

Humanists International issues urgent call to drop charges against Gulalai Ismail

- Humanists urge Pakistan authorities to drop charges against human rights and peace activist Gulalai Ismail
- Urge Pakistan Army Chief to intervene in support of Gulalai, whilst on a visit to London, UK
- Calls for intervention from the United Nations

Internationally renowned human rights and peace activist, Gulalai Ismail, who is also a Board member of Humanists International, is being harassed by Pakistan authorities following a campaign she supported in support of justice in the case of a girl who was raped and murdered¹.

The latest harassment comes only months after she was detained at Islamabad Airport following a visit to London to attend a Board meeting of Humanists International².

Gulalai has been charged with “sedition” under terrorism laws in what is clearly a spurious accusation aimed at silencing an important voice for justice and human rights. According to confirmed reports her family have faced repeated harassment and intimidation by the security forces in Pakistan.

Gulalai is in hiding in Pakistan.

Commenting on the situation, Gary McLelland, Humanists International Chief Executive, said:

“For weeks we have been working quietly behind the scenes, to brief human rights-supporting governments, the United Nations and other NGOs to lobby in support of our friend and colleague Gulalai; however enough is enough.

“Today we are calling on all of our members and supporters to raise their voices loud and clear, and tell the Pakistan authorities that they must immediately drop these unfounded charges against Gulalai.

“Gulalai is an inspirational human rights campaigner who deserves respect and admiration.

¹ <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/pakistan-rape-murder-farishta-girl-police-chief-suspended-islamabad-protests-a8925796.html>

² <https://humanists.international/2018/10/urgent-call-action-gulalai-ismail-arrested-return-pakistan/>

We know that Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan is aware of Gulalai's case, and we urge him to intervene directly to drop the charges and offer protection against the threats of violence she is subjected to daily.

"From our office in London, we are today making a direct appeal to the UK Government, which is currently hosting the Pakistan Army General Qamar Javed Bajwa, to make the strongest possible representations for Gulalai's safety and security."

ENDS

Notes:

- Pakistan Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa arrived in London on Thursday 20 June 2019 on an official visit to UK Government
<https://twitter.com/OfficialDGISPR>
- Gulalai was elected a Board member of Humanists International in 2017.
- For more information, or comment, contact Gary McLelland, Chief Executive of Humanists International, on +447813060713 or gary@humanists.international
- About Humanists International: We are the global representative body of the humanist movement, uniting a diversity of non-religious organisations and individuals. We want everyone to live a life of dignity in a world where universal human rights are respected and protected, and where states uphold secularism.