



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)
LEGAL AID BOARD

Pakistan - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Thursday 22 & Friday 23 May 2014

Information on arrests and detention of those involved in the 2006 demonstrations against the publication of Muhammad cartoons by Jyllands-Posten

A report issued in February 2006 by *United Press International* notes:

“At least 3,000 Pakistanis participated in a violent demonstration in Peshawar against the controversial cartoons depicting Mohammed. Most of the protestors were students, the BBC reported. The crowd turned ugly, tearing down billboards advertising the Norwegian communications company Telenor. Police arrested at least 16 people” (United Press International (13 February 2006) *3,000 Pakistanis protest cartoons*).

In February 2006 *Deutsche Presse-Agentur* notes:

“In the national capital, Islamabad, up to 6,000 mostly students broke through riot police barricades in a march to Parliament to protest the printing and reprinting of blasphemous caricatures by the European media. Police fired tear gas and carried out baton charges to disperse the procession when the students marched in to the diplomatic enclave where most of the foreign missions in Islamabad are located. Some protesters were injured while at least 50 were detained by police” (Deutsche Presse-Agentur (14 February 2006) *ROUNDUP: Two killed in anti-cartoon protest in Pakistan*).

A report issued by *The Times* in February 2006 states:

“Violence has swept across Pakistan this week after several peaceful demonstrations were held to protest the Muhammad cartoons in recent weeks. Two protesters were killed in Lahore yesterday, where a mob burnt down a KFC, a McDonalds and a Pizza Hut, and a crowd of 1,000 students attacked the British, French and Indian embassies in Islamabad, throwing petrol bombs. Hundreds were arrested” (The Times (15 February 2006) *70,000 gather for violent Pakistan cartoons protest*).

In February 2006 *The Guardian* notes:

“Elsewhere in Pakistan and across the wider Muslim world, Friday prayers saw a resurgence of demonstrations against the images, which were originally published in September last year. Thousands of Pakistani security forces were deployed across the country after five people were killed and western businesses attacked this week. Police in Karachi fired teargas and swung batons to disperse 2,000 protesters blocking the main road into the city, police official Alim Jafari said. In Multan, in Punjab province, security forces arrested 125 demonstrators for violating a ban on protests imposed in the east of the country following the violence” (The Guardian (17 February 2006) *Cleric offers reward for killing of cartoonist*).

BBC News in February 2006 point out in a report that:

"In Karachi, Pakistan's biggest city, police fired tear gas and used batons to disperse some 2,000 protesters who blocked a major street. Some 60 people were arrested. Dozens of protesters were detained by police in Lahore, Multan and Faisalabad" (BBC News (17 February 2006) *Denmark closes Pakistan embassy*).

A report released in February 2006 by *Agence France Presse* notes:

"Denmark temporarily shut its embassy in Islamabad and Pakistan recalled its envoy from Copenhagen Friday as fresh protests against cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed sparked a diplomatic row. An Islamic cleric added fuel to the fire by offering a one-million-dollar reward and a car for anyone who killed the cartoonists behind the drawings, first published in a Danish newspaper in September. Thousands of demonstrators took to the streets for a fifth straight day in Pakistan, with police firing tear gas and waving batons at protesters in the southern city of Karachi and the central city of Multan. Pakistani police arrested nearly 300 people and put a firebrand Islamic leader under house arrest in a bid to clamp down on the unrest that has left five people dead this week" (Agence France Presse (17 February 2006) *Denmark closes embassy, Pakistan recalls envoy over cartoons*).

BBC News in February 2006 points out that:

"On Friday police used tear gas to disperse angry protesters in Karachi. A radical Islamic leader Hafiz Mohammed Saeed was detained to prevent him from leading protests. More than 100 other people were detained across Pakistan" (BBC News (18 February 2006) *Four hurt in Pakistan cartoon row*).

In February 2006 *Agence France Presse* states:

"Hardline Islamist parties said Saturday the temporary closure of the Danish embassy in Islamabad and Pakistan's recall of its envoy from Copenhagen would not dampen protests over controversial cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed" (Agence France Presse (18 February 2006) *Islamists in Pakistan demand end to relations with Denmark*).

The *Associated Press* published a report in February 2006 which stated:

"Pakistani police raided offices and homes in three cities overnight, arresting a number of federal lawmakers, placing several radical Islamic leaders under house arrest and detaining hundreds of their associates in a bid to foil a Sunday rally in the capital against cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad, officials said" (Associated Press (19 February 2006) *Hundreds arrested as opposition attempt prophet cartoon protest in Pakistani capital*).

A report published by *Voice of America* in February 2006 notes:

"Pakistani authorities had imposed a ban on protest rallies in Islamabad following past week's violent demonstrations in other parts of the country. But hundreds of demonstrators led by leaders of major Islamic parties tried to rally in a central part of the capital in defiance of the ban. Security forces used teargas and rubber bullets to disperse them while protesters retaliated by throwing stones. Police also detained several lawmakers and religious leaders during raids in three cities to prevent them from taking part in the protest rally in Islamabad" (Voice of America (19 February 2006) *Pakistani Police Use Tear Gas Against Cartoons Protesters*).

A document issued in February 2006 by the *Associated Press* states:

“Pakistani security forces arrested hundreds of Islamic hard-liners, virtually sealed off the capital and used gunfire and tear gas Sunday to quell protests against caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad. Authorities in eastern Pakistan had banned protests after riots killed five people in two cities last week” (*Associated Press* (20 February 2006) *Security forces seal Pakistani capital to quell prophet cartoon protests*).

In February 2006 *The Times* notes in a report that:

“Violent protest continued in several countries yesterday. In Pakistan, police manned a security cordon around Islamabad and arrested hundreds of people, including politicians and Islamist leaders, intending to participate in a banned rally. A small protest march drew salvos of tear gas and gunfire from the security services. Police raided offices and homes of dozens of radical leaders, putting several under house arrest and detaining hundreds of their associates” (*The Times* (20 February 2006) *Curfew after 16 die in protests*).

In February 2006 *Agence France Presse* points out that:

“Pakistan detained the head of the country's main Islamic coalition for the second time in a week Friday amid fresh protests against cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed, officials said. Qazi Hussain Ahmad, chief of the hardline Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA), or United Action Forum, was held at his party compound in the eastern city of Lahore, a senior government official told AFP. Police arrested another 70 activists during overnight raids on their homes in Islamabad and Lahore to prevent a repeat of last week's violent anti-Western riots in two cities which left five people dead” (*Agence France Presse* (24 February 2006) *Pakistan detains Islamic leader amid new protests*).

Voice of America in February 2014 notes:

“Police in Pakistan say they have detained at least 19 Islamic activists in the eastern city of Lahore after they vowed to defy a ban on rallies protesting controversial cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad” (*Voice of America* (25 February 2006) *Pakistan Detains Islamic Activists Ahead of Cartoons Protest*).

The *Associated Press* in February 2006 notes:

“About 25,000 people some chanting "Death to America!" rallied against the Prophet Muhammad caricatures in Pakistan's largest city Sunday, but police prevented a rally in the eastern city of Lahore by arresting the religious ringleader and detaining scores of supporters. In Karachi, Pakistan's largest city and economic hub, where the provincial government has not banned such rallies, protesters also chanted "Down with the blasphemer!" and "End diplomatic ties with European countries!" No violence was reported. About 25,000 people joined the downtown rally organized by Tahafuz-e-Khatm-e-Nabuwat, a Sunni Muslim religious group, said Shaukat Shah, a Karachi police officer. The protest was the biggest in the port city since 40,000 rallied there Feb. 16 against the cartoons, which first appeared in a Danish newspaper in September but have been reprinted across Europe since. In Lahore, clerics, opposition lawmakers and religious school administrators were among 150 people arrested or detained without charge Saturday and Sunday in a bid to thwart the illegal

protest, police official Amir Zulfiqar said” (Associated Press (26 February 2006) *Pakistan police detain dozens in bid to prevent rally against prophet cartoons*).

The *Associated Press* in February 2006 notes:

“Police arrested scores of people, including opposition lawmakers, clerics and religious school administrators, to prevent an illegal rally Sunday against the Prophet Muhammad cartoons in the eastern city of Lahore” (Associated Press 26 February 2006) *Police detain scores of people to prevent illegal prophet rally in Pakistan*).

Dow Jones Factiva in February 2006 states that:

“About 70 people, including clerics and religious schools administrators, were arrested Sunday ahead of an illegal rally against Muhammad cartoons in the eastern Pakistani city of Lahore, police said” (Dow Jones Factiva (26 February 2006) *Pakistan Police: 70 Arrested Before Illegal Cartoon Rally*).

In February 2006 a publication issued by the *Associated Press* notes:

“About 25,000 people rallied in Karachi against Prophet Muhammad cartoons while authorities rounded up scores of Islamic hardliners to stop them from demonstrating in another Pakistani city” (Associated Press (27 February 2006) *25,000 rally against Prophet cartoons in Karachi, scores arrested elsewhere*).

In January 2007 a publication released by the *International Federation for Human Rights* states:

“On 19 Feb 2006, the press stated that the Peshawar city police had arrested 50 juveniles during the recent anti-Danish cartoons protests..” (International Federation for Human Rights (January 2007) *Slow march to the gallows: Death penalty in Pakistan*, p.48).

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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