



Written by [James Heiser](#) on May 4, 2011

## Pakistani Pastor Targeted by Jihadists

While the world is distracted by the spectacle of the assassination of Osama bin Laden, what remains unchanged in the ongoing Jihad is the brutal persecution of Christians in Pakistan and throughout the Muslim world. While the death of Osama is being greeted throughout the West with celebration, the attempt by Jihadist thugs in Pakistan to murder a Christian pastor and his family is being ignored.

The April 27 attack on Rev. Ashraf Paul and his family left one son, Sarfraz Paul, critically wounded after he was struck by three bullets. The attack from the Islamic group Tehreek-e-Gazi Bin Shaheed (TGBS) came after Rev. Paul refused to either convert to Islam, or pay a supposed “poll tax.”



The attack on the Paul family is a far from isolated incident: The overt, and growing, persecution of Christians in Pakistan has long made it clear that Pakistan’s status as an “ally” against the Islamic Jihad is a farce. In January, Salman Taseer (pictured, above) the governor of the province of Punjab, was murdered by his own bodyguard because he had dared to intervene on behalf of a Christian woman facing death on trumped up charges of “blasphemy” against Mohammed. The murder of this high-ranking Pakistani official was greeted with the support of [500 Muslim clerics](#), and scholars and [1,000 lawyers in Islamabad](#) offered their support for Taseer’s assassin. When a prominent member of Pakistan’s parliament, Sherry Rehman, sought to modify her nation’s blasphemy law so as to remove the death penalty, she ultimately [had to abandon the effort](#) when she could not even gain the support of her own political party. In late February, Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani declared the blasphemy law to be “[categorically excluded](#)” from reform — after all, the judicial murder of blasphemers is part of the Islamic law, and Pakistan is an Islamic state. [As Time reported in 1953](#) after the formation of Pakistan:

But Pakistan, in framing its own constitution last week, chose the dark path which might lead to theocracy and fear. The Constituent Assembly ruled that the nation should become “the Islamic Republic of Pakistan” (presumably within the British Commonwealth, like India), in which:

- ¶ No law “repugnant to the Holy Koran” may be enacted by state or local assemblies.
- ¶ Only Moslems may serve as Chief of State.
- ¶ The state will make “the teachings of Islam known to people.”

The Hindu members of the Assembly protested, then walked out.

“We Hindus form about 14% of the population,” said their leader, and the Assembly’s bill “implies an inferior status for non-Moslems.” In India there were demands that Moslems be subjected to similar treatment. But the prospects of Hindu agitation within their shaky state, and worsened



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relations with India, worried Pakistan's Moslem-Firsters not one bit. Pakistan means, literally: "The Land of the Pure."

Now, nearly 60 years later, the fruit of such policies are clear. In March, the only Christian serving in the government of Pakistan — [Minorities Minister Shahbaz Bhatti](#) — was shot to death in his own driveway by Jihadists. The purpose for Bhatti's office was to facilitate relations between the Islamic state and the various religious minorities living in Pakistan. When Jihadists murder the representative of those minorities, with no apparent political ramifications for the Islamic state, it would appear that an increasingly violent element within Pakistani society has decided that the time for talking is at an end.

Rev. Ashraf Paul and his family are simply the latest victims of the ongoing persecution of Christians in Pakistan. [As reported by the Assist News Service](#):

Prior to this incident, the Rev. Paul had received a letter on March 30, 2011, telling him to stop his evangelical activities. It was claimed to be from Tehreek-e-Gazi Bin Shaheed (TGBS), an Islamic organization in Pakistan, and signed by its leader.

Rev. Paul contacted CLAAS and informed them that he, along with his family, were constantly receiving these death threats which told him to stop church and Christian publishing work. They also demand[ed that the] pastor ... pay the equivalent of US \$119,79USD, as a "poll-tax" otherwise they said they would kill him and his family.

The Rev. Paul, 55, said he turned down their demands and this [is] why they may have attacked him and his family. He has been the pastor of Hope Fellowship Evangelical Ministry in Hamza Town, near Youhanabad, Lahore and was converted to Christianity in 1970.

He went to seminary some ten years later where he got three years of pastoral training and then, in 1983, he was deputed as principle of the Good News Center at Dera Ghazi Khan.

In 1998, the pastor was appointed as assistant director at the Eye Hospital at Gillgit and the following year, he moved to Lahore and joined Pakistan Bible Society as a proof reader. Pastor Ashraf is also well-known in Pakistan as a writer and a poet.

A [similar report of the attack](#) has been posted by the *Pakistan Christian Post*, with the added clarification that the Jihadists had allegedly not only told Rev. Paul to shut down his ministry, but also to convert to Islam: "Pastor Ashraf Paul has received threat calls and letter before this incident for converting to Islam or pay[ing] money." [As noted elsewhere](#), the supposed "poll tax" is nothing other than a demand that Rev. Paul pay the [Jizya](#) — a "tax" which a Muslim ruler extracts from his non-Muslim citizens. Essentially, Jizya is a Islamic protection racket.

The death of Osama bin Laden has raised the level of awareness regarding the nature of the regime in Pakistan. But as is becoming clear, the nature of Pakistan's Islamic state is nothing new — the United States knew the character of Pakistan's government and presumably thought that enough American money ("[Dane-geld](#)"?) could cause them to change. Day by day, we are learning how wrongheaded that strategy truly is.

*Photo: In this Nov. 20, 2010 file photo, Salman Taseer, Governor of Pakistani Punjab Province, talks to reporters: AP Images*



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