

## INCIDENT REPORT

# RECENT SURGE IN AHMADI GRAVE DESECRATIONS IN PAKISTAN

---

### Overview:

Since the start of 2024, the graves of Ahmadis have continued to be desecrated in Pakistan as part of a troubling pattern established since 2020, where hundreds of Ahmadi graves are destroyed each year. Over 170 graves have been desecrated so far in 2024, with recent weeks witnessing a surge of such attacks. Attacks against Ahmadi graves, highlight the deepening intolerance fostered by extremist elements against the community. In many cases, the police and local authorities have either been complicit or have failed to take action, further jeopardising the safety and dignity of the community.

### Recent Incidents:

#### 19–20 September 2024: Goi Batali, District Kotli, Azad Kashmir

On the night of 19–20 September, unidentified individuals desecrated the burial places of three Ahmadis in the Goi Batali cemetery, District Kotli, Azad Kashmir. Out of the eight Ahmadi graves in this cemetery, three headstones were removed. Local Ahmadi leaders informed authorities, including the Chief Secretary of Azad Kashmir, the DIG of Mirpur region, and police officials, who visited the site and filed a case against unknown individuals.

This attack followed threats made during a religious procession earlier that month, where extremist groups demanded the removal of Ahmadi headstones, giving the administration a strict ultimatum. Although negotiations occurred that saw extremist elements extended their deadline, this did little to prevent the subsequent desecrations.

#### 25 September 2024: Vehari District

On 25 September 2024, the police in district Vehari blackened sacred inscriptions on 13 Ahmadi headstones in the cemetery of Chak 363/EB in response to the demands of extremist groups. Local police defaced the inscriptions using black paint. Despite a delegation of local Ahmadis attempting to submit a formal complaint, the SHO refused their request, threatening further consequences unless the community removed the inscriptions themselves.

Earlier in the day, a message circulated by Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) urged supporters to take action if the authorities did not intervene. By afternoon, three policemen entered the cemetery and defaced the gravestones. This was done in a communal cemetery, although Ahmadi graves were kept in a separate section.

### **29 September 2024: Dogri Guman, District Sialkot**

On 29 September 2024, extremists in District Sialkot desecrated 47 out of 48 Ahmadi headstones in Dogri Guman cemetery, in the presence of police who failed to intervene. When two individuals tried to film the attack, they were detained by police, and their video footage was deleted from their phones.

### **30 September 2024: Roda, District Khushab**

Eight graves in the Ahmadiyya cemetery of Roda, District Khushab, were destroyed on the night of 30 September by unknown individuals. Extremist groups had been pressuring the local administration to erase religious inscriptions on Ahmadi graves, and the failure to protect these burial sites led to the incident. The Special Branch, CTD, and local police were contacted and conducted an investigation, but no arrests have been made so far.

## **Key Concerns:**

### **1. Complicity of Authorities:**

The incidents in Vehari and Sialkot highlight the role of police in either participating in or allowing the desecration of Ahmadi graves. Their lack of intervention, and in some cases, active involvement, raises significant concerns about state protection for religious minorities.

### **2. Escalation of Religious Intolerance:**

The growing influence of extremist groups, such as the TLP, which openly incite violence against Ahmadi graves and cemeteries, has contributed to an alarming atmosphere of religious hostility. The government's failure to act decisively against these threats has emboldened these groups, fostering a culture of impunity and deepening intolerance towards the Ahmadiyya Community. This inaction signals a troubling erosion of minority rights and fuels ongoing persecution.

### **3. Legal and Human Rights Violations:**

The desecration of Ahmadi graves is a violation of both Pakistan's constitutional provisions and international human rights standards. These attacks demonstrate a lack of state accountability and neglect in protecting vulnerable minorities.

### **4. Impact on Ahmadiyya Community:**

The Ahmadiyya Community, already marginalised, faces deepening alienation and insecurity as a result of these incidents. The desecration of their burial sites is a profound act of contempt, worsening their fears for personal safety and the future of their religious freedom in Pakistan.

## **Recommendations:**

### **1. Protection of Ahmadi Cemeteries:**

The state must provide immediate security to Ahmadi cemeteries and prevent future desecrations. The introduction of stringent law enforcement mechanisms to protect religious burial grounds is critical.

### **2. Hold Law Enforcement Accountable:**

Police officers and units who participate in or allow these acts of desecration must be held accountable. Investigations into police conduct in Sialkot and Vehari should be prioritised, and disciplinary action should be taken.

### **3. Tackle Extremism:**

Extremist groups inciting violence against religious minorities must face legal consequences. The state must take a firm stance against religious extremism to restore social harmony and protect all its citizens.

### **4. Promote Religious Freedom:**

The government must reaffirm its commitment to religious equality and provide legal protection to all communities, including Ahmadis. State institutions should play an active role in countering hate speech and promoting tolerance.



## **Conclusion:**

The recent spike in the desecration of Ahmadi graves in September 2024 underscores the increasing influence of extremist groups and the alarming erosion of minority protections in Pakistan. These grave attacks represent a brutal form of persecution that haunts the Ahmadiyya Community from cradle to grave, stripping even the deceased of dignity. The complicity of local authorities, particularly law enforcement, has only deepened the community's sense of insecurity, as those meant to protect them either stand aside or participate in these hate crimes. Urgent government intervention is needed to put an end to these violations, safeguard Ahmadi graves, and reaffirm Pakistan's commitment to upholding religious freedom and human rights.



Chak 363/EB, District Vehari



Dogri Guman, District Sialkot



Roda, District Khushab