



Pakistani scholars' statement condemns Atif Mian's removal over 'private faith'

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Pakistani scholars, professionals and citizens wrote an open statement “to register disappointment at the recent forced resignation of Dr Atif Mian from the Economic Advisory Council (EAC) of Pakistan” and to condemn “a long history of systematic discrimination against Pakistan’s Ahmadiyya community at home and abroad at the hands of the Pakistani state and society”.

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government received severe backlash from the progressive segments of society after it backtracked on Dr Atif’s nomination three days after its Federal Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry vowed not to bow down to “extremists”. The government had been under pressure from religious outfits, like Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP), to sack Mian for being an Ahmadi, since his nomination to the council.

Earlier on Saturday, after Dr Mian’s resignation which was followed by the resignation of Dr Asim Ijaz Khwaja in protest, another EAC member Dr Imran Rasul had quit the body.

The EAC had 18 members, including three international economists of Pakistani origin, at the time of its establishment; however, with the resignation of two members and sacking of another, all three international economists on the council are no longer part of the advisory body.

The statement began circulating on Twitter last night when it was first shared by Shahrukh Wani, a graduate student at London School of Economics.

<https://twitter.com/ShahrukhWani/status/1038557530316840960>

he statement was drafted by Sarah Khan, a PhD Candidate in Political Science at Columbia University.

“Statement by Pakistanis in Solidarity with Dr [#AtifMian](#) & the Ahmediyya community at home and abroad. Thanks to [@ShahrukhWani](#) for initiating and [@asadliaqat](#), [@sahar shafqat](#) and [@thedronalisa](#) for advice on content and form. Please add your signature,” she tweeted.

https://twitter.com/_sarahkhan/status/1038555621447094272



“Dr Mian’s forced resignation comes in the wake of a targeted smear campaign on the ground and on social media, and an official call to notice against his appointment submitted in the Senate.”

“On the one hand, this forced resignation represents the present government’s willingness to capitulate to the demands of those who believe that questions of private faith ought to determine appointments to professional and public service. On the other, this outcome has a sense of inevitability in our current society, where the question of private faith has been strategically exploited for political gain, at the expense of the dignity and physical security of Ahmadiyya citizens, for decades,” the statement argued.

“Among the signatories of this statement are scholars of history who understand that change is possible, lawyers who understand not just the letter but the transformative potential of the law, social scientists who understand the macrodynamics and microfoundations of power, artists who understand that human stories told through all varied mediums can generate empathy, citizens who understand the ground realities of Pakistan, and activists who understand that the arc of the moral universe is long, but who work tirelessly to bend it towards justice.”

“We envision a Pakistan where those of all faiths enjoy not just tolerance but dignity, not just freedom from persecution but freedom to actively express their identity in its fullest, where their presence in the highest echelons of power is not something that is merely permissible but rather something that is enthusiastically celebrated.”

Prominent names among the signatories include Pervez Hoodbhoy, Nida Kirmani, Yasser Latif Hamdani, Dr Osama Siddique, Ahmer Naqvi, Shahrukh Wani, Khurram Zafar, Adil Najam and Sarah Khan.

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