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## PAKISTAN Tributes pour in to Shahbaz Bhatti on day of his funeral

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Pakistan's Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani led the tributes to Shahbaz Bhatti, the Minister for Minorities Affairs assassinated on Wednesday, at his funeral in Islamabad today. According to news reports, Gilani described Bhatti's death as "a great loss to the nation". Bhatti is being buried today in his home village of Khushpur.

Stuart Windsor, National Director of Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW), said, "The tributes paid to Shahbaz Bhatti show the esteem in which he was held, both within and far beyond the Christian community to which he belonged. He was driven by his deep faith, and he was a patriot in the truest sense, one who sought the best for his country, and who realized that the reform and repeal of the abusive blasphemy laws, and the promotion of inter-faith harmony, would benefit not only the minorities he represented, but all of Pakistani society.

"The international community must honor Shahbaz Bhatti's memory not just in words, but in lasting solidarity with all those who, like Bhatti, sought to foster the society envisaged by Pakistan's founder, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, characterized by pluralism, freedom of religion and the rule of law."

### **Notes to Editors:**

1. Many world leaders issued statements condemning the assassination, among them [UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon](#), [US President Barack Obama](#), [British Prime Minister David Cameron](#), [US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton](#), [British Foreign Secretary William Hague](#), [EU Foreign Affairs High Representative Catherine Ashton](#), and [European Parliament President Jerzy Buzek](#).