

# **This Could Be Asia Bibi's Last Chance to Live**

A special bench of the Pakistani Supreme Court is reportedly meeting to hear Christian mom Asia Bibi's appeal of her execution sentence over allegations of blasphemy in just 3 days.

A three-member special bench of the Supreme Court will on Monday hear the final appeal against the execution of Asia Bibi, a Christian woman sentenced to death for blasphemy.

According to a supplementary cause list issued by the apex court on Friday, a three-judge bench headed by Chief Justice Mian Saqib Nisar will hear Bibi's appeal (Asia Bibi v. The State, and so on) on Oct. 8. Justice Asif Saeed Khosa and Justice Mazhar Alam Khan Miankheh will be the other members of the bench.

The court has issued a notice to the additional prosecutor general of Punjab to be present for the hearing. Also in attendance will be lawyers Syed Fayyaz Ahmed Sherazi, Saif-ul-Malook Chaudhry and others.

A legal team from our office in Pakistan will be in attendance at that hearing as well.

As we've told you, Asia Bibi was convicted in 2010 under Pakistan's medieval blasphemy laws and sentenced to death for blasphemy against the Prophet Muhammad after she offered water to a Muslim co-worker who believed Asia had made the water ceremonially unclean by drinking from the same cup.

Since then, the Christian mother of five has languished on death row, while her husband and children wait anxiously, praying for a miracle.

Months ago we reported a glimmer of hope in Asia's case when the Chief Justice of Pakistan's Supreme Court promised he would personally review her appeal, but no firm date was given.

Now this three-member special bench of Pakistan's Supreme Court will hear the "final appeal." This is a clear-cut human rights violation. If Asia's appeal is rejected, her options look grim. Only Pakistan's president will then be able to spare her life.

Bibi's supporters maintain her innocence and insist it was a personal dispute, and the Vatican has called for her release.

But successive appeals have been rejected, and if the SC bench eventually upholds Bibi's conviction, her only recourse will be a direct appeal to the president for clemency.

If that fails, she could become the first person in Pakistan to be executed for blasphemy.

We've presented Asia Bibi's plight to the U.N. to urge intervention. We've sent legal letters directly to Pakistan, demanding her immediate release. We have aggressively advocated across the globe for her freedom. And we will have our legal team from Pakistan in the courtroom praying that true justice is served and her life is saved.

Asia Bibi has committed no crime—she is facing this outrageous barbaric sentence because of her Christian faith. If her appeal fails, five children will be left motherless. We cannot sit by and let that happen. {eo}

*For the original article, visit .*