Pakistani Mother Burns Daughter Alive for Marrying Without Permission

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By Zaheer Babar, The Associated Press

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A Pakistani woman was arrested Wednesday after dousing her daughter with kerosene and burning her alive, allegedly because the girl had defied her family to marry a man she was in love with, police said.

Police official Sheikh Hammad said the killing took place in the eastern city of Lahore, the country's cultural hub, and that the mother was arrested the same day.

The suspect, Parveen Rafiq, has confessed to tying up her 18-year-old daughter Zeenat Rafiq to a cot after which, with the help of her son, Ahmar Rafiq, she poured the oil on the girl and set her ablaze, Hammad said.

Nearly 1,000 women are killed each year in so-called “honour killings” in Pakistan for allegedly violating conservative norms on love and marriage.

A schoolteacher, Maria Bibi, was assaulted and set on fire last week for refusing to marry a man twice her age. Before she died, she managed to give a statement to the police, testifying that five attackers had broken into her home, dragged her out to an open area, beat her and set her ablaze.

The prime suspect in the case - the father of the man she refused to marry - and the other four are all in custody.

A month earlier, police arrested 13 members of a local tribal council who allegedly strangled a girl and set her on fire for helping a friend elope. The charred body of 17-year-old Ambreen Riasat was found in a burned van.

The daughter killed in Lahore, Zeenat Rafiq, had gotten married last month before a court magistrate to a motorcycle mechanic, Hasan Khan, said Hammad.

Three days ago, he said, the girl's mother and an uncle visited her to try to persuade her to return home and have the marriage ceremony repeated in a traditional family function, instead of being labelled her whole life as someone who had “eloped.”

Khan, her husband, told the local Geo News TV station that his bride had feared the worst.

“Don't let me go, they will kill me,” Khan recounted his wife telling him.