



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on May 3, 2013

## **Pakistani Doctor on Hunger Strike, Obama's Disregard Called a "Disgrace"**

The Pakistani doctor who reportedly helped the CIA locate Osama bin Laden is on a hunger strike to protest mistreatment by officials of the prison where he is being held.

Relatives of Dr. Shakil Afridi told reporters that they have been denied access to Afridi since August of 2012. Afridi was arrested by Pakistani law enforcement for his alleged links to the CIA and was charged and punished under the Pakistani constitution and sentenced to prison for 33 years.



Afridi ran a vaccination program in that city that was allegedly just a front for a CIA operation to obtain a DNA sample that would verify bin Laden's presence in the city. A senior CIA official [told the \*New York Times\*](#) that the effort ultimately was unsuccessful.

Although he was arrested for his alleged participation in the Osama bin Laden search operation, at his trial the government failed to prove his violation of the statute he was charged under, but on May 23, 2012, he was convicted nonetheless.

Additionally, the court that sentenced Afridi is only authorized to impose maximum sentences of three years, making the 33-year punishment given to Dr. Afridi illegal.

While the Obama administration has ignored Dr. Afridi's case and refused to speak out against his harsh treatment, others in Washington are aware of the disgrace and have tried to right the wrong.

In [August 2012, Senator Rand Paul \(R-Ky.\) sought to to stall the confirmation](#) of President Obama's nominee to fill the post of U.S. ambassador to Pakistan. Paul wanted to stall the confirmation of the U.S. ambassador to Pakistan until that nation — which is deemed a U.S. ally in the War on Terror — released Dr. Afridi.

This was not Senator Paul's first foray into the fight for the doctor's freedom. In a conference call with reporters in July 2012, Paul reiterated his call to withhold aid to Pakistan pending Afridi's release.

All of Senator Paul's attempts to assist Dr. Afridi were futile and now the doctor is in poor health with little hope of relief — judicial or otherwise.

Dr. Afridi has friends in the House of Representatives, as well.

During a session of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs last week, Congressman Dana Rohrabacher (R-Calif.) renewed the call for aid to Pakistan to be denied "until Dr. Afridi, the man who helped us bring to justice Osama bin Laden, is freed from a Pakistani dungeon." Rohrabacher doesn't hold out much hope for a happy ending, however:

I would advise not to get your hopes up too high, because until the moment that Dr. Afridi is released and is outside the jurisdiction along with his family, we do not know whether or not some radical Islamic fanatic will pound on the table and force a reversal of this strategy, if this is indeed



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the strategy of Pakistan right now.

Rohrabacher continued: “This report is certainly better than a report that would indicate that they’re hardening their stand, and they’re going to make him an example. But these brutal men who run Pakistan would not in any way consider compromising on the decision they made to go get him.”

“There are good people in the Muslim world, and if they think we are just going to abandon them, we don’t have a chance. It’s only through them that we have a chance to stand up and defeat Islamic terrorism,” Rohrabacher added.

Counterterrorism expert and retired Marine Lieutenant Colonel Bill Cowan agrees with this assessment, telling [Breitbart News](#) on Wednesday:

From a pure intelligence perspective, anybody who is providing clandestine intelligence support to us, any assets who are agents, have to be nervous when they see how we threw Dr. Afridi under the bus for political purposes. We would look as though we were mean and tough in our pursuit of Osama Bin Laden, but in fact, we used the doctor — which is normal for intelligence operations — but then we exposed him, and we’re not working hard to get him out of jail. It’s like he didn’t exist. It’s totally disgraceful.

Cowan added, “People who work for us around the world take note of things like this.”

In the Breitbart article, former Navy SEAL and chairman of Special Operations for America Ryan Zinke described Afridi’s incarceration as another in a long list of examples of “America’s failed foreign policy.” Zinke believes that President Obama’s failure to interpose in the case puts “our future critical intelligence capability at risk by not acting in the case of Dr. Shakil Afridi. Who in their right mind would risk so much with no insurance that we will be there when needed?”

For now, Dr. Afridi remains in Peshawar Central Jail, allegedly without access to an attorney or to his family.

Sadly, although a spokesman for former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton released a statement last May saying, “Dr. Afridi should never have been locked up in the first place,” there has been little or no official action by the Obama administration to convince Islamabad to intervene in the high-profile case.

Meanwhile, attorneys for Afridi have appealed his sentence and report that a ruling by the higher court on that appeal could be handed down any day.

“The decision is likely to be announced on May 3 but we don’t know what it would be, but legally we are on stronger side on the verdict,” Afridi’s lead counsel [told Dawn.com](#).

In [a letter published on his House website](#), Congressman Rohrabacher promises to keep the pressure on until the doctor is released: “We must not abandon the hero who helped bring to justice, Osama bin Laden, the murderer of 3000 innocent Americans on 9/11.”

Rohrabacher added: “In the next two weeks, efforts will be made behind the scenes and in public view to pressure decision makers in the Executive and Legislative branches to do what’s right in order [to] save Dr. Afridi.”

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