

On December 2nd and 9th of 2015, Brother Shakoor's bookshop was raided by the Counter Terrorism Department of the Punjab police and the counterterrorism focused Elite Force. He and his assistant, Mazhar Abbas, a Shia Muslim, were arrested for the crime of distributing Ahmadiyya commentaries on the Qur'an. Brother Shakoor was charged with violating both the Anti-Terrorism Act, for "disseminating any material to incite hatred," and the Pakistani Penal code for committing acts or speech that insult a religion or defile the Qur'an or the Prophet Muhammad.

Brother Shakoor was brought to trial within a month before the Anti-Terrorism Court in Faisalabad, Punjab. The only witnesses at the trial were the officers who raided his bookstore who entered into evidence a letter supposedly recovered during the December 9 raid. The letter, purportedly from the Ahmadiyya Director of Public Affairs, notified Brother Shakoor that some Ahmadiyya literature had been banned and he should neither display nor sell it. However, the literature cited in the letter, and for which Brother Shakoor was prosecuted, was not banned until January 20, 2016, after the trial had concluded. Obviously, religious literature cannot be banned under international human rights law in any case.

Brother Shakoor contended at trial, and maintains the position, that while he was in possession of the literature, he did not distribute it. Yet, the anti-terrorism court Judge Raja Parvaiz Akhtar announced Brother Shakoor's conviction under the Anti-Terrorism Act and Sentenced him to eight years imprisonment for his alleged crimes, dealing a terrible blow to the local Ahmadiyya community. The shop assistant, Mr. Abbas, was convicted under the Anti-Terrorism Act as well and was sentenced to five years in prison.

Since his conviction, Brother Shakoor has appealed the verdict and petitioned for bail on appeal to the Lahore High Court, but he has remained in jail. The case has been listed on the Lahore High Court's daily docket on several occasions, but it has been repeatedly postponed. The last postponed hearing date is believed to have been June 22, 2017, and the matter has not been noticed since to the best of our knowledge. Brother Shakoor remains in prison and is suffering from medical conditions which we cannot say are being attended to, including hernia and severe weakness owing to old age. For example, the distance within the jail facility between the daily meeting point and his cell is very long, and so he needs to be transported with help from a warden because he cannot even make that basic walk by foot.

When anti-terrorism statutes are used to persecute practitioners of minority religious communities who have done nothing but observe their faith, they are obviously illegitimate instruments of tyranny and threaten public support for legitimate anti-terrorism policies. Brother Shakoor's imprisonment is a scandalous abuse of an anti-terror law and demands international condemnation. He should be freed immediately.

As the world's first constitutional democracy, America must defend the freedoms of speech, expression, and religion against state persecution everywhere. So today, I ask my colleagues to join me in standing with Brother Shakoor and calling for his release, as well as that of Mr. Abbas.

RECOGNITION OF REV. ALPHONSO WASHINGTON

HON. DAVE BRAT

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 9, 2018

Mr. BRAT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate the 105th year of life of the Reverend Alphonso Washington. Rev. Washington was raised by his grandparents in Hume, Virginia. He attended the Mount Morris Primitive Baptist Church (later called Mount Morris Baptist Church), where his grandfather served as the pastor. He went to school while also working odd jobs to help his mother and stepfather. Beyond working on the family farm, he also took on plumbing and construction jobs. In November 1942, he received a letter from "your uncle" . . . Uncle Sam, stating Alphonso Washington had been drafted into the U.S. Army. He was sent to Fort Meade, MD, for about a week, and then traveled by train to the new Air Navigation School in San Marcos, Texas. The U.S. Army was still segregated at that time, and while the white barracks had been built on the new base, there were no black barracks yet. He and his fellow soldiers slept on the train and then in tents until the black barracks were completed.

Since there were no black chaplains, and he had preaching experience, Alphonso was assigned to the base Chaplain Corp. It was during this timeframe Rev. Washington made a truly risky stand for God. While praying for troops that were heading out to war, a new Chaplain Officer, Major Dunn, stated: "I will not swear to you there is a God, because I have not seen Him. . . ." Thinking those troops definitely needed their faith strengthened, not reduced, Private First Class Washington stood up and challenged the Major regarding God's existence. For this, he was charged with insubordination, and "black-balled" from promotion in lieu of Court Marshal. After the war, Rev. Washington remained in the San Marcos area for nearly 60 years with his first wife, Rosa Mae.

When Rev. Washington moved back to Virginia in the early 2000s, he returned to Mount Morris Baptist Church and served as an associate minister, traveling to preach in local churches, perform marriages, funerals, and counseling. He was later appointed to the position of Senior Statesman, where he continues to serve through preaching, committee appointments, the Sunday School Conference, the Women's Auxiliary and Ministers and Deacons Conference. In 2002, he married his current wife and former secretary of the church, Carol Whitmore.

In 2009, he wrote an autobiography called, "All in God's Time" and has held book signings and been the keynote speaker throughout Fauquier and Culpeper Counties. The book contains his memoirs from his early days in Hume through his marriage to Carol at the time he wrote the book. He has served as an American Legion Chaplain since 1946 and has been preaching the Word of God for over 83 years. Rev. Washington and his wife Carol currently reside in Culpeper, VA. I'm happy to honor Rev. Alphonso Washington on 105 years of life and know he will continue to do great things.

IRAN IS MAKING A MOCKERY OF INTERNATIONAL LAW

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 9, 2018

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, Secretary of State Pompeo announced the U.S. was ending the 1955 Treaty of Amity, Economic Relations, and Consular Rights with Iran. This justified decision comes after three decades of Iran blatantly violating its terms. No other state has defied international norms to such severity as Iran. The terrorist regime in Tehran has no respect for international law or multilateral agreements, and thus should not be shown the respect responsible nations are afforded.

Just earlier this week, a German court ruled that an Iranian diplomat violated his diplomatic immunity for participating in an attempted terrorist operation in France. Meanwhile, Iranian proxies fired rockets at U.S. diplomatic outposts in Iraq. But this was nothing new. Since the founding of the Islamic Republic, Iran has flouted all diplomatic protocol to pursue its murderous agenda. Its diplomats use their special status to facilitate terrorism, assassinate dissidents, and pursue sanctions busting schemes. For example, in the early 1990s Iranian diplomats in Argentina were deeply involved in the terrorist bombings of the Israeli embassy and AMIA Jewish center. This classic Iranian behavior continues around the globe today.

Despite these outrageous acts, Iran has the audacity to pursue legal action against the U.S. based on the 1955 treaty, claiming U.S. sanctions violate its terms. Yet, the Islamic Republic ignores the fact that it terminated the treaty the day it raided the U.S. Embassy in Tehran and held U.S. diplomats hostage. That day in 1979 the mullahs in Iran replaced amity with hostility. Nevertheless, Iran's Foreign Minister blames the U.S., calling us an "outlaw regime." Why any nation takes Iran's government seriously is beyond logical explanation.

By enabling Iran's duplicitous and evil behavior, organizations like the International Court of Justice undermine their own legitimacy. What justice are the Iranian people shown when they are beat and murdered by regime thugs in their own streets? What justice is shown to the victims of Iranian supported terrorism around the globe? The ICJ's decision is a joke where only the murderers in Tehran are laughing. It is time for our partners in the international community to grow a spine and stand up to the illegal behavior of the Iranian regime. No nation is safe so long as we allow the mullahs in Iran to mock justice rather than be held to it.

RECOGNIZING INTERNATIONAL PLASMA AWARENESS WEEK

HON. DORIS O. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 9, 2018

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, "How is Your Day?" For all of us, this is an ordinary question we ask others—and are asked by others—every day. But for so many people