

Christians Condemn Beheading Of Sikhs By Taliban In Pakistan

Wednesday 24 February 2010, by [MUGHAL Aftab Alexander](#) (Date first published: 24 February 2010).

Christians and other human rights groups strongly condemned Taliban militants' recent brutal act against Sikhs, a tiny religious minority in Pakistan. Taliban beheaded two Sikhs in Pakistan's tribal area near Afghanistan's border, which is mostly under the control of Taliban, after their families and community were unable to pay the ransom amount for their release.

Nadeem Anthony, a Christian, member of Human Rights Commission of Pakistan told Minorities Concern of Pakistan that the lives of religious minorities, including Christians, Hindus, Sikhs and Shia Muslims, are constantly under threat by the Taliban in the tribal areas. He demanded the government to take strong measures to save lives and properties of minorities in those areas.

A small group of Sikhs, Hindus and Christians had been living in the tribal area. Majority of them have left the area because of Taliban's atrocities. Last year, Sikhs, mostly traders, were asked by Taliban to convert to Islam or leave the area or pay Jizia (an Islamic tax imposed on non-Muslims). Hundreds had fled their homes and moved to Peshawar, capital of North West Frontier Province, but some were still there hoping that the situation would be better soon.

"The plight of Christian, Hindu and Sikh minorities in and near Swat and the tribal areas is particularly precarious, with their livelihoods and day-to-day existence threatened by the encroaching presence of the Taliban," Rafia Zakaria, a Muslim, writes in the daily *Dawn*, an English national newspaper, on Feb. 24, 2010.

Taliban killed Jaspal Singh and another Shikh who were abducted in Bara, a town in Khyber district, in late January. His body was found on Feb. 21 in the neighboring tribal district of Orakzai. According to some reports, Taliban later handed over their beheaded bodies to their relatives.

Sikh leaders in Peshawar said that the Taliban abducted three Sikh men so one is still in their captivity.

Sikhs are a very tiny community in Pakistan.

Tehrek-e-Taliban (TTP) has become the most dangerous militant group operating in Pakistan, where a wave of suicide and bomb attacks carried out by Islamist militants have killed more than 3,000 people since July 2007, a media report says.

According to ANI news agency, following the brutal beheading of two Sikhs by Taliban in Pakistan, refugee Sikhs, hailing from Peshawar in Pakistan living in Amritsar, India, have demanded that they should be given citizenship so that they can live in India safely with their families.

The refugee Sikhs expressed that their families and relatives in Peshawar and other tribal areas are under severe threat from Taliban and repatriation will cost them their lives as well. About 60 Sikh families from Pakistan have taken refuge in Amritsar for the last couple of years.

"Yet the Taliban are not the only threat to Pakistan's religious and sectarian minorities. The past few

months have seen the emergence of horrifying cases of systematized persecution of religious minorities,” Rafia Zakaria says.

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