



CHURCH IN CHAINS

AN IRISH VOICE FOR PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS

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Mr Sardar Shuja Alam
Ambassador
Embassy of Pakistan
1B Ailesbury Road
DUBLIN 4

13 March 2019

Your Excellency,

Welcome to Ireland – I hope that your time living and working in Ireland will be pleasant and productive for relations between our two countries.

Our charity supports the right of freedom of religion and belief for all and advocates on behalf of persecuted Christians worldwide. I have met a number of your predecessors in relation to the situation of Christians in Pakistan.

On several occasions, we have made representations to your government regarding the case of Asia Bibi. Most recently (in November 2018), a group of our supporters gathered outside the Embassy to highlight the dreadful injustice that she had suffered in that she had been declared innocent by the highest court in Pakistan and released from prison but was still not free, following the decision of the government of Pakistan to ban her from leaving the country while a review petition against her acquittal was considered by the Supreme Court.

On that occasion, Mr Brendan Howlin TD (Leader of the Labour Party) and I met with Mr Shahzad Dastgir Nousherwani. He gave us an assurance that there would not be a protracted process into the future and that the matter would be dealt with expeditiously.

In late January, the Supreme Court dismissed the petition to review its acquittal of Asia Bibi thus paving the way for her to leave the country. Therefore, we cannot understand why she has been prevented from leaving Pakistan and are deeply concerned that the Pakistani army is reported to be actively involved in this denial of Ms Bibi's human rights. It is completely unacceptable by any criteria that an innocent Christian woman, acquitted in October 2018, upheld in January 2019, is still not free.

We ask that you convey urgently to your government our request that it act immediately to ensure that Asia Bibi's rights as an innocent person are fully upheld and that she and her husband are allowed to leave the country immediately.

Yours sincerely,

David Turner
(Director)