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***GRAVES OF AHMADIYYA MUSLIMS DESECRATED IN PAKISTAN***

*Islamic verses on tombstones specifically targeted*

Incident Report:

- In the early hours of Monday Dec 3, 2012, masked gunmen – specifically targeting Ahmadi graves bearing Islamic (Quranic) inscriptions –desecrated over 100 tombstones at an Ahmadiyya graveyard in Lahore, Pakistan.
- The group, proclaiming to be members of a banned organization – said that the Ahmadi’s had no right to use Quranic verses on their gravestones, as they are not Muslims.
- According to media reports, the attackers – armed with weapons and digging tools – entered the graveyard, tied up the guards, grave diggers and their family while they went about unearthing and destroying the headstones.
- According to members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, many of the graves that were vandalized belonged to men who had fought for the Pakistan Army and some served sentences as prisoners of war.
- In July 2012, Tufail Raza of the Khatme Nabuwat Lawyers Forum filed an application with local Police to have the Islamic inscriptions removed from the tombstones. Although the police did not follow up on the application, they began pressuring the community to remove the text
- Ahmed Munir, a member of the Ahmadi community who has been liaising with the police over the issue since July, said, “we cannot remove the [Islamic inscriptions] ourselves, because it is against our faith, but we requested the police to look at the law and [enforce it accordingly].”
- In October 2012, the Additional Sessions Judge of the Lahore Sessions Court ordered the police to act according to the law and disposed of Mr. Raza’s petition
- Despite the court order, more than 30 individuals from Mr. Raza’s group paid multiple visits to the local Police urging for the removal of the Islamic verses. However, police failed to respond to the threat adequately to prevent the threat
- Regularly targeted by vigilante groups, Ahmadi’s are described as the most vulnerable of all the minority communities living in the country. Having been declared non-Muslims in 1974 through constitutional amendments introduced by Zulfikar A. Bhutto’s government, Ahmadi’s have continued to suffered violence fueled by anti-Ahmadi sentiments across the country

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*Compiled by: Khalid Akram, WMFI Research & Correspondence (December 7, 2012)*