

AEA NEWS

Asia Evangelical Alliance

AEA Condemns Beheading of Sikh Traders in Pakistan

Asian Evangelical Alliance condemns the recent beheading of Sikh traders in Pakistan on February 21.

According to Indian media reports, two Sikhs were beheaded by Pakistan based Taliban militants in Khyber and Orakzi areas near Peshawar. The Sikhs beheaded were among a group of persons of unconfirmed number, who had been kidnapped by the Taliban 34 days earlier. The Taliban had demanded Rs 30 million as ransom for their release of this group and beheaded two members after the expiry of the deadline for the payment of the ransom. Two persons, Gurvinder Singh and Gurjit Singh are still believed to be in the custody of the militants.

Some media reports suggest that the Sikhs were beheaded after they refused to convert to Islam.

An estimated 10,000 Sikhs lived in the tribal belt, till the Taliban imposed *jiziya* or religious tax on them last year. Most members of the community then fled to cities across Pakistan.

AEA calls of the Pakistani government to ensure the safe release of those still in the custody of the militants and to make every effort to ensure the protection of minority groups, especially their right to religious freedom.

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