

## 'Islam insult' woman facing death

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A Pakistani Christian woman condemned to death for blasphemy against Islam, has tearfully pleaded her innocence and asked that her life be spared.

The case of Asia Bibi, 45, has drawn appeals from Pope Benedict XVI and human rights groups to free her. She was sentenced to death earlier this month and has been in prison for the last 18 months.

Mrs Bibi **has appeared** in a televised interview at her prison, protesting her innocence to reporters and maintaining the case stemmed from a personal dispute.

"It was just the outcome of a rivalry. I **would** never even **think** of blasphemy," she said weeping. "I **have** small children. For God's sake, please set me free."

The verdict has drawn attention to Pakistan's blasphemy laws, which critics say are used to persecute Christian and other minorities and fan extremism. They are also often exploited to settle personal grudges.

Shahbaz Bhatti, Pakistan's minister for minority affairs, said that President Asif Ali Zardari has asked for a report on the case.

"The president has taken notice of this case ... he is concerned on this issue," Mr Bhatti said, adding that Zardari has the power to pardon her even ahead of the court appeal.

Her husband said Mrs Bibi's original spat was in June 2009 with a group of Muslim women who refused to drink from the same water bowl as a Christian when they **were picking** fruit in an orchard in their village of Attian Wali, west of Lahore in Punjab province.

After Mrs Bibi argued with them, the women told the local imam that Mrs Bibi had insulted the Prophet Mohammed. The imam **told** the police and she was arrested. A local court sentenced her to death on November 8.

Dozens of Pakistanis - many of them Christians - are sentenced to death each year for blasphemy. Most cases are thrown out by higher courts and no executions have been carried out, Mr Bhatti said, but the law is being examined to prevent what he said is widespread abuse by religious extremists and opportunists.

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**Find opposites:**

Absolved: \_\_\_\_\_

Life: \_\_\_\_\_

Guilt: \_\_\_\_\_

Majority: \_\_\_\_\_

Answered: \_\_\_\_\_

Accepted: \_\_\_\_\_

Lower: \_\_\_\_\_

**Find synonyms:**

Liberate: \_\_\_\_\_

Condemned: \_\_\_\_\_

Jail: \_\_\_\_\_

Dispute: \_\_\_\_\_

Crying: \_\_\_\_\_

Kids: \_\_\_\_\_

Preoccupied: \_\_\_\_\_

1) "Besides rights and freedoms, there are also "duties". Write the words "**RIGHT**"; "**DUTY**" and "**FREEDOM**" after its meaning:

Something people should do because it is what is expected. - \_\_\_\_\_

Something people are entitled to and are allowed to. - \_\_\_\_\_

Something people can do because they are free to choose. - \_\_\_\_\_