



Christian Freedom[®] International

Stories of Hope from Pakistan

www.ChristianFreedom.org

OCTOBER 2021



An Exciting Story & More Ways to Help Persecuted Christians...

A Christian couple who were convicted of blasphemy have been acquitted! And your support for Christian Freedom International helped to win their freedom.

Shagufta and Shafqat were victims of Pakistan's notorious "blasphemy" laws. They spent seven years in jail and were sentenced to death after being accused of sending a blasphemous text message – written in English – to a Muslim imam in 2014.

But the impoverished married couple and parents of four children are illiterate even

in their own language. The phone used to send the message was never found.

We worked together with legal groups to hire the most-successful anti-blasphemy attorney in Pakistan to represent Shagufta and Shafqat. He argued their appeal – and the court ruled in June that they are innocent!

The family quickly left Pakistan and got asylum in an unnamed European country.

Read their full story in the enclosed cover letter.

Trained in computer, beauty skills, or sewing, Christians can get jobs, or they can start their own businesses. They learn to care for themselves, gaining dignity in a culture that otherwise treats them like trash.



Christian ladies learn sewing, a valuable skill in Pakistan.

Elaborate beauty techniques taught to Christian women.



Christian ladies learn basic computer skills.

Showing the Jesus Film in an open, public area of Pakistan.



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Dear Friend of the Persecuted Church,

We have amazing news from – of all places – Pakistan!

A Christian couple who was *convicted of blasphemy* have been acquitted! And your support for Christian Freedom International helped to win their freedom.

Here is their exciting story – and more ways to help persecuted Christians:

Shagufta and Shafgat were accused of sending a blasphemous text message – written in English – to a Muslim imam in 2014. They were sentenced to death by hanging and spent seven years in prison.

But the impoverished married couple and parents of 4 children are *illiterate even in their own language*. The phone used to send the message was never found.

Shafgat is paralyzed and confined to a wheelchair from an accident in 2004. His wife Shagufta was the breadwinner working as a caretaker in a Christian school.

Pakistan's notorious "blasphemy" laws are vicious tools for grudges and to victimize religious minorities. False accusations against innocent people trigger mass violence, jail sentences, and death by mobs and assassins.

In April, the European Parliament passed a resolution supporting Shagufta and Shafgat and criticizing Pakistan's blasphemy law. They even threatened Pakistan's special trade status if the Christians were not released "immediately and unconditionally." (Please pray and urge

your lawmakers to use the considerable leverage the U.S. has to abolish barbaric blasphemy regulations worldwide.)

A member of the European Parliament held up a picture of Shagufta and Shafqat during the debate and said, "I would like to express my special thanks to their lawyer, Saif ul-Malook. He is defending this couple as he previously successfully defended Asia Bibi, who is now free."

Remember Asia Bibi? She is the poor Christian mother who spent nine years in a Pakistan jail, sentenced to death after being falsely accused of blasphemy. Thankfully, she was acquitted after Saif ul-Malook took up her case.

Christian Freedom International worked with legal groups to hire Saif, the most-successful anti-blasphemy attorney in Pakistan, to represent Shagufta and Shafqat. He argued their appeal – and the court acquitted them in June!

The family quickly left Pakistan and received asylum in an unnamed European country.

Shagufta thanked "all the international friends who prayed and fought for her case. She could not find words to describe how relieved and happy she was," her family said.

We are so grateful for your support! Together we were able to free this desperate Christian family from the clutches of persecutors!

And together we can do more. We can help other Christians who suffer daily. Please take action! Enclosed is an opportunity to write an encouraging note to our brave co-workers and the persecuted Christians we serve.

Pakistan is one of the worst places for Christians – ranking as the fifth worst country for persecution. Christians are among the poorest in the country. They lack education and skills and face cruel discrimination in jobs and everyday life.

Many find themselves in debt to Muslim brick kiln owners with whole families forced to work in slave-like conditions, six days a week, making bricks. Many are illiterate, their children cannot attend school, and families live in squalor.

Other Christians live impoverished in filthy slums. They

lack skills to make a living.

Please take action! You can encourage these Christians and give them hope!

With your support, Christian Freedom International is giving food and daily necessities to Christians in debt bondage in brickyards – and providing basic educational classes.

Children who cannot attend school have classes brought to them. Teens sit next to youngsters, all in need of the most basic building block to success – learning how to read and write. It is a delicate task because everyone must be careful not to antagonize Muslim landlords.

Last year we began a new partnership to reach Christians in slum areas!

"Saira" teaches Christian women key vocational skills to provide for themselves and their families.

In one room, Christian women learn computer skills.

In a second room, they learn beauty techniques. In Pakistan, weddings and special events are huge celebrations – a bright spot in otherwise dreary existences – where women enjoy elaborate make-up and hair adornments. At "Saira's" school, they learn beauty skills – talents that women will pay for around the world.

In the third room, Christians learn sewing. Textiles are a huge source of income in Pakistan. This is a real opportunity for Christians. They can take the skills they learn at this school to make any type of textile product.

Equipped with education, computer, beauty, or sewing training, Christians can get jobs, or they can start their own businesses. They learn to care for themselves, gaining dignity in a culture that otherwise treats them like trash.

With the skills they are taught, Christians not only earn a living, but they can be spared from draconian loans that force families into debt bondage and lives of slavery.

And – would you believe – these Christians are sharing Jesus with Muslims!

"Saira" is boldly witnessing and teaching the Bible

- starting with Genesis - to young Muslim women who voluntarily join the Bible classes each week.

Is this dangerous? Yes. **"I am ready for them to cut my neck" for teaching the Bible to Muslims,** "Saira" said. Pray for "Saira", and for these ladies to truly hear and believe so they may be saved with God's free gift of eternal life.

Her brother "Asa" also teaches Sunday School classes and Bible studies in slums and brick kilns. He gives audio Bibles to these illiterate Christians - they love them! They are hungry and excited to hear the Word of God.

Recently "Asa" got equipment to show the "Jesus Film" in open areas. Yes - inside Pakistan, the violent Muslim country where Christians are constantly at risk of attacks and accusations that can land them in horrific jails and on death row.

Pray for "Asa," "Saira," and our co-workers. Pray for all who watch the Jesus Film and for Christians who are learning skills to make a living.

Thank you for gaining freedom for Shagufta and Shafqat through your support!

Will you encourage other persecuted Christians in Pakistan and other countries? You can take action by writing an encouraging note to our brave Christian co-workers - who risk much to love and equip persecuted Christians - and to the persecuted Christians we serve.

God bless you,

Wendy Wright

Wendy Wright
President

P.S. Shagufta and Shafqat thank you for rescuing them from death row! Your support helped to hire the best anti-blasphemy attorney in Pakistan.

Will you also partner with us to provide food and basic items to persecuted Christians, as well as supporting persecuted Christians in learning job skills and the Bible to boldly witness for Jesus?