

PUBLIC

AI Index: ASA 33/04/99

UA 06/99

Fear for safety

13 January 1999

PAKISTAN/AFGHANISTAN Fatana Gailani, women's rights campaigner (f)
Ishaq Gailani, politician

Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the safety of Afghan women's human rights campaigner, Fatana Gailani, and her husband Ishaq Gailani after a number of death threats have been made against them.

Individuals claiming to represent the Taleban have circulated warnings that the couple are among a dozen Afghan citizens living as refugees in Pakistan who have been targeted for assassination for their "anti-Taleban activities". The couple have received a number of suspicious telephone calls at their home, often late at night, and have seen armed men following them.

The couple are under Pakistani police protection, but believe that more needs to be done to ensure their safety, and that of other prominent Afghans and women's rights defenders. In November 1998 at least four Afghan political figures were assassinated in Pakistan. So far this year there have been at least two politically-motivated attacks against Afghans known for their opposition to the Taleban. The Pakistani authorities have reportedly not taken serious measures to investigate these attacks and bring those responsible to justice.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Fatana Gailani heads the Afghan Women's Council in Peshawar, Pakistan, which provides educational and health facilities to Afghan children and women refugees. A long-standing campaigner against human rights abuses in Afghanistan, she has often spoken out against Taleban policies and practices restricting the rights of Afghan women. Fatana Gailani attended AI's human rights defenders conference in Paris in December.

Ishaq Gailani used to head the Council for Understanding and Cooperation in Afghanistan, a gathering of Afghan intellectuals in Pakistan seeking a political solution to the armed conflict in Afghanistan.

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

To the Pakistani authorities:

- urging the Pakistani authorities to investigate the death threats made against Fatana and Ishaq Gailani and to bring those found responsible to justice;
- urging the Pakistani authorities to ensure that the couple are provided with effective and adequate protection against political assassination.

To the Taleban armed political group:

- expressing concern at the reports that Taleban members are responsible for issuing death threats and carrying out a series of political killings of Afghan civilians in Pakistan;
- urging the Taleban to ensure that its members do not threaten the lives and physical integrity of any Afghan civilians;
- urging the Taleban to make a public statement condemning all targeted political killings of Afghan civilians.

APPEALS TO:

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif
Office of the Prime Minister
Islamabad
Pakistan

Telexes: 5742 PMHPK

Telegrams: Prime Minister, Islamabad, Pakistan

Faxes: + 92 51 920 8890/920 1545

Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

Taleban representative:

Ambassador
Afghanistan Embassy
Islamabad
Pakistan

Faxes: 92 51 824504

Salutation: Dear Ambassador

Members sending appeals to the Taleban should use their Section address and not their home address.

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Pakistan accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 24 February 1999.