



ASIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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A Statement by the Asian Human Rights Commission

PAKISTAN: The tragedy continues -- the killing of more than eighty Ahmadis by Muslim extremists

The Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) has repeatedly drawn the attention of the world's community to the blatant abuse of Ahmadi Muslims in Pakistan. This ongoing abuse is neither investigated properly nor remedied by the government who are effectively depriving them of their fundamental freedoms and Human Rights. The Ahmadi Muslims do not have the right to vote under the eighth amendment of the 1973 Constitution and have no freedom to practice their faith, belief, practice or worship. In spite of its claim to be a democracy the government of Pakistan has shown no inclination to repeal its disgraceful laws and regulations against the Ahmadi Muslims.

The AHRC has repeatedly urged the government of Pakistan to repeal such laws which encourage fundamentalism, extremism and the resulting terrorism in the country. It is a well known fact that the fundamentalist and extremist Mullahs and religious fanatics are the root cause of the murder, persecution and harassment of scores of Ahmadis throughout Pakistan. This is tantamount to a crime against democracy and humanity.

It is with sadness that we report this latest heinous act of terrorism against the Ahmadis which took place during the time of their Friday congregation on May 28 in their principal mosque on Allama Iqbal Road and another mosque in Model Town in Lahore. While the Friday worship service was being conducted the two mosques were attacked by the anti-Ahmadiyya hooligans supported by the extremist groups and protected by the government authorities. The worshipers were attacked with hand grenades and sprayed with bullets. The attackers also included suicide bombers who detonated suicide vests inside the mosques killing over eighty worshipers and injuring hundreds.

This is the culmination of events in which fundamentalists have been allowed free reign by the government of Pakistan. For a number of days now fundamentalists have been holding religious conferences with the intent of inciting the masses against the Ahmadis and openly challenging the government.

It is a haunting tragedy which could have been avoided if the government of Pakistan had fulfilled its duty towards the safety and security of its citizens regardless of their religious affiliations. The AHRC once again urges the government of Pakistan to restrain from its shameful treatment of Ahmadis who are respected as a peace loving and law abiding community all over the world. Pakistan which is already in the clutches of terrorism should take immediate steps to avoid further destruction of its State and subjects.

What we have seen by this latest catastrophe is defacto state sponsored terrorism and a frightening vision of things to come. As long as the government sits by idly making empty claims of democracy and moderation, religious extremists will continue to commit these atrocities. For too long now the government has stood by passively and let these atrocities

continue. The government of Pakistan now needs to stand up and adopt a zero tolerance approach to deal with this issue once and for all by giving Ahmadis the same rights enjoyed by other citizens of Pakistan instead of capitulating to the demands of extremists.

The AHRC also urges the international community to take notice of this event so as to ensure that Pakistan complies with its obligations under International Laws and Regulations, particularly the United Nations Charter on Human Rights. Systematic and sustained pressure needs to be put on Pakistan to ensure it compliance with these obligations rather than let it continue in its present course of denial.

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About AHRC: The Asian Human Rights Commission is a regional non-governmental organisation monitoring and lobbying human rights issues in Asia. The Hong Kong-based group was founded in 1984.

