



STATEMENT

Minister Kenney Expresses Condolences to Canadian Ahmadiyya Community

Ottawa – May 29, 2010 Citizenship and Immigration Minister Jason Kenney today issued the following statement.

The Honourable Jason Kenney, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration, and Multiculturalism issued the following statement offering condolences to Canada's Ahmadiyya community.

"I offer my deepest condolences to the members of the Jamaat Ahmadiyya of Canada who lost their loved ones yesterday in the terrible attacks on Ahmadiyya mosques in Lahore, Pakistan.

"These vicious attacks by extremists were clearly motivated by hatred. Members of the Ahmadiyya community were targeted simply because of their faith. It is especially perverse that they were massacred as they gathered peacefully for Friday prayers, and that the victims included children.

"For too long this kind of hatred has been permitted to take root, thanks in part to blasphemy laws that have been used to marginalize Ahmadiyyas and members of other religious minorities. I raised these issues with Prime Minister Gilani and other senior members of the Pakistani government in Islamabad last year, pressing them to reform the blasphemy laws and provide greater protection for minority communities. Other Conservative Members of Parliament, such as John Weston and Tim Uppal have travelled to Pakistan in the past year to raise the same issues.

"Yesterday I personally expressed my condolences to members of Canada's Ahmadiyya community by visiting representatives of the Baitul Islam Mosque in Maple, Ontario. And today I spoke to His Holiness Khalifa Mirza Masroor Ahmad to convey to him personally our shared grief, and our solidarity with the Jamaat at this time of great sadness."

On May 28, while speaking at a ceremony with His Highness the Agha Khan, Prime Minister Stephen Harper condemned vigorously the attacks against members of the Jammat Ahmadiyya in Pakistan. He said:

"Unfortunately as we saw only this morning in the shameful attack on two mosques in Pakistan, the fruits of hatred are always the colour of blood. The government of Canada condemns in the strongest terms these vicious murders, which sadly remind us why... our own Canadian values of toleration for people of differing religious beliefs are so important."

Also, on May 28, 2010, Minister of Foreign Affairs the Hon. Lawrence Cannon issued the following statement:

May 28, 2010 - The Honourable Lawrence Cannon, Minister of Foreign Affairs, today issued the following statement condemning the attacks on two Ahmadi mosques in Lahore, Pakistan, that have killed and injured scores of people:

"Canada strongly condemns today's attacks on the Ahmadiya community in Lahore. On behalf of all Canadians, I extend my deepest sympathies to the families and friends of the victims of these attacks, and wish a swift recovery to the injured.

"We urge the Pakistani authorities to ensure equal rights for members of minority communities, and we hope that the perpetrators of this horrendous attack are brought to justice. Canada supports the Government of Pakistan's resolve to bring peace and stability to its country. We will continue to work with Pakistan and our allies to help Pakistan address the challenges it faces.

"The Government of Canada will also continue to engage with the Government of Pakistan to promote freedom, democracy, the rule of law, freedom of religion and human rights."