

## **A report on brutal attack of Muslims extremists on Joseph Colony Lahore**

In another shocking display of violence in Pakistan, Islamists set ablaze about 160 Christian houses and a Church at Joseph Colony Badami Bagh Lahore on Saturday March 9, 2013 at about 11:00 a.m after a false blasphemy accusation was leveled against a Christian youth, Savan Masih alias Buddy s/o Chaman Masih resident of Joseph Colony, Noor Road, Badami Bagh, Lahore.

Savan Masih s/o Chaman Masih aged 40, resident of Joseph Colony, Noor Road, Badami Bagh Lahore. He has a wife, 1son and 2 daughters and lived along with his parents. He worked as a Sweeper in Municipal Committee Lahore. Savan has a Muslim friend named Shahid Imran who was a barber and ran his own shop. Since 4 years they had friendship and used to sit together in the evening and drink liqueurs. They sit together late night for drink and used slang language for each other in routine.



**Savan Masih s/o Chaman Masih**

According to the facts, on March 7, 2013 Savan and Shafid sit together for drink in Barber's shop while drinking their behavior to each other was not new, they have been shrinking and using slang language and abused each other. Later they went to their houses to sleep in the night. Next day on March 8, 2013 they have been doing their own works. In the evening there was a rumor by Shahid Imran that Savan Masih has passed derogatory remarks against the Prophet Mohammad. Local Muslims became furious, they called upon some more Muslims from the locality and informed them about blasphemy, and then the anti-Christian hostility spread like a wildfire in the area. Living up to their reputation of penalizing so-called "blasphemers", local Muslim clerics accused the father and the son, of committing blasphemy and made inflammatory statements against Savan Masih and his father and incited Muslim residents of Joseph Colony and adjoining other Muslims from surroundings to attack on the Christians of the area to avenge alleged blasphemy. Above than 3000 Muslims from surrounding armed with

firearms and explosives, were gathered there to attack on the Christian Colony. They put pressure on the police to get register a false and fabricated case FIR number 112/13 Under Section 295-C against Savan Masih in Badami Bagh Police Station

Savan Masih was at his work and when he heard about registered FIR against him, he became scared and ran away. At about 5:00 p.m CLAAS was informed about the tense situation at Joseph Colony by Fr. Inayat Barnard a Catholic Priest, the area in-charge and board member of CLAAS informed Mr. Joseph Francis that Christians were frightened (because of the example of Gojra and Koriean village in District Toba Take Sing in 2009, where 147 houses were burnt and 7 people were burnt alive due to the fake blasphemy accusation) and they left to the save places. Many families still at the place were scared and they were waiting for help. CLAAS national Director has urged to the local police for the security of Christians at the place because of the tense situation.

Immediately, CLAAS team headed by Mr. Joseph Francis MBE National Director, including Mr. Asher Sarfraz Field Officer, Mr. Asif Raza Assistant Field Officer, Mr. Sohail Habel Finance Manager, Ms. Huma Lucas Assistant In-charge Legal Department and Ayaz Gill Court Clerk reached at the place to help Christian residents. CLAAS team observed there a few police man in the area for security of Christians against the mob of above 3000 people. Who demanded the arrest of Savan Masih otherwise they will set the houses of all Christian Colony on fire, police arrested Savan Masih's father to calm down Muslims aggression.



**Savan Masih along with Mr. Jospeh Francis MBE, National Director CLAAS, at CLAAS Office**

Samuel Masih a local social activist and work for the welfare of the Christians, he informed Mr. Joseph Francis, there were announcements in the mosques urging Muslim to target Savan Masih and his family to kill them at the spot. Therefore he kept safe Savan and his family at some unknown place.

Samuel brings Savan Masih at CLAAS Office at 01:00 a. m in the night and through CLAAS he handed over him to the custody of police. Investigation officer of this case also came to CLAAS office and recorded the statement of Savan Masih and took him in to the custody. He promised to CLAAS that he is responsible of Savan Masih security and he will keep him at some other police station (hide).

Savan Masih assured CLAAS that he was not an accused. He was confused that why he got involved in such a dreadful case. He also informed CLAAS that the complainant Shahid Imran was his good friend. He requested CLAAS to handle his legal case as he only trusts CLAAS. He also requested for the shelter of his family as he has a son, 2 daughters, wife and parents.



**A Local Bishop of Independent Church, Savan Masih and Mr. Francis at CLAAS Office**



At 1:00 a. m some other leaders of different Christian organizations took gathered in the area and went to the police station but police officials were not ready to hear them. Later at about 3:00 a. m they all including Mr. Joseph Francis from CLAAS and team, gathered at Catholic Church Anar Kali Lahore along with Fr. Inayat Barnard a Catholic Priest to make the work strategy for this case. Fr. Inayat Barnard showed his trust on CLAAS to deal this case.

Today morning at about 11:00 the Muslims attacked the Christians of the Joseph colony incited by broadcast from local mosques. The Christian residents fled to safety as Muslim clerics announced their verdict to “kill the blasphemers.” The chemical used by the Muslim mob to set fire to Christian houses was so inflammable that it utterly destroyed the targeted houses.



The mob broke into the houses, looted the valuable things and burnt the remaining belongings in the houses. SSP Operations

Suhail Sukhera and the SHO Hafiz Abdul Majeed of Police Station Badami Bagh Lahore were also reportedly injured when the mob pelted a police party with stones.

There is left nothing in the houses for Christians of Joseph Colony. They have lost everything and they are helpless the moment.



The charged group had gathered around Joseph Colony on Noor Road, led by Shafiq Ahmed a local, who was in search of the accused Savan, alias Buddy. The mob then attacked Savan's house, setting it on fire and pelting it with stones. About 160 other houses in the locality were also attacked and set on fire. Many residents, including women and children, hastily fled to save themselves.

The attack was failure of the government security department which is totally failed to protect the non-Muslims especially Christians of the country. The police force could not control extremists who were demanding alleged accused of blasphemy.



Through reporters, Punjab government has announced that all those whose property had been damaged will be compensated within five days and that the cases have been registered against those responsible for burning the houses of Christians will be prosecuted. While the eyewitnesses said that the Christian community of Joseph Colony Lahore has become the victim of aggression of armed Muslim extremist with the support of Punjab government. The MPA's and MNA's of the Punjab government gave courage to the extremists to attack Christian belongings and threatened them to flee from the place as they want to grab the property of Christians.

**Reported by,  
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