

# PRISONERS OF faith

## Dr Robin Sardar Country: Pakistan

Christian doctor Robin Sardar is currently imprisoned in Pakistan, with his family forced into hiding after a local Muslim accused him of insulting Islam. Tensions first arose between Dr Sardar and a local Muslim six months ago, when the man had visited the doctor's clinic. The man had shaken hands with fellow-Muslims but had refused to shake Dr Sardar's hand. *'It's an insult to shake hands with a Christian,'* he said, according to our partner in Pakistan. Some weeks later, Dr Sardar prevented the same Muslim from setting up a stall in front of his clinic. The man then filed a blasphemy case against the doctor. When local Muslims heard of the charges they used a loudspeaker to call for his death, fuelling an angry crowd to gather near the family home, armed with sticks and kerosene. Witnesses also claimed that the assembled crowd began hurling stones and bricks. *'They were chanting anti-Christianity slogans ... I thought I was going to be killed'* said his wife Veenas, who remains in hiding with her five daughters and one son amid fears of more violence.

Dr Robin's daughter, Amelia, said she started crying when she heard the Muslim mob shouting abuse. *'We started reading the Bible and prayed to God to keep us safe and secure. Daddy should be released and we should be given protection'*, she said. *'I am supposed to sit an examination but I am too scared. I anticipate attacks by angry Muslims who know that I am daughter of a man who has been accused of blasphemy.'* One of Dr Sardar's relatives said that the mob would have killed him had the police not intervened. Since then the religious extremists have organised demonstrations demanding that Dr Sardar be publicly hanged. Neighbours have allegedly told Veenas that members of local Islamist groups have also threatened to kill her husband if he is acquitted.

Through our international network of missions, Release International serves persecuted Christians in 30 countries around the world by supporting pastors and Christian prisoners, and their families; supplying Christian literature and Bibles; and working for justice.

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**EMAIL ALERT**  
**for prayer & action**  
**JUNE 2008**



Dr Robin Sardar, 55, who denies the charges, was arrested in Punjab's district of Hafizabad under Pakistan's controversial blasphemy laws and transferred to Punjab's Gujranwala Central Jail on May 4. Christian lawyers representing Dr Sardar are hoping that a fair trial will be possible. The blasphemy legislation, with its open-ended and vague definition of the word 'blasphemy', is frequently used unjustly against the Christian minority in Pakistan. Release International's partners in Pakistan have visited Dr Sardar in prison to encourage and pray with him. They report that currently he is in good health and his faith remains strong.

### PLEASE PRAY

- ▶ That God will protect Dr Sardar and his family from extremist reprisals
- ▶ That the charges against Dr Sardar will be dropped
- ▶ For the repeal of Pakistan's blasphemy laws, which are often misused to persecute Christians

*'But while Peter was in prison, the church prayed very earnestly for him'*  
Acts 12:5

**release** INTERNATIONAL  
THE VOICE OF THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

**Hebrews 13:3 'Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow-prisoners, and those who are ill-treated as if you yourselves were suffering'**

## **SEND A MESSAGE OF ENCOURAGEMENT**

Please send a card or short letter of encouragement to Dr Robin Sardar. Assure him that you are praying for him and for his family.

**'God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.'** Psalm 46:1

**When writing please do not mention Release International, or advance your political opinion or include anything which could be insulting to the authorities. Do not send money**

Dr Sardar can receive cards or letters c/o the following address:

**PO Box # 478  
GPO  
Lahore  
Pakistan**

## **You may also write a letter on his behalf to**

**His Excellency Wajid Shamsul Hassan  
High Commission for the Islamic Republic of Pakistan  
35-36 Lowndes Square  
London  
SW1X 9JN**

Your Excellency,

May I respectfully request your attention in the case of Dr. Robin Sardar who was arrested in Punjab's district of Hafizabad under Pakistan's controversial blasphemy laws and transferred to Gujranwala Central Jail on May 4 2008. The story of his case has been circulated around the world and thousands of Christians around the world are concerned about it.

Strong claims have been made concerning his innocence and there are indications that the complaint against him was fabricated. His family are at risk because of the bad feeling against him. Given that other Christians in similar circumstances have suffered years of detention before finally being acquitted, I ask you to intervene to ensure that the charges are investigated swiftly and that, in the absence of clear and strong evidence, the case against him is dropped.

I am delighted at the recent decision taken by the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) to restore Pakistan's position in the Council of the Commonwealth and Pakistan's re-election to the UN Human Rights Council. I also acknowledge and appreciate the recent statement from your Prime Minister that the Government and the people of Pakistan believe in fundamental freedoms.

Here is an opportunity to act in a way that justifies the renewed trust that is being placed in your nation.

I am praying for you and for the nation of Pakistan at this time.

Yours faithfully,

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