

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



DEFENDING HUMAN RIGHTS

9 April 2021

Senator the Hon. Marise Payne
Minister for Foreign Affairs
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Senate
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

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Dear Minister Payne

RE: SURGE IN TARGETED KILLINGS OF AHMADIS IN PAKISTAN

The Ahmadiyya community in Pakistan is increasingly under threat after a surge in targeted killings since July 2020. This issue requires an immediate and robust international response to encourage Pakistani authorities to impartially investigate and swiftly respond to past, present, and future threats to the persecuted community.

We invite your government to join and facilitate an international strategy on this issue.

The Ahmadiyya community has long-been victimised by the discriminatory policies of Pakistan, borne from broad religious intolerance to the sect of Islam across the country. Islamist pressures in 1974 successfully promoted constitutional amendments that declared Ahmadis as non-Muslims. A decade later, Ahmadis were prohibited from proselytising or openly professing their beliefs. Today, Ahmadi individuals are subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention, and charges on the basis of their beliefs under blasphemy legislation. Furthermore, Pakistan's democracy has systematically excluded most Ahmadis from participating in elections by requiring voters to declare themselves "Muslim" or "non-Muslim," and actively penalising Ahmadis who made a claim to be Muslim.

The widespread and rampant discrimination against the Ahmadiyya community perpetuated by these policies have contributed to a recent surge in targeted killings.

In November 2020, Amnesty International reported on five targeted killings of Ahmadi individuals in Pakistan since July of that year. We understood that wave of killings to underscore the seriousness of the threat against Ahmadi individuals from widespread discrimination, while also calling attention to the callous indifference of authorities as they failed to protect the community or punish the perpetrators.

Since that report, Ahmadi individuals have continued to be targeted in Pakistan. Dr. Abdul Qadir, an Ahmadi homeopathic doctor, was shot at his clinic by a Pakistani Muslim youth as recently as 12 February this year.

These attacks cannot be allowed to continue. The international community is obligated to subject the Pakistani government to formal scrutiny and inquiry as a result of their failure to comply with their international legal obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

I urge you to **contact the High Commissioner for Pakistan** and encourage immediate action on this issue. Pakistani authorities must:

- Impartially investigate the surge in violent attacks on members of the Ahmadiyya religious community,
- Take appropriate legal action against those responsible for threats and violence against Ahmadis,
- And, more broadly, take on immediate legal and policy measures to eliminate widespread and rampant discrimination and social exclusion confronting the Ahmadiyya community in Pakistan. This includes repealing the blasphemy law and all anti-Ahmadiyya provisions.

I strongly encourage a swift and robust response to support a prompt investigation of all attacks and the immediate prosecution of those responsible.

For further information, or to discuss and organise a meeting, please contact Joel MacKay at joel.mackay@amnesty.org.au or 0424 242 112.

Yours sincerely,



Sam Klintworth
National Director
Amnesty International Australia