

Statement of Asiya Nasir MNA, 3rd March 2011
- addressed to Pakistan's National Assembly, in response to the previous day's assassination of Shahbaz Bhatti, Federal Minister for Minorities Affairs.

"Thank you very much Speaker sahib.

Excerpt from Faiz Ahmed Faiz's poem, *Hum jo tareek raahon mein mare gaye* (We who were executed on dark highways):

*As the evening of tyranny dissolved in your memory
We walked on as far as our feet could carry us
A song on our lips, a lamp of sadness in our heart
Our grief bore witness to our love for your beauty
Look, we remained true to that love
We, who were executed in the dark lanes.*

Mr. Speaker, with your permission I request this house to listen to me in silence. Mr. Speaker, with your permission today, I wish to address not the Prime Minister of Pakistan, and not these 342 assembly members. Instead, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, I am addressing you, because my brother has been murdered. Mohammad Ali Jinnah, you told us, come build a house together, on this pure land we will create Pakistan, and in that pure land there will be no Hindu, no Christian, no Muslim. Instead under one flag we will all be one.

Quaid-e-Azam (Jinnah), today I ask you, when Pakistan was decided, and when at your request we came into this house, then how were we treated? Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask this house, what was my brother's crime? Just that he wished to see this country and Quaid-e-Azam's Pakistan? Mr. Speaker, when we arrived in Pakistan back then our elders made the decision to join Pakistan. At that time when the Boundary Commission held a meeting, Pakistan and Hindustan (India) were being divided. Perhaps few people are aware that the leaders at the time called the Christians and wished to give them a separate piece, but they refused it. They said they would go to Pakistan and be a part of it. We came into Pakistan by vote. What kind of people are you? What kind of humanity are you? When you needed our votes, when we were needed to create Pakistan you took us with you, but when Pakistan was formed you called us minorities and threw us against the wall. Then we were forced to face discrimination. Sometimes we were called untouchables and you separated our dishes, or treated us as servants. Sometimes, in the name of privatization our institutions were taken away and sometimes our Messiah was taken from us.

Mr. Speaker, today I wish to ask this assembly, what crime did we Christians commit? We have always been loyal to Pakistan and continue to be today and always will be because we created this land with our blood. Just yesterday my brother gave his fresh blood for this land. What was our crime that we now face this discrimination? Now there will be speeches here that minorities have their rights, so I wish to tell this house that it has been 65 years and minorities have never had rights before, nor do they have them now and nor is there an expectation that we will have them in the future. After Gojra, I said in my speech here that I am afraid that our coming generations should not regret that their elders made the decision to join Pakistan. Yesterday when my daughter embraced me and screamed "Mom, let's leave this country!", then I was convinced that our younger generations regret that we made the decision to