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Afghanistan: 100 lashes for teen shows why climate of violence against women must be tackled

The flogging in public of a sixteen year old girl by a local mullah in the southern Ghazni province of Afghanistan for an “illicit relationship” with a boy is abhorrent and testifies to the precarious situation of women and girls in Afghanistan, said Amnesty International.

The girl was sentenced to 100 lashes on 16 September, which was carried out in a verdict issued by three Mullahs in Jaghori district of Ghazni province.

It has been reported that the Afghan Parliament’s lower house – the Wolesi Jirga – has initiated an investigation into the brutal and unlawful assault on the teenager.

“Flogging, whether in public or not, constitutes cruel, inhumane and degrading punishment”, said Horia Mosadiq, Amnesty International’s Researcher for Afghanistan.

“Such punishment is outrageous and is forbidden under national Afghan and international law. The fact that the girl in question is only 16 years old only makes this case even worse”

“The parliament’s decision to investigate this case is a great first step. Now the Afghan authorities must follow up and ensure that all unsolved cases of violence against women get the same treatment.”

“Impunity for violence against women is endemic in Afghanistan. The Afghan authorities have, for example, still not investigated the case of Najiba, who was unlawfully killed in Parwan province in July after being accused of adultery.

“Amnesty international urges the Afghan Government to promptly enforce the law on Elimination of Violence Against Women. The law criminalises forced marriage, rape, beatings, and other acts of violence against women. It was enacted in August 2009, but is still only sporadically enforced.

“This case has also highlighted the problem of the parallel, informal justice system that in many Afghan provinces still exists in place of the Government. The Afghan Government must do more to increase oversight and accountability of the legal system across the whole country. It must review the informal justice systems, as part of its strategy to reform the criminal justice system.”