

Andrew Bolt: Australia has a duty to offer Asia Bibi asylum

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WE have a refugee program that's helped plenty of frauds.

Let's now use it to help a real refugee — a Christian woman who mobs want to murder.

In fact, why hasn't the Morrison government already offered Asia Bibi asylum? What's it waiting for?

Asia Bibi is a Christian farm worker in Muslim Pakistan and a mother of five. Nine years ago she went to pick fruit in a field with Muslim neighbours. It was hot and at midday she drank from a well. That other workers screamed that by dipping her cup in the water, this Christian was making it unclean for Muslims. She should convert, they said.

Bibi's retort was to seal her fate: "What did your Prophet Mohammed ever do to save mankind?"

The women complained to their imam, who accused Bibi of blasphemy. A mob beat her up in front of her children.



Asia Bibi. Picture: AFP Photo/British Pakistani Christian Association

Police rescued her but then threw her in jail. For eight years she was on death row, sentenced to die for insulting Islam.

Two politicians who protested against this barbarity were assassinated, but last week Pakistan's High Court finally dismissed the charges and said Bibi could walk free.

She couldn't. Huge mobs whipped up by Muslim hardliners rioted around Pakistan, demanding Bibi hang and threatening her relatives. Her lawyer fled the country, her family went into hiding and Bibi was kept in jail.



Pakistani protesters burn a poster image of Christian woman Asia Bibi. Picture: AP Photo/Pervez Masih

Prime Minister Imran Khan, the former cricketer, tried to appease the mobs on Friday by agreeing to ban Bibi from leaving Pakistan while her acquittal is appealed. Bibi's husband has since recorded a video pleading for, Britain, the United States or Canada to offer Bibi and her family asylum. "My wife, Asia Bibi, has already suffered greatly," he said.

Why hasn't our own government already offered Bibi asylum? And why haven't journalists, feminists and human rights groups insisted on it?



A protest in Pakistan following the Supreme Court decision to acquit Christian woman Asia Bibi of blasphemy. Picture: Rizwan Tabassum/AFP

I suspect it's partly because this case highlights an embarrassing intolerance in Islam and mercy to Bibi could cause trouble with our own Muslim hardliners.

But what else is our refugee program for if not for cases like this? Liberal MP Andrew Hastie on Tuesday called on his government to help Bibi and her family immediately.

It should. Let the government finally use the refugee program for exactly the kind of people it was meant to save. Save Asia Bibi.

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