

PAKISTAN DISABLED GIRL ARRESTED FOR BLASPHEMY

BBC Article

by

Unknown

19 Aug 2012

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-19311098>

--()--

Pakistani police have arrested a mentally disabled 11-year-old girl after a mob accused her of desecrating pages of the Koran.



Christians argue they are often falsely accused of blasphemy

The mob demanded the Christian girl's arrest and threatened to burn down Christian homes outside the capital Islamabad, local media say.

Officials said the girl could not properly answer police questions.

Her parents have been taken into protective custody following threats and other Christian families have fled.

It is thought that the girl has Down's syndrome.

Paul Bhatti, Pakistan's minister for National Harmony, told the BBC that the girl was known to have a mental disorder and that it seemed "unlikely she purposefully desecrated the Koran".

"From the reports I have seen, she was found carrying a waste bag which also had pages of the Koran," he said.

"This infuriated some local people and a large crowd gathered to demand action against her. The police were initially reluctant to arrest her, but they came under a lot of pressure from a very large crowd, who were threatening to burn down Christian homes."

He said more than 600 people have fled from the Christian neighbourhood.

Rights activists have urged Pakistan to reform its controversial blasphemy laws, under which a person can be jailed for life for desecrating the Koran.

Many of those accused of blasphemy have been killed by violent mobs, while politicians who advocate a change in legislation have also been targeted.

Last year, Shahbaz Bhatti, the minister for minority affairs, was killed after calling for the repeal of the blasphemy law.

His death came just two months after the murder of Punjab Governor Salman Taseer, who also spoke out about the issue.

End

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-19311098>

--()--

20082012

-- HUFFINGTON POST --

**PAKISTANI CHRISTIAN GIRL
WITH SPECIAL NEEDS
ARRESTED FOR
ALLEGEDLY BURNING ISLAMIC TEXT**

Huffington Post Article

by

Unknown

19 Aug 2012

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/08/19/pakistani-christian-girl-burning-quaran-islamic-text-arrested-blasphemy_n_1807105.html

CMG Archives

<http://www.campbellmgold.com>

--()--

A Christian girl with Down's syndrome has been arrested and charged with blasphemy in Pakistan for allegedly burning pages containing Islamic text, the BBC and Agence France-Presse report.

According to the Express Tribune, an English language newspaper in Pakistan, the 11-year-old was beaten last week after locals in her village near Islamabad saw her burning pages inscribed with Islamic text.

Dawn, another English-language Pakistani paper, notes that other reports indicate that she "was burning used papers collected from the garbage for cooking."

If found guilty, the young girl could face the death penalty, according to AFP.

Her family and other Christians in the area reportedly fled out of fear following the incident, according to the Express Tribune and Dawn, but not before people in the village brought the girl and her mother to local authorities.

AFP reports that the Women's Action Forum [WAF], a women's rights organization in Pakistan, has called on authorities to release the young girl.

"WAF is outraged at the total inhumanity of the men who lodged the First Information Report (FIR) in the police," Tahira Abdullah, a spokeswoman for WAF said.

This is one of the latest high-profile incidents to draw attention to Pakistan's controversial blasphemy laws, which state that people who are convicted of insulting the Quran or Islam's prophet can face the death penalty.

In 2010, a Christian mother of five was sentenced to death for blasphemy.

And last month, a man accused of desecrating the Quran was dragged from a police station in Pakistan and beaten to death before his body was set on fire.

Salman Taseer, a Pakistani governor, was assassinated by a bodyguard in 2011 because of his reported opposition to the laws.

End

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/08/19/pakistani-christian-girl-burning-quaran-islamic-text-arrested-blasphemy_n_1807105.html

--()--

<http://www.campbellmgold.com>

20082012