

# Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

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## Responses to Information Requests

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Responses to Information Requests (RIR) respond to focused Requests for Information that are submitted to the Research Directorate in the course of the refugee protection determination process. The database contains a seven-year archive of English and French RIRs. Earlier RIRs may be found on the UNHCR's [Refworld](#) website. Please note that some RIRs have attachments which are not electronically accessible. To obtain a PDF copy of an RIR attachment, please email the [Knowledge and Information Management Unit](#).

30 September 2015

### IND105313.E

India: Treatment of Ahmadis [Ahmadiyyas, Ahmadiyas] by society and authorities; state protection  
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

#### 1. Overview

According to an article written for the Huffington Post by Qasim Rashid, a Visiting Fellow at Harvard University's Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Islamic Studies Program, Ahmadis are a "sect" of Islam whose members believe that the "Messiah and Mahdi has come in the person of Mizra Ghulam Ahmad [Ahmed] of Qadian [the founder of the sect]" (The Huffington Post 24 Sept. 2014). The Berkley Center for Religion, Peace & World Affairs at Georgetown University similarly states that the Ahmadis "revere Mizra Ghulam Ahmed as the Messiah/Mahdi" (Georgetown University n.d.). The same source also notes that Ahmadi Muslims reject "terrorism in any form" and believe in the "separation of mosque and state" (ibid.). According to Rashid, in 1974 Muslim leaders from the 72 other sects met in Pakistan and "unanimously declared all Ahmadi Muslims to be 'non-Muslim'" (The Huffington Post 24 Sept. 2014). For further information on the ideology and history of the Ahmadis, see Response to Information Request PAK104254.

Sources indicate that the headquarters for Ahmadi Muslims in India is in Qadian, Gurdaspur district, Punjab (*Outlook* 14 June 2010; *Hindustan Times* 2 Oct. 2011; *The Times of India* 31 Jan. 2015). According to *Outlook*, an Indian news magazine based in New Delhi, it was estimated in 2010 that there were 60,000 to 1 million Ahmadis in India (14 June 2010). Further and corroborating information on the Ahmadi population could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

#### 2. Treatment by Society

According to sources, other Muslims in India do not consider Ahmadis to be Muslim (*The Hindustan Times* 2 Oct. 2011; *Asia Times* 15 May 2012; *US* 20 May 2013, 12). In correspondence with the Research Directorate, a postdoctoral research associate at Cambridge University who has performed field research within the Ahmadi community in India, stated that there has been a longstanding "theological dispute" between Ahmadis and other Muslims in India, that can "occasionally" result in incidences of "communal violence" (Postdoctoral Research Associate 28 Sept. 2015). According to the same source, there have been reported cases of Ahmadi missionaries being kidnapped by other groups of Muslims while operating in towns and villages across India (ibid.). Further and corroborating information on reported kidnappings could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Sources state that Ahmadis are not allowed to sit on the All-India Muslim Personal Law Board (*Tehelka* 28 July 2012; *Asia Times* 15 May 2012; *US* 20 May 2013, 8), a "body of religious leaders that the central government recognizes as representative of Indian Muslims" (ibid.).

Sources state that in September 2011, a Quran exhibition held by Ahmadi Muslims at the Delhi Constitution Club was cancelled due to protests by other Muslim groups (*Hindustan Times* 2 Oct. 2011; *The Times of India* 24 Sept. 2011; *Tehelka* 28 July 2012).

According to Indian weekly news magazine *Tehelka*, in February 2012, the Andhra Pradesh Wakf [Waqf] Board [1] issued a decision to take over Ahmadi mosques and graveyards "since Sunni or Shia mosques cannot be administered by non-Muslims" (28 July 2012). Further and corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

According to Two Circles (TCN), a non-profit news site "for the marginalized sections of India" (TCN 30 Jan. 2009), in March 2012, local Muslim organizations and political parties in the Hyderabad state demanded a ban on the "activities and community halls" of the Ahmadis (ibid. 27 Mar. 2012). According to sources, that same month, an Ahmadi mosque [considered to be a community center or hall] was attacked in Saidabad, Hyderabad (ibid.; *Tehelka* 28 July 2012; US 20 May 2013, 12). Sources further state that the attack was instigated by 200 members of the Majlis Tahaffuz-e-Khatam-e-Nabuwat [Khatm-e-Nubuwwat] (ibid.; TCN 27 Mar. 2012), a group described as "extremist" (US 20 May 2013, 8) or "anti-[Ahmadis]" (TCN 27 Mar. 2012). TCN reports that two commercial buildings belonging to Ahmadis were also damaged by "stone pelting" (ibid.).

*Tehelka* reports that in May 2012, the Jamaat-e-Islami Hind [2] called for a "'complete social boycott' of Ahmadiyyas" during a public meeting in New Delhi (28 July 2012). Further and corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Sources state that Islamists attacked a small group of Ahmadis during a meeting in Tirupur, Tamil Nadu in April (Ahmadiyya Times 7 Apr. 2012) or May 2012 (*Tehelka* 28 July 2012). Sources also report that in May 2012, the Grand Mufti of Jammu and Kashmir requested that the Jammu and Kashmir State Assembly pass a law that would deem Ahmadis to be non-Muslims (ibid.; Asia Times 15 May 2012). Further information on the response of the State Assembly could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

In August 2015, sources reported that ten Ahmadis were injured in West Bengal when a large group of local "extremist" Muslims attacked the home of an Ahmadi Muslim family (*The Rabwah Times* n.d.; Ahmadiyya Muslim Community International Press & Media Office 17 Aug. 2015). Without providing details, the same sources reported that a similar attack took place in July 2015 (ibid.; *The Rabwah Times* n.d.).

### 3. Treatment by Authorities

Information on the treatment of Ahmadis by state authorities was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response. Sources state that Ahmadis in India are legally recognized as Muslims (*Outlook* 14 June 2010; *Tehelka* 28 July 2012; Asia Times 15 May 2012). The Postdoctoral Research Associate expressed the opinion that, to his knowledge, as a result of their "avowed allegiance to the Indian state" and their rejection of "all forms of violent Jihad," Ahmadis are viewed "positively" by the government (ibid.).

The *Hindustan Times*, an English-language newspaper, quotes Syed Tanveer, the spokesperson for Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat, as stating that India "is one of the few countries where [Ahmadis] have the same rights as others" (*Hindustan Times* 2 Oct. 2011). In contrast, according to the US *International Religious Freedom Report for 2012*, the government of the state of Andhra Pradesh "has classified Ahmadi Muslims as non-Muslims and declared that it would not consider any property owned by the Ahmadiyya[s]...to be Muslim" (US 20 May 2013, 8). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

## 4. State Protection

### 4.1 State Response

Sources report the following responses by police to incidents against Ahmadis:

- In response to the attack in 2012 by a Muslim extremist group in Saidabad, Hyderabad, sources report that police responded to the situation, dispersed the crowd (US 20 May 2013, 12; TCN 27 Mar. 2012), and "provided protection" to the 500 Ahmadis trapped inside their mosque (ibid.).
- In response to the attack in 2012 by a Muslim extremist group in Tirupur, Tamil Nadu, sources report that the police responded and relocated the group of Ahmadis to Coimbatore (Ahmadiyya Times 7 Apr. 2012; *Tehelka* 28 July 2012).
- In response to the attack in 2015 on the home of an Ahmadi family by a group of Muslim extremists, sources report that the police did not respond promptly, nor did they disperse the crowd (Ahmadiyya Muslim Community International Press & Media Office 17 Aug. 2015; *The*

*Rabwah Times* n.d.). The same sources report that the police prevented injured residents from seeking medical treatment right away (ibid.; Ahmadiyya Muslim Community International Press & Media Office 17 Aug. 2015); only after the crowd left the next morning were the injured residents able to seek medical treatment (ibid.). According to the *Rabwah Times*, a local newspaper in Rabwah, Pakistan, those injured had difficulty seeking medical treatment as they did not receive an incident report from the police, which is required in order to treat injuries related to a criminal offence (*The Rabwah Times* n.d.).

- In response to a similar attack earlier in 2015, sources report that the police were able to control the situation (ibid.; Ahmadiyya Muslim Community International Press & Media Office 17 Aug. 2015).

According to the Postdoctoral Research Associate,

[t]he official position of the current [Ahmadiyya Community] administration in India is that acts of communal violence against Ahmadis are the work of isolated Muslim extremists, and they insist that when such incidents occur, they can rely upon the full support of the Indian police and authorities to resolve problems. ... [i]t is worth pointing out that such claims ... are part of a more general programme of fostering good relations with the Indian state. For Ahmadis, allegiance to the secular nation state is an article of faith ... [and] in order to avoid conflict with Indian authorities, the official spokesmen of the [community] tend to downplay acts of communal violence against their community. (28 Sept. 2015).

Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

#### 4.2 Legal Remedies

Information pertaining to the availability of legal remedies specifically for Ahmadis could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response. However, the following information may be useful.

The US *International Religious Freedom Report for 2013* states that there are legal remedies for violations of religious freedom (US 28 July 2014, 4). The same source further states that federal bodies exist to investigate allegations of religious discrimination, including the Ministry for Minority Affairs, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), and the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) (ibid., 4-5). MRG states that the Minorities Commission [National Commission for Minorities] was established in 1977 to monitor the situation of "the non-scheduled caste and non-scheduled tribe minorities such as Muslims, although it has no powers to implement changes" (MRG n.d.).

The US *International Religious Freedom Report for 2013* states that the government "generally enforced legal protections for religious freedom," though, they "did not always efficiently or effectively prosecute those who attacked religious minorities" (US 28 July 2014, 5). According to the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF)'s *Annual Report 2015*, "India has long struggled to protect minority religious communities or provide justice when crimes occur" (US 2015, 149). The same source further states that conflict between Muslims and Hindus has been a "longstanding" issue and that religious minority groups allege that police are biased and fail to investigate and arrest those accused of violence (ibid.). A 2015 report by Human Rights Watch similarly states, citing a report by an unnamed think tank and another by senior police officials, that Muslims mistrust the police and view them as "communal, biased, and insensitive" due to police misconduct "especially during communal tensions" (Human Rights Watch 2015).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

#### Notes

[1] *The Times of India* reports that waqf is a "religious endowment in Islam, typically devoting a building or plot of land for Muslim religious or charitable purposes," such as a madrassa, mosque, tomb or graveyard (*The Times of India* 2 Oct. 2010). The same source further reports that waqf boards are "formed by the government" under the *Waqf Act, 1995* (ibid.). According to the same source, waqf boards manage the properties through custodians that track revenues, expenditures and ensure that the property "is used for the purpose [for which] it was created" (ibid.).

[2] According to their website, Jamaat-e-Islami was established in 1941, before partition, in Lahore as an Islamic reformist movement (Jamaat-e-Islami Hind n.d.). After partition, two independent organizations were formed, including Jamaat-e-Islami Hind (ibid.). The same source further states that they have approximately 6,000 members, 29,000 *karkuns* (workers) and 308,000 *muttafiqs* (sympathizers) (ibid.). The associated

"trusts" and "societies" run "masajid, madrasas, schools, colleges, hospitals, orphanages, vocational training centres, interest-free loans, relief activities and housing projects" (ibid.).

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**Oral sources:** Assistant professor of Islamic studies, Department of Religious Studies, Loyola University New Orleans; associate professor of social anthropology, Department of Anthropology, Harvard University; freelance lecturer, Islamic studies, Leeds Univeristy and Bradford University, United Kingdom.

**Internet sites, including:** Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamat – India; Al Jazeera; Amnesty International; Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development; Asian Human Rights Commission; *Dawn*; *ecoi.net*; *The Express Tribune*; International Federation for Human Rights; Factiva; *Foreign Policy*; Gatestone Institute; *The Hindu*; Human Rights First; *Human Rights Quarterly*; India – National Commission for Minorities, National Human Rights Commission, Ministry of Minority Affairs; International Crisis Group; Minority Rights Group International; *The Indian Express*; IRIN; The Jamestown Foundation; *Jane's Intelligence Review*; Open Doors; Reuters; Saddarlaq; United Nations – Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Refworld; United States – Central Intelligence Agency.

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