

MEMORANDUM

RE: BLASPHEMY RELATED KILLINGS AND MOB ATTACKS IN PAKISTAN

DATE: OCTOBER 27, 2014

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At least **117** people have been killed in violence stemming from Pakistan's blasphemy laws, while violent mobs have targeted minority sects on at least **eight** occasions where accusations of blasphemy were made. Further, **sixteen** people are on death row and **twenty** are serving life sentences.

BLASPHEMY RELATED ATTACKS

- On September 25, 2014, Muhammad Asghar, a 70-year-old British national, was shot by a prison guard in the Rawalpindi prison where he had been held since he was first charged with blasphemy in 2010.¹ Asghar, who had a long history of mental illness, was convicted and given a death sentence in January 2014 on evidence that he had written numerous letters in which he claimed to be the prophet Muhammad.² The original charge of blasphemy was brought by a tenant in Asghar's building with whom Asghar had a personal dispute.³
- On September 18, 2014, Muhammad Shakil Auj, the Dean of Islamic Studies at the University of Karachi, was shot and killed because of an allegedly blasphemous speech he gave during a 2012 visit to the United States.⁴ Auj had become known as a moderate Muslim scholar following numerous articles and speeches where he advocated for lighter treatment of Muslim women.⁵ Following the 2012 speech, he began receiving death threats and blasphemy accusations which continued until his murder in 2014.⁶

¹*Family Pleads For Mohammad Asghar, Briton On Blasphemy Charge In Pakistan*, GUARDIAN (Sept. 25, 2014), <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/sep/26/family-pleads-mohammad-asghar-briton-blasphemy-charge-pakistan>.

²*Id.*

³*Id.*

⁴Zia ur-Rehman, *A Pakistani Scholar Accused Of Blasphemy Is Shot Dead*, N.Y. TIMES (Sept. 28, 2014), <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/19/world/asia/pakistan-shakil-auj-assassinated-blasphemy-karachi.html>.

⁵Andrew Buncombe & Umair Aziz, *Blasphemy Laws Silence Another Voice In Karachi*, INDEP. (Sept. 21, 2014), <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/blasphemy-laws-silence-another-voice-in-karachi-9746156.html>.

⁶*Id.*

- On May 16, 2014, a teenage gunman shot Khalil Ahmad, an Ahmadi sect member, while he was in police custody following a blasphemy accusation.⁷ The accusation came after Ahmad and a group of Ahmadi asked a village shopkeeper to remove stickers that were offensive to the Ahmadi community.⁸ The shopkeeper refused and retaliated by filing blasphemy charges against the men, leading to Ahmad's arrest and murder while in police custody.⁹
- On July 19, 2010, a Christian pastor named Rashid Emmanuel and his brother, Sajid Emmanuel, were shot and killed outside the court in Faisalbad where blasphemy charges had been brought against them.¹⁰ The Christian brothers were accused of writing a pamphlet that contained remarks disrespectful to the prophet Muhammad.¹¹ Before the brothers were murdered, a mob of several hundred rioters descended on the Waris Pura slum, home to approximately 100,000 Christians, and injured at least 10 people during riots that targeted Christian homes and called for the death of the Emmanuel brothers.¹²
- On April 8, 2008, a Hindu factory worker named Jagdesh Kumar was tortured and killed by coworkers at a factory after they accused him of blasphemy.¹³ A fellow worker who witnessed the incident said that Kumar and the coworkers who ultimately killed him had quarreled, but that they did not accuse him of blasphemy until after they had attacked him a first time and he had been taken to the security room for his own protection.¹⁴ At that point, police were summoned to quell the situation, but instead the blasphemy accusation prodded a growing mob to break into the security room and beat Kumar to death in front of police who did not intervene until the mob attempted to set fire to Kumar's dead body.¹⁵
- On May 24, 2004, a Christian named Samuel Masih was charged with blasphemy for allegedly leaving trash near a mosque and was subsequently killed by a policeman who had been assigned to guard his room.¹⁶ After his original arrest on August 23, 2003,

⁷Katharine Houreld, *Teenager Kills Man Accused Of Blasphemy In Pakistan Police Station*, REUTERS (May 16, 2014), <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/16/us-pakistan-blasphemy-killing-idUSBREA4F0HI20140516>.

⁸*Id.*

⁹*Id.*

¹⁰*Blasphemy Accused Christian Brothers Shot Dead In Faisalabad*, PAKISTAN CHRISTIAN POST (July 19, 2010), <http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/viewnews.php?newsid=1641>.

¹¹*Pakistan City Tense After 'Blaspheming' Christians Shot*, BBC NEWS (July 20, 2010), <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-south-asia-10696762>.

¹²*Id.*

¹³*Police Watched As Jagdesh Was Lynched By Workers*, THE NEWS (April 12, 2008), <http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=106324&Cat=4&dt=4/11/2008>.

¹⁴*Id.*

¹⁵*Id.*

¹⁶*Pakistani Christian Dies From Police Attack*, VOICE OF THE MARTYRS (May 28, 2004), <https://www.persecution.net/pk-2004-05-28.htm>.

Masih was held in Lahore Central Jail where he contracted tuberculosis.¹⁷ After being taken to a local hospital on May 22, 2014, a policeman assigned to guard Masih beat him to death with a hammer, saying that it was his religious duty as a Muslim to kill the blasphemous Christian.¹⁸

- On June 11, 2002, Yousaf Ali, a Muslim cleric convicted of blasphemy, was shot by a fellow prisoner who belonged to the militant Islamic group Sipah-e-Sahaba.¹⁹ Ali's conviction for blasphemy was founded on a private complaint that Ali had claimed to be a prophet of Islam.²⁰ Local Islamic clerics referred to Ali as Yousaf Kazab, the term 'kazab' meaning 'great liar.'²¹
- In November 1997, a Pakistani Christian named Ayub Masih was leaving court when he was shot by the complainant who had accused him of blasphemy.²² Although he survived, Masih was convicted of blasphemy and given a death sentence in April 1998 based on claims that he had slandered the prophet Muhammad and recommended Salman Rushdie's book *The Satanic Verses*.²³ In early 1999, while imprisoned, Masih was badly injured when four Muslim inmates tried to stab him to death.²⁴ In 2002, the Supreme Court of Pakistan held that the arrest and sentencing of Masih was a violation of due process of law and he was subsequently released.²⁵
- On April 5, 1994, Salamat Masih, Rehmat Masih, and Manzoor Masih, three Christians charged with blasphemy, were shot as they left a court hearing.²⁶ Manzoor was killed, while Salamat and Rehmat sustained serious but non-fatal injuries.²⁷ The three Christian men had been charged with blasphemy on accusations that 13-year-old Salamat Masih had written blasphemous phrases on the local mosque, despite testimony that he could

¹⁷*Id.*

¹⁸*Id.*

¹⁹*Amnesty Writes To Musharraf On Yousaf's Murder*, DAILY TIMES (June 26, 2002), <http://archives.dailytimes.com.pk/main/26-Jun-2002/amnesty-writes-to-musharraf-on-yousaf-s-murder>; see also Art Moore, *Christian's Blasphemy Charge Overturned*, WORLDNETDAILY (Aug. 15, 2002), <http://www.wnd.com/2002/08/14901/>.

²⁰Zaffar Abbas, *Pakitani 'Prophet' Sentenced To Death*, BBC NEWS (Aug. 5, 2000), http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/867449.stm.

²¹*Amnesty Writes To Musharraf*, *supra* note 19.

²²Moore, *supra* note 19.

²³*Id.*

²⁴Adrian Morgan, *Exclusive: Pakistan: Abuse Of Christian And Other Religious Minorities (Part Three of Three)*, FAMILY SECURITY MATTERS (October 8, 2009), http://www.familysecuritymatters.org/publications/id.4469/pub_detail.asp.

²⁵Moore, *supra* note 19; see also *Ayub Masih: Pakistan*, FREEDOM NOW, <http://www.freedomnow.org/campaign/ayub-masih/>.

²⁶*UA 137/94 – Pakistan: Political Killing/Fear For Safety: Manzoor Masih, Rehmat Masih, Salamat Masih, John Joseph*, AMNESTY INT'L (April 6, 1994), <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/ASA33/002/1994/en/136387ef-ec0e-11dd-85b9-0939011eabc9/asa330021994en.html>.

²⁷*Id.*

neither read nor write.²⁸ On October 17, 1997, Justice Arif Iqbal Hussain Bhatti was assassinated in his chambers at Lahore High Court for his role in acquitting Salamat Masih and Rehmat Masih of blasphemy in February 1995.²⁹

- On July 19, 1992, Tahir Iqbal, a 35-year-old Christian paraplegic who had converted from Islam, was poisoned by an unidentified party while in jail awaiting trial for blasphemy.³⁰ The imam of a local mosque had accused Iqbal of blasphemy, saying that Iqbal had defiled the Quran by underlining verses and writing in the margins.³¹ Iqbal was imprisoned for over two years, suffering death threats and harsh conditions.³² Despite his outspoken fears that he would be murdered in jail, no protective measures were ever taken and his body was found in his cell on July 20, 1992.³³
- On January 6, 1992, Bantu Masih, a 65-year-old Christian, was stabbed eight times in front of the police officers who were holding Masih on charges of blasphemy.³⁴ Masih's attacker was the young Muslim man who had brought the initial blasphemy accusation.³⁵

BLASPHEMY RELATED VIOLENCE AND KILLINGS DURING MOB ATTACKS

- On July 27, 2014, three members of the Ahmadi minority sect—a woman named Bushra Bibi and her two young granddaughters, a 7-year-old and an 8-month-old—were burned alive after a Muslim mob set fire to multiple houses and looted the surrounding area.³⁶ The mob began its rampage after a member of the Ahmadi minority sect, an 18-year-old man named Aqib Saleem, was accused of posting a blasphemous picture on Facebook.³⁷ The picture supposedly depicted a semi-nude white woman sitting atop the Kaaba in Mecca, but the man whose Facebook post supposedly instigated the riot went unharmed.³⁸

²⁸*Id.*

²⁹Rana Yasif, *1990s Blasphemy Acquittal: Judge's Murder Case Put In Hibernation*, EXPRESS TRIBUNE (Nov. 29, 2012), <http://tribune.com.pk/story/472495/1990s-blasphemy-acquittal-judges-murder-case-put-in-hibernation/>.

³⁰Dr. Stephen Gill, *Apostasy From Islam In Pakistan*, PAKISTAN CHRISTIAN POST (2008), <http://www.pakistanchristianpost.com/viewarticles.php?editorialid=254>.

³¹*Id.*

³²*Id.*

³³*Id.*

³⁴*Use and Abuse of the Blasphemy Laws*, AMNESTY INT'L (July 1, 1994), <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6a9aa4.html>.

³⁵*Id.*

³⁶Waqar Gillani, *3 Killed In A Facebook Blasphemy Rampage In Pakistan*, N.Y. TIMES (July 28, 2014), <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/29/world/asia/3-pakistanis-die-as-facebook-photo-sets-off-muslim-rampage.html>.

³⁷*Id.*

³⁸Terrence McCoy, *How A 'Blasphemous' Facebook Post Led To The Killing Of This Pakistani Family And Why Nothing Stopped It*, WASH. POST (July 29, 2014), <http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2014/07/29/how-a-blasphemous-facebook-post-led-to-the-killing-of-this-pakistani-family-and-why-nothing-stopped-it/>.

- In March 9, 2013, a mob of several thousand Muslims set fire to about 180 Christian homes and two churches in Joseph Colony after one Christian resident of the area, Sawan Masih, was accused of blasphemy.³⁹ One year later, in March 2014, Masih was sentenced to death for blasphemy⁴⁰ but no one from the Muslim mob that vandalized and burned the Christian homes and desecrated the churches was brought to justice.
- On May 28, 2010, 94 people were killed and 120 injured in coordinated attacks against Ahmadi minority sect mosques in Lahore, attacks for which Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan claimed responsibility.⁴¹ The terrorist attacks were carried out by seven attackers who planned their attacks to occur during Friday prayers at the local Ahmadi mosques.⁴² At the mosque known as Dar-ul-Zakir, two suicide bombers detonated their bombs inside the prayer hall after they had opened fire on the praying Muslims inside.⁴³
- On July 30, 2009, 7 Christians were killed and approximately 100 Christian homes were burned down in the villages of Korian and Gojra, following accusations that Christians had desecrated the Quran at a local Christian wedding.⁴⁴ Although police said the blasphemy accusations were baseless, the accusations led a mob of over 1,000 people to overrun the Christian sector of the town and set fire to numerous Christian homes, resulting in six Christians being burned alive, while a seventh Christian died from gunshot wounds.⁴⁵
- On July 1, 2009, hundreds of Christians in Bahmniwala were forced to flee their homes after a Muslim mob of at least 600 began setting fire to Christian homes.⁴⁶ The incident began when a Muslim man refused to give way to a Christian man riding on a tractor because the Christian was of a “lower caste.”⁴⁷ The incident was instigated by a local Muslim cleric who began to spread rumors that Christians had blasphemed the prophet Muhammad, rumors that led the mob to burn Christian homes and churches, injuring at least 13 and forcing hundreds to flee.⁴⁸

³⁹Walsh & Gillani, *Attack On Christians Follows Claim Of Blasphemy In Pakistan*, THE NEW YORK TIMES (Mar. 8, 2013), <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/10/world/asia/explosion-rips-through-mosque-in-peshawar-pakistan.html>.

⁴⁰AFP, *Blasphemy: Christian Sentenced To Death In Joseph Colony Case*, DAWN (Mar. 28, 2014), <http://www.dawn.com/news/1095974>.

⁴¹Waqar Gillani & Jane Perlez, *Attackers Hit Mosques Of Islamic Sect In Pakistan*, N.Y. TIMES (May 28, 2010), <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/29/world/asia/29pstan.html>.

⁴²*Id.*

⁴³*Id.*

⁴⁴Alex Rodriguez, *Attack On Christians A Further Crisis For Pakistan*, L.A. TIMES (Aug. 6, 2009), <http://articles.latimes.com/2009/aug/06/world/fg-pakistan-christians6>.

⁴⁵*Id.*

⁴⁶George Masih, *Pakistan: Christian Village Attacked On Blasphemy Charges*, CHRISTIAN TODAY (July 2, 2009), <http://www.christiantoday.co.in/article/pakistan.christian.village.attacked.on.blasphemy.charges/4137.htm>.

⁴⁷*Id.*

⁴⁸*Id.*; see also Ali Usman, *Christian Community Targeted By Cleric*, DAILY TIMES (July 3, 2009), <http://archives.dailytimes.com.pk/national/03-Jul-2009/christian-community-targeted-by-cleric>.

- In December 2008, a Muslim minority sect “faith healer” named Abdul Jabbar was accused of burning pages from the Quran, an accusation that led a mob of several thousand to surround Jabbar’s house, torture him and his assistant, and attempt to burn them alive.⁴⁹ After saving Jabbar and his assistant, the police later charged them with blasphemy on the accusation that Jabbar was burning verses of the Quran to use in black magic spells.⁵⁰
- In June 2006, one Sunni Muslim sect accused Qamar Javed, the imam of a different Sunni Muslim sect, of burning pages from the Quran.⁵¹ Javed claimed he was merely burning trash, but the accusation spurred a mob to kill Javed and severely beat his assistant.⁵² Blasphemy charges were filed posthumously against Javed and against his assistant, but the mob responsible for Javed’s death was not charged or investigated at all.⁵³
- On November 12, 2005, a mob of Muslims, prompted by calls from the loudspeakers of the local mosque, attacked the Christian quarter of Sangla Hill and destroyed multiple buildings, including churches and a school, after Yousaf Masih, a Christian, was accused of burning pages of the Quran.⁵⁴ Soon after, Muslim leaders called for the public execution of Masih while addressing a crowd of approximately 3,000 Muslims at a mosque.⁵⁵ Many Christians fled Sangla Hill following the incident after being pressured to drop charges against the rioters.⁵⁶
- On September 9, 2005, approximately 100 Christian families fled their homes after Younis Masih, a Christian, complained that a group of Muslims were being too loud as they sang a religious song.⁵⁷ This complaint prompted the Muslim group to falsely accuse Masih of making derogatory remarks about Muhammad, accusations that incited the mob of Muslims to attack the Christian community.⁵⁸ Masih was charged with blasphemy and sentenced to death, but his sentence was subsequently overturned in 2013.⁵⁹

⁴⁹Faraz Khan, *Spiritual Healer Held For Blasphemy*, DAILY TIMES (Dec. 26, 2008), <http://archives.dailytimes.com.pk/karachi/26-Dec-2008/spiritual-healer-held-for-blasphemy>.

⁵⁰*Id.*

⁵¹Morgan, *supra* note 24.

⁵²*Id.*

⁵³*Id.*

⁵⁴*Accuser Drops ‘Blasphemy’ Charge in Sangla Hill Case*, WORLDWATCH MONITOR (Jan. 11, 2006), https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2006/01-January/newsarticle_4167.html/.

⁵⁵*Id.*

⁵⁶*Id.*

⁵⁷*Pakistani Court Overturns Younis Masih’s ‘Blasphemy’ Conviction, Death Sentence*, MORNING STAR NEWS (Apr. 3, 2013), <http://morningstarnews.org/2013/04/pakistani-court-overturns-younis-masihs-blasphemy-conviction-death-sentence/>.

⁵⁸*Id.*

⁵⁹*Id.*

