

Pakistani Prime Minister Announces Persecuted Christian Asia Bibi Will Be Freed in 2 Weeks

Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan has announced that Asia Bibi, the Christian woman whose death sentence for blasphemy against Islam was overturned, will leave the Muslim nation in two weeks and be reunited with her family, according to WorldNetDaily (WND).

But WND says *Jihad Watch* Director Robert Spencer cautions that supporters who followed Bibi's ordeal for the past nine years should hold their applause.

"Why is Khan making this announcement now?" he asked. "Why not in two weeks, after she is safely out of the country? Is he giving the furious Muslim mobs who have been baying for her blood and hunting house to house for her time to mobilize and renew their efforts to find and murder her?"

"Why would he make this announcement otherwise, instead of secreting this poor woman out of the country without saying a word until the mission was completed?"

WND stated last month that contrary to the reported claim of her lawyer that she was safely reunited with her family in Canada after her conviction was overturned last October and reaffirmed in January, Bibi remained in protective custody in the Muslim nation and was said to be "very unwell."

WND said authorities have been protecting her from the threats of radical Muslims who immediately took to the streets in protest of the October decision. Some searched house to house to carry out what they viewed as unfulfilled justice under

Islamic law.

The review in January was part of a deal the government struck with the Tehreek-e-Labbaik party, whose members sought to kill her.

'Waiting for the Green Signal'

The Media Line reported the news that Bibi will be released in two weeks followed British Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt's statement in the U.K. Parliament earlier this month that the British government was negotiating her freedom.

A senior Pakistani government official told The Media Line on condition of anonymity that Bibi "is all set to travel abroad."

"We are waiting for the green signal from concerned authorities in this regard."

When Pakistan's Supreme Court upheld its October decision to overturn her death sentence, her exit from the country was blocked by the army, sources told London's *Daily Mail*.

The sources said the health of the 53-year-old mother of two was failing, and she was being denied access to medical care.

Bibi was convicted in 2010 under section 295-C of Pakistan's penal code, which punishes blasphemy against Islam's prophet. She was sentenced to execution by hanging.

Supreme Court: 'Concocted' Story

WND said Bibi's problems began when, according to her testimony, Muslim co-workers refused to drink water from a cup from which she had taken a sip and demanded she convert to Islam. Her refusal, she said, prompted a mob to later allege she had insulted Muhammad.

The Supreme Court ruled Oct. 31 that the basis of the

blasphemy charge was a “concocted” story and overturned the guilty verdict.

After her release from Multan, Pakistan’s women prison on Nov. 7, Bibi was flown to Islamabad and taken to an undisclosed place amid tight security.

Following her acquittal and the death threats, Bibi’s supporters asked the United States to grant her asylum after she apparently was rejected by Britain.

As WND reported, an advocate for Bibi in the United Kingdom said the British government turned her down because her entry would cause unrest among Muslims and pose a security threat to British embassies in the Muslim world.

WND says The White House and the American Center for Law and Justice, which fought for Bibi’s freedom for more than four years, have declined to comment regarding Bibi’s asylum appeal. ACLJ Chief Counsel Jay Sekulow, President Trump’s personal lawyer, was a key advocate for American pastor Andrew Brunson, who was released from a Turkish prison last month.

A spokesman for the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad has said that the mission “continues to follow the case closely.”

‘Appeasement Only Provides Oxygen’

The WND report says that while no one has been executed by the Pakistani government for blasphemy, at least 65 people accused of the “crime” have been murdered by Muslim vigilantes since 1990.

CNS News noted that since 2006, the government has engaged in various agreements to appease the Islamic party TLP that have ended in failure, including withdrawing troops from certain areas, pardoning terrorists and allowing Shariah, or Islamic law, zones.

Wilson Chowdhry of the British Pakistani Christian Association

said he was not surprised the Pakistani government “has caved in to extremists – this is a commonly recurring socio-political trend in Pakistan.”

“Politicians have historically been hijacked by either the extremist groups within the nation or the military, this situation is simply the status quo as far as I am concerned,” he said.

In a column in *Dawn*, security analyst Muhammad Amir Rana wrote: “State appeasement only provides oxygen to extremist groups, increasing their bargaining power.”

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