



THE SOUNDING MEGAPHONE

ISSUE 8, JUNE 2018

PAKISTAN HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSE





In Pakistan horrific religious persecution is carried out under the pretence of “Blasphemy Laws.” Many politicians have turned a blind eye to this injustice in order to maintain foreign economic interests. At The Sounding Megaphone Magazine we believe that blasphemy laws and anti-conversion laws are inherently evil and should be strongly resisted and opposed. Join with us as we take a sobering look at the plight of the persecuted in Pakistan. God bless you.

Shawn Stevens

Visit our websites freedomandsocialorder.com and zionchristianministry.com

P. O. Box 933, Lynden, WA 98264, U. S. A.

INSERT A

The purpose of this magazine is more than to simply supply articles of social interest to the public. It is to encourage readers to become involved in changing their communities through social activism. One way readers can potentially do this is by writing their concerns in letter format and mailing them to their local member of Parliament, prime minister and other MPs. God bless you as you get involved in changing your community, province and country for good.

INSERT B

You understand that by reading this magazine, you might be exposed to content that you regard to be offensive or objectionable and that you read this magazine at your own risk. We do not intend to offend anyone, however, what is offensive to one person may not be offensive to another. It is difficult, if not impossible, to speak on controversial topics in a clear way without offending someone. We ask that viewers would receive the contents of this website in the spirit in which they are given, that is, to speak the truth on sensitive issues in a loving way that does not compromise our conscientious convictions. Freedom of speech is a provision of The Canadian Charter of Rights And Freedoms (Section 2). We want to express in the clearest language possible that all statements made in this issue are meant to be taken not in malice towards any identifiable people group but, rather, as discussion on issue of public interest, for public benefit, in good faith. Our views on the issues contained here are also consistent with our faith beliefs which are contained in our statement of faith which can be viewed on our website freedomandsocialorder.com. Whether you agree or disagree with what we have stated here, we bless you and invite your feedback.

THE SOUNDING MEGAPHONE 8

PAKISTAN HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSE

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan is a country in South Asia. Historically, the government has been one of two extremes, weak civilian parties crippled by infighting and corruption, or autocratic military dictatorships. Most recently, politics has been increasingly polarized between modern secularists and an Islamist extremist minority that have close ties with the Taliban in Afghanistan. Pakistan's problems include an awkward dynamic with America and the West and tensions with India, especially over disputed Kashmir. The economy is based on agriculture, light industry and service. Huge budget deficits, high inflation and widespread corruption have crippled the economy. Pakistan is the only Muslim-majority nuclear weapons state. The population of Pakistan is 193 million. The official language is English with Urdu the national language. The population is poor, especially in rural areas. Poverty and unemployment have created dissatisfaction and resentment against government and foreign influences. Despite the letter of the constitution, shari'a law is increasingly applied to Christians, Hindus, Ahmaddiyas and Shi'a Muslims. The notorious blasphemy law, that has come under so much world attention, can impose the death penalty on anyone who defames Mohammed, and a life sentence for anyone who defames the Quran. Muslims represent 95.8% of the population (15-20% are Shi'a Muslims) and those claiming to be Christian are 2.45%.¹

Sadly, Pakistan has been a tremendous persecutor of Christians. News headlines have repeatedly told the story of Asia Bibi. Bibi was arrested on June 19, 2009, and was charged with blasphemy over a religious discussion she had with co-workers. Muslim co-workers had pressured Bibi, wanting her to renounce her Christian faith and to convert to Islam. Bibi's family is one of only three Christian families living in a village of over 1,500 families. On June 19, Bibi, in a discussion with Muslim women, told them that Christ died on the cross for our sins. She also said that "Our Christ is the true prophet of God."² The Muslim women erupted in anger and Bibi was beaten. She was locked in a

room and it was announced from a mosque that she would be punished publicly. Other Christians called for the police and Bibi was taken into custody. Local Muslim leaders pressed for blasphemy charges. The blasphemy charge was upheld and, in 2010, Bibi was sentenced to death. Her execution was not carried out and her sentence is under appeal. Many Muslims fear that her sentence will be overturned. On December 2010, a Muslim Mullah pledged \$6,000.00 in U.S. money to anyone who would kill Bibi.

Sadly, Bibi's case is only one of many cases of persecution for Christians in Pakistan. On December 17, 2017 two Jihadist suicide bombers entered Bethel Memorial Methodist Church in Quetta Pakistan and an explosion erupted killing at least 9 people. On March 21, 2011, during a Salvation Army's annual celebration and prayer meeting in Hyderabad, armed Muslims opened fire on the Christians gathered and two Christians were killed and two others were injured. Younas Masih, 47, leaves behind a wife and four children and Jamil Masih, 22, leaves behind his wife who he had just married one month earlier. Imran Ghafur Masih was sentenced to life in prison on January 11, 2010. His crimes? He was accused of burning pages of the Quran. While cleaning out a relative's retail shop, Imran was burning some trash and it was discovered that some pages of a Muslim book had fallen into the fire. Before his arrest, Imran and his father were severely beaten and, after his arrest, Muslims threw stones at the police station where he was being held. In another case, on July 19, (2010), two Christian men who were facing charges of blasphemy against Mohammed were shot dead as they left the courthouse.

Another well-known incident is the slaying of Shahbaz Bhatti. Bhatti was Pakistan's only Christian cabinet minister. He had called for the reforming of Pakistan's blasphemy law and also for the release of Bibi. Pakistani television showed images of his bullet-riddled car.

Pakistan's blasphemy laws have long been criticized by advocates of freedom. The blasphemy laws pertain to disparaging speech

directed at the Quran or Mohammed. Former President Musharraf made efforts to reform the law in 2000 but decided to drop the issue when Muslim religious protest arose. Also, in 2000, Pakistani Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed declared that this law would be changed after the governmental election of that year. However, it has remained in place.

Social advocates must not stop in their efforts to see Pakistan's blasphemy laws changed. In addition to this, detained Christians such as Asia Bibi and Imran Ghafur Masih must be released. If you are a Christian, pray for the well-being and release and safe resettlement of Bibi and Imran. Pray for the Christians in Pakistan, that they would be able to forgive their persecutors. It is challenging for any of us to forgive the smallest acts of injustice perpetrated upon us. How much more challenging would it be to forgive horrific human rights atrocities perpetrated upon oneself or one's family. Yet, Jesus Christ forgave even to this extent. Concerning Jesus as He was being crucified; "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots." (Luke 23.34). To follow Jesus in this kind of forgiveness is the greatest witness that a Christian can show to an unbelieving world. Forgiveness can be given and, still, with it call for human rights. Hatred and one person murdering another over religion can be traced back as far as Cain and Abel. If this kind of oppression is allowed to continue in countries such as Pakistan, the killing of Christians and other minorities may continue to increase. While many choose to look away silently, others have courageously lifted up a voice in defence of persecuted Pakistani Christians. Now is the time to call on members of Parliament to use diplomatic means to bring about change in Pakistan. Pakistan has been considered to be an important partner in the fight against global terrorism. Canadian and Pakistani officials have taken steps to enhance mutual, regional security interests. However, much more needs to be done. It is reasonable to call for the change of Pakistan's blasphemy laws which are such an affront to human rights. Public pressure on the part of Canadians and diplomatic pressure on the part of government can see this victory attained and this injustice overturned. If you would like to

sign a petition go to <https://aclj.org/persecuted-church/save-christian-mom-asia-bibi-from-execution> . Similarly, innocent lives such as those of Bibi and Imran Ghafur Masih can once again know freedom from incarceration and censorship if caring individuals will stand up for them and see these laws changed.

Thank you.

Shawn Stevens

Endnotes :

1. Donna Siemens. Pakistan, International Page. zionchristianministry.com

2. Asia Bibi quoted in "Save Asia Bibi"http://www.lfapk.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=85&Itemid=156

References:

<http://en.wikipedia.org>

<http://www.prisoneralert.com>

<http://www.persecution.com>

<http://www.canadianinternational.gc.ca>

Mandryk, Jason. *Operation World*. Colorado Springs: Biblica Publishing, 2010

Siemens, Donna. Zion Christian Ministry. International Page.

Scripture taken from the King James Version.

PAKISTAN – BLASPHEMY LAWS

In June of 2009, Asia Bibi was arrested on charges of blasphemy. The local courts quickly announced a death sentence upon her and she has been waiting for over 8 years as her case is under appeal. Her husband and two children long for her release. Bibi is a victim of Pakistan's blasphemy laws.

Blasphemy laws are common in the Muslim world. In theory, they are to protect religions from slanderous speech. However, they are always used in the defence of the one religion, Islam, and used against religious minorities within Islamic countries. Pakistan stands out amongst other Muslim nations for the strictness of its blasphemy laws and the severity of punishment for this offence. In Pakistan, the defiling of the Koran can result in life imprisonment and the defaming of Muhammad may result in a death sentence. Pakistan's laws stipulate that if a blasphemy charge has been made, the trial must take place under a Muslim judge. Between 1986 and 2007, 647 charges of blasphemy had been filed in Pakistan. Although no Pakistani has actually been executed by the legal system of Pakistan for blasphemy, twenty of the 647 charged individuals mentioned have been murdered by assassins. Prime Minister, Yousuf Raza Gilani announced on January 12, 2011, that there would be no amendment to Pakistan's blasphemy laws. Specific cases of prosecution and related material reported in Wikipedia include:

- [Arfa Iftikhar](#) was forced into hiding after a furious mob stormed Farooqi Girls' High School in the eastern city of Lahore over a piece of homework she set that allegedly contained derogatory references to the Muslim prophet Mohammad.[\[17\]](#)
- [Rimsha Masih](#) (some reports use the name "Rifta" or "Riftah") is a Pakistani child who was arrested in [Islamabad](#) by Pakistani police in August 2012 and who could face the

death penalty for blasphemy[\[18\]\[19\]](#) for allegedly [desecrating](#) pages of the [Quran](#) (or a book containing verses from the Quran) by burning.[\[20\]\[21\]](#) She is a member of Pakistan's Christian minority.[\[18\]](#)

- On 12 December 2011, a teacher [Shahid Nadeem](#) in the missionary school of Faisalabad accused by Qari Muhammad Afzal (who is a member of Lashkar-e-Jhangvi which is a banned organisation) registered FIR on 28 December 2011 in the local police station and said that culprit had deliberately torn the pages of Quran and later burn these pages.
- On 2 March 2011 [Shahbaz Bhatti](#), Pakistan's Federal Minister for Minorities Affairs (a Roman Catholic member of the National Assembly), was killed by gunmen in Islamabad as he was travelling to work, a few weeks after he had vowed to defy death threats over his efforts to reform Pakistan's blasphemy laws.[\[22\]](#)
- In November 2010, [Asia Bibi](#) was sentenced to death by hanging on a charge of blasphemy; the case that has yet to be upheld by the Lahore High Court has sparked international reactions. Punjab Governor [Salman Taseer](#) was shot dead by his security guard for supporting [Asia Bibi](#). [Salman Taseer](#) had visited [Asia Bibi](#)

in Jail and had held a press conference with her. [23] He had told media that [Asia Bibi](#) will be released soon and the President of Pakistan will soon annul her death sentence. This triggered mass protests in Pakistan with many imams of local mosques claiming that [Salman Taseer](#) had defied [Mohammed](#) and should be sentenced to death for it. Taseer was later assassinated in early 2011.

- In July 2010, a trader in Faisalabad complained that one of his employees had been handed a pamphlet which contained disrespectful remarks about Muhammad. According to the police, the pamphlet appeared to have the signatures and addresses of Pastor Rashid Emmanuel and his brother Sajid, who were Christians. The brothers were shot and killed while being escorted by the police from a district court. Both had denied the charge of blasphemy. [24] Allama Ahmed Mian Hammadi, a Pakistani Muslim cleric, claimed that [Shahbaz Bhatti](#), Pakistan's Federal Minister for Minorities, had himself committed blasphemy by branding the murdered Christian brothers as victims of Pakistan's blasphemy laws.
- On 9 July 2009, a FIR was registered against two teenager brothers, complainant falsely accusing them that they had spoke against Prophet Mohammad and this family had to left the country for their

safety. On 30 July 2009, hundreds of members of *Sipah-e-Sahaba* and International Khatm-e-Nabuwat 'IKNM' the banned Muslim organizations, torched the Christian homes and killed Christians in the Punjabi city of [Gojra](#) Faisalabad and in the nearby village of Korian, District Faisalabad. The professed reason for the violence was that a Christian had defiled and spoke against Prophet Mohammad. [Quran](#). [25][26] [27]

- On 22 January 2009, Hector Aleem a Christian Human Rights Activist in Pakistan was arrested on a blasphemy charge. According to the FIR, someone sent a blasphemous text message to the leader of Sunni Tehreek. Hector Aleem was arrested because the sender had once contacted him. Hector Aleem, the Chairman of Peace Worldwide, had been working for a church in Islamabad which was demolished by the CDA (Capital Development Authority) for having been built illegally. When Hector Aleem objected to the destruction of the church he was faced with several threats and lawsuits ranging from fraud to criminal charges. He fought all of them in the courts and proved his innocence. He also faced several assassination attempts. Hector Aleem was eventually arrested on the charge of blasphemy.

- In February 2008, Special Rapporteurs of the [United Nations Human Rights Council](#) reminded Pakistan's representative of the matter regarding Raja Fiaz, Muhammad Bilal, Nazar Zakir Hussain, Qazi Farooq, Muhammad Rafique, Muhammad Saddique and Ghulam Hussain. According to the allegations received, the men were members of the [Mehdi Foundation International](#) (MFI), a multi-faith institution utilizing the name of [Riaz Ahmed Gohar Shahi](#). They were arrested on 23 December 2005 in Wapda Town. The police confiscated posters on which [Gohar Shahi](#) was shown as "Imam Mehdi." On 13 July 2006, the Anti-Terrorism Court No. 1 in Lahore sentenced each accused to five years of imprisonment, *inter alia*, under § 295-A for having outraged others' religious feelings. Since 27 August 2006, the seven men have been detained in Sahiwal Jail, Punjab, where they were forced to parade naked, and were suspended from the ceiling and beaten. For this reason, they were constantly threatened and intimidated by prison staff as well as by other detainees.
- ...
- On 11 August 2005, Judge Arshad Noor Khan of the Anti-Terrorist Court found [Younus Shaikh](#) guilty of defiling a copy of the Quran, outraging religious feelings, and propagating religious hatred among society.[\[29\]](#) Shaikh's

conviction occurred because he wrote a book: *Shaitan Maulvi* (Satanic Cleric). The book said stoning to death (*Rajam*) as a punishment for adultery was not mentioned in the Quran. The book said also that four historical *imams* (religious leaders) were Jews.[\[30\]](#) The judge imposed upon Shaikh a fine of 100,000 rupees, and sentenced him to spend his life in jail.[\[31\]](#)

- In October 2000, Pakistani authorities charged Dr. M. [Younus Shaikh](#) M.D., a physician, with blasphemy on account of remarks that students claimed he made during a lecture. The students alleged that, *inter alia*, Shaikh had said Muhammad's parents were non-Muslims because they died before Islam existed. A judge ordered that Shaikh pay a fine of 100,000 rupees, and that he be hanged.[\[32\]](#) On 20 November 2003, a court retried the matter and acquitted Shaikh, who fled Pakistan for Switzerland soon thereafter.[\[33\]](#)

The police arrested Ayub Masih, a Pakistani Christian bricklayer for blasphemy on 14 October 1996 and jailed him for violation of § 295-C. Muhammad Akram, a Muslim neighbour to Masih, complained to the police that Masih had said Christianity was right, and Masih had recommended that Akram read [Salman Rushdie's](#) *Satanic Verses*.[\[10\]](#)[\[34\]](#) The same day that Masih was arrested, Muslim villagers forced the entire Christian population of Masih's village (fourteen families) to leave the village. Masih's family had

applied under a government program that gave housing plots to landless people. Local landlords resented Masih's application because the landlords had been able to oblige landless Christians to work in the fields in exchange for a place to live. Masih's application gave him a way out of his subservience to the landlords.[11] Upon Masih's arrest, the authorities gave Masih's plot to Akram.[10] Akram shot and injured Masih in the halls of the Session Court at Sahiwal on 6 November 1997. Four assailants attacked Masih in jail. The authorities took no action against Akram or against the other assailants.[10] On 20 April 1998, Judge Abdul Khan sentenced Masih to death and levied a fine of 100,000 rupees. Two judges of the Lahore High Court heard Masih's appeal on 24 July 2001. Shortly thereafter, the judges affirmed the judgment of the trial court.[10] On 16 August 2002, the Supreme Court of Pakistan set aside the judgment of the lower courts. The Supreme Court noted Akram's acquisition of Masih's property and concluded the case had been fabricated for personal gain. The court also noted other breaches in the law of due process.[35][36] 1

Former Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lawrence Cannon, issued the following statement, following the assassination of Pakistani Shahbaz Bhatti:

We urge Pakistan to protect all those who find the courage to speak out against the country's controversial blasphemy laws and to bring to justice the perpetrators of this heinous crime. We continue to call on the government of Pakistan to prevent the abuse of the blasphemy laws, which restrict freedom of religion and expression and have disproportionately targeted religious minorities. 2

Pakistan's blasphemy laws stand in open contradiction to the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, which declares that “[e]veryone shall have the right to hold opinions without interference.” 3

Blasphemy laws are also in defiance of the United Nations recent official statement which came through the Human Rights Committee. The official statement is called *General Comment #34* and paragraph 48 says; “Prohibitions of displays of lack of respect for a religion or other belief system, including blasphemy laws, are incompatible with the Covenant, except in the specific circumstances envisaged in article 20, paragraph 2, of the Covent.” The exception laid out in article 20 says that states should prohibit “advocacy of national, racial, or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility, or violence.”

This United Nations statement is supposed to be binding to all 165 member states.

It is time for the laws in Pakistan to change. A legal system which overtly persecutes Christians, and others, for speaking truth and standing for their convictions is criminal. Blasphemy laws are an oppressive abuse and must come to an end. The first country where these laws should end is Pakistan because Pakistan has been the most extreme nation for its severity and its overuse of these laws.

A former president of Pakistan has announced that he will not change Pakistan's blasphemy laws. It is time for diplomatic pressure to be used to foster change. Much dialogue has already gone on. It is time for stronger measures. It is time for sanctions to be applied to Pakistan. It is time for Canada to pull back its investments into Pakistan. It is time for strong measures to be taken which match the severity of the offence which is ongoing.

Shawn Stevens

ENDNOTES :

1. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blasphemy_law_in_Pakistan

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Text_of_Creative_Commons_Attribution-ShareAlike_3.0_Unported_License

2. <Http://www.international.gc.ca>

By quoting this document I am not claiming that the Canadian Government endorses my article.

3. "Freedom of Speech" http://en.wikipedia.org/Freedom_of_speech

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Text_of_Creative_Commons_Attribution-ShareAlike_3.0_Unported_License

REFERENCES :

<Http://www.international.gc.ca>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blasphemy_laws_in_Pakistan

"Freedom of Speech." http://en.wikipedia.org/Freedom_of_speech

"United Nations Affirms the Human Right to Blasphemy." Austin Nacey. <http://www.org.religiondispatches>

^ [a b c d e](#) "[Petition To: United Nations Working Group On Arbitrary Detention – in the Matter of Ayub Masih, Citizen of Pakistan v. Government of Pakistan](#)". Freedom Now. 8 October 2001. Retrieved 26 June 2009.

^ "[Lahore's 'blasphemy' teacher in hiding](#)". Dawn. 2 November 2012. Retrieved 24 November 2012.

^ [a b](#) Katie Hunt and Nasir Habib (22 August 2012). "[Girl held in Pakistan, accused of burning Quran pages](#)". CNN. Retrieved 22 August 2012.

^ Rick Dewsbery (20 August 2012). "[Down's syndrome girl', 11, faces death penalty for desecrating Koran in Pakistan](#)". Daily Mail. Retrieved 27 August 2012.

^ "[Pakistani girl accused of Qur'an burning could face death penalty](#)". The Guardian. 22 August 2012. Retrieved 22 August 2012.

^ AFP (26 August 2012). "[Blasphemy suspect: Vatican prelate says Rimsha can't read](#)". The Express Tribune. Retrieved 27 August 2012.

^ "[Pakistan minorities minister 'shot dead in Islamabad'](#)". BBC. 2 March 2011. Retrieved 2 March 2011.

^ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i7L18cmAf6k>

^ "[Pakistan city tense after 'blaspheming' Christians shot](#)". BBC. 20 July 2010. Retrieved 21 July 2010.

^ The Associated Press (1 August 2009). "[6 Pakistani Christians die in riots with Muslims](#)". *Toronto Star*. Retrieved 1 August 2009.

^ "[Pakistan: Christians Burned to Death in Islamist Attacks](#)". Compass Direct News. 1 August 2009. Retrieved 1 August 2009.

^ Maqbool, Aleem (12 August 2009). "[Sectarian violence hits Pakistani town](#)". BBC News. Retrieved 12 August 2009.

^ "[Writer in Pakistan given life for 'blasphemy'](#)". National Secular Society. 27 July 2007. Retrieved 21 June 2009.

^ "[Document – Pakistan: Fear for safety/ Prisoner of Conscience \(POC\), Mohammed Younus Shaikh](#)". Amnesty International. 19 August 2005. Retrieved 21 June 2009.

^ "[KARACHI: Writer of sacrilegious book gets life term](#)". Dawn the Internet Edition. 12 August 2005. Retrieved 21 June 2009.

^ McCarthy, Rory (20 August 2001). "[Blasphemy doctor faces death](#)". *The Guardian* (UK). Retrieved 19 June 2009.

^ "[Mukto-mona special News: Younus Shaikh Free!](#)". Mukto-mona. 23 January 2004. Retrieved 19 June 2009.

^ "[Blasphemy Prisoner Acquitted After Six Years in Prison](#)". International Christian Concern. 16 August 2002. Retrieved 27 June 2009. [[*dead link*](#)]

^ "[Blasphemy Prisoner Acquitted After Six Years in Prison](#)". International Christian Concern. 15 August 2002. Retrieved 26 June 2009. [[*dead link*](#)]

^ Olsen, Ted (8 August 2002). "[Pakistan frees](#)

[Christian prisoner as country mourns attacks"](#).

Christianity Today Magazine. Retrieved 26 June 2009.

PAKISTAN : WHY IS ASIA BIBI STILL IN PRISON?

A conversation between Muslim co-workers and the Christian, Asia Bibi, included Bibi testifying that “ Our Christ is the true prophet of God.” The co-workers flew into a rage, beat Bibi and tried to pressure her into converting to Islam. Bibi was locked in a room and it was announced, from a mosque, that she would be publicly punished. Police took Bibi into custody and she was swiftly charged with blasphemy and sentenced to death. Her execution has not yet occurred and her case is under appeal. Many Muslims fear that Bibi's sentence of death will be overturned. A mullah has pledged \$6,000 U. S. dollars to anyone who would assassinate Bibi. (Voice of The Martyrs Magazine).

For years Bibi has been held in prison and has been allowed only brief visits with her family. Bibi's daughters, twelve-year old Isha and eight-year old Isham, pray for her release as she sits in a six-by-eight foot cell. Isha says, “Mama loves us,” and “She would take us to the bazaar, and I would help her with daily work like cleaning or other simple work that I could do. She would help us prepare for school before she went to her job.” After visiting Bibi, Isham said, “I was hoping to get a hug from my Mama, but there were bars between us.” Upon leaving the prison, Isham said to her mother, “Come home soon.” (Voice of The Martyrs Magazine). 2

Asia Bibi's case has drawn international attention, yet, after years, she still remains in prison and the death sentence over her has not been lifted. Bibi was told early on by her guard that if she would convert to Islam she would be released. Instead, Bibi has held on to her precious faith. Her family also has been threatened. At least one large public protest in the city of Karachi has demanded punishment for Bibi. There has also been at least one public protest in defence of Bibi. (Voice of The Martyrs Magazine).

The tormenting of this young wife and mother has gone on long enough! It is time for concerned individuals around the world to raise the outcry for her release to a new level. Asia Bibi must be freed and returned to her family. The death sentence that hangs over her must be removed. Further, her and her family need to be given asylum by a free country where they can live in peace and safety and where they can practice their faith.

The government of Pakistan needs to be pressured to intervene and to do its duty to protect minorities from this kind of abuse. A message needs to be sent to the world community that Bibi and those like her have done nothing wrong by speaking their faith conviction.

It is time for the Canadian government to press hard for Bibi's release and, further, to pressure Pakistan and other nations to end blasphemy laws. This type of injustice must not continue in our world. Canada has welcomed past efforts of Pakistan to protect human rights and religious freedom. However, Pakistan has taken a huge step backwards in how it has treated Bibi and other Christians who dare to speak their faith.

We appreciate Canada's efforts to see change through diplomatic talks. However, while talks are ongoing, a young wife and mother sits in jail with a death sentence hanging over her. Canadians want their government to take stronger measures in their efforts to see Pakistan change. Canadians do not want to see our two nations come closer together diplomatically and economically while these kind of offences continue. It is time for Canada to start demanding that Pakistan rise to its responsibility or Canada will start cutting ties in its relationship with Pakistan. May the bars be removed and may a young mother be able to feel the hands and hugs of her children again. May they be given a safe future in Canada if that is their wish.

Thank you.

Shawn Stevens

ENDNOTES :

1. http://www.lfapk.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=85&Itemid=156
2. *The Voice of the Martyrs New*, Streetsville, Ont. (All quotes from this paragraph).
3. <http://www.international.gc.ca/media/aff/news-communications/2011/227.aspx?view=d>

By quoting this document I am not claiming that the Canadian Government endorses this article

REFERENCES :

<http://www.international.gc.ca/media/aff/news-communications/2011/227.aspx?view=d>

http://www.lfapk.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=85&Itemid=156

“Pakistan : Asia Bibi – Death Sentence.” <http://www.persecution.com> November 9, 2010.

“Pakistan : Mullah Requests Murder.” <http://www.persecution.com> December 7, 2010.

The Voice of the Martyrs New, Streetsville, Ont.