

# Christian Freedom<sup>®</sup> International



**Christians Burned Alive in Pakistan**

**Please Pray.**





# Pakistani Couple Severely Beaten and Burned Alive for Suspected Blasphemy

LAST NOVEMBER A MUSLIM MOB beat and burned to death Shamaa and Shahzad, a married Christian couple who were bondservants in a brickyard in Punjab, for suspected blasphemy. Shamaa was pregnant at the time of her death. The couple is survived by four children.

Even just an accusation of blasphemy can be an effective death sentence in Pakistan.

Scores of innocent people, mostly Christians, are murdered by vengeful Muslims before their trials even begin, including a mentally disabled man who was seized from a police station by a mob and torched alive in 2012.

According to The Church of Pakistan, the murder of the Christian couple was for revenge over unpaid debt, not because they had damaged a Koran.

➤ Following the brutal slaughter of the couple, The Church of Pakistan, that comprises several Christian denominations including Anglicans, released the following statement to clarify reports about the murders:

*By this time you might have heard through media about the brutal killing of a Christian couple in Kot Radha Kishan (close to Raiwind) on the pretext of desecration of Holy Quran. This family lived close to Clarkabad, which is a Christian village about 25 km from the city of Raiwind. Today I, along with Bishop Samuel Azariah and some other colleagues, visited the family for condolence and to investigate the real facts. So here are our findings:*

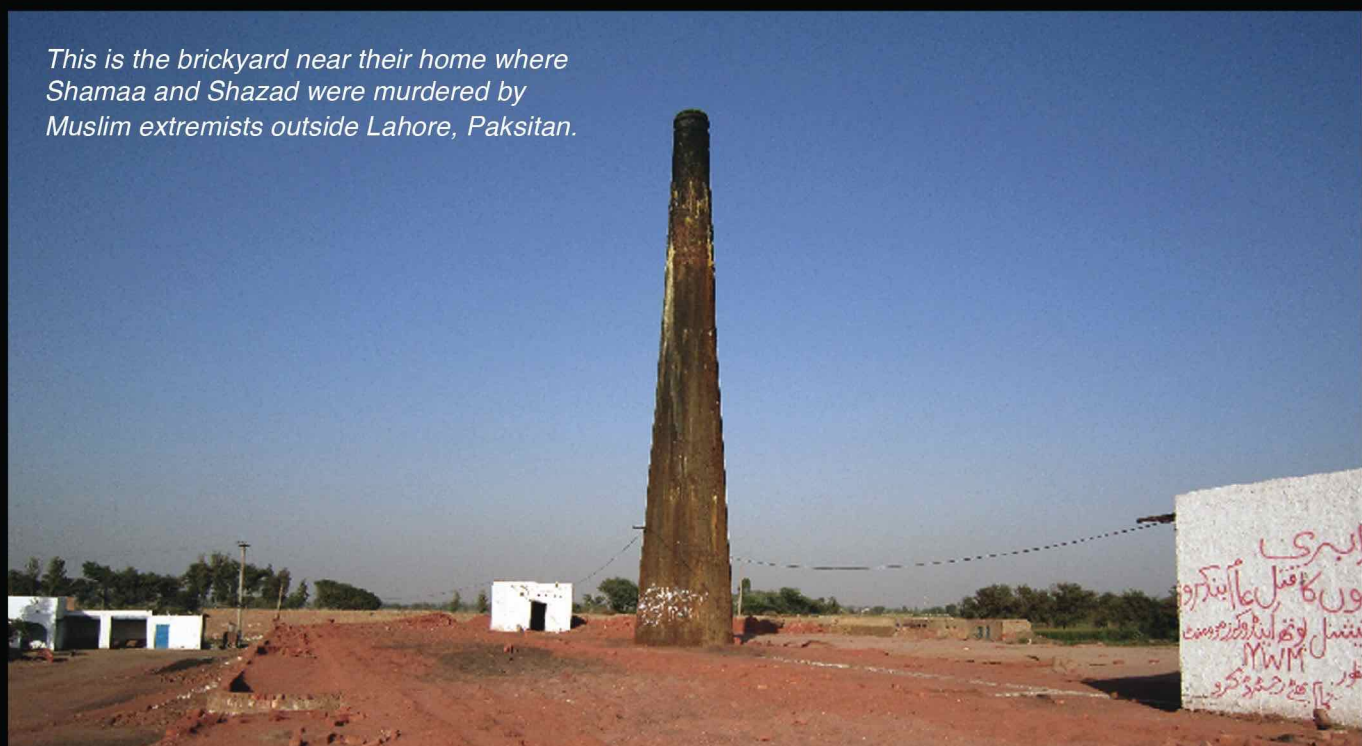
*"On Tuesday, November 04, 2014 at 06:00 a.m., a mob of 1500-1600 people, from the Muslim Religious Community of nearby villages, gathered near the village of*

*Clarkabad. This mob was gathered on the pretext that a Christian couple belonging to the said village and working as brick kiln workers had allegedly desecrated the pages of Holy Qur'an by burning them in the brick kiln furnace."*

*"The couple, Shehzad and Shamaa [Bibi], were pulled out of their house. Family of the victims called the police through emergency number, on which five policemen from the local police station arrived and tried to pull away Shehzad and Shamaa from the clutches of the crowd. Their efforts went in vain as they were overwhelmed by the mob which snatched away the victims."*

*(continue to pg. 4)*

*This is the brickyard near their home where Shamaa and Shazad were murdered by Muslim extremists outside Lahore, Paksitan.*





(continued from pg. 3)

*"After that, the mob gathered around the brick kiln where Shehzad and Shamaa used to work and where the alleged desecration took place."*

**"After thoroughly beating both the victims, they threw them in the furnace of the brick kiln and burned them alive."**

*"They tore away the clothes of Shehzad and Shamaa, and paraded them naked around the brick kiln twice before attacking them and beating them to near death. At the time of this happening Shamaa was four months pregnant."*

*"After thoroughly beating both the victims, they threw them in the furnace of the brick kiln and burned them alive. When the family of the victims went to claim the dead bodies, all they found were few bones."*

*"The real story is that the owner of brick kiln, Yousaf Gujjar, lent some money to the couple and when he asked for the money to be returned there was a confrontation since majority of brick kiln workers cannot return their loans in cash but do it by working at the brick kiln. After which he started spreading rumors of desecration of the Holy Qur'an."*

*"The role of police is of total negligence since all this went on for quite a while and this place is about 25 minute drive from Lahore; while the local media only shared this news as a Christian couple being burned by an angry mob without sharing the pretext of the misuse of religious fervor. As for local Government they only played their role to make sure this story does not reaches the masses and becomes big."*



*The location where Shamaa and Shahzad were burned alive. All that remained were their shoes and a few bones.*



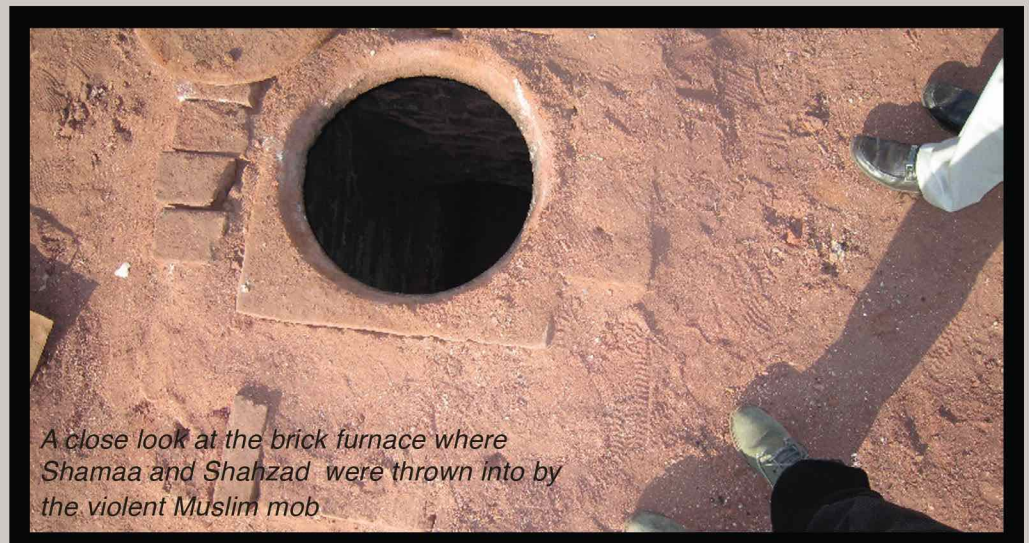


*Pictured is one of our co-workers from Pakistan at the brick kiln where the couple was burned to death.*

# Another Possible Motive

ANOTHER MOTIVE FOR THE BRUTAL MURDERS of Shamaa and Shahzad was not blasphemy, but jealousy. They were born and raised in the Christian community in Clarkabad, outside Lahore. Recently, incidents of Muslim violence against the Christians of Clarkabad have increased. According to a source -- who must remain anonymous -- "Muslims of neighboring villages were very much jealous of Christians of Clarkabad."

The village is named after Robert Clark (1825–1900), the first Anglican missionary to Pakistan. Clarkabad was the first village in the district that had electricity, a bank, a post office and a high school. "Most educated people of surrounding villages had studied in in Clarkabad. Strife between the Christian villagers and Muslim villagers has been a common feature in recent years," according to the source.



*A close look at the brick furnace where Shamaa and Shahzad were thrown into by the violent Muslim mob*



## ➤ How You Can Help:

CFI has initiated a benevolence fund for the family of Shahzad and Shamaa. We desire to free their surviving children (Solomon, 8, Zeeshan, 5, Sonia, 4, and 18 month-old Poonam) from their bonded labor status and will work toward providing a new safer, Christian environment for the children.

Your gift of any amount will help the care-givers of the children -- relatives of Shahzad and Shamaa -- have the funds they need to help provide for the ongoing needs and education of the children.

The care-givers are very poor. Your gift, along with the gifts of others, will ensure that the debt of the family is "paid in full" so that the children will not have to work in the brickyards.

Bondservant debt to brickyard owners is passed on from generation to generation. We must break this cycle for these children.



## "We desire to free their surviving children from their bonded labor status..."

*Top Right: Three of Shamaa and Shazad's now orphaned children with care-giver Asghar, Bottom Left: 8 year old Solomon who witnessed the horrendous murder, Bottom Middle: 4 year old Sonia, Bottom Right: 18 month old Poonam*



# Pakistan's Blasphemy Laws

Pakistan's blasphemy laws carry a death sentence for anyone who insults Islam. The blasphemy laws have been used to persecute minority faiths and unfairly target minority Christians.

Pakistan's blasphemy law, as section 295-C of the penal code is known, makes the death penalty effectively mandatory for those convicted.

In Pakistan today, even an accusation of blasphemy can be a death sentence. Scores of Christians have been brutally killed by "vigilante mobs" on the mere accusation of blasphemy.

**"Anyone convicted, or even just accused, of insulting Islam, risks a violent and bloody death at the hands of vigilantes."**

The killers are never brought to justice, and the media does not report the killings. Extrajudicial killings in the context of blasphemy are commonplace and encouraged.

During the 1980s the blasphemy laws were created and expanded in several installments.

In 1980, making derogatory remarks against Islamic personages was made an offence, carrying a maximum punishment of three years in jail.

In 1982, another clause prescribed life imprisonment for "willful" desecration of the Koran, the Muslim holy book. In 1986, a separate clause was inserted to punish blasphemy against the Prophet Muhammad and the penalty recommended was "death, or imprisonment for life," in that order.

Often the laws are used to settle personal scores and have little or nothing to do with religion. According to numerous reports, the mere accusation of blasphemy is enough to make someone a target for Muslim radicals. Anyone convicted, or even just accused, of insulting Islam, risks a violent and bloody death at the hands of vigilantes.

According to Sahaid Mehrej, the Dean of the Lahore Cathedral, Christians -- who make up less than 3 percent of Pakistan's 194 million people -- are particularly vulnerable to charges of blasphemy.

While Pakistan's constitution supposedly guarantees freedom of speech, a 1991 review of the criminal code by the Federal Shariat Court of Pakistan not only upheld the blasphemy laws, but upgraded the penalty for blasphemy to death.

## Muslim Majority Support Blasphemy Laws

ACCORDING TO REPORTS, a large majority of the Pakistani people supports the idea that blasphemers should be punished. Many believe the law, as codified by the military regime of General Zia-ul Haq back in the 1980s, is, in fact, straight out of the Koran and therefore is not man-made.

When Punjab Governor Salman Taseer -- a prominent critic of the law -- was assassinated by his bodyguard in 2011, many hailed his killer as a hero.





## An Accusation of Blasphemy is a Death Sentence

The killing of people merely on accusations, particularly of those accused of 'blasphemy', is becoming commonplace in Pakistan. In 2009 more than 100 houses of Christians were looted and set on fire in the city of Gojra.

In 2013, thousands of Muslim fundamentalists attacked Joseph Colony, a Christian locality in the heart of Lahore.

Last May, Rashid Rehman, a lawyer representing a man accused of insulting the prophet Muhammad, was shot dead in Multan, a city south of Lahore. Asia Bibi, a Christian Pakistani woman, was

sentenced to death for blasphemy against Islam in 2010. The year before, while picking fruit with Muslim women, she took a sip of water from the local well. She was immediately accused of making the water impure by the other workers, who told her that they could no longer use the well.

While awaiting her fate in prison, her case is now pending before Pakistan's highest court. If not overturned, she will be hanged. Her family lives in hiding as they fear "vigilante justice." A Muslim cleric has promised 500,000 rupees (about \$6000) to anyone who would kill her in jail. Her most recent appeal in December 2014 was rejected.

➤ CFI has launched a petition campaign on behalf of Asia Bibi and is working for her release from prison. To send a petition on her behalf, go to [www.christianfreedom.org](http://www.christianfreedom.org).

# Christian Freedom International



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