

Mob attacks priests at school in Pakistan

Church issues cry for help after land grabbers move in on property in Ayyaz Gulzar, Karachi, Pakistan



Illegal markings on Church land

The Church is seeking help from the authorities after “land mafia” attacked two priests and several parishioners at a Catholic school in Karachi on Monday.

Father Pervez Khalid, one other senior priest and six Church workers were assaulted by a group 70 people on April 16 after entering the playground of Cardinal Cordeiro High School which has been seized by land grabbers. One parishioner in his forties was taken to hospital after receiving several heavy blows.

The trouble began on Sunday when local residents informed Church authorities that people were demolishing a wall at the school which is situated in Karachi’s Korangi town.

Other men were seen marking out a piece of ground measuring about 2,000 sq m.

“We went to see where they made the illegal plot markings next day when about 70 men arrived and ordered us to leave. They even damaged the car of a priest who had land documents,” said Fr Khalid of Karachi’s Good Shepherd Parish.

The priests and representatives from the Church’s Justice and Peace commission yesterday met the town administrator and are now seeking support from local politicians as well as government chiefs.

They say the property was purchased from the Karachi Development Authority 24 years ago.

According to the school principal, several people “mysteriously” began questioning the ownership of land at the school six months ago.

Police removed the laborers and have issued security assurances but we cannot open the school on the basis of verbal guarantees, especially after what happened on Monday, Shahbaz Khan said.

“We shall act on priests’ directives,” he said. “We want peace and are saddened by attempts to target the school. It will not be possible to offer a healthy future to students if the place is taken,” said Fr Khalid.

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