



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on November 10, 2014

Muslim Mob Burns Christian Couple Alive

Sajjad Maseeh and Shama Bibi were expecting their fifth child. But that baby will never enter this world, nor will the couple's four other children ever see their parents again. This is because, this past Tuesday, a Muslim mob in Pakistan's Punjab Province burned the Christian couple alive in an industrial kiln, leaving nothing remaining but charred bones and the victims' discarded shoes.



The couple's alleged "crime," if you want to call it that, was desecration of the Koran. The problems started approximately two weeks ago after the death of Maseeh's father, a local religious healer. As Bibi cleaned out the departed's room, she removed certain items from an old trunk and discarded and burned the rest. A garbage man collected the trash the next day, claimed that pages from the Koran were among it, and informed a local cleric.

And so rumors spread about the "blasphemous" couple. At this point the Christians decided to flee, but were prevented from doing so by Yousaf Gujjar, owner of the brick factory in which Maseeh worked. Claiming the couple owed him money, Gujjar and a dozen accomplices seized them from their home and locked them in a factory office.

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According to Maseeh's family, by Tuesday, "loudspeaker announcements from local mosques were branding Sajjad and Shama as 'blasphemous' and saying they should be 'wajib-ul-qatal,' which translates as 'necessarily murdered,'" [reports](#) NBC News. That 24-year-old Shama was "uneducated and probably didn't realize she was burning the Quran and not just any documents," as lawyer and Christian rights activist Mushtaq Gill put it, wouldn't change their fate.

Sajjad and Shama never had it easy. Forced to be an indentured worker at age seven under a system allowing bonded labor to pay off cross-generational debt, 27-year-old Sajjad had been toiling away in Gujjar's brick factory for 20 years. This is why Gujjar, perhaps viewing Sajjad as akin to a slave, felt he could detain the father for unpaid debt. But whatever Gujjar's motivation, what happened next is not in doubt.

Whipped into a frenzy by local clerics, a mob of 1,200 to 1,500 marched on the factory. "Unable to break down the office door," writes NBC, "the swelling crowd ripped open the building's thatched roof." The mob then threw bricks at the victims and beat them with sticks while chanting "We will lay down our lives for the honor of the prophet." Their legs were even broken so they couldn't run away. NBC then reports on the couple's final moments, as related by family spokesman Javed Maseeh:

"They [the mob] picked them up by their arms and legs and held them over the brick furnace until their clothes caught fire," he said. "And then they threw them inside the furnace."

Bibi, a mother of four who was four months pregnant, was wearing an outfit that initially didn't burn, according to Javed Maseeh. The mob removed her from over the kiln and wrapped her up in cotton to make sure the garments would be set alight.



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All this happened while, [reports](#) witness Malik Abdul Aziz, the “couple were screaming, begging for mercy and saying they have not committed any sin.”

But there would be no mercy — and there very well may be no justice. As the *Daily Mail* [reported](#):

Blasphemy is a hugely sensitive issue in the majority Muslim country [of Pakistan], with even unproven allegations often prompting mob violence.

Those who take part in the violence are rarely if ever prosecuted — a fact not lost upon the relatives of the deceased.

“I need justice but I am sure I won’t be able to get it, the clerics are too powerful,” [Sajjad’s brother Iqbal said].

In fact, blasphemy is such a big issue in Pakistan that the nation even has laws prohibiting it. And there are frequent victims. As the *Times of India* [wrote](#) on Tuesday:

A conviction or merely an accusation of blasphemy can put one’s life in danger. Even if one is acquitted, the fear of death at the hands of vigilantes remains.

A Christian woman, Aasia Bibi, has been on death row since November 2010 after she was found guilty of making blasphemous remarks about Prophet Muhammad during a quarrel with a Muslim woman. Two prominent politicians who were campaigning for the release of Aasia Bibi and reform of the law were ruthlessly murdered in Pakistan’s capital. Ex Punjab governor, Salman Taseer, was shot dead in January 2011 by his own bodyguard while the then federal minister for minority affairs, Shahbaz Bhatti, was killed in March 2011.

And the burning of Christians alive is not uncommon. Pakistani Muslims [burned](#) the Christian villages of Shanti Nagar and Sangla Hill in, respectively, 1997 and 2005; and incensed by rumors of a man who burned some pages from the Koran, attacked and partially burned the villages of Koriyan and Gojra in 2009. And in the midst of widespread [anti-Christian violence](#) in 2012, the Boko Haram Islamic group in Nigeria embarked on a 12-village killing spree during which they burned alive 50 members of the Church of Christ in the village of Maseh.

Even more recently, the world has witnessed the religious cleansing of Christians by ISIS and other Muslim groups in places such as Egypt, Iraq, and Syria. In fact, Christianity in the Middle East — its birthplace — is in danger of extinction. This would conclude a conquest that began in 632 A.D., when the Mideast and North Africa were mostly Christian, and that was only interrupted when the Crusades were launched to blunt Muslim expansion.

As for the Maseeh family, the Pakistani government has promised them \$50,000 and 10 acres of land as compensation for their loss. With Sajjad’s three Christian brothers in hiding, however, whether or not they’ll live to collect it is anybody’s guess.



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