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Pakistan threat to non-Islamic religions

Having read with concern your leader (11 February 1995) saying that Pakistan is now threatening all religious minorities, in line with their persecution by Islamic fundamentalists in Iran, Sudan, Saudi Arabia and elsewhere, I got out a handsome blue and gold book presented to me by the Government of Pakistan nearly 40 years ago. It was the Constitution of the new Islamic Republic, which I had drafted for them in accordance with their instructions.

This 1956 Constitution said that Pakistan should be a state 'wherein adequate provision should be made for the minorities freely to profess and practise their religion and develop their culture'. At that time it gave a guarantee of 'freedom of thought, expression, belief, faith, worship and association'. This was done 'so that the people of Pakistan may prosper and attain their rightful and honoured place amongst the nations of the world and make their full contribution towards international peace and the progress and happiness of humanity'. The 1956 Constitution stated that 'every citizen has the right to profess, practise and propagate any religion' and that 'every religious denomination and every sect thereof has the right to establish, maintain and manage its religious institutions'. It guaranteed the right to move the Supreme Court by appropriate proceedings for the enforcement of these rights.

What has gone wrong?¹

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¹ *The Times*, 22 February 1995.