

Asif Pervaiz

Country: Pakistan

Arrested: 2013
Charge: Sending 'blasphemous' text messages
Sentence: Death



Arrest and background

Asif Pervaiz is married to Marilyn and they have twins. In 2013, when the babies were only 17 days old, Asif was arrested and charged with allegedly sending 'blasphemous' text messages. In 2020, he received a death sentence, and immediately Marilyn and her children were forced to go into hiding to protect themselves from militant attacks.

Asif was moved 100 miles away from his family to Faisal Abad Jail. However, our partners have been able to give Marilyn assistance, providing help with the financial burden of travel so she can visit her husband, as well as help to provide for her basic needs. "When I go there, I sometimes forget what I wanted to say and ask him and he also in excitement doesn't know what to say so he writes things down on his hand so he can remember," Marilyn told us. She is only able to make the journey to the prison once a month and has been looking after their four children on her own, since Asif's arrest. "When you or your husband are under a charge of blasphemy in Pakistan nobody will stand with you. Everybody abandoned me. I was helpless and hopeless," she said.

Asif's lawyer, Saiful Malook, who also represented Asia Bibi (who was sentenced to death for blasphemy in 2010 and released in 2018) said the prosecution's case was so weak he could not understand why the judge had ruled against his client. "The worst thing in blasphemy cases is that the accused are left to rot in jail for years till their innocence is finally proved," he commented. Since June 2023 there have been four different court hearings. Marilyn is very frustrated at the lack of progress within the judicial system, some of which is due to intimidation of the legal officials from extremists.

Naturally, the whole experience has affected Marilyn and the children, mentally and emotionally. However, Asif appears to remain positive despite his circumstances, and regularly tells Marilyn, "Don't worry, I'll be back soon. I am not afraid of the situation because my living God is with me.

"My favourite verse is in Psalm 23, 'Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for You are with me.' That verse is always helping me because I am going through the valley of shadow. And I always have found my God and my Lord with me. He is standing alongside me, so He is my refuge and my help."

Asif Pervaiz has some medical issues in the jail but, our partners insist, that he always requests believers to continue to pray, believing that one day he will see his children at home.

Pray:

1. Asif will be moved closer to Lahore.
2. Asif would be released as a matter of urgency.
3. Asif would be protected by God in prison.
4. Marilyn would be given strength as she brings up the children on her own.



Marilyn with RI Partner showing cards from supporters

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