

# IMPACT STORIES

*“Peace is not something you wish for,  
it’s something you make,  
something you do, something you are,  
something you give away”.*



**PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION**  
For Interfaith Harmony and Human Rights

2017

## **PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION**

Peace and Development Foundation (PDF) believes in Unity in Diversity and in the equality of all citizens, regardless of religion, sex, class, caste, occupation, language, ethnicity or any other differentiation. PDF was established in 2013, aiming to deal constructively and proactively with issues of violence and discrimination based on religious and gender disparities with communities of different sects, and faiths.

## **VISION AND MISSION**

‘Pakistani citizens are united as nation to foster hope, peace, justice, equality and diversity’.

## **GOAL**

To create a conducive environment for interfaith dialogue, cultivate pluralistic cultural values, and progressive attitudes among people of different background.

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# PREFACE

## TOWARDS EQUALITY AND PEACE

Pakistan is home to Muslims, including Shia Muslims, Ahmadis, Christians, Hindus, Sikhs and Parsis. Unfortunately, unrelenting violence by militants and mobs has placed this religious diversity at risk. No community Muslim or non-Muslim is safe. And so, the country is faced with a crisis; promoting common bonds of citizenship while accommodating and showing respect for ethno-cultural linguistic and religious pluralism has become a major challenge. Citizenship, civic identities, and civic virtues are vital for the functioning of liberal democracies. Citizenship and diversity always hinge on public policy and institutional sign.

Pakistan's creators envisaged it as a liberal and egalitarian society with equal rights and privileges for all Pakistanis. The country's founder Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah proclaimed in 1947 that his countrymen "may belong to any religion or caste or creed -- that has nothing to do with the business of the state. ... We are starting with this fundamental principle that we are all citizens and equal citizens of one state."

But the identity politics in the state formation, statecraft, and fundamentalist tendencies have marginalized the religious minorities in Pakistan. The constitutional crisis over nation-building in the post-partition era in Pakistan and the missing links of citizens and basic human rights, which have cost heavily to the internal security of the country and the visible populations of the minorities, still have to be resolved.

By executing policies that could build bridges and form common bonds of citizenship, the society should articulate a societal behavior Pakistan's founders had envisaged.

Peace and Development Foundation (PDF) through its projects "Equal Opportunities and Citizenships", "Just and Sustainable Peace in Pakistan" in operation in Faisalabad, Gujranwala, Lahore districts, has worked through its community peace groups towards making people, irrespective of their faith, contribute to bringing socio-political change for a just and tolerant society.

The projects focus on mobilizing grassroots communities for coordinated efforts to create an enabling environment for sustainable change, so that religious minorities can reclaim their rights and access improved protection (particularly women and girls). The projects engage political, religious leadership and lawyers at the district, provincial and national levels to complement efforts at the community level.

We have compiled a set of stories here as an indicator of success we have achieved in bridging the polarity gap. For the success to snowball, these stories should serve as an example for other segments of the society so that Pakistan's national journey to tolerance, acceptance, respect for humanity and equal citizenship is progressive and not regressive.

**ROMANA BASHIR**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

FROM VISION TO REALITY

PROJECT

‘JUST AND SUSTAINABLE PEACE  
IN PAKISTAN’

## A FRIDAY SERMON ON JOYFUL CO-EXISTENCE

“

**We need to celebrate our differences instead of hating each other.**

**Islam also teaches us that we should live peacefully with other nations and tribes and we should respect each other and our differences.**

”

The efforts of PDF to create peace and harmony in the society have started bearing fruit with the support from various quarters. A recent example of this successful journey is the result of a capacity building training on “Interfaith Harmony: A Prerequisite for Just and Sustainable Peace” held by Peace and Development Foundation on January 19-20, 2015 in Tehsil Sumandri, district Faisalabad.

A local prayer leader, Qari Amir Shehzad (Imam Markazi Ahl-Hadees Mosque, Sumandri) after attending this training became a part of peace building efforts in practical terms. He exhibited keen interest in joining hands with PDF for the promotion of peace. Keeping his promise he had made at the ToT, he delivered Friday sermon on January 23, 2015 on peace and interfaith harmony and sent its recording to PDF.

He emphasized upon the need for peace during his sermon. “There is violence in Pakistan because we

have forgotten the teachings of Islam. Islam aims to promote peace and understanding among people of all faiths, and it strongly prohibits all forms of violence and aggression against all people regardless of their faith or race.” This wonderful principle of Islam, he said, makes it clear that no one is superior to others on the basis of religion or race. He said God has created different nations and tribes so that we get to know each other instead of hating each other only because we are different.

Qari Amir said: We need to celebrate our commonalities instead of hating each other. Islam also teaches us that we should live peacefully with other nations and tribes and we should respect each other and our differences. We should learn to live together and to get to know each other, and to engage in dialogue amongst all nations and treat every human being as equal and there is no harm in it if we live together with people of different faiths and share our joys and sorrows.

**QARI AMIR SHEHZAD**

IMAM MASJID, MARKAZI  
AHL HADEES

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**We should learn to live together and to get to know each other, and to engage in dialogue amongst all nations and treat every human being as equal and there is no harm in it if we live together with people of different faiths and share our joys and sorrows.**

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## CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM CONFLICT RESOLVED AT PERSONAL LEVEL

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**He apologized to the Christian customers sitting in his shop for hurting their religious sentiments. He said that being a Muslim he could not hurt the feelings of any other religion.**

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**M**ushtaq Sadiq, a Christian by faith, is one of the youth activists who attended PDF's peace training workshop in 2015. He is not highly educated but is clear in his ideas about promoting peace through action. Sadiq is a resident of Karbath village, Bedian Road, Lahore, which is adjacent to Youhanabad.

Narrating an incident, he said that on February 5, 2015 evening he went to a barber's shop in his village. The Muslim shop-owner had installed a television set in his shop for his customers to watch while waiting for their turn. Sadiq was sitting with other customers and waiting for his turn and watching television. In the meanwhile, a Christian young man came in and flipped the television channel to Issac TV (a Christian Gospel channel in Pakistan) on which a Christian prayer ceremony was being telecasted.

The barber disliked the program and used harsh words for the program and asked the Christian boy to change the TV channel. Soon they started shouting at each other. Mushtaq Sadiq immediately intervened and explained to the shopkeeper that.

Christian prayer was being telecast on Issac TV channel and he had hurt the religious sentiments of Christians by using harsh words. “As Christians and Muslims we are taught by our religions to respect each other's faiths,” he said quoting examples of religious tolerance and interfaith harmony from both religions.

After listening to Mushtaq's arguments, the shopkeeper admitted that no one had explained to him about the Christian prayers before. The barber said he was ignorant about that and he unconsciously uttered harsh words. He apologized to the Christian customers sitting in his shop for hurting their religious sentiments. He said that being a Muslim he could not hurt the feelings of any other religion. He thanked Mushtaq Sadiq for educating him about respecting other's religions. Sadiq played a good mediatory role in settling the dispute which could lead to Muslim-Christian conflict.

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**MUSHTAQ SADIQ**  
 PDF CPG MEMBER,  
 LAHORE

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**“As Christians and Muslims we are taught by our religions to respect each other's faiths,” he said quoting examples of religious tolerance and interfaith harmony from both religions.**

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## HUMAN RELATIONS BEYOND THE BOUNDARIES OF RELIGIOUS IDENTITIES

**Prayer leader got convinced and allowed Christians to shoulder the Muslim friend's funeral and participate in final rituals**

Mian Muhammad Younis lives in Youhanabad, a socio-economically poor and less developed Christian majority area in Lahore. He enjoys good relationship with Christian neighbours and voluntarily participates in peace efforts. He attended PDF's peace and interfaith training programmes in January 2015. Now, he is an active peace promoter and interfaith harmony advocate. Narrating an incident, Mr Younis said he went to attend funeral of a relative in Fathee Town, Okara on February 11, 2015. Fathee town, around 125 kilometers from Lahore, has diverse population with a substantial number of Christians. Muslims and Christians have been living together in Fathee Town, participating in each others' social gatherings and sharing sorrow and happiness for decades.

Younis's relatives have been living in the Christian neighborhood and enjoying good relationship with each other for decades. Therefore, as a part of tradition, people from the Christian community came to attend the funeral. When the body was being taken

to graveyard for burial, the Christians said that they had brotherly terms with the deceased and so, they wanted to shoulder the coffin to the graveyard. A local mosque's prayer leader objected to the suggestion arguing that they could not shoulder the coffin as they were Christians. Mian Mohammad Younis who was witnessing the whole scene immediately intervened and asked to stop the funeral and listen to him first.

He quoted an anecdote from Islamic history and said: "Once, a funeral passed by the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and he stood up out of respect. It was said to him, "It is a Jew." The Prophet said, "Was he not a soul?" [Source: Sahih Bukhari 1250, Sahih Muslim 961]. He also highlighted the importance of Muslim-Christian relationships through references from Islamic history. Majority of the people in the village were not that educated. So when Younis gave examples in a simple way to them, they and the prayer leader got convinced and allowed Christians to shoulder the Muslim friend's funeral and participate in final rituals also.

**MIAN MUHAMMAD YOUNIS**  
PDF CPG MEMBER  
UC-244 GAJJUMATTA, LAHORE

**"Once, a funeral passed by the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and he stood up out of respect. It was said to him, "It is a Jew." The Prophet said, "Was he not a soul?" [Source: Sahih Bukhari 1250, Sahih Muslim 961].**

## RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION WITH STUDENT BY THE TEACHER

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**EDO charged the teacher under the education Act 2006 and thus withheld the teacher's promotion for three years as disciplinary act.**

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This case is a classic example of the fact that if you are aware of your rights and can take a stand to protect them, you can not only attain the justice for yourself but make the violators accountable for their actions as well. According to details of the case, Naveed Rafique S/O Rafique Masih, a Christian student of 8th Grade was declared as failed in Nazra (oral) Islamiyat exams by his Muslim teacher on a flimsy pretext.

“He appeared in the examination of Punjab Examination Commission held in April 2016, under Roll No.68-426-220 in district Faisalabad. In the oral examination of Islamiyat (Islamic Studies) the examiner told him at the spot, “You are failed as you have not recited Kalimah.” Naveed Rafique said, “I am Christian and I do not know the Islamic Kalimah.” The honourable examiner deliberately attempted to have forced conversion of Naveed Rafique violating Article 22 (1) of the Constitution of Pakistan and when he could not achieve his purpose he declared failed the mentioned candidate.”

The teacher that denied Naveed from his right tried to justify his act citing that as the boy was failed to recite Kalma. It was actually a cunning ploy of victimization as the said teacher was fully aware of the fact that reciting Kalma will be automatically considered as wilfully embracing Islam. It could also be termed as a case of forced conversion. However, Naveed refused to recite Kalma by exercising his religious rights given by the constitution of Pakistan. However, the teacher deemed as enough excuse for declaring him as 'failed'. Thus, the action of the teacher was deemed

as discriminative towards the religious minority communities and violation to their rights as well.

### CHALLENGING THE ACTION (INTERVENTION):

After getting information about the incident, Professor Anjum James Paul, Coordinator Peace and Development Foundation (PDF) decided to take up the case to provide justice to victim of this discriminative behaviour. He highlighted the case and pleaded it with the concerned authorities and wrote letters to top officials of the government of Pakistan including the Prime Minister, Chief Minister Punjab and federal and provincial education ministers with the details of the incident and urge for an appropriate action.

Thus, with his persistent efforts, the case was finally brought into the notice of Executive Director Officer (EDO) Education Faisalabad. As a result of hearing and on the basis of all available evidences, EDO charged the teacher under the education Act 2006 and thus withheld the teacher's promotion for three years as disciplinary act. This punishment is considered the major penalty for the violator of rules and regulations under Education Policy Act 2006.

This positive action which was entailed as enrolling of Naveed in 9th grade as well in a well reputed school of district Sumandari, saved the loss of one academic year of the victim. As a kind gesture, He was also provided with books and uniform besides arrangements of fee for his enrolment by the EDO

**PROF. ANJUM JAMES PAUL**  
CHAIRMAN PAKISTAN MINORITY  
TEACHERS ASSOCIATION,  
PDF CPG COORDINATOR

Education. The EDO Faisalabad also sent a request to Punjab Education Commission, Centre Examination Board to award average marks to Naveed in the Islamiyat exam as he was not allowed to appear in the examination for the same.

#### CONCLUSION

The efforts made by Prof. Anjum James Paul (PDF Coordinator), Naveed currently studying in the 9th

grade. The role of EDO Education that was to provide justice to youngster from the marginalized is received highly positive and encouraging by civil society. The act has also revived the confidence of the victim as well as community that they are equal citizen of this country and hence may seek justice in case of any discrimination. Though, the decision for the average marks is pending yet, hopes for similar act of kindness by the authorities are quite high at present.

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## GIRLS' EDUCATION SUPPORTED BY LOCAL IMAM

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**QARI BASHIR HUSSAIN**  
PDF CPG, COORDINATOR

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In general perception about the local religious leadership people thinks that they do not support women's education and they promotes conservativeness and narrow mindedness in society especially regarding women issues. Qari Bashir (local Imam and CPG leader at Samundri, 465-GB) after the meeting of CPG on September 8, 2015, introduced two girls to the PDF team and shared that these are the girls who had decided to quit their education after completing their matriculation because of conservative approach of the family and environment of the area but he himself and an educationist Prof. Anjum Paul motivated the girls to continue their education. The girls now had completed intermediate with good marks

and now being motivated to get admission to complete their graduation.

This was a good example with another aspect as well where a Muslim religious leader and a Christian educationist were working together for a cause and thus contributing to build trust and confidence among communities through motivational spirit as well.

Qari Bashir further shared that he himself and his wife were also motivated by Prof. Anjum James Paul to continue their education as well and graduation result of both was being awaited. Qari also said that he and his wife would continue their education. It was an interesting example of Muslim-Christian friendship with highly positive results in the communities.

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## CHANGING THINKING PATTERN

During a meeting of CPG on September 8, 2015 at community level in a village of Samundri an elder man pointed out that there is a lack of female participation in this group. He said that we are having a female leader among us who is

PDF and has come to talk to us. Thus, we can emulate to this example and if a woman can lead such initiative, we must ensure women participation in this group in future from our locality to give experience and exposure to our women.

## AVERTING SECTARIAN CONFLICT THROUGH DIALOGUE AND NEGOTIATIONS

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**With proactive engagement CPG coordinator was able to resolve intra-faith dispute and sustain the peace among communities.**

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An intra-faith issue arose in the months of October to November 2016; the ownership of a Mosque in the locality of UC 244 Gajjumatta, Faisal Town, of Lahore became the reason behind a tense situation between people of two Muslim sects.

The community members from Brelvi sect were agitating against some members of Deobandi sect for using Mosque for the purpose of preaching. The Brelvi community was claiming that they had allowed the members of other sects to come in Mosque to offer their prayers but instead, they started using the Mosque for the preaching about their own sect.

They said that they will not allow the entrance of the members of other sects in the Mosque any more. This created a tension in the local community with potential threat of violence.

However, Khalid Mayo, CPG Coordinator of PDF, decided to act immediately to defuse the tension. He involved local political as well as religious leadership including local MNA, UC's Chairperson and police officials in dialogue to resolve the issue. After several rounds of mediation between the two groups, finally it was decided on November 10, 2016 that the members of Deobandi sect would offer their prayers in another Mosque in the area to avoid and avert conflict like situation in the community. With this proactive engagement, CPG coordinator was able to resolve intra-faith dispute and sustain the peace among communities.

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**KHALID ANJUM MAYO**  
 PDF CPG COORDINATOR

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**CPG Coordinator involved local politicians as well as religious leadership including local MNA, UC's Chairpersons, and police officials in dialogue to resolve the issue.**

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## 'ACT NOW', PDF'S UNIQUE APPROACH FOR PEACEBUILDING

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**PDF leadership and its local CPG's members through timely action and utilizing the contacts and linkages at higher political level averted a social issue from turning into religious hatred.**

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**A** 'ct now' when it's needed the most has been the approach, Peace and Development Foundation (PDF) has been applying to save the human lives from undue sufferings and to restore their faith in fairness and humanity. Through such timely and direct interventions, PDF has not only created living examples of avoiding and reducing violence in society through a thoughtful action and using the available mechanisms to seek justice but also brought the peace back in the lives individuals and families that were subjected to torment that they did not deserve. One of such interventions that PDF has recently made was the incident occurred at Khaliq Nagar, an adjunct area of Youhanabad locality of Lahore. The PDF leadership and its local CPG's members through timely action and utilizing the contacts and linkages at higher political level averted a social issue from turning into religious hatred and violence between the two communities.

According to detail of the incident that occurred March 7, 2017, Christian family residing in Khaliq Nagar, an adjunct area of Youhanabad locality was attacked as an act of forced eviction by some land grabbers. While the elders in the family were not present on the scene, the attacker not only thrown the furniture and other valuables out of the home in addition to beating up the small children. The attackers justified the act on the pre-text that the family residing in the house doesn't have legal documents. The family had purchased the land from a housing society but only to get an agreement on a stamp paper without the registry of ownership. Therefore, the land grabbers find the

family vulnerable to attack and made them evict the place. The situation suddenly turned volatile when some locals find a copy of the Holy Bible along with the thrown items and thus termed it as an act of desecration. The tension started mounting in the area however; PDF team was by a sheer coincidence, near the locality and reached at the place of happening around 11 PM.

Earlier, a CPG member of PDF from the locality kept the situation in control by constantly engaging both the communities urging them to not to let the situation turned into a religious issue. PDF leadership meanwhile used its own linkages and contacted the Advisor to Chief Minister Punjab, Dr. Abdul Ghafoor by urging him to intervene into the matter. He also arrived on the occasion immediately and finally an application was submitted to police by the victim family with its consent and understanding of both the communities that it's a social issue that's should not be allowed to turn into religious one.

The things started to get normalized and PDF leadership made a follow up visit to victim family next day. The inspiring thing that the team founded was that the children of the victim family went to appear in their primary level exams despite of going through this trauma which reflects their sense of importance of the education. The family was assured that such incident would not be allowed to happen in future. Thus, the peace was restored in the lives of family members as well as in the community and the action of PDF generated an impact that was expected to have a profound influence in the local community for a sustained peace.

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**ZEESHAN ASIM**  
 CPG PDF MEMBER

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## THREAT OF FORCED EVICTION FROM THE AREA

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**He assured the Christian community that they can celebrate Christmas without any fear nobody will disturb them anymore. They have equal rights as Pakistani.**

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**QAZI ABDUL QADEER KHAMOSH**  
CHAIRMAN, MUSLIM CHRISTIAN  
FEDERATION INTERNATIONAL

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**PDF** has collaborated and travelled to Gujranwala (conflicting area) on December 23, 2016 with the delegation of Muslim religious leaders (members of MCIF, Muslim Christian International Federation) to show solidarity with the Christian community (victim party) at Gujranwala who faced the threat of forced eviction from that area where they were living peacefully from the decades. This situation was created by the influential land mafia of the slum area of the Gujranwala few days before Christmas.

Two years back PDF has worked hard for interfaith relationship to promote peaceful co-existence of faith communities for living together without fear in district Gujranwala. PDF established a network of religious leaders who can intervene in the harsh condition to defuse the tense situation and resolve the conflict at community level even after the completion of the project. When this conflict came into the knowledge of local Muslim Religious Leaders they inform heads of MCIF (Qazi Abdul Qadeer Khamosh, Chairperson) and PDF (Romana Bashir, Executive Director). Both CSOs intervened jointly as a delegation with the help of local influential Muslim leadership and social activists of the particular area they initiated dialogue between Christians and Muslim communities in the area and resolved conflict peacefully.

While visiting the area (Church) delegation which was comprises on Christian and Muslim members spoke on the occasion, especially leadership of MCIF and PDF mustered up the courage of the survivors and ensure them that we are all standing with you in any

critical circumstances and the local Muslim religious leaders were also there to defend them and to protect them. Qazi Abdul Qadeer Khamosh emphasized on a long standing with the Christian community through religious connotation he made them aware that how Islam protect the rights of minorities. He assured the Christian community that they can celebrate Christmas without any fear nobody will disturb them anymore. They have equal rights as Pakistani.

### CONCLUSION:

The dialogue was initiated between local imams, MCIF and PDF CPG members with the guidance of PDF and MCIF leadership. With this peace delegation the pressure was built on those who were evoking Christian community to evacuate from the area. With this intervention, the landlord was directly involved and narrated that the land is granted by him to the Christian community and if anyone has objection on Christians living here and practice their faith and belief then they also have left the place. The dialogue and firm stand of landlord in favor of marginalized made otherwise possible force eviction of Christians. Now, both the communities are living together and practicing their religious faith and belief without fear.

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## PDF'S PEACEBUILDING STORY IN THE WAKE OF YOUHANABAD TRAGIC INCIDENT

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As soon as the news flashed on electronic media, PDF contacted its staff, who was on Sunday holiday, to rush to Lahore.

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### PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

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March 15, 2015 marked another tragic day for Pakistan in general and Christian community in particular when two suicide bombers blasted themselves outside Christ Church and St John's Church in Youhanabad, Lahore reportedly killing 21-28 people and injuring 75-85 people (various sources). Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan Jamaatul Ahrar (TTP-JA) claimed responsibility for the attacks.

The incident triggered mob protest causing panic situation in the Youhanabad and surrounding areas. The angry mob caught two alleged suspects from police custody and gunned them down with the pistol later, they burnt their bodies. Police arrested around 108 people from different areas of Lahore. Without investigations police raids created fear and insecurity among people and forced them to migrate from their homes.

As soon as the news flashed on electronic media, PDF contacted its staff, who was on Sunday holiday, to rush to Lahore. PDF team from Rawalpindi travelled to Lahore on the day of Yohanabad incident; visited the attacked sites, met different people and assessed ground realities. PDF team expressed condolences with grieved families and showed solidarity with them.

PDF's Executive Director Romana Bashir was taken on line (through phone call) on two TV channels; SUCH <http://www.suchtv.pk/program/aaj-ka-such/item/19987-aaj-ka-such-16-03-2015.html> and 92 respectively. Since, she was in the area so she mitigated the rumors and misconceptions being aired on media by articulating real situation from the ground.

Subsequently, PDF also demanded to the Government to honour Akash Masih with civil award who sacrificed his life for saving others in the Church. The demand was published in Christian Post <http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/viewarticle.s.php?editorialid=2314> and it was also circulated on the social media and number of people supported the demand and shared the post on facebook.

In the wake of Youhanabad incident, PDF has chosen Faisalabad as a base for bringing together faith communities and building their opinion to response terrorism as a nation. In this regard, PDF in collaboration with Faisalabad Arts Council held an awareness seminar and a Theatre performance on "Social, Religious Harmony, Peace and Equal Opportunities" on March 19, 2015. PDF ensured religious, sectarian, fields and gender diversity among panelists. A total of 312 participants (213 Muslims and 99 Christians) including 110 female attended the seminar.

Furthermore, On March 20, 2015, PDF held press conference at Press Club Faisalabad to brief the media about facts and to draw their attention to publish balanced reporting regarding Youhanabad tragic incidents; bomb blasts and lynching of two persons by the aggressive mob. <http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/headlinewsd.php?hnewsid=5256>

PDF sent its representative second time to Youhanabad on April 1, 2015 to assess ground realities by meeting with Church leaders, shopkeepers, journalists and social activists.

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**Mohammad Younas (member delegation) had a two hours long meeting with brother of the lynched victim (Naeem) on June 1, 2015 at Lahore, also invited him to meet with PDF's delegation.**

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Later, the PDF held follow-up meetings with network of faith-based organizations FBOs and civil society organizations (CSOs) on March 31, 2015 at Lahore and five working committees were formed; for data collection of arrested people and Court matters, to Deal with Media, to indentify Youth leadership, to engaging women, and to develop contacts with Mosque and Church leadership in surrounding area of Youhanabad.

In another follow-up meeting of the FBOs/CSOs Network was held in Lahore on April 17, 2015 in which a 12-member lobbying delegation, one member from each member Network organization, was formed to initiate dialogue with relevant authorities in the area. The delegation was encompasses on Christians and Muslim religious leaders and social activists. A brief summary of findings, recommendations and demands regarding aftermath of Youhanabad incident were prepared and presented to the Govt. officials, relevant authorities by the lobbying delegation. The lobbying delegation met with provincial parliamentarians and relevant departments, administration, electronic and print media groups, political parties, and Christian and Muslim religious leadership in surrounding areas of Youhanabad to normalize the critical situation.

In connection with lobbying campaign the lobbying delegation met with Imam of Noorani Mosque & head of Chishtiya Maderassa (which was reportedly targeted by protesters after Youhanabad incident), & Muslim community leaders to initiate dialogue for bridging gap between Christians/Muslims. First they showed resistance/reaction as they were of the view that the delegation members were defending Christians who had pelted stones on Mosque & insulted Muslims by checking their identity cards after incident. But while interaction and discussion with delegation, they were placated and were willing to be

part of peace efforts and lobbying delegation meetings to defuse the tension in their area.

Likewise, while lobbying for normalizing the tense situation between Christians & Muslims at Youhanabad & its surroundings, PDF's delegation met with Imam (Haji Imdad) head of Jaamia Umm-e-Ashraf Jamal, He praised the Delegation's efforts and offered to host interfaith dialogue at his Madrasa (Muslim seminary). He engaged people from Youhanabad and surrounding areas to make peace effort result-oriented. Subsequently, he hosted an interfaith dialogue at Jaamia Umm-e-Ashraf on June 13, 2015.

As a brave step; Mohammad Younas (member delegation) had a two hours long meeting with brother of the lynched victim (Naeem) on June 1, 2015 at Lahore, also invited him to meet with PDF's delegation. Victim's brother shared that no one had approached their family for talks or dialogue. He also said that he will talk to his elders as whether they will be agreed to talk with delegation or not. Meeting with the concerned person was a good and courageous step taken by the PDF's lobbying delegation member to engage victim party in dialogue to address the root causes of the conflict and for exploring possibilities and opportunities for the reconciliation process.

Moreover, the lobbying delegation also presents facts to the media through press conferences at Lahore Press Club. PDF also arrange a 'Public Forum on Peaceful Co-existence' at Youhanabad which was attended by number of Christian and Muslim audience from diverse fields. This forum helped in easing the prevailing tension after the terrorist incident and bridging Christian and Muslim communities in the area.

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**PDF has been successful in its efforts to take on board Muslims and Christians together to response the challenging environment constructively through various interventions and developing synergies with relevant government and social networks.**  
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Besides, it was sad that hardly a month has passed of the incident, yet another tragic incident happened. 13-year-old Nauman Masih was intercepted by two unknown motorcyclists who first assaulted him and then set him alight by throwing kerosene oil after identifying his Christian faith in Gulshan-e-Ravi market, Lahore on April 10, 2015. He was pronounced dead on April 15, 2015, exactly a month after Youhanabad incident. PDF sent its Project Officer to collect facts and finding of the incident and will share the case study within next couple of days.

This was an alarming situation as fear and insecurity has further gripped the area. There was a dire need to taking immediate steps to curb more religion-driven violent incidents/conflicts. PDF sent its Project Officer to Lahore on April 16, 2015 to prepare case study of the incident.

PDF has played an instrumental role by engaging direct and indirect stakeholders from the target areas, its network of Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and representatives of Community Peace Groups (CPGs) to restore the social relations of faith communities.

### **CONCLUSION:**

In the beginning of the project 'Just and Sustainable Peace in Pakistan' In the wake of major religion driven incidents within a span of few months including; burning to death of a Christian couple by the violent mob of Muslims at Kot Radha Kishan (Nov 4, 2014),

publication of blasphemous cartoons in French Magazine (Jan 2015), terrorist attacks on Churches and lynching of two persons by aggressive mob of Christians at Youhanabad (March 2015); in relation to these successive incidents situation was become tense and critical at the project areas in 2015. Hence duration of the project period from November 2014 to March 31, 2017 in the given alarming situation PDF decided that peace efforts should be done persistently and bravely by playing its instrumental role for building trust and relation among the communities. However, PDF has been successful in its efforts to take on board Muslims and Christians together to response the challenging environment constructively through various interventions and developing synergies with relevant government and social networks. PDF has established good coordination with 'Muslim Christian Federation International (MCFI), Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), district government of Faisalabad, Punjab Commission on the Status of Women, print and electronic media representatives, politicians, local Imams/ priests and benefiting from their contacts and platforms to influence target communities to improve social cohesion.

## A PROMPT RESPONSE OF PDF ON YOUHANABAD TRAGIC INCIDENT (MARCH 15, 2015) THROUGH ELECTRONIC MEDIA



**The state should have protected minorities; it is also in the Islam/Quran. Hence loss of 5 people from Christians/minority is more shameful than 50 majority Muslims in the global world. It earns bad name to Muslim state/Pakistan.**




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**PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION**

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Glimpses of TV Talk Show on March 16, 2015 In relation to Youhanabad Tragic Incident

Program Host: Nadeem Hussain

Program Panelists were:

1. Mufti Kifayallah, Jamiat-e-Ulmae Islam (F) Pakistan
2. Allama Arif Hussain Wahidi, Secretary General Shia Ulema Council
3. Romana Bashir, Consultant of Interreligious Dialogue Council, Vatican City, Rome

The host introduces Romana Bashir as Member Interfaith Harmony Council-Vatican City (as Romana has appointed as Consultant for “Pontifical Council of Interreligious Dialogue” by the Pope (Holy Father) but not as Director of Peace and Development Foundation (PDF), which is interesting aspect and more acceptable position I guess. In the first part there was more general narrative of terrorism in the country and little more situation update asked by the host from Romana Bashir about Youhanabad?

**Romana Bashir;** people have mixed expressions of deep sorrow, crying for lost lives, protesting, anger etc. when asked about burning two men after the incident, R.B. said; same Kot Radha Kishan (a Christian couple burnt to death in November 2014), we all burning people is below the human value. She said the Church leadership is all against violent protests. We as nation could be more united without violent protests.

**Mufti Kifayallah;** we need to stand united as nation and take it as moral obligation, collective responsibility on one hand. But, failure of Punjab government and intelligence agencies is also obvious, same as National Action Plan - NAP.

**Allama Arif Hussain Wahidi;** minorities have equal protection rights same as others (Muslim majority) in Pakistan. He also criticized the NAP affectivity so far. NAP has been very limited to control the loud speakers in the Mosques only, but not countering terrorists directly.

About burning of two persons in Youhanabad...

**Romana Bashir;** there is overall intolerance in society as nation now, Kot Radha Kishan and now Youhanabad all are condemnable. Incidences like Kot Radha Kishan, Youhanabad should have united people than divided them. But, we shall not see such incidents from religious lenses, but from humanitarian and Pakistani/national lenses.

**Mufti Kifayallah;** The state should have protected minorities; it is also in the Islam/Quran. Hence loss of 5 people from Christians/minority is more shameful than 50 majority Muslims in the global world. It earns bad name to Muslim state/Pakistan. But, meaningful peaceful protest could have earned more results, what people have now lost (the Christianity’s image of peace) from Youhanabad.



**Role of the Church is to prepare peaceful, tolerant people and avoid violence. The Youhanabad incidence is same intense as Army Public School, Peshawar (December 2014 attacked by terrorists, more than 100 individuals killed), the Imambragahs or any other state institute/department not aside from the mainstream.**



**Romana Bashir;** Agree with Mufti Kifayullah that violence has weakened the case, rather diverted attention from main/core issue. The martyred guy Akaash Bashir a young boy (the one who stopped the suicide bomber) lost his life, which is pride of Christians in Pakistan. It also gives sense of responsibility to safe others. However, the Church leaders and we are conveying peace messages.

**Allama Arif Hussain Wahidi;** Some interfaith efforts are on-going, but not sufficient. We need increase interaction, also government to take serious step, which is not yet done.

**Mufti Kifayullah;** The Church leadership could play better role, may be in future now. There is more need to 'create intra-faith forums to achieve inter faith harmony'.

**Romana Bashir;** The violence from angry youth could be avoided, if police (government administration) played positive role promptly. The violent youth doesn't represent the whole Christian/Church at all. I came to know, the Chief Minister (Mian Shahbaz Sharif, brother of prime minister Mian Nawaz Sharif) was elected Member for Provincial Assembly – MPA, elected from the same Youhanabad constituency.

Mufti Kifayullah; Protection of minority is state's responsibility.

**Romana Bashir;** The international war West/Christianity vs Muslims have nothing to do with Christians living in Pakistan. Each Christian is son and daughter of the Pakistani land and hence patriot. The Pakistani society is at such psychological hype, where anything negativity and division is more quickly

absorbed than the positive. But the state is like mother for all children (the good and the bad once), and state has to play role.correct to positive behavior building (the example is of protection of minorities he said).

**Allama Arif Hussain Wahidi;** He challenged Mufti Kifayullah about role of Mosques, saying there are low literate Mosque leaders (more on countryside) inciting violence and sectarianism.

**Romana Bashir;** Role of the Church is to prepare peaceful, tolerant people and avoid violence. The Youhanabad incidence is same intense as Army Public School, Peshawar (December 2014 attacked by terrorists, more than 100 individuals killed), the Imambragahs or any other state institute/department not aside from the mainstream.

**Mufti Kifayullah;** Role of Mosque is still better than the Church. But if the Vatican Church and Bait Ullah Mosque (Saudi Arabia) show unity, then no one can challenge the peace. Unanimously from all guests; 'state should improve security measures'.

**To watch the program again: 'Aaj Ka Such (16-03-2015)' on web link:**

**<http://www.suchtv.pk/program/aaj-ka-such/item/19987-aaj-ka-such-16-03-2015.html>**

Program is also uploaded on page of Peace and Development Foundation on face book.

**Transcription by:  
Imran Munir, Project Officer NCA**

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## MINORITIES HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR IN PAKISTAN



**WAQAR MUSTAFA**  
JOURNALIST

The Pakistani prime minister's overtures to minority faiths are heartening and may well entail adoption of sound policies to empower the marginalised segments of society.

Inaugurating the restoration of an ancient Hindu temple complex recently, Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif went beyond symbolism. At a ceremony at 900-year-old Katas Raj temple, one of the holiest sites in South Asia for Hindus, Sharif said: "We are all equal - Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Christians - and people belonging to other religions; we are all one."

At the ceremony attended by senior Christian, Sikh and Hindu leaders, he said he was the prime minister of all Pakistanis and "not just Muslim Pakistanis" and that the day was not far when Pakistan would be recognized as a "minorities-friendly country".

This is not Sharif's first attempt to burnish progressive credentials in a country where non-Muslims, who make up only about three per cent of the 190 million populations, often complain of insecurity and discrimination. In 2015, while attending a ceremony in Karachi to mark the Hindu festival of Diwali, he said minorities were part of Pakistan and it was his duty to protect them. "If you are in distress, I will stand by you. Even if a Muslim commits an injustice, I will stand with the victim," he said. Last month, he re-named a National Centre for Physics at Quaid-i-Azam University as 'Professor Abdus Salam Center for

Physics' in honour of Abdus Salam, a Nobel Prize-winning physicist who was shunned for decades as he hailed from the small Ahmadiyya community.

The Pakistani prime minister's overtures to minority faiths are heartening and may well entail adoption of sound policies to empower the marginalised segments of society regardless of their religion, sex, race or ethnicity. But by correcting the wrongs done for decades - that have fueled a sense of deprivation, dissipated talent and human potential in minority groups and so, hampered economic growth - and alienating hardliners opposed to social change will not be an easy task. Pakistan's founder, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, recognised as the Quaid-e-Azam, had said in his speech at the inaugural session of the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan that non-Muslims would be equal citizens in the new country. Jinnah emphasised the equality of all citizens by saying: "You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques, or to any other place or worship in this state of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed that has nothing to do with the business of the state. ... We are all citizens and equal citizens of one state."

The statement provided a framework for protecting the rights of all citizens of Pakistan without any discrimination of religion and race. Pakistan's early history shows that 15 of the 69

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**"You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques, or to any other place or worship in this state of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed that has nothing to do with the business of the state. We are all citizens and equal citizens of one state."**

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members of Pakistan's first Constituent Assembly (1947-54) were citizens of other faiths. Jinnah nominated a Hindu and an Ahmadi to Pakistan's first cabinet. True, the representation reflected their population; non-Muslims comprised about 23 per cent of Pakistan's population then. But it cannot be denied that things changed over the last several decades with the decline in religious tolerance. However, the steady rise of attacks and persecution of non-Muslims and introduction of discriminatory laws during the 1970s and 1980s further reduced them to just a shade above three per cent of the population.

The Constitution of Pakistan does stipulate that adequate provisions shall be made for the minorities to freely profess and practice their religions and its Articles 20, 21, 22, 25, 26, 27, 28 and 36 guarantee equal citizenship and protection of rights of minorities. Separate electorate has been abolished. Seats have been reserved in the legislative bodies both at provincial and central levels (four seats in Senate, 10 seats in National Assembly). Five per cent of quota has been allocated for them in jobs. August 11 is celebrated as the Minorities Day. A Federal Ministry of National Harmony has been in place since 2011. But things are far from ideal yet.

According to a Charter of Demands developed by the Centre for Civic Education Pakistan, the challenges to equality of citizenship can be addressed through a review of the constitutional and legal instruments that put religious minorities in a disadvantageous position and vulnerable situations. Political parties can adopt 'inclusive culture'; increase in the number of reserved seats in the National Assembly of Pakistan and all

provincial assemblies corresponding to the increase in their population; democratisation of the system of party lists for reserved seats and making it more transparent and inclusive to accommodate the genuine concerns of religious minorities; undertaking affirmative actions to support and facilitate religious minorities to directly contest constituencies in the elections for local, provincial and federal level democratic institutions; celebration of August 11 as the day of 'Equality of Citizenship' instead of the Day of Minorities as officially designated in 2009; and taking concrete steps to ensure strict adherence to job quotas reserved for religious minorities.

A pluralist society is the only panacea sane elements in the society are crying for. The day should not be far when Pakistan is designated a minority-friendly country as suggested by the prime minister.

Waqar Mustafa is a print, online and broadcast journalist and commentator based in Pakistan

**<http://www.khaleejtimes.com/editorials-columns/minorities-have-nothing-to-fear-in-pakistan>**

PROJECT

‘PROTECTING THE BASIC  
HUMAN RIGHTS OF VULNERABLE  
RELIGIOUS MINORITIES’

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION SKILLS PUT A LINGERING DISPUTE TO REST

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**Farhan Tawakkul said that as a lawyer previously he would only think about his fee and not about justification of the case but after attending the PDF training on May 12-14, 2014 in Gujranwala his views had changed.**

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**“Now I want to work for the unprivileged and minorities and towards peaceful resolution of such issues, equal opportunities and citizenship,” he said.**

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It was all normal for these members of Christian community living in this locality of Gujranwala's Emanabad town for the last 100 years. With about 300 households, they had transformed the area from a hutment to a colony and named it as Basti-e-Isaiyan (Colony of Christians), and built a local Presbyterian Church there.

But on July 18, 2014 some members of Muslim community from a nearby area started tying their buffaloes in the Church compound. They had attempted to grab the land several times but now they seemed serious. With their buffaloes hitched and cots laid in the Church compound, they yelled it was their property. The already tense situation worsened after both the Muslim and the Christian groups called in their associates and their brawl left many people injured.

Farhan Tawakkul, a high court lawyer, was requested to intervene. Mr. Tawakkul delved into the matter and came to know that Christians had been living in the area even before the independence on a land scalp given to them by a Sayed Muslim who died 50 years back. He told the occupiers that a place reserved for worship could only be used for that specific purpose. With the help of police, he had a boundary wall built around the Church compound and gated it.

A few days later, the issue was again ignited when Muslims of the area broke the wall. A Christian MNA

against doing so, for to him it could heighten the tension instead of reducing it. He started negotiating with both the warring groups in the presence of the police. He knew that the Christians had been living for the last 100 years on the land scalp given to them but they had not documented the transfer. In order to protect the land, the Church and Church compound and to avoid any conflict in future, Mr. Tawakkul made the two groups to sign a peace agreement in the police presence with the Muslim group conceding ownership of the piece of land to the Christians.

Sharing the story on September 16, 2014 in a Follow-up Workshop organized by Peace and Development Foundation in Gujranwala, Farhan Tawakkul said that as a lawyer previously he would only think about his fee and not about justification of the case but after attending the PDF training on May 12-14, 2014 in Gujranwala his views had changed. “Now I want to work for the unprivileged and minorities and towards peaceful resolution of such issues, equal opportunities and citizenship,” he said.

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**FARHAN TAWAKKUL VIRK**  
 ADVOCATE HIGH COURT

## ENROLMENT OF CHRISTIAN STUDENTS

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**They accepted their mistake and said they would not discriminate against anyone.**  
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The headmaster of a school, Daisy Public School, in a village, Phuranwala, Faisalabad, sought Mian Nadeem's intervention after parents of Muslim students and some teachers resented enrolment of a couple of Christian students in the 350-student institution.

After the request, Nadeem told a peace cluster meeting on September 22, 2014, he organized a two-day orientation workshop on August 20, 2014 for the DPS teachers. The training proved to be fruitful; it changed their thinking. They accepted their mistake and said they would not discriminate against anyone.

But the main concern was changing the parents' approach toward the issue. With the support of trained teachers on August 23, 2014, Nadeem arranged an orientation workshop for the parents and taught them about “Equal Opportunities and Citizenship” using the technique of see, act and react (which he had learnt from the PDF training). He was able to change their mindset and their stereotypical thinking of discrimination.

He shared with them the story of a tree he had heard at the PDF platform from Ms Romana Bashir, which for years provided shelter to many birds that would come from different and far flung areas. Though having different languages and behaviours, they owned and understood each other and would share their happiness and sorrows with each other. As time passed, the birds got united and the bond of love got

stronger. An enemy of the tree felt jealous whenever he saw them happy and so, he placed poison in its roots. The birds won't buy into the neighbouring trees' advice to leave it. Instead they decided to save the tree. They took the poison out of its roots out and started living again in harmony. Seeing all this the enemy planned something worse than poison. It lighted the roots of that old tree and thought the birds would have no option but to leave the tree. Birds were again advised by their neighbors to leave the tree but both the enemy and the neighbors had forgotten that it was a not a tree but their home. They put their acts together and save their home again to be together!

Towards the end of the story and the training, said Nadeem, many women were crying. They said they would let their kids study with the Christian children and that even the Christian children studying in other schools were welcome to study here.

Narrating the whole story, Nadeem said it was only because of the PDF training that he was able to conduct training and work towards changing the mindsets of people.

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**Towards the end of the story and the training, said Nadeem, many women were crying. They said they would let their kids study with the Christian children and that even the Christian children studying in other schools were welcome to study here.**  
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**MIAN NADEEM AHMED**  
 CHAIRMAN FACE FOUNDATION  
 PDF CPG COORDINATOR

## DIFFUSES SECTARIAN STRIFE

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**Mediation and arbitration by Mian Nadeem averted a possible sectarian strife and conflict in the area. Acknowledging the efforts of Peace and Development Foundation, Mian Nadeem said that previously he would sidestep such issues.**  
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**Mian Nadeem, while narrating the story said that he applied conflict resolution, negotiations, and mediation skills he had learnt at a PDF training and pacified both the parties.**  
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Local residents of Barelvi and Deobandi sects of Muslims living in 215 RB area, Jaranwala Road, Faisalabad have been offering prayers together for the past over 40 years led by a person from the Deobandi school of Islamic thought. The prayer leader died in 2014 and on August 01, 2014 people from the two sects had a quarrel over the mosque ownership. The matter was taken to the police, whose effort at tackling the issue failed as both the groups had taken up the cudgels again the next day.

Peace Cluster Group intervened in the dispute. After several sessions of negotiations with the two warring parties, they were able to firm up an agreement on them holding separate Friday prayers. They also agreed that the mosque prayer leader would be a Deobandhi and the moazzin [one who calls people to pray] a Barelwi, and that the mosque treasury would be the peace group's responsibility.

Mian Nadeem, Chairman of Face Foundation and Private Schools Association, Faisalabad, briefed a Peace Cluster Meeting held on August 28, 2014 by PDF in Jaranwala, Faisalabad on whatever had happened. He said the issue had been sorted out temporarily and that the cluster was worried it could pop up again. The PDF suggested that they involve the youth from both sides who, now potential agents of peace, could be dragged in to sectarianism.

Mian Nadeem involved the youth and organized a cricket match for youths from both the sects. It did help but the issue remained under the cluster group observation for sectarian disharmony.

Their fears came true when in April 2015 differences developed again between the two sects over offering prayers in the same mosque. The differences grew sharply and they even had a quarrel. Had the peace activist not intervened well in time, the clash between the sects would have led to bloodshed.

Mian Nadeem, while narrating the story said that he applied conflict resolution, negotiations, and mediation skills he had learnt at a PDF training and pacified both the parties. But after a few days the issue popped up again and the parties went to police. The police approached Mian Nadeem to settle the issue but to no avail as both parties stuck to their points.

Later, he held talks with the parties were separately and tried to convince them. It was decided that those who were in a majority (Barelvi) would own the mosque and people of Deobandi sect were assured that they would be paid Rs300,000 to purchase land for their mosque. Ex-Nazim Mohammad Rafique gave Rs100,000 along with 20,000 bricks and Mian Nadeem assured them he would arrange rest of the amount through Faisalabad NGO Network.

An arbitration meeting of local community members was called at Mohammad Rafique's place and Barelvis admitted to their mistake and sought apology from Deobandis. The meeting also decided that if any one of the parties caused problem for the other they would be fined Rs 300,000.

After a few days when Deobandis purchased land for the mosque, Barelvis filed a complaint with the police

through a local resident of the area. When Mian Nadeem contacted the complainant and inquired about the application, he said he had not filed any complaint and so he withdrew the one submitted in his name.

Another arbitration meeting was called in Ramazan (July) to settle the matter which decided that if any problem or obstacle was created by Barelvis, the mosque would be handed over to Deobandis.

Thus, frequent talks, mediation and arbitration by Mian Nadeem averted a possible sectarian strife and conflict in the area. Acknowledging the efforts of Peace and Development Foundation, Mian Nadeem said that previously he would sidestep such issues and would not even know how to tackle them. “But having attended the June 23-25, 2014 PDF workshop in Faisalabad, I try to resolve such issues of conflict applying the techniques learned there.”

**MIAN NADEEM AHMED**

CHAIRMAN FACE FOUNDATION PDF CPG COORDINATOR

**RELIGIONS MAY BE DIFFERENT BUT AS HUMAN BEINGS, ALL ARE SAME**

It was Ramazan, the Muslim month of fasting. During a Sehri [pre-dawn meal consumed for fasting] sermon, Khushi Muhammad, a prayer leader at a local mosque, claimed overhearing members of the Ahmedi community say something “against Muslims” at their place of worship, and declared that their houses in Peoples Colony, Gujranwala would be destroyed.

This alerted Qari Sami-ur-Rehman, a prayer leader at Masjid Jam-e-Manzoor-ul-Islam. And he had reason to be worried about. A mob had burned down several homes belonging to the Ahmedi community in the same colony, killing a woman and her two granddaughters in riots following rumours about blasphemous postings on Facebook.

Rehman who had attended a PDF training on May 23-25, 2014, shared his concern with other mates to resolve the issue in a peaceful way using the skills

they had learnt during the training. So, Qari Sami-ur-Rehman, Saeed Awan, a journalist, and Shahzad Lawrence, a peace activist, went to the local police station and requested Station House Officer Naeem to help resolve the issue before it turned violent. They succeeded in their effort when the SHO met Khushi Muhammad and told him not to take law in their hands.

and that the police would investigate the whole matter.

Qari Sami-ur-Rehman said his approach towards handling the issue might have been otherwise if he had not attended the PDF training on “Equal Opportunities and Citizenship”. “Now I can feel a change in myself. Religions may be different but as human beings we all are same. If we can sit with Christians, Hindus and Sikhs, we can also sit with Ahmedis,” he said.



**“Now I can feel a change in myself. Religions may be different but as human beings we all are same.”**



**QARI SAMI - UR - REHMAN**  
LOCAL IMAM  
JAM-E-MANZOOR-UL-ISLAM

## ONCE AN OUTCAST HIMSELF, NOW AN INCLUSIVITY ADVOCATE

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“I was never cordial with non-Muslims living in my area. Rather, I used to rib them as much I could. Now after doing some soul-searching during this workshop, I have understood that I was doing the same to the non-Muslims, which I had gone through during my schooldays. I shouldn't have done this to them!

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**QARI ALI AKBAR CHISHTI**  
IMAM, JAMIA MASJID, ALLAH-O-AKBAR

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**Q**ari Ali Akbar Chishti had not uttered a word until he sprang up to comment on the workshop he was attending.

“It's been self revelatory; now I know the pangs of being discriminated against,” he said to the amazement of other participants and organisers.

Despite having been an avid participant in the training which Peace and Development Foundation had organised at Warispura, Faisalabad from May 20-22, 2014 under the project 'Equal Opportunities and Citizens', Chishti, who delivers Friday sermons at a local mosque, he had kept mum until it was about to close.

Dusting off his childhood memories, he said he was not a prayer leader by choice.

“I had a skin disease called leucoderma, [also known as vitiligo, is a rare skin disease characterized by white spots and patches. Leucoderma in literal term means white skin]. The treatment I received from my fellow students changed the course of my life. They used to jeer at me for the skin color. I left the school and got enrolled in a local madrasa.”

“From my experience, I knew the agony and pain such discrimination could cause. But this workshop has made me fathom that whatever I used to do to non-Muslims in my area,” Chishti said remorsefully.

“I was never cordial with non-Muslims living in my area

Rather, I used to rib them as much I could. Now after doing some soul-searching during this workshop, I have understood that I was doing the same to the non-Muslims, which I had gone through during my schooldays. I shouldn't have done this to them! “Chishti said he had undergone transformation.

“I have learned a lot about the importance of peace, harmony and rights of vulnerable groups, especially religious minorities. This has brought about a big change in the way I used to see non-Muslims. It has changed my attitude towards them.”

He promised that instead of bothering his non-Muslim neighbours, he will be a support to them and would make his fellow Muslims aware of the importance of interfaith harmony and minority rights.

Being a firsthand victim of discrimination, he said he would now work for promotion of interfaith harmony and rights of religious minorities not only in his neighborhood but also in schools and madrasas in his area.

He said he would talk to teachers and students about the discrimination and injustice done to certain students only for being non - Muslim. “This discrimination causes them to drop out of school and consequently they settle for some menial jobs lowering their social and economic status,” he said.

But it was much more than plain advocacy that was needed to test his resolve.

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“On August 05, 2014, members of Shia community who lived in our neighbourhood arranged prayer service and funeral food on the fortieth day of the death of an elder of theirs in the playground near the [Sunni] mosque I lead prayers at. But all of a sudden it started raining and they requested me to allow them to hold their commemorative ceremony at the mosque, which I did,”

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At a Mosque, Panj Tan Pak, in Warispura's Ali Town a prayer leader attacked the sanctity of Christians' religious festivals in his Friday sermon on July 20, 2014 in a way that angered the followers of the faith living in the town where they are in a minority and in the nearby Khushal Town where they are in a majority.

They demanded that the prayer leader be sacked and asked Qari Ali Akbar, who delivered Friday sermons at Masjid Khadim-ul-Islam, support their demand. But knowing that such a step would worsen the already tense situation, he stepped in to resolve the issue.

Qari Akbar met the prayer leader and asked him not to give such remarks without conceptual clarity regarding any faith. He made him realize his mistake and asked him not to lead prayers until the issue was resolved. Qari Akbar then went to the Christian community and sought forgiveness for him. He brought both Muslims and Christians together in a mosque and asked the Christians to share their grievance with the prayer leader whose words had hurt them. He apologized and assured them he won't do any such thing in future. After a discussion the issue was resolved peacefully, using the technique of conflict resolution through mediation.

Qari Ali Akbar told PDF in a Peace Cluster Meeting he would only favor Muslims in such a situation previously. “But after attending two three-day workshop on May 20-22, 2014 and June 23-25, 2014 I have changed; now I try to resolve issues without any bias,” he said claiming that he had become permissive.

“On August 05, 2014, members of Shia community who lived in our neighbourhood arranged prayer service and funeral food on the fortieth day of the death of an elder of theirs in the playground near the [Sunni] mosque I lead prayers at. But all of a sudden it started raining and they requested me to allow them to hold their commemorative ceremony at the mosque, which I did,” he said in a follow-up workshop on September 23, 2014 in Faisalabad.

Qari Ali Akbar said he did so despite opposition from some people of his sect. He said he would help everyone without any discrimination.

## A SECTARIAN FEUD SETTLED JUST BEFORE TURNING BLOODY

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“Had I got the training and orientation some 20 or 25 years ago, I could have had more time and worked more to resolve conflicts in my area. But even now with whatever skills the workshop has inculcated in me, I won't hold back my efforts for bringing about peace here”.

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**QARI AMJAD ASIM**  
KHATEEB MAKAZI  
JAMIA MASJID MUHAMMADI  
AHL-E-HADITH

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Not that Qari Amjad Asim, a prayer leader of a mosque in Gujranwala's Prime City locality, was in any way bigoted. Yet after he had attended a training workshop by Peace and Development Foundation, Qari Asim who also delivered Friday sermons at Jame-Masjid Sadiqiya, Ahl-e-Hadith, Nowshera Sansi Road, Gujranwala, said it had changed him altogether. “It's a thorough change; 100 percent, nay, 1000 percent, or even more,” said Asim who was among a group of clergymen the non-governmental organization had engaged in March 2014.

PDF is working in Faisalabad, Gujranwala, Lahore districts through its community peace groups towards making people, irrespective of their faith, contribute to bringing socio-political change for a just and tolerant society.

And the change showed up quite distinctively when a dispute arose in a densely populated neighbourhood of Bhikopura in Gujranwala's Rajput Colony only a few days after he had taken part in the workshop over an attempt by members of a sect to turn a place used commonly by people of the area into a their worship place. The Shiite sect members, as small a minority as comprising one household, who had been allowed to hold a prayer service for a deceased person at the community centre sometime back, wanted to turn it into a permanent place for holding commemorative gatherings called majalis. The Sunnis who held a majority there resisted the move saying the Shiites had five other such centres in the surrounding areas and building another one in this area would cause tension. The row between the two Muslim sects –

Sunnis and Shiites – would have turned violent had Qari Asim, an Ahle Hadith scholar, not intervened.

Employing the conflict management and conflict resolution skills he had learnt at the workshop along with about a dozen other prayer leaders, Qari Asim stepped in. He held meetings with Shiite and Sunni religious leaders and the local administration and after a quite intensive shuttle diplomacy was able to resolve the issue quite amicably. Egged on by him, members of the Shiite sect gave up their decision to turn the community centre into their prayer place for amity and peace in the area. An agreement to this effect was signed between the elders of the two sects on April 23, 2014.

Qari Amjad Asim, who is Deputy General Secretary, Islamic Foundation Pakistan and Information Secretary Muslim Christian Federation International, Gujranwala Division, said that the level of positive change in him brought about by the PDF training had made him think he could have done more such acts of resolving disputes in the previous years of his life.

“Had I got the training and orientation some 20 or 25 years ago, I could have had more time and worked more to resolve conflicts in my area. But even now with whatever skills the workshop has inculcated in me, I won't hold back my efforts for bringing about peace here,” the elated middle-aged cleric said. Humbled by this success, PDF Executive Director Romana Bashir said: “We only make our trainees think of an alternate way: of resolving disputes through talks instead of forces, and the rest is for them to do, to manage and resolve them”.

## WORKSHOP EVOKES NEIGHBORLY FEELINGS FOR CHRISTIANS THEY DISLIKED

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“I rather show respect to the Christians of my area. Now I know they are my neighbors and I have some responsibilities towards them.”

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I never liked mingling with them, says Aamir Usman Mujahid who leads prayers at a mosque in Chanda Qila area of Gujranwala about Christians living in a locality adjacent to the one he does.

So deep was the disgust that I would even refuse to sell them grocery, says Mujahid who also runs a small retail shop in the area.

But this was all before he had attended a Peace and Development Foundation (PDF) workshop on 'Equal Opportunities and Citizens'. During a post-workshop visit to clusters in Gujranwala, Mujahid told the PDF evaluators how his life had undergone positive change and his perception about religious minorities had changed after attending the training workshop.

“Every human being, regardless of caste, creed, ethnicity or color, is equal. I don't abhor Christians or for that matter people from any other religion than mine. I rather show respect to the Christians of my area. Now I know they are my neighbours and I have some responsibilities towards them,” says Mujahid with exuberance

He ran a madrasa for young Muslim girls in the area. After attending the PDF training, he opened a sewing center for girls also. “Initially only Muslim girls were enrolled in the sewing center but later on I also allowed Christian girls to sign up for training there, which some Muslim girls objected to,” narrates Mujahid and

explains that how he shared with them whatever he had learnt from the training workshop about the importance of interfaith harmony, peace and equal rights of minorities.

“Now the Muslim girls are friendly towards their Christian classmates. Now they come together, learn together, eat together in the same sewing center,” says Mujahid thanking PDF for the change. So grateful was he that he insisted Ms Romana Bashir, the PDF Executive Director, to inaugurate the sewing center, which she did on May 26, 2014 to encourage the change to be permanent.

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**AAMIR USMAN MUJAHID**

IMAM / KHATEEB  
JAMIA RIAZ-UL-SALAMEEN

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“Now the Muslim girls are friendly towards their Christian classmates. Now they come together, learn together, eat together in the same sewingcenter,” says Mujahid

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## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, FEAR TO WOMAN'S LIFE

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**MIAN NADEEM AHMED**  
CHAIRMAN FACE FOUNDATION  
PDF CPG COORDINATOR

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On June 30, 2014, a 24-year-old Christian girl Shabana came to Mian Nadeem's Centre and said she was interested in learning information technology but could not afford the fee. He got her admission in the IT classes. He also helped her financially. After a few days Shabana told him that she was married and had a daughter. She said her husband physically abused her and had even thrown acid on her face burning half of it which she used to cover. She said she now lived at her father's home.

Shabana said she feared for her life and so, wanted a divorce from her husband, which he refused to give. Mian Nadeem called her husband but he did not oblige and even started threatening his wife. Nadeem asked the police to make it clear to him he would have to face charges of throwing acid on his wife's face if he did not sign the divorce papers.

After a few days Shabana's husband contacted Nadeem and told him he was ready to reconcile with his wife. To this, Shabana said he was a drunkard and would beat her again, and so, wanted a divorce from him. The group assisted her legally in getting the divorce. After sometime when she had come out of the trauma, it helped Shabana get married again. She has now shifted to Chiniot and is living a happy life with her new husband and her daughter. She is continuing her studies as well. Sharing the story on August 28, 2014 in a Peace Cluster Meeting held by PDF in Jaranwala, Faisalabad, Nadeem said that after attending the three-day workshop his approach to solving issues changed. "I try to help victims of such issues for the sake of humanity using the skills he had learnt at the Peace and Development Foundation training."

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## RELIGIOUS TROUBLE AVERTED

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**HINA IMRAN**  
INCHARGE PUNJAB  
RURAL SUPPORT PROGRAM,  
PDF CPG MEMBER

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A young man from Gulzar Colony, Gujranwala, who had converted from Christianity to Islam in January 2014, started visiting St. John Chapel, Gujranwala, for Sunday prayer. On the third Sunday, July 17, 2014, members of the church saw some armed members of Muslim community around the church who they thought were monitoring the young man lest he should convert to Christianity. Islam discourages practicing of prior religion after one has converted to Islam and such an act is considered apostasy. Apostates may be shunned by the members

of their former religious group or subjected to formal or informal punishment such as death.

Hina Imran said it was a situation of terror. She and other group members made the young man understand that his church visits could anger Muslims and could cause trouble for him and for Christian community as a whole. Hina said PDF had played a vital role in teaching her how to resolve a conflict peacefully.

## WHERE THERE IS WILL, THERE IS A WAY, TO END DISCRIMINATION

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**He wanted minorities to come forward and play their role in nation-building by strengthening themselves both economically and socially.**

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**Qaiser met the academy managers and his advocacy made them realize that they should not discriminate against anyone because everyone is equal and Islam's Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) treated everyone equally.**

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Lawyer Naveed Qaiser won't buy into claims of discrimination. “I always thought every individual gets an equal opportunity,” he said. But that was before he had attended a PDF training on “Equal Opportunities and Citizenship” on May 12-14, 2014 in Gujranwala.

He told a follow-up workshop on September 16, 2014 that after returning home in an upscale neighbourhood in the industrial city of Wazirabad, 30 kilometers from the district capital, Gujranwala, he took it upon himself to test veracity of the assertions of inequity.

Near his home he noted that an academy, which was established in 2003, had no child from the Christian community as their student. When he probed into the cause, he knew that poor parents – who mostly did menial jobs in the area such as sweeping -- wanted their children admitted there but could not afford paying their fees. Some of them even worked at the academy as sweepers but even their children were denied admission by the management on the stereotypical excuse it could impair the school standard Qaiser met the academy managers and his

advocacy made them realize that they should not discriminate against anyone because everyone is equal and Islam's Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) treated everyone equally. His efforts paid off on July 29, 2014 when first child from the Christian community got admission in the academy. Gradually the number of minority students increased. Now several Christian students are studying in the academy.

“Unfortunately, the marginalized, especially the members of minorities communities, are disadvantaged at seeking and pursuing education and so, devoid of any education or skills, they are left with only low-class jobs, said Qaiser.

Qaiser said he wanted minorities to come forward and play their role in nation-building by strengthening themselves both economically and socially.

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**NAVEED QAISER**  
ADVOCATE HIGH COURT

## IDENTITY ENSURES EMPOWERMENT

**S**yed Makhdom Hussain Shah, Secretary, 127 Union Council, Duddhiwala, Faisalabad, said that after attending a PDF training in June, 2014 he thought he would work towards empowerment of the members of minorities in his area and them having their National Identity Cards made could be one way of achieving it.

He and his group members worked in the area for the promotion of social and inter-faith harmony. Major thrust of the welfare programs was on the neglected, disadvantaged, underprivileged people, particularly

those from the minorities. By September, 2014 all members of the minorities living in the area had their CNICs, said Shah.

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**SYED MUKHDOOM HUSSAIN**  
GENERAL SECRETARY  
UNION COUNCIL

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“  
**He thought he would work towards empowerment of the members of minorities in his area and them having their National Identity Cards made could be one way of achieving it.**  
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## TALKS NIP A CONFLICT IN THE BUD

**R**ev. Ahsan Tanveer was returning from a PDF workshop on May 14, 2014 when he saw some Muslim children in front of Presbyterian Church, Batala Jhanda, he was pastor of. Initially he thought they were playing but they were not. “They made a cross with sticks, put it up on a pile of debris and started throwing stones on it,” he recalled. The Cross, seen as a representation of the instrument of the crucifixion of Jesus, is revered as the best-known symbol of Christianity. And this act of the children could ignite a conflict.

Before anger could set in, the priest thought of employing the conflict management skills he had learnt at the PDF workshop in Gujranwala on May 12-14, 2014. To resolve the matter peacefully, he

called the children's parents and told them about whatever he had seen. “I made the parents realize that whatever their children had done was very wrong and no one had the right to hurt the feelings of people belonging to any faith and it was their duty to let their kids know how to respect others,” Rev. Ahsan Tanveer told in a cluster meeting on September 15, 2014.

He was happy that he sorted the matter out peacefully. “Usually people do not go for discussion in our society in such a situation and so, it turns violent,” he said.

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**Usually people do not go for discussion in our society in such a situation and so, it turns violent,” he said.**  
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**REV. AHSAN TANVEER**  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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## SOCIAL BARRIERS START BEING BROUGHT DOWN

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“Hina said, It was not easy to work in the village but whatever skills she had learnt from PDF Training, she tried to apply there.

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“Now slowly and gradually the thinking and approach of some individuals there is changing. They have started accepting each other equally, eliminating the sense of superiority and inferiority,” she said.

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**A**t a follow-up workshop on September 17, 2014, Hina Imran, in charge of Punjab Rural Support Program, said she visited Village Sankey, Gujranwala, for her office work in April, 2014. People there won't look beyond traditional hierarchies based on faith, caste and class, founded on their occupation and social ranking, and would consider some as destined to do the most menial jobs and even term them untouchables.

One day she visited a Christian household but had to leave it soon over some issue. A Muslim woman from landowning Jatt caste, Khalida, who lived nearby saw Hina coming out of the neighborhood. In a gesture of association with her who she thought might have been from an upper class, invited her to her house and have something to eat and drink, saying “come to our house we are also jatt”. Hina thanked the woman and left the area lamenting about the society's fragmentation.

On August 01, 2014 she went to the village again. By then she had attended a three-day PDF training on “Equal Opportunities and Citizenship” on May 12-14, 2014. In the village she heard that Khalida and other women from the so-called upper class would call females of the Christian community not by their names. They would call them Sain (derogatorily meaning Christian woman). Hina told them to call everyone by their names and not by their faiths.

A co-worker of Hina's told Khalida that Hina was also Christian by faith. Khalida was surprised to know that a Christian was educated enough to hold such a post.

Hina said it was not easy to work in the village but whatever skills she had learnt from the PDF training, she tried to apply there. “Now slowly and gradually the thinking and approach of some individuals there is changing. They have started accepting each other equally, eliminating the sense of superiority and inferiority,” she said.

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**HINA IMRAN**  
INCHARGE PUNJAB  
RURAL SUPPORT PROGRAM,  
PDF CPG MEMBER

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## DISPUTE BETWEEN TWO GROUPS RESOLVED THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS

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**Now both the communities are living peacefully. Christians are practicing their faith in the church.**

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**HAFIZ ANAS ZAHEER**  
KHATEEB JAMIA MASJID  
HOZABIA

Closure of church in April 2014 after a dispute between two Christian groups (Church of Pakistan) in this Muslim-majority village of Sangowali in Aroobwala town, Gujranwala was a bit disturbing for these Muslim religious leaders from Ahl-e-Hadith sect -- Hafiz Anas Zaheer and Hafiz Ramzan Sajid.

Having attended a PDF training only recently, which they said had contributed a lot to their knowledge about peace and interfaith harmony, they took it upon themselves to try out the tools learnt during the training for mediating between the two communities and avert any untoward situation.

The two religious leaders, who are members of peace cluster and represent Muslim Christian International Federation, said the Christian groups welcomed and appreciated their initiative.

The two Muslim leaders talked with both the groups and helped them resolve their dispute through negotiations. They made it possible that the church in the area, with approximately 70% Muslim and 30% Christian population, opened for people for Easter prayer on April 21, 2014.

“Now both the communities are living peacefully. Christians are practicing their faith in the church. This is a good example of interfaith harmony where both the communities solved the matter through talks and negotiation,” said Hafiz Anas Zaheer.

“

**The two Muslim leaders talked with both the groups and helped them resolve their dispute through negotiations. They made it possible that the church in the area, with approximately 70% Muslim and 30% Christian population, opened for people for Easter prayer on April 21, 2014.**

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**HAFIZ RAMZAN SAJID**  
NAZIM MADRASSA,  
MADRASSA KHALID BIN WALEED

## TMA EMPLOYEES GET PROMOTIONS AFTER 22 YEARS

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**Assistant Commissioner accepted their demands and directed the relevant departments to form a Departmental Promotions Committee (DPC) for promotion of the protesting clerks.**

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Octoroi clerks from Town Municipal Administrations of Laylpur, Madina Town, Jinnah Town, and Iqbal Town of Faisalabad district had to wait for 22 years for their promotions before a Peace and Development Foundation (PDF) activists helped them get their due in May 2015.

Narrating the story of his struggle, Syed Makhdoom Hussain Shah, (a member of a peace cluster of Faisalabad), said that some 187 octoroi clerks whose services were hired some 22 years ago to work in the Octoroi (local tax) Department of TMAs were not granted their due promotions after the department was disbanded.

Out of these 187 employees, 100 either got retired from their services, passed away or were transferred to other departments, while the remaining 87 had to wait for 22 years for their promotions.

The clerks were putting up their case individually with high-ups for promotion, but to no avail. Later in March 2015, they formed a union to get the issue resolved collectively. They launched their struggle with

peaceful protest demonstrations, sloganeering and sit-ins.

Union's President Mohammad Farooq Butt, Chairman Mohammad Khan Kaloo, General Secretary Syed Makhdoom Hussain Shah, other office-bearers of the union and employees staged a sit-in in front of the Lalypur TMA office. The protestors locked the office of the TMA from outside, thus leaving the TMO and other staffers confined to the office premises till 5pm.

The protestors continued sit-in and protest demonstrations for about next one month. Later, Assistant Commissioner Rafay Haider held talks with the union members. He accepted their demands and directed the relevant departments to form a Departmental Promotions Committee (DPC) for promotion of the protesting clerks.

The DPC promoted 52 clerks out of 87 in quick succession. The process for promotion of the remaining 36 has also started and they are likely to be promoted soon.

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**SYED MUKHDOOM HUSSAIN**  
 GENERAL SECRETARY  
 UNION COUNCIL

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**DPC promoted 52 clerks out of 87 in quick succession. The process for promotion of the remaining 36 has also started and they are likely to be promoted soon.**

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## RAPE VICTIM GETS RELIEF

**S**habana Gulnaz, a member of PDF's Faisalabad peace cluster, helped a rape victim in getting an FIR lodged on May 5, 2015 in Faisalabad after she was denied its registration by the local police.

The woman was taken away by one of her colleagues, who worked with her in a garment factory, from Kohinoor area of Faisalabad to an unknown place where she was raped in the presence of two other persons. Later, she was thrown in the same area by the accused.

The rape victim got her medical check-up done and carried its report to People's Colony Police Station to lodge a case against the accused. But the police refused to book them and asked the victim to give them time.

Feeling helpless and dejected, the woman came to Shabana through a mutual friend. Shabana took her to the police station and asked the police officer to lodge an FIR of the rape victim, but to no avail. Later, Shabana asked the police officer to get her through to the Superintendent of Police (SP). The SP directed his sub-ordinates to lodge the FIR and arrest the accused at the earliest. Following the directives, the police registered a rape case against the accused and arrested him.

Since the rape victim was going to get married after Eid-ul-Azha, so she and her family requested for settlement of the matter as it would bring a stigma to her and the family. Later, Shabana mediated and resolved the matter by getting a written apology from the accused.

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**SHABANA GULNAZ**  
WOMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST  
PDF CPG MEMBER

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## PROTECTION OF RIGHTS OF VULNERABLE COMMUNITY BY AVERTING VIOLENCE

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**After several rounds of mediation involving political leadership and influential of the area, the efforts resulted as culprit asked forgiveness publically to the Christian community and signed written peace agreement with apology.**

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What could be the parameter for the successive of an initiative aimed at sustainable peace in society, especially among the communities prone to religious violence? While finding the answer, the ability of trained peace builders in society to avert the eruption of violence and pacify the communities after smaller acts of hateful incidents could be termed one of the major indicators in this regard.

The one example of pro-activeness on part of civil society at local level has been recently observed in Khushal Town, Faisalabad (UC 249, CC 86) which falls in one of the selected union councils under the project 'Joint Social Action for Equal Rights and Opportunities for Minorities of Faith and Belief in Faisalabad and Lahore, Punjab' under taken by Peace and Development Foundation (PDF). According to details, the Christian community living in the area was made subject to atrocity and violent attack by a mob on the behest of an individual from Muslim community (Umar Hayyat) who had earlier a quarrel with a Christian youth (Adnan Masih) on a very petty issue.

Adnan Masih incidentally happened to slightly hit the brother in law of Umar Hayyat while riding on motorbike in the street on August 21, 2016. In retaliation Adnan was not only beaten by a few Muslims on the occasion but despite of his apology was later chased out and made subject to harsh beating again on same day. Incidentally, some Christian youth also appeared on the scene and they resisted the attacking men and made them leaving alone.

However, sooner, Umar Hayyat and his supporter gathered a larger group (about 50 people) that angrily attacked on the houses of Christians in the locality (Khushal Town) on August 22, 2016 and not only abused and beaten an elderly man (about 70 years of age) but also intruded in the privacy of the homes and beaten Christian women as well.

As a result of this violent atrocity, the situation in the area turned highly tense and the fear of a worst clash between the two religious communities were being sensed. During these testing hours, the local peace activists associated and trained by Peace and Development Foundation (PDF) as members of Community Peace Groups (CPG) exhibited their peacebuilding skills and not only initiated engagement with the effected party but also approached high officials of the law enforcing agency (Police) and the political figures that could have a role in pacifying the situation.

More aware and sensitized on its rights as equal citizens, Christian community was not only able to pursuit legal action against the main accused persons and got an FIR registered against them but also to take firm stand and hence refused to bow down before the pressure from certain majority quarters to forgive the culprits. The peacebuilders associated with PDF Robin Daniel (coordinator of a CPG, Faisalabad) and other CPGs members remained fully vigilant about the situation and at one hand ensure there would be no eruption of violence further and at other, pleaded the case of Christian community effectively during the

**ROBIN DANIEL**  
CHAIRMAN NATIONAL MINORITY  
ALLIANCE OF PAKISTAN,  
PDF CPG COORDINATOR



**The incident become one of the example of indirect influence caused by work of PDF and besides, it also proved that the selection of CPGs leadership in the area has not only been correct but evidentiary of their strength.**



efforts on mediation between two communities by registering their vote power to the local political leadership and sensitized them that 50% voters are Christians in the area that's why they are not only representatives of majority therefore they have to stand for the rights of minorities (victim party) as well. PDF also witnessed the negotiations and mediation process between conflicting parties at Faisalabad.

After several rounds of mediation involving political leadership and influential of the area including; Tahir Khalil Sindhu (Minister for Human Rights and Minority Rights, Punjab) elected Chairpersons of UCs and Councillors etc., the efforts resulted as culprit asked forgiveness publically to the Christian community and

signed written peace agreement with apology and guaranty from the majority community that no further act of vengeance would be allowed against the Christian community in the area in future. The incident become one of the example of indirect influence caused by work of PDF and besides, it also proved that the selection of CPGs leadership in the area has not only been correct but evidentiary of their strength, peacebuilding approach and level of awareness resulted by efforts on capacity building for conflict resolution through mediation, reconciliation at community level.

# PROJECT

‘JOINT SOCIAL ACTION FOR EQUAL RIGHTS  
AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR MINORITIES  
OF FAITH AND BELIEF’

## RESCUING A YOUNG GIRL IN VULNERABILITY

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“Where young girls are always tempted to opt for wrong choices and destroy their lives.”

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According to details of this incident, Sadaf Bibi D/O Muhammad Hanif, a young girl 17 years old from Data Darbar area of Lahore left her home for the reason that her parents was pressurizing her to marry against her will. During the last week of October 2016, she submitted an application to local court to send her to Dar-ul-Amaan (Shelter House) as she has left her home and has no other place to take refuge. She said that she has fear of life from her family members and thus needs protection.

The local court sent the girl to Dar-ul-Aman on October 24, 2016 with orders that nobody is allowed to meet her without seeking prior approval from the court. When this issue came in the notice of Naghmana Ashiq, PDF's CPG member and also Councillor from her respective Union Council, she realized the nature of vulnerabilities that young girl was trapped in. Considering the environment of Dar-ul-Aman, where young girls are always tempted to opt for wrong choices and destroy their lives, she decided to do something to save the girl.

She with her personal efforts was able to get permission on November 4, 2016 from the court to meet the girl and with the consent of girl, to take her to her own home in safety. Later, she engaged her parents in discussions and made them realized that by oppression on their own daughter, they will get nothing but only to destroy her life. She sensitized them that being parents what is their duty towards their daughter and they should treat her with kindness as nothing is safest for a girl in our society than her own home and family. She also convinced the girl to go back to her home with parents while making them aware that they will remain under observation for the safety of the girl. By this sympathetic intervention, the PDF's CPG member was able to save a life from the vulnerabilities and send her back to safety of home.

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**NAGHMANA AASHIQ**  
COUNSELOR,  
PDF CPG MEMBER

## KIDNAPPING OF A MINOR GIRL AND SUBSEQUENT MURDER OF HER FATHER

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PDF respected the decision  
of victim family and closed  
proceeding.  
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**M**arch 12, 2016: Mehwish Bibi, age 14 years D/O Tanveer Masih, resident of Khalid Colony, Faisalabad was kidnapped by Mohd. Zahid Iqbal s/o Mohammad Iqbal and his family. Mehwish Bibi, worked as a domestic worker in different houses to support her parents to run their daily livelihood. On March 12, 2016 morning Majida Bibi w/o Mohammad Iqbal visited Mehwish house at early hours and said that they had a function in the evening and they need a girl who can help them in organizing crockery and do some cleanliness work at their home. They requested Mehwish parents to send their daughter with them and in the evening they would dropped her at home. Upon request Mehwish parent agree to send her daughter for work.

On the same day till late hours when her daughter didn't came back her parents approached Iqbal's family. On arrival they said that they had some work and Mehwish would come tomorrow morning on request to meet her daughter, family told that she is out for some shopping. Tanveer visited several times to Iqbal's house but every time they lingered on and never let him met with her daughter. At last Tanveer filed FIR no. 259/16 of Mehwish Bibi kidnapped at Raza Abad police station against Iqbal Family and nominated his seven family members in FIR.

Meanwhile, culprit's family approached Tanveer to settle the matter outside the court and emphasized him to withdraw the case. On May 31, 2016 kidnappers asked Tanveer to come to their place alone at Chak no. 73 Jhapal Village and take her daughter. While on the way he was gunned down and murdered

by unknown persons. His FIR no. 392/16 was registered against Mohammad Iqbal family in Thekarwala, Faisalabad Police Station on May 31, 2016.

Till today Mehwish Bibi is misplaced. Najma Bibi mother of Mehwish said that she wants her daughter back and want justice of her husband's murder. On the charges of murder on nominated culprits in FIR, police raided and arrested two culprits Mohammad Iqbal and Mohammad Zahid who are father and son in relation. Mohammad Zahid accepted that he killed Tanveer Masih and his father Mohammad Iqbal supported him for this heinous crime. The Lawyer that PDF had hired he suggested to wait till the culprits presented before the court for further proceedings. PDF arranged legal aid facility for the murder case and due to strong references and contacts with the Lahore high court bar association PDF agreed lawyers to fight the case of forced conversion and marriage on voluntarily bases. This intervention was a great success for PDF to resolve the case to provide justice to the victims. PDF with the help of CPGs members and the lawyers who were following the case after the arrest of the culprits, unfortunately, the scenario was changed overnight when w/o deceased started receiving life threats from the culprit's family members to withdraw the case or prepare themselves for dire consequences. Considering the situation, wife of deceased Tanveer Masih and mother of the minor girl Mehwish have withdrawn the case to protect her and remaining family members. PDF respected the decision of victim family and closed proceeding.

**ROBIN DANIEL**  
CHAIRMAN NATIONAL MINORITY  
ALLIANCE OF PAKISTAN,  
PDF CPG COORDINATOR

## A SANER RESPONSE TO RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM

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“Emerging conflict and threat to peace was averted Through this timely intervention.”

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**ASHIR IQBAL**  
PDF CPG COORDINATOR UC-248  
DAUD NAGAR FAISALABAD

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This act of religious extremism was occurred in the month of June at D- Type Pull, Samna bad, Faisalabad and had it not been dealt wisely, it could have sparked violence on a bigger scale. According to details, a Christian sanitary worker was beaten up June 24, 2016 by the religious person belonging to a particular sect for wearing green colour uniform that was interpreted as act of desecration to the religious symbol green turban adopted by this religious group.

The green colour uniform to sanitary workers has been provided by Faisalabad Waste Management Company (FWMC). The colour of the uniform coincidentally with green turbine (part of the dress code of this particular religious sect) but they termed it a deliberate act of poor sanitary worker. The particular religious group also warned the sanitary worker of dire consequence if he wears that uniform again.

This created a critical situation and it was feared that similar incidents may occur in the other parts of the city as well. Ashir Iqbal, PDF's CPG member when

informed about the incident decided to act immediately. He approached the management of FWMC and made them aware about the critical situation.

Finally the management of the company formed a delegation of stakeholders and religious leaders to initiate dialogue with the members of religious group who wear green turban as religious identity.

The delegation made the group realized that the uniform has been provided to sanitary workers officially and uniform colour decided by the company not by the employees that signifies nothing but indicate that the some employee of the company is at official duty. Thus, the emerging conflict and threat to peace was averted through this timely intervention on June 28, 2016

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“The management of the company formed a delegation of stakeholders and religious leaders to initiate dialogue with the members of religious group who wear green turban as religious identity.”

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## FAITH COMMUNITIES STAND TOGETHER TO CURB THE SOCIAL TENSION

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“Faith communities set a great example that communities could stand jointly against the social evils regardless of religious affiliations.”

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**JAVED BHATTI**  
EX- COUNSELOR  
PDF CPG COORDINATOR

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A personal dispute between the persons from two different faith groups was prevented before to turn into a religious issue with timely intervention by PDF's CPG coordinator Javed Bhatti. According to details, the dispute was erupted in July, 2016 at Town Ship, Lahore when a Muslim employee managed to steal the professional and personal data of his Christian employer from his computer. On the basis of some data about the personal life of the employer, the Muslim employee took it as an opportunity to extract some money from the employer through the act of blackmailing.

However, on refusal to oblige, the employee threatened him that he would also level charges against him for the desecration of Holy Quran. The matter was brought into the knowledge of Javed Bhatti (CPG's, coordinator) on July 12, 2016 who is also ex-councilor from the area, considered it highly dangerous for communal peace. Hence, he involved political and religious leadership across the faith communities.

As a result of this engagement, the political and religious leadership from Muslim community refused to support the person who was trying to use religion for his personal gain. They made the Muslim ex-employee of the Christian employer that he must refrain from this act of blackmailing which may lead to a violent situation in the area. They informed the Muslim person that Muslim community would not support him and instead if was still up to committing something wrong, proper action will be taken against him. As a result, the issue was prevented and settled peacefully. Faith communities set a great example that communities could stand jointly against the social evils regardless of religious affiliations.

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“A personal dispute between the persons from two different faith groups was prevented before to turn into a religious issue with timely intervention

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## SAVING THE SOULS OF A FAMILY

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**SHAHEEN ANTHONY**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
AIMS ORGANIZATION &  
PDF CPG COORDINATOR

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The peace in society begins from peace at home. With this understanding, Shaheen Anthony, CPG coordinator Union Council 249, Faisalabad and she is a principal of a School in the same locality as well, decided to intervene and make effort to settle a family dispute in October 2016. The wife in a Christian family at Bilal Town, Faisalabad was subject domestic violence and abuse consistently and a breakup between the husband and wife was almost about to happen. The CPG coordinator initiated her counseling to both the husband and wife and discussed various aspects and consequences of a broken family. She also made discussions with the daughter of the couple and when she was asked with

which parent she would like to live with, the girl responded that she needs both of her parents with her. Through reconciliation process, Shaheen made the couple realized that how they need to save their daughter from a distressing life in a male dominating society. The couple finally realized the importance of living together with mutual respect and care in a family unit.

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**The girl responded that she needs both of her parents with her.**

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## TURNING A VIOLENT SECTARIAN SITUATION INTO MUTUAL GOODWILL

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**IQBAL SANI**  
PDF CPG COORDINATOR

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The intra-faith (Sunni and Shia) tension was being observed in the area of Dillu Kalan, Lahore. The PDF's CPG coordinator Iqbal Sani sensed that the situation needed to respond on urgent basis with some proactive approach and action. Hence, he found 10th Moharrum (First month of Islamic year) October 12, 2016 as a perfect occasion to act for restoring the harmony back among faith communities. He, along with his other companions from Sunni sect, made special arrangements to serve the participants of religious procession of Shia community. They offered mourners milk and sweet water in the middle of the route of procession. This act was received as huge

helped in defusing the existing tension between the people of two sects in the area but also brought the people from different sects closer. The proactive approach adopted by CPG's coordinator laid the foundations of sustained peace and harmony in the society and successfully prevented the religious based violent situation.

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**Sunni sect, made special arrangements to serve the participants of religious procession of Shia community.**

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## PRE-EMPTING COMMUNAL HATRED WITH TIMELY INTERVENTION

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“Prevent the threat to peace and harmony between local Christian and Muslim communities.”

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**IQBAL SANI**  
PDF CPG COORDINATOR

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S ometime, apparently small family feuds could become potential threat to situation of peace and harmony in society if left unaddressed or unresolved for a longer period of time. A similar situation was arose in ‘Thay Deyal Mustfabad’, semi-rural area of Lahore during the month of November 10, 2016, when Iqbal Sani, coordinator of PDF's Community Peace Group (CPG) came to know about a conflict like situation in a local Christian family. According to details of the event, the situation was arisen when a Christian girl had shown her interest in marrying with her first cousin. As it is clearly forbidden in accordance to Christian teachings, the parents of the girl opposed the idea but the girl expressed her full defiance against her parents.

Iqbal being Muslim himself perceived the issue in full cognition of the range of consequence of such defiance as the consequences could have been far more damaging than as a simple family matter of violation of religious teachings.

Therefore, Iqbal decided to intervene into the matter and initiated rounds of discussion with the girl to make

her understand and realized that her action would lead her to social isolation besides losing parental love and care. He also explained that since the marriage will be a religious taboo, the children born from such relationship would also suffer as the consequence.

The probability was also in the mind of Iqbal that the couple could resort into conversion to Islam for the sake of this marriage. But afterward, when they would try to back in Christianity, it would lead to a violent conflict between the Muslim and Christian communities as leaving Islam is not allowed once it is accepted.

The girl however, after listening to Iqbal, decided to accept her parent's verdict and stepped back from her intention. Thus, with this mindfulness, Iqbal was able to not only save two young people from several miseries but also prevent the threat to peace and harmony between local Christian and Muslim communities. It was also significant event as the coordinator of CPG, being Muslim himself acted in the full realization of the religious sensitivities of the other faith which is the essence of peace for every society.

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## LAND GRABBING CONFLICT HANDLED AMICABLY

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The area was prevented from violent religious dispute between Christian and Muslim Communities that might cause social and religious relations among faith communities.  
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Haq Nawaz Ghafari, Chairman Union Council 63 in District Faisalabad, has initiated a struggle against the land grabbing mafia at every forum. This struggle is beyond consideration of who is involved in these acts. In Mohala Daud Colony, self proclaimed Church leader) one Iftikhar Andrias aka lumbar (leader) had been occupying 4 Kanals and 9 Marlas of Water and Sanitation Authority (WASA) land since last 10 months from February 16, 2016. To obtain financial resources, he constructed a few rooms on the land pretending as free school where children are being imparted free education and he fulfil all their needs.

In reality, the rooms are in his personal use and school is nothing but a mere propaganda. The Bureau Chief of daily 'On Record' and Rev. Irshad Parkash, priest at local Church supported chairman union council in this regard. They made relevant information published in the newspapers to urge the concerned officials to take notice and take the government land back. Iftikhar Andrias was not ready to return the land as it was his source of income on the name of poor children.

The money he was receiving was increasing his bank balance but the poor kids were forced to make payments for everything including books and uniform. Bureau Chief of daily 'On Record' and Rev. Irshad Parkash obtained all the relevant proofs and made them public. They informed the concerned officials that its being propagated that poor children are being imparted free education whereas in reality, nothing was free. On this WASA official realized the situation and they served notice to Iftikhar for vacating government property.

He instead sought time and gave written commitment on stamp paper that the land will be vacated in one month. Instead of vacating the land, he approached two local influential people and bribe them as a result they promised to Iftikhar that they will not allow the return of the land from him.

However, chairman Union Council Haq Nawaz Ghafari , Rev. Irshad Parkash and Bureau Chief of daily 'On Record' became the voice of the people. They sought opinion of local population on issue and everyone talked against him and demanded that the said land should be returned to WASA. While responding to strong appeal from the people, WASA officials constituted a team under, Assistant Commissioner AC city and Managing Director WASA that initiated action to take the land back.

Meanwhile, the land grabbers attacked government officials while using sticks and started beating them. As a result five persons including driver got injured and admitted to Allied Hospital, Faisalabad. WASA team fled from the spot but left official machinery behind that was later damaged by miscreants. It was proved that Land grabber had armed their supporters as a deliberate plan to stop enforcement team to reclaim the land even at the cost of bloodshed. Later, Iftikhar Andrias gathered people from Jhumra and Waris Pura so that a big procession could be brought on the road. It was another proof that local people were not with him. Land grabber party misguided people on the name of religion. They told the people that the WASA department has desecrated the Holy Cross and hence insulted our religion.

**REV. IRSHAD PARKASH**  
PDF CPG MEMBER

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**Land grabber party misguided people on the name of religion. They told the people that the WASA department has desecrated the Holy Cross and hence insulted our religion.**

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On this, a large number of people reached Daud Colony through buses where as it was planned by Iftikhar Andreas and his supporters, provoked people to chant slogans against Pakistan and Muslim Community. It was in stark violation of National Action Plan where it is clearly said that treason case will be registered on inciting religious hatred but these persons provoked the people and incited them to chant hateful slogans on the road. This provocation resulted as creeping religious hatred in entire area. On this Haq Nawaz Ghafari, Rev. Irshad Parkash and Bureau Chief of daily ‘On Record’ discussed the situation with AC City who advised them to seek guidance from religious elders to normalize the situation.

The first meeting was arranged with City President Sunni Tahreek and then they met prayer leader of the Mosque in Daud Colony and belongs to Brelvi Sect. Meeting was also arranged with another religious leader who belongs to Ahl- e- Sunnat waljamaat. After these meetings, people were called to gather at police station Daud Colony and where it was decided to

register case against the culprits. On the directions of City Police Officer (CPO), case was registered against 20 nominated and 40 unknown persons.

The WASA land was thus taken back on November 12, 2016 which was celebrated by local population because the area was prevented from violent religious dispute between Christian and Muslim communities that might cause social and religious relations among faith communities.

## DISPUTE OVER WATER SUPPLY TO CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY SETTLED

**D**enial of water to Christian community from government provided facility created a situation of communal hatred and tension in the area of Union Council 225, Bahar Colony 2 of Lahore. The tube well in the area was installed with the help and support by Kamran Michael (Federal Minister) and the Chairman UC (who is Christian) for the benefit of both Christian and Muslim community. However, its installation was made on the part of area that falls in Muslim population.

Both the communities were getting benefitted from the facility till a tussle between the Christian Chairman and Muslim Vice Chairman of UC was arisen. As a result, just before the Christmas celebrations in December 2016, Christian community was told by the Muslims that they cannot use this facility.

Knowing about the issue and resulting tension, J. Bruce Herman, PDF's local CPG coordinator approached the local political and religious leadership and pleaded that the government has provided the facility to benefit all the residents of the areas.

He argued that denying the rights of Christian community would only create communal hatred besides the fact that this right is undeniable in legal terms as well. He also urged the Chairman and Vice Chairman that their personal grudge should not affect the relations between the two communities in the area.

With this intervention and dialogue process at different levels, he was able to resolve the issue peacefully and Christian community was given its right to be benefitted from water supply facility.

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**J. BRUCE HERMAN**  
PDF CPG COORDINATOR

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“Denying the rights of Christian Community would only create communal hatred.”

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## PEACEBUILDING THROUGH UPHOLDING FAIRNESS AND JUSTICE

“ PDF decided to take up the case, the management was advised by several community members and well-wishers to not to pursue the case. This was out of their sheer disappointment and hopelessness keeping in view the nature of case but PDF's management kept faith in its struggle for justice. ”

Sometimes, your one thoughtful moment and a single act of kindness may lead towards not only to change the lives a family but to reduce the chances of the eruption of violence and hatred in society, especially between two religious groups i.e. Muslims and Christians. It was one of such moments when Romana Bashir, Executive Director PDF, decided to intervene into a matter and to stand for justice and fairness on a sudden impulse to act.

As of the details, it was just a routine proceeding of a seminar of PDF under the project 'Just and Sustainable Peace in Pakistan on January 14, 2017 at Lahore, when the executive director PDF received a distressed looking elderly lady at the venue just prior to her lecture. Assuming her one of the participants, she made the lady sit in the hall while being unaware of the fact that the elderly lady was there only to meet her.

As soon as the devastated looking lady came to know that Romana Bashir was the same lady who had received her earlier, she rushed towards her, hugged her tightly and started crying. It was revealed later that after her son being implicated in a false case and arrested, as a resource-less poor lady she approached a local NGO in Lahore to get support in this case. The local NGO informed her that it wouldn't be able to provide her any support in this case. However, she was told by the NGO officials that if she could contact Romana Bashir, the ED PDF, she might find some help in this case.

The elderly lady (Safina Johnson) was also informed that Romana was supposed to be in Lahore on January 14 and it was the same occasion when she was actually received by PDF, through its continued approach of standing against injustice, becoming voice of voiceless and contributing for the social causes through its proactive endeavor, has not only been able to provide justice to a socially and economically marginalized family but also prevented a possible clash and violence between different faith groups.

Romana Bashir, in the presence of coordinators of PDF's Community Peace Groups (CPGS), allowed her to share the details of the situation she was facing. Safina (resident of Maka Colony Lahore) explained that how her son Sheroon Johnson was implicated in a false case and as a result of poor handling of the case by lawyers was sent to jail on wrong accusations. The real issue behind this was a personal feud between Sharoon and his friend and business partner, Muslim by faith. Sharoon was implicated in a case of cybercrime on behest of that 'friend' that was motivated by personal financial gain but he was charged and convicted under Cybercrime Act as well as Anti-Terrorist Act.

The son of Safina was rotting in jail from last 14 months and at other hand, the entire family was going through tremendous hardships and agony. His father was died and his sister was divorced and sent back to parent's home with an infant baby girl. Even the wife of Sharoon couldn't endure it for too long and left the family amidst this deepening crisis. The family was

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**With this intervention, PDF has been able to save the soul of another family besides ensuring sustained peace in the community and eliminating the chances of future backlash and potential violence between the two faith communities.**

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completely devastated but still there was no hope of Sharoon returning back home.

PDF team listened to all the details carefully and suggested that providing justice to Sharoon was not important for the family but also for possible backlash by Sharoon on his release from jail as in such situations when someone would leave with no hope in life, the revenge seems the ultimate resort. Thus, there was every chance that this feud may turn in to violence on some later stage.

PDF advised Bruce, the local CPG coordinator to take every possible measure to ensure justice and relief for the family. Bruce, while keeping close liaison with PDF team, worked untiringly to resolve the issue. From providing legal support to taking care of small needs of family (at one occasion the family even didn't have milk to feed the little baby, he niece of Sharoon), and to boost their morale, he was there in all these roles. Bruce with the help of local religious leaders and the community members, was also been able to provide shelter and support the family to run a small shop so the family could earn the bread and butter for itself.

Within few months during the proceedings of the case fortunately, the judge was changed and the newly appointed judge called Safina (the mother of Sharoon) on the hearing of the case and listened to her sympathetically and ensured that the case will be re-examined and her son would get released soon.

Meanwhile, PDF and CPG's coordinator Bruce remained in close touch with the poor lady to revive her hopes and visited her as well to monitor that the basic needs of the family were being met. PDF found that the Safina (elderly lady) was now full of hopes and extremely thankful for all the love, care and support that PDF and Bruce have been providing during this

agonized period. She specially lauds Bruce for being there whenever family needed his support.

By taking up this case with the proper legal assistance, finally on June 6, 2017 Sharoon was acquitted from all the charges released from the jail and sent back home on the orders of the court. This case has a special significance as PDF had taken up the case at a juncture when his family had lost all the hopes for justice and thus his release from jail proved to be a revival of faith and humanity. It has also shown the effectiveness of local peace mechanism developed by the PDF and dedication of CPG's coordinators.

With this landmark success, the victim of this conspiracy was now not only able to return back to home but living a peaceful life along with his family and hence. Moreover, with this intervention, PDF has been able to save the soul of another family besides ensuring sustained peace in the community and eliminating the chances of future backlash and potential violence between the two faith communities. This case has a special significance in terms of believe in truthfulness as when PDF decided to take up the case, the management was advised by several community members and well-wishers to not to pursue the case. This was out of their sheer disappointment and hopelessness keeping in view the nature of case but PDF's management kept faith in its struggle for justice. Although justice was delayed but not denied it was rebuilding trust of minority community in the judicial system of Pakistan too.

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**J. BRUCE HERMAN**  
CHAIRMAN VOICE OF PEACE  
PDF CPG COORDINATOR

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## THE IMPORTANCE OF PROMOTING INTERFAITH HARMONY



**M.SALIM CHAUDHARY**  
PRESIDENT SOCIAL WELFARE  
FOUNDATION AND  
PDF CPG MEMBER

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**“Islam, Christianity and  
Sikhism, all believe  
in one God.”**

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After participating in solidarity visit on Oct. 30, 2016, Mohammad Salim Chaudhry (social activist & member of CPG) wrote an article; 'The Importance of Promoting Interfaith Harmony in the Society' published in Daily "Waqif" Newspaper Faisalabad, brief summary of the article is as follows; Mohammad Salim Chaudhry, in his article 'The Importance of Promoting Interfaith Harmony in the Society' published in Daily Waqif Faisalabad, discussed the need promoting peace and love in society. He narrated that all human beings are sons of Adam and thus brothers to each other. He said this world would become a beautiful place to live when we will love each other and live in peace.

He highlighted the importance of social interaction and taking care of each other and to help those that are in need of help and to resist the oppressors and to stand for weak and vulnerable. He said unfortunately, we observe wars and hatred around us and humanity is calling for peace to get rid of the miseries inflicted by conflicts. He said that if we start loving each other, we would no more in need of spending huge money on security and spend the same money on development and creating a prosperous society.

He then presented details of the unique initiative of Peace and Development Foundation (PDF) Rawalpindi, in collaboration with 'Faisalabad NGOs Network' to promote interfaith harmony. He wrote that under the initiative, a trip of about 150 persons (men and women both) from different civil society organizations and different walks of life from

Faisalabad to three sacred places belong to three different faiths i.e. Christian, Muslim and Sikh in district Nankana was arranged. The participants were very pleased to know that Islam, Christianity and Sikhism, all believe in one God. All have common believe that God has created the entire universe and He is the sole provider. Besides, its God who is running all the affairs of the world and except him, no one else deserved to be worshiped. They were agreed that only difference is that we have different ways of worship but all have an understanding that 'Don't leave your faith but do not make criticism on others' faith'.

The understanding among the group was emerged that the followers of all three religions dislike extremism and terrorism. All feel proud of being son of Adam. All being son of Adam are brothers regardless of their religion, race, nationality, language and culture. They were of view that the world has become a global village and people should learn to live together with the spirit of mutual respect and cooperation. People should advance the approach of 'Live and let live' at town, district, provincial and country level. The people from different faiths in the country are like a bouquet of flowers and hence they must promote tolerance, co-existence and sentiment of love for the fragrance of peace to prevail. People must discourage divisions, biases and extremism on the name of religion or culture.

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