

# (Precis)

## - Role of Ulemas -

The whole nation has collective responsibility to cope with extremist threats to the country. Ulemas specifically are bound to manage situation. However, on most occasions they do much ado about nothing. On the contrary, their role in condemning militancy and supporting government is also fascinating.

Council of Islamic Ideology chairman censured militant activities and murders of <sup>blasphemy</sup> suspects. According to the editor, solution of extremism lies in

castigation of militants by Ulemas, which needs <sup>of</sup> ~~auditing~~ <sup>audacity</sup> from both scholars and

people. State has also tried to manage this ~~is~~ deep rooted issue by carrots and sticks.

State functionaries need to be united and misuse of religion should not be allowed and false accusers of blasphemy must face the music.

Firm stand of Ulemas and state can vanquish the propagandists.

Original text = 329

Precis text = 129

## Ulema's role (Dawn Editorial)

A LONG with robust action from the state, all elements within society are required to play their role to fend off the existential challenge posed to Pakistan by extremist forces. Considering the nature of the threat, ulema have a particular responsibility to ensure that faith is not misused and misinterpreted by regressive and violent elements. Members of the clergy have had a mixed record in this regard, with scholars of repute at times staying silent when their voices needed to be heard the most, while in other instances they have endorsed statebacked fatwas condemning militancy and extremism. Yet it was welcome to note that the Council of Islamic Ideology chairman recently addressed the problem of misuse of religious laws with frankness. In a media interaction last week, Dr Raghib Naeemi said certain religious outfits were manipulating Islamic laws as per their liking, while condemning the ghastly trend of mob justice in cases of reported sacrilege. He also criticised the issuance of edicts authorising the killing of individuals suspected of committing blasphemy. In a telling revelation, Dr Naeemi said that 'saner elements' within religious circles were afraid of extremists.

The search for a solution starts with agreeing to the fact that there is a problem. In this regard, more ulema of standing need to speak up against the violent extremist forces threatening to tear apart Pakistan. It will require immense courage to stand up to these dangerous elements, but if the country is to be saved from their zealotry, both the state and all of society need to display fortitude to achieve the goal of deradicalisation. The problem of radicalisation has, unfortunately, been affecting society for decades, and the state has itself aided this process both by omission and commission. Therefore, it will take time to remove these toxic narratives from society, but all stakeholders need to display resolve and stay the course. The state must not cave in to extremists, and no one can be allowed to misuse religious injunctions to forward their dark agenda. Those who hurl false accusations of sacrilege must themselves face the law, and clergymen need to work to defuse the situation when such accusations arise. The path to moderation begins with the state refusing to bow before regressive forces, and ulema playing a role to promote tolerance and harmony, rather than fragmentation.