

Pakistani Soldier Stoned to Death for Love Affair, Tribesmen Say

A Pakistani soldier was publicly **stoned to death** on the order of a **tribal court** in the country's northwestern Kurram region for having an **affair** with a local woman, government officials and tribesmen said on Wednesday.

Such **tribal justice** is a stark reminder of the difficulty in establishing a credible civilian administration in **Pakistan's** semi-autonomous region bordering Afghanistan, despite a series of military operations in the area and Western nations pouring in millions of dollars to help build infrastructure.

Punjab native Anwar Din, 27, was posted last year to the Parachinar area of Kurram agency where he met Intizar Bibi, 19, while manning a checkpoint near her home.

The two embarked on a romantic relationship, tribal sources said, and he tried to elope with her when he was later posted to the disputed Kashmir region. It was not immediately clear what evidence there was, if any, of a romance.

"The girl left her home on Monday and met Anwar Din when villagers saw them," said Munir Hussain, the head of the local jirga, or tribal court, that sentenced Din to death. "We took the girl into custody and took the boy to the local graveyard where he was stoned to death and buried."

Din was killed on Monday, he added. A government official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the jirga had ruled the woman must be **shot to death**. It was not immediately clear if this had already taken place.

The army was not immediately available for comment.

Kurram, the only part of Pakistan's largely lawless border

region that has a significant Shi'ite population, is wracked by sectarian violence between Sunni and Shi'ite tribes. Anti-Shi'ite ideology from the Taliban and al-Qaida has meant years of bloody fighting.

Bibi is Shi'ite while Din was Sunni, Hussain added.

The Federally Administered Tribal Areas have never been fully integrated into Pakistan's administrative, economic or judicial system.

Instead, families and tribes often take justice into their own hands, presiding over "jirgas" or "panchayats", gatherings of elders that hand down punishments including rape, killing and the bartering of women to settle scores and restore honor.

In such tribal justice, women often fare far worse than men.

Hussain said that the jirga had also requested that another Pakistani soldier, Saif Ullah, be handed over for helping the couple meet and coordinate the planned elopement.

"The army is here for our security but if they engage in such activities we will not let them stay here," Hussain said. "This is an insult to tribal customs. We will revolt against this."

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