Anti-blasphemy laws are legal provisions that prohibit insulting or defaming religious beliefs, symbols, practices or figures. They exist in many countries, especially in those with a dominant religion or a state religion. However, anti-blasphemy laws can also be used to suppress dissent, stifle free speech, persecute minorities and justify violence. Here are some cases of injustice that were caused by anti-blasphemy laws:

- In Indonesia, a Catholic woman named Suzethe Margaret was charged with blasphemy and blasphemous libel in 2019 after she brought her dog into a mosque and allegedly made derogatory remarks about Islam. She was diagnosed with schizophrenia and had a history of mental illness. She was detained for several months without proper treatment or legal representation until she was acquitted by a district court in 2020. The court found that she was not fit to stand trial and that her actions were not intentional.

- In the United Kingdom, a shopkeeper named Asad Shah was stabbed to death in 2016 by a Muslim extremist who accused him of disrespecting the Prophet Muhammad. Shah was an Ahmadi Muslim, a minority sect that is considered heretical by some orthodox Muslims. He had posted messages on social media wishing his customers a happy Easter and expressing his love for humanity.

There are many cases of injustice that have been caused by anti-blasphemy laws around the world. For example, in Pakistan, a Christian woman named Asia Bibi was accused of blasphemy by her Muslim co-workers after a dispute over a water cup. She was sentenced to death by a lower court in 2010, but was acquitted by the Supreme Court in 2019 after spending nine years on death row. Her case sparked violent protests and death threats from Islamist groups, and she had to flee the country for her safety (The Guardian, 2011).

In Indonesia, a Buddhist woman named Meiliana was sentenced to 18 months in prison for blasphemy in 2018, after she complained about the loudness of a mosque's call to prayer. Her complaint triggered riots by Muslim mobs, who burned down several Buddhist temples and homes in her town. She appealed her conviction, but it was upheld by the Supreme Court in 2019 (Pew Research Center, 2022).

In Greece, a playwright named Minas Vintiadis was accused of blasphemy in 2019, after a Buddhist monk filed a complaint against his play "Buddha Collapsed Out of Shame". The play depicted scenes of violence and abuse against children in Afghanistan under the Taliban regime, and used a statue of Buddha as a prop. Vintiadis was questioned by the police, but no charges were filed against him. He said he faced harassment and intimidation from some religious groups, who tried to censor his work (Pew Research Center, 2022).

These are just some examples of how anti-blasphemy laws can be used to suppress dissent, stifle artistic expression, and discriminate against minorities. Anti-blasphemy laws are incompatible with democratic values and international human rights standards. They should be repealed or reformed to ensure that everyone can enjoy their rights to freedom of speech and religion without fear of persecution or violence.

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