We, the undersigned, express our deep concern over the persecution of members of the Ahmadi Religion of Peace and Light in Jordan. The movement, has faced increasing pressure from Jordanian authorities in recent years. The small community, whose beliefs diverge from traditional Muslim views, has been subjected to a systematic campaign of intimidation and repression.

The most recent incident, occurred on July 25, 2024, when six members of the Ahmadi community were arrested while peacefully conducting missionary work in Amman's Tla Ali district. The detainees, who were transferred to Amman's Marka prison, are:

1. Issa Mahmoud Abd Al-Rahman Abu Shahin
2. Fadi Mostafa Mohamad Alyan
3. Yahya Hassan Abdullah Jabir
4. Omar Mahmoud Abd Al-Rahman Abu Shahin
5. Yahia Abedelmajeed Mahmoud Berjawi
6. Maryam Jabir Sabir Al-Debaji

These individuals have been charged under Article 150 of the Jordanian Penal Code with "insulting religious feelings of others" and "inciting sectarian strife." Their arrest and subsequent treatment have raised serious concerns about religious freedom and human rights in Jordan.

According to reports, the detainees were subjected to intense interrogation by both the prosecutor and national intelligence officers. They were questioned about their beliefs and accused of sectarianism and insulting Islam. One particularly contentious point was the Ahmadi belief that the true location of the Kaaba is in Petra, Jordan, rather than in Saudi Arabia. The interrogators reportedly mocked their beliefs and explicitly prohibited the group from publicly manifesting their beliefs, forcing them to pledge a 70,000 USD payment if they ever did so again. The group was threatened with job loss and with more severe state actions if they persisted in their faith, before pressing charges against them. They were then placed in solitary confinement in Amman's Marka Prison, in abysmal conditions where they were prohibited from interacting with other inmates, to prevent the spread of their religious beliefs within the prison.

As part of the interrogation the group was taken to meet a representative of Jordan's ministry of religious affairs who accused the members of blasphemy and declared them as apostates.

Perhaps most troubling is the case of Maryam Jabir Sabir Al-Debaji, who was initially slated for release. However, after affirming her faith, her release was postponed and later denied by the governor of Amman. She was subsequently charged along with the others.

The Ahmadi Religion of Peace and Light has condemned these actions as a blatant attack on religious freedom. They are demanding an immediate halt to all persecution, intimidation, and police harassment against its members, as well as the dropping of all charges.

This recent incident is not isolated but part of a broader pattern of repression against the Ahmadi community in Jordan. Since 2016, members have been subjected to repeated arrests, interrogations, physical abuse, and even violent attacks on their homes. One family of believers, Basir Al Sqour's and his siblings, Omar, Amer, Ahmed, Soha, Mays and Reema reported being called "impure apostates" by relatives and neighbours before enduring a violent attack on their homes with sticks and guns. They were also repeatedly arrested and subjected to continuous state harassment.

Members have been dismissed from their jobs or even forced to resign, including Yahya Berjawi who was dismissed after 16 years of working at a computer maintenance company. Basir Al-Sqour was forced to resign from the Jordanian army after serving there for 18 years as a military officer with the rank of "major. He recounts: "*After 18 years of service in the Jordanian army, I was forced to resign from my position as a major. My crime? My faith. How can a country that claims to protect religious freedom treat its citizens this way*?"

The persecution extends beyond individual harassment. In 2020, Jordanian authorities shut down the satellite channel of the Ahmadi Religion of Peace and Light, which had been broadcasting to hundreds of thousands of homes in the Middle East and North Africa region.

These actions stand in stark contrast to Jordan's constitutional guarantees and international commitments. The Jordanian constitution ostensibly protects "the free exercise of all forms of worship and religious rites" and prohibits discrimination based on religion. Moreover, Jordan is a party to the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which protects freedom of religion or belief.

We, the undersigned therefore urge the Jordanian authorities to:

- Immediately drop all charges against the members of the Ahmadi Religion of Peace and Light arrested on July 25, 2024, and end their prosecution.
- Safeguard the free exercise of religion for the Ahmadi community, as protected by Articles 6 and 14 of the Jordanian Constitution.
- Abide by commitments to international law, particularly Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

As one Ahmadi member put it, *"We're not asking for special treatment. We're simply asking for the right to practice our faith in peace, without fear of persecution or imprisonment. Is that too much to ask in the 21st century*?"

Signatories:

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