



World Council of Churches

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World Council of Churches Condemns Attack on Churches in Pakistan

The World Council of Churches is shocked by reports it is receiving of violent attacks against churches and Christians in in Jaranwala district in the Punjab province of Faisalabad, Pakistan. The reports received indicate that six churches have been burnt in a Christian colony of Punjab province, after two Christians were accused of blasphemy. A Presbyterian church, a Catholic Church, a Full Gospel Assembly Church, a Salvation Army centre and other independent churches have reportedly been burnt, and Christian clergy threatened and harassed.

These reports illustrate yet again the extremist threats faced by members of the Christian community in Pakistan. The WCC calls on the Pakistani authorities to act urgently and consistently to prevent further such violent attacks and violations of the human rights of Christians in Punjab province or elsewhere in Pakistan.

The WCC has long expressed grave concerns regarding the impact of Pakistan's blasphemy laws on Christians and members of other religious communities, as these latest reports once again indicate. All Pakistanis are entitled to respect and recognition of their equal rights as citizens of the country regardless of their religious affiliation, but once again these incidents demonstrate the gulf between that aspiration – and obligation – and the current reality in the country.

Christians in Pakistan are, as communities, precious and integral members of society in Pakistan. As Pakistan celebrated its 76th Independence Day on the 14 August, we are reminded of the commitments made at its founding to its diverse communities. We look to the of the wider society to ensure that all communities stand together and protect each other and that the government and the authorities take responsibility for protecting all and ensuring that even the most vulnerable do not have to live in fear.

We invite all WCC member churches and ecumenical and inter-religious partners around the world to join in raising their voices against this violence and oppression, and in prayer for equal human rights, justice and peace in Pakistan.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jerry Pillay". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jerry" being more prominent than the last name "Pillay".

Rev. Prof. Dr Jerry Pillay
General Secretary
World Council of Churches