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INTERNATIONAL

For immediate release: January 17, 2024

Pakistani Family In Grave Danger After Being Falsely Accused of Violating Blasphemy Law; Islamic Extremists Call For Beheadings

One Free World International Calling Upon Canadian Government To Grant The Family Refugee Status; Petition Urging Immediate Action Gathers More Than 3,000 Signatures

TORONTO – A family from Pakistan is in grave danger after being falsely accused of blasphemy by Islamic extremists who are publicly calling for their beheadings for the “crime” of maintaining a relationship with a member of their immediate family who converted to Christianity.

Following Raza Muhammad’s conversion from Islam to Christianity in 2009, he and his family have experienced unimaginable pain, suffering, and even death – all under the guise of enforcing Pakistan’s draconian blasphemy law.

“My family is being hunted by Islamic extremists who have vowed to behead us all simply because I became a Christian,” said Raza Muhammad. “We have been stabbed, shot, beaten, and in the case of my sister, murdered. I am desperately asking for help and asylum for my family before we all suffer the same fate as my late-sister.”

Blasphemy is considered the highest crime in Muslim-majority Pakistan — worse than murder. The Muhammad family vehemently denies these false, but deadly accusations.

They are currently in-hiding where their lives continue to hang in the balance. Their location is not being disclosed out of concern for their safety.

Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan, a far-right Islamic extremist political party, issued the fatwa (a formal ruling or interpretation on a point of Islamic law), calling on its supporters to attack the Muhammad family and “separate head from body”. This is the same political party that led protests against the high profile case of Asia Bibi, a Pakistani Christian woman who was convicted of blasphemy and sentenced to death by hanging before international pressure led to her receiving asylum in Canada.

To date, four fatwas have been issued against Raza and his family from various extremist organizations since 2010. Fatwas do not expire. The family has become the regular subjects of hostile media coverage from Islamist aligned media in Pakistan, emboldening vigilantes and escalating the threats of additional violence the family faces.

One Free World International (OFWI), a Toronto-based human rights organization that fights for the rights of persecuted minorities, has launched a public campaign pleading for the Canadian government to bring the Muhammad family to safety in Canada.

“This week, OFWI sent an open letter to the Honourable Marc Miller, Canada’s Minister of Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship, highlighting the grave nature of the Muhammad family’s situation and urging him to take immediate action to bring the family to safety,” said Mr. Majed El Shafie, President and Founder of OFWI.



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“Our open letter contains a petition, which has already garnered more than 3,000 signatures, calling upon Minister Miller to exercise his ministerial powers and grant the Muhammad family asylum in Canada.”

Pakistan’s blasphemy laws have enabled and encouraged legal discrimination and persecution of minorities under the guise of defending Islam for decades. OFWI’s team on the ground in Pakistan have regularly reported witnessing instances of the country’s blasphemy law being misused against Pakistan’s religious and ethnic minority groups.

“For nearly two decades, OFWI has helped bring persecuted people to Canada, from Yazidis fleeing ISIS’s genocide to Ukrainians escaping Russia’s murderous invasion,” said Mr. El Shafie. “I know from firsthand experience that time is of the essence, and for the Muhammad family, it’s a matter of life and death. We have to act now.”

To learn more about the Muhammad family’s plight, visit:

<https://ofwi.org/pakistan-blasphemy-raza-needs-help>

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Majed El Shafie and Raza Muhammad are available for media interviews by phone or video connection.

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About One Free World International (OFWI): For nearly 20 years, OFWI has been a voice for the voiceless. Based in Toronto, Canada, OFWI promotes and protects the rights of religious minorities around the world. Through OFWI’s work on the frontlines of today’s human rights struggles, they bring those voices to decision makers who have the power to enact even greater change to see human rights upheld.