

Human Rights Without Frontiers Int'l



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"Freedom of Religion or Belief News Alert"

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PAKISTAN

Pakistani parliament calls for blasphemy laws reform after student's lynching



Mashal Kahn, a student in journalism, was mercilessly beaten and then shot dead by a vigilante mob of students from the same university, suspecting him of publishing blasphemous content online and promoting the Ahmadi faith, police said.

<http://bit.ly/2ouf0ql>

[Read the article on HRWF website](#)

Premium Times (18.04.2017) - <http://bit.ly/2pQLHPJ> - Pakistan's parliament on Tuesday called for a reform of controversial blasphemy laws which prescribe the death penalty for insulting Islam, after a university student was killed by a mob on April 14.

A resolution passed by the National Assembly condemned the lynching of the student, terming it "clod-blooded murder" and expressing resolve "to ensure that strong safeguards may be inserted into the blasphemy law to prevent its abuse through such atrocities in the future."

The move came as the country's top court began a probe into the murder of the student from Abdul Wali Khan University in north-western Pakistan, allegedly for his views on sufi Islam and socialism.

The blasphemy laws are a highly sensitive subject in majority-Muslim Pakistan, and it is the first-time Pakistani members of parliament as a whole have called for such changes.

People accused of blasphemy have been gunned down, burned alive and bludgeoned to death in some cases.

A secular governor of the most popular Punjab province was shot dead by a police officer in his security detail after he called for the release of a Christian woman facing blasphemy charges in 2011.

NAN reports that a journalism student of the Abdul Wali Khan University in Mardan was brutally beaten to death by a violent mob in Pakistan over allegations of promoting 'blasphemous' content on social media.

Another student was injured in the incident, which took place Thursday, April 14 within the university premises, prompting officials to shut down the campus and vacate hostels in order to restore peace.

According to a Dawn report, a total of 45 people have been detained in connection with the mob attack.

The Dawn article notes that the two students had never been officially charged under Pakistan's blasphemy laws and that the violence seemed to have been provoked by rumours circulating among the university's students.

The Dawn quoted Mardan's Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police, Mohammad Alam Shinwari, as saying that Mashal Khan, the student who was killed, was said to be running Facebook pages "which allegedly published blasphemous content" online.

[Read the article on HRWF website](#)

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PAKISTAN

Stop crusade against Ahmadiyya community

A statement by the Asian Human Rights Commission

[Read the article on HRWF website](#)

Asian Human Rights Committee (13.04.2017) - <http://bit.ly/2orjzS5> -A new wave of persecution and killings of the Ahmadi sect has started after an Islamabad high court judge took a position on religious matters of individuals, particularly about free discussions on social media. Judge Shaukat Siddiqui is generally known as a bigot and hate monger. Leading the movement for the release of Constable Mumtaz Qadri, the murderer of former governor of Punjab province, Mr. Salman Taseer, the judge declared Qadri as 'Ghazi' (victorious for

upholding the teachings of Islam).

In recent days, Judge Siddiqui is taking cases of alleged blasphemy and instructing the authorities to ban the accused persons' accounts of Facebook, Twitter and Internet. The Judge's interpretation of blasphemy amounts to any free discussion on Islam or its sacred personalities.

Unfortunately, the backlash of this focus on blasphemy is faced by the Ahmadiyya community, which ironically never challenges the ideas of other religions or sects of Islam.

Harassed, ostracized, and made outcasts, the "kafir" (infidel) Ahmadi community has been suffering incessantly at the hands of fundamentalist groups who vowed to wipe out all Ahmadis from Pakistan. Since 1974, when Ahmadis were declared non-Muslims, the country has witnessed a systematic cleansing, and a political, social, and economic ostracization of Ahmadis.

As Justice Siddiqui started delivering his decisions on bloggers accused of blasphemy charges, the persecution and killings of Ahmadis began again. Within a span of 10 days, two Ahmadis were gunned down. A few days ago, Malik Saleem Latif, a prominent Ahmadi lawyer in Nankana Sahib was shot dead, while his son was injured. Mr. Malik was a member of the Nankana Bar Association and relative of Pakistan's first Nobel Laureate, Dr. Abdus Salam. The proscribed group Lashkar e Jhangi claimed responsibility for his murder, raising doubts about the efficiency and effectiveness of the ongoing military operation against the group.

Before that, 68-year-old Dr. Ashfaq Ahmad was shot at from point blank range near Scheme Mor, Lahore on April 7, while he was going to Friday prayers along with his grandson and a friend. A motorcyclist, wearing a helmet, approached and shot at his temple, killing him immediately. Dr. Ashfaq Ahmad had a PhD in food and nutrition and was retired from the University of Veterinary Sciences.

At least six Ahmadis were killed in Pakistan in 2016 because of their religious beliefs, claims a recent report issued by the Jamaat-e-Ahmadiyya. Pakistan's state inaction in the face of discrimination and prejudice against the Ahmadiya minority is condemnable and deplorable, to say the least. Pakistan is the only country in the world where not only is such prejudice institutionalised, but also practiced as a matter of religious duty. The country's law enforcement turns a deaf ear to hate speech against the beleaguered community, whose members despite being citizens of the state, are left to fend for themselves.

In December 2016 for instance, a mob attacked and burned down an Ahmadi place of worship in District Chakwal. In a [letter](#) addressed to the District Coordinator earlier, the community had notified the concerned authorities about their apprehension of an attack. The officials paid no heed to the warning, and instead tried to muzzle the voice of the victimized community by banning its publication of an Ahmadi paper, terming it seditious and inflammatory.

While charges of blasphemy have been a harbinger of mass atrocities against all religious minorities, the Ahmadi community has borne the brunt. Even amongst educated and well versed Pakistanis, the Ahmadis are considered the least deserving minority in terms of equal opportunities and civil rights, according to polls conducted by [reputed organizations](#). To date, several Ahmadis have been killed and hundreds injured as a result of mass hysteria in the name of blasphemy.

The world is well aware of the murder of hundreds of Ahmadis in Pakistan because of their faith and belief. Ahmadis are constantly drawing the attention of the international community to the barbaric laws targeting them in Pakistan, depriving them of freedom of religion and their fundamental human rights.

The Asian Human Rights Commission urges the media and all concerned organisations to take up this issue resolutely and pressure the Government of Pakistan to repeal discriminatory laws against religious minorities. Moreover, the Government must stop a well organised hate campaign against Ahmadis, resulting in killing, harassment and discrimination of innocent community members. The Government's claim to take action against extremists and militant organisations appears to be nothing more than political rhetoric. The actions of such hate mongers have not only destroyed the peace of Ahmadis, but also social harmony. In order to stop the violence and discrimination, it is crucial for the Government to take strict legal action against the perpetrators and revoke all laws that support their vicious intentions.

[Read the article on HRWF website](#)

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HRWF database of news and information on over 70 countries:

<http://hrwf.eu/newsletters/forb/>

List of hundreds of documented cases of believers of various faiths in 20 countries: <http://hrwf.eu/forb/forb-and-blasphemy-prisoners-list/>

JOIN OUR CAMPAIGN TO RELEASE RELIGIOUS AND BELIEF PRISONERS!

HRWF advocates worldwide for the release of people in prison for their religion or belief - and we need your help!

Below are selected case(s) that we're asking for help in writing to embassies to show support for these prisoners and to help get them released.

Current Case(s):

[Baha'i Seven \(Iran\)](#)

[Nabeel Masih \(Pakistan\)](#)

[Click here to join the campaign](#)



Click on the links to read more on each prisoner(s) and use the form below to sign up to join the campaign.

Some of our activities in 2017

Guest-speaker at a conference in Seoul: International Literature - Human Rights Conference (29.03.2017)

Organizing a conference about human rights in North Korea at the European Parliament (22.03.2017)

Publication of an 8-page Supplement to the Parliament Magazine about the European Arrest Warrant (20.03.2017)

Publication of an article in the Flemish monthly magazine « De Stem » : "De Getuigen van Jehova. Wie zijn ze?" (15.03.2017)

Publication of an article in The Parliament Magazine: High alert for human rights protection in the future in the UK and beyond (11.03.2017)

Co-sponsoring a side-event at the UN in Geneva on women's and children's rights in North Korea (10.03.2017)

Report by EUReporter about HRWF's call for adoption of judicial reform in Albania (24.02.2017)

Coverage of HRWF roundtable by EUReporter, EU TODAY, The Parliament Magazine and Voxbox (08.02.2017)

Organizing a roundtable about the European Arrest Warrant at the European Parliament with MEP Hannu Takkula (07.02.2017)

Interviews by EUReporter (Brussels) and Bursa (Bucharest) about the detention conditions in Romania (25.01.2017)

Coverage of HRWF fact-finding mission by Romanian media : TV Romania, AGERPRESS, Antena3 and DC NEWS (20.01.2017)

Fact-finding mission of the director and Hans Noot in Bucharest about the independence of the judiciary and detention conditions in Romania (18-21.01.2017)

Interview of HRWF director about the persecution of Christians in the world published by the Ukrainian Week in Kiev (10.01.2017)

Media Coverage of HRWF Annual Prisoners List:

EUReporter : Behind Bars for their Faith in China and Iran -

EU Today: Behind Bars for their Faith in 20 Countries -

Brussels Times: North Korea tops list of 20 countries around the world that systematically deprive believers and atheists of their freedom

En 2015, 20 pays ont emprisonné des gens à cause de leur religion (AFP, Belga, Le Soir, La Libre Belgique, RTBF, RTL, Panorama News, La Quotidienne, Observatoire de la Laïcité et des Religions...)

(04.01.2015)

HRWF network of experts covers more than 20 countries, including

AUSTRIA (Dr. Reinhard Kohlhofer - Prof. Dr. Christian Bruenner) - BELARUS (Prof. Viktor Adzinochanka) - BELGIUM (Attorney Inès Wouters) - CHINA (Willy Fautré) - FRANCE (Prof. Regis Dericquebourg) - GERMANY (Prof. Dr Thomas SCHIRRMACHER) - IRAQ (Dr Eden Naby) - ITALY (Raffaella Di Marzio) - KAZAKHSTAN (Dr Roman Podoprigora) - KYRGYZSTAN (Prof. Ammar Younas) - KOREA, REPUBLIC OF (Prof. Joshua Park) - KENYA (Dr. Alex OJACOR) - LEBANON (Dr. Elie Abouaoun) - PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY (Dr. Justus Reid Weiner - Dr. Susanna Kokkonen) - POLAND (Agnieszka Koscianska / Warsaw University) - RUSSIA (Prof. Elena Miroschnikova - Attorney Sergey Tarasov) - SOUTH & SOUTH EAST ASIA (Colin Forber) - UKRAINE (Prof. Yevgeniya Dodina), etc.

HRWF Int'l Human Rights Advocacy Network

ARMENIA: Collaboration for Democracy Center - Helsinki Committee of Armenia - Helsinki Citizens Assembly-Vanadzor

AZERBAIJAN: The Institute of Peace and Democracy

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: Ligue des Sacrifices Volontaires pour les Droits de l'Homme

GEORGIA: Human Rights Information and Documentation Center

IRAQ: Assyrian Aid Society

JAPAN: Life Fund for North Korean Refugees

MOLDOVA: Promo-LEX Association

NEPAL: Human Rights Without Frontiers/ Nepal

RUSSIA: Sova-Center

RWANDA: Association Rwandaise des Travailleurs Chrétiens

SERBIA: Centar 9

SOUTH KOREA: Korean Rehabilitation Center for Torture Victims and Families (KRCT)

TCHAD: Droits de l'homme sans frontières

UKRAINE: International Centre for Policy Studies

USA: Women's Rights Without Frontiers

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