

**Progressive Islam in Practice**

**Takfir Series: Part IV**

# **Takfir Case Studies Part I**

**Minority Groups**

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# Ahmadiyya (Pakistan)

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- In Pakistan, in 1974, the Federal Constitution was amended to declare Ahmadis as non-Muslims.
- In 1984, the federal government of Pakistan issued an ordinance declaring that Ahmadis could not call themselves Muslims, stripping them of their rights to religious freedom.
- As a result, Ahmadiyya are forbidden from calling their mosques 'masjids' and professing the Islamic creed in public.
- They are also forbidden from quoting the Qur'an, preaching in public, and disseminating religious information.
- The ordinance also prohibited Ahmadis from praying in non-Ahmadiyya mosques, using public prayer rooms, and performing the call to prayer.

# Alawites (Syria)

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- Found in Syria, Turkey, Lebanon, and the Golan Heights, the Alawites or the Nusayris, are a minority group with origins in Shi'a Islam.
- Although the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem issued a fatwa recognizing Alawites as Muslims, a number of Sunni and Shi'a scholars across the world have condemned Alawites as *kafir*.
- Sunni scholars, like Ibn Taymiyya, criticized them as enemies of Islam and called them more "infidels than Jews or Christians".
- The Syrian scholar Ibn Kathir called Alawites *mushrikeen* (polytheists) in his writings.
- Twelver Shi'a Scholars are also critical of the Alawites, refusing to acknowledge them as Shi'a Muslims and calling their beliefs heretical.

# Hazaras (Afghanistan)

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- The Hazaras, a large minority group in Afghanistan, numbering about 8 million are primarily located in central Afghanistan.
- They have long been targets of the Sunni majority in Afghanistan but in 1998, the Taliban began systemically murdering Shi'a Hazaras, claiming that, as Shi'as, they were not Muslims
- As a result of the 1998 attack, about 8,000 Hazara civilians were slaughtered.
- The commander of the attack, Mullah Niazi was quoted as saying "They are kufr (infidels). You either accept to be Muslims or leave Afghanistan."
- The Taliban has since been criticized by ISIS for their acceptance of Shi'a sects in the country.

# Mongols (Central Asia)

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- In the 13th CE, the majority of Western Khanates Mongols converted to Islam, leaving behind their traditional Shamanism religious beliefs.
- Despite their conversion to Islam, they continued to observe Yassa code, the traditional legal code of the Mongol Empire that had been transmitted orally through their society for decades.
- In the 14th CE, Ibn Taymiyyah issued a fatwa against them, calling on Muslims to "combat... those that place themselves outside the Shari'a", specifically targeting the Mongols for their practice of Yassa code rather than Shari'a.
- In issuing the fatwa, Ibn Taymiyyah effectively *takfired* the Mongol Muslims, rendering them apostates as a way to call for and justify a violent jihad against them.

# Shi'a Muslims (Iraq)

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- A number of terrorist groups affiliated with ISIS have declared Shi'a Muslims to be *kafir* and have declared an all out war against this population.
- Over an eight year period, these groups were responsible for 27,947 deaths, many who were Muslims who the groups claimed to be *kafir* as they were Shi'a.
- Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the founder of the jihadist group, Jama'at al-Tawhid wal-Jihad called for an all out war on the sects of apostasy, referring to the Shi'a Muslims in Iraq and surrounding areas
- Articles featured in the IS magazine, Dabiq, often call for attacks and the systemic murder of Shi'a Muslims on the premise that they are *kafir*.

# Shi'a Muslims (Saudi Arabia)

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- In Saudi Arabia, Shi'a Muslims are referred to as *rafidha* (rejectors), a derogatory term used to refer to Shi'as, condemning them as 'rejectors' of the first two successors of Prophet Muhammad.
- Until 1993, statewide school textbooks openly denounced Shi'as, referring to them as *rafidha*.
- In 1988, the leading cleric, Abdul-Aziz ibn Baz denounced Shi'a Muslims as apostates.
- Six years later, one of the members of the Higher Council of Ulama sanctioned the killing of Shi'a Muslims, calling them "vicious enemies of Islam".
- Numerous attacks on Shi'a religious centers have taken place over the years and in 2016, Sheikh Nimr, the prominent Shiite cleric was executed by the State.

# Sufi Muslims (ISIL Territory)

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- Since the rise of the Islamic State, a number of Sufi Muslims have been violently attacked or killed, using the justification that Sufis are not Muslims but *kafir*.
- In 2017, ISIL gunmen attacked the al-Rawda mosque, a Sufi mosque in Egypt, during Friday prayers, killing 311 people and injuring 122.
- ISIL has condemned Sufi practices as *kafir* and claims that the Sufi saints and shrines are against the Islamic belief of monotheism.
- In the Islamic State magazine, Rumiya, an article written by a commander of ISIL identified districts within the Sinai peninsula that have significant Sufi populations, as districts the Islamic State hoped to eradicate.



# Zikiri (Pakistan)

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- An offshoot of the Mahdavia sect, the Zikris are found in Western Pakistan.
- After the establishment of the official state of Pakistan, Zikri were subjected to forced conversion by the Sunni majority.
- During the military dictatorship, they were harassed and killed.
- Ulamas (religious authorities) in Pakistan have declared Zikris *kafir*.
- In 1978, the local ulama started a movement calling for the government of Pakistan to *takfir* the Zikris, similar to the declaration against the Ahmadis.
- Since 2014, with the rise of militancy in Pakistan, the Zikris face additional persecution at the hands of the Taliban and the Lashkar-i-Jhangji, a Sunni supremacist militant group.

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