

## Table of Contents

- [Pakistani Christian speaks out](#) - (09.10.1999)
  - [Persecution of Ahmadis in Pakistan January 1999](#) – (13.01.1999)
- 

## **Pakistani Christian speaks out**

By Lois M. Collins

Deseret News (09.10.1999)/HRWF International Secretariat (19.10.1999) - Website: <http://www.hrwf.net> - Email: [info@hrwf.net](mailto:info@hrwf.net) - Hina David-Abel doesn't believe silence and patience always bring peace. She believes, instead, that achieving it is an active process of telling the truth — even at the risk of her own life — and praying that people around the world will care enough to pressure leaders for peace. The story this Pakistan native tells is ugly. And it hurts to hear it. She speaks of murder, disguised as justice. Of religious oppression and bigotry, of governmental corruption, of hopelessness. She is describing the life of a Christian in Pakistan, where fewer than 3 percent of the 140 million population are Christian.

And their suffering is no more extreme than that of others who belong to a minority faith.

David-Abel was in Utah this week as an International Peacemaker, sponsored by the Presbyterian Church. While here, she visited churches and schools in Logan, Ogden, Salt Lake City and Springville to talk about the divisions wreaking havoc in Pakistan and to ask people to pressure their national leaders to pressure the Muslim League, which holds power.

She knows outside pressure works. When her government wanted to introduce different-colored identification cards, based on the carrier's religion, international pressure forced it to scrap the idea. A core issue is Pakistan's blasphemy laws. One states that "whoever willfully defiles, damages or desecrates a copy of the Holy Koran or of an extract therefrom or uses it in any derogatory manner or for any unlawful purpose" will spend life in prison.

The other promises a mandatory death penalty for anyone who "by words, either spoken or written or by visible representation or by any imputation, innuendo or insinuation, directly or indirectly, defiles the sacred name of the Holy Prophet Mohammed." Those laws, she said, have become a weapon in the hands of people with a grudge and a tool for genocide. "What happens is if Christians are progressing socially, economically — even getting better grades or a better job — and someone who is Muslim says 'I should be in that place, it's my homeland,' then it's common to see false accusations."

She cites cases: In 1994, a boy, 14, and two of his uncles who were doing well economically were accused of writing blasphemous remarks on pages torn from the Koran and throwing them into a toilet. The district court found them innocent because all three — like 75 percent of the Pakistani population — were incapable of

even signing their own names. The accusers appealed to a high court, which also later acquitted them because of proven inability to write what they were accused of. On their way out of the courtroom, one of the men was shot and killed. The judge was murdered shortly after. In February 1997, David-Abel said, seven Christians were accused of having torn pages from the Quran, written their names on them and thrown them into the mosque. A Muslim religious leader incited a riot that grew to thousands of people, who marched on the Christian village (which was also home to her grandfather, uncles and cousins). Villagers heard them coming and armed themselves with sticks and knives.

"They were ready to fight them off. But the police came first and said they will just demonstrate peacefully, you can put aside your weapons and hide in the house." They did, and most of their village was burned to the ground.

"I have uncles and cousins who lost everything," she said. "When you consider that to buy a bike for transportation takes several generations of hard work (average salary is \$60 a month), their lives were shattered totally."

When the police role was revealed, she said, the government turned the blame on neighboring — and hated — India.

In May, a young man who was clearly innocent was sentenced to death for blasphemy. A Catholic bishop, the Rev.

John Joseph, who had been working to get the blasphemy law repealed, killed himself as a protest, sparking demonstrations around the country. At a particularly large one in Lahore, where David-Abel lives, more than 900 Christian men were jailed. Those who were injured by police batons were refused care at a government-run hospital.

She's also worried about a proposed "Shariat" law that would make things harder for those in the minority. "Muslim leaders would gain an extreme amount of power," because they would become "friends of the court," despite a lack of judicial training. Not all the news is bad in Pakistan, she said. For one thing, while she charges that the government is corrupt and promotes bigotry and oppression, a great many Muslims — including her own best friend — are both moderate and kind. Recently, after pressure from missionary David Stoner, the government gave the Presbyterian Church back 10 of the schools it had taken away in 1972. Unfortunately, they were the schools that had been so neglected they were falling apart. And return of two of the schools is being held up by teachers suing to prevent their return because they fear the church will raise the teaching standards and the teachers will lose their jobs, David-Abel said.

So why do Christians stay in Pakistan? Most can't afford to leave, she said. And foreign governments have cracked down on issuing visas to Pakistanis because so many who do get out don't go home, becoming illegal aliens. That makes it hard for those who would like to travel and who do plan to go home. Speaking out puts her at great risk. Others have been shot and killed after talking about their government. But she speaks because of one hope: "To get help from the people I talk to and spend time with. If they will write to their representatives and ask their government to help . . . international pressure sometimes does work. "This could affect us. But if I don't speak about it, you'd never hear it."

## Persecution of Ahmadis in Pakistan

### January 1999

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Association Belgium (Qasur, 13.01.1999)/HRWF (28.04.1999) - Website: <http://www.hrwf.net> - Email: [info@hrwf.net](mailto:info@hrwf.net) - Mr. Muhammad Nazir joined the Ahmadiyya Community some time before and had to stay with the President of District Qasur community because of the difficult circumstances subsequent to his conversion. On 13 January 1999 he went out to have a haircut when two fundamentalists approached him and started talking religion. Thereafter they went to the police station and asked a case to be registered under PPC 295C, which the police willingly did. When Mr. Nazir came to know of it he went into hiding. The police, therefore, nabbed two sons of the President instead. Two days later the boys were released, and Mr. Nazir was arrested. Now he has to defend for his life against a false charge.

#### **Ahmadi Dead Disinterred**

(Lalewali, District Sialkot, 10.01.1999) - Mr. Barkat Ali, Ahmadi died on 9 January 99 at Lalewali. His sons, who are not members of the Ahmadiyya Community, had him buried in the village graveyard. During the night, a few miscreants dug up his grave and disinterred the dead body. The next day his sons were told to bury their father elsewhere. His remains were therefore taken to Dhaiti where the burial took place. The old man was 95.

A case of disinterment occurred in the same district last month as well.

#### **Death Threat to an Ahmadi**

(Moro, Sind, 13.01.1999) - Mr. Muhammad Abbas Javed, of Moro is being targeted by the opposition for his Ahmadiyya activities. Recently he received a threat to his life through a letter written in Sindhi language. Its translation in English is produced below:

*Abbas Qadiani,*

*We have exercised restraint for long but you are exceeding your limits every day. First you targeted the Chandio tribe, and now you are enticing the people of Moro and its suburbs. This is the final warning to you. If you desist, it will be good for you; otherwise the entire Muslim Umma has already given a fatwa for your death. All apostates are liable to be killed, and you are also outside the pale of Islam.*

*You will be finished in a manner that dogs will eat your dead body. You should get the message.*

*You are warned again to desist from preaching your Qadianism.*

## **Teacher Incites Other Students to Murder a Fellow-Student**

(Moro, District Noshero Firoz - Sind, 13.01.1999) - The local high school has a student population of 1200, out of which only two are Ahmadi. These are brothers; one is a student of class VI, the other of Class IX. A teacher by the name of Yusuf Lund, on 12 January made his Ahmadi pupil, Rafiq Ahmad son of Mr. Saleem Ahmad Mughul stand up, and told him to declare that he is a Sunni, otherwise state that he is a Kafir (an infidel). The boy said: "No, I am neither, I an an Ahmadi". The leader, therefore, told him to remain standing throughout the study period.

The next day, on 13 January, the teacher brought and distributed anti-Ahmadiyya literature in the class. He also agitated the students and told them that Qadianis are Wajib-ul-Qati (liable to be put to death). He told them that if they kill Rafiq Ahmad, they would be rewarded by an abode in paradise. This school is a state-owned institution.

At another school, in Chak 97/GB, Ahmadi students were not permitted to participate in the festivities of the Prophet's birthday celebration. They were banned from the speech making, and their contributions were also rejected. In another school, at Chak 96/GB, Ahmadi students were denied the opportunity to recite the Quran. The teacher made insulting remarks about the Ahmadiyya mosque.

## **Desecration of Ahmadiyya Mosque**

(Baddomalhi, District Narowal, 13.01.1999) - For the last month, the mullas of Badomalhi have targeted the Kalima (Islamic creed) written on the facade of the local Ahmadiyya mosque. It may be mentioned here that Ahmadi have no other creed than the same Kalima.

The mullas approached the authorities to help remove the Kalima. The authorities obliged them by undertaking the impious act upon themselves. Accordingly, on 13 January 1999 the SHO arrived with a police contingent and a laborer, and with a chisel and hammer removed the Kalima. The incident had a traumatic effect on some of the Ahmadi who were very seriously grieved to see the desecration undertaken by state authorities. An Ahmadi, MR. Abbas Kazmi, could not bear the gravity of the sacrilege and fainted. The entire Ahmadiyya Community was terribly hurt and bore the injury with fortitude and restraint.

The incident reminds one of the dark and evil days of Zia regime. The political progeny of the General is trying to accomplish the unfinished agenda of the dictator.