



## Pakistan: Rape as a Tool for Conversion to Islam

For Zubaida Bibi, a Christian woman working in a garment factory in the Korangi Industrial Area of Karachi, Pakistan, the workday on October 12 at Crescent Enterprises probably began like most. Her job as a custodian helped make it possible for her to care for her children. But before her shift was over, a Muslim worker at the factory attempted to rape her, and then slit her throat, leaving four orphans without a mother to care for them. And the case of Zubaida Bibi is far from unique: In Pakistan, the phenomena of Islamic men raping Christian women is becoming more common.



An [October 18 story](#) for PakistanChristianPost.com relates some of the details of the tragic death of Zubaida Bibi:

On October 12, 2011, during duty hours, Zubaida Bibi entered to clean factory bathrooms when one Muslim employee named Mohammad Asif followed her and locked door behind him.

When Mohammad Asif attempted to sexually assault Zubaida Bibi, she cried for help on which Mohammad Asif took out a dagger and slit the throat of Zubaida Bibi.

The factory management called police help and Mohammad Asif was arrested on crime scene where throat cut dead body of Zubaida Bibi was lying on floor.

One might want to imagine that the case of Zubaida Bibi was isolated, or that the assault and murder of this woman had nothing to do with the religious beliefs of the alleged murderer and his victim. However, the truth is that in Islamic societies such as Pakistan, it is not at all uncommon for Muslims to get away without punishment for raping Christian women.

The situation in Pakistan has reached the point that at Persecution.org, a website for International Christian Concern, it was noted in [an article for October 4](#):

Many Christian girls are raped at the hands of Muslims in Pakistan. Rape has been used as a weapon of persecution against Christian girls in Pakistan, a country where Christians are treated as third-class citizens. In the Muslim majority country, Christian girls are particularly vulnerable to these types of crimes because Muslim authorities are reluctant to protect them when their rights are violated by Muslims.

According to Compass Direct News, a Christian mother of five said that she was raped by two Pakistani Muslims on September 15th. In January, Muhammad Aftab was arrested after raping six Christian girls at different times.

The president of the Pakistan Christian Congress, Dr. Nazir Bhatti, told us, "The incidents of rape and enforced conversion of Christian women to Islam is rising every year. 99.9% of rape cases go unreported in Pakistan... If a Muslim man rapes a Christian girl, then he easily forces her to convert to Islam, marries her and covers up his heinous crime of rape under Islamic law. Some



Written by [James Heiser](#) on October 20, 2011

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cases of rapes of Christian women are reported, but the majority of such rapes are never reported.”

The *Pakistan Christian Post* article regarding Zubaida Bibi made essentially the same observation:

There are rising incidents of sexual harassment against Christian women workers on workplaces in Pakistan which go unreported due to cultural and social values. The influential Muslims feel free to kidnap and rape Christian women in Pakistan where Islamic laws protect culprits. In kidnap and rape cases against Christian women, the Muslim culprits walk free from courts which keep victims silent on such abuses.

A report from the Barnabas Fund was released in September, detailing the widespread problem in Pakistani society of Muslim men kidnapping Christian girls and forcing them to marry the very men who abducted them. [According to the report](#), the horrifying tragedy of such a crime is played out hundreds of times every year in Pakistan:

The abduction and forced conversion to Islam of Christian girls who are then married against their will to their captors is a disturbing and growing trend in [Pakistan](#); it is estimated that there are over 700 cases every year. ...

The forced conversions and marriages are often carried out by influential Muslim families who threaten and severely beat the young girls to frighten them into compliance, as seemingly happened in the case of [Farah Hatim](#). The authorities rarely take action, and often the young girls never return to their families unless they manage to escape their captors. The girls are often raped and become pregnant, making it almost impossible for the courts to release them.

One father was told by police to “forget his daughters” after the two Christian sisters were abducted, raped and forcibly converted in Faisalabad in May.

Even when a captive does manage to escape, it is by no means the end of her suffering. If a woman leaves her new Muslim family and Islam to return to her Christian background, she is considered an apostate — even though she was forcibly converted — and is therefore liable to be killed.

Such widespread and systematic criminal activity nevertheless remains virtually unknown outside the Muslim world, and attempts to highlight the tragic plight of Christians living under Islam is often dismissed out of hand. However, such crimes — and the attitudes which make them possible — are hardly isolated to Pakistani society; just last year, a controversy erupted in the United Kingdom when a guest on a show for the Islam Channel allegedly [advocated marital rape](#). An observer may reasonably ask: Is it really difficult to believe that if a husband is permitted to rape his wife, is it really difficult to justify the use of such a crime as a means of converting a woman to Islam?

The horrifying case of the murder of Zubaida Bibi is made all the more terrifying by the commonality of the crime which motivated it. Foreign intervention cannot bring about a change in a society which is so fundamentally influenced by a religion which justifies such crimes; but for those who do not yet live under Islam, Bibi’s death is a powerful reminder that the religion embraced by an individual — or a society — shapes the entire lives of those who adhere to that religion.

*Photo: Fundamentalist Muslim women protest amendments to Pakistan’s controversial Islamic rape laws, approved by Pakistan’s Senate to help rape victims, Nov. 23, 2006 in Lahore, Pakistan: AP Images*



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