

# Writer in Pakistan given life for “blasphemy”

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A writer in Pakistan has been jailed for life for so-called blasphemy offences. A court in Karachi handed down the sentence on Younus Sheikh after finding him “guilty” of “defiling a copy of the Koran, outraging religious feelings and propagating religious hatred among society.”

Mr Sheikh was arrested by police in January 2005 for writing a book criticising the punishment of stoning in cases of adultery. He also apparently “wrote contemptuous remarks against the Imams of Fiqah”.

Sheikh, 41, stated to be a matriculate with no religious education, admitted writing the book. The prosecution placed eight witnesses including four religious scholars of Muslim schools, who unanimously issued a Fatwa (religious edict) against the accused after perusing the book, written by the accused, to prove the guilt of the accused.

The High Court will hear an appeal.

*(NB: This is not the same Younus Sheikh who was put on death row in Pakistan several years ago on blasphemy charges, and who was released after international pressure led by IHEU)*

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