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by Shivam Vij

The brazen murder of three brothers from the Hindu community in Shikarpur district on Eid day demonstrates that the perpetrators believe they can get away with murder simply because the victims are non-Muslim, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) has said.

In a statement issued on Wednesday the Commission said: "HRCP is shocked at the brazen murder of the three Hindu citizens in Shikarpur and shares the sense of outrage of the Hindu community, not least because of the utter failure of the police to prevent the killings or arrest the killers even though threats of violence had been brought to their notice.

After a reported dispute with a local Muslim tribe three weeks earlier, the Hindu community in the area had received anonymous calls threatening them of 'serious consequences'. The community had sought protection from the police. It is alarming that the three men were slain no more than a few meters away from the local police station. The Hindu community has also expressed concern that the law enforcement personnel tend to support the criminals rather than the victims when their community is targeted.

HRCP believes that the spike in faith-based violence in the country in the last few years has been fuelled in no small part by a sense among the perpetrators that they have virtual immunity for murder for all intents and purposes as long as the victims are from a religious minority community.

It is hoped that the authorities realize where they have fallen short in protecting the fundamental rights of the religious minorities, including their right to life. The government must wake up to the monumental challenge of allaying an acute sense of insecurity and vulnerability

among members of religious minority communities. HRCP welcomes expressions of concern from top government officials in the wake of the ‘abhorrent murders’, as the prime minister has described them, but also wants to emphasise that promises of strict action must be followed through and steps taken to reassure the affected community that their tormentors would be held to account. Furthermore, instead of merely suspending police officials right, left and centre after the fact, the government must devise a mechanism to ensure protection for those vulnerable on account of their faith and train the police on how that can be implemented.

The people also expect Pakistan’s political parties to publicly and unambiguously condemn faith-based violence and remind the government of its responsibility to ensure rights and provide protection to all citizens, non-Muslims in particular in view of the heightened threats that they face.”

Zohra Yusuf
Chairperson, HRCP

*This press release was put out by the **HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION OF PAKISTAN**,
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