

**News and Current Events :: Pakistani President Pardons Christian Woman on Death Row****Pakistani President Pardons Christian Woman on Death Row - posted by StarofG0D (), on: 2010/11/22 20:52**

Pakistani President Pardons Christian Woman on Death Row

Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday pardoned Asia Bibi (also referred to as Asia Noreen by some media), the first woman sentenced to death for blasphemy.

Bibi, who had been imprisoned for one-and-a-half years without being allowed to give her statement in court, was released soon after the presidential pardon.

“This is the only acceptable outcome to what has been a travesty of justice from the outset,” said Nasir Saeed, coordinator for U.K.-based Center for Legal Aid, Assistance and Settlement (CLAAS). “Asia Bibi should never have been charged with blasphemy, let alone found guilty and sentenced to death.”

Saeed added, “The ordeal faced by her and her family is unimaginable to most people outside of Pakistan who are largely unaware of the abuse and discrimination faced by the tiny Christian minority there.”

Bibi had signed a petition Saturday appealing for the president’s mercy. The request by the 45-year-old mother of five, of which two are biological, was delivered to Zardari by Punjab Gov. Salman Taseer.

<http://www.christianpost.com/article/20101122/pakistani-president-pardons-christian-woman-on-death-row/>

**Re: Pakistani President Pardons Christian Woman on Death Row, on: 2010/11/23 2:56**

Praise God. That's so awesome. I know many of us here, and probably Christians from all over the world, were praying for her and her family.

**Re: Pakistani President Pardons Christian Woman on Death Row - posted by Lysa (), on: 2010/11/23 9:52**

Quote:  
-----Bibi, who had been imprisoned for one-and-a-half years without being allowed to give her statement in court, was released soon after the presidential pardon.  
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Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

This family still needs a heavy prayer covering. Sure she's been released but she's BACK to live with the zealots who condemned her in the first place and who can't see the truth if it bit them in the nose.

God have mercy and cover her and her family in Your son's name, Jesus the Christ!!

Lisa

**Re: Pakistani President Pardons Christian Woman on Death Row - posted by InTheLight (), on: 2010/11/23 10:01**

This report may be premature, I received the following from Intercessors Network today...

Asia Bibi, Pakistan

At first, Monday evening, we had reason to rejoice because of the reports regarding the release of Asia Bibi, but this morning, Nov. 23. we are left in the dark as to her situation – as you can draw from the following items.

Please, continue to pray. . .

Lars W.

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Pakistan Releases Christian Woman

Sentenced to Death for 'Blasphemy'

International Christian Concern (ICC) has learned that today the president of Pakistan has pardoned a Christian woman sentenced to death for blasphemy.

Asia Bibi was sentenced on November 8 after a court in Punjab province found her guilty of making blasphemous statements against the Islamic prophet Muhammad. According to Pakistan's blasphemy law, it is a crime punishable by death to blaspheme the Islamic prophet.

Her release came after intense international pressure by politicians and church leaders as well as coverage by several media outlets.

Asia has now been taken to an undisclosed location for her safety. In the past, Christians have been killed by vigilantes after being accused of blasphemy. On July 19, gunmen killed Pastor Rashid Emmanuel and his brother, Sajid Emmanuel, while police were transporting them from the court in Faisalabad to jail. The gunmen also seriously wounded a policeman accompanying them.

Some Muslim lawyers and other fundamentalist Muslims are preparing to demonstrate against Asia's release.

ICC's Regional Manager for South Asia, Jonathan Racho, said, "We are delighted to learn about Asia's release and we would like to commend Pakistan's president for taking the right action. It's high time for Pakistan to repeal the blasphemy laws that have caused so much persecution against Christians and other religious minorities."

Asia Bibi's daughters hopeful of reunion

By Jamal Shahid, a reporter with DAWN newspaper in Pakistan

Blasphemy convict Asia Bibi's daughters - Sidra and Ashi - have put their trust in God that they will be united with their mother.

"She has done nothing wrong. The allegations are baseless," said Sidra in a melancholic tone sitting in the office of Minister for Minorities, Shahbaz Bhatti here Saturday.

An additional district and sessions judge at Nankana Saheb recently handed Asia death penalty and Rs100,000 fine under the controversial blasphemy law - that many believe has been used as a tool for suppression.

Charges against Asia had been brought as a result of statements which she allegedly made during a water dispute with local women in a fruit farm in her hometown at Nankana in November 2009.

"The women instigated the imam (clergy) of the local mosque who then made a mountain out of a mole hill," said Asia's husband Ashiq Masih, who was forced into hiding with his five children, the youngest less than 10-year-old, because the clergy and people of the town threatened to kill his children and set them on fire if they returned.

"They dragged my mother out of the house. We tried to free her from an angry mob. They ripped her clothes. My younger sister ran to save her too. But a mob member slammed her into the wall," said Sidra while explaining how her mother kept shouting that she had committed no wrong.

According to Ashiq Masih, his wife was then judged before a local landlord who forced her to confess the guilt but she denied the allegation.

Failing to extort a confession, the charged mob threatened the police to register an FIR under 295-C for "abusive and insulting utterances against their religion," said Ashiq Masih.

The children met their mother on Tuesday from behind a steel cage at the Sheikhpura jail where she has been imprisoned for the last one and a half year.

“She tried to touch us with her finger tips. She was so weak we could barely hear her,” said Ashi.

The minister for minorities expressed his confidence that the dispute was personal and nothing more.

“The allegations are baseless and victimization of a weaker people. The blasphemy law has been misused on several occasions because it is vague and the government should repeal it to stop its abuse,” he said, vowing to protect the woman’s life, return her to her family and provide justice to the family.

“The President has taken notice and he is the legal authority to pardon,” the minister said.

Back home, according to Ashiq Masih, the local clergy has again announced through his mosque loudspeaker to decapitate Asia if the court pardoned her and if she returned home.

Ashiq Masih’s family was one of the two Christian households in Itanwala, Nankana district, living among 7,000 to 8,000 Muslim families.

**Mystery Surrounds the Case Of The Christian Woman Facing Death For Blasphemy Who Some Sources Say Has Been ‘Freed’**

Asia Bibi was said to have been pardoned by the Pakistani president, but other sources say that this is not true

By Dan Wooding

Mystery surrounds the case of Asia Bibi, a Christian mother of four who was sentenced to death on November 8, 2010, for alleged blasphemy.

Several sources inside of Pakistan had claimed that Asia Bibi, also known as Asia Noreen, who had already spent the last year and a half in prison, was set free today (Monday, November 22, 2010), after being pardoned by Pakistani President, Asif Ali Zardari.

According to a source in Pakistan, “She has gone now into hiding over fears for her safety.”

The Centre for Legal Aid, Assistance and Settlement (CLAAS) told ANS that it “welcomes the release of Asia Bibi, the first Christian woman to be sentenced to death for blasphemy in Pakistan.”

But now other sources are saying that this claim is premature. A respected source close to the case has said that, according to their latest information, Bibi has not been pardoned and that her mercy plea has been sent to the Punjab Home Department, which will forward it to the Interior Ministry for onward submission to the Presidency.

The source went on to say that the presidential spokesman has just made a statement that President Zardari has not “received any such plea” but he may consider it on the “advice of the prime minister.”

It is also believed that, if and when she receives a possible presidential pardon, a strike has been called for Wednesday with threats of violence that could erupt if Asia is released.

Bibi was found guilty of blasphemy despite there being no evidence that she committed the crime and her repeated denial of the charges laid against her.

She was accused of insulting the Prophet Muhammad by Muslim field workers following a dispute over their different faiths. When she was asked to bring a cup of water, the women refused to drink from it, saying that it had been touched by a Christian and was therefore “unclean.”

She was arrested in June 2009 in her home village of Ittanwalai, west of the Punjab provincial capital of Lahore, and prosecuted under Section 295 B and C of the Pakistan Penal Code, which carries a mandatory death penalty.

The case has made international headlines and thrown the spotlight on what many Pakistani Christians believe are unjust blasphemy laws.

Nasir Saeed, Coordinator of CLAAS in the UK, told ANS: “The ordeal faced by her and her family is unimaginable to most people outside of Pakistan who are largely unaware of the abuse and discrimination faced by the tiny Christian minority there.

“The blasphemy laws smack in the face of democracy and human rights and only reinforce the notion that Christians and other religious minorities in the country are somehow inferior and less human.”

ANS will continue to follow this case and will bring you the latest news as it becomes available.