



Pakistan: Court upholds life sentence of Christian falsely accused of blasphemy

Description

PAKISTAN: All it took was a local Islamic leader Ahmed Khan filing “a complaint with local police that an unregistered number sent him text messages insulting the Prophet Muhammad’s mother. ” And that’s that. Zafar Bhatti, a Christian is now in prison for life on the word of Khan alone. Let’s now hope that Lahore High Court will accept Bhatti’s appeal.

Such news has become so routine that Westerners ignore it. While Christians and minorities are murdered, abused and imprisoned on a daily basis in the Islamic world, there is little advocacy for them. Instead, the Western world is obsessed with the alleged “Islamophobia” of those who even dare to call out these pervasive human rights abuses.

“Court in Pakistan Upholds Life Sentence of Christian Wrongfully Convicted of Blasphemy,”
[International Christian Concern](#), June 28, 2021:

06/28/2021 Pakistan (International Christian Concern) – According to Morning Star News, a court in Rawalpindi, Pakistan upheld the life sentence of a Christian man convicted under the country’s controversial blasphemy laws. This conviction was upheld by the court despite claims of manipulated evidence and the prosecution’s failure to establish the Christian’s involvement in the blasphemous incident.

On June 22, an additional sessions court judge in the Rawalpindi District upheld the blasphemy conviction of Zafar Bhatti, age 56. This decision was reached even though new evidence presented by the prosecution failed against to directly link Bhatti with the blasphemous text messages he was wrongfully convicted of sending in 2017.

On July 11, 2012, Ahmed Khan, a local Islamic leader in New Town, Rawalpindi, filed a complaint with local police that an unregistered number sent him text messages insulting the Prophet Muhammad’s mother. The leader forced local police to open an investigation for blasphemy under Section 295-C of Pakistan’s Penal Code, even though the complaint

truly belonged under Section 295-A. A First Information Report was then filed against an unknown person.

On July 22, police arrested Bhatti and charged him with sending the text messages from the unregistered number. According to Bhatti, police tortured him into confessing to the crime.

Multiple reports link a woman named Ghazala Khan, rather than Bhatti, with the unregistered number from which the text messages were sent. On November 11, 2012, Khan was arrested and charged with blasphemy. However, at trial in April 2013, Justice Khalid Mehmood of the Lahore High Court refused to pass judgment in Khan's case and instead tried to convince the petitioner to forgive Khan. Khan refused but was released on bail, pending the court's final decision. In November 2016, Khan died from Hepatitis C.

On May 3, 2017, Bhatti was sentenced to life in prison under section 295-C of Pakistan's Penal Code by Additional District and Session Judge Mohammad Yar Gondal. According to reports, Bhatti was given life in prison even though Section 295-C carries a mandatory death sentence because there was no evidence presented linking him to the blasphemous text messages.

"The trial court judge gave this verdict under immense pressure because the complainant was an office bearer of the Islamist extremist outfit Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat," Tahir Bashir, Bhatti's attorney told Morning Star News. "I believe the verdict delivered this time was also under pressure, because there's no direct evidence against Bhatti."

Despite the disappointing verdict, Bashir told Morning Star News he is still hopeful that the Lahore High Court will accept Bhatti's appeal and will eventually acquit his client.

In Pakistan, false accusations of blasphemy are common and often motivated by personal vendettas or religious hatred. Accusations are highly inflammatory and have the potential to spark mob lynchings, vigilante murders, and mass protests.....

By Christine Douglass-Williams

Category

1. Main

Date Created

07/06/2021