



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on March 8, 2019

Pakistani Christian Woman Acquitted of Blasphemy Kept From Leaving Country

A Christian woman who was acquitted of blasphemy by the Pakistani Supreme Court remains trapped in the country, and her health is failing, reports London's [Daily Mail](#).

Asia Bibi, 53, was accused of blaspheming the Prophet Mohammed in 2009 after an altercation with some Muslim women with whom she was picking berries. After enduring numerous insults and being told she should convert to Islam, Bibi got fed up and spoke her mind. "I'm not going to convert," she [said](#). "I believe in my religion and in Jesus Christ, who died on the cross for the sins of mankind. What did your Prophet Mohammed ever do to save mankind? And why should it be me that converts instead of you?"



For this she was arrested and convicted of blasphemy, which carries a death sentence in Pakistan. She languished on death row for eight years only to have her conviction overturned by the country's high court last October, an event that led to violent street protests from Islamist hardliners. The prime minister prevented her from leaving the country while the decision was appealed. Finally, in January, a three-judge panel [affirmed Bibi's acquittal](#), with the chief justice charging that the case against Bibi was riddled with false evidence and perjured testimony.

"The image of Islam we are showing to the world gives me much grief and sorrow," he said.

That appeared to be the end of Bibi's ordeal. According to one of her friends, Bibi said at the time, "Now after nine years it is confirmed that I am free and I will be going to hug my daughters," who are already in Canada, where Bibi and her husband have also been offered asylum. (Bibi had first sought asylum in Great Britain but was [denied](#) it, supporters say, because of fears of unrest among the country's large Muslim population.)

Five weeks later, however, Bibi's departure from Pakistan is "no longer imminent," according to the *Mail*.



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British officials say the Pakistani government has “confirmed that Asia Bibi is free to make her own decisions and to leave Pakistan.”

But in reality, senior figures within the military — which has close ties to extremists — are trying to stop her going.

Mrs. Bibi and her husband do not even know their own whereabouts, and foreign diplomats believe the delay in processing the asylum paperwork is deliberate. Even Canadian envoys have struggled to contact Mrs. Bibi.

A source told the newspaper that Bibi is suffering from “extremely low blood pressure” and “is not getting the medical treatment she needs.”

“Everyone is very worried,” the source said. “She won her appeal and was supposed to be out of Pakistan by now. Even though the government says she can leave, the army has all the power in this case.”

“They are in control of her. They are fearful about getting a negative press if she speaks out about her experiences — but they will get an even worse press if she dies in protective custody.”

Bibi’s situation is grim indeed, but no grimmer than what she faced all those years on death row. Her faith pulled her through that, and then she was shockingly — one might even say miraculously — acquitted. Now she needs one more miracle; and if anyone can supply one, it is, as she said, “Jesus Christ, who died on the cross for the sins of mankind.”

Image of Asia Bibi: Screenshot of [a YouTube video by Rome Reports](#)



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