

PAKISTAN

The 2015 Annual Report of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom contains a list of prisoners¹ detained for activities allegedly blasphemous or religiously insulting. Contravening the blasphemy laws can result in death or life imprisonment as it is mentioned in Section 295-A, B, C and 298-A, B, C of the Penal Code provide the death penalty in Pakistan. Muslims, Christians, and others are victims of these laws.

The use of blasphemy laws has created an environment where some religious fanatics believe that they are entitled to take law into their own hands. There have been many instances where the local administration and police have either colluded with perpetrators or have stood by and done nothing to assist the accused, fearing the crowd. The use of the blasphemy laws has become a quick way of resolving disputes arising from business rivalry, honour disputes, disputes over money and property. The accused are often lynched or languish for years in jail without trial because lawyers are too afraid to defend them. Judges have previously been attacked in Pakistan for acquitting blasphemy defendants and two politicians who discussed reforming the law were shot dead.

The cases listed below have been documented from fragmentary information available from USCIRF and other sources.

- Christians
- Ahmadis
- Sunnis
- Shias

Death sentence (de facto life in prison)

In practice people sentenced to death are not put to death but incarcerated indefinitely.

Christians

Collective arrests

Shafqat EMMANUEL, Shaguftah EMMANUEL (husband and wife) - Anglicans

Age: Shafqat (38 years) and Shaguftah (42 years)

Place of residence: Gojra

Date of arrest: 20th July 2013 in the city of Gojra

Charges: Blasphemy. They allegedly sent a text message in English deemed insulting to the Prophet Mohammed from their mobile telephone to an imam.

¹ See the list at <http://www.uscirf.gov>

Statement of the defendants: Shaguftah told the police that her cell phone had been lost for a month and that she did not know who could have sent the messages. The couple are uneducated and unable to send messages in English.

Article of the criminal/civil/administrative code: Pakistan Penal Code Sections 295-B (defiling, etc. of the Holy Qur'an), 295-C (use of derogatory remarks, etc., in respect of the Holy Prophet, punishable with life imprisonment or death), and 25-D of the Telegraph Act of 1885 ("Penalty for causing annoyance, etc. Any person, including a Telegraph Officer, who uses any telephone, public or private, for causing annoyance or intimidation to any person, whether a subscriber or not, or for obnoxious calls shall, without prejudice to any other action which the Telegraph Authority is competent to make under this Act, be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years, or with fine, or with both").

First court decision: Trial court in Toba Tek Singh on 4th April 2014 handed death sentence to the Christian couple.

Place of detention: Toba Tek Singh District Jail.

Other information: With an intention of forcing them to confess, the police tortured Shafqat in front of his wife and four children. Their lawyer said that they would challenge the verdict in High Court. The legal team of the World Vision in Progress is defending the couple and taking care of their young children.

Anjam Naz Sindhu (Christian), Javed NAZ (Christian), Jafar ALI (Muslim)

Date of arrest: 15th May 2016

Charges: Blasphemy. They were charged with insulting the Prophet Muhammad in an audio recording.

First court decision: 29th June 2016. They were sentenced to death in addition to a 35-year prison sentence.

Other information: Upon their arrest, police found recordings of Sindhu making blasphemous remarks. It has been claimed that the other two were using this material to blackmail Sindhu.

Source: <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/pakistan-court-sentences-2-christians-muslim-death-blasphemy-1567976>, <http://www.gospelherald.com/articles/64998/20160629/two-christians-muslim-sentenced-death-pakistan-insulting-prophet-muhammad.htm#closepopup>, <http://christiandaily.com/article/pakistans-blasphemy-law-hits-both-victim-and-accusers/53675.htm>

Individual arrests

Mohammad Zulfiqar ALI

Charge: Writing blasphemous messages on walls in 2008.

First court decision: Sentenced to death on 14th July 2014

Place of detention: Lahore

Muhammad ASGHAR (British Protestant)

Age: 70 years

Date of arrest: September 2010 in the city of Rawalpindi.

Charges: Blasphemy. He was accused of writing letters to several people claiming to be a prophet.

First court decision: Sentenced to death in January 2014 by Rawalpindi court.

Other information: Asghar is from Edinburgh. His lawyers claimed that he had a history of mental illness in Scotland, but the court did not accept UK medical reports.

Malik Muhammad ASHRAF

Charge: Derogatory remarks against the prophet.

Article of the criminal/civil/administrative code or law: Pakistan Penal Code Sections 295-C (use of derogatory remarks, etc., in respect of the Holy Prophet, punishable with life imprisonment or death) and 298 A (use of derogatory remarks, etc. in respect of holy personages).

First court decision: On 17th February 2010 he was sentenced to death.

Place of detention: Central Jail (Adiala).

Amoor AYUB

Date and place of arrest: 17th November 2014 in Lahore

Charges: Blasphemy.

Article of the criminal/civil/administrative code or law: Pakistan Penal Code Section 295-C (person of Qadiani group, etc., calling himself a Muslim or preaching or propagating his faith).

Place of detention: District jail at Jhelum.

Other information: He is the brother of Qaisar Ayub (see below).

Qaisar AYUB

Age: In his 40s

Date and place of arrest: He was arrested on 15th November 2014 in Lahore.

Charges: Blasphemy. He was accused of posting blasphemous messages on a Christian website that he was moderating.

Article of the criminal/civil/administrative code: Pakistan Penal Code Section 295-C (person of Qadiani group, etc., calling himself a Muslim or preaching or propagating his faith).

Place of detention: District jail at Jhelum

Other information: He is the brother of Qaisar Ayub (see above).

Asia BIBI (Protestant)

Age: 37 years

Place of residence: Ittanwali

Date of arrest: 19th June 2009

Charges: Blasphemy. She allegedly insulted the prophet Muhammad during an argument with some Muslim neighbors when she drank water from a well with an allegedly “unclean” cup used by Muslim women.

Article of the criminal/civil/administrative code: Pakistan Penal Code Section 295-C (person of Qadiani group, etc., calling himself a Muslim or preaching or propagating his faith).

First court decision: She was sentenced to death in November 2010.

Last court decision: The Lahore High Court upheld the death sentence.

Place of detention: Central Jail in Multan.

Other information: When Bibi’s case came to prominence in 2010, three politicians – Salmaan Taseer, Shahbaz Bhatti and Sherry Rehman – all from the Pakistan People’s Party, which was currently in power, took up the case and called for reform. The consequences speak for themselves. Taseer was shot dead by his bodyguard in January 2011. In March the same year, Bhatti was killed by Taliban assassins. Rehman was forced into semi-hiding. In December 2010, a prominent Islamic cleric offered half a million Pakistani rupees (more than \$5,000) to anyone who would kill her. More recently, religious groups have demanded her execution.

Abdul HAMEED

Charge: Claiming to be a prophet

Article of the criminal/civil/administrative code or law: Pakistan Penal Code Sections 295-A (deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs), 295-B (defiling, etc. of the Holy Qur’an), and 295-C (use of derogatory remarks, etc., in respect of the Holy Prophet, punishable with life imprisonment or death).

First court decision: 3rd March 2006

Place of detention: District Jail Sahiwal

Soofi Mohammad ISHAQ

Charge: Claiming to be a prophet

Statement of the defendant: The accusations are purely motivated by his affiliation to Sufism.

Article of the criminal/civil/administrative code or law: Pakistan Penal Code Sections 295-A (deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs), and 295-C (use of derogatory remarks, etc., in respect of the Holy Prophet, punishable with life imprisonment or death).

First court decision: On 20th December 2012, he was sentenced to death.

Place of detention: Talagang/Chakwal

Soofi Mohammad ISHAQ

Charge: Claiming to be a prophet

Statement of the defendant: The accusations are purely motivated by his affiliation to Sufism.

Article of the criminal/civil/administrative code or law: Pakistan Penal Code Sections 295-A (deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs), and 295-C (use of derogatory remarks, etc., in respect of the Holy Prophet, punishable with life imprisonment or death).

First court decision: On 20th December 2012, he was sentenced to death.

Place of detention: Talagang/Chakwal

Anwar KENNETH

Date of birth: 1941

Place of residence: Karachi

Date of arrest: 25th September 2001

Charges: Anwar was accused of blasphemy.

Statement of the defendant: He was distributing pamphlets containing bible verses.

Article of the criminal/civil/administrative code or law: Pakistan Penal Code Section 295-C (use of derogatory remarks, etc., in respect of the Holy Prophet, punishable with life imprisonment or death).

First court decision: On 15th June 2002 he was sentenced to death.

Place of detention: New Central Jail Multan (Multan Jail)

Other information: He was known to be suffering from mental health problems when the alleged offence occurred.

Muhammad Shafeeq LATIF

Charge: Blasphemy

First court decision: On 18th June 2008 he was sentenced to death.

Place of detention: Sialkot, Punjab

LIAQAT

Charge: Blasphemy

Article of the criminal/civil/administrative code or law: Pakistan Penal Code Section 295-C (use of derogatory remarks, etc., in respect of the Holy Prophet, punishable with life imprisonment or death).

First court decision: On 21st March 2006, he was sentenced to death.

Place of detention: District Jail Faisalabad

Savan MASIH

Age: 26 years

Place of residence: Karachi

Date and place of arrest: He was arrested in March 2013 in Karachi.

Charges: Sawan Masih was accused of blasphemy when he engaged in a dialogue with his Muslim friend.

Statement of the defendant: The complainant only filed a case as part of a ploy by a businessman to drive Christians away from the Colony they live in Karachi.

Article of the criminal/civil/administrative code: Pakistan Penal Code Section 295-C (use of derogatory remarks, etc., in respect of the Holy Prophet, punishable with life imprisonment or death).

First court decision: On 27th April 2014, he was sentenced to death.

Other information: At the time of the arrest, 180 Christian-owned homes and properties in Lahore's Joseph Colony were torched, but a court later freed 133 Muslim suspects.

Wajihul HASSAN aka Murshid MASIH

Charge: Publishing a letter to the editor which contained blasphemous content.

Statement of the defendant: He had published a letter he had received without checking its content.

Article of the criminal/civil/administrative code or law: Pakistan Penal Code Sections 295-A (deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs) 295-C (use of derogatory remarks, etc., in respect of the Holy Prophet, punishable with life imprisonment or death), 298 (uttering words, etc., with deliberate intent to wound religious feelings) and 298-A (use of derogatory remarks, etc. in respect of holy personages).

First court decision: On 3rd March 1999, he was sentenced to death.

Place of detention: District Jail Sheikhpura.

Other info: In March 2001, a judicial inquiry into the *Frontier Post* case determined that the offending letter was published due to negligence and not to any malicious intent. Though, provincial authorities decided to proceed with the criminal prosecution against him.

RAFLQ

Charge: Blasphemy

First court decision: On 2nd February 2011 he was sentenced to death.

Place of detention: Jalalpur Peerwala

Abdul SATTAR

Charge: Blasphemy

First court decision: On 22nd June 2011 he was sentenced to death.

Place of detention: Larkana

Muhammad SHAFIQ

Charge: Passing derogatory remarks about Prophet and burning Quran.

Article of the criminal/civil/administrative code or law: Pakistan Penal Code Sections 295-B (defiling, etc. of the Holy Qur'an), and 295-C (use of derogatory remarks, etc., in respect of the Holy Prophet, punishable with life imprisonment or death).

First court decision: On 17th March 2006, he was sentenced to death and six months in prison and fined.

Place of detention: District Jail Sahiwa

Hazrat Ali SHAH

Age: 28 years

Charge: Blasphemy

Statement of the defendant: A disagreement with a neighbour is at the root of the accusation.

Article of the criminal/civil/administrative code or law: Pakistan Penal Code Section 295 (injuring or defiling place of worship, with intent to insult the religion of any class).

First Court decision: On 15th December 2012, he was sentenced to death and ten years imprisonment.

Place of detention: Barenis Village, KhyberPakhtunkhwa

Life imprisonment

Christians

Masqood AHMAD

Age: 52 years

Place of residence: District Narowal

Date and place of arrest: Arrested in Sambrial

Charges: Masqood Ahmad was accused of blasphemy by his wife and daughter for throwing the Holy Quran on the floor.

Statement of the defendant: According to Masqood Ahmed he had prohibited his daughter from wearing makeup before reciting the Holy Quran and they took revenge on him.

Article of the criminal/civil/administrative code: Pakistan Penal Code Section 295-C (use of derogatory remarks, etc., in respect of the Holy Prophet, punishable with life imprisonment or death).

Last court decision: Sentenced to life imprisonment and the judge imposed a fine of Rs. 20,000.

Place of detention: Sahiwal Jail

Other information: Masqood Ahmad was also known for having disciplined his wife and daughter for alleged illicit relations with men residing in the same locality. Therefore, Masqood Ahmad's wife and daughter became annoyed and accused Masqood Ahmad of throwing the Holy Quran to the floor.

Rehmat ALI

Age: 80 years

Place of residence: Mtala Colony

Date and place of arrest: He was arrested in Mtala Colony.

Charges: He was accused of blasphemy.

Article of the criminal/civil/administrative code: Pakistan Penal Code Sections 295-A (deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs), and 295-B (defiling, etc. of the Holy Qur'an).

First court decision: Sentenced to life imprisonment.

Place of detention: District Jail, Faisalabad

Other information: He is a psychiatric patient.

Muhammad ASLAM

Charge: Vandalizing a poster with Quran verses.

Statement of the defendant: The defendant was only taking a poster down after a celebration of the Prophet's birthday.

Last court decision: On 8th April 2010, he was sentenced to life in prison.

Place of detention: New Central Jail Multan

Shams ud DIN

Charge: Writing a blasphemous letter

First court decision: 1st July 2005

Place of detention: District Jail Sahiwal

Malik Mohammad FAROOQ

Charge: Blasphemy. He was allegedly tearing up a banner inscribed with Muhammad's name.

Statement of defense: He was framed in the case since he had a dispute with the management of a mosque adjacent to his shop.

Last court decision: On 8th May 2014, he was sentenced to life in prison.

Imran GHAFOOR

Age: 28 years

Place of residence: Hajavery Town, Faisalabad

Date and place of arrest: He was arrested on 1st July 2009 in Faisalabad.

Charges: Imran Ghafoor was accused of burning the Holy Quran and also some holy papers in front of his shop.

Statement of the defendant: The blasphemy allegations arose after business jealousy and rivalry. Imran's business flourished whilst the accusers' businesses were not doing so well.

Article of the criminal/civil/administrative code: Pakistan Penal Code Sections 295-A (deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs), and 295-B (defiling, etc. of the Holy Qur'an).

First court decision: On 1st July 2011, he was sentenced to life imprisonment.

Place of detention: Central Faisalabad prison.

Muhammad ISHAQ

Charge: Blasphemy

Statement of the defendant: Members of a rival faction brought false charges against him in an attempt to take control of the Pir Faisal Shah shrine.

Article of the criminal/civil/administrative code: Pakistan Penal Code Section 295-C (use of derogatory remarks, etc., in respect of the Holy Prophet, punishable with life imprisonment or death).

First court decision: A district court in Punjab province sentenced him to death.

Last court decision: On 5th January 2011, he was sentenced to life in prison.

Place of detention: Uch Sharif, Mohallah Qadirabad

Other info: Ishaq has been a U.S. resident for 30 years, and was visiting the Pir Faisal Shah shrine when an individual named Asadullah accused him of claiming to be a prophet and attempting to get people to worship him.

Manzarul Haq Shah JAHAN

Charge: Uttering blasphemous remarks against the Holy Prophet

Article of the criminal/civil/administrative code or law: Pakistan Penal Code Section 295-C (use of derogatory remarks, etc., in respect of the Holy Prophet, punishable with life imprisonment or death).

First Court decision: On 17th March 2012, he was sentenced to life in prison.

Place of detention: Kasur

Abdul KAREEM

Age: 24 years

Place of residence: Saddar Farooqabad

Date and place of arrest: He was arrested on 15th October 2006 in Saddar Farooqabad.

Charges: Blasphemy

Statement of the defendant: The allegations of the complainant (Mushtaq) for blasphemy allegedly took place whilst he was in jail (false accusations). According to Abdul Kareem, Mushtaq was infuriated after being severely injured by Kareem, and he wanted to take revenge on him.

Article of the criminal/civil/administrative code or law: Pakistan Penal Code Section 295-B (defiling, etc. of the Holy Qur'an).

First court decision: He was sentenced to life imprisonment with rigorous imprisonment (hard labour) on 21st June 2007.

Place of detention: District Jail Sahiwal

Arif MAHDI

Age: 32 years

Place of residence: District Multan

Date and place of arrest: 8th April 2006, Multan.

Charges: Arif Mahdi was accused of blasphemy when he found Islamic booklets on the ground while he was painting a wall of the mosque.

Statement of the defendant: He claimed that the headman of the village (Malik Mehmood) took advantage of the situation and made a false accusation.

Article of the criminal/civil/administrative code or law: Pakistan Penal Code Section 295-B (defiling, etc. of the Holy Qur'an).

First court decision: He was sentenced to life imprisonment on 20th October 2006.

Place of detention: New Central Jail Multan

Imran MASHI

Age: 27 years

Place of residence: Faisalabad suburb of Hajvairy

Charge: Burning the Quran

Statement of the defendant: He was burning an old Arabic textbook (not the Quran) with many other old or worn out texts from his bookshop.

Article of the criminal/civil/administrative code or law: Pakistan Penal Code Sections 295-A (deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs), and 295-C (use of derogatory remarks, etc., in respect of the Holy Prophet, punishable with life imprisonment or death).

Last court decision: On 1st January 2010, he was sentenced to 10 years labour, life in prison and fined.

Place of detention: District Jail Faisalabad

Nabeel MASHI

Age: 16 years

Place of residence: Chak 66, Bhai Pheru, District Kasur, Punjab Province.

Date and place of arrest: 20/21st September 2016, Chak 66, Bhai Pheru, District Kasur, Punjab Province

Charges: Blasphemy

Article of the criminal code: Section 295 (“injuring or defiling place of worship, with intent to insult the religion of any class”), 295A (“deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious and feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs”) of the Pakistan Penal Code. Possible death sentence or life imprisonment.

Duration of detention: A week or two as of the 29th September)

Source: <http://www.gospelherald.com/articles/66772/20160925/pakistan-christian-boy-could-be-put-to-death-for-blasphemous-facebook-post.htm>

Muhammad MUSHTAQ, alias MASTA

Age: 32 years

Place of residence: Multan

Date and place of arrest: Arrested in Makhdoom Rasheed

Charges: Muhammad Mushtaq was accused of disgracing the Holy Quran.

Article of the criminal/civil/administrative code or law: Pakistan Penal Code Section 295-B (defiling, etc. of the Holy Qur'an), and Article 7 of the Anti-Terrorism Act (outlines the punishment for acts of terrorism, which lists the mandated punishments for terrorism acts depending on casualties, injuries, intent, kidnapping, intent, location (including attacks specifically on religious locations, or towards religious groups), tactic or weapon. The various sentences range from six months to a death sentence).

Last court decision: On 1st August 2011, he was sentenced to life imprisonment.

Place of detention: New Central Jail Multan

Sajjad MASHI

Age: 30 years

Place of residence: The district of Pakpattan, in the province of Punjab

Charge: Sending blasphemous text messages

First court decision: He was sentenced to life imprisonment and a fine of 200 thousand rupees by a court of first instance in Gojra.

Last court decision: On 13th July 2013, he was sentenced to life in prison.

Place of detention: Station City Gojra

Other info: On 18th December 2011, Malik Muhammad Tariq Saleem, received some blasphemous text messages from an unknown phone. The next day, Tariq reported the incident to the police in Gojra who registered a complaint for blasphemy, then immediately indicting and arresting Sajjad Gill. His conviction came as a surprise as there was absolutely no evidence or accusations presented against him in court. This is the first case of blasphemy via SMS recorded by the police in Pakistan.

Inayat RASOOL

Age: 27 years

Place of residence: Zafarwal in Shakargarh Tehsil

Date and place of arrest: 23th June 2006, Zafarwal Narowal.

Charges: Inayat Rasool was accused of desecrating the Holy Quran by throwing the Holy Quran into the canal.

Statement of the defendant: He was attending a carnival of Chanpeer, and on his way home while crossing a canal bridge, he saw some pages of the Holy Quran in dirty water.

Article of the criminal/civil/administrative code: Pakistan Penal Code Section 295-B (defiling, etc. of the Holy Qur'an).

First court decision: He was sentenced to life imprisonment with rigorous imprisonment (hard labour) on 29th December 2008.

Place of detention: District Jail Sahiwal

Muhammad SAFDAR

Age: 51 years

Place of residence: Kabirwala, District Khanewal

Date and place of arrest: 1st October 2010 in Kabirwala, Khanewal.

Charges: Muhammad Safdar was accused of blasphemy.

Statement of the defendant: Safdar's wife had a dispute with the wife of Muhammad Abdullah, a neighbour of Muhammad Safdar. That led Muhammad Abdullah to falsely accuse him of blasphemy.

Article of the criminal/civil/administrative code: Pakistan Penal Code Section 295-B (defiling, etc. of the Holy Qur'an).

Last court decision: He was sentenced to life imprisonment with rigorous imprisonment on 17th January 2011.

Place of detention: New Central jail Multan

Muhammad SHAFI

Age: 58 years

Place of residence: Muzaffar Garh

Date and place of arrest: He was arrested in Dera Deer Panah.

Charges: Muhammad Shafi was accused of blasphemy because he removed a poster with printed verses of the Holy Quran and of trampling it with his foot.

First court decision: He was sentenced to life imprisonment and a fine.

Place of detention: New Central Jail Multan

Muhammad SHAHZAD

Age: 32 years

Place of residence: College Road, Gujranwala.

Date and place of arrest: He was arrested in Garjakh-Gujranwala.

Charges: Muhammad Shahzad was accused of blasphemy.

Statement of the defendant: Shahzad was working at his mill shop when he saw Mouhammad Yousaf, a mentally ill individual, burning the Holy Quran. He rushed to stop him, but before he arrived too late. Shahzad took the burnt pages and tried to rescue others from the flames, but people who saw him mistakenly assumed that he was an accomplice.

Article of the criminal/civil/administrative code: Pakistan Penal Code Section 295-B (defiling, etc. of the Holy Qur'an).

First court decision: He was sentenced to life imprisonment on 18th January 2011.

Shamas UD DIN

Age: 35 years

Place of residence: Gondal Ghari, Sialkot

Date and place of arrest: He was arrested in Marala.

Charges: Accused of blasphemy.

Statement of the defendant: He was framed for blasphemy in an attempt to stop him from reporting an act of loan fraud.

Article of the criminal/civil/administrative code: Pakistan Penal Code Sections 295-A (deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs), and 295-C (use of derogatory remarks, etc., in respect of the Holy Prophet, punishable with life imprisonment or death).

First court decision: He was sentenced to life imprisonment on 5th June 2010, and fined.

Place of detention: District Jail Sahiwal

Other information: He is the father of three children. He has developed psychiatric problems.

Liaquat USMAN

Place of residence: Nabipura Sheikhupura district, Punjab

Date of arrest: 25th May 2016

Charges: Blasphemy. He was tagged in a Facebook post from over a year before the arrest that was deemed to be blasphemous.

Other information: Usman entered into an altercation with local Muslim boys who were teasing female students. As a result, a complaint was lodged against him of blasphemy.

Source: <http://www.outlookindia.com/newswire/story/christian-man-arrested-for-posting-blasphemous-messages-in-pak/941376>

Muhammad YOUSAF

Age: 50 years

Place of residence: Gujranwala

Date and place of arrest: 24th March 2003 in Garjakh-Gujranwala.

Charges: Muhammad Yousaf was accused of blasphemy for burning the Holy Quran.

Article of the criminal/civil/administrative code: Pakistan Penal Code Section 295-B (defiling, etc. of the Holy Qur'an).

First court decision: Sentenced to life imprisonment on 18th January 2011.

Place of detention: Sahiwal Jail

Other information: He is mentally ill.

Asif

Age: 31 years

Place of residence: Village of Machikay in Gujranwala

Date and place of arrest: 18th June 2006 in Ferozewala, Gujranwala

Charges: Asif was accused of burning the pages of Holy Quran.

Statement of the defendant: He was burning waste papers and mistakenly burned a few pages of the Holy Quran.

Article of the criminal/civil/administrative code: Pakistan Penal Code Section 295-B (defiling, etc. of the Holy Qur'an).

First court decision: He was sentenced to life imprisonment with rigorous imprisonment (hard labour) on 31st January 2008.

Place of detention: District Jail Sahiwal

Other information: He is currently mentally ill.

Prison Terms

Christians

Hajaj BIN

Date and place of arrest: August 2015, Gujrat district

Charges: Blasphemy. He made posters that included a word that translated similar to "apostle", and pamphlets to commemorate the death of one of their fathers that included the word "prophet".

Statement of the defendants: "We [Christians] have already apologized to our enraged Muslim brethren for this misunderstanding and asked for forgiveness, but they have rejected our apology and pressed the police to arrest the organizers," they said.

First court decision: On 20th June 2016, the Gujranwala Anti-terrorism court sentenced him to six years in prison.

Other information:

Source: <http://www.christiansinpakistan.com/gujranwala-an-anti-terrorism-court-acquits-five-christians-of-blasphemy-charges-sentences-two-to-imprisonment/>,
<http://www.realcourage.org/2015/10/pakistan-christians-in-prison/>,
<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2016/07/4538054/>

Pastor Aftab GILL

Date and place of arrest: August 2015, Gujrat district

Charges: Blasphemy. He made posters that included a word that translated similar to "apostle", and pamphlets to commemorate the death of one of their fathers that included the word "prophet".

Statement of the defendants: “We [Christians] have already apologized to our enraged Muslim brethren for this misunderstanding and asked for forgiveness, but they have rejected our apology and pressed the police to arrest the organizers,” they said.

First court decision: On 20th June 2016, the Gujranwala Anti-terrorism court sentenced him to six years in prison.

Other information:

Source: <http://www.christiansinpakistan.com/gujranwala-an-anti-terrorism-court-acquits-five-christians-of-blasphemy-charges-sentences-two-to-imprisonment/>,
<http://www.realcourage.org/2015/10/pakistan-christians-in-prison/>,
<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2016/07/4538054/>

Ahmadis

Tahir Mahdi IMTIAZ

Place of residence: Lahore, Punjab

Date and place of arrest: 30th March 2015

Charges: Shakoor was charged with propagating the Ahmadiyya Muslim faith.

Article of criminal/civil/administrative code: Pakistan Penal Code Sections 295-A (deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs), 295-B (defiling, etc. of the Holy Qur’an), and 295-C (use of derogatory remarks, etc., in respect of the Holy Prophet, punishable with life imprisonment or death), and 1997 Anti-Terrorism Act, Article 8-W (stirring up ‘religious hatred’ and ‘sectarianism’).

Other information: Printer of the Ahmadiyya monthly Ansarullah. He was denied bail and due to the later terrorism charges he is being tried by an anti-terror court.

Source: <https://www.persecutionofahmadis.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/News-Report-April-2016.pdf>

Abdul SHAKOOR

Age: 80 years

Date and place of arrest: He was arrested in his optical store on 2nd December 2015

Charges: Shakoor was charged with propagating the Ahmadiyya Muslim faith.

Article of the criminal/civil/administrative code: Pakistan Penal Code Section 298-C (person of Qadiani group, etc., calling himself a Muslim or preaching or propagating his faith), and for stirring up ‘religious hatred’ and ‘sectarianism’, a crime under the 1997 Anti-Terrorism Act.

First court decision: On 2nd January 2016, he was sentenced to five years imprisonment under Penal Code Section 298-C and three years under the Anti-Terrorism Act, with the sentences to run concurrently.

Other information: He was arrested after he was falsely accused of selling an Ahmadiyya commentary on the Holy Qur'an, among other publications, to an undercover police officer. His store manager Mazhar Sipra, a Shi'a, was also arrested and sentenced to five years under the Anti-Terrorism Act.

Source: <http://www.uscirf.gov/news-room/press-releases/pakistan-uscirf-calls-the-immediate-release-abdul-shakoor-and-the-dropping>

Qamar Ahmed TAHIR

Place of residence: Jhelum, Punjab

Date and place of arrest: 20th November 2015, Jhelum Punjab

Charges: Desecrating the Holy Qur'an

Articles of criminal/civil/administrative code: Pakistan Penal Code Sections 295-B (defiling, etc. of the Holy Qur'an).

Other information: Tahir was the head of security at a chipboard factory. A fellow worker at the factory accused him of throwing copies of the Qur'an into the boiler. Following his arrest, a mob burned the factory and Ahmadi places of worship.

Source: <https://www.persecutionofahmadis.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/News-Report-May-2016.pdf>, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1221273>, <http://www.thefridaytimes.com/tft/the-fire-of-intolerance/>

Sunni

Jahanzaib KHASKHELI

Place of residence: Tando Adam, Sindh Province

Date and place of arrest: On 20th June 2016, in Tando Adam

Charges: Blasphemy

Other information: Khaskheli, a shopkeeper, was selling shoes that featured the "Om" symbol, which local Hindu leaders claimed was insulting to their religion. Authorities are also investigating the supplier and manufacturer of the shoes.

Source: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/06/pakistan-arrests-muslim-man-blasphemy-laws-160620151633846.html>

Shia

Mazhar SIPRA

Date and place of arrest: Arrested in his optical store on 2nd December 2015

Charges: Sipra was charged with propagating the Ahmadiyya Muslim faith, a crime under the Pakistani Penal Code, and for stirring up ‘religious hatred’ and ‘sectarianism’, a crime under the 1997 Anti-Terrorism Act.

Article of the criminal/civil/administrative code: Anti-Terrorism Act, Pakistani Penal Code.

First court decision: Sentenced to five years under the Anti-Terrorism Act.

Other information: He is the manager of Abdul Shakoor’s (listed above) optical store.

Source: <http://www.uscirf.gov/news-room/press-releases/pakistan-uscirf-calls-the-immediate-release-abdul-shakoor-and-the-dropping>