Second Amendment to the Constitution of Pakistan (1974)

1. Background The Second Amendment was passed on 7 September 1974 during the government of Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. It was enacted after national unrest and public pressure following the Rabwah incident. A special committee of Parliament held detailed hearings before reaching a decision.

2. Historical Context Religious parties demanded that Ahmadis be constitutionally declared non-Muslims because their beliefs contradicted the Islamic doctrine of the Finality of Prophethood (Khatm-e-Nubuwwat). The Rabwah incident intensified public protests, leading to parliamentary action.

3. What the Amendment Did The amendment changed Article 260 of the Constitution. It introduced: a. A constitutional definition of a Muslim. b. A declaration that Ahmadis (Qadiani and Lahori groups) are non-Muslims.

4. Definition of Muslim A Muslim is defined as a person who believes in the absolute and unqualified finality of the Prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him) and does not recognize any person as a prophet after him.

5. Declaration of Ahmadis as Non-Muslims Article 260(3)(b) was amended to declare the Qadiani group and Lahori group (who call themselves Ahmadis or by any other name) as non-Muslims.

6. Reasons Behind the Amendment a. Religious grounds: Protection of the doctrine of Khatm-e-Nubuwwat. b. Public pressure: Large-scale demonstrations demanded legal clarity. c. Political stability: The government sought to calm unrest. d. Legal consistency: Prior to the amendment, the constitutional status of Ahmadis was unclear.

7. Effects of the Amendment a. Ahmadis became a constitutionally recognized non-Muslim minority. b. The definition of Muslim became legally binding. c. It strengthened Islamic identity in state law. d. It laid the foundation for later legal changes under Ordinance XX (1984).

8. Support and Criticism Supporters argue it preserved Pakistan’s Islamic identity. Critics argue it limited religious freedom and blurred the separation of religion and state.

9. Importance The amendment shaped Pakistan’s religious and constitutional framework, becoming one of the most significant and debated amendments in national history.

10. Conclusion The Second Amendment is a landmark constitutional change that officially declared Ahmadis as non-Muslims and provided a constitutional definition of Muslim. It continues to influence Pakistan’s legal, political, and religious environment.