In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the merciful

A Contribution from Canada
Persecution of Ahmadi Muslims in Pakistan

Pakistan is the home of some 4 to 6 million Ahmadis who were in the forefront of the struggle for an independent Muslim homeland — a struggle which culminated in the creation of the country.

The founding father Mohammad Ali Jinnah's closest political and legal advisor Sir Mohammad Zafrullah Khan was an active and devoted member of the Ahmadi community. Sir Zafrullah Khan later became the first Foreign Minister of Pakistan and also represented the country in the United Nations at the very delicate moments of the new nation.

Many other Ahmadis joined the armed forces and defended Pakistan in spectacular fashion when foreign aggression was waged. Some rose to the positions of Generals and Air Marshalls.

In the field of social services, Ahmadi officers proved stubbornly incorruptible in the discharge of their duties thus setting shining examples of loyalty and honesty.

An Ahmadi scientist, Dr. Abdus Salam, was the first and, hitherto, only Pakistani to put the country in the league of Nobel Prize winners.

The irony is that Pakistan is the only country where the life and property of Ahmadis are not safe now. They are being persecuted and prosecuted on account of their differences in religious belief.

Ahmadis reject the notion of "Holy Wars" to spread the message of Islam which is peace and Universal brotherhood. They also differ with the other Muslim groups that the punishment of an apostate is not murder as is being wrongly advocated by some fanatic Muslims. Ahmadis believe that the most effective method to resolve conflict is peaceful persuasion based on mutual respect.

Since 1974, scores of Ahmadis have been murdered, hundreds have been arrested and tried on false charges, millions of dollars worth of business have been looted, houses have been burnt and even the mosques belonging to the Ahmadi community have been desecrated and destroyed.

This situation of Ahmadis in Pakistan sees no end. It is illegal for Ahmadis to call themselves Muslims or worship in the manner of Muslims.

Looking into these circumstances, in 1985, the United Nations Sub-Commission on Human Rights expressed its grave concern and called on the goverment of Pakistan to repeal all the laws against Ahmadis which contravene the Charter of Human Rights adopted by all the member countries of the United Nations. No action has yet been taken in this regard by the goverment of Pakistan.

Ahmadis celebrated their first centennial on March 23, 1989, in 120 countries, but in Pakistan all forms of celebrations, even to the extent of distributing sweets to children, were banned by the government.

"Evidently, the Pakistan government refuses to recongize the Ahmadiyya as Moslem and they are, therefore, denied equal rights as Moslems and are treated as second-class citizens. It appears the government is trying to score some brownie points with the Sunnie majority by making the Ahmadiyya scapegoats for at bout of religious and other problems".

David Kilgour, MP

"The situation which Ahmadis in Pakistan find themselves in is a violation of the very basis of, what I think, our common faith in the freedom of conscience and the freedom of religion. It is also a violation of our belief in respect which is due to the rights of minorities, be these religious minorities or minorities of any other kind".

Justice Jules Deschenes

"... The Ahmadis account for only four million of Pakistan's 90 Million people, but they have produced some of its most accomplished citizens including the first foreign minister and only Nobel Prize winner.

In most aspects, the Ahmadis follow the basics of mainstream Islam. They pray five times daily, worship in mosques and recite the Koran.

The state has also turned a blind eye when fundamentalist mobs have engaged in anti-Ahmadi violence. Ahmadi mosques have been desecrated or demolished, many Ahmadis have been assaulted and some have been killed.

Pakistan's mistreatment of the sect has been condemned by such bodies as the UN Human Rights Commission, the New York based Lawyers Committee for Human Rights and London based Amnesty International".

Editorial in Globe and Mail

"The official persecution has encouraged the hatred and violence whipped up by the orthodox mullahs. Ahmadis in public positions have been forced to resign, several Ahmadis have been killed, businesses burned and homes looted.

The fact that the sect is obscure, however, does not justify silence about its mistreatment. The Canadian government and the other Western nations should strongly express their concern about this policy of persecution".

Editorial in Winninpeg Free Press

"(Ahmadis) claim has been documented by Amnesty International. Yet, the plight of Ahmadis has received little attention.

... Hundreds of Ahmadis have been arrested".

Editorial in Edmonton Journal