



Fatah: Christian victims of Muslim oppression rot in Thailand

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The country code of 66 on the incoming call was unfamiliar, as was the number.

Usually I ignore such calls as they invariably are threats from the worldwide network of my fans or duct-cleaning companies worried about the air I breathe.

But on that day, I took a chance. The other option was to continue listening to the Fourth of July monotone drone of President Donald Trump reading from what was once called ‘idiot cards’ (today’s teleprompters) about airports in the year 1775.

The voice on the other end was subdued. I could detect a bit of tepidness in the soft-spoken man who introduced himself as Faraz Parvez, a Pakistani Christian currently living in Bangkok, Thailand.

For the next 10 minutes I heard the story of this young man, who had fled Pakistan after Islamic political parties and Mullahs had announced a two-million-rupee (C\$16,000) reward to anyone who would behead Parvez for allegedly insulting Prophet Muhammad of Islam.

Later that day, Parvez would send me posters with his photograph plastered across many cities, including Lahore and the capital Islamabad, outside mosques and government offices, urging ordinary Muslims to hunt him down to avenge the supposed insult to Prophet Muhammad.

The images were shocking. Videos of mass demonstrations and processions led by Mullahs where the crowd chanted:

“Gustakh-e-rasool ki aik hi sazaa

Sar tann se juda! Sar tann se juda!

TRANSLATION: There is only one punishment for insulting the Prophet.

Sever the head from the body! Sever the head from the body.

Over the last week, I have had long conversations with Parvez over the plight of his immediate family and relatives who also had to run for their lives. They are among more than 1,500

Pakistani Christians who are living in horrible conditions, not allowed to work and constantly hunted down by Thai police who simply imprison them in squalid conditions with no light at the end of the tunnel of despair.

On Tuesday alone, Thai authorities arrested 51 Pakistani Christian asylum seekers.

“They took everyone — men, women, old people, young children,” a Pakistani Christian asylum seeker who was privy to the incident via a phone connection told the Union of Catholic Asian News (UCAN). “They even took sick old people who can’t walk anymore.”

The United Nations Human Rights Council office in Bangkok has done little to assist Parvez or his family despite evidence that his life is in danger.

In fact, it is alleged that the interpreters hired by UNHRC to translate the verbal submissions of the refugee claimants are Pakistani Muslims in Bangkok who purposely relay incorrect versions that include deliberate contradictions which led to a rejection of 100% of the cases so far.

I wrote to the UNHRC office in Bangkok to obtain clarification about the hiring of interpreters hostile to the refugee claimants, but have not heard back from them.

Doug Bandow, a senior fellow at the Cato Institute and a former special assistant to President Ronald Reagan, has written about the conditions of these abandoned Christians.

Bandow writes about “... backstreet neighbourhoods (of Bangkok where) impoverished Pakistani Christians” live “hoping to gain religious asylum elsewhere.” He blames the problem on “domestic failures in Pakistan, especially social and legal discrimination and persecution, often violent, against religious minorities ... The domestic political system is unstable, corrupt, and dominated by the military. Religious minorities suffer; not just Christians, but Ahmadis, Hindus and others as well.”

Will Canada, the United States or Europe open its doors to fleeing Pakistani Christians? Will the UNHRC investigate allegations of a corrupt system in Bangkok?

For Faraz Parvez and his Christian community stuck in Bangkok’s ghettos and prisons, I hope they do.

If not the Canadian government, surely Canada’s churches should speak up for their fellow Christians.

The power of prayer alone will not help them.