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**Your World**

**Pakistanis protest against Rushdie knighthood**

Nasir Jaffry  
AFP  
June 22, 2007

ISLAMABAD -- **Thousands of Pakistani Islamists burned effigies of Queen Elizabeth and Salman Rushdie Friday as the country's parliament renewed a call for Britain to withdraw the novelist's knighthood.**



IN PROTEST: Activists of opposition Islamic alliance Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) protest against British author Salman Rushdie, in Karachi June 22. (REUTERS)

Demonstrators took to the streets in several cities amid growing anger at Britain's decision to honor the author of *The Satanic Verses*, which some Muslims consider blasphemous.

A crowd of around 300 people in the capital, [Islamabad](#), watched over by riot police carrying batons and shields, chanted "Our struggle will continue until Salman Rushdie is killed!"

"Britain must withdraw the knighthood and hand Rushdie to [Pakistan](#) to be punished under Islamic laws," Fazalur Rehman, a pro-Taliban cleric and leader of the parliamentary opposition, told the protestors.

In the southern commercial hub of [Karachi](#) more than 1,000 people chanting "Death to Rushdie, Death to Britain" gathered outside the city's main hardline Binori mosque after Friday prayers.

The protestors chanted that they backed comments made in parliament Monday by religious affairs minister Ijaz-ul Haq that Rushdie's knighthood justified suicide bombings.

They hit out at former prime minister Benazir Bhutto for calling for Haq's resignation.

Britain earlier this week expressed "deep concern" over the remarks, when the British envoy to Islamabad was summoned to the Pakistani foreign office to receive a complaint about the award.

In the central city of Multan there were several protests, the largest drawing some 600 people. Members of the local paramedics association torched effigies of Rushdie and the queen, a witness said.

Around 700 Islamists and members of cricketer-turned-politician Imran Khan's party chanted "Curse Rushdie, Long Live Osama" in the northwestern city of Peshawar.

Hundreds of protestors burned tires and posters from a local cinema in the eastern town of Gujrat. They also set fire to a Rushdie dummy and blocked the main road through the town for two hours.

Several hundred protestors also gathered in the eastern city of Lahore and in Quetta, a southwestern city near the Afghan border.

Earlier Pakistan's national assembly - the lower house of parliament - unanimously passed a resolution again calling for London to revoke Rushdie's honor. It issued a similar call Monday.

"This house again demands the British government take back the award from blasphemer Rushdie and apologize to the Islamic world," said the new resolution, moved by parliamentary affairs minister Sher Afgan Niazi.

A legislator from the party of exiled former premier Nawaz Sharif called for Rushdie to be murdered. "Whosoever kills him will be the hero of Muslims," Khwaja Saad Rafiq told the assembly.

Pakistani traders offered a reward of 10 million rupees (\$165,000) late Thursday for anyone who beheads Rushdie, while a group of Islamic scholars awarded Osama Bin Laden their highest honor in a tit-for-tat move.

Iran's clerical regime sentenced Rushdie to death in 1989.

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