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PAKISTAN Christian sentenced to life under spurious blasphemy charges

Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) is deeply concerned over news that a Pakistani Christian from Lahore was sentenced to life imprisonment for blasphemy against the Prophet Mohammed yesterday.

Qamar David has been in prison awaiting a verdict since 2006, after being refused bail. During that time both Mr David and his lawyer, Mr Parvez Choudhry, were regularly subjected to assassination attempts and threats of violence from abusive mobs.

A contact close to Mr David is of the opinion that the facts, evidence and law have been in his favour. The evidence against him is said to be based on hearsay, and an accused Muslim in a parallel case was fully acquitted on the same facts. Speaking on condition of anonymity, the source described the final judgement as “biased and prejudiced,” and believes that external pressure on the court may have played a part in distorting the outcome.

CSW’s National Director Stuart Windsor said: “This alarming verdict is yet further illustration of the urgent need for the government of Pakistan to repeal its blasphemy laws. The legislation continues to be abused for the satisfaction of personal vendettas against Pakistanis of all faiths. It is a dangerous tool in the hands of those seeking to persecute or discriminate against religious minorities.”