Not festive for all

**Share:**

[SA Khan](https://nation.com.pk/Columnist/sa-khan)

August 29, 2018

Another Eid brings with it a day of mourning for members of the Ahmadiyya community in Faisalabad. 31 people were injured and an Ahmidiyya mosque was burnt down as a result of a verbal argument turning ugly. Reports have been scant, due to both the closure of most media outlets as a result of Eid holidays and the general lack of coverage given to issues faced by the marginalised minority group, but it seems that a verbal kerfuffle took a religious colour when youths from both the Ahmadiyya community and Muslims from the surrounding area argued about something very minor. But as is the norm with most arguments concerning any minority group, the Muslim antagonists turned it into an issue of religion which led to the attack on the Ahmadiyya mosque.

**READ MORE: [Zulfi Bukhari appears before NAB in offshore companies case](https://nation.com.pk/29-Aug-2018/zulfi-bukhari-appears-before-nab-in-offshore-companies-case)**

What was supposed to be a day of celebration and festivities will be permanently remembered by the family members of victims as a day when the Pakistani state failed them yet again. Pakistan’s treatment of its minorities often borders on indifference until property disputes or any other issues involve someone from a non-Muslim background. This indifference then turns into open vitriol and violence against marginalised sects, often culminating in burning down homes or the community worship area.

The Ahmadiyya community has suffered much at the hands of their fellow Pakistanis, and apart from the loss of lives and property, one of the worst things the Pakistani state has done is to muzzle them completely, to make sure that no member of the marginalised sect can even come out and talk about the state-sponsored injustice they face on a daily basis. There is an absence of political representation, and due to separate voter lists and other forms of discrimination, the community does not even get to vote in any electoral contests and most individuals do not openly admit their religion to their peers around them, through fear of further victimisation.

Our collective silence has only exacerbated the problem, until the majority speaks out for the minority, their rights will not be safeguarded in a country where the state only looks to protect the powerful and uses religion to gain support from the populace. Bringing up the issue of a revision in the blasphemy laws – a revision mind you and not a repeal – can bring about a swifter mob-sponsored death sentence than any actual crime mentioned in the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC). In a situation like this, even those that might be sympathetic to everything the Ahmadiyya community and others (Christians, Hindus and other religious minorities) have been through stay silent due to fears for their own lives.

A new government brings new possibilities and it is hoped that the PTI government can turn a corner and work for the betterment of those that really need it – extending basic protection to minority communities should not be out of the question and it is hoped that PM Khan will focus on this. Although he neglected to talk at length about the plight of minorities in his maiden address to the nation, it is hoped that the following days and this unfortunate tragedy will bring this issue into the limelight.

**READ MORE:**[**Gold imports decrease 32.04pc in July**](https://nation.com.pk/29-Aug-2018/gold-imports-decrease-32-04pc-in-july)

But this hope is faint. It is not very likely that this government will have the gumption required to take on decades of internalised hate. There is no silver lining, no optimism and nothing in the way of hope that the Ahmadiyya community can take from this piece, sadly. For now, all that needs to be done is for this issue to be talked about, over and over again, until society finally takes notice of how much it has wronged a community that has sacrificed everything to call this country at home. Until there is a better day, somewhere far in the future, all the Ahmadiyya community can really do is what has been the status quo for a while; hide in plain sight and hope no one notices their existence, or else their lives risk getting a lot more perilous.

The writer is a freelance contributor