

EU parliament calls on Pakistan to abolish the death penalty for blasphemy

Posted: Mon, 1st Dec 2014

The European parliament has voted for a resolution condemning Pakistan's blasphemy laws, saying that they were increasingly being used to "target vulnerable minority groups."

The resolution, which is non-binding, calls for a "thorough review of the blasphemy laws and their current application" and urged the Pakistani government to repeal the laws and abolish the death penalty. Although Pakistan does currently have prisoners on 'death row' for blasphemy convictions, there has been a virtual moratorium on executions since 2008. Nonetheless, even the allegation of blasphemy can have fatal consequences.

The resolution noted the case of Christian couple Shama Bibi and Shahbaz Masih, who were recently beaten by a mob and burnt to death, after accusations that the couple had damaged pages from a Koran.

The parliament also drew attention to the case of Asia Bibi, who was sentenced to death for blasphemy by a Pakistani court back in 2010. Bibi filed an appeal against the sentence last week, however this process "may take years," according to the resolution. The European parliament called on the President of Pakistan to issue a presidential pardon for Asia Bibi, and also urged the Pakistani Supreme Court to "start its proceedings on the case swiftly and without delay and to uphold the rule of law and full respect for human rights."

The EU parliament cited further cases of Pakistani blasphemy convictions in its resolution, including Sawan Masih, Shafqat Emmanuel and Shagufta Kausar who have all been sentenced to death.

The European Parliament's resolution urged the government to "increase efforts towards better inter-religious understanding, to actively address religious hostility by societal actors and combat religious intolerance... and acts of violence."

The resolution strongly condemned "acts of violence against religious communities, as well as all kinds of discrimination and intolerance on the grounds of religion and belief" and urged the European Commission to "use any tools at their disposal... for the promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief, to aid religious communities and to pressurise the Pakistani Government to do more for the protection of religious minorities."

A Pakistani "anti-terrorism" court recently sentenced Veena Malik, Asad Bashir Khan and Mir Shakil-ur-Rahman to 26 years each in prison for blasphemy, after a "blasphemous" wedding scene, starring Veena Malik, aired on Pakistani TV.

- [Share on What's App](#)
- [Share on Facebook](#)
- [Share on Twitter](#)
- [Share on Email](#)
- [Subscribe to RSS Feed](#)

Tags: [Free speech](#)

Related Campaigns

-

[Protect freedom of expression](#)

We promote free speech as a positive value.

[Read More](#)

Related Articles

[NSS: Report reveals ‘inherent danger’ of Islamophobia definition](#)

Creeping restriction of free expression illustrated in report's account of increasingly spurious accusations of 'Islamophobia'. [Read More »](#)

[We must empower secular schools to assert their ethos](#)

When Islamists tried to bully Michaela Community School, the school refused to back down. Other schools have not been so successful in challenging religious intimidation. Megan Manson explores what made Michaela different. [Read More »](#)

[NSS announces major conference on protecting liberal values](#)

Kenan Malik, Joan Smith and more speaking at NSS Secularism 2024 conference in London. [Read More »](#)

[NSS hosts talk with author of Annie Besant book](#)

Renowned author Michael Meyer discusses 'A Dirty, Filthy Book' in online event. [Read More »](#)

Three years on, the lessons of Batley are yet to be learned

The Batley affair exposed the Islamist threat to UK schools. We're still yet to come to terms with its implications, says Jack Rivington. [Read More »](#)