



## INCIDENT REPORT

### SHOCKING LYNCHING OF PAKISTANI MAN ACCUSED OF BLASPHEMY

The International Human Rights Committee (IHRC) is shocked to learn about yet another lynching in Pakistan of a man accused of Blasphemy.

Mr. Waris, who was in police custody over blasphemy charges for allegedly desecrating the Holy Quran, was lynched to death by a charged mob. IHRC extends the deepest condolences to the family and loved ones of Mr. Waris.

A video of the incident, shared on social media and confirmed as authentic by the police, showed a man being dragged through the streets by his legs, stripped of his clothes and being pummelled by sticks and metal rods.

Pakistan has seen numerous cases of vigilante action by mobs against people accused of blasphemy in recent years. This shocking violence and religious extremism has sharply increased in recent weeks with attacks against Ahmadi Muslim mosques, Christian worshipers and other minorities.



*Picture: Screenshots of viral videos, showing a mob outside Warburton Police Station in Nankana Sahib area of Punjab, Pakistan on February 11, 2023, in the process of the shocking act of lynching a man accused of Blasphemy.*

Pakistan's blasphemy laws criminalise anyone who insults Islam, including by outraging religious feeling (Section 295-A), defiling the Qur'an (295-B), and defiling the name of the Prophet Mohammed (295-C), which carries the death penalty or life imprisonment. The laws are open to misuse, and often used as a weapon of revenge against both Muslims and non-Muslims to settle personal scores or to resolve disputes over money, property or business. Blasphemy accusations can also have an impact beyond that on the accused, and often trigger mass violence against minority communities.

Various Human Rights NGOs including but not limited to IHRC have consistently called for abolishment of such draconian laws which grant the

State complete impunity to punish citizens. Such charges and allegations in most cases are based on false pretence and are politically motivated.

Once again, Pakistan has been shaken by egregious mob violence in relation to its notorious blasphemy laws, which are wholly incompatible with the fundamental right to freedom of religion or belief and must be reviewed urgently, moving towards their full repeal in the long term. We call on the Punjab and national authorities to ensure that rule of law is upheld in the ongoing police investigation, and that those who were party to this violence are prosecuted.

Such despicable incidents are now a way of life in Pakistan. The extremist organizations seemed to have overpowered the law enforcing agencies and even the judiciary has succumbed to their pressures. No religious minority is safe in Pakistan. The extremists concoct false allegations against the peace-loving innocent minorities and accuse them of blasphemous behaviour and instigate the mob to brutally torture and kill them. All that is happening in day light under the nose of the world and yet the world has not done what needs to be done to stop it.

IHRC is there to seek justice for the victims of religious persecution and calls on all those who stand for freedom of religion, faith and practice to wake up the Government of Pakistan to act to stop such horrific atrocities taking place almost every day.

We appeal to the international community and human rights groups to call out the on-going injustice and urge the government of Pakistan to immediately cease the spread of such hatred in the country.

We further urge the international community to impress upon the Government of Pakistan, that perpetrators of such vicious attacks should be brought to justice, to bring its laws and practices in conformity with international standards as ordained by Article 20 and United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 2,18 and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) Article 25,26.

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