

Week 2: Pray for Shagufta Kiran (Pakistan)



Shagufta Kiran (38) is a former nurse and mother of four who was arrested in Pakistan's capital, Islamabad, in July 2021 after she was accused of forwarding a WhatsApp message with blasphemous content the previous September. She is waiting for trial in Rawalpindi's Adiala Central Jail and her case hearings have been repeatedly adjourned.

Shagufta was a member of several interfaith WhatsApp groups where she defended her Christian faith. An administrator of one of the groups who is a member of an Islamist organisation accused her of forwarding a blasphemous message and filed charges. Shagufta's husband Rafique said she had not read the message and had probably

forwarded it accidentally.

Armed agents from the cybercrime wing of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) raided Shagufta's home in the Iqbal Town area of Islamabad on 29 July 2021 without a warrant and arrested her and her two youngest sons (then aged 10 and 12). She was charged with insulting Islam (Section 295-A of Pakistan's Penal Code, punishable by up to ten years in prison), insulting the Prophet Muhammad (Section 295-C, which carries the death penalty), uttering words with deliberate intent to outrage religious feelings (Section 298), derogatory remarks in respect of holy personages (Section 298-A), abetment (Section 109) and inciting interfaith hatred (Section 11 of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act 2016).

Shagufta endured four days of interrogation before being transferred to Adiala Central Jail in Rawalpindi, Islamabad's neighbouring twin city, where Rafique visits her about once a month. She is being held in solitary confinement but is allowed to walk outside during the day. She reportedly has her Bible and reads it and prays whenever she feels sad or lonely.

Shagufta's lawyer filed a bail application in the Special Judge Central FIA court in Islamabad but on 21 March 2023 a judge rejected it. The bail application was then taken to the Islamabad High Court, which rejected it on 14 April 2023.

Family

Shagufta and her husband Rafique Masih have four children – three sons who were aged 10, 12 and 15 at the time of her arrest and a daughter aged 18. After Shagufta was charged with blasphemy her family had to flee Islamabad because of threats and went into hiding.

Latest News

On 14 April 2023 the Islamabad High Court rejected Shagufta's petition for bail. Her husband Rafique Masih said an application would be made to the Supreme Court.

Prayer Diary

Sunday	Ask God to bless Shagufta and keep her safe and well.
Monday	Pray for hope and encouragement as she waits.
Tuesday	Pray that Shagufta would be tried soon and found innocent.
Wednesday	Ask for courage and protection for her lawyers and judges.
Thursday	Pray for safety, comfort and hope for Shagufta's family.
Friday	Pray for strength and wisdom for Rafique.
Saturday	Pray for reform of Pakistan's blasphemy laws.

