

Pakistan: Female madrasa [Islamic seminary] teachers slaughter their colleague over alleged blasphemy allegations

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Early morning on 29 March, three female Muslim teachers of an Islamic seminary slaughtered their colleague over alleged blasphemy allegations in Dera Ismail Khan in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, Pakistan.

In the name of religion, violent incidents have been occurring in Pakistan now and then. This another case over the blasphemy allegations. It is different one as all actors involved are female. It shows how the ultra-extremism narrative holds the power to brainwash common people, especially the young ones who only believe in violence.

According to the police sources, the female teachers of Jamia Islamia Falahul Binaat, a madrasa for girl students, were identified as Umra Aman, aged 24, Razia Hanif, aged 21, and Aisha Nomani, aged 17.

The victim was a 21-year-old female teacher of the same seminary. As she arrived at the school, her colleagues attacked her with knives and sharp objects outside the madrasa and slaughtered her.

The victim was found lying in the street outside the madrasa in a pool of her blood. A number of witnesses simply looked at the whole episode and did not intervene.

The suspects claimed that their 13-year-old female relative saw a 'dream' a night before about a blasphemous act, which was committed by the victim. However, according to a media report, the victim and the attackers had differences of opinion on religious issues.

Police had registered the First Information Report (FIR) against the suspects, and three teachers along with another suspect were arrested soon after the incident. Dera Ismail Khan's District police officer (DPO) Najmul Hasnain Liaquat told the media that a notebook containing details of the 'dream' had been recovered, and the investigation was started.

Pakistan is predominantly a Muslim country where blasphemy is a contentious issue. Mostly, non-Muslim minorities, especially Christians and Hindus, become the victim of those allegations. Since General Zia-ul-Haq, military dictator, introduced the blasphemy laws in the country in the 1980s, more than 80 people have been killed by individuals or by charged mobs over unproven allegations. In an incident on 12 February, a mentally ill person, Muhammad Mushtaq, a middle-aged Muslim man, was accused of burning the pages of the Holy Quran. He was beaten to death in rural Talumba, Punjab province, by hundreds of people. Later, his tortured dead body was hanged on a tree for hours. On 3 December 2021, Priyantha Kumara Diyawadana, 49-year-old Sri Lankan man, was accused of blasphemy by Muslim labourers of a local factory in Sialkot where he worked as a manager. He was lynched by the mob, and his body was put on fire later.

Although Wafaqul Madaris al Arabia Pakistan, a board of seminaries, condemned and demanded for an independent inquiry, other religious leaders are still silent on it.

Prime Minister Imran Khan takes credit for raising the issue of Islamophobia at the international level, but shows no concern to save its own citizens from these unhuman incidents which are committed in the name of religion. Rather he always uses religious card for his political gain. He has not taken any measures to stop these ruthless episodes yet.

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P.S.

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