

House Foreign Affairs Committee  
Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission  
Hearing on “Discrimination and Persecution Against Muslims Worldwide”  
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Virtual via Cisco WebEx

STATEMENT SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD



AHMADIYYA  
MUSLIM COMMUNITY  

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*United States of America*

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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Commission:

Thank you for inviting me to provide written testimony on the subject of “Discrimination and Persecution Against Muslims Worldwide.”

On a number of prior occasions before this body, most recently [here](#), I have testified about the religious repression endured by members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, who remain among the most persecuted Muslim communities in the world. The U.S. State Department, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom and numerous human rights non-governmental organizations have documented the systematic persecution endured by our Community at the hands of religious extremists and state and quasi-state institutions in numerous countries around the world, including Pakistan, Algeria, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Libya and Syria.

For this statement, I provide the following updates relating to Pakistan and Algeria since my last testimony before this Commission on July 13, 2021:

Pakistan

- Ahmadi Muslims continue to be excluded from the joint electorate since 1985 and have not participated in elections since 1985. They are the only religious group in Pakistan to be placed on a separate electorate list as “non-Muslim” and can only cast their votes as Muslim if they swear under penalty of perjury that they are not Ahmadi, which they cannot nor will ever do as a matter of conscience.

- 2 Ahmadi Muslims have been murdered for faith, raising the total to 272 since the promulgation of Ordinance XX in 1984
- 14 Ahmadi Muslims have had murder attempts on them, with 2 attempts made during March 2022
- 2 Ahmadi Muslim prisoners died in custody, having previously been imprisoned for their faith
- 16 Ahmadiyya Muslim mosques have been desecrated, and 1 mosque sealed by governmental authorities
- 182 graves have been desecrated, 47 of which were during 2022
- 25 new cases have been registered against Ahmadi Muslims under the blasphemy laws & anti-Ahmadi laws
- Sacred inscriptions from 16 houses and shops have been removed
- The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has blocked 20 non-Pakistan based foreign websites of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, including three U.S.-based websites, affiliated with the worldwide community and properly registered in their respective countries. PTA has also issued notices to their operators with criminal prosecution for violating Pakistan's blasphemy and anti-Ahmadiyya laws. According to PTA, any website that portrays Ahmadis as Muslims will be blocked in Pakistan.
- Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) has ordered that Ahmadi channels (MTA) should not be carried by any distribution service licensee.
- In 1996, the government of Punjab issued a notification to return all nationalized educational institutions, which affected the community's 8 schools and 2 colleges that had been nationalized in 1972. Despite fulfilling all terms and conditions, and regardless of repeated requests and numerous reminders, the community's institutions are not de-nationalized.
- The entire population of Rabwah, i.e. Ahmadiyya headquarters in Pakistan, was charged under section PPC 298-C on Dec. 15, 1989, and again on June 8, 2008. (Rabwah population is approximately 60,000.)
- The government has banned all outdoor rallies and conferences of Ahmadis in Rabwah.
- The government of Punjab has banned the publishing of the Quran and its translation
- The government of Punjab has banned the entire written works of the Founder of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community.
- Ahmadiyya daily newspaper and periodicals for women, youth, children and elders were banned by a Punjab government notification.
- Authorities have prohibited sports events organized at a community level.

## Algeria

- Since 2016, 292 Ahmadi Muslims have been prosecuted in at least five cities.
- The Supreme Court of Algeria has heard or has pending before it more than 280 cases against Ahmadi Muslims, of which 26 Ahmadi Muslims have spent between 2-7 months in jail, all on charges that relate to their religious affiliation.
- 2 Ahmadi Muslims remain in prison in Adrar.
- Cases in Kenchla, Tiaret, Batna, Tizi-Ouzou and Constantine are under appeal

Mr. Chairman, I urge the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission to urge the Pakistan Government and Algerian Government to take the following immediate measures to stop the tide of religious repression of Ahmadi Muslim in Pakistan and Algeria:

As to Pakistan:

1. Stop the extra-territorial prosecution of foreign citizens for alleged cyber and blasphemy crimes, including U.S. citizens who are members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community.
2. Repeal Section 48A of the Elections Act of 2017 and permit Ahmadi Muslims to vote alongside all other citizens of Pakistan as part of a joint electorate.
3. Stop local and provincial police from desecrating Ahmadi Muslim mosques and burial sites.
4. Protect the rights of accused Ahmadi Muslims in criminal proceedings and allow independent trial monitors.
5. Remove Passport and National Identity Declarations pertaining to Ahmadi Muslims.
6. Remove restrictions on freedom of religion or belief and amend legislation that discriminates against Ahmadi Muslims.
7. Cease prosecuting Ahmadi Muslims as “terrorists” under Pakistan’s anti-terrorism laws.
8. Combat impunity for attacks on Ahmadi Muslims by effectively investigating allegations and by prosecuting those responsible.

As to Algeria:

1. Release all Ahmadi Muslims in prison or facing prosecution.
2. Allow Ahmadis to register as an association without undue burden by local waliyas (provinces).
3. Under the newly adopted Constitution in December 2020, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in Algeria should be free to incorporate and re-open their respective associations and houses of worship.

Finally Mr. Chairman, I also submit the following observations:

The constitutional model of several Muslim countries presents itself as an “Islamic Republic” with the enforcement of religious freedom as a principle. Nominally, Pakistan’s Constitution, along with other constitutions of Muslim countries, purport to guarantee freedom of conscience and religion. But what many of these constitutions give with one hand, they take away with the other.

Most notably, the Constitution of Pakistan specifically deems members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community non-Muslim, depriving them of their essential professed identity as Muslims. This constitutionally enforced apostasy is amplified by legislation that criminalizes any manifestation of the Islamic faith by Ahmadi Muslims and denies fundamental rights of citizenship, including voting, to that community. Additionally, this constitutional-legal framework of religious exclusion has created a climate of impunity, leading to the murders of hundreds of Ahmadi Muslims and countless attacks against the community. By legislating a particular understanding of Islam as supreme, Pakistan has marginalized not only Ahmadis but also other non-mainstream religious groups, including Christians, Jews and Hindus. In particular, the blasphemy laws are routinely used to target these and other minority religious communities.

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community recommends an alternative model for Muslim countries based on the Medina Charter established by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). If implemented, this model would enforce the freedom of religion as it was set forth by the founder of Islam, Muhammad. In this model, although the State will remain Muslim and will not relinquish their Muslim identity, it will have to recognize all the sects of Islam, without distinction or interpretation, and all faiths without discrimination as part of the Muslim identity. This model will lead to a revolutionary model for the separation of mosque and state that would be tailored for Muslim countries. This model will operate on a non-sectarian basis, soundly rejecting the notion that any government should have the power to define the bounds of any faith. Accordingly, it will also allow anybody to vote, to have all the social rights enforced by the Constitution irrespective of religious creed or sect. In Muslim-majority countries, that means there can be no restriction under the law for who is deemed Muslim.

As the first step toward realizing this non-sectarian non-establishment principle, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community calls upon the American Muslim diaspora, which holds a powerful and influential position in the Muslim ummah, to sign a declaration unequivocally stating that no person or community ought to be declared non-Muslim (or expelled from any other faith) in any country.