

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Public Statement

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Afghanistan: Armed group must end hostage taking

Amnesty International strongly condemns the abduction of three UN election staff in Kabul and appeals for the immediate and unconditional release of the hostages.

Annetta Flanigan, from Northern Ireland, Shqipe Habibi, from Kosovo and Angelito Nayan from the Philippines were abducted on 28 October. They had been working with the United Nations (UN) in overseeing the landmark Presidential elections when they were seized from their vehicle in broad daylight in Kabul. On 28 October, *Jaish-e-Muslimeen* (Army of Muslims) claimed responsibility for the kidnapping.

Amnesty International calls on *Jaish-e-Muslimeen* to respect minimum standards of international humanitarian law, to treat the individuals humanely as civilians contributing to the reconstruction of Afghanistan and the protection of the human rights of the Afghan people.

The taking of hostages is prohibited under principles of international law. Amnesty International condemns the use of hostages as bargaining chips and urges all armed groups to comply with these principles in all circumstances.