

Reference: TG ASA 33/2026.7608

Chief Minister's Secretariat,
Punjab Civil Secretariat,
Lower Mall, Lahore,
Pakistan

21 May 2026

Chief Minister of Punjab, Maryam Nawaz,
Amnesty International writes to express grave concerns regarding the structural and persistent discrimination, harassment and violence against the Ahmadiyya community in Punjab province. These violations routinely intensify in periods preceding and during major religious occasions, such as the upcoming Eid ul-Adha. We urge your government to take immediate and preventive measures to ensure that the rights to freedom of religion and belief, peaceful assembly, freedom of expression and equality before the law of Ahmadis are upheld across Punjab.

Amnesty International has consistently documented a sharp rise in incidents of violence and harassment, both in volume and intensity, during and around religious holidays. Earlier in 2026, during Eid ul-Fitr, Amnesty International received reports that local administrative and police authorities across districts in Punjab placed unlawful restrictions on Ahmadi religious practices. The reports indicate that Ahmadis congregations were explicitly prohibited in Gujranwala and police intervened at six locations in Sialkot to stop all worship activities on Eid day, 21 March 2026. On the same day, worshippers were reportedly removed from a place of worship during prayers in Faisalabad and multiple places of worship were sealed in Sargodha.

These incidents reflect a recurring pattern that amounts to unlawful interference with the right to freedom of religion and belief. In 2024, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination expressed concern about "harassment and intimidation of Ahmadi Muslims in the period preceding and during Eid al-Adha."¹ That year, Amnesty International documented 36 cases of arbitrary arrests and detention as well as dozens of cases of police harassment of Ahmadis in the lead up to and during Eid ul-Azha.² In 2025, similar practices prevailed as local authorities in Punjab prevented Ahmadis from celebrating Eid, including forcing individuals to sign affidavits undertaking that they would refrain from prayers and performing rituals on Eid day.³

These incidents during Eid occur in the backdrop of systemic discrimination and violence against the community. Attacks on burial sites of the Ahmadiyya community are frequent. The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief noted in her 2026 report⁴ that hundreds of Ahmadi graves have been desecrated in Punjab province and Ahmadi funeral rites are regularly interrupted by police. In 2025, at least three Ahmadis were killed in targeted attacks, while five survived assassination attempts.⁵ Notably, two of the three killings occurred in Punjab, underscoring the heightened risks faced by Ahmadis in your province. Members of the community, including doctors, lawyers, teachers and public officials, are frequently subject to smear campaigns, blasphemy accusations, and calls for violence or removal from their professions,⁶ leading to a climate of fear that effectively excludes Ahmadis from public life.

¹ Concluding observations on the combined twenty-fourth to twenty-sixth periodic reports of Pakistan, Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, CERD/C/PAK/CO/24-26, 24 September 2024.

² Amnesty International, Pakistan: Authorities must end escalating attacks on minority Ahmadiyya community, 21 June 2024, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/06/end-escalating-attacks-on-minority-ahmadiyya-community>

³ Amnesty International, Pakistan: End cyclical harassment and persecution of minority Ahmadiyya community, 5 June 2025, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/06/the-ahmadis-deserve-to-practice-their-religion-and-celebrate-eid-without-fear-for-their-safety-and-liberty>

⁴ How freedom of religion or belief relates to death and honouring the deceased, A/HRC/61/50, 7 January 2026, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/ahrc6150-how-freedom-religion-or-belief-relates-death-and-honouring>

⁵ International Human Rights Desk, Persecution of Ahmadis: Annual Report 2026, <https://persecutionofahmadis.org/annual-reports>

⁶ Al Jazeera, "Bowling to far-right pressure, Pakistan removes Ahmadi adviser", 7 September 2018, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/9/7/bowling-to-far-right-pressure-pakistan-removes-ahmadi-adviser>

Amnesty International has received credible reports that Ahmadis are facing significant administrative barriers to the registration of marriages since 2024, including refusal by local authorities to issue marriage and divorce certificates or accept certificates issued by the community's designated authority, which was treated as valid legal documentation till the abrupt policy change in 2024. Since the second amendment to the Constitution in 1974, marriage registration of the Ahmadiyya community have existed in a liminal space as they were no longer regulated by Muslim Personal Law. In the absence of rules and regulations governing Ahmadi marriages, the community is at the mercy of arbitrary decisions by local administration. Such practices not only violate the right to freedom of religion and belief but also interfere unlawfully with the right to family life.

Punjab, in particular, must take measures to protect the Ahmadiyya community given that a majority of the Ahmadi population resides in the province. According to the 2023 census, 86% of the Ahmadiyya population (140,512 out of 162,684) resides in Punjab.⁷ While Amnesty International has observed that the Punjab government has taken positive steps in promoting interfaith harmony in the past two years, these efforts remain fragmented and insufficient given the scale and severity of the threat faced by the Ahmadiyya community.

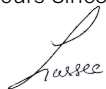
In the lead up to Eid ul-Adha, Amnesty International urges your government to take decisive and preemptive measures to respect, protect, promote and fulfil the human rights of Ahmadis in Punjab. This includes effective and urgent action to ensure that officials from police and local administrations refrain from interfering with the right of the Ahmadiyya community to practice their religion, to end arbitrary arrests and detentions, and to prevent raids, or attacks on homes and places of worship and sealing of such places. These actions are in violation of Article 20 of the Pakistan's Constitution that guarantees the right to profess religion and to manage religious institutions as well as Pakistan's international human rights obligations. Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights enshrines the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. Furthermore, the manner in which Ahmadis are targeted in Pakistan also violates their rights to liberty and security of person, freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, and non-discrimination. In many cases, these actions amount to unlawful and arbitrary interference with the privacy, family and home of members of the Ahmadiyya community.

Further, Amnesty International urges your government to work towards repealing or amending, in line with international human rights law, discriminatory laws that enable the Ahmadiyya community to be targeted. We would also like to remind the government that during Pakistan's Universal Periodic Review in 2023, the report of the UPR Working Group contained several recommendations to ensure the protection of the Ahmadiyya community.⁸ These recommendations have included calls to repeal discriminatory laws used against members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community, particularly sections 295-A, 295-B, 295-C, 298-B and 298-C of the Pakistan Penal Code. The authorities must also uphold the 2022 Supreme Court judgment which acknowledged the rights of Ahmadis to practice their faith within their homes without interference.

Lastly, Amnesty International calls on the Punjab government to conduct thorough, independent, impartial, transparent and effective investigations into past incidents of violence, harassment and discrimination against Ahmadis during Eid celebrations. Further, to create an effective and accessible reporting and accountability mechanism to ensure that any violations occurring during the upcoming Eid ul-Adha are promptly addressed and that suspected perpetrators, including state and non-state actors, are held accountable. Victims and their families should be provided with access to justice and effective remedies.

We look forward to your government's response to us and to measures being taken to ensure that the members of the Ahmadiyya community in Punjab can observe Eid ul-Adha free from fear, coercion and discrimination, and in full enjoyment of their human rights.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Isabelle Lassée".

Isabelle Lassée

Deputy Regional Director, South Asia Regional Office
Amnesty International

⁷ Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, Population by sex, religion and rural/urban, Census - 2023, https://www.pbs.gov.pk/wp-content/uploads/census_tables/tables/table_9_national.pdf

⁸ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, A/HRC/53/13, 31 March 2023.