

# **AGM of the APPG for the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community**

*6.00pm - 7.00pm, Wednesday 11 September 2024*

*Room S, Portcullis House, 1 Parliament Street, London*

## **AGENDA**

1. **Welcome** – *Siobhain McDonagh MP*
2. **Confirmation of elected of officers**
  - a. Chair: Dame Siobhain McDonagh MP
  - b. Vice-Chair: Sir Ed Davey MP
  - c. Secretary: TBC MP
  - d. Treasurer: Luke Taylor MP
3. **Presentation of Income and Expenditure statement**
4. **Update on persecution case studies** - *Fareed Ahmad, Ahmadiyya Muslim Community UK*
5. **Remarks by National President of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community U.K.** - *Rafiq Hayat, National President of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community UK*
6. **Agree next steps** – *APPG Secretariat*
7. **AOB**

## **Note of AGM of the APPG for the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community**

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### **Attendance**

1. Rt Hon Damian Hinds MP (East Hampshire)
2. Rt Hon Sir Edward Davey (Kingston)
3. Bobby Dean MP (Carshalton and Wallington)
4. Matt Western MP (Warwick and Leamington)
5. Rt Hon John McDonnell MP (Hayes and Harlington)
6. Paul Kohler MP (Wimbledon)
7. Greg Stafford MP (Farnham and Bordon)
8. Deirdre Costigan MP (Ealing Southall)
9. Will Forster MP (Woking)
10. Luke Taylor MP (Sutton and Cheam)
11. Ruth Cadbury MP (Brentford and Isleworth)

### **Welcome and Introduction**

The Chair presiding over the AGM and was pleased with the strong attendance. The Chair also informed that Siobhain McDonagh MP, Jeremy Hunt MP and Dr Rupa Huq MP sent their apologies.

### **Election of Officers.**

The results were confirmed as follows:

- **Chair:** Dame Siobhain McDonagh MP (Mitcham and Morden)
- **Vice Chair:** Rt Hon Sir Edward Davey MP (Kingston and Surbiton)
- **Secretary:** Greg Stafford MP (Farnham and Bordon)
- **Treasurer:** Luke Taylor MP (Sutton and Cheam)

## Updates

### *Current Situation*

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in Pakistan is currently facing an alarming rise in hatred, violence, and further denial of rights. There have been multiple murders, attacks on places of worship, and ongoing state-sanctioned persecution.

### *Religiously Motivated Murders*

#### *Four Ahmadi Muslims have been murdered so far in 2024:*

- Bahawalpur (March 2024): Tahir Iqbal, the president of the local Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in Chak-84, was shot dead by two motorcyclists.
- Mandi Bahauddin (June 2024): In Saadullahpur, two Ahmadi Muslims, Ghulam Sarwar (62) and Rahat Ahmad Bajwa (30), were murdered in separate incidents on the same day. The alleged perpetrator, a 16-year-old madrassa student, confessed to the killings, citing religious reasons.
- Gujrat (July 2024): Zaka ur Rehman, a 53-year-old dentist, was killed in his clinic by two gunmen.
- Despite the gravity of these crimes, there is little to no accountability, with perpetrators often evading justice, perpetuating a cycle of impunity.

### *Desecration of Mosques and Graves*

Since 2023, 40 mosques have been attacked and since 2021, 421 graves have been desecrated. The latest incidents include:

- Musay Wala (January 2024): Punjab police desecrated 65 tombstones in an Ahmadi graveyard, removing Islamic inscriptions. This act was ordered by a local official, reflecting systematic discrimination by state authorities.
- Kotli, Azad Jammu and Kashmir (February and June 2024): Ahmadi mosques were attacked by mobs in two separate incidents. In February, extremists destroyed the minarets of a mosque in Bhabra, severely beating worshippers, including women. Despite police presence, no arrests were made. In June, a mob of 150 people attacked another mosque during Eid celebrations.
- Lahore (June 2024): Police officers in Lahore desecrated the minarets of an Ahmadi Muslim mosque in Jahman. The attack took place at 1:00 am, with the police confiscating CCTV footage to hide state complicity.

These acts violate the religious rights of Ahmadi Muslims and serve as powerful symbols of the marginalization and societal acceptance of anti-Ahmadi sentiment and violence.

### *Judicial Discrimination*

In August 2024, Pakistan's Supreme Court revised its ruling under pressure from extremists. Mr. Sani had been charged under the Punjab Holy Quran (Printing and Recording) (Amendment) Act, 2021, for distributing a Holy Quran with commentary to another Ahmadi. However, the Supreme Court rejected the case as having no basis in law and released Mr. Sani.

The ruling triggered a massive backlash from Islamist groups, particularly Tehreek-e-

Labbaik Pakistan (TLP). The group launched widespread protests, some of which turned violent, and initiated a hate campaign against Chief Justice Isa. The Deputy Leader of TLP placed a bounty of 10 million Pakistani Rupees on the head of the Chief Justice.

In July 2024, the Supreme Court, under pressure from Islamist organisations, conducted a review of the decision. The review upheld the earlier Supreme Court decision but noted in commentary that Ahmadis, as a minority group under the Pakistan Constitution, could practice and preach their faith in the privacy of their homes and places of worship. This was again picked up by extremists, leading to further protests in Islamabad.

As a result of the protests, the Punjab Government petitioned for a correction hearing, normally reserved for minor amendments. However, this was turned into a full call for the decision to be reversed, with both legal representatives and Islamic scholars presenting their views against the defendant, who was given no right of reply. The Supreme Court upheld its decision but agreed to delete three paragraphs in the judgment to appease the extremists, leaving the wider matter to parliament.

This has completely undermined the independence of the judiciary and caved into extremist demands that Ahmadis (and therefore other minorities) have no right to practice their faith even in private. This is an extremely disturbing precedent.

### ***PTA notice***

In August 2024, a notice to geofence the APPG's website was issued by the Pakistan Telecommunications Authority (PTA) to Dame Siobhain McDonagh MP. The notice is another clear example of state-sponsored persecution and stated that Ahmadis are barred by law from calling themselves Muslims and must not be accessible in Pakistan.

### ***Prisoners of Conscience***

There are currently 7 Ahmadis behind bars on fabricated charges on grounds of faith, namely Mr Malik Zaheer Ahmad, Mr. Shiraz Ahmad, Mr Mubashar Ranja, Mr. Owais Ahmad, Mr. Muhamad Waqas, Mr. Sultan Ahmad, and Mr. Muhammad Zaki.

### ***Recent Rise of Hate Speech***

The group was updated on the recent rise of hate speech targeting the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in Pakistan. Key instances include:

- Threats Related to Eid-ul-Adha Sacrifices:
  - Statements such as: "The sign of Allah is the animal of the sacrifice, if they [Ahmadis] sacrifice that then we will slaughter the Qadiani dog instead."
  - Asim Ishfaq Rizwi, a Tehreek-e-Labbaik leader in Jhelum, stated: "If any Qadiani tries to sacrifice even one animal on Eid, then in Jhelum we'll hang the Qadianis."
- Radicals are publicly threatening to behead and hang Ahmadis if they celebrate Eid-ul-Adha.
- Violent Incitement by Clerics:
  - Muhammad Naeem Chattha Qadri, a senior cleric from Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP), called for attacks on pregnant Ahmadi Muslim mothers to prevent new Ahmadis from being born, stating: "Those babies who are being born should be killed." He also warned police not to protect Ahmadi Muslims families.
  - Molvi Habib-ur-Rahman declared that Ahmadis, including army or police officials, must be killed.

- Prof Dr. Mufti Muhammad Mukhtar Ali Al-Haidari posted a video calling on the public to "strangle every Qadiani," emphasizing slogans that incite violence against Ahmadis.
- On 7 September 2024, the far-right religious party Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam (JUI-F) held a gathering at Lahore's Minar-e-Pakistan to mark 50 years since the constitutional amendment declaring Ahmadis as non-Muslims. Cleric Manzoor Mengal declared Ahmadis "Wajibul Qatl" (liable to be killed) and openly incited the public to kill Ahmadis if the state did not.

Pakistan is experiencing an alarming rise in violent hate speech, with grave consequences for the Ahmadi community and other religious minorities.

**Actions agreed were:**

- 1. APPG to write to the Home Office and the Foreign Office to seek a meeting and build momentum on all points raised including the need to ban hate preachers.**
- 2. An active campaign be run on advocating of the release of prisoners of conscience with MPs adopting a prisoner.**
- 3. A debate be tabled on persecution of Ahmadis on the floor of the House.**
- 4. Write to the UK Bar Association about the Mubarak Sani case and the threat to Ahmadi lawyers to bar them from practising law in Pakistan.**
- 5. To write to the Pakistan High Commissioner about the PTA notice.**
- 6. To press the Home Office on the resettlement of refugees.**

The Chair thanked everyone for attending. The meeting ended at 7.00pm.