

**Notice:** Undefined index: et\_header\_layout in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public\_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1214

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**PAKISTAN: Cleric killed by mob following blasphemy accusation**

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CSW (09.05.2023) – A local cleric in the city of Mardan, Khyber Pakthunkhwa Province, Pakistan, was killed by a mob on 6 May after he was accused of making a blasphemous reference during a political rally of former Prime Minister Imran Khan's party.

Maulana Nigar Alam, 40, reportedly stated 'Imran Khan is a truthful person and I respect him like the Prophet,' while addressing a rally arranged by Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) Mardan in the Sawaldher area, to express solidarity with Imran Khan and the judiciary on 6 May.

The remarks, which were considered blasphemy, prompted a group of those gathered at the rally to attack Mr Alam. Police were called to the venue and proceeded to lock him in a shop for his safety, however whilst talks were being held with the clerics, the mob, which primarily comprised of PTI activists, broke the shutters of the shop and took Mr Alam out by force. They began to kick him, beat him with sticks and ultimately lynched him to death. Video footage of the cleric's speech and of his killing went viral on social media. This is the second incident of mob violence and killing in Pakistan in 2023. On 11 February a man suspected of committing blasphemy was lynched in Nankana Sahib, Punjab Province.

There have also been previous attacks of this nature in Mardan. On 13 April 2017, Mashal Khan, a student at the mass communications department of Abdul Wali Khan University, was killed over blasphemy allegations by a mob.

Pakistan's blasphemy laws criminalise anyone who insults Islam, including by outraging religious feeling, which carries the death penalty or life imprisonment. These laws are poorly defined and require low standards for evidence. As a result, they are often used as a weapon of revenge against both Muslims and non-Muslims to settle personal scores or to resolve disputes over money, property or business.

CSW's Founder President Mervyn Thomas said: 'CSW extends our deepest condolences to the family and loved ones of Maulana Nigar Alam. His tragic murder is yet another disturbing reminder of the dangerous implications of Pakistan's notorious blasphemy laws. We reiterate that these laws are wholly incompatible with the fundamental right to freedom of religion or belief and must be reviewed urgently, moving towards their full repeal in the long term. We also call on the Pakistani authorities to ensure that a full investigation is carried out, and that all those responsible for this horrific act are held to account. It is necessary for the government to enforce the rule of law and not allow anyone to take the law into their own hands.'

For further information or to arrange interviews please contact Kiri Kankhwende, Press and Public Affairs Team Leader at CSW on +44 (0)782 332 9663 or email [kiri@csw.org.uk](mailto:kiri@csw.org.uk).

CSW is a human rights organisation specialising in freedom of religion or belief. We work on over 20 countries across Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America. [www.csw.org.uk](http://www.csw.org.uk)

[Further reading about FORB in Pakistan on HRWF website](#)

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