



## CAN SOCIAL MEDIA PUT AN END TO HONOUR KILLINGS.

Peter Adamis 28 May 2014

My question to readers is whether we in the western world have a right to question and protest against practices of behaviour that are alien to our society. Furthermore do we have the right to interfere in the religious functions of another country when we are having our problems (whatever they may be) in our backyard. I would like to think that we do and yet, I try to look at issues from their point of view to decide what is the best course of action.

Over the past 20 years or so we in the western world have been subjected to cultural concepts, traditions, faiths, religious practices, community standards, paradigms and forms of behaviour alien to our Western democratic ideals and concepts of living. This is as a direct result of exposure to the internet and its associated social media outlets influencing our behaviour.

There is not a day that does not go past when we read or hear of men and women being stoned, a couple being flogged, shot, beheaded and others hung for living a lifestyle that appeared to be in direct contradiction to the environmental, accepted community and cultural values and morals they find themselves in. As much as we in the Western world disagree and are abhorred at these behaviours and practices, why is it that we are still surprised and astonished that it continues.

Prior to the internet, we relied upon travellers, visitors from abroad, news paper articles and refugees or displaced individuals and groups providing information relating to the above practices. We would recoil at the stories and in many cases it united us against all o the evils that we heard against mankind. Each generation asked of themselves how they could influence or change the culture and community values and morals of these alien cultures and community standards. Trade embargos failed, education appears to have made some headway, religious freedoms are difficult to change overnight, leading by example has been an absolute failure on our part and diplomacy is but a word that is often used to gain the advantage.

As an individual living in a democratic and free world, I am naturally aghast at such behaviour in these countries, but all that I can do is voice my opinion in the best way I know. That lone voice of mine is through government representation and showing the flag so to speak, that we as individuals find such hypocritical and alien practices is against what is acceptable in this day and age of enlightenment. I do know that if we don't protest in one form or another, we as humans fail to address the evils that surround us, even though we do not and cannot understand why such matters still occur.

It is my opinion that such practices can be avoided by effectively using social media in order to avert mercy killings and all of the above evils against mankind. Social media is but a tool that can be utilised to change the courses of history, events and bring about changes to government and religious intuitions bent on living in the Middle Ages. Even though we do not live in these countries, we cannot stand by and let someone die without some form of protest, otherwise we are all living a lie.



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## **PREGNANT PAKISTANI WOMAN IS BEATEN TO DEATH BY HER FAMILY**

Waqar Gillani and Declan WALSH May 27, 2014

LAHORE, Pakistan — A pregnant Pakistani woman was beaten to death by her family outside a courthouse in the eastern city of Lahore on Tuesday because she had defied their wishes and married the man of her choice, police officials said.

Police investigators said that the woman, Farzana Parveen, 25, was beaten to death on a busy street as a crowd of about 30 men watched, but did nothing. Such attacks, known as honour killings, are common in pockets of rural Pakistan where tribal traditions are strong. But they are relatively rare in large, cosmopolitan cities like Lahore, and Ms. Parveen's death was taken as further evidence of the failure of Pakistan's increasingly weak police to protect vulnerable members of society.

Ms. Parveen, who came from a small Punjabi village 57 miles west of Lahore, enraged her family in January when she married Muhammad Iqbal, a widower from a neighbouring village, instead of the cousin who had been chosen by her parents. Her parents brought a police complaint against Mr. Iqbal, claiming that he had kidnapped their daughter. On Tuesday, Ms. Parveen was scheduled to appear in court in Lahore in the case. Her lawyer said she intended to tell the court that she had not been coerced into the marriage. She was three months pregnant.

As she met with her lawyer early in the morning, a large group of men from her home village gathered outside the lawyer's offices. The crowd attacked her as she walked the short distance to the city High Court. One of Ms. Parveen's brothers stepped forward and fired a gun at her, but missed, the police said, and she stumbled and fell as she tried to flee. He caught her and beat her on the head with bricks from a nearby construction site.

A crowd of witnesses, including her father, failed to intervene during the beating, and Ms. Parveen died of her injuries, the police said. Her brother fled the scene, and the police later arrested her father, Muhammad Azeem, over the killing. Honour killings in Pakistan are often mistakenly described as the product of Islamic law. Some reports on Tuesday described Ms. Parveen as the victim of a stoning — an image that conjures up images of Taliban-era executions of women accused of adultery — because she had been beaten to death with bricks.

But such killings more frequently stem from tribal traditions or deep-rooted cultural norms. The independent Human Rights Commission reported that 869 women were stabbed, shot, beaten or burned to death in honour killings in Pakistan in 2013, usually at the hands of close family. The attacks have a variety of names in different languages, but are usually referred to as “black work,” a reference to the culturally unacceptable practice of marrying without familial consent.

In some cases, the killings are sanctioned by tribal councils or other community groups; men are also sometimes killed in such cases, but much less frequently. As the country becomes more urbanized, and the middle class grows in size, marriages conducted through free choice are becoming more common. But for many young Pakistanis, the choice of a marriage partner is strongly influenced, if not entirely dictated, by parents.

Lawyers who defend women at risk of honour killing are routinely subjected to death threats, and the men who carry out the killings often escape imprisonment through an Islamic provision of Pakistani law that allows the perpetrator of a crime to avoid penalties by making a cash payment to the family of the victim. When honour killings take place inside a family, such a payment may not even be made.

Had she made it to the courthouse on Tuesday, Ms. Parveen would have told the court that she had married Mr. Iqbal of her own free will, according to her lawyer, Rao Mohammad Kharal. “Farzana was here to tell the court that she married of her own choice,” he told Agence France-Presse. Her husband, Mr. Iqbal, accused Ms. Parveen’s father, two brothers and three other men of being behind her killing, according to a police report. Hours later, in an interview from inside the jail cell where he was being held, Mr. Azeem told reporters that he had killed his daughter to preserve the family’s honour. Waqar Gillani reported from Lahore, and Declan Walsh from London.

[http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/28/world/asia/pregnant-pakistani-woman-is-beaten-to-death-by-her-family.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/28/world/asia/pregnant-pakistani-woman-is-beaten-to-death-by-her-family.html?_r=0)