

Hearings on Religious Freedom in India and Pakistan: Panel 2 Introduction

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Chairman Elliot Abrams

U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom

CHAIRMAN ABRAMS: I'm going to begin by introducing the panel on the situation in Pakistan. Professor Mumtaz Ahmad was educated at the University of Karachi and is now professor of political science at Hampton University in the State of Virginia. He has also served as a lecturer at the Foreign Service Institute of the United States Department of State on contemporary South Asian problems.

M.L. Shahani is an attorney who is formerly an additional judge of the High Court of Sind [ph] and advocate general of Sind. He was educated there at the University of Sind and has practiced as an advocate before the Supreme Court for 24 years. He has been, from 1985 to 1990, a member of the Council of the Men's Department of the Baptist World Alliance and was for 14 years the director of the Karachi YMCA.

Father James Channan comes here from Lahore. He was educated there in the University of Lahore; was ordained in Faizal Abbad [ph] in 1980. He is the secretary now for about 15 years of the Pakistan Association for Interreligious dialogue and executive secretary of the Catholic Bishops' National Commission for Interreligious dialogue. He has also served on the Commission for Religious Relations with Muslims, appointed by Pope John Paul II in 1999 and is president of the Leadership Conference of Major Superiors of Men this year in 2000.

And finally, Mujeeb Rahman is an advocate before the Supreme Court of Pakistan. He received his law degree from the University of Karachi and has been associated for a long time with human rights groups such as Amnesty International and the International Commission of Jurists. As a trial and appellate and constitutional lawyer, he has often represented cases involving the Ahmadiyya community in Pakistan and has written about the condition and persecution of Ahmadiyyas in Pakistan and has underway now a study of the blasphemy laws in Pakistan.

We begin with Professor Ahmad.