

INCIDENT REPORT

ESCALATING ATTACKS ON AHMADI MOSQUES ACROSS PAKISTAN

Overview:

In recent weeks, a disturbing series of targeted attacks have taken place against Ahmadi places of worship across multiple districts in Pakistan, including Larkana, Okara, Karachi, Lahore, Nankana, Khanewal, and Gujranwala. These incidents, driven by extremist factions and often facilitated by police action, represent a systematic effort to erase the architectural and religious identity of Ahmadi mosques, that has been ongoing since the passing of the Zia-era anti-Ahmadi laws. These attacks highlight the worsening situation for the Ahmadiyya Community in Pakistan, where legal protections are frequently undermined by societal pressures and rising religious intolerance.

Recent Incidents:

Goth Masan, District Larkana 6 September 2024:

Clerics forced the seizure of the Ahmadiyya mosque in Goth Masan, after lodging a formal complaint with the authorities that the minarets and arches of the building violated the constitution. Local authorities did not initially act on these demands, causing the clerics to file a petition which led to the registration of a case against 6 Ahmadis. Tensions peaked on 5 September 2024, when Tehreek-e-Labbaik (TLP) organised a protest rally demanding the immediate closure of the mosque. This culminated in the police sealing the mosque the following day.

Depalpur, District Okara 10 September 2024:

Police demolished the minarets of a historic Ahmadi mosque and removed the inscription of the Kalima. This mosque predated the 1984 anti-Ahmadi laws, yet the authorities carried out the destruction, showing complete disregard for the historical and religious significance of the site.

According to reports, two police vehicles from Depalpur Police Station, led by the DSP, arrived at the site with 12 to 14 officers. They sealed off the area around the residence and proceeded to tear down the minarets of the building. Following this, the Kalima and the words "Bait-ul-Zikr" were erased using cement.



45 Marar, District Nankana



Jahanian, District Khanewal



Gakhar Mandi, District Gujranwala



Mohlenke Chattha, District Gujranwala



Depalpur, District Okara

In the days leading up to this incident, there had been frequent police patrols around the mosque. Initially, this increased presence was assumed to be routine security, possibly due to recent heightened tensions in the area. However, it culminated in the demolition of the historic place of worship.

Drigh Colony, Karachi 15 September 2024

A mob of 30-40 agitators attacked the residence of Muhammad Jameel, the Ahmadi community leader in Drigh Colony. Although the property was under construction as a private residence, agitators falsely alleged that a mosque was being built. Despite Jameel's sworn statement clarifying the building's residential purpose, protesters damaged the home and stole construction materials.

Islamia Park, Lahore 22 September 2024

In Lahore, hundreds of TLP activists gathered outside the Ahmadi mosque to demand its closure. Despite the heavy police presence, the crowd refused to disperse and insisted that Ahmadi be prohibited from worshipping there. The police carried out a search of the mosque but found no legal violations. Tensions remained high as the clerics continued to threaten violence if their demands were not met.

45 Marar, District Nankana 1 October 2024

On 1 October 2024, the police demolished the minaret and niche of an Ahmadi mosque in 45 Marar, District Nankana.

The mosque was built in 1948, and during an expansion in 1965, the minaret and mihrab were constructed. In August of last year, the TLP called on these architectural features to be destroyed, threatening to do themselves if the authorities did not take action.

Despite a number of consultations between the community and local authorities, the police themselves carried out the destruction of the minaret and niche in the early hours of 1 October.

Jahanian, District Khanewal 4 October 2024

In blatant defiance of a Lahore High Court ruling protecting pre-1984 mosques, the police demolished the minarets of a historic Ahmadi mosque in Jahanian which dated back to 1952. This covert operation, executed at night, involved systematic efforts by the police to ensure no evidence of the demolition was recorded. Patrols ensured there were no witnesses, and sacred inscriptions were covered with cement.

Gujranwala 10-11 October 2024

In two separate attacks, the police demolished the minarets of Ahmadi mosques in Gujranwala, one built in 1953 and the other in 1954. Despite being shown the Lahore High Court ruling of April 2023, by Justice Tariq Saleem Sheikh, which stated that minarets and archways of Ahmadi mosques built before 1984 cannot be demolished, the police ignored the legal protections

for these mosques and carried out the destruction. The dismantling of the minarets, conducted in the dead of night, was followed by the confiscation of debris and the temporary detention of a local Ahmadi leader.

Analysis of Factors

Religious Extremism:

Groups like the TLP have used mass mobilisation, legal challenges, and direct action to press their demands. This wave of attacks coincides with rallies and protests led by religious groups calling for strict enforcement of constitutional provisions banning Ahmadi religious practices.

State Compliance:

In several cases, local police were directly involved in carrying out these demolitions. This raises questions about the role of law enforcement in perpetuating sectarian violence. Despite legal protections, authorities are often unable or unwilling to resist extremist pressures.

Legal Ambiguity:

The inconsistent application of laws, such as the Lahore High Court's ruling protecting Ahmadi places of worship, creates a climate of fear for the community. Extremists exploit legal grey areas, demanding the destruction of mosque features like minarets and inscriptions as constitutional violations.



Conclusion

The pattern of attacks on Ahmadi mosques in recent signals an alarming escalation in religious violence against the Ahmadiyya Community. The complicity or outright participation of law enforcement in these acts highlights a dangerous trend in Pakistan, where legal safeguards are frequently overridden by extremist pressure. These incidents not only violate domestic laws but also infringe on international human rights standards, requiring urgent attention and intervention to protect the rights of religious minorities in the country.