

## PRESS RELEASE

### International Christian Voice

International Christian Voice dedicated the birthday of Martyr Shahbaz Bhatti, September 09, 2023, to the victims of Jaranwala, Pakistan by hosting a Vigil at the Shahbaz Bhatti Park in Brampton, Canada.



Amongst the large gathering of the Pakistani Canadian Christian community present were the Hon. Ruby Sahota Member of Parliament (Liberal), Patrick Brown Mayor City of Brampton, Harkirat Singh Deputy Mayor, Gurpartap Singh Regional Councilor, and Rod Power City Councilor. Also present were Tim Iqbal member of the Ontario Progressive Party Executive, Azim Rizvee a politician and prominent Pakistani Muslim Community leader, Asil Hamid a compassionate Muslim human rights activist. The large scale destruction of homes, churches and even graveyards by a frenzied mob in Jaranwala, Pakistan has shocked and deeply affected the Pakistani Christian Community of Canada. The community is going through a range of emotions of shock, anger, tears and charged to activism in support of their community of Jaranwala.



One of the speakers, Mr. Javaid Rahim Bakhsh, a former Military officer, said that Jaranwala is not the first incident of its kind. He reminded the audience of Shantinagar, Gojra, Joseph Colony, Peshawar and multiple other attacks which continue to reoccur in Pakistan like a barricaded hic-up. This is a watershed moment, a turning point; Jaranwala has caught the attention of the world. We the Pakistani Christian Diaspora across the world should synergize our efforts to raise this issue from every forum available to us. Do not let Jaranwala die.

Ruby Sahota Federal Member of Parliament said that ofcourse no one should be burning the Bible or Quran but in the past weeks as she is learning more about Jaranwala and thinking about it she thinks that we should be more disgusted by, angered by is the burning of the homes and the attacks on people. When we start focusing on human life and dignity and seeing that as true crime we can all come together and stop incidents such as these.

Mayor Patrick Brown emphatically stated that the reason we have this Shahbaz Bhatti Park in Brampton is to express in a very clear manner that we stand by Shahbaz Bhatti's message that minorities should never be persecuted. What happened in Jaranwala is the reason Shahbaz spoke so loudly because of his conviction on religious freedom. He knew what would happen.



There would be Jaranwala's if he didn't speak up.

The mayor added that Canada has a role to play to be one of the voices of the United Nations and every global body to say that we cannot accept this that in one part of the world religious freedom is going to be ignored. If you allow any minority rights to be trampled on, it is a cancer that spreads. Mayor Brown said he heard a previous speaker talk about a pathway for those fleeing persecution. If we can convince our MP colleagues to make those

changes, we will be the first to line up in favor of that.

The Chairman of International Christian Voice, Mr. Peter Bhatti, the brother of Martyr Shahbaz Bhatti, lamented that this is not the first violence against our community; he also recalled the cases of Shantinagar, Gojra, Sangla Hill, Joseph Colony and many others. He requested the government of Pakistan not to just give lip service this time. The granting of financial aid for losses after the event is not enough. What happens during these mob attacks, no police or government support is present to help stop the violence. Its only well after the mob has completed its ruthless designs does any police or government shows up. This time we expect the government to apprehend the extremists and use the full force of the law to give justice to the victims of Jaranwala.



The community clearly laid out its demands and expectations from the government of Canada.

1. The Government of Canada must officially acknowledge the persecution, discrimination and suppression of religious and human rights of the minority faiths in Pakistan.
2. Victims of Jaranwala and victims of religious violence in Pakistan are given a pathway to resettle in Canada, to rebuild their lives and become productive, valuable citizens of this great country Canada, where human rights and religious rights are not only guaranteed by our constitution, it is the Canadian way of life.

Media cell

International Christian Voice.