

PUBLIC

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EXTRA 44/99

Fear of f.

**AFGHANISTAN**Farzana (f)

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A young pregnant woman found guilty of extra-marital sexual intercourse is reportedly due to be publicly flogged after she has delivered her baby, expected in a few weeks time. On 12 March 1999, her co-accused, Sayed Sarwar, who had been found guilty of adultery, was reported to have been publicly lashed one hundred times in the football ground of a school in Kabul.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Floggings, amputations and public executions are frequently carried out by the Taleban authorities in Afghanistan. Verdicts for these punishments are passed by Taleban's Shari'a courts, which reportedly lack minimum requirements for a fair trial. Judges in these courts, many of whom are virtually untrained in the law, reportedly base their assessments on a mixture of their personal understanding of Islamic law and the prevalent Pashtun code of honour. Amnesty International has received reports that such courts often decide a dozen cases of alleged criminal activity in a day, in sessions which may take only a few minutes.

Amnesty International takes no position with respect to the cultural, political or religious values that underlie judicial or legal systems. However, the organization considers that judicial floggings as well as other forms of corporal punishment and torture violate the most elementary standards of humane treatment.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send faxes/express/airmail letters in English or your own language:**

- expressing grave concern at reports that a young woman - Farzana - allegedly found guilty of extra-marital sexual intercourse, is due to be publicly lashed after she has given birth to her child;
- appealing to the Taleban authorities not to subject Farzana to any flogging, which Amnesty International believes to be a cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment.

**APPEALS TO:**

Mullah Mohammad Omar (Leader of the Taleban)  
Embassy of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan  
House No.8, Street No 90  
G-6/3 Islamabad  
Pakistan

**Fax: +92 51 82 45 04**

**Telegrams: Embassy Afghanistan, House 8, Street 90, Islamabad, Pakistan**

**Salutation: Dear Mullah Mohammad Omar**

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 12 April 1999.