

Obama Condemns Bhatti Murder in Islamabad

Charisma News reported earlier this morning that Shahbaz Bhatti, Pakistan's only Christian cabinet member, was killed in broad daylight by Islamic extremists. President Obama has condemned the attacks.

"I am deeply saddened by the assassination of Pakistan's Minister for Minority Affairs Shahbaz Bhatti today in Islamabad, and condemn in the strongest possible terms this horrific act of violence," Obama says. "We offer our profound condolences to his family, loved ones and all who knew and worked with him. Minister Bhatti fought for and sacrificed his life for the universal values that Pakistanis, Americans and people around the world hold dear—the right to speak one's mind, to practice one's religion as one chooses, and to be free from discrimination based on one's background or beliefs.

"He was clear-eyed about the risks of speaking out, and, despite innumerable death threats, he insisted he had a duty to his fellow Pakistanis to defend equal rights and tolerance from those who preach division, hate, and violence. He most courageously challenged the blasphemy laws of Pakistan under which individuals have been prosecuted for speaking their minds or practicing their own faiths. Those who committed this crime should be brought to justice, and those who share Mr. Bhatti's vision of tolerance and religious freedom must be able to live free from fear. Minister Bhatti will be missed by all who knew him, and the United States will continue to stand with those who are dedicated to his vision of tolerance and dignity for all human beings."