



Brussels, 23 April 2019

To: The Director of the board of the Roosevelt Four Freedoms Award,

We are writing to nominate Mr Saif Ul-Malook, Asia Bibi's lawyer, to be a recipient of the Roosevelt Four Freedoms award, in the category of Freedom from fear.

We know that you are familiar with the case of Asia Bibi; a Christian woman who has recently been freed after 9 years spent on death row, accused of blasphemy. Ms Bibi's case has become infamous; multiple riots, two assassinations and one controversial judgement from the Supreme Court of Pakistan garnered worldwide attention for her plight. The role of Mr Malook was key to Ms Bibi's release, and subsequently to setting a new precedent concerning blasphemy accusations in Pakistan. As such, I feel that the Roosevelt award is a fitting tribute to the service that he has rendered to justice in Pakistan.

Mr Malook's involvement in Ms Bibi's case began following the 2011 assassination of Minister Salmaan Taseer. Mumtaz Qadri, was arrested and charged with Minister Taseer's murder. Lawyers in Pakistan were reluctant to act as prosecutors in Qadri's case, for fear of reprisals from Islamist fundamentalists. Despite the risk, Mr Malook stepped forward to take the case, and won the prosecution, securing the conviction of Qadri, and justice for Minister Taseer's family.

Three years after this initial case, in 2014, Ms Bibi's appeal was denied by the Lahore High Court. Many thought that her death was certain. It was at this point, that Mr Malook offered to take her case forward to the Supreme Court, despite the risks involved for him, and his family, in the hopes of securing freedom for Ms Bibi. After four years of hard work, Asia Bibi's appeal was upheld by the Supreme Court of Pakistan in a landmark judgment. Following a final review, she was released to be with her family.

Unfortunately, this victory came with a cost. Upon the release of the initial judgment of the Supreme Court, thousands of Islamist protestors brought Pakistan to a standstill as they protested the decision of the court. Mr Malook received threats and was forced to flee Pakistan, leaving behind his wife and child, who were placed under military protection.

After some time spent in the Netherlands, further campaigning for the ultimate release of Asia Bibi, Mr Malook sacrificed his Asylum procedure and returned to Pakistan to hear the outcome of the final review of the Supreme Court judgment. He remains there now, with his house still under military protection.

The story of Mr Malook is one of great courage and sincere humanity. The act of stepping forward as Muslim man, to defend a Christian woman, is one that beautifully illustrates what true, unconditional dedication to the protection of human rights for all, stands for. I am aware that given the location of the awards ceremony in New York this year, in principle the awards will go to Americans. However, dear Chair-people, I implore you to seriously consider Mr Malook as a recipient of one of this year's awards. His defence of Asia Bibi led to a landmark judgment, and an outcome that many had not expected. His nationality should not preclude his acknowledgement for this most prestigious award.

I remain at your disposal should you have any further questions.

With kind regards,

Peter van Dalen, MEP, Co-chairman of the Intergroup on Freedom of Religion or belief and Religious Tolerance

Syed Kamall, Co-Chair European Conservatives & Reformists Group

Manfred Weber, Chair of the European Peoples Party Group

Jean Lambert, Chair of the European Parliament Delegation for Relations with the countries of South Asia