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PAKISTAN APMA condemns official investigation into Shahbaz Bhatti's murder

The All Pakistan Minorities Alliance (APMA), the nationwide coalition co-founded by the late Shahbaz Bhatti, on Saturday condemned the latest developments into his official murder investigation, stating that it risks “diverting the case away from reality”. Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) is concerned that the Pakistani state is “at risk of losing the already frail trust of religious minorities across the country”.

Earlier this month, representatives of the police investigation informed the Pakistani media that Shahbaz Bhatti's assassination could be linked to a family property dispute. APMA has denied that this has any basis in reality and has “strongly condemned” the reports, expressing “no confidence in the ongoing investigation”, and stating that the Joint Investigation Team has “failed in arresting the assassins and uncovering the motive behind the assassination”.

The statement has been released following a meeting of the APMA leadership team, now headed by Shahbaz Bhatti's brother Paul, to discuss the progress of the investigation into the assassination of the minorities minister on March 2, 2011.

APMA is calling for a Judicial Commission of Inquiry into the case, to be led by a High Court judge, and plans to organize nationwide protests if the investigation is further delayed or distorted.

CSW's South Asia Team Leader, David Griffiths, said, “Shahbaz Bhatti fought tirelessly for the rights of minorities and the repeal of Pakistan's destructive blasphemy laws and he wanted a more just future for all Pakistani citizens. The Government of Pakistan speaks frequently in the favour of minority rights, including as recently as 11 August, on National Minorities Day, but APMA's comments show that the state is at risk of losing the already frail trust of religious minorities across the country.”

Notes to Editors:

1. For further background, see CSW's briefing, [‘Pakistan: Religious freedom in the shadow of extremism’ \(June 2011\)](#).
2. APMA was co-founded by Shahbaz Bhatti himself, who led the coalition from 2002 onwards.