassment and intimidation of Ahmadi Muslims in the period preceding and during Eid al-Adha.” The Committee also raised concerns about the impunity afforded to perpetrators of this harassment and intimidation.

Unrelenting harassment and violence

This is not the first time this year that Eid has been a flashpoint for the harassment of Ahmadis. During Eid-ul-Fitr at the end of March, Eid prayers were [disrupted](#) by religious groups and activists at five Ahmadi places of worship in Lahore and four in Karachi. There have been incidents of harassment after Friday prayers on a near-weekly basis in Sindh and Punjab provinces, particularly in the Islamic month of Ramadan during which at least 63 Ahmadis were [detained](#) for offering prayers.

In one incident, in Karachi on 18 April, a violent mob [killed](#) a man after Friday prayers outside an Ahmadiyya place of worship. In late May, religious groups openly destroyed a cold storage cabin after learning that the body of an Ahmadi woman was stored there.

“Violence against Ahmadis has become routine, often reaching fever pitch around religious occasions such as Eid. The Pakistani authorities have repeatedly failed to provide protection to the community and have in fact actively discriminated and harassed Ahmadi individuals through detention orders, criminal cases and orders placing restrictions on the community’s right to freedom of belief and religion,” said Isabelle Lassée.

“Amnesty International calls on provincial and federal governments across Pakistan to withdraw directions preventing the community from observing the Islamic holiday of Eid-ul-Adha, to take protective measures to safeguard Ahmadis from various forms of violence, and to effectively and impartially investigate allegations of attacks against members of the community. Authorities must also take long-term steps to repeal discriminatory laws impacting the community. Ahmadis deserve to practice their religion and celebrate Eid without fear for their safety and liberty.”