

NSS urges government to aid Ahmadi Muslim prosecuted for blasphemy

Posted: Thu, 10th Feb 2022

The National Secular Society has urged the UK government to intervene in the case of an Ahmadi Muslim woman prosecuted for 'blasphemy' in Pakistan.

According to the International Human Rights Commission (IHRC), 65 year old Kaneez Bibi was arrested on 2 February after being accused of destroying an anti-Ahmadi propaganda poster that allegedly had verses from the Quran on it.

Pakistan's penal code makes it an offence to "outrage religious feelings" by "insulting" religion.

IHRC says Kaneez Bibi was reported by Tehrik-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP), a far-right Islamist political party, for 'committing an act of contempt' against the Quran by destroying the poster.

IHRC says there were no verses from the Quran on the poster and that TLP fabricated this detail to incite public anger against Ahmadi Muslims.

TLP dedicates itself to punishing perceived 'blasphemy'. In 2018 it held disruptive [protests](#) across Pakistan after the Supreme Court ordered Asia Bibi, a Christian sentenced to death for blasphemy, to be freed.

Pakistan prohibits Ahmadis from calling themselves Muslims because their beliefs differ from those of the Sunni majority. Ahmadi Muslims experience regular persecution and discrimination in Pakistan and around the world.

Pakistan's blasphemy laws are routinely used to target minority groups, including Ahmadi Muslims. In 2020 former Ahmadi Muslim [Tahir Naseem](#) was shot dead in court while standing trial for blasphemy.

IHRC also reported that last week police desecrated 45 Ahmadi Muslim graves in Hafizabad, Punjab.

NSS letter: Blasphemy laws "incompatible with a genuine commitment to human rights"

In a letter to the FCO, NSS chief executive Stephen Evans urged the government to "make representations on this matter" and "to impress upon counterparts in Pakistan the importance of providing effective protection and freedom of religious belief and practice to Ahmadis and other religious minorities."

He added: "Blasphemy laws and religious restrictions on speech are incompatible with a genuine commitment to human rights."

"We therefore hope the government will continue to not only speak out about the 'misuse' of blasphemy laws, but also the existence of such laws at all."

Image: [Chickenonline](#) from [Pixabay](#)

What the NSS stands for

The Secular Charter outlines 10 principles that guide us as we campaign for a secular democracy which safeguards all citizens' rights to freedom of and from religion.

- [Read the Secular Charter](#)
- [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

[**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 »](#)

Response unit needed to tackle blasphemy flashpoints, report says

Recommendations echo NSS calls for more support for schools facing religious intimidation and threats. [Read More »](#)