**Boy, 10, killed in attempted blasphemy lynching in Pakistan**

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https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/may/04/10-year-old-boy-killed-attempted-blasphemy-lynching-pakistan

A 10-year-old boy has been killed and five other people wounded after a mob attacked a police station in an attempt to lynch a Hindu man charged with blasphemy in south-west [Pakistan](https://www.theguardian.com/world/pakistan), officials said. It was the third major vigilante attack linked to accusations of insulting Islam in less than a month, as law enforcement agencies struggle to deal with a surge in violence.

Thursday’s incident occurred in the town of Hub in the restive province of Balochistan following the arrest of Prakash Kumar, a 34-year-old member of the country’s Hindu religious minority. Kumar, a crockery shop owner, was detained on Tuesday for allegedly posting an incendiary image on social media.

“When news of his arrest was published in local newspapers on Thursday, a crowd of some 500 people, including traders, clerics and politicians, surrounded the town’s police station to demand he be handed over,” police official Abdul Sattar told Agence France-Presse.

When police refused, the mob turned on them, beating up officers and local government officials before firing guns. The 10-year-old boy died and five others were wounded in the melee, he added.

Jam Mohammad, a second police official, confirmed the account, adding: “The siege went on for about three hours and the mob went on a rampage demanding that Kumar be handed over.”

Order was restored once the government sent in paramilitary troops to disperse the mob, which police said was led by an influential cleric as well as Zia Shehzad, a politician from the ruling [Pakistan](https://www.theguardian.com/world/pakistan) Muslim League political party.

Mujeeb Qambrani, a senior local administration official, said his government had not succumbed to the mob because “we are legally bound to protect the accused”.

On 13 April, [hundreds of men attacked and killed a 23-year-old journalism student](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/apr/26/lynching-of-a-student-sparks-uproar-in-pakistan-against-blasphemy-laws)in the north-western town of Mardan in an incident that sparked a national backlash after a video went viral.

Just over a week later, a mob attacked a mentally ill man who claimed to be a prophet at his local mosque in north-western Chitral. He was rescued by police.

The spate of incidents follows a government drive against blasphemy, a hugely sensitive charge in conservative Muslim Pakistan. Unproven allegations have led to dozens of mob attacks or murders since 1990.