

South Asia Analysis Group

Published on *South Asia Analysis Group* (<http://www.southasiaanalysis.org>)

[Home](#) > PAKISTAN: Sectarian Groups Running Riot:

PAKISTAN: Sectarian Groups Running Riot:

Submitted by asiaadmin2 on Wed, 11/07/2018 - 15:01

Paper No. 6458 . Dated 07-Nov-2018

By R.M.Panda

The Minorities are not Safe:

Though Pakistan consists of many religious, ethno-linguistic minority groups, it continues to be dominated by fanatical sectarian groups with official blessings and making it intolerable for non Muslim minorities like Ahmadis, Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, Calash, Sikhs and the Parsis to survive.

The case of Ayesha Bibi is the most recent example. Under pressure of some sectarian groups, the Government is keeping Ayesha Bibi a Christian woman, a mother of five children arrested under blasphemy law still in jail thus defying the Supreme Court's order ^[1] to release her immediately.

After the hollow warning from Prime Minister Imran Khan to the sectarian agitators, the Government of Pakistan meekly surrendered after the three days of violent protests by the Sectarian group "Tehreek-i-Labbaik Pakistan". This tiny group forced the Government to abdicate its powers and accept certain outrageous conditions. These were

1. Government will not oppose the review petition to be filed against the Supreme Court's judgment on acquittal of Ayesha Bibi.
2. Government will put Ayesha Bibi's name in the exit control list (ECL) so that she cannot leave the country and enjoy the freedom she would never get and would be under constant threat within the country.

3. The Government will take appropriate legal action to redress any deaths that may have occurred during the protests against the Ayesha Bibi verdict and to release all people picked up in connection with the protests.

The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) had shown its concerns and condemned the Government for failure to tackle the situation and surrender to the extremist-led mobs' demand. The TLP (Tehreek-i-Lannaik Pakistan has openly called for murder and mutiny, making a mockery of the rule of law and fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution.

The Case of Ayesha Bibi:

Asia Bibi was convicted for blasphemy under Section 295-C of the Pakistan Penal Code for allegedly defaming Prophet Muhamed. The offence carries the mandatory death penalty under the Pakistani law.

The allegations against Ayesha Bibi were that she made three defamatory and sarcastic statements about the Holy Prophet during an argument with three Muslim women while the four of them were picking fruits in a field.

She was asked to fetch water, but the Muslim women objected, saying that as a non-Muslim she was unfit to touch the water bowl. An argument ensued.

Instead of complaining to police the Muslim women later went to the local Cleric and accused Bibi of blasphemy against the Holy Prophet.

A trial court convicted Ayesha Bibi for blasphemy and sentenced her to death on November 2010 and the Punjab High Court confirmed the sentence in October 2014.

She had then challenged the High Court verdict in the Supreme Court, which stayed her execution and admitted her appeal for hearing. The Court acquitted Ayesha Bibi of blasphemy and ordered her immediate release on October 31st.

In 2011, former Punjab governor Salman Taseer, who spoke out in support of Ayesha Bibi, was gunned down in broad daylight in Islamabad by a sectarian fanatic- a follower of the Barelvi [2] version of Sunni Islam.

The tail wags the Dog!

Earlier, in October 2017 at the time of PMLN's Government under the Prime Ministership of Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, the Government had completely surrendered to a 20 days violent protests by sectarian groups such as Tehreek Labbaik Ya Rasool Allah (TLY), the Tehreek-i-Khatam-i-Nabuwwat and the Sunni Tehreek Pakistan (ST). The riots left many people dead and hundreds injured.

The Pakistan Army then brokered a deal between the Government and the Sectarian groups. According to military sources, the Army Chief Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa had opposed the use of force against the sectarian groups. The Government then meekly signed the document prepared jointly by Army and the Sectarian groups conceding to all the demands of the sectarian groups. Some of important ones were

1. Remove Federal Law Minister Zahid Hamid from his position immediately. "Tehreek-i-Labaik will issue no fatwa [religious decree] of any kind against him."
2. The report prepared by Raja Zafarul Haq-led committee will be made public within 30 days and whoever is named in the report for being responsible for the change in the election oath will be dealt with under the law.
3. All protesters arrested will be released within one to three days according to legal requirements. The cases registered against them and the house arrests imposed on them will be ended.
4. An inquiry board will be established to probe and decide what action to take against the government and administration officials over the operation conducted by security forces against protesters on Saturday, November 25. The inquiry should be completed within 30 days and action will be taken against those found responsible.
5. The Federal and Provincial Governments will determine and compensate for the loss of government and private assets incurred from November 6 until the end of the sit-in.
6. A board of Clerics led by Pir Muhammad Afzal Qadri will be set up to probe on remarks made by Punjab Law Minister Rana Sanaullah against the persecution of Ahmediyas. Sanaullah will have to accept the decision made by the Board.
7. No difficulty should be faced in registering cases under clause 295-C of the Pakistan Penal Code (blasphemy law).
8. No leniency will be given to those convicted by courts for blasphemy.
9. No ban will be imposed on the use of loudspeakers..
10. The holiday of Iqbal Day on November 9 will be revived.
11. Two representatives of Tehreek-i-Labaik will be included in the panel assigned to decide changes in the textbook board. The officials will push for inclusion of translation of the Holy Quran and chapters about Seerat-un-Nabi and Muslim leaders.
12. The chehlum of martyrs will be held on January 4 at Rawalpindi's Liaquat Bagh.
13. Every year, November 25 will be observed as "Martyrs of Prophet's honour day".

The list shows that the Pakistan Army had completely identified itself with the sectarian groups and had forced the Government to sign on "dotted lines" which no Government with a sense of dignity would do.

The Government is Guilty:

People from the minority sections are not welcomed to work in higher positions in Pakistan. Recently the Prime Minister Imran Khan Niazi was forced to remove Dr. Atif Main from the Economic Advisory Council soon after his appointment because he is an Ahmediya. The Prime

Minister was forced to take this step as Muslim sectarians considered the appointment of an Ahmediya as blasphemous.

The concept of a minority does not appear to sit well in Islam and in Pakistan that was said to have been created as a Muslim holy land or Darul Islam. Anyone who is not a Muslim is looked down upon as a 'kafir' and a de facto inferior citizen. They can of course redeem themselves by converting to Islam. Alternatively, they can be enslaved or exiled or killed according to doctrinal law.

All the sectarian organisations follow this ideology and it is a pity that the Government of Pakistan has meekly surrendered to the extremist demands of these entities.

The issue is whether the minorities in Pakistan are safe? They are not and the Government in power is equally guilty of acquiescing in such ideas and being dominated by such intolerant organisations.

The writer can be reached at pandaradhamadhaba@gmail.com ^[3]

Tags:

[Pakistan](#) ^[4]

[Minority Groups](#) ^[5]

Category:

[Papers](#) ^[6]

Countries:

[Pakistan](#) ^[7]

Topics:

[Minorities](#) ^[8]

[Islamic Affairs](#) ^[9]

Copyright ©2012. All Rights are Reserved.

```
(adsbygoogle = window.adsbygoogle || []).push({ google_ad_client: "ca-pub-2275491169696384", enable_page_level_ads: true });
```

Source URL: <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/node/2381>

Links

- [1] <https://www.dawn.com/news/1442396/supreme-court-acquits-asia-bibi-orders-immediate-release>
- [2] <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barelvi>
- [3] <mailto:pandaradhamadhaba@gmail.com>
- [4] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/taxonomy/term/71>
- [5] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/taxonomy/term/1970>
- [6] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/papers>
- [7] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/pakistan>
- [8] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/minorities>
- [9] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/islamic-affairs>