

Edinburgh East MP raises death row plight of Mohammad Asghar



There was an exchange between Edinburgh East MP Sheila Gilmore and the Prime Minister at Westminster yesterday during which the Edinburgh East MP called for the UK Government to intervene in the case of an Edinburgh man sentenced to death in Pakistan.

Ms Gilmore said:-“Mohammad Asghar, who lived in the UK for 40 years and has family in my constituency, has recently been convicted of blasphemy and sentenced to death in Pakistan. Mr Asghar was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia in 2010 and was treated in Edinburgh, but the judges refused to take that into account. I wrote to the Foreign Secretary yesterday, but can the Prime Minister now assure me that he and his Ministers are doing everything they can to support this man and see him returned to the UK, where he can get the treatment he needs?”

The Prime Minister assured her that he and the UK Government always oppose the death penalty and view the matter very seriously.

Amnesty International have called upon Pakistan to immediately and unconditionally release Mr Asghar who has been sentenced to death under the country's blasphemy laws after writing letters to various officials claiming he was a prophet. Mr Asghar's family have said that he is suffering from a mental illness.

“Mohammad Asghar is now facing the gallows simply for writing a series of letters. He does not deserve punishment. No one should be charged on the basis of this sort of conduct,” said

Polly Truscott, Amnesty International's Deputy Asia Pacific Director.