

## H.E. Ms Saadia Altaf Qazi

### Your Excellency,

I am writing to express my worries about the state of religious freedom in Pakistan after the recent violent attacks by mobs on Christian communities in Jaranwala.

With hundreds of homes, many church-buildings and neighbourhoods vandalised and destroyed, Christians and other religious minorities are in dire need of protection from authorities. Failure to protect citizens against the violent attacks, and the apparent lack of willingness to pursue legal remedies for serious violations of peoples' basic safety constitute serious breaches of international law.

The attacks on the Christian communities came after allegations of blasphemy. Following the expansion of the blasphemy laws in Pakistan earlier this year, religious minorities seem to be increasingly vulnerable for violent attacks, as evinced by the recent attacks on Jaranwala.

Pakistan has not allowed the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief access to the country to investigate the situation of religious freedom and provide support for the Pakistani government in tackling issues and policies relating to religious freedom. This is unfortunate – and has potentially massive negative impact on the lives of many Pakistani citizens.

In light of the recent violent attacks and breaches of the realisation of basic safety for citizens in Pakistan, I kindly ask for your intervention in ensuring that:

- The authorities guarantee the safety of religious minorities in Pakistan, including Christians, Ahmadiyyas and Hindus;
- The government abolish the blasphemy laws;
- The UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief is granted access to the state in order to assess the state of religious freedom in Pakistan.

**Sincerely,**